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DEBATES

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ASSEMBLY CHAMBER

VICTORIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

FIFTIETH PARLIAMENT

AUTUMN SESSION 1987

Legislative Assembly

VOL. CCCLXXXVI

[From February 24, 1987, to March 26, 1987]

The Governor

His Excellency the Reverend DR JOHN DAVIS McCaughey

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable SIR JOHN MCINTOSH YOUNG, KCMG

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Deputy Premier, and Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources	The Hon. R. C. Fordham, MP
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FIFTIETH PARLIAMENT—SECOND SESSION

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Cain, John	Bundoora	Mathews, C. R. T.	Oakleigh
Callister, Miss V. J.	Morwell	Micallef, E. J.	Springvale
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Coghill, Dr K. A.	Werribee	Perrin, D. J.	Bulleen
Coleman, C. G.	Syndal	Pescott, Roger	Bennettswood
Cooper, R. F.	Mornington	Plowman, S. J.	Evelyn
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Crozier, D. G.	Portland	Ramsay, J. H.	Balwyn
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Delzoppo, J. E.	Narracan	Reynolds, T. C.	Gisborne
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Edmunds, C. T.	Pascoe Vale	Roper, T. W.	Brunswick
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Evans, B. J.	Gippsland East	Seitz, George	Keilor
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Gleeson, Mrs E. S.	Thomastown	Sibree, Ms P. A.	Kew
Gude, P. A.	Hawthorn	Sidiropoulos, Theodore	Richmond
Hann, E. J.	Rodney	Simmonds, J. L.	Reservoir
Harrowfield, J. D.	Mitcham	Simpson, J. H.	Niddrie
Hayward, D. K.	Prahran	Smith, E. R.	Glen Waverley
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Jolly, R. A.	Doveton	Trezise, N. B.	Geelong North
Kennedy, A. D.	Bendigo West	Vaughan, Dr G. M.	Clayton
Kennett, J. G.	Burwood	Wallace, T. W.	Gippsland South
Kirkwood, C. W. D.	Preston	Walsh, R. W.	Albert Park
Lea, D. J.	Sandringham	Weideman, G. G.	Frankston South
Leigh, G. G.	Malvern	Wells, Dr R. J. H.	Dromana
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McDonald, M. J.	Whittlesea	Williams, M. T.	Doncaster
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Chairman of Committees: MR W. F. FOGARTY

Temporary Chairmen of Committees: Miss Callister, Mr Delzoppo, Mr Ernst, Mr B. J. Evans, Mr Harrowfield, Mr Hockley, Mr Jasper, Mr Kirkwood, Mr Plowman, Mrs Ray, Mr Remington, Mr Richardson, Ms Sibree, Mr Stirling, Dr Vaughan, and Mr Whiting.

Leader of the Labor Party and Premier: THE HON. JOHN CAIN

Deputy Leader of the Labor Party and Deputy Premier:

THE HON. R. C. FORDHAM

Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party and Leader of the Opposition:

THE HON. J. G. KENNETT

Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party and Deputy Leader of the Opposition:

THE HON. T. L. AUSTIN

Leader of the National Party: MR PETER ROSS-EDWARDS

Deputy Leader of the National Party: MR E. J. HANN

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Mr R. K. Evans

Assembly—Clerk of the Legislative Assembly: Mr R. K. Boyes

Hansard—Chief Reporter: Mr L. C. Johns

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House—Secretary: Mr R. M. Duguid

VICTORIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

Second Session of the Fiftieth Parliament

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 24 February 1987

OPENING OF THE SESSION

The **SPEAKER** (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds) took the chair at 2.30 p.m. and read the prayer.

The Clerk read the Proclamation by His Excellency the Governor convoking Parliament.

The Usher of the Black Rod of the Legislative Council brought a message from His Excellency the Governor desiring the attendance of honourable members in the Chamber of the Legislative Council.

The House, headed by the Speaker, proceeded to the Council Chamber.

The sitting was suspended at 2.36 p.m. until 5.35 p.m.

DEATHS OF STANDISH MICHAEL KEON, ESQUIRE AND NEIL FRANK STACEY, ESQUIRE

The **SPEAKER**—Order! I suggest that the Premier move the condolence motions separately. When the motions have been dealt with, I shall ask the House to agree to the motions in the traditional manner.

Mr **CAIN** (Premier)—I move:

That this House expresses its sincere sorrow at the death of Standish Michael Keon, Esquire, and places on record its acknowledgment of the valuable services rendered by him to the Parliament and the people of Victoria as a member of the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Richmond from 1945 to 1949.

Stan Keon died on 22 January this year at the Epworth Hospital in Richmond, the area where he was born, where he grew up and which he represented in both the State and Federal Parliaments for a considerable period.

As the motion states, Stan Keon was a member of this House from 1945 to 1949. He had a long association with the Labor and union movements. He was a member of the Australian Labor Party during the 1940s and early 1950s and was later a member of the Democratic Labor Party having held office at branch and executive level within both organisations. He was also the Secretary of the Victorian Public Service Association and a

delegate to the Trades Hall Council. A one time public servant, Stan Keon followed his Parliamentary years with careers in the wine industry and as an agent for Tattersall's.

It could be said that Stan Keon is one of those who represented a long tradition of Parliamentarians who lived, grew up, represented and died in the same district and who were totally caught up in and part of the political and social life of those areas. That was especially true of the inner suburbs in the early part and through the middle of the century.

Growing up in and being part of the Richmond scene is perhaps different to doing the same in any other inner suburb. Not long ago I read the book by Janet McCalman about the struggles of Richmond, which is a superb work. The book refers to the way people grew up and how they lived and behaved and it contains some references to Stan Keon. It is enlightening for all who may wish to gain a better perspective of the early years of the inner suburbs.

People such as Stan Keon came into Parliament at a fairly young age without much formal education or financial resources to give them an easy start. Stan Keon had an intellect of some measure and a personal determination to better his lot and that of those around him. He came from the pre-electric age when politics and being part of campaigns and elections involved being on street corners and where affiliations to and legends about people such as Stan Keon could proliferate.

Stan Keon was a powerful orator, as those who were his contemporaries in both this House and the Federal Parliament have attested. At a time when one's worth in politics was measured by oratorical skills, Stan Keon was seen by many good judges as having the capacities to take him right to the top in Federal politics.

It can be said that the vehemence with which members such as Stan Keon pursued their views is to be admired and respected, if not always agreed with. He achieved prominence both in and out of the Australian Labor Party at a time when that party was undergoing considerable turmoil, not unlike the turmoil currently being experienced by another part of the political spectrum.

Political parties go through such turmoil—there is no disgrace in it—and they have to resolve it. Perhaps that sort of turmoil tends to bring to the fore people with a rigid approach to politics. I am not sure, but it may be that, as one looks back at the events of the mid-1950s, one can see that kind of unyielding and unbending approach in many places. Perhaps when historians write, they may recognise that that approach emerged.

There have been stories of Stan Keon's Irish family background. A story appeared in a Melbourne daily newspaper about the loss of the family estate in a card game, and I suppose that is a colourful memory of this area, this era and that person.

As I have said before, the late Stan Keon had a great capacity with words. I suppose it was typical of Stan Keon that he ultimately became an in-patient at a hospital in the area in which he lived. However, he was a very impatient patient and chose not to live out his last days in hospital but, rather, in his own home. He escaped home from hospital to spend some time with friends on the weekend before he died. The Government offers its sincere condolences to the family and friends of the late Stan Keon.

Mr KENNETT (Leader of the Opposition)—I join with the Premier in paying the Opposition's respects to the service of the late Stan Keon and pass on its commiserations to his family and friends at his recent passing.

Stan Keon was another former Parliamentarian whose contribution we on this side of the House, probably without exception, were not in a position to witness. However, he follows a long line of politicians who not only served this Parliament and the community well, but also continued his service to the community through his activities both within football clubs and, of course, as a trustee of Olympic Park.

As the Premier mentioned, as one reviews his life one finds that Stan Keon was one of those Labor politicians in the traditional mould of Labor politicians. He came into this

place with a great deal of commonsense, stood for what he believed in and, at times—particularly on one occasion—did so at great personal cost to himself. At no time did he allow the politics of the day to in any way compromise his own very deep feelings on certain issues.

It is with regret that we witness the passing of many people who were very much part of the Labor movement, and then the Democratic Labor Party in the late 1940s and the 1950s. As time passes, no doubt, more such former members of Parliament will regrettably pass away and be remembered in this way.

The late Stan Keon was probably one with whom the Premier had better working relations and better knowledge, given his own personal involvement in the affairs of the Australian Labor Party in those days.

The Opposition joins with the Premier in respecting the services that the late Stan Keon gave to this Parliament, and it extends its condolences to his family and friends.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party)—I join with the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in paying tribute to the late Stan Keon. I did not know him very well, but he did visit me on a couple of occasions, and I had various telephone conversations with him. It is fair to say that he held very strong political views right up until the time of his death. He had his own set of principles and he never wavered in his views.

Stan Keon represented Richmond in the Victorian Parliament from 1945 to 1949 and held the Federal seat of Yarra from 1949 to 1956. He was very much a Richmond boy in every sense of the word. He was born there; he was educated there; his sporting interest was there; and he was a trustee or member of the committee of management of Olympic Park. He was a member for Richmond in every sense of the word and, as the Premier said, he also died there.

The late Stan Keon was a remarkable man. He had wide business interests in the George Adams company. He enjoyed a good life and had a large circle of friends. From time to time he belonged to several luncheon clubs and had a wide circle of friends outside the political field.

According to *Who's Who*, one of the interesting things about him was that his recreations, as it were, were wine, food and amateur athletics. I cannot imagine any honourable member in this day and age being so brave as to put down those types of things as his recreations as honestly as Stan Keon did at that time.

The funeral service was remarkable. Some 1000 people attended who came from all walks of life, as one would have expected, and high tributes were paid to him.

To sum it up very well, in his eulogy at the funeral service Father Walker made the following comments about Stan Keon:

Stan Keon fought the good fight, kept his faith and finished the course.

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster)—I wish to pay my respects to the late Stan Keon, more as one of the old timers in the Liberal Party who was there before the split.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr WILLIAMS—There is much of the Democratic Labor Party in me—I am sorry for the error. I make the point that, when I entered the Liberal Party, we had only eleven members in this place, and it was largely because of Stan Keon and many stalwarts who stood with him that we were able to represent the people of Victoria on the Government side of the House. Although I did not know Stan Keon very well, I knew Jim Brosnan quite well because he was a member of the electorate of Box Hill, to which seat I was elected.

I should have liked to see Jim Brosnan serve as well in this place, and in the Federal Parliament, as did Stan Keon.

I pay tribute to Stan Keon because he made it possible for the Bolte Government to give Victoria the great era of prosperity and progress which, sadly, has not been seen since.

The SPEAKER—Order! I wish to say on behalf of the House to the family of the late Stan Keon that he certainly knew how to fight in politics, and he did fight over a long period to express a point of view; whether or not one agreed with it, of course, was another matter.

To his family and relatives, I express the sympathy of the House.

Mr CAIN (Premier)—I move:

That this House expresses its sincere sorrow at the death of Neil Frank Stacey, Esquire, and places on record its acknowledgment of the valuable services rendered by him to the Parliament and the people of Victoria as a member of the Legislative Council for the electoral province of Chelsea from 1976 to 1982.

Neil Stacey died on 29 January this year at the age of 52 years. As honourable members would be aware, he had been ill for a number of years prior to his death. I believe it is entirely appropriate that this House, many of whose members knew Neil Stacey as a contemporary, should take the opportunity of considering this condolence motion at this time. It is not the usual practice to do so for former members of the other place, but, with one who was so recently a friend and contemporary of ours, it is entirely appropriate in this case.

Neil Stacey was a member of the Legislative Council for six years, and he was defeated in the election of 1982. During his time in Parliament, he served on the Meat Industry Committee, the Library Committee, the Printing Committee and the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee. He made contributions to the work of all those bodies.

He was by profession, as are a large number of members of this House, a schoolteacher. He spent some twenty years in that profession teaching at State schools and, shortly before his election to this place, he had moved to the private education system.

He was teaching at Haileybury College just before he was elected. Outside his teaching work he was involved with the Victorian Teachers Union; he was president of the union for a period.

Neil Stacey was a member who lived in and was part of the province that he represented. He lived in Aspendale for almost 25 years. He was involved in the community not only as a member of the Upper House for the province that included Aspendale but also, for some years, as a councillor of the City of Chelsea; he was mayor of that council from 1971 to 1972.

He is well remembered and was liked by all members of this House, and I express the view of all in saying how sincerely we regret his early death after a very long illness. He leaves behind his wife, Barbara, and three children. On behalf of the Government, I extend our sympathy to his wife and children and to other members of the family.

Mr KENNETT (Leader of the Opposition)—I join the Premier in paying tribute to Neil Stacey and, in doing so, I thank the Government for allowing the condolence motion for Neil Stacey to be moved in this House. As the Premier said, it is not the normal procedure. Many members on both sides of the House came into Parliament with Neil Stacey in 1976, including the Premier and me.

There is no doubt that Neil Stacey was a real individual. He was very outspoken. He had a good sense of fun, and he had a tremendous capacity for work. He had an outgoing nature which is best remembered by his laughter, which could be heard from one end of the building to the other. The only other member of Parliament in years gone by who could come near Neil Stacey in decibels was Alan Scanlan.

Neil Stacey made friends very easily. He was a well-respected teacher. He was very much involved in community affairs with his service on the council and to other organisations. He was Mayor of the City of Chelsea from 1971 to 1972. He had a long

association with the Liberal Party. Although he was obviously very disappointed at his defeat in 1982, he maintained close links and firm friendships not only with Liberal Party members but also with Labor Party members. This was demonstrated clearly by the members of Parliament from both parties who attended his funeral.

Neil Stacey died at the young age of 52. Three years prior, he was in very good health: tall and strong; unfortunately, he was cancer ridden. Each time he was hospitalised he fought it. He lived in high hopes and was very optimistic; at the same time he was very realistic. It is a tragedy, in a body such as Neil's, that he was struck not only with secondary cancer but, over two and a half years, with three different primary cancers. He experienced considerable pain and hardship during this time but never once when I or my colleagues visited him did he complain. The same spirit has been seen before in other members of Parliament who have been struck by this illness—Jack Ginifer, for instance. These people seem to have an inner strength.

This period was very trying for Neil Stacey and his family. I visited Neil a week and a half before his death. He had undergone another series of ray treatment. He realised then that the cancer had spread and, although he was advised that more hospitalisation and medication were necessary, he decided against it. He knew he had a very short time to live. A protracted and fatal illness often brings out the very best in some individuals.

The death notices placed by his wife and three children best demonstrate not so much the role Neil played as husband and Babs as wife but the fact that not only were they husband and wife but also they were the very best of friends. They had a fantastic relationship which would be very hard to emulate in any marriage. One of the greatest joys for Neil and Babs was last year when, after having undergone the second lot of major hospitalisation, Neil recovered to a certain degree and they undertook a trip to Queensland together in a caravan. It brought them a great deal of pleasure.

Not so long ago Neil visited this House. Some honourable members may remember seeing him in the Public Gallery. At that stage he appeared to be in very good health. Unfortunately, these diseases take their course and, in the last weeks of his life, Neil suffered a tremendous loss of weight. That huge body was reduced so much in size and obviously it was very distressing. Neil had a special relationship with his family. In the last few days of his life he was able to hold his newest grandchild which was delivered by his daughter, Anne.

On behalf of the Liberal Party and my colleagues, and, as the Premier has expressed, on behalf of this Parliament, I express deep regret that Neil was taken from us at such a young age. We very much recognise the strength that was shown by his family throughout his illness. They will miss not only a father and husband but also, more particularly, a friend. As we remember Neil, I reiterate that his funeral service, a beautiful service at Balnarring, was well attended by all members of this House. It demonstrated the good that comes out of Parliamentary life in the friendships that develop within and across party lines, despite the cut and thrust of politics, and which endure when one is no longer a member of Parliament. We will miss Neil very much indeed. I extend our condolences to his family, children, grandchildren and friends.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party)—I join the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in paying tribute to Neil Stacey, who served this Parliament between 1976 and 1982. He died at the very early age of 52 and it was of great sadness to us all when we heard of his passing. He showed great courage during a very long and painful illness. He lived as normal a life during that long period as anyone could hope to do.

He was educated at Wesley College and he was a teacher by profession up to the time he entered the Legislative Council. He enjoyed his six years in Parliament very much indeed and I can understand his disappointment when he was defeated in 1982 because he had only just begun to make his contribution and, of course, dying at the age of 52 took away from him the opportunity of giving so much more to life that he would have given whether

he had come back to politics or he had followed some other course in life. That was not to be. It seems to happen so often in this place that members die of this dreadful disease.

To his wife, Babs, and the three children I extend the deepest sympathy of members of my party and, as the Leader of the Opposition has said, of all members of the Parliament of Victoria. He was a father who was very dear to his children and, as the Leader of the Opposition has said, he was a partner to a remarkable marriage.

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Education)—I join with the Premier and the Leaders of the opposition parties in paying tribute to the career of Neil Stacey and expressing my sympathy to his wife Barbara, and their three children. Neil followed a well-known track, starting his career in school teaching, with an interest in politics that finally developed into political representation in Parliament. Neil started his early years of teacher training in Melbourne and became an active and prominent member of the student representative council at the time. In those days there was only one teachers' union. He became a prominent member and the leader of the Victorian Teachers Union. He finished teaching at Aspendale Primary School at the time when my own children were enrolled there.

Neil Stacey was a popular, well-liked, dedicated and hardworking teacher. He also maintained wider community interests, being elected to the Chelsea City Council and ultimately becoming mayor of the city in 1971 until 1972. He was then elected as a member of the Legislative Council representing Chelsea Province. As a bayside member he showed considerable interest in conservation issues and the quality of the environment. He never lost the interest he had since he first decided that he wanted to become a teacher—an interest in young people, particularly those in the Chelsea community.

Neil Stacey was a regular attender at lifesaving clubs. I recall him, as both a councillor and member of Parliament, still making himself available at the annual Chelsea youth week celebration by continuing the speciality that he developed as a schoolteacher at school sports events by being the key announcer on that day.

The last occasion on which I saw Neil Stacey was some time after he had been defeated. He had been active and prominent in seeking the support of the Government of the day for the rebuilding program of the Aspendale lifesaving club. At the official opening of the club a short time ago Neil Stacey showed, once again, the concern and commitment that he had made to the young people of the district. That action was typical of Neil Stacey.

He was a hardworking man who identified himself with the community and the needs of the community; he was widely respected.

Mr LIEBERMAN (Benambra)—I shall say a few words about my former Parliamentary colleague, Neil Stacey, who was elected to Parliament in the same year as I was elected, in 1976. In my opinion, Neil would have made a wonderful contribution in this Chamber had he been a member of it. I remember his skill as a forceful debater. He was a clear thinker and a strong and inspiring speaker. Without intending disrespect to the other place, I always imagined my friend, Neil, as being one who would have done well in this place, the people's House. I suspect that Neil secretly harboured the thought that he would have liked to be here.

I am sad that Neil Stacey is not able to be with us now. As has been said, he was devoted to his family. He was a good, staunch friend, a good politician and a good Parliamentarian. I always remember Neil taking an interest in issues affecting other members of Parliament and their electorates. I remember with gratitude the interest he took in matters in my electorate. In my first two or three years representing my electorate on issues involving conservation, mountain cattlemen and so forth, when those issues were very much to the fore, I remember that Neil gave up his time to visit my electorate when he could probably ill afford to be away from his electorate, as he did not hold it with a large majority. However, he spent time in my electorate to learn about the issues and contribute to the development of policies. That was typical of Neil Stacey.

I convey the sympathy of my family to Neil's wife, Barbara, and his three children. We will all remember Neil's contribution to Parliament and the community.

Mr WEIDEMAN (Frankston South)—I support the motion so ably moved by the Premier and supported by the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the National Party. I remember Neil Stacey as a colleague and a friend from 1976 to 1982 when the Frankston electorate was encompassed in the Upper House seat of Chelsea. Neil was left with the responsibility of covering a province with equally balanced representation between the Government and the Opposition. His province covered four State Lower House seats. He did this admirably with his wife, Babs.

The Leader of the Opposition referred to the special relationship between Babs and Neil Stacey. During election time one would often see Babs and Neil Stacey knocking on doors and giving out pamphlets, which Babs enjoyed. It was certainly a pleasant experience to be involved on such occasions, I extend my condolences to Babs, Ian and Anne, who are twins, and Jenni. Anne has also had twin sons and a son who was born before Neil's death in January. I think also at this time of Neil's mother. Neil also lost his father a year or so ago. His mother was proud of her son, Neil.

As the Premier said, Neil Stacey started his career, like many, as a teacher. He took interest in the communities in which he taught. He took special interest in local government in Chelsea for nine years, becoming mayor during that time. As the Minister for Education pointed out, Neil Stacey had a great interest in politics in the teaching profession, and later in the Liberal Party.

I remember Neil Stacey as a big man with a big heart. He never had a bad word for anyone on either side of politics. I remember him well for his laugh. He had an enormous voice and one could hear his laugh from some distance away. He fought a mean fight during his illness. He is the second member of Parliament from the Mornington Peninsula to have died from the same illness in recent years.

Neil Stacey was born in 1934, the centenary year of Victoria. I join other members in extending my condolences to Neil Stacey's family. He was held in high regard in Chelsea, Hastings and the Mornington Peninsula, and was also involved when he retired from politics. He spent his life being involved on the Mornington Peninsula and will be sadly missed.

Mr LEIGH (Malvern)—It grieves me to be addressing this motion today. I knew Neil when I was a Young Liberal and he was chairman of the Isaacs Liberal Party electorate committee. He was probably one of the first people to encourage me to become a member of Parliament. I remember Neil Stacey best for his commitment to the community for which he worked. Perhaps one of the best lessons for a member of Parliament is that, irrespective of one's political affiliations, one should help others, and Neil Stacey is one person who would help others. The lesson one should learn is that each one of us is here to serve people, regardless of how they vote.

When Neil lost his seat in 1982 he faced a difficult time because he had worked so hard to obtain that seat. It could be said that he defied the odds in 1976 by becoming the member for Chelsea Province. That win demonstrated the calibre of Neil Stacey when he in fact won the seat of Chelsea Province because it was not a seat that the then Liberal Government anticipated winning.

I am sad for Babs and the family who have lost him. Victoria should be sad about losing such a person because he was a man who put his political affiliations aside to meet the needs of the community. That is perhaps the best lesson that all members of Parliament could learn. I hope more people of the calibre of Neil Stacey enter Parliament because the people of Victoria would be better served.

Mr GUDE (Hawthorn)—I join briefly with the Leaders of the three parties and my colleagues in paying tribute to a friend. Like the Leader of the Opposition and the honourable member for Frankston South I well recall Neil's generous laugh. It was a laugh

that filled the corridors of this place and made everyone feel good inside, no matter what one's interests in life or one's political affiliations were. He shared his laugh with all of us in a positive way.

He was a person who cared for others. Neil had a special quality about him that few people have; the capacity to give to others. He was positive in that caring and it made one feel good. It made one feel good when Neil was well and strong, yet in a strange way it strengthened and enriched those of us who knew Neil and visited him in his declining days.

I recall another colleague who has passed on and who also came into Parliament in 1976. Neville Hudson was the member for Werribee. He was stricken with the same cancerous disease as was Neil Stacey. Neville shared Neil's positive nature and his inner strength shone through to so many of us.

As the Leader of the Opposition has said, Neil Stacey did not merely have primary cancer followed by the secondary disease, he had three episodes of primary cancer. Never once in the difficult times when I visited Neil or when Neil and Babs came to our home, did Neil have anything but a positive thought for the future—his future, his family's future and even my future. I do not know why he should have bothered about my future, but he did. That was the sort of man he was.

If we had a smidgeon of the positive nature and strength of Neil Stacey, all in this Parliament would be better people and the State would be enriched because of it.

I join with other members in expressing my condolence to Babs and the family at this most trying time.

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—I express my words of appreciation for the contribution and friendship that Neil Stacey brought to Parliament and also express my condolences to Babs and the family at Neil's untimely passing. He will be long remembered for the natural friendliness that he brought to all in Parliament.

He will be remembered as a forthright contributor. In our own party room, Neil made his point of view in a clear and forthright manner. He will be remembered as a dogged fighter, not only for those things that he believed to be right—and that he expressed in the party room time after time—but also as a dogged fighter in the last difficult years when he faced his personal battle with untimely ill-health.

If more people of Neil Stacey's calibre were in Parliament, it would be a better place. His contribution will be long remembered by those colleagues who worked with him and it is with thankfulness that we count him among our friends.

The SPEAKER—Order! Neil Stacey was a friendly man. When he came into this place he exhibited a mature attitude and was respected by those on all sides of politics who worked with him during his term of office.

To Barbara and his family, I express deepest sympathy during this period.

The motions were agreed to in silence, honourable members signifying their unanimous agreement by standing in their places.

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

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

MISLEADING CLAIMS OF GOVERNMENT

Mr KENNETT (Leader of the Opposition)—Will the Premier explain why he and his Government continue to mislead the Victorian community by claiming that Victoria leads the economic recovery of Australia, when the truth is that, because of the Government's disastrous mismanagement of the economy, Victorians now pay more taxes than citizens in other States, Victoria has the largest debt and the highest inflation rate?

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member is now making a speech. I ask the Leader of the Opposition to ask the question in the usual manner and to resist the temptation to make a speech.

Mr KENNETT—Mr Speaker, I am asking the question in the normal manner, but I shall abbreviate it. Will the Premier explain why he continues to claim that Victoria leads the economic recovery when Victorians pay more in taxes than citizens in any other State and when Victoria has the largest debt and the highest inflation rate of any State in Australia?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The claim is made with confidence by the Government and by me because it is true.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr CAIN—That is the absolute fact—it is true. If we are to talk about tax policies, I hope we will learn some time in the next three days, if not in the next week, what the tax policies of the Opposition are. Are they wets or dries, or are they Joh's men? Are they 25 per centers? Do they want a consumption tax?

Mr LIEBERMAN (Benambra)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, the Premier was asked an important and specific question and is not permitted to debate the answer by introducing extraneous material, which in this case is the Federal coalition policy on taxation. The question asked in this House should be answered with sensitivity and intelligence, particularly as it affects all Victorians.

The SPEAKER—Order! I refer honourable members to Standing Order No. 127 and I ask the Premier to continue to answer the question.

Mr CAIN (Premier)—If the honourable member for Benambra is happy to tell the House what the Liberal Party's tax policy is, let him do so because we will not get it from the Leader of the Opposition. I should have thought the Leader of the Opposition, after nine weeks off, would have done better than to ask a question such as that. He talked about this issue last year and was told clearly what the position was.

For the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition alone, I shall repeat it, although he knows what the Government's commitment is on this matter. There will be no overall increase in the tax burden on Victorians in the current term of office of my Government. The facts demonstrate that the Labor Government is more than meeting that commitment. If the Leader of the Opposition read the Budget Papers or listened to the Budget debate last year, he would know that tax receipts, as a proportion of non-farm gross domestic product, are in the order of 4.8 per cent this financial year and that they were 5 per cent in 1984–85. If the Leader of the Opposition were to examine those items covered by the consumer price index, he might learn something. If he were to listen, it might do him the world of good.

The items involving State and local government charges as a component of the CPI demonstrate the success of the commitment that I have mentioned. Melbourne had the lowest increase of all capital cities between December 1983 and December 1986. That figure was 9.8 per cent. What was it up in paradise? It was 30.1 per cent. That is the so-called capital of the low tax State that people have spoken so much about.

If the honourable member for Malvern had read his newspapers over the past fortnight, even he would have noticed the devastating case that is made out about taxes in that so-called haven of low taxes. Victoria has far outstripped Queensland in its performance in that area.

The Leader of the Opposition should also be aware that the Labor Government has indexed payroll tax rates, has exempted apprentices and has abolished a number of stamp duties paid by business. The Government has reduced the number of individuals who pay land tax compared with the number who paid land tax under the previous Government. The Leader of the Opposition is aware of that.

We have exempted pensioners from land tax on their own homes from 1 January 1987.

In respect of water, gas and electricity charges—the Leader of the Opposition knows because I told him last year and I am sure he has not forgotten—the average increase in charges has been below the consumer price index. Even the Leader of the Opposition should start to understand it.

I want to add one final point. The Government has made a commitment in respect of taxes. There is a ceiling on them and, to meet that ceiling, the Government has made it clear that it requires a 1.5 per cent productivity response from agencies and departments.

An Honourable Member—Garbage!

Mr CAIN—It is not garbage at all. If the Opposition thinks it is garbage to demand efficiency, that is the very best reason I can think of why it should not be in government. When the Opposition was in government, we had inefficiency. It did not care how it spent money. It looked after its mates and, so long as they were satisfied, it just went on spending, year after year. That was why Victoria had a deficit of hundreds of millions of dollars when the Cain Government came to office.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr CAIN—The Treasurer had to pick up the worst deficit in the history of this State and honourable members opposite know it.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr CAIN—I do not know what is the policy of the rabble opposite on anything. How could one know? I defy anybody to know what the Opposition's policy is on any issue. Despite the rabble on the Opposition benches, the Government will keep its commitment and will go on delivering efficient government in this State.

HOME LOAN INTEREST RATES

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party)—I refer the Treasurer to a statement made by a senior official of the National Australia Bank concerning the likelihood of an increase in the concessional interest rate for home buyers. Can the Treasurer advise the House whether he has had any communication with his Federal colleagues to try to ensure that the concessional interest rate on home loans is maintained at the present level?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—I thank the Leader of the National Party for his question on this issue. The Government has on many occasions made it clear, not only to the Federal Government but also to the Parliament of Victoria, that it is important to apply pressure to reduce interest rates in both the long run and the short run.

As a result of the amendments to the State Bank legislation in Victoria, the Government was able to remove the shackles from the State Bank to allow it to compete more effectively in the marketplace. As the Leader of the National Party would be aware, the major reason why Victorians have been better off in respect of housing loans has been because of the role played by the State Bank. In 1986 it was lending approximately 40 per cent of the total number of housing loans available in this State; and that was only because the State Bank was able to compete effectively with existing Australian banks and with the new foreign banks.

The Leader of the National Party will be interested to know that pressure has been brought to bear to increase building society interest rates on housing loans. The Government has made it clear that it sees no case for an increase in building society interest rates. We also believe that, while it is important to exert pressure on all organisations to keep interest rates down at present, it is far more important to look to the medium term and to ensure that we have a structured economy that will assist in moving interest rates down in that period.

The Leader of the National Party would be aware that in that context it is very important to improve the balance of payments position, and the State Government's economic strategy is geared specifically to achieving a better balance of payments position.

I was pleased that both the Leader of the National Party and the Leader of the Opposition attended the opening of the Portland aluminium smelter because conservative assumptions alone on that project will boost export income by some \$600 million. That will also be important in reducing interest rates in the long run.

The Government has not only been making representations in respect of short-term interest rates but it has also been concerned about the medium term. The Government's specific economic policies will ensure that interest rates will fall over the medium term not only in the housing area but also in other important sectors of the economy.

BUDGET FOR 1987-88

Mr HOCKLEY (Bentleigh)—Given a significant change in the Parliamentary timetable, can the Premier inform the House on the likely date for the introduction of the next State Budget?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—This year it is intended to introduce the Budget for the next financial year approximately one month or six weeks earlier than otherwise would have been the case. The Government hopes to introduce the Budget in the middle of August or thereabouts. The new arrangement will depend upon the Commonwealth agreeing to the Premiers Conference being held towards the end of May, and I believe there is a high probability of that occurring.

Honourable members will recognise this as a further move to improve the effectiveness of Government stewardship.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr CAIN—The Opposition really is in trouble when it comes to knowing about running government. I am not sure I can help the Opposition very much. The shadow Treasurer does not know that it would be a good idea to introduce the Budget as early as possible in the financial year. The honourable member does not deserve to be anything in this place, let alone shadow Treasurer!

It is good sense to introduce the Budget as early in the financial year as possible. It provides a sharper focus on Budget issues and on economic planning; the Government is able to do this because it does have coherence and direction. It knows where it is headed. The Government has made clear what its policies and strategies are.

I say this as advisedly as I can: having said that, I do not know how the Opposition will handle the Budget. The Opposition will face a considerable problem because it has not shown any capability of grasping the big issues that face the State. Based on everything I have seen and heard it appears that the Opposition does not understand the significant issues. The Opposition does not understand what is needed to ensure the continued economic growth of the State and to provide jobs. The reason is understandable. The Opposition has been completely and absolutely distracted by internal fighting. There are "wet" Libs and "dry" Libs. There is a war between the leaders and pretenders. The Opposition has all the troubles in the world, and I sympathise with it.

The troubles have a lot to do with having a Leader who does not enjoy majority support in his party room. That is hard to live with.

The National Party has problems too! I am aware of where the National Party is headed—it will be Joh's Nationals or the rest. One heard today of the Victorian National Party being told by somebody outside the State what it should do with candidates, and it appears that there is the shadow of the white shoe brigade in Victoria.

The SPEAKER—Order! I ask the Premier to cease debating the question.

Mr CAIN—I was merely making the point, Mr Speaker, that the new timetable will impose considerable discipline upon those who wish to contribute to decision making in respect of the Budget.

The Opposition will have to lift its game if it is to prove capable of comprehending the issues and if it is to rid itself of the infighting and get down to the issues and policies it is supposed to stand for. The problem is that the Opposition has no policies.

PUBLIC HOUSING WAITING LISTS

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—I ask the Minister for Housing: is it a fact that under the Cain Government the waiting list for public housing in Victoria has grown from less than 16 000 to 34 000 applicants?

Mr WILKES (Minister for Housing)—It is a fact that more than 32 000 Victorians are on the waiting list for public housing; but another fact that ought to be taken into consideration is that the client base now for public housing has extended far beyond the parameters of when the Opposition was in government and when the now Leader of the Opposition was the Minister of Housing.

In addition, public housing today is infinitely better in quality than when the previous Government was in office and therefore more people are interested in public housing now than ever before.

Also, the Government's record in public housing is far better than when the former Government was in office. In the last year of the former Government, it handed over approximately 1700 housing units; the present Government is handing over, to this date, 3100 units a year and that speaks for the quantity of public housing that the Government is able to provide.

When the honourable member for Balwyn raises the question of an increase in the waiting list for public housing, he should remember that the Government is providing a better class of housing and twice as much public housing as the previous Government could provide.

Of course, the reason the Government is able to do this is that it is not wasting millions of dollars of public funds on land scandals and land deals. Any land that the Government purchases is governed by its ability to pay the Valuer-General's valuation. This was ignored by the former Government and, consequently, the money wasted on land deals resulted in fewer houses being built.

The present Government does not countenance that situation. Its aim is to build more and better public housing.

Mr Kennett interjected.

Mr WILKES—The Leader of the Opposition ought to know that waiting lists are not a true indication of the demand for public housing in this State. If one were to examine the situation of the 32 000 people on the waiting list, it is possible that one would find that a third of them have already found accommodation.

Mr Kennett—Rubbish!

Mr WILKES—The Leader of the Opposition was the Minister of Housing and he ought to know that. If he does not know it, he could not have been a good Minister of Housing and I have grave doubts about his ability to be Minister for Housing.

Mr Kennett—It shows bad administration by the Government!

Mr WILKES—It does not show bad administration. The Leader of the Opposition has the audacity to talk about efficiency in the Ministry of Housing when his predecessors were responsible for wasting millions of dollars of public money on land scandals, filling the pockets of developers and people who wanted to rob the public purse.

The Opposition had no difficulty in saying, "Yes, you can do that". The record is there. Three inquiries have been held into the Opposition's administration, and those inquiries were an indictment of the Government of the time and of that Minister of Housing.

The present Government is proud of its record in housing and it will continue to work towards providing 12 000 houses in the four-year office of the Government.

REGIONAL LIBRARIES

Mr HANN (Rodney)—I ask the Minister for the Arts if he is aware of widespread concern throughout Victoria among regional libraries and municipalities and thousands of Victorian library users about the effective cutback in library funding this year because there was no overall increase in per capita funding, and the reported announcement by the Minister that he proposes to cut library funding by \$2 million in the next financial year. If the Minister is aware of this, will he make an approach to the Treasurer to seek the necessary funding to ensure we can maintain a reasonable standard of library service to the State of Victoria?

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for the Arts)—I make no apology for the fact that in per capita terms the Victorian Government spends on libraries twice as much as its neighbours in New South Wales, and more than any other mainland State other than Western Australia. That is a record in which the State Government is entitled to take pride. For the first time in 40 years the State Government is conducting a comprehensive review of the library system as a whole, geared to seeing that greater cost-effectiveness is obtained from that system and that still more improvements are obtained in its level of service delivery.

The report of that review will be brought down later next month or early in April and will be received jointly by the Government and the Municipal Association of Victoria. After those bodies have had a chance to consider that report it will be released for public discussion. I hope that at this point both opposition parties will make plain their policies where library funding is concerned.

Mr Kennett—The Government has broken a promise.

Mr MATHEWS—The interjection of the Leader of the Opposition is a descent into hypocrisy extreme even by his own lax standards. The undertaking of the Government in which the Leader of the Opposition served as a Minister was to fund libraries on a \$2-for-\$1 basis. The present Government inherited from its Liberal predecessors a situation in which the ratio was in the other direction—less than \$1 of Government money for every

\$2 spent by local government. Let us not have more hypocrisy about broken promises. Let the Opposition make its policies plain, and let it for a change make a constructive contribution on the report of the Geddes review when it is released for public discussion.

EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS

Mr SIMPSON (Niddrie)—Can the Premier advise the House of the most recent Victorian employment statistics, what effects whose statistics have and how they compare with those in other parts of Australia, especially Queensland?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—For the past 44 months Victoria has had the lowest unemployment rate of any State in this country.

I emphasise that this occurred over 44 consecutive months. The latest figures show that Victoria's rate of unemployment is 7.1 per cent compared with 9.5 per cent for the rest of Australia. That figure is even more impressive when one has regard to the high participation rates in this State. In January 1987, 50 000 more Victorians were employed than twelve months previously. If any member of the opposition parties considers that this is not a satisfactory performance, he should say so.

More importantly—and even the honourable member for Hawthorn, who claims some interest in the private sector, should be able to understand this—85 per cent of those jobs were estimated to be in the private sector. Those who say that they know something about employment should listen to this figure: 43 per cent of new jobs created in Australia during 1986 occurred in Victoria. How can any Government be other than proud of that statistic? The employment growth in Victoria is now twice that of the rest of Australia. More jobs mean more investment, more growth and more exports, as the Treasurer said earlier in answer to a question.

The honourable member for Niddrie asked about Queensland, where Joh has “no worries at all.” For anyone wanting to go to “paradise”, the unemployment figure is 10.3 per cent, which is only the second highest figure, the highest being Tasmania. It should be noted also that “paradise” can boast the second highest youth unemployment rate of 26.9 per cent. Again, that figure is second only to Tasmania. All I wish to say is: let those who advocate all that is happening in Queensland as being great, simple and terrific be aware of those figures. That is the record of two conservative Governments in this country.

Further, the Victorian Government has delivered security for all Victorians. It is the best State in which to live. More mums and dads in this State than in any other State know that their kids will get jobs. That is the test. For three years and eight months Victoria consistently has remained the State with the lowest unemployment rate of any State in Australia. That is a record of which this Government is proud. It is a record that the Victorian Government will continue and continue to make known throughout the country.

It did not just happen; it was not an accident; it did not happen because the Victorian Government is the most industrious Government in this country; it happened because the Victorian Government had policies. The Victorian Government said what those policies were and went out and made growth and jobs for the people of the State. The Victorian Government will keep on doing that.

INTEREST RATES

Mr STOCKDALE (Brighton)—I direct a question without notice to Australia's highest taxing Treasurer.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! I should advise the honourable member for Brighton that I will not call him if he continues to refer incorrectly to a Minister's title in a preamble to a

question without notice. I ask the honourable member to recommence and rephrase his question.

Mr STOCKDALE—The question is: is it a fact that high Government sector borrowing——

The SPEAKER—Order! I am asking the honourable member for Brighton to commence his question again and to state to which Minister his question is directed.

Mr STOCKDALE—My question is addressed to the Treasurer, Mr Speaker. Is it a fact that high Government sector borrowings are a major contributing factor to the high interest rates in Victoria?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—The honourable member for Brighton is obviously testy because he is no longer responsible for WorkCare, or so I understand. Apparently he found the workload too much. If one looks at the interest rates issue, one finds—and the honourable member for Brighton should be aware of this—that the interest rates that are determined by banks throughout Australia are, in fact, a reflection of national and international policy.

If the honourable member for Brighton had listened to the answer I gave earlier in response to a question about interest rates from the Leader of the National Party, he would have appreciated the fact that the State Bank, because of action taken by this Government, is now the biggest provider of housing finance in Victoria—round about 40 per cent—and the only reason why the State Bank is doing so well is that this Government, unlike the Opposition, decided to strengthen the State Bank.

The Liberal Party, as the honourable member for Brighton would be aware, wanted to sell off the State Bank. We are not sure who they wanted to sell it to, whether it was a foreign bank or some other Australian bank, but they wanted to sell off the State Bank. One of the major reasons why we have been able to keep housing loan costs in Victoria down to a reasonable order of magnitude has been our strengthening of the State Bank. The figures that have been published in relation to housing loans and taking house loan payments as a proportion of income reveal that house loan payments account for a lower proportion of income in this State than is the average for the rest of Australia.

We make it quite clear that we would like to see lower interest rates, not only in the short term but also in the long term, and we are doing something about that. I have already pointed out that the State Bank, because of our actions, is in the position of providing housing finance at cheaper rates than are available elsewhere in this country. We have put a clamp on building societies at present and, because of our policy of building up the competitive strength of the Victorian economy, there will be an improvement in the balance of payments position. Given that the inflation rate has peaked and given that there will be an improvement——

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr JOLLY—Opposition members have great difficulty in understanding these issues. In the case of third-party insurance, for example, they advocated a \$450 premium and wanted to take \$74 million out of the Consolidated Fund, all in the name of reducing taxes. One cannot trust them at all! They wanted \$74 million from the taxpayers. The only way that could have been achieved would have been through an increase in taxes. That is what the Liberal Party stands for—increases in taxes!

The facts of life are these: if one looks at State and local government charges as a component of the consumer price index, since we have been in government the increase in this State has been well below the average increase for the rest of Australia, including Queensland, so Victoria has had a relatively lower tax burden as a result of our policies. There is no doubt that our policies are the best for Victoria.

As the Premier has already indicated, for 44 months in a row Victoria has had the lowest unemployment rate in Australia. No Liberal Government in this State has ever been able

to do that. On only eight occasions in 36 months could the Liberal Government obtain such a result. There is no doubt that the Victorian economy is performing well and it is doing so because of the State Government's economic policies.

TAXATION POLICIES

Miss CALLISTER (Morwell)—Has the Premier examined various tax proposals currently being put forward, including a consumption tax, and, if so, can he advise the House of the impact that would have on the Victorian Budget and Victorians generally?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—I thank the honourable member for Morwell for the question because it is important that the Government's position be made clear, considering all the fuzziness surrounding the tax issue. The Government has always had a commitment to spread the burden of tax evenly across the community. It has strongly attacked the tax avoiders for that reason.

The Government will always do all it can to detect those who, through smart schemes and the shuffling around of bits of paper, put an additional burden on ordinary taxpayers who pay their share as they should. The Government has limited its spending so that State revenue collection has remained at the level that I mentioned; that is, at the level of the consumer price index, subject to economic growth.

The Federal Government undertook what I believe was a long needed review of the tax regime. It reduced the amount of income tax paid by Australians, and further relief is still to come. We support those moves that ease the burden of tax on Victorians. We believe that the suggestion by the Leader of the Opposition that a consumption tax be levied would rob taxpayers of the relief that has been given to them by the Federal Government. The Victorian Government would not support that proposition.

Although Victorians can be certain about the Government's position, there is some uncertainty about the State Opposition's response to that proposal.

Mr Kennett interjected.

Mr CAIN—The Leader of the Opposition ought to have a response to his Federal Leader. He does not know whether he supports Mr Howard. I do not think he does. He is talking about a broadly-based consumption tax. The people of the State want to know whether the Leader of the Opposition supports that proposition. Apparently he has no view on it. That is all that is being asked of him.

What is the State Liberal Party's response to the Federal proposal?

Mr Kennett—You are the only one talking about it.

Mr CAIN—I am not the only one talking about it; your Federal Leader is talking about it!

Mr COLEMAN (Syndal)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, the question asked was specific. The Premier is now trying to debate the answer. The House has no control over the way in which Commonwealth income tax is levied. The Premier is trying to advise on the way in which this Government might levy some taxes.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member for Syndal has taxed my patience on a number of occasions this evening with his interjections. Now, by the device of a point of order, the honourable member is making a speech. I advise him that I will ensure the Premier does not debate this subject. As I understood the question, the Premier was asked what effect the tax would have on Victorians. I do not uphold the point of order.

Mr CAIN (Premier)—I wish to make a simple point for the Opposition to understand. The Liberal Party in Canberra has proposed a consumption tax which will affect ordinary taxpayers in the State. We reject that notion.

I have the greatest sympathy for any Victorian who is trying to work out the Opposition's policy on tax. Victorians are entitled to know what it is. As the Minister for Consumer Affairs has said, the Opposition does not seem to have a policy, or it seems not to want to tell us about it. It does not have a policy on anything!

If there is to be continual canvassing of a broadly-based consumption tax, we want to know what the view of the Opposition is. It will not tell us.

HOUSING

Mr AUSTIN (Ripon)—I ask the Minister for Housing whether it is a fact that last year private new house commencements in Victoria decreased by 16·4 per cent and that other residential housing decreased by 20·9 per cent?

Mr WILKES (Minister for Housing)—Last year there was a decline in private sector housing right across Australia, not only in Victoria, for a variety of reasons. Investors in the private rental market preferred to invest their money elsewhere to obtain a return of more than 8 per cent on their money. That placed strains on the public rental housing market. Consequently, the increase in the waiting list for public housing increased dramatically.

The Victorian Government had no control over what took place in investment in the private rental market.

Mr Stockdale interjected.

Mr WILKES—If the honourable member for Brighton wants to become Treasurer of this State, he must realise that the Government's proposed legislation to amend the Residential Tenancies Act had a marginal effect. If the honourable member took the time to consult with the real estate bodies in the State, he would find that they would admit it had a marginal effect.

Mr Stockdale interjected.

Mr WILKES—Of course negative gearing had some effect! This Government is not responsible for the factors that caused the decline in the private rental market investment. To counter that, in the last Budget, the Government emphasised the need to increase the availability of public rental housing, and it did that effectively.

The previous Liberal Government provided 1700 houses for a waiting list of 18 000. This Government is providing 3200 houses for a waiting list of 32 000. The record of this Government is infinitely better than the record of the previous Liberal Government, and it will continue to be so.

I found great difficulty in identifying any policy on housing of the previous Liberal Government; as hard as I searched, I was never able to discover the previous Liberal Government's policy. I want to know what the Opposition proposes to do about public housing.

The record of this Government with regard to housing is twice as good as the record of the previous Liberal Government. Until such time that the Opposition can present a policy on public housing to the people of Victoria, I suggest the Leader of the Opposition should keep quiet.

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 Hoppers Crossing—Certificate of the Minister for Education.

Film Victoria—Report for the year 1985–86.

Geelong and District Water Board—Report for the year 1985–86.

Geelong Performing Arts Centre Trust—Report for the year 1985–86.

Government Employee Housing Authority—Report for the year 1985–86.

Land Conservation Council—Final recommendations for the east Gippsland area.

Melbourne University—Report of the council for the year 1985, together with statutes approved by His Excellency the Governor during 1985.

Optometrists Registration Board—Report for the year 1985–86.

Pharmacy Board of Victoria—Report and statement of accounts for the year 1985.

Police Regulation Act 1958—Determinations Nos 466 and 467 of the Police Service Board.

Statutory Rules under the following Acts:

Abattoir and Meat Inspection Act 1973—No. 302/1986.

Accident Compensation Act 1985—Nos 399, 400/1986.

Alpine Resorts Act 1983—No. 374/1986.

Audit Act 1958—No. 325/1986.

Boilers and Pressure Vessels Act 1970—Nos 377, 379, 380/1986.

Building Control Act 1981—No. 330/1986 together with documents required by S.32 of the Interpretation of Legislation Act 1984 to accompany the Statutory Rule as mentioned in Schedule 1 of the Statutory Rule.

Chattel Securities Act 1981—No. 394/1986.

Chiropodists Act 1968—No. 317/1986.

Chiropractors and Osteopaths Act 1978—No. 308/1986.

Companies (Administration) Act 1981—No. 333/1986.

Construction Industry Long Service Leave Act 1983—No. 354/1986 together with documents required by S.32 of the Interpretation of Legislation Act 1984 to accompany the Statutory Rule—

Building and Construction Industry Long Service Payments Act 1986 of New South Wales.

Construction Industry Portable Paid Long Service Leave Act 1985 of Western Australia.

Long Service Leave (Building and Construction Industry) Ordinance 1981 of the Australian Capital Territory.

Long Service Leave (Building Industry) Act 1975 of South Australia.

National Building Construction Industry Labourers (On Site) Award 1986.

Country Fire Authority Act 1958—No. 304/1986.

County Court Act 1958—Nos 356, 364, 365/1986.

Dental Technicians Act 1972—Nos 310, 340, 369/1986.

Dentists Act 1972—No. 309/1986.

Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981—No. 316/1986.

Education Act 1958—No. 353/1986.

Emergency Services Superannuation Act 1986—No. 7/1987.

Evidence Act 1958—No. 363/1986.

Explosives Act 1962—No. 385/1986.

Firearms Act 1958—No. 336/1986.

Fisheries Act 1968—Nos 368/1986, 11/1987.

Food Act 1984—No. 338/1986.

Grain Elevators Act 1958—No. 14/1987.

Groundwater Act 1969—No. 375/1986.

Health Act 1958—Nos 311, 315, 341–350, 372/1986.

Hospitals and Charities Act 1958—Nos 370, 373/1986.

- Inflammable Liquids Act 1966—No. 386/1986.
Land Act 1958—No. 367/1986.
Land Tax Act 1958—No. 307/1986.
Legal Aid Commission Act 1978—No. 16/1987.
Legal Profession Practice Act 1958—No. 352/1986.
Lifts and Cranes Act 1967—Nos 381, 382/1986.
Liquefied Gases Act 1968—No. 387/1986.
Listening Devices Act 1969—No. 9/1987.
Lotteries Gaming and Betting Act 1966—No. 324/1986.
Magistrates' Courts Act 1971—No. 398/1986.
Marine Act 1958—No. 4/1987.
Medical Practitioners Act 1970—Nos 312, 337/1986.
Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Act 1958—No. 355/1986.
Mental Health Act 1959—No. 366/1986.
Motor Car Act 1958—Nos 395/1986, 3/1987.
National Parks Act 1975—Nos 322, 323, 334/1986.
Nurses Act 1958—Nos 318, 320, 321, 371/1986.
Optometrists Registration Act 1958—No. 319/1986.
Parliamentary Salaries and Superannuation Act 1968—No. 12/1987.
Pay-roll Tax Act 1971—No. 397/1986.
Pharmacists Act 1974—No. 313/1986.
Physiotherapists Act 1978—Nos 314, 339/1986.
Pipelines Act 1967—No. 376/1986.
Police Regulation Act 1958—No. 305/1986.
Port of Portland Authority Act 1958—No. 396/1986.
Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986—No. 360/1986.
Private Agents Act 1966—No. 303/1986.
Public Service Act 1974—Nos 326, 335, 388, 389/1986; 13, 17/1987 P.S.D. Nos 45, 47–54/1986; 1, 3, 4/1987.
Rain-making Control Act 1967—No. 6/1987.
Registration of Births Deaths and Marriages Act 1959—No. 2/1987.
Rural Finance Act 1958—Nos 332, 351/1986.
Scaffolding Act 1971—Nos 378, 383, 384/1986.
Superannuation Benefits Act 1977—No. 15/1987.
Supreme Court Act 1958—Nos 327, 328, 329, 361, 362/1986.
Transport Accident Act 1986—Nos 357, 358/1986; 8/1987.
Transport Act 1983—Nos 390, 391, 392, 393/1986.
Travel Agents Act 1986—No. 1/1987.
Vegetation and Vine Diseases Act 1958—No. 331/1986.
Water Act 1958—No. 5/1987.
Wildlife Act 1975—No. 10/1987.
Taxation—Analysis of Operations—
 Gift Duty for the year 1985–86.
 Land Tax for the assessment year 1985.
 Probate Duty for the year 1985–86.

Town and Country Planning Act 1961—

Concept Plans for the Lower Yarra River (Punt Road to Dights Falls) and the Lower Maribyrnong River.

Planning Schemes—

Bacchus Marsh—Shire of Bacchus Marsh Planning Scheme, Amendment No. 37.

Bairnsdale—Town of Bairnsdale Planning Scheme, Amendment No. 57.

Ballaarat—City of Ballaarat Planning Scheme, Amendment No. 89.

Bass—Shire of Bass Planning Scheme, Amendment No. 19.

Cobram—Shire of Cobram Planning Scheme 1979, Amendment No. 20/1986.

Colac—City of Colac Planning Scheme, Amendment No. 26.

Cranbourne Planning Scheme 1960, Amendment No. 57/1985.

Geelong Regional Planning Scheme, Amendment Nos 138 Part 1A/1985, 156/1986, 164/1986, 168/1986, 170/1986.

Hastings—Shire of Hastings Planning Scheme, Amendment No. 18.

Horsham—City of Horsham Planning Scheme 1982, Amendment No. 112.

Kilmore—Shire of Kilmore Planning Scheme, Amendment No. 60.

Knox—City of Knox Planning Scheme 1965, Amendment Nos 269/1986, 275/1986, 277/1985, 285/1985.

Korumburra—Shire of Korumburra Planning Scheme, Amendment No. 34/1986 Part 1, 35A.

Lillydale—Shire of Lillydale Planning Scheme 1958, Amendment Nos 195, 202, 204, 206, 207, 209, 210, 222.

Lorne Planning Scheme, Amendment No. 13.

Maffra—Shire of Maffra Planning Scheme (Maffra Township), Amendments Nos 26/1985, 27/1985, 29/1985.

Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Scheme, Amendments Nos 150 Parts 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21; 282 Part 3; 307; 316 Part 4; 320 Part 2; 322 Part 3; 323 Part 2; 370; 381 Part 2; 383 Part 1; 406 Part 1; 409; 423; 424; 441; 443; 445.

Moe—City of Moe Planning Scheme 1966, Amendment No. 95/1986.

Morwell—Shire of Morwell Planning Scheme 1977, Amendment Nos 31/1985, 39/1985.

Pakenham—Shire of Pakenham Planning Scheme Part 1, Amendment No. 49.

Portland Planning Scheme, Amendment No. 61/1986.

Rochester—Shire of Rochester (Rochester Township) Planning Scheme, Amendment No. 15.

Rosedale—Shire of Rosedale Planning Scheme, Amendment No. 50/1985.

Shepparton—City of Shepparton Planning Scheme 1953, Amendments Nos 99/1986, 105/1986.

Sherbrooke—

Shire of Sherbrooke Planning Scheme 1979 (Rural Areas), Amendment No. 23/1984.

Shire of Sherbrooke Planning Scheme 1979 (Urban Areas), Amendments Nos 35, 37/1985.

Traralgon—City of Traralgon Planning Scheme 1957, Amendment No. 69.

Woorayl—Shire of Woorayl Planning Scheme, Amendment No. 83.

Trade Unions—

Report of the Government Statist for the year 1985.

Report of the Registrar of Friendly Societies for the year 1985–86.

Victorian Nursing Council—Report for the year 1985–86.

EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr FORDHAM (Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources)—In accordance with the usual practice, and in order to preserve the privileges of the House, I move that I have leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Extractive Industries Act 1966, the Extractive

Industries (Amendment) Act 1984 and the Extractive Industries (Amendment) Act 1986 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH Address-in-Reply

The SPEAKER—Order! I have the honour to report that the House, this day, attended His Excellency the Governor in the Legislative Council Chamber, when His Excellency was pleased to make a Speech to both Houses of Parliament, of which I have, for greater accuracy, obtained a copy. As the Speech is printed and copies have been handed to honourable members it will not be necessary for me to read it.

Mr POPE (Monbulk)—I move:

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! Would the honourable member for Monbulk resume his seat? I advise the House that I do not intend to tolerate barrages against any honourable member and I shall do what I can to ensure there are no barrages of interjections.

Mr POPE (Monbulk)—I move:

That the following Address-in-Reply to the Speech of His Excellency the Governor to both Houses of Parliament be agreed to by this House:

Your EXCELLENCY

We the Legislative Assembly of Victoria, assembled in Parliament, wish to express our loyalty to our Sovereign, and to thank your Excellency for the Speech which you have made to the Parliament.

I deem it a pleasure to move the motion for the Address-in-Reply. It is almost five years since the Cain Government came to power in the State of Victoria. That is but a short period, but the achievements of the Cain Government in Victoria have been enormous.

The Government inherited a lamentable situation in all aspects of Government administration and policy. In 1982 it inherited the result of short-term planning or, indeed, no planning whatsoever. The previous Liberal Government had been a "quick fix" Government; a Government that caused dire results for Victoria.

Schools were suffering because of lack of facilities. In the outer eastern suburban area in the five years prior to 1982, there was a 46 per cent reduction in building facilities. The student-teacher ratio was at an unacceptably high level.

The limited amount of capital funding that was put forward by the previous Government was based not on priority, not on need, but purely on a matter of who one knew and where it might best be placed to win a few votes. Even so, the funding was limited and had little effect.

In the transport area the red rattlers were still running. There was little coordination between rail, bus and other forms of transport. Road funding was dished out purely on an historical basis with little justification on a needs or priority basis.

One could go through all the portfolios of Government and come up with the same situation.

It was lamentable, and, in 1982, the people of Victoria let both the Liberal Party and the National Party know what they thought of that situation. In the short period of almost five years the position has been totally reversed. His Excellency the Governor, at page 1 of his Speech, stated today that Victoria has stumbled into the modern economic era.

I have stated what the situation was before 1982 when the Labor Party took office in Victoria under the auspices of John Cain. As the Premier explained during question time, an enormous deficit was inherited. In five short years Victoria now leads the economic recovery which has been occurring in Australia. The economic recovery is a result of the long-term planning of the Victorian Treasurer through his economic strategy.

At page 3 of the Governor's Speech, His Excellency stated that by identifying strengths and concentrating on their development, the industries of this State can significantly increase the volume of value-added exports and, therefore, Victoria's general wealth. His Excellency stated that this lies at the heart of the economic strategy.

The Victorian Labor Party Government's economic strategy was a strategy that had not been seen previously in any State of Australia. It was an economic strategy that was not a quick-fix or short-term strategy but long-term economic planning. It is to their great credit that the Cain Government and the Treasurer of Victoria have taken this course.

A lot has been said about the "paradise" up north and what occurs in the State of Queensland. We have heard about the leadership aspirations of the Premier of Queensland, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen and how he will fix Australia and lead the way. Both Liberal Party and National Party members of the Victorian Parliament believe he is the Messiah and he will cure Australia's woes.

Several economic indicators were mentioned by the Premier during question time in reference to unemployment. I shall refer to ten economic indicators that demonstrate that Victoria is leading the way in the economic recovery and that the supposed Utopia in Queensland is nothing but a fallacy and a joke. The latest Australian Bureau of Statistics figures indicate that as at January 1987 the unemployment rate in Victoria is 7.1 per cent; in Queensland it is 10.3 per cent. Indeed, the Premier stated during question time that Victoria has had the lowest unemployment rate for 44 consecutive months. Victoria has led the rest of Australia with its lowest unemployment rate. By comparison, the record of the former Liberal Party Government in Victoria was only eight months out of 36 months prior to vacating office. The Labor Government did not inherit the best unemployment rate—the Labor Government created it by creating jobs. In the financial year 1985–86 the figure was 225 jobs a day.

We have heard a lot about industrial disputes and how the great Messiah from the north will bring the unions into line. One should examine his record. The latest figures to October 1986 on the yearly index for October 1985–86 show that days lost per 1000 employees in Victoria was 186; in Queensland the figure is 217. Even in this area, where the Premier of Queensland believes he has brought the unions into line, his record is disgusting.

It is notable—as I refer to aspects of the lamentable position of the Queensland National Party, whose policies are supported by the Victorian National Party and even by various Liberals—that most members of the Liberal Party have left this Chamber and that not one National Party member is in the House during my speech on the motion I have moved on behalf of this Parliament as an Address-in-Reply to the Speech of His Excellency the Governor. The motion is also an expression of loyalty to our Sovereign, yet only two members of the Liberal Party are in the Chamber and no member of the National Party is present. I do not believe what one has heard of the National Party's loyalty is being demonstrated as it usually is in this House this evening.

I have mentioned unemployment and industrial disputes. I refer to expenditure restraint. Once again, Victoria is showing how it is leading the economic recovery in this aspect. Yet again the statistics demonstrate the true and disgusting situation of a National Party Government in Queensland. The Victorian figure for Budget sector current expenditure from 1982–83 to 1985–86 is 15.9 per cent; for Queensland, the State of restraint, the figure is 26.3 per cent. For total expenditure, that is Budget and non-budget current and capital, 1982–83 to 1985–86, the figures show that Victoria's rate is 14 per cent and Queensland's rate is 18.8 per cent. This is the State of the great Messiah!

Mr Leigh—With much regret, I draw attention to the state of the House.

A quorum was formed.

Mr POPE—It is unfortunate still that in moving the Address-in-Reply the Speech of His Excellency the Governor, and expressing our loyalty to our Sovereign, there is not one National Party member in the House and only two Liberal Party members. What an absolute insult!

I refer to another economic indicator that highlights the situation in Queensland. The Queensland Government has squealed continually about insufficient Commonwealth Government funding going to that State. In general revenue grants from the Commonwealth Government to State Governments on a per capita basis for the financial year 1986–87, Victoria received \$689 per capita; Queensland received \$889.

Although the Queensland Government is being propped up by the Commonwealth Government, it still cannot look after its own affairs. This is the State led by Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, whom not only members of the National Party but also members of the new right within the Liberal Party are saying is the Messiah, the great saviour from the north, who can fix the woes of Australia. He cannot fix the woes of his own State—he is leading it to economic ruin. To illustrate consumer confidence, the most up-to-date figures I can acquire for retail sales is from November 1985 to November 1986. In Victoria the figure is 9.9 per cent; in Queensland it is 8.3 per cent.

Some fall off in residential construction has occurred. However, the reality is that that fall off has occurred across Australia. The figures for the value of all construction in the building industry from December 1985 to December 1986 show an increase in Victoria of 0.8 per cent compared with minus 7.5 per cent in Queensland. That is the State we are led to believe is bouncing along!

The State Government charges component in the consumer price index from December 1982 to December 1986 shows an increase in Victoria of 22.2 per cent compared with an increase in Queensland of 45.5 per cent. The Victorian Government is continually being told that it is a high taxing Government. Victoria is actually leading Australia with the lowest taxes and charges component in the consumer price index. Queensland is in the unbelievable position of having an increase in the taxes and charges component of 45.5 per cent, more than double the percentage increase in Victoria.

We are told that the Queensland Government is a Government of restraint in the public sector and that Victoria must streamline its public sector and assist the private sector, that free enterprise should reign. One must compare Queensland with Victoria in this area. In State and local government employment, the increase from 1979 to 1985 was 15.8 per cent in Victoria compared with 24.3 per cent in Queensland. State and local government employment as a percentage of total employment in Victoria was 23 per cent compared with 26.2 per cent in Queensland. Queensland has more public employees than any other State in Australia. However, it is heralded by the new right, by the National Party and by many members opposite as the model Victoria should use in streamlining its public sector.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr POPE—One must give credit to the honourable member for Sandringham who has stated in his local paper that Sir Joh should stay where he is; he should not move down to Canberra. I have not heard many other members of the Liberal Party in Victoria make any kind of a statement. I should like to know their opinion of Sir Joh.

I know the opinion of the honourable member for Swan Hill because that opinion was pasted all over the front page of *The Northern Times*, a Kerang newspaper, dated 10 February 1987. I shall read from that article for the benefit of the honourable member for Malvern, one of only two Liberal members who have bothered to remain in the House.

Mr KENNETT (Leader of the Opposition)—On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, I have been listening to the honourable member's contribution to this debate in my room

for 10 minutes. He has not once referred to the Governor's Speech in terms of content or matters relative to the people of Victoria. In particular, he has once again totally ignored his own electorate.

This is meant to be an Address-in-Reply to the Speech given to this Parliament today by the Governor. I suggest that for this honourable member to continue to ramble on about issues that do not compound either on Victoria or the people of the Central Highlands Province further proves that this honourable member is not worthy of being a member of Parliament.

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—On the point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has not been listening to the debate. He has been outside the Parliament. He now runs in but is completely out of line. The honourable member for Monbulk has been highlighting the economic strategy that has done so well in Victoria. He has explicitly mentioned the Governor's Speech and has contrasted the degree of stability here in Victoria with the instability elsewhere.

Mr LEIGH (Malvern)—On the point of order, I support the Leader of the Opposition. I have been in the Chamber and I have listened to the speech made by the honourable member for Monbulk. He has continually referred to the Queensland Government. I have read the Governor's Speech but I cannot find in it any reference to Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen or to the Queensland Government. I urge you, Mr Deputy Speaker, to rule on the matter and to bring the honourable member for Monbulk back to the point at issue which is the Government program for Victoria.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Fogarty)—Order! The debate clearly relates to that point. I do not uphold the point of order.

Mr POPE (Monbulk)—Obviously the Leader of the Opposition has not been in the House and has not been listening to this debate otherwise he would know that I have quoted twice from the Governor's Speech and referred to it on at least five occasions. I shall explain how the economic strategy within the State has manifested itself not only within the electorate of Monbulk but also in the entire outer eastern area of the State. Unfortunately, the Leader of the Opposition has once again left the House.

Mr LEIGH (Malvern)—On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, the presence or absence in the House of the Leader of the Opposition should bear no relationship to the Address-in-Reply.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Fogarty)—Order! There is no point of order.

Mr POPE (Monbulk)—Economic recovery in Victoria has been magnificently led by the Premier and ably assisted by the Treasurer. The situation in Queensland is totally different. When I was interrupted by the Leader of the Opposition, I was about to inform the honourable member for Malvern of an article concerning the honourable member for Swan Hill and which appeared on the front page of *The Northern Times* of 10 February 1987. That article reports:

Speaking in Kerang on Friday, Mr Steggall said that the electorate was dissatisfied with the present conservative leadership.

"Sir Joh is trying to smarten up conservative MPs around Australia.

"When we have a change of Government we don't want another era like Fraser.

"Socialism really continued with his Government. We are effectively in the 15th year of the socialist experiment and it hasn't worked," he said.

It is obvious that the honourable member for Swan Hill believes that Sir Joh is the great Messiah, a saviour. However, the economic indicators in Queensland show that what Sir Joh has done has brought that State to economic ruin. We do not know what Opposition members think about a future under conservative leadership because they have not told us. The only person we have heard from is the honourable member for Sandringham who has told Sir Joh to stay where he is.

There is one other Liberal who has been prepared to make some comment about Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen. That person is the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Mrs Sallyanne Atkinson. An article in the *Age* of 21 February 1987 entitled "Red Tape throttling Queensland, says Lord Mayor" states:

The lord mayor of Brisbane, Mrs Sallyanne Atkinson, yesterday accused the Queensland Government of throttling free enterprise with red tape and regulations.

This is the Liberal Lord Mayor of Brisbane!

Mrs Atkinson said Queensland was not the free-enterprise State that the Government believed it to be. The State Government had set a record for the greatest number of regulations passed by any Government in Australia, and economic development was suffering as a result, she said.

"When I began the job as lord mayor, I was quite alarmed to find business so handicapped by Government regulations," she said. "What happens in Brisbane is a microscope of the State."

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. . . his boasts about the Queensland economy were not necessarily true, she said.

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Employment in the manufacturing industry has fallen from 122 717 to 109 940 in twelve months.

A study had shown that the Queensland Government had introduced 4495 regulations in the decade to 1979. In 1981, 1003 more regulations had been approved.

I remind honourable members that this quote is from the Liberal Lord Mayor of Brisbane. Honourable members on the Government side have heard little from the Liberal Party in Victoria about what it thinks of Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen. The honourable member for Swan Hill has put his position forward honestly, obviously believing that Sir Joh is a Messiah.

The economic indicators do not back up that claim. It will be interesting to see what occurs in the next few months. The Leader of the National Party has not made up his mind whether he welcomes Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen running to Federal politics or coming to Victoria.

The Governor, in his address to Parliament, stated that the Cain Government believes the surest guarantee of social well-being is through improving the economic health of the State and that is what has occurred during the past five years of Labor Government; improving economic health under the great leadership of the Premier, John Cain, and the Treasurer, Rob Jolly, ably assisted by all Ministers of the Government, as well as the backbench members.

His Excellency also stated that the decision to adopt a social justice strategy arises from the Government's determination to harness the resources of the State in a systematic way, according to a planned schedule, and with all Government agencies working towards clearly specified objectives.

The Governor then went on to state four major priorities regarding the social justice strategy and these were: children in poverty; long term unemployment; dignity and security for the aged and human rights. In the past five years Victoria has been heading down that road, making mammoth efforts to satisfy those priorities. These areas will be greatly enhanced and expanded in the next few years. The Government is committed to that cause and, indeed it is through the economic well-being of the State that it will achieve its objectives.

In the 30 seconds that the Leader of the Opposition was present in the Chamber, he called a point of order on the fact that I had not addressed aspects concerning my own electorate of Monbulk or indeed concerning the Central Highlands province. The Leader of the Opposition invited me to make some comments regarding those matters and I shall do so. I thank him for his invitation.

In the short period that the Labor Government has been in office, dramatic changes have occurred in the Monbulk electorate. These changes are too numerous to mention in detail, but I shall endeavour to give some examples that have occurred.

It is unfortunate that in moving a motion regarding the loyalty to our Sovereign and in making the Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech that only the honourable members for Swan Hill and Portland are present in the Chamber, even though the Leader of the Opposition made some inane comments during his 30-second appearance.

Dramatic changes have occurred in the rail system in the outer eastern area of Melbourne, but in particular the Monbulk electorate. In Monbulk electorate the Ringwood to Croydon and Ringwood to Bayswater tracks have been duplicated. Considerable money has been spent on rolling stock. As I indicated earlier, the old "red rattlers" were used on all railway lines prior to the Labor Government being elected to office in 1982, but now modern rolling stock has been introduced which has had an immediate effect on timetabling efficiency and comfort for the patrons of the train system.

Investigations were conducted with the holdups that were occurring on the rail system in that area and, as a consequence, overhead maintenance costing \$1.9 million has been expended on the Belgrave line. Car park facilities have been developed to ensure that train patrons can park their cars satisfactorily to catch trains to Melbourne. The Belgrave railway station is presently undergoing a \$200 000 extension program to increase its car parking facilities. Extension work is taking place at the Upper Ferntree Gully and Mooroolbark railway stations.

The Minister for Transport recently announced the establishment of a new station between Mooroolbark and Lilydale, Moorooldale railway station, which will be of greater assistance, not only to the people within the electorate of Monbulk, but also to all people living in the outer eastern suburbs.

Extra trains have been introduced during the peak periods on these lines and most people are extremely grateful that they are able to catch a train to travel to the city or to go to their place of work along those arterial routes.

Bus services have been increased dramatically and an announcement was made yesterday about a further increase in the bus services in the outer eastern suburbs. A number of those extra buses will service people in the electorate of Monbulk, continuing a trend that has occurred over the past five years.

The Liberal Government made many promises to develop and improve the William Angliss Hospital, but did not spend any money on any equipment or on improving the facilities at that hospital. They were empty promises put out just before the elections. The Government has initiated a \$4 million development of the casualty and operating theatres at the William Angliss Hospital. These projects will be completed in a few years. The Maroondah Hospital will receive an additional 100 beds.

Tourism is very important to the area I represent, being so close to the Dandenong Ranges, in generating income, investment money and employment. Victoria has been promoted extremely well by the Deputy Premier, the Minister responsible for tourism. During 1985, 380 000 visitors arrived from overseas to visit Victoria. Since 1983-84 there has been a 62 per cent increase of Japanese visitors. Fortunately, many of them are travelling to the Dandenong Ranges and because of that the area has some magnificent tourist establishments such as Burnham Beeches, which was established after the Cain Labor Government came to office and also the large development by the Baron of Beef restaurant, which is catering for international visitors.

The Governor, in his address to Parliament, referred to a conservation strategy to be presented to the State of Victoria shortly and that the conservation strategy will recognise eight major priorities. These priorities will impact upon the outer eastern areas of Melbourne, including the electorate of Monbulk. The eight major priorities are: restoring the land; ensuring the survival of flora and fauna; protecting forests; reviving rivers, coasts

and wetlands; wise use of resources; enhancement of our cities; control of pollution and hazardous chemicals and environmental education and community involvement. Those areas are presently being addressed in the Dandenongs and after leading two deputations to the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands, I am happy to say that a Dandenong Ranges development plan has been established and will be completed early next year. That plan will examine the balanced use of the area around the Dandenongs, which is appreciated by the people in the electorate of Monbulk.

A linear reserve has been created for the old Lilydale-Warburton railway line that is no longer in use.

A program involving the buy-back of old and inappropriate subdivisions created in the 1920s and 1930s has been introduced by the Government. Those areas are fire hazards and should not be developed. The Government has paid in excess of \$2 million for land covered by that program over the past five years.

At the same time, the Government has appreciated the need to service developing areas. In doing so, great impetus has been placed on natural gas extensions to the Belgrave, Kallista, the Patch and Monbulk areas, and going further up the mountain towards Olinda. That work has been carried out by the former Minister, the Honourable David White, and the current Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources.

A similar position applies to the State Electricity Commission of Victoria. Given the nature of the Dandenong Ranges, the commission is involved in an area that requires sensitivity. It is a credit to the Deputy Premier that after receiving deputations from me he agreed to establish a program in the Dandenong Ranges that carefully monitors not only conservation issues but also fire prevention. The Government has introduced a balanced tree trimming code that will benefit not only local communities and all Victorians but also the numerous interstate and overseas visitors to that area.

As most of the outer eastern suburbs have large young populations, the Government is delighted to be able to honour its commitment to one year's full-time kindergarten being made available to all four-year-olds. That has occurred because of capital funding and recurrent expenditure to cover directresses and their assistants at kindergartens.

The shires of Lilydale and Sherbrooke have been fortunate in that \$350 000 has been provided to establish a child-care centre that is well used and appreciated by local residents.

Honourable members recognise the Government's attitude towards improving the Police Force. More police officers are available in Victoria per capita than ever before. The advantages of that are obvious in many areas, but more specifically a 24-hour station now operates in the Belgrave area.

More than \$10 million has been poured into housing in the outer eastern area of Melbourne over the past five years. The elderly now have more security with the passage of the Retirement Villages Bill in the last session. Three facilities for the aged in that area are Walmsley Friendship Village, Kirkbrae Presbyterian Homes and the Tullamore Aged Persons Hostel, which are greatly appreciated by the elderly and have secured their long-term future.

The elderly have also been assisted by concessions in the charges for energy through the auspices of the Honourable David White and the Deputy Premier in examining those important issues. A significant amount has also been made available for home renovations to assist the elderly.

The economic well-being created over the past five years by the Cain Government has been manifested in the various ways that the electorate of Monbulk and outer areas of Melbourne have been assisted, and that has been appreciated by thousands of Victorians.

It is humbug to suggest that the Victorian Government is not leading the economic recovery or that it is not witnessing the benefits of that recovery. The economic indicators that I have mentioned clearly spell that out and any belief that a conservative-led

Government in Victoria could do better is rubbish. If one were to believe the honourable member for Swan Hill, perhaps that Government would be led by Sir Joh from a centralised Federal level, but that could never be the case.

Queensland economic indicators demonstrate that that could never be so because they show clearly the lamentable position of that State. The Premier of Victoria today illustrated that position by referring to Tasmania—the only Liberal State in Australia—which has greater unemployment than any mainland State and is far behind the Australian leader—Victoria.

It is a pleasure to be able to move the adoption of an Address-in-Reply and I thank His Excellency the Governor for the Speech he delivered this afternoon.

In moving the motion, I express the loyalty of the Government to our Sovereign. It is unfortunate, as I conclude my remarks, that only two members of the opposition parties are present in the Chamber when such an important motion is before the House.

Mr McDONALD (Whittlesea)—I am honoured to second the motion for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Speech of His Excellency the Governor. However, I am disappointed to see only two members of the opposition parties in the Chamber. These are supposed to be the people who are firm supporters of the Royalist position, but only two members are present to support a Speech that was delivered this afternoon. That is an insult.

The Governor has given a summary of the achievements of five years of Labor Government in Victoria under the great leadership of the Honourable John Cain. He has also given us a blueprint for the next two years.

The Governor, of course, did not indulge in discussing the difficulties facing the Liberal and National parties—either the Sir Joh variety or the “Sinkers” Sinclair—Peter Ross-Edwards led variety. It was interesting to discover in this morning's newspaper that the Leader of the National Party in this House appears to be having two bob each way. Even Joh knows one cannot do that; one cannot walk along a barbed wire fence with one's feet on each side without getting hurt. Somewhere along the line, you must stand up and state your position.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member should address the Chair.

Mr McDONALD—Thank you, Mr Speaker. I was getting carried away with the current political situation.

Victorians have come to know that this Labor Government is a caring, capable and determined Government that is laying the foundation for a future based on fairness and equity. The Government's proud record, which has been mentioned on numerous occasions in this House today, will also be mentioned in the future because that process will continue over the next two years.

Victoria has had the lowest level of unemployment of all States for 44 consecutive months. We have consistently maintained the highest levels of apprentice intake and last year Victoria had the highest number ever of apprentices in training.

The secure future that we all wish for our young people is dependent upon the continuation of that performance. In the words of John Cain, “It is jobs, jobs, jobs and training for jobs is the key.” Initiatives have been undertaken to redirect orders currently going to overseas suppliers which can be and are being met by metal trades manufacturers in Victoria and that has been welcomed by unions and employers alike.

The Government funding of the Industrial Supply Office, operated by the Metal Trades Industry Association of Australia (Vic. Branch), was so successful that it has been copied by New South Wales, South Australia and—wait for it—Queensland.

Each \$1 million that is redirected results in the creation of another 40 jobs. Manufacturing industry, which is the key to employment in Victoria, has been under strong pressure over

recent years. The Victorian Government has demonstrated its commitment to supporting that vital part of our economy through the Department of Industry, Technology and Resources, giving greater emphasis to the need to keep abreast of high technology development in industry and providing the necessary skills-based training programs.

Group apprenticeship schemes have been established involving small business, local government and State Government departments, to the extent that Victoria has more such schemes and more apprentices than all the other States put together.

The seat of Whittlesea, which I represent, forms part of the Upper House Central Highlands Province.

Mr Leigh interjected.

Mr McDONALD—The honourable member will find out a lot about it in the next three weeks.

Mr Ross-Edwards interjected.

Mr McDONALD—Is there going to be a Joh candidate?

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member should ignore interjections.

Mr McDONALD—The seat of Whittlesea forms part of that Upper House province which faces a by-election in the near future. I should like to say something about what has occurred in that electorate during the five years that the Cain Government has been in office.

The electorate of Whittlesea ranges from Craigieburn in the west to Epping, Hurstbridge and Warrandyte in the east, and to the north takes in the towns of Wallan, Kilmore, Broadford, Pyalong, Romsey and Lancefield. It is a rapidly developing electorate that was neglected by successive Liberal Governments. Just prior to my being elected to represent the people of Evelyn—

Mr Leigh—How have you jumped seats?

Mr McDONALD—It is just as well I did or you would have lost Evelyn as well. Just prior to my being elected to represent the people of Evelyn in 1982, I visited the Whittlesea Technical High School, which then consisted of five permanent classrooms and 56 portables; even the toilets were portable. It was situated on an undrained flood plain of the Plenty River. On the day that I was there, it had not rained for a week, but one could not walk on the footpath because there was 2 inches of slurry over it. The footpath led nowhere because whenever it was necessary to erect another classroom it was erected where the footpath was. If the previous Minister of Education were here, he would be able to verify the facts. It was nothing more than an educational slum. There is no way of bringing up students to have a love for their school under those conditions.

Following the 1982 election, planning commenced to provide a replacement permanent school at Whittlesea. This school is now completed at a cost of approximately \$5 million and has an enrolment of approximately 1000 students. Parents, students and staff can be justly proud of it.

A new high school is under construction at Epping to replace a core-plus school, which was also created under the former Liberal Government. The core began to tumble down six months after it was built. That has been rebuilt and stage 3 of that school is now under construction.

New primary and post-primary schools combined have been constructed on the one site at Craigieburn. This concept of the two schools on one site alleviates the trauma of orientation of students going from primary to secondary school and has been acclaimed by the people there as a wonderful move.

I was heartened to learn today that an extended bus service has been announced from Craigieburn to Broadmeadows which will allow students to travel to the TAFE college at Broadmeadows.

New primary schools have been built at Wallan and St Andrews, and planning is under way for a new primary school for Epping as well as for a new or upgraded school at Flowerdale.

These capital works were necessary to overcome 27 years of neglect by successive Liberal Governments and I am talking about schools in only one Lower House electorate.

The town of Whittlesea, where my electorate office is situated, is a rapidly expanding area. To upgrade the existing town water supply, the Board of Works has constructed a large pipeline from the Yan Yean reservoir through to Whittlesea. That will upgrade the district's water supply for many years and, following the upgrading of the water supply, sewerage to the area will be provided.

Wallan is another growth area, and the Government has approved the installation of a sewerage system for that town and district. The Broadford and Kilmore shires have jointly constructed a large reservoir in the Mount Disappointment State Forest to provide a first-class and reliable water supply to the towns of Broadford and Kilmore. Government grants towards the cost of this dam were \$8 million.

The Government's initiative in providing natural gas to Kilmore has been acclaimed by the residents of that town.

These are merely some of the major projects initiated by the Cain Government in the Whittlesea electorate, which falls within the Central Highlands Province. The Cain Government is held in high regard by people in the electorate of Whittlesea. It is necessary only to walk through one of the shopping centres in any of the towns that I have mentioned and talk to the traders to confirm that they know that the Cain Government is a determined, caring and fair Government. It has spelt out a recipe for progress based on fairness, whether in its approach to public spending or equity in ensuring that those who are most disadvantaged in the community are assisted in a way that gives them equal opportunity with the more privileged sections of society.

I congratulate His Excellency the Governor on his fine Speech and wish him a long and successful career.

On the motion of Mr PLOWMAN (Evelyn), the debate was adjourned.

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

TEMPORARY CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES

The **SPEAKER** laid on the table his warrant nominating Miss Callister, Mr Delzoppo, Mr Ernst, Mr B. J. Evans, Mr Harrowfield, Mr Hockley, Mr Jasper, Mr Kirkwood, Mr Plowman, Mrs Ray, Mr Remington, Mr Richardson, Ms Sibree, Mr Stirling, Dr Vaughan and Mr Whiting to act as Temporary Chairmen of Committees whenever requested to do so by the Chairman of Committees.

THE SPEAKER AND DEPUTY SPEAKER

Temporary relief in chair

Mr FORDHAM (Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources)—By leave, I move:

That, during any absence of Mr Deputy Speaker, Mr Speaker be authorised to call upon any of the Temporary Chairmen of Committees to temporarily relieve him in the chair, and that during any absence of Mr Speaker, Mr Deputy Speaker be similarly authorised to call upon any of the Temporary Chairmen.

The motion was agreed to.

APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES

Mr FORDHAM (Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources)—By leave, I move the following motions in relation to the appointment of committees:

House Committee

That Mr Dickinson, Mrs Gleeson, Mr Hann, Mr John and Mrs Wilson be members of the House Committee; and that the committee have leave to sit on days on which the House does not meet.

Library Committee

That Mr Speaker, Mr Evans (Ballarat North), Mrs Hill, Mr Stirling and Mr Wallace be members of the Library Committee; and that the committee have leave to sit on days on which the House does not meet.

Printing Committee

That—(a) Mr Speaker, Mr Gavin, Mr McGrath (Lowan), Mr McNamara, Mr Pope, Mr Ramsay, Mr Stirling and Mr Williams be members of the Printing Committee; (b) the committee have power to send for persons, papers and records and to sit on days on which the House does not meet; (c) three to be the quorum; and (d) the committee have power to confer with the Printing Committee of the Legislative Council and to jointly report thereon to the House.

Privileges Committee

That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon complaints of breach of privilege referred to it by the House; such committee to consist of Miss Callister, Mr Evans (Gippsland East), Mr Hill, Mr Lieberman, Mr Maclellan, Mr Simpson and Dr Vaughan; and that the committee have power to send for persons, papers and records; to sit on days on which the House does not meet and to move from place to place, four to be the quorum.

Standing Orders Committee

That a Select Committee be appointed to consider and report upon the Standing Orders of the House, such committee to consist of Mr Speaker, Mr Fogarty, Mr Gavin, Mr Jasper, Mr Maclellan, Mr Plowman, Mr Pope, Mrs Setches and Mr Whiting; and that the committee have leave to sit on days on which the House does not meet; five to be the quorum.

The motions were agreed to.

Mortuary Industry and Cemeteries Administration Committee

Mr FORDHAM (Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources)—By leave, I move:

1 That a joint Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon all aspects of the mortuary industry and related industries in Victoria, including both private and Government operations, together with any aspect of cemeteries administration, funding or provision of land encompassed by the *Cemeteries Act* 1958, the *Trustee Act* 1958, or any other provisions relating thereto.

2 That the committee shall give priority to such investigations referred to it by resolution of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly.

3 That the committee be required to present its final report to the Parliament no later than 30 November 1988.

4 That the committee consist of six members, comprising not more than two members of the Legislative Council nor more than five members of the Legislative Assembly.

5 That three members of the committee constitute a quorum of the committee.

6 That the committee shall elect one of its members to be chairman who, in the event of an equality of votes, shall also have a casting vote.

7 That the committee may elect a deputy chairman who shall exercise all the powers and perform the duties of the chairman at any time when the chairman is not present at a meeting of the committee.

8 That the committee may sit and transact business during any adjournment or recess of the Houses in the period for which it holds office but the committee shall not sit while either House of Parliament is actually sitting, except by leave of that House and at a place that is within the Parliament buildings.

9 That the committee may sit at such times and in such places in Victoria or elsewhere as seems most convenient for the proper and speedy despatch of business.

10 That the committee may send for persons papers and records and report the minutes of evidence from time to time.

11 That the committee have power to authorise publication of any evidence given before it and any document presented to it.

12 That evidence taken before any previous Mortuary Industry and Cemeteries Administration Committee shall be considered by the committee as if that evidence had been given before and for the information and guidance of the committee.

13 That the committee be a committee to which section 51A of the *Parliamentary Committees Act* 1968 applies.

14 That the foregoing provisions of this resolution, so far as they are inconsistent with the Standing Orders and practices of the Houses, shall have effect notwithstanding anything contained in the Standing Orders.

As this is not a joint Select Committee established by statute but an ad hoc committee dealing with a specific issue, it is a requirement that this committee, as distinct from others, be appointed following the reopening of Parliament. The arrangements, copies of which are in the hands of honourable members, are in accordance with the previous arrangements determined by the House, namely, that the committee complete its work by November next year.

Mr KENNETT (Leader of the Opposition)—The Opposition realises that, under the chairmanship of the honourable member for Preston, this is one of the most important committees in terms of the work before Parliament. It certainly would appear that way because it meets every day of the week and I have it on very good advice that there is no likelihood of the committee completing its work before the next election, although the Opposition wishes it well in its serious deliberations.

The motion was agreed to.

It was ordered that the foregoing resolution be transmitted to the Legislative Council with a message desiring its concurrence therein.

Mr FORDHAM (Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources)—By leave, I move:

That contingent on the resolution appointing the Mortuary Industry and Cemeteries Administration Committee being agreed to by the Legislative Council, Mr Culpin, Mr Cunningham, Mr Evans (Gippsland East), Mr Kirkwood and Mr Reynolds be appointed members of the committee.

Mr KENNETT (Leader of the Opposition)—The Opposition has no objection to those nominees. I should be interested to learn whether the committee met during the Parliamentary recess, given the consistency of its sittings during the last sessional period.

Mr Kirkwood—The committee did not meet because it did not have the power to do so.

The motion was agreed to.

SESSIONAL ORDERS

Mr FORDHAM (Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources)—By leave, I move:

That:

1. Unless otherwise ordered, the House shall meet on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, Mr Speaker to take the chair at 2.00 p.m. on Tuesdays and Wednesdays and 10.30 a.m. on Thursdays.

2. (a) During the present session, Government Business shall take precedence of all other business (including motions pursuant to Standing Order No. 26 which is hereby to the necessary extent suspended, but not including

a motion of want of confidence in the Government) each Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday and at 2.00 p.m. each Thursday, other than on every third Thursday pursuant to Standing Order No. 59

(b) On the Thursdays on which Standing Order No. 59 applies, business shall be called on in the following order:

1. Grievances

2. Government Business

3. General Business

3. Notwithstanding the right of a Minister to move a motion for the adjournment of the House pursuant to Standing Order No. 25:

(1) At 11.00 p.m. on each sitting day Mr Speaker shall interrupt the business before the house, or if the House be in Committee, the Chairman shall report progress and Mr Speaker shall then interrupt such business; provided that in the event that a division is in progress at 11.00 p.m. such division shall be completed and the result announced and if such division be upon a closure motion any question required to be brought to conclusion as a result of such division shall be so brought to conclusion.

(2) Upon such interruption of business—

(a) Before a motion for the adjournment is proposed by Mr Speaker, a Minister may move that the sitting be continued; which motion shall be put forthwith without amendment or debate and if such motion is agreed to, the House or Committee shall resume the proceedings at the point at which they had been interrupted; or

(b) If a Minister does not so move, the Speaker shall forthwith propose the question “That the House do now adjourn” which question shall be open to debate in accordance with the rules and practices of the House; at the conclusion of the debate, Mr Speaker notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order No. 24, shall adjourn the House without putting any question until the time of the next meeting.

(3) Any business under discussion and not disposed of at the time of the adjournment shall be set down on the Notice Paper for the next sitting and any member speaking at the time of interruption may, upon the resumption of debate thereon, continue such speech.

These arrangements were determined at the end of the last sessional period but are required to be reintroduced following the proroguing of Parliament. Towards the end of the last sessional period and following discussions between the parties, new sitting times were determined by the House providing for a commencement time of 2 p.m. on Tuesdays and Wednesdays and 10.30 a.m. on Thursdays.

The change related mainly to Wednesday mornings. A number of committee chairpersons expressed the view that it would be wise to make the time available for committees. I thank the members of the other parties for their support of the motion.

Mr KENNETT (Leader of the Opposition)—These Sessional Orders were discussed last sessional period and agreed to by my deputy. The Opposition looks forward to determining how the Sessional Orders will work. The Opposition welcomes the change to allow the important work of committees to proceed.

Mr HANN (Rodney)—When I first entered Parliament approximately fourteen years ago the Government of the day introduced Sessional Orders at least two or three weeks into the session. That allowed debate on General Business items on each sitting day until the Sessional Orders were introduced. In those days the Opposition—now the Government—could lead the debate on the General Business items. It added more life to Parliament, especially in the early part of the sessional period when the Government had a limited number of Bills on the Notice Paper.

It is a matter of regret that the Deputy Premier has not been prepared to allow a delay of one or two weeks before introducing Sessional Orders. I hope that such a change will be considered to Sessional Orders in the future.

The motion was agreed to.

BROADCASTING OF EXCERPTS OF PROCEEDINGS

Mr FORDHAM (Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources)—By leave, I move:

That this House authorises the broadcasting and rebroadcasting on radio and television stations of recorded sound excerpts of proceedings in the Legislative Assembly, commencing at the time fixed for the meeting of the House until the motion is moved or the question is proposed (and is not put forthwith and negatived) for the adjournment of the House, subject to the following conditions:

1. Excerpts shall be recorded from the audio signal of proceedings transmitted by the House monitoring system only by representatives of accredited media organisations. No alteration to the sound relay equipment is permitted without the permission of Mr Speaker.
2. Excerpts are not to be used for the purposes of satire or ridicule.
3. Excerpts shall not be used for the purpose of political party advertising or in election campaigns.
4. Fairness in reporting with reasonable balance between both sides of the House is to be achieved by avoiding undue concentration on any one member.
5. Excerpts must be placed in context. Commentators should identify members at least by name.
6. Media personnel are required to obey any instruction given by Mr Speaker, or through him by the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, the Serjeant-at-Arms or the Housekeeper.
7. Any breach of these conditions may result in the immediate suspension of the privileges by Mr Speaker.

The issue of the broadcasting of excerpts of proceedings of the House has only been a recent focus by the House. In the last sessional period the Government proposed, on a trial basis, the broadcasting of question time. It was a big step for the Legislative Assembly, which has been taken only by a limited number of Parliaments in this country, namely, the Commonwealth and the South Australian Legislative Assembly.

The Government wanted to determine at first hand how the system would work in practice, based on the point of view of honourable members and the media itself. There are no grounds for complaint regarding the way the media handles the broadcasting and rebroadcasting of question time. Following that practice, the Government is now proposing that the system be significantly extended to cover all aspects of the operation of the Legislative Assembly, with the exception of the adjournment debate.

Such a program was the practice of the Commonwealth until recently, following a joint Parliamentary examination of broadcasting arrangements for the Commonwealth. Proposals along those lines were recommended.

I learned only recently that the Commonwealth had taken a further step of also allowing for the broadcasting of the motion for the adjournment of the sitting, but this is a major step and the Victorian Government strongly preferred the more limited way—that the broadcasting be extended from the commencement of the proceedings of the day until the time of the motion for the adjournment of the sitting. All parties should, perhaps, give consideration to the further step of including the motion at a later stage.

A matter raised by the Leader of the Opposition last year concerned the issue of televising or videoing proceedings, and the potential for replay. The Government has not received a request for this to take place but inevitably interest will be shown by television stations in Victoria and I suggest that, over the next year, I invite the Leader of the Opposition or his nominee and, similarly, the National Party, to monitor the situation with me, perhaps in conjunction with yourself, Mr Speaker, to determine how this proposal works in practice and to explore what interest is shown by television stations in taking up this issue of wider media coverage and the degree of community interest in the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly. I am sure similar interest will be taken in the Legislative Council.

I made the point last time that honourable members did not, perhaps, appreciate the significance of the media approaching this task in a particular way. To date, it has been a constructive coverage and I hope that that will continue to be the case in the interests of individual members but more particularly in the interests of Parliament itself. Obviously,

if this does not continue to be the case, it is not in the interests of any honourable member of the Assembly.

This second tentative but still significant step will prove to be to the benefit of the Assembly and I put the offer concerning those future discussions with the other political parties.

Mr KENNETT (Leader of the Opposition)—As the Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources says, this is a great opportunity for the Opposition to crow but I do not intend to do so. However, I should highlight to the Government that when it took this bold step forward last year of allowing limited recording of Parliament, the Opposition argued that if the Government believed in open government and making the best utilisation of the new technology available, as there is nothing to hide, the whole proceedings should be recorded to be used at the discretion of the media, for those to whom we are accountable.

I do not believe for a moment that the processes to date—the recording of question time—have been abused in any way whatever and I cannot believe the recording of the rest of the proceedings up to the motion for the adjournment of the sitting will be in any way abused.

Personally, I cannot imagine that the public would have much interest in hearing what happens in this place, particularly during the heated debates in the House; however, I take issue with the Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources who now claims to be moving into the 21st century, in that if we have gone this far, I cannot for the life of me see why the televisings cannot continue for the extra half hour or hour to cover the motion for the adjournment of the sitting. The same stupid argument as before has been espoused by the Government but the Opposition believes that if one is going to record any part of it, one may as well record the lot.

I shall not try to amend this particular provision; it is in the hands of the Government; but the Opposition wants to make the point again that it welcomes the recording of Parliament under rules and guidelines for obvious reasons but it seeks an extension to cover all Parliamentary proceedings.

In terms of the videotaping of Parliament, as referred to by the Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources, again, given proper rules and guidelines, I cannot see why that should not be done. I appreciate that this place would be a low rater in terms of the public audience at large. It may be that with the introduction of Broadcom in Victoria Parliamentary proceedings will be beamed live into all hotels between or after football matches but again, it does not matter whether the facility is used or not; the fact is that the recordings will be of value and, from time to time, honourable members may wish to refer back not only to the written law in the form of *Hansard* but to the audible and visual coverage of proceedings. That is obviously still some way down the track. As the Opposition argued before, from a position of relative commonsense if one has nothing to hide, the proceedings should be opened up entirely, whether the recording be audio, visual or a combination of both.

Again the point should be made, however, that there should be guidelines and if those guidelines are exceeded at any time, presumably you, Mr Speaker, as custodian of the House Rules, would come down heavily upon the offending party; but no offence has been seen to date and I cannot imagine it happening in the future.

Therefore, the sooner we open up this place, even if it is not utilised in terms of transmissions to the community, the better off we shall be.

Mr HANN (Rodney)—The National Party supports the motion. The only reason why the Leader of the House this morning excluded the possibility of televising the motion for the adjournment of the sitting, on my understanding, was that we were under the impression that the Commonwealth had excluded the televising of the motion, but if that is not the case and the Commonwealth allows the recording of proceedings on the motion for the adjournment of the sitting, I support the Leader of the Opposition and ask that, at the end

of the current sessional period, the situation be reviewed with a view to including the motion.

The National Party would also certainly support the right for videoing, subject to certain conditions. This move will ensure that we make use of modern technology and there will be occasions when television stations will be quite interested in using that material; so that, obviously, would be the logical next step and I welcome the Minister's proposal that the situation be monitored by the Leaders of the parties with a view to considering extension of the motion in the future.

The motion was agreed to.

PROCLAMATIONS FIXING OPERATIVE DATES

Mr FORDHAM (Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources)—By leave, I move:

That this House authorises and requires the Clerk to lay on the table copies of proclamations of His Excellency the Governor in Council fixing dates for the coming into operation of Acts, as published in the *Government Gazette* from time to time.

This standard motion simply renews a requirement that has been there in the past and agreed to by the House in the last sessional period. It makes it an obligation, once again.

The motion was agreed to.

GRIEVANCES

Mr FORDHAM (Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources)—By leave, I move:

That the operation of Standing Order No. 59, requiring the question that grievances be noted to be proposed on every third Thursday, be suspended until 31 May 1987, and that the Standing Order have application on Thursday, 5 March and Thursday, 9 April 1987.

Under the timetabling for the Legislative Assembly, the opportunity for the grievance debate would not be there for honourable members, and that would strike at the heart of people concerned for Parliamentary democracy. Following a discussion with honourable members of the other parties, the Government, out of the goodness of its heart, is prepared to facilitate a motion in the above terms. This applies specific dates as distinct from the original motion of the third Thursday, irrespective of whether sitting or otherwise, and it meets the requirements and has the support, I understand, of honourable members of the other parties.

The motion was agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Water sport facilities in Geelong—Responsibilities of school staff for children—Police Force—Housing for teachers in country areas—St Helena Post-Primary School—Compulsory unionism—Disorderly passengers on V/Line—Railway staff security

Mr FORDHAM (Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources)—I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr DICKINSON (South Barwon)—In the absence of the Minister for Sport and Recreation, I direct a matter to the attention of the Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources concerning the planning of water sports facilities in Geelong. In the past week there have been two editorials and one disturbing article in the *Geelong Advertiser* on the future of holding the GPS head of the river on the Barwon River. The last time the head of the river was taken away from Geelong was 30 years ago in 1957 when it was held on the Yarra River at the request of the public schools in Melbourne, which thought that the Geelong schools had some advantage if the event was held year after year in Geelong. As

it turned out, a Geelong school won the head of the river again on that occasion and the race was returned to Geelong, and has been held there for the past 30 years.

I direct the Minister's attention to broader aspects which concern the trip last year by the Minister for Sport and Recreation to the United Kingdom when he visited the running centre and the water sports centre in Nottingham. I believe it encompasses not only Olympic rowing but also windsurfing, water skiing, angling and other water sports to which we have grown accustomed.

The Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources is aware of the growing interest in Geelong for water sports and the Bell's Beach Classic, of world-class fame, at Easter time. I suggest to the Minister that the Geelong Regional Commission and his department should liaise to request from England a videotape which would be of assistance to water sports enthusiasts in Geelong.

I know the Minister had an interesting trip to the United Kingdom. It would help clubs in Geelong to know what facilities have been developed in other parts of the world. I appreciate that the Government has honoured a Liberal Party commitment in developing the Carrum Water Sports Centre, notwithstanding that the Geelong area has been the home of many water sports for nearly 100 years. There is tremendous demand in the area for ongoing upgrading of facilities. It behoves both the Government and the Opposition to ensure that those facilities are put in place for succeeding generations of Geelong communities.

Dr COGHILL (Werribee)—The matter I direct to the attention of the Minister for Education concerns the obligations and responsibilities of various members of school communities involving students at school. I raise the matter because of an incident that occurred at a particular school, although I shall not give details of the personalities involved. An eight-year-old child went missing from the school during school hours. It was not until late that evening that the child was found, having wandered off in the opposite direction to home, quite unharmed. It appears the child left the school because of some fear of punishment the child may have incurred for being late for a class. The child left the school at about lunchtime and it was realised that the child was missing at the end of the school day. The school staff made the proper search one would expect of the schoolgrounds in an attempt to establish whether the child was on the schoolgrounds, but not with the child's class.

As the child could not be found, the home of the child was telephoned and the stepfather advised that the child was not at home. A further search was made of the schoolgrounds and, after the child still could not be found, the other children from the same family who attended the school were taken home by one of the teachers and the stepfather was advised that the child could still not be found.

At that stage the stepfather and mother of the child found themselves being required to notify the police that the child was missing and had evidently gone missing from the school during school hours. In this particular case the responsibilities of the school staff were the subject of a fairly vigorous debate within the school community at the school council and at other levels. I understand that the Ministry of Education senior staff and administrative staff took up the matter with the school staff, the principal and others, and advised them of their responsibilities and steps that should be taken to avoid, in the first instance, a child being missing for such a period and, secondly, the response that should have been made once it was established that the child was missing.

It has occurred to me that similar circumstances may arise in other schools and that school staff may not be properly aware of their responsibilities and the actions they should take to monitor the presence of pupils in the school so that there is an early indication if a child is missing from the school. Clear guidelines setting out the responsibilities of school staff and others associated with the school when a child is found to be missing should be provided. They should indicate the actions that should be taken, the point at which the parents should be advised, whether it is a matter that may involve the police and the

responsibilities for involving the parents. It seems to me, from discussions I have had with the school community and others involved in education, that there is some doubt in the minds of school staff and others as to what responsibility is borne by the school, teachers and others in circumstances of this kind.

It would be helpful if the Minister for Education could make explicit the responsibilities of school staff and teachers, in particular, who may be involved so that if similar circumstances arise the teachers and other members of the school staff will know what should be done and parents can be confident that schools are well advised as to the course they should follow.

Mr LEIGH (Malvern)—The matter I raise for the attention of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services is of grave concern to the Malvern community as well as the general community. It concerns specifically the Criminal Investigation Bureau in Malvern. As of today, approximately half of the 48 CIB policemen listed for that area are unavailable. That is partly due to the fact that the annual leave of policemen has been increased from seven weeks to nine weeks. I accept that that has brought them into line with the rest of the Public Service.

One policeman was suspended four years ago but is still listed as one of the 48 acting policemen available to serve that community. He has not been available for four years. I am not questioning his suspension or the reasons for it, but I am questioning why he is listed as an active policeman in the community.

Another policeman has been seconded to the National Crime Authority. He has not been seen in the district. Another policeman has been seconded to the State Insurance Office, presumably investigating some further Government corruption.

Despite the fact that policemen are unavailable for various reasons, the Government says that it is concerned about providing police. The fact is that half the police do not exist; they are paper figures. Over the past five years the Government has employed thousands of pen-pushers in the bureaucracy but has not been able to keep the promise of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to employ 1000 extra police. The answer has been an unequivocal "No".

As the Minister for Police and Emergency Services is well aware, I have already predicted that he will lose his seat on this issue because the matter is critical. The statistics show one thing and the facts show another. I commend the police officers concerned; CIB personnel have hired paging devices at their own expense so that they can be contacted more quickly than at present.

This will make the officers more efficient because they have only half the staff numbers required. What does the Minister say about this? In the past he has accused me of being a Joseph Goebbels. However, each time I was right. Has the Minister been man enough to say that I was right? Of course not!

I speak on behalf of the honourable members for Kew and Hawthorn and other honourable members in the area who would like to have the 48 operational CIB agents who are supposed to be available to their communities. Let us not have people sitting behind desks in police stations. Let us not have bureaucrats sitting behind desks.

Included in the 1000 police officers the Minister claims have been provided are pen-pushers. We want 1000 operational police officers to serve the community. It is of no use having Neighbourhood Watch and other programs if they cannot have police backup. The Minister is an abject failure when it comes to serving the Police Force and the people of the State. One could say that the Minister is a failure to the Government. I recommend that the sooner the people of Oakleigh realise that it is time the member for Oakleigh, the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, goes, the better this State will be.

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—I refer the Minister for Education to the Government's policy on teacher housing. The House will be aware that during the last sessional period

on two occasions I referred to the difficulty that would be created with the Government's policy with respect to teachers in country Victoria and their opportunities to obtain housing in the immediate and long-term future. I pointed out that this would have devastating effects on many areas across the State.

I particularly raised with the Minister the fact that in the electorate I represent not one house owned by the Government Employee Housing Authority being used for teacher housing is shown as "required to occupy". I pointed out to the Minister that a policy change was needed and that there be a complete review of the provision of housing so that it is provided on a continuing basis.

The Minister said that he would receive representations from schools, school councils and individuals on this problem and that the situation would be reviewed. In correspondence to me the Minister said that information was being received from various sources in the country and that an investigation would take place with respect to housing for country teachers. He said that information would be received up until the end of March by a committee comprising representatives of the Ministry of Education, the Department of Labour and teacher unions.

My concern is that there is no representation from country areas on the committee which will make submissions to the Minister concerning areas throughout the electorate I represent and across Victoria where there is a need to retain houses for country teachers for the future.

The problem has been highlighted recently and housing shortages have been brought to my attention. Apart from the fact that there needs to be a review of the personnel comprising the committee that will investigate teacher housing, I am also concerned about a specific instance concerning Mr Don Callister the principal of the Cobram High School. Mr Callister moved from Ocean Grove, where he owns his own home, to Cobram and was unable to find housing of any description in Cobram or the surrounding areas.

When he contacted the Ministry of Education to point out that he could not find housing, he was told that he should consider going into a caravan park. When he stated that he had a wife and two children, the Ministry suggested that perhaps he should obtain a caravan with an annex and that that might be sufficient for the time being.

Mr Callister was not happy with that suggestion. He was able to obtain accommodation in the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria holiday resort at Cobram at a weekly rental of \$270. Although he wrote to the chief executive of the Ministry of Education seeking a rental subsidy, he has received no response. A telegram has been sent to the chief executive asking for action to be taken.

The Minister must take action to examine a rent subsidy for Mr Callister, who is the principal of the high school. He cannot perform his job properly because he does not have adequate accommodation and he does not know where else he can go if he moves out of his present accommodation.

This situation highlights the problem with teacher housing right across Victoria. I ask the Minister to examine the problem and take note of the submissions that will be presented to him. Representations will be made from country areas to the committee that will be examining this problem in the future.

Mrs TONER (Greensborough)—I refer the Minister for Education to the St Helena Post-Primary School and the need for support staff. I state at the outset that I am grateful to the Minister, and to the previous Minister of Education and the then Government, for a school which I believe is the best school in Australia. It really is a splendid post-primary school.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mrs TONER—I urge honourable members to come and have a look at the school because they will be convinced that this is a splendid school which was built at a cost of

\$9.38 million. It has wonderful facilities including a gymnasium, a theatre, a greenhouse, science facilities, an automotive workshop and cooking facilities. It has the lot.

The design for the school was worked out in association with the school council. It is the first time that a school of such complexity has been built with a school council contract. It was completed within the space of a year and the school was opened with no problems at the beginning of this school term.

The Federal member for McEwan, Mr Peter Cleeland, and I visited the school during the first couple of days of operation. We are pleased that our constituents have the benefit of such a facility as this. Mr Ken Cunningham is an excellent principal and he and Mrs Sue Dyet were involved in the project. The school council must be congratulated for this splendid building which answers the educational needs of the children and anticipates further needs because it was involved in the design process all the way through. It is a clear demonstration of what can be done with a school council, parents and teachers and it is also an indication that Victoria has a Government that is prepared to be confident in its school community. It is confident in the parents and teachers who were involved in the development and control of the design and every stage of the school building.

However, here one runs into a difficulty. Although the area has this splendid school with its wonderful cooking, library and science facilities, it requires the necessary support staff to back up the teachers so that they are able to take full advantage of those facilities and provide the wonderful curriculums they have designed. Those support staff are lacking.

An anomaly exists because positions for support staff have been allocated to other schools in areas where the population is smaller. For example, Bulleen may have an excess of support staff, yet limitations have been placed on a school in the area that I represent. That militates against the capacity of the school to take advantage of its facilities.

The school has been designed to provide appropriate facilities for disabled students of which there are about eleven at the St Helena Post-Primary School. It would be to their benefit as well if support staff were provided at the school. The Minister for Education should consider the needs of these children so that a school which has the facilities in Victoria is also able to deliver the best programs in cookery, the library and science, which need support staff.

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster)—The matter I direct to the attention of the Minister for Education relates to an agreement signed by his predecessor with the Federated Miscellaneous Workers Union of Australia, which, in effect, provides for compulsory unionisation of school cleaners, canteen maids and certain other personnel who could be deemed to be members of the union. This matter is of particular importance in the light of a recent decision by the Equal Opportunity Board.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr WILLIAMS—It does not matter whether the decision of the board was that the matter was *ultra vires*; Parliament does not have the sole right to say whether Victoria will have compulsory unionism. To the best of my knowledge no legislation has passed through Parliament to legalise compulsory unionism, which was the basis of the decision of the Equal Opportunity Board.

It is wrong of the Ministry of Education to hand to the Federated Miscellaneous Workers Union of Australia the names and addresses of every school cleaner, canteen maid or person who could be deemed by the union to be part of its empire. In this day and age the United Nations has declared that people have the right to join or not to join a union.

It is reprehensible that the Government of Victoria should have entered into an agreement with a union to allow backdoor unionisation, particularly when the Equal Opportunity Board declared it *ultra vires*. I want the Minister for Education to assure the House that he will have the agreement amended to stop the standover tactics which are forcing cleaners and others to join a union.

Mr W. D. McGRATH (Lowan)—I direct to the attention of the Minister for Transport an incident which occurred on Tuesday. A disorderly passenger on the *Vineland* was removed at an unmanned station at Litchfield, which is about midway between Donald and Watchem.

I do not have any sympathy for disorderly passengers, but I sympathise with the people who must take responsibility for them when they are offloaded from a train. Litchfield is purely a silo siding. There are about four or five homes and a telephone box in the area. The conductors on the *Vineland* decided to discharge the passenger at about 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning. The first thing that the passenger would have done would be to start knocking on someone's door. No one wants a person who has been thrown off public transport for disorderly conduct knocking on the door at 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning.

In this day of two-way radios, communication could easily be made between railway staff and police personnel and this would ensure that police were in position when a train pulled into a station. This type of incident has occurred on a number of occasions. A recent incident at Horsham was a good example of police cooperation with V/Line staff when a disorderly football team had to be removed from a train.

Mrs Toner—Where were they from?

Mr W. D. McGRATH—Frankston, and they were soccer players. Another incident occurred on the day train to Horsham. The conductor made arrangements with the police at Stawell to have the disorderly passenger discharged. The police were in position approximately 100 yards from the station, where the passenger was removed, and the train continued into the station. No one was the wiser that the incident had occurred. It was a neat operation.

I ask the Minister for Transport to ensure that railway personnel, who are already doing a good job handling disorderly passengers, make contact with the police at the town a train is approaching so that the disorderly passengers can be put under the charge of police officers. This will remove the nuisance factor to the community.

The incident which occurred last Tuesday was not the first. A couple of weeks ago some passengers were discharged from a train in the township of Donald. At 3 o'clock in the morning the shire secretary, Tom Bowles, had to advise them where the police station was. Unless proper communication is made between railway personnel and police officers, the local communities will have problems when disorderly passengers are offloaded. Better negotiations can be made to relieve the nuisance factor these people cause in isolated communities.

Mr COLEMAN (Syndal)—I wish to build on the comments raised by the honourable member for Lowan.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member for Syndal would be out of order if he wishes to continue the same topic raised by the honourable member for Lowan. The honourable member should raise another issue of his choice.

Mr COLEMAN—Thank you, Mr Speaker. I direct to the attention of the Minister for Transport the question of security provided to V/Line staff on both trains and railway platforms late at night. I am aware of similar situations to that portrayed by the honourable member for Lowan. Recently a member of the Met staff came to my electorate office.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member's time has expired. The time for raising new matters has also expired.

Mr TREZISE (Minister for Sport and Recreation)—The honourable member for South Barwon again raised the issue of future plans for the flood plain of Connewarre Lakes and the Barwon River in Geelong for a water sports complex. This matter has been raised by the honourable member before but, as an old rower, it is probably natural that he is interested in this area. The Government is keeping that area in mind. Geelong is a natural venue for the pursuit of aquatic sports.

Last week it was reported in the press that the first national aquatic centre was launched by us and this brought together thousands of people to participate in the numerous water sports followed in Australia and thousands of spectators to watch them.

Geelong offers surf beaches, Corio Bay and swimming pools and therefore is an area that can be developed for water sports.

There is a doubt about the public schools rowing championship being held on the Barwon River because of the silt problem. That is the responsibility of the Geelong and District Water Board. I trust that it will do something about it, because the head of the river has been held on the Barwon River for approximately 25 years.

The honourable member for South Barwon also referred to the water sports project at Carrum, which is going on steadily. The site at Carrum was selected by those involved with rowing in preference to Geelong. That selection was made known to the previous Liberal Government and to this Government.

The honourable member also referred to the water sports centre at Nottingham in England. Last year I visited the centre with a view to trying to develop a similar centre in the area suggested by the honourable member for South Barwon. I ordered a video from the centre in Nottingham but have been informed that it cannot be done at the moment because it is the winter season and that it will be done during the summer season. When I receive the video I shall be happy to call a public meeting and give the honourable member for South Barwon the credit of initiating the idea. In that way, those interested in developing a water sports centre in the area referred to by the honourable member can attend a public meeting and discuss the matter. I thank the honourable member for his continued interest.

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Education)—The honourable member for Werribee referred to an incident that occurred at Werribee Primary School, which is regretted by myself and by the school. The salient facts are that the child disappeared at the end of the lunch hour, but her absence was not discovered until after 3 p.m. because the school had broken up into specialist classes for library and art and craft and the specialist class rolls had not been prepared.

When the girl's absence was discovered, the school immediately contacted her father, who was at home. The other children of the family who attended the school were driven home by one of the teachers who then discussed the issue with the father and mentioned that the family had the option of calling the police if they wanted to do so. The child returned home shortly afterwards, and the next day the principal interviewed the mother and apologised for the incident.

As a result, the school has introduced roll checks for all specialist classes. The school should have had an attendance check system in place, and the Government will ensure that all schools will be made aware of their responsibilities in that area.

The honourable member for Murray Valley consistently raises the issue of teacher housing. I cannot add much more to what I said on the previous occasion except to point out that the review he mentioned is still continuing. Some houses are in the category of "required to occupy" because the Government recognises the problems of distance and isolation in country Victoria and the need to help those communities where housing is not available for teachers who may be sent there. There is also a category of houses not required to occupy, and in between there is an equally large group of houses that is currently in dispute.

The Government has invited not only the teacher unions but also school communities and people in country towns to put forward their cases. I assure the honourable member for Murray Valley that the Government will respond to those cases on the merits of the arguments.

Mr Coleman—Buy them a bulldozer!

Mr CATHIE—The honourable member for Syndal always has a simplistic approach to complex questions. He would produce a bulldozer for anything.

I am not aware of the details of the principal who has been transferred from Ocean Grove to Cobram High School. I shall follow up that matter and discover why no response has been made. I imagine in those circumstances that there is a case to ensure that the principal can find a satisfactory resolution.

The honourable member for Greensborough referred to the St Helena Post-Primary School. I congratulate members of that school council for carrying through a fine school council contract for the building of a magnificent post-primary school.

The honourable member indicated the need for support staff, especially for library and laboratory services. This year, the Government is hoping to establish consistent conditions across secondary education, especially when renegotiating teacher union logs. The issue of additional ancillary staff is still being discussed. The Government has been generous in the supply of special needs teachers, especially in secondary education. All primary schools now have access to some clerical assistance and the Government has been generous in undertaking its responsibilities for the Youth Guarantee Scheme work study programs in training young people between the ages of fifteen and eighteen years who have been unemployed for six months or more in a whole range of skills, including integration aides, library assistants, gardeners, laboratory assistants and so on.

The honourable member for Doncaster complained about compulsory unionism for school cleaners and other ancillary staff. I point out to the honourable member that the industrial agreement of the Government is quite consistent with the requirements of the Equal Opportunity Board. The Government's policy is to encourage individuals to join the appropriate unions.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—The honourable member for Malvern has difficulty understanding the arithmetic of police numbers. The matter is straightforward and should be intelligible even to someone with his limited capacities.

As at 30 June 1982, the funded strength of the Police Force was 8198. At present, the funded strength is 8958. In addition, the Government is carrying 120 members of the force over and above that funded strength as a hedge against possible optional early retirements. That means that the funded strength of the force over the past five years has increased by 760 members, while a further 120 police are currently on the books.

A further 278 public servants have been taken to replace police who were previously engaged in clerical duties in conformity with the recommendations of the Neesham inquiry. That means a net increase to the operational strength of the Police Force of 1038.

It is true that the Victoria Police Force has been the first force in Australia to gain a 38-hour week. I should have thought that would be something in which the honourable member for Portland would take some pride. It is equally true that, under this Government, the Victoria Police Force has been the first force in Australia to gain optional early retirement.

Again, I would have hoped that this would be something in which the honourable members for Portland and Malvern would take pride. Rather than denigrating these achievements, I would expect them occasionally to say a word in their favour.

Mr LEIGH (Malvern)—I raise a point of order, Mr Speaker. The Minister has accused me of denigrating the police. I make the point that I am not denigrating the police.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member for Malvern is out of order. He is attempting to make a personal explanation. I advise that if he continues to interject, I shall take other action.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—The deterioration in the intellect of the honourable member for Malvern is matched by the deterioration in his hearing. I made no such statement about the honourable member, Mr Speaker. I said that he consistently denigrated the achievement of the 38-hour week and optional early retirement for the Police Force.

These great steps forward in the working conditions of the police have not been achieved without cost. It follows that the further expansion in the force has proceeded less rapidly than would otherwise have been the case. However, I make the case that the Government's undertaking to increase the effective strength of the Police Force by 1000 has been fully honoured and fully achieved. What is more, in other respects the Government's undertakings in respect of the Police Force have been greatly exceeded.

The past five years have seen the greatest building program for police purposes ever undertaken in the history of this State. More new police stations than ever before have been opened over the past five years. More police stations have been upgraded and renovated than in any comparable period in the State's history. Whereas, when the Cain Government came into office the police owned one helicopter, they now have three. The number of vehicles available to the Police Force has increased over that period by 190.

The Water Police Squad has been totally re-equipped over that period. The police previously had a total of 597 portable radios whereas, at the end of this year, that total will be 2397. That is part of a rolling program of—

Mr KENNETT (Leader of the Opposition)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, you understand the customs of the House, inasmuch as if a Minister is reading from a document—which is typed in this case—one may ask him to table the document from which he is so obviously reading.

The SPEAKER—Order! Will the Minister advise the House whether he will make the document available?

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I shall do so, Mr Speaker. Those achievements are part of a \$25 million rolling program for the upgrading of police communications. When the present Government assumed office, the police were equipped with a computer which had to be closed down, literally, whenever summer temperatures were experienced. A new \$19.3 million police computer package is nearing completion.

The overall picture is of a Police Force previously unequipped and unresourced which is now moving to the forefront amongst Police Forces throughout Australia.

Mr Crozier interjected.

Mr MATHEWS—By interjection, the honourable member for Portland says that the Police Force is undermanned. He should be aware that the ratio of police to population is more favourable in this State than in Queensland—which State he admires so greatly—and far more favourable than in New South Wales.

I know that honourable members opposite wilfully blind themselves to the improvements which have been made in the capital resourcing of the Victoria Police over the past five years. However, the fact is that the runs are on the board. The police know that they are better housed and equipped than ever before in their history.

Mr WALSH (Minister for Public Works)—The honourable member for Lowan raised the important subject of disorderly passengers being removed from trains in small country towns. In towns where there are only three or four houses, the public can be annoyed by those disorderly passengers, but I believe railway personnel have a job to protect other passengers on those trains and a right to remove disorderly passengers so that others can travel in the best and safest way possible.

I also agree that there ought to be some communication with the Police Force when disorderly passengers arrive at those small country towns so that the police can take charge of them. It may be that charges have to be laid as a result of such occurrences on passenger trains.

The Minister for Transport was not in the House when the honourable member raised the matter, but I shall certainly raise with the honourable gentleman this important matter.

The SPEAKER—Order! Will the Minister advise whether he will respond to the matter raised by the honourable member for Syndal?

Mr WALSH—The honourable member for Syndal raised a similar matter, but he said very little, and I suggest he should raise it at another time.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.7 p.m.

Wednesday, 25 February 1987

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds) took the chair at 2.4 p.m. and read the prayer.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

RESIGNATION OF CHAIRMAN OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION

Mr COOPER (Mornington)—I ask the Minister for Local Government: what payments were made to Mr Morris at the termination of his employment as Chairman of the Local Government Commission and what was the justification for those amounts?

Mr SIMMONDS (Minister for Local Government)—Mr Morris's appointment was terminated at his request. The arrangements for the balance of payments between the shorter period of employment and the original contract were a matter of some detail. I shall obtain the details for the honourable member for Mornington if he is prepared to put the question on notice.

COMPULSORY UNIONISM

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party)—I direct my question to the Minister for Labour who, hopefully, will know more about this matter than his immediate predecessor knew.

I refer the Minister to a recent decision of the State Equal Opportunity Board, which awarded \$10 000 to a former employee who was dismissed because he was not a union member. Is it the intention of the Government to avoid a similar situation arising by bringing about compulsory unionism?

Mr CRABB (Minister for Labour)—I should have thought that the Leader of the National Party would know the Government's policy on this matter. It encourages trade unionism, as I thought did the Liberal Party. I am unsure whether the National Party does.

I thought that across the spectrum of the community there was an encouragement of trade unionism. Certainly, the major employer bodies in this country support trade unionism and support encouragement of trade unionism, as does the Government which does what it can to encourage employees to join their appropriate trade unions and take part in their affairs. The Government does not make trade unionism compulsory.

Mr Williams—Not much you don't!

Mr CRABB—However, the Government and everyone else in society recognises that compulsory trade unionism agreements do exist in society and have existed for many years. Indeed, with regard to the particular decision of the Equal Opportunity Board referred to by the Leader of the National Party, if there had been a formal agreement the case would not have ensued.

I imagine that at this point in time, in all the circumstances where compulsory unionism has existed for some period in their workplace, people will no doubt be exchanging letters constituting formal agreements so that these circumstances do not occur again.

DISTRIBUTION OF CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

Mr MICALLEF (Springvale)—I ask the Minister for Labour: is it a fact that confidential documents from the Minister's office have been distributed to journalists? Can the Minister inform the House how this occurred and what steps he intends to take to prevent its recurrence?

Mr CRABB (Minister for Labour)—Earlier this month, the honourable member for Hawthorn distributed to journalists a copy of—

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—Mr Speaker, I raise a point of order in relation to both the question and the answer intended to be given by the Minister. If either the question or the answer raises a matter of privilege, you, Mr Speaker, should take the matter in hand.

The SPEAKER—Order! I cannot uphold the matter raised as a point of order. I have heard the question and its contents for the first time and I am now listening to what the Minister has said in response to that question. Whether the question involves a matter of privilege is yet to be determined, so I cannot uphold the point of order.

Mr CRABB (Minister for Labour)—Methinks he protesteth too much! He is a bit nervous. The fact is that back on the fourth of this month the honourable member for Hawthorn, as I was saying, distributed to journalists copies of a Cabinet committee brief.

I commenced investigations to establish how the document was removed from my office and it transpired that the document was one of those which were stolen from my office when it was occupied by Builders Labourers Federation supporters on 3 October last year.

The one person who has gone public in terms of claiming possession of the documents is Mr Bill Hartley. He claims they have liberated the documents. How they got from Mr Hartley to Hawthorn is something of a mystery and one can only speculate that it may be Bill Hartley has joined the Liberal Party, in which case he will have increased the average IQ of both parties by the one action. Then again, it may be the honourable member for Hawthorn, in trying to build up his alliance for taking over the leadership of this thankless lot across here, is going to the extremes of politics—not just Joh's lot but the other lot also.

More seriously, I have taken steps to try to prevent in the future the occupation of my office by supporters of anyone, and criminal charges have already been laid as a result of that occupation of my office. It is possible that other charges may follow.

SEPARATION ALLOWANCE

Mr COOPER (Mornington)—My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Local Government. Is it a fact that nearly \$40 000 was paid as a so-called separation allowance to Mr Morris, the former Chairman of the Local Government Commission, and that he received also other payments that amounted to four months' salary plus a payment of the equivalent of two and a half years of superannuation contribution? If that information is correct, will the Minister justify that to the House, particularly with regard to the fact that Mr Morris served as chairman of the commission for only sixteen months?

Mr SIMMONDS (Minister for Local Government)—The honourable member asked a question about the termination of the appointment of the Chairman of the Local Government Commission, and the period of appointment was to October 7, 1987. The arrangements for the termination of the work of Stuart Morris as chairman of the commission were conducted in an amicable manner. The work of the commission, which needed to be consolidated, was continued in this period following his initial discussion about the shortening of the appointment. With respect to the actual time of the ceasing of the appointment and the settlement details which I am not carrying in my pocket, the honourable member quoted some figures, and I shall be happy to provide those figures that relate to that appointment and to the payments to Mr Morris in the manner I described in my earlier answer.

BLUE LAGOON COOLER

Mr HANN (Rodney)—I address my question without notice to the Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources. If the Government is serious about under-age drinking in Victoria, can the Minister explain to the House why the Government is continuing to allow a product known as Blue Lagoon Cooler with 1 per cent alcohol to be sold in milk bars to children as young as three or four years of age?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources)—This issue does not come within my Ministerial portfolio and it is subject to the Health Act. The product concerned is not defined as liquor in terms of the 1 per cent alcohol level. It is not defined in this State or in most other places in Australia. I suggest the honourable member become familiar with the relevant regulations in this State. I must say that the Government has addressed this issue and was very much to the forefront of the issue of coolers, their packaging and their sale in this country.

I, together with my colleagues, the Minister for Health and the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, have discussed this issue, and the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and the Minister for Health have contacted their counterparts in other States of Australia.

New regulations are under consideration by both the Federal and State authorities. Of course, the product referred to by the honourable member is not a new product. It has been on sale in this State and throughout Australia for a long period.

TRANSPORT SERVICES

Mr McDONALD (Whittlesea)—Will the Minister for Transport provide the House with the full details of transport expansion programs aimed particularly at Victorians who have previously been denied adequate transport services?

The SPEAKER—Order! I should advise the honourable member for Whittlesea that he has asked a very broad question, particularly if it is to be responded to in full as he requests. I shall allow the question but I ask the Minister for Transport to truncate his reply.

Mr ROPER (Minister for Transport)—It is extremely difficult to truncate the answer but, certainly, I shall attempt to do so in view of your request, Mr Speaker. Members of the opposition parties do not appear to understand that over recent years a great deal of work has been done—first by my predecessor, who is now the Minister for Labour, and second by my Ministry—in ensuring that for the first time in a generation the services to which the people of the outer suburbs of Melbourne are entitled are received by them. Members of the opposition parties should be aware that in the 1960s and 1970s, and in the early 1980s, the majority of the Melbourne population moved to areas that were then not serviced or were very ill-served by public transport. Liberal Party Governments did virtually nothing in all that time to ensure that those services were provided.

The Labor Party Government commenced to service a whole range of areas by rail extensions, tramway extensions, and now, very significantly, by bus extensions. Members of the opposition parties talk about pork-barrelling. It would be pork-barrelling if these programs were aimed purely at places such as the Central Highlands Province. However, I invite any member of the opposition parties to examine a map to determine where these services will be placed.

Mr W. D. McGRATH (Lowan)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, clearly you gave a direction to the Minister for Transport as to his reply to the question. So far, the honourable gentleman has directed his remarks at the opposition parties, although the question was asked by a member of his party. The honourable gentleman is debating the question and I

request you to direct him to give a precise and proper answer to the question that was asked.

The SPEAKER—Order! The Minister for Transport has been addressing the House for nearly 2 minutes and I believe he is only entering into the start of his response to the question. I do not uphold the point of order but I ask the Minister to truncate his reply.

Mr ROPER (Minister for Transport)—One should expect that parts of the Central Highlands Province, being an area of the rapidly expanding outer suburbs, would benefit from any sensible decision that, of course, was never made by any previous Liberal Party Government to expand outer suburban transport services. The new transport services will not simply service areas in the Central Highlands Province. They will service the electorates of the honourable members for Gisborne and Werribee.

So far as I am aware, few electors in the Werribee area will play much part in the by-election on 21 March, but they do have transport requirements and those transport requirements are being addressed.

Approximately 36 services around the outer suburbs of Melbourne have had major expansions. I am sure that honourable members on all sides of the Chamber will appreciate these major expansions. They have been made possible as a result of a considerable amount of hard work by officers of both the Metropolitan Transit Authority and the Ministry of Transport, with the great cooperation of the bus proprietors themselves.

It is significant that the bus proprietors I talked to this morning at both Craigieburn and Lilydale—I also talked to the honourable member for Gippsland West in Lilydale—believe they will have access to buses to enable the authority to speed up its timetabling for these services which were coming onstream by 31 December.

As a result of the cooperation from the bus proprietors and the unions concerned, we would expect, if anything, to have these services up and running well before Christmas.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMALGAMATIONS

Mr PERRIN (Bulleen)—Will the Minister for Local Government give an unequivocal assurance that the Government will not force local government amalgamations by arbitrary action or by any other means?

Mr SIMMONDS (Minister for Local Government)—I am pleased to advise the House that the restructuring of local government in Victoria is being attended to in a number of areas at the request of municipalities that are concerned to obtain the best structure.

A number of areas have proposals which recognise the need to restructure the particular form of local government which is operating in a number of regions. Some requests are currently before the Local Government Commission that will actively involve the commission in developing those proposals.

As a result of the commission's work, I am confident that a number of proposals will emerge which will receive almost universal agreement of local government and, more importantly, will provide a base for local government to more ably work with both State and Federal Governments in delivering those services that are being made available.

It is important that those matters take place so that local government can take advantage of the recent amendments to the Local Government Act which provides local government with the opportunity of involving itself with both the private and public sector in developing projects to deliver services which it was previously unable to deliver.

Approximately sixteen municipalities have had internal redistributions to provide a basis of democratic elections of councils, so that the number of councils that are elected on the democratic principle of one vote for one value has virtually doubled in recent months.

That is the answer to the question of the developing approach to restructuring of local government following the Premier's statement on 3 September 1986.

References have been made to the commission from a number of areas throughout Victoria that have not yet been fully resolved. The commission's approach will be to ascertain the degree of local understanding and desire for change and provisions in existing legislation will enable these matters to be resolved. I propose to implement the existing legislation as it involves local government in Victoria.

PRIVATE TRAINING COLLEGES

Mrs SETCHES (Ringwood)—Can the Minister for Consumer Affairs advise the House of any action that he is considering with regard to private training colleges?

Mr SPYKER (Minister for Consumer Affairs)—I thank the honourable member for her question because she has been expressing concern about this matter for some time.

Although private colleges in the main have provided fairly good courses, particularly to young people, the college we are concerned about is the June Taylor Model and Beauty School and Receptionist Services Training School, which is run by Ms June Currie of Collins Place. This college has been of concern to my Ministry for a number of years.

Any negotiations or suggestions by officers of my Ministry on how to improve the courses conducted at that college have not met a good response. Our main concern is that many young women seeking employment believe they require additional training, particularly receptionists and people wishing to pursue modelling and beauty careers.

Many young people pay hundreds of dollars for specific courses but at the end of the courses no jobs are available. Many false claims have been made.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member for Forest Hill should cease interjecting.

Mr SPYKER—I understand the frustration of the honourable member for Forest Hill because of his absolute failure as shadow Minister and that is why he is on the back bench.

Mr Weideman—He doesn't know!

Mr SPYKER—One can only draw the conclusion that in his time as shadow Minister he supported any shady operator. I thought, as a family man, the honourable member would be concerned if his son or daughter was involved in a course at that college and was ripped off for hundreds of dollars; I should imagine he would want something done about that.

The Government is concerned that young people are being ripped off for hundreds of dollars; they are not being trained adequately; and their so-called recognition certificates are not worth the paper they are printed on. More than 30 former students have made claims before the Small Claims Tribunal in an attempt to recover some of their lost money. The Ministry is concerned that the advertising undertaken by Ms June Currie is misleading. The courses conducted by the college are not recognised by any institution and no person is able to get a job at the end of that course.

I assure the honourable member for Ringwood that the Ministry will continue to pursue this matter through the Small Claims Tribunal. Officers of my Ministry, the Ministry of Education and the Department of Labour are involved in discussions to ensure that Ms June Currie is run out of town.

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, during the answer by the Minister for Consumer Affairs to the last question, the Minister made a series of remarks that associated me with shady characters. I direct your attention to the fact that the Minister is in breach of Standing Order No. 108.

Furthermore, what the Minister said is untrue and I find it offensive. Therefore, I ask that it be withdrawn.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! I do not uphold the point of order. If the honourable member for Forest Hill believes some words used by the Minister are offensive and asks for a withdrawal, I ask him to nominate the words. I shall then ask the Minister to withdraw them.

Mr RICHARDSON—Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thought I had done that, but I shall repeat the remarks that I found offensive. The Minister said that I had been associated with shady characters. I find that reflection offensive.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member has advised the Chair of what he has found offensive. I shall now call the Minister. Will the Minister withdraw the expression?

Mr SPYKER (Minister for Consumer Affairs)—Mr Speaker, if the honourable member for Forest Hill will indicate to me which words he finds offensive, I will withdraw.

The SPEAKER—Order! I shall not call the honourable member for Forest Hill again. I understood him to find offensive the fact that he has been accused of mixing with shady characters.

Mr SPYKER—Mr Speaker, if I recall correctly the comments I made, I believe I said that he appears to be defending shady characters. I do not think I actually said that he “associated” with shady characters. However, considering the side of the House on which he sits, he should feel at home.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! The Chair has some limitations in respect of this matter. However, I shall check the record, examine what was said and take whatever action I can in the immediate future.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION CHAIRMAN

Mr DELZOPPO (Narracan)—Will the Minister for Local Government advise the House why the job of Chairman of the Local Government Commission has been given to Mr Badham, a person with clear political prejudice and demonstrated bias for forced local government amalgamations?

Mr SIMMONDS (Minister for Local Government)—Mr Badham was appointed by the Governor in Council to the Local Government Commission along with other commissioners. When the vacancy occurred the position was advertised and Mr Badham applied for the position. He went through the due processes, and his excellent record and his standing with the local government scene in Victoria were sufficient to secure his endorsement for the position. I had no hesitation in appointing him.

CARLTON AND UNITED BREWERIES LTD DISPUTE

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—What action is the Minister for Labour taking to assist in resolving the three-week old Carlton and United Breweries Ltd drivers' strike, recognising the serious ramifications this will have for the financial viability of liquor retailers and the problem of meeting their licence fees, which are due to be paid next month?

Mr CRABB (Minister for Labour)—In regard to the dispute at Carlton and United Breweries Ltd, the company concerned certainly did not ask for Government advice or support before it took the action that it did. I am sure the company would admit also that the matter has not been conducted in the most efficacious manner from an industrial point of view. The situation having reached its present stage, it is a matter of picking up spilt milk—perhaps “picking up spilt beer” is a better way of describing it.

Mr Williams—He runs both the beer and the milk.

Mr CRABB—I hope the honourable member for Doncaster is not suggesting that Foster's is an essential service!

Mr Williams—I am talking about Fox, and you know it!

Mr CRABB—I have been in communication with all the parties to the dispute and have offered to assist in any way possible. That offer has not been taken up by any of the parties so far, other than the Australian Hotels Association, which is not involved in the dispute in that sense.

A difficult position certainly exists at present, and I shall continue to talk to the parties to the dispute and make every possible endeavour to seek a resolution at the earliest possible time.

PETITIONS

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

Delta Task Force

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE VICTORIAN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED:

The humble petition of the undersigned citizens of Australia respectfully sheweth that your petitioners are gravely concerned that since the disbandment of the Delta Task Force, the sexual exploitation of children has greatly increased. This petition seeks the re-institution of Delta Task Force or an increase in the powers of the existing Child Exploitation Unit to a level equivalent to that of the Delta Task Force.

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

By **Mr Gude** (221 signatures)

Cranbourne-Narre Warren road

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

The humble petition of residents of Cranbourne-Narre Warren Road, also known as Cameron Street, Cranbourne, Victoria sheweth concern for current and future funding for road construction in Cranbourne Shire, Victoria, particularly Cranbourne-Narre Warren Road and for which there is an application currently before the Road Construction Authority. Your petitioners therefore pray that.

The Government include in Cranbourne shire's Road Construction Authority allocation a firm commitment of funds to cover construction and sealing in 1987 for Cranbourne-Narre Warren Road, Cranbourne, Victoria.

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

By **Mr Maclellan** (22 signatures)

Brothels

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

This humble petition of the undersigned citizens of the City of Moe and district sheweth that we are totally opposed to any action which will enable brothels to be established within the municipality of the City of Moe and in particular we are opposed to:

1. the adoption by the State Government of any recommendation of the Neave report into prostitution which will deny any municipality the right to decide if it will allow brothels to be a permitted use in a zone in its planning scheme, and

2. the idea that the towns of Traralgon, Morwell and Moe should be considered as one urban area with a population in excess of 20 000 persons for the purpose of denying those areas the natural right to refuse to allow brothels as a permitted use in their respective planning schemes when such areas are quite separate and distinct municipalities.

Your Petitioners therefore pray that the State Government immediately abandons any intention to force the City of Moe to provide for brothels as a permitted use in its planning scheme.

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

By **Mr Delzoppo** (44, 74 and 17 signatures)

Euthanasia

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

The petition of the undersigned citizens of the State of Victoria respectfully sheweth:

—that the lives of the aged, the sick and disabled in Victoria are under attack from the euthanasia movement

—that the terms of reference of the “Dying With Dignity” inquiry are not based on the principle that the lives of the aged, the sick and disabled should be protected by law until ended by natural death

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that the Government of the State of Victoria will reject any recommendation to introduce euthanasia in any form through either legislation or regulation and will ensure that the lives of all human beings are protected by law.

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

By **Mr Weideman** (297 signatures)

Police strength

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

The humble petition of the undersigned citizens of the State of Victoria sheweth that there is considerable community concern at the general level of lawlessness in the Western Port and Mornington Peninsula area and calls upon the Government of Victoria to make available adequate numbers of police to properly protect lives and property of all citizens in the above named area.

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

By **Mr Cooper** (402 signatures)

Public libraries

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

The humble petition of the undersigned citizens of the State of Victoria sheweth that the proposed cuts of \$2 million to public library funding in the 1987–1988 and again in the 1988–1989 financial years will have catastrophic effects on the services provided by the already under-funded public libraries.

Your petitioners therefore pray that the Government reverse this decision and return to the stated A.L.P. policy of 50:50 funding of public libraries between State and local government. And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

By **Mr Cooper** (1868 signatures)

Pollution of water supply

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

The humble petition of the undersigned citizens of the State of Victoria sheweth that their water supply has become polluted due to the addition of chemicals. Your petitioners therefore pray that action be taken to prevent the addition of chemicals which have been shown to injure man, animals or plants to the community water supply. And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

By **Dr Wells** (10 162 signatures)

Meat trading hours

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER, MR C. T. EDMUNDS, MP, AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY IN THE PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA ASSEMBLED:

The petition of the undersigned citizens of Australia respectfully sheweth:

The concern of the members of the Meat and Allied Trades Federation of Australia (Victorian Division) and residents of Ballarat South at the possible extension of trading hours for retail butcher shops in Victoria beyond the hours presently prescribed by the Labour and Industry Act 1958, as amended, as such action would increase costs, aggravate inflation and unemployment in the retail butchering industry; discriminate against labour intensive small firms employing full-time skilled employees in favour of giant self-service retail chains mainly employing junior staff at casual rates and would not be in the best interests of the community.

We respectfully submit that any extension of trading hours would seriously impact the 'quality of life' of the small business owner manager and the 'quality of work life' of employees of small and independent firms.

We respectfully urge all Members of Parliament to support an amendment to the Shop Trading Act 1986 to maintain the status quo.

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

By **Mr Sheehan** (2164 signatures)

Ministry of Education houses

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

The humble petition of the Lake Bolac Primary School Parents Club and the Community of Lake Bolac and District sheweth that the Government policy regarding the sale of Ministry of Education housing will leave Lake Bolac and other country areas without adequate teacher accommodation and thereby threaten the viability of our schools and community.

Your petitioners therefore pray that the Government take immediate action to place Ministry of Education Department houses in Lake Bolac and surrounding districts on the "Require to Occupy" list. We also strongly recommend that your Government review current policy regarding Government housing, particularly in country areas.

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

By **Mr Austin** (493 signatures)

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

PAPERS

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

State Board of Education—Report for the year 1985–86.

The following proclamations fixing operative dates for various Acts were laid on the table by the Clerk, pursuant to an Order of the House dated 24 February 1987:

Annual Reporting (Amendment) Act 1986—23 December 1986 (*Gazette* No. 109, 31 December 1986)

Education (Amendment) Act 1986—Whole Act (other than sections 7 and 8)—31 December 1986: sections 7 and 8—1 July 1987 (*Gazette* No. 108, 23 December 1986)

Emergency Management Act 1986—Sections 8, 9, 18 to 21, 25 to 35, 37 and 38—3 December 1986 (*Gazette* No. 101, 3 December 1986)

Estate Agents (Amendment) Act 1986—8 October 1986 (*Gazette* No. 83, 8 October 1986)

Firearms (Amendment) Act 1985—Sections 5 to 8 and 13—1 January 1987 (*Gazette* No. 104, 7 December 1986)

Firearms (General Amendment) Act 1984—Sections 10, 11 (1) and 11 (4)—1 January 1987 (*Gazette* No. 104, 17 December 1986)

Local Government (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 1986—Sections 1, 2, 18 (1) (b), 18 (2), 19 to 35—10 December 1986; section 18 (1) (a)—1 March 1987; section 39—1 January 1987 (*Gazette* No. 102, 10 December 1986)

Local Government (General Amendment) Act 1986—Sections 1 to 6—22 January 1987 (*Gazette* No. G1, 7 January 1987)

- Lotteries Gaming and Betting (Amendment) Act 1986—Section 9—8 December 1986 (*Gazette* No. 101, 3 December 1986)
- Petroleum (Submerged Lands) (Amendment) Act 1986—1 December 1986 (*Gazette* No. 99, 26 November 1986)
- Port Authorities (Amendment) Act 1986—Sections 1 to 30 and 32 to 81—23 December 1986 (*Gazette* No. 108, 23 December 1986)
- Post-Secondary Education Remuneration Tribunal (Repeal) Act 1986—10 December 1986 (*Gazette* No. 101, 3 December 1986)
- Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986—Sections 1, 4 to 6, 8 to 25, 26 (other than paragraph (h) of sub-section (2)), 27 to 41 and 42 (other than paragraph (n) of sub-section (1))—4 March 1987 (*Gazette* No. G1, 7 January 1987)
- Racing (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 1986—Sections 1 to 5, 9 to 12 and 14—31 January 1987 (*Gazette* No. G3, 21 January 1987)
- Road Safety Act 1986—Sections 1 to 4, 101 and Item No. 3 of Schedule 3—1 January 1987 (*Gazette* No. 108, 23 December 1986)
- Rural Finance (Amendment) Act 1986—26 November 1986 (*Gazette* No. 99, 26 November 1986)
- Taxation Acts (Amendment) Act 1986—9 December 1986 Section 10—15 July 1985; section 24—18 September 1986; section 31—1 January 1986; section 5—1 January 1987; remainder (except sections 11, 12 and 30)—9 December 1986; (*Gazette* No. 104, 17 December 1986); sections 11 and 12—1 February 1987 (*Gazette* No. G4, 28 January 1987)
- Transport Accident Act 1986—Sections 121 and 180 (2)—1 February 1987 (*Gazette* No. G4, 28 January 1987)
- Transport (Amendment) Act 1986—Sections 3 and 41 (b)—12 January 1987 (*Gazette* No. 108, 23 December 1986); Sections 1, 2, 4, 6 to 30 (1), 31 to 41 (a) and 42 to 44—17 December 1986 (*Gazette* No. 104, 17 December 1986)
- Travel Agents Act 1986—Whole Act (except sections 37 and 38)—1 February 1987 (*Gazette* No. G3, 21 January 1987)
- Water Acts (Further Amendment) Act 1986—Sections 31 and 32—24 December 1986 (*Gazette* No. 108, 23 December 1986)
- Water (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 1986—Sections 6, 8, 14 to 18 and 21 to 43—24 December 1986 (*Gazette* No. 108, 23 December 1986)

GAS AND FUEL CORPORATION (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr FORDHAM (Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Gas and Fuel Corporation Act 1958 and to repeal the Gas Act 1969, the Gas Franchises Act 1970 and the Liquefied Petroleum Gas Subsidy Act 1980 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

SHOP TRADING BILL

Mr FORDHAM (Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to provide for the regulation of shop trading, to make consequential amendments to certain Acts and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

CONSERVATION, FORESTS AND LANDS BILL

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Education) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to create a body corporate called the Director-General of Conservation, Forests and Lands, to abolish various bodies and transfer their functions to that body corporate, to provide for the

administration and enforcement of Acts administered by the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands and for other matters concerning land management, to make consequential amendments to various Acts and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

NATIONAL PARKS (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Education) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to establish new parks, to enlarge and vary the boundaries of existing parks, to amend the National Parks Act 1975 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr CRABB (Minister for Labour) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to repeal the Hospitals Remuneration Tribunal Act 1978, to amend the Industrial Relations Act 1979, and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

JUDICIAL SALARIES BILL

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for the Arts) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to make provision for determining judicial salaries, to amend the Constitution Act 1975 and the County Court Act 1958 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

PLANNING APPEALS (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for the Arts) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act 1984 and the Planning Appeals Board Act 1980, to make consequential amendments to certain other Acts and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

HEALTH SERVICES (CONCILIATION AND REVIEW) BILL

Mr ROPER (Minister for Transport) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to provide an independent and accessible review mechanism for users of health services and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

VICTORIA GRANTS COMMISSION (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr **SIMMONDS** (Minister for Local Government) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Victoria Grants Commission Act 1976 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT BILL

Mr **WILKES** (Minister for Housing) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to establish a framework for planning the use and development of land in Victoria and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr **FORDHAM** (Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill is introduced as a privilege Bill. It seeks to make changes to the Extractive Industries Act to remove discriminatory language from the Act in accordance with Government policy.

The Bill also makes amendments to: reflect machinery of Government changes to a number of departments and agencies; and clarify the position of applicants and objectors with respect to compliance with the Extractive Industries Act and the Town and Country Planning Act.

It has been an important objective of this Government to remove discriminatory practices from legislation. I am pleased that in the resources area of my portfolio this Bill proposes to remove discriminatory practice presently in force by deleting references to 'boys' and ensuring that the Act reflects equal opportunity practices which now apply to extractive industries. This need for change is recognised and supported by industry.

The Bill more clearly states the intention of amendments previously put forward in 1984 and 1986 by solving problems of clarity resulting from the timing of previous amendments.

It is proposed in this Bill to make amendments to reflect machinery of Government changes to a number of departments and agencies. These changes will make the Extractive Industries Act more readable and clarify for industry and the public the appropriate departments to be consulted in the decision-making process on any extractive industry application.

The Bill, as well as making machinery changes, addresses the issue of joint advertising of applications for extractive industry leases and licences under both the Extractive Industries Act and the Town and Country Planning Act.

The section dealing with joint advertising included in the 1984 amendments to the Act is amended in this Bill by making the Town and Country Planning Act the Act to be complied with to satisfy the conditions of the Extractive Industries Act. This reverses the section as previously written and is a consequence of consultation with the Ministry for Planning and Environment to adopt the more extensive and discretionary principles of the Town and Country Planning Act. The change will ensure that advertising of extractive industry applications is efficient and is undertaken only once instead of twice and provides an opportunity for the public to participate in the public consultation process in a more effective manner.

The Bill now before the House is designed to give previous enactments greater clarity and make the principal Act a more effective piece of legislation.

I invite the spokespersons from both the Opposition and the National Party who will be handling the Bill to contact me because I shall be pleased to facilitate briefing from officers within the Ministry to ensure that the opposition parties are fully aware of the details of the Bill.

I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, March 10.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH Address-in-Reply

The debate (adjourned from the previous day) on the motion of Mr Pope (Monbulk) for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech was resumed.

Mr PLOWMAN (Evelyn)—I am pleased to enter the Address-in-Reply debate. In doing so I congratulate the Governor on the delivery of his Speech. I am sure you will agree, Mr Speaker, that, with the Governor's soft brogue, he delivered the Speech beautifully. It was a pleasure to listen to it. However, the political content is another matter, part of which I intend to deal with this afternoon. My colleagues on the Opposition side of the House will deal with various other areas of the Speech during the debate.

I pledge my loyalty to the Crown and the Queen, and I should like the Governor to express that loyalty to the Queen on behalf of the vast majority of electors within my electorate.

The Speech by the Governor placed heavy emphasis on a number of areas. One of those areas was the issue of conservation. I shall direct my remarks predominantly to that area. If one wishes to examine the conservation issue and consider the real facts, not the words of the Governor in his Speech, one examines the operations of the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands. In making that examination one finds some severe shortcomings. One notes the maladministration, due largely to under-resourcing. One notes gross financial mismanagement and the State's assets, namely, national parks, productive forests, Crown land and private land, being threatened by neglect, particularly neglect in fire prevention measures, by the department.

Mr Fordham—Rubbish!

Mr PLOWMAN—I should like the Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources to listen and I shall explain to him carefully where that neglect has taken place and indicate that it is not only the Opposition saying it, but also other people, such as members of the Country Fire Authority, who support that view.

One also notes an ideological fog imposed on the department by the Minister and her left-wing party faithfuls. One notes the appalling morale throughout the department. Let the Minister deny that, if she wishes! The Cain Government, by its administration, has managed to turn the pride in employment of departmental employees across the full spectrum of the department into a feeling that "it is just a job".

The Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands has been singled out by the Auditor-General as one of the slowest payers of accounts and one of the departments with the most outstanding accounts in Victoria. Traders in the Orbest area as well as traders in other areas of the State will deal with the department only on a cash on delivery basis. It is a "COD" department. That is an indictment of the capacity of the Government to run the finances of the department. The Auditor-General, in his report to Parliament of 21

November 1986, indicated that the department was unable to provide supporting documentation to verify \$25 million worth of accounts. It was not only a handful of accounts, but accounts totalling \$25 million, for which the department was unable to provide verifying documentation. The Auditor-General stated:

The journal entries which affected recurrent and works and services expenditure were in excess of \$25 million and the department was unable to provide supporting documentation to enable an audit to verify their validity.

It is an extraordinary situation that the department was unable to verify expenditure of \$25 million. Let the Government scoff at that statement by the Auditor-General! The department instructs outdoor staff in one district for one day a week to remain within the departmental compound, to sit down, read books, play cards and stay out of sight because the Government is not providing the resources for the proper employment of those employees.

One of the old-time employees of the department in this area told me that he used to be proud to be an operator with the department, but is now ashamed to walk down the main street of his town as members of the public call him a bludger and say he is not doing his job. His morale is shattered. He is simply an example of thousands of others within the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands around the State. The department has exceptionally poor morale across the board.

It is little wonder that this is occurring as a result of the maladministration of the Minister and the Cain Labor Government, and Victorians are the losers. I do not assign blame for the sorry saga of the present situation to the officers of the department, who would wish to be carrying out their responsibilities in the way they formerly did in former departments.

I place responsibility for the maladministration and poor delivery of services to the people of Victoria squarely on the shoulders of the Government of the day and the Minister who administers the department. As a result of the Government's policies, there is a marked downturn in the services provided to the Victorian people.

Mrs Toner—What nonsense!

Mr PLOWMAN—I wonder how often the honourable member for Greensborough has been out into the field to see what is happening beyond the end of the tramlines. Regrettably, many others like her say it is nonsense while sitting in the comfort of suburbia. They are not prepared to go out and look at the real world. Unfortunately, that situation also applies to the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands, who appears not to go out into the real world to find out what is happening within her own department.

The previously provided services by loyal, technically skilled and adequately resourced and proud officers of the former Forests Commission provided an excellent service for Victoria and people used to come from overseas to examine our forest services and to examine the way in which the commission operated the National Parks Service, the Fisheries and Wildlife Service and the Land Protection Service including the Soil Conservation Authority and the Vermin and Noxious Weeds Destruction Board which were also comprised of highly efficient dedicated officers.

With the restructure that the Government has imposed on the department, these officers have been thrown into a hotchpotch of a department and their previous loyalties and pride in their positions and services to Victoria have been intentionally broken down so that the new restructure can arise from the chaos that has been created.

The officers have not been provided with clear career paths and every officer within the department is expected to be able to transfer his or her responsibility—be it forests, fisheries, soil conservation or whatever—across the full spectrum. This is a nice socialist philosophy, but in the real world it simply does not work. Officers need a structure that gives them clear job specifications and definitions and clear career paths.

As I mentioned, the morale in this department is appalling and I suggest that this applies across the State. The Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands rejects this proposal. She rejected it as recently as yesterday in a radio interview.

However, I simply ask the question: to whom is the Minister speaking when she travels around Victoria, as I know she does so substantially? From whom is she obtaining information?

I have examined statements made by the General President of the Victorian Public Service Association who represents the officers working within the department. In a recent radio interview he said that there is no doubt the morale of the staff is at an all time low.

The Minister simply rejects this statement when it is made by me and others and says that these statements are made for political purposes. I should like to again ask the question: to whom does the Minister speak?

Since my appointment as the Opposition shadow Minister in this field, for the past fifteen months I have travelled widely throughout Victoria and have spoken to a great number of people employed in the department. Of course, the regional managers are saying that they are improving the staff morale in their department. They have to. I believe they are doing an excellent job in trying to achieve improved morale. But, when one speaks to the people in the work place—the people who are really doing the job—one obtains a different story; one gets a true story about the disgraceful morale and the consequence is the poor provision of services by this department to the people of Victoria.

I shall quote further from Mr Jim Anderson, the General President of the Victorian Public Service Association, who said:

There is no doubt that morale is at an all time low. In some areas officers are able to cope, but this is generally at the expense of other areas. In other areas it is just not happening. I give an example in the fire protection area we are finding hundreds and hundreds of kilometres of fire access tracks are now being closed because work is not being done to maintain them.

It is a scandal that fire access roads are being neglected by this Government. This poses an extreme threat not only to forests, Crown land and national parks, but also to private land and people living adjacent to those areas of Crown land.

As my colleague, the honourable member for Benambra interposes, after the Ash Wednesday disaster it is hard to believe the Government could be so shortsighted that it would not ensure that forest roads and especially fire access tracks are properly maintained to ensure the minimisation of fire risk.

One classic example of this occurs in the Dandenong Ranges, and, coincidentally, those ranges are located in the Central Highlands Province, although that is not why I raise the matter. I shall quote from an article that appeared in the *Sun Easterly* on 28 January 1987. Under the heading "Firefighters Warn of Another Disaster" the article states:

Firefighters throughout the Dandenongs this week warned of a possible repeat of the Ash Wednesday holocaust.

It is the first time so many CFA units and fire prevention community in the hills have sounded such an alert since 1983's fires.

They said thick bushland on the western face of Mt Dandenong was in direct threat to the townships of Olinda, Kalorama and Sassafras.

They have blamed the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands, and its Minister, Mrs Kirner, for failing to clear the area.

Olinda CFA captain Mr John Faull said he sent a telegram to Mrs Kirner last week to tell her she was ill-informed.

Mr Faull said letters Mrs Kirner had sent to the CFA on fire prevention works in the area were "ridiculous and confused".

"The fire breaks are nearly inaccessible and we have been talking to the DCFL for two years about doing something".

This situation poses a real threat to Victorians and to the assets of Victoria as well as the lives, livelihoods and homes of people throughout the State, especially in the areas adjacent to Crown land.

Another area that is being severely neglected is the maintenance of forest roads. I instance the situation in the Alexandra region where the Treasury accepts approximately \$4 million in royalties in this region alone. For the year 1986-87 a paltry allowance of \$200 000 was made for forest road maintenance. Of that allowance \$80 000 was specifically earmarked for silviculture experimental work. That leaves \$120 000 to cover all forest road maintenance in the Alexandra region.

I contrast the \$4 million income from that area with an expenditure of only \$120 000 on forest road maintenance. Recently I spent some time travelling on forest roads with people in the north-eastern part of the State and I found that the crowns of the roads are breaking up. The roads are powder dry with either a powder dust surface or they have been worn down to bedrock. The condition of the roads is causing considerable cost to contract carriers with tyres, front ends and suspension systems of their vehicles being knocked about by the roads.

The point I wish to make is that the neglect of these forest roads which are assets of Victoria will mean that in the long run when these roads have completely broken down and have to be upgraded the cost to Victoria will be infinitely higher than the cost of providing ongoing maintenance.

Mrs Toner interjected.

Mr PLOWMAN—The honourable member for Greensborough might relate that back to the painting of her house.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Kirkwood)—Order! The honourable member for Greensborough, who is interjecting, is out of order.

Mr PLOWMAN—I shall not mention the honourable member for Greensborough in particular and any honourable member would realise that if one allows the paint on one's house to deteriorate in the extreme, the ultimate cost of restoring the house to a reasonable condition would be infinitely more than regular maintenance to keep it in good condition.

The cost to Victoria, taxpayers and the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands will be multiplied many times over by this neglect. I have already mentioned that due to the neglect of fire tracks, which are becoming overgrown in the Dandenongs, the north east of Victoria, the Otways and Gippsland because they have not been graded or cleared, some are becoming almost impassable.

The neglect of these tracks is posing a grave threat to the resources of the State. It is scandalous that the Government is not prepared to make money available through programs conducted by the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands and is not prepared to face its responsibilities.

In areas where sawmillers are responsible for the maintenance of the roads, the roads are in good condition. One needs to know where the sawmillers' responsibility begins and ends and where the department's responsibility begins and ends. In the areas for which the department has responsibility the roads are badly maintained or completely neglected.

Earlier I quoted figures from the Alexandra region which were provided by the Assistant Regional Manager of Public Land Management in a letter to J. L. Gould, the Managing Director of J. L. Gould Sawmillers. I am willing to make that letter available to any honourable member who wishes to read it.

This problem is not specific only to the Alexandra region: recently in an interview on radio the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands denied that this problem existed around Victoria. She said that there might be only one region in which this problem

existed. After discussing the matter with people in western Victoria, the north east and east Gippsland I have discovered that they are facing the same problems.

Heavy machines that are owned by the department for the maintenance of roads are lying idle. At Cann River a large Caterpillar grader and Caterpillar bulldozer, which were formerly used for road maintenance and construction of forest roads, have been lying idle for four months. The reason for this is that the department has not had the money to fuel the machines or to operate them properly to maintain the State's assets.

Formerly the Mansfield district had a large D-7 bulldozer and a grader to maintain forest roads and fire tracks. They have been removed from the district. Machinery has been withdrawn and equipment has been run down in the Otways district. Proper maintenance work cannot be undertaken if there is no machinery to carry out the work or if the Government is not prepared to provide the necessary resources to allow the machines to run.

In a recent radio interview the Minister also said that this was not the case. She suggested that it might be happening in only one region. I suggest that the Minister should leave her ivory tower when she visits the various regions and should talk to the people involved—the contractors who are carting logs from the bush, the sawmillers, the staff at the lower echelons of the department and outside staff—as well as the regional managers. Then she will be given a clear indication of the maintenance of forest roads and fire tracks throughout Victoria and of the morale of the department.

The neglect of fire tracks and forest roads threatens the State's assets, productive timber, national parks and adjoining private land. This was pointed out by residents of the Dandenong Ranges. The threat it poses is another holocaust similar to the Ash Wednesday bushfires.

The Governor stated in his Speech that he was pleased to advise that land now held and controlled by the National Parks Service has increased by 36 per cent. The Government is proud of this increase, which is part of its ongoing program to declare national parks. Unfortunately these vital areas are not being properly resourced.

In answer to a charge not just from me but also from officers within her department, from the Victorian Public Service Association and people throughout Victoria who are concerned about the maintenance of national parks, the Minister said that it was simply a change of status. How can the declaration of Crown land or reserve forest land as a national park involve simply a change of status and no need for additional resources? By saying that no additional money is required to run a national park the Minister is putting her head in the sand.

If it were simply a change of status and involved no additional input, why is it necessary to make the change at all? Why declare an area a national park? Why not leave the land as Crown land or as reserve forest?

Mr Lieberman—What's in a name?

Mr PLOWMAN—Yes, what is in a name, as the honourable member for Benambra eloquently put it? It is nonsense to suggest that a national park requires no more expenditure than a reserve forest, a productive forest or Crown land.

Unless the Government declares an area of land worthy of the status of a national park and unless the land is properly resourced, it will simply debase the nature and value of national parks. Any area of land declared a national park should be significant on a national and world scale. The national park declaration should increase the expectations of those who will be visiting the area.

The department is concerned about the increase in visitors to the Grampians and the effect this increase is having on the condition of the park. When an area of land is declared a national park, certain facilities must be provided to service the visitors to the area. For

example, toilets, rubbish disposal and camping areas should be made available to visitors and that involves additional expenditure.

The Government is increasing the number of national parks in Victoria, and spreading the available resources over a wider area. In this instance, a diminishing resource is being spread over an additional 36 per cent of land, which will result in the degradation and downgrading of the park system in Victoria.

The other sting in the tail of the Government rushing to declare national parks is that it is locking up valuable renewable timber resources, and that must be taken into consideration. The parks are costing the Government more to run and it is locking up resources that should be available to Victoria. Victorians will be the losers as a consequence.

Land protection covering soil conservation, salinity, vermin and noxious weeds has suffered a severe reduction in funding. Some time ago, the Government unloaded the former Chairman of the Vermin and Noxious Weeds Destruction Board, David Sexton, who probably had more knowledge of the problem than anyone else in Victoria. His knowledge was of enormous value to Victorians and, since he has gone, the Budget allocation has been reduced by 7.2 per cent. When one considers that the consumer price index for inflation is running at 10.2 per cent, the reduction in the Government's allocation is 17.4 per cent. When this figure is weighted for a one-off fire contribution from Treasury included in the last Budget, the allocation is reduced by approximately 15 per cent.

The results are as I have mentioned in the area of preventative measures. There are insufficient resources for field officers to carry out the jobs for which they are employed. The Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands is unable to cope with the vast proliferation of noxious weeds, especially in high rainfall areas, the alpine areas and the parks of Victoria.

There has been a large spread of ragwort, St John's wort and blackberries, and a severe explosion of noxious weeds in Gippsland. The Shire of Korumburra has moved a motion of no confidence in the Minister because of her incapacity to handle the noxious weed problem in that area.

Noxious weeds have spread on Crown lands and officers who understand the problem know that, like the old adage says, one year's seeding will bring about seven years' weeding. The ultimate eradication costs will be horrendous.

The rabbit population has increased markedly. I shall quote from an article written by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation which appeared in *Stock and Land* under the heading, "Rabbits remain the major pest". The article states:

Rabbits still head the Australian feral pest hit-list and will become an increasing burden on farmers and the environment if the species is left to practise its own form of land degradation.

This is the stark warning to emerge from the CSIRO Division of Wildlife and Rangelands Research this week as rural Australians watch with horror the upwards leap in the rabbit population.

In areas I have visited, such as the Victorian highlands, I have seen more rabbits than I have seen since the introduction of myxomatosis in the 1950s. Rabbits are reaching plague proportions. One may believe that noxious weeds and rabbits are a small problem, but they are a major cause of land degradation.

The Government suggested to the Governor that he tell the people of Victoria in his Speech that the Government is doing a wonderful job in the field of conservation, forests and lands. However, because of insufficient resources, rabbits, pests and noxious weeds are increasing.

The morale of the workers is low, especially those who were employed by the former Department of Crown Lands and Survey and who can see the problems. The Government is telling Victorians to tighten their belts, be more efficient and reduce expenditure.

Mrs Toner—What is wrong with that?

Mr PLOWMAN—I agree with that principle, but the Government indicated, through the Governor's Speech, that it was concerned about conservation and that it was one of its high priorities. Despite that, it has reduced the Budget allocations for conservation by 7·2 per cent. The Government cannot have its cake and eat it too; the Government is strong on rhetoric but does not put its money where its mouth is.

I have referred to the ideological fog that has prevented the proper use of resources in this State. I refer specifically to the Otways area and the Errinundra plateau where the Government has capitulated to the extremist conservationist lobby. I have visited the Errinundra plateau twice, as recently as December last year, with fifteen other members of the Liberal Party conservation, forests and lands committee. Any person visiting that area would be horrified to see the vast wastage of material left on the forest floor after logging has taken place.

The Government has agreed that logging can take place, but it will not agree to the vast amount of material left after logging being used for anything other than a few posts or some firewood. Due to ideological restraints, the Government has decided that the material cannot be used for woodchipping. Millions of dollars worth of resources are being left to rot on the forest floor because of the ideological hangups of the Government.

In fact, it is a matter of more than just using these forest wastes to produce jobs and revenue. When one sees the enormous quantity of waste product that is left on the floor of the forest to rot down over 120-odd years, one sees that this inhibits regeneration of the forest after logging; it blocks fire control access and ultimately impedes the harvesting of that renewed forest in 70 to 90 years' time. It is simply ideological nonsense, and the State is turning its back on jobs that would be available if these resources were properly used to allow the revenue to flow to Victoria.

The honourable member for Greensborough said that we should tighten our belts. I do not disagree with that, but we should also use the resources of this State to the best possible effect for the benefit of Victorians and to produce income for this State and this nation.

In summary, in the area of conservation, forests and lands, the Governor's Speech told of the importance that the Government places on this aspect. Honourable members see a restructured department where morale is now at rock bottom. We have seen the assets of the State threatened by inefficient maintenance of forest and fire prevention forest roads. Although the Government preaches the importance of conservation, it does not put its money where its mouth is. This situation is an indictment of the Minister and the Cain Government. The Victorian people should see that part of the Governor's Speech for what it is worth—a cynical effort to mislead the people of this State.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Kirkwood)—Order! I should explain to the House that the National Party has not yet had a speaker in the Address-in-Reply debate, and I now call the Deputy Leader of the National Party.

Mr HANN (Rodney)—The address by His Excellency the Governor on behalf of the Government yesterday is disappointing in that it does not offer very much hope for Victoria. It offers a lot of rhetoric but very little hope for the homeless, for the children in poverty and for the unemployed. A false sense of security is created because, of course, the Government has been employing many younger people under its massive increase in Government employment.

In recent years the rural sector has had virtually no support of any significance from the Government. That is one reason why this is an exciting time for the National Party on the Australian political scene. For the first time, the National Party is able to say that there is a conservative force in this nation that is prepared to bring it back into some sort of order; to provide real incentive and encouragement for individuals; to look to the protection of the family—a matter in which I am sure the honourable member for Greensborough will be interested; and particularly to provide a real impetus for private enterprise and for individuals with initiative.

It is interesting to note in the Governor's Speech the reference to the days when Australia rode on the sheep's back and on what could be dug out of the ground. The suggestion is that Victoria stumbled into the modern economic era burdened by the baggage of an earlier one from those days when it was possible to think that this nation rode on the sheep's back and on what could be dug out of the ground.

Burdened by the baggage of that era! I should not have thought that the State of Victoria was burdened! In fact, I should have thought that the early 1950s was the largest single growth period in the history of this State. The wool industry was booming; wool, for example, was making a pound for a pound, and there was an enormous boost in the economy with Victoria and Australia riding on the sheep's back. That provided the impetus for a very healthy economic climate through the 1950s and 1960s.

Victoria has limited resources, the bulk of which are used to generate electricity as a cheap energy source, and that encourages manufacturing. It is not a State with huge mineral resources to exploit, apart from the gold of the early 1850s boom. The bulk of our resources these days is being used as a cheap energy source.

The Governor went on to suggest to Parliament that manufacturing industry will be the solution to Victoria's economic ills; that this is the way to boost export revenue; that it is the way in which Victoria will proceed in the future. As I have said on a previous occasion in this Parliament, if one considers the practical reality of that type of philosophy on the industrial scene in Australia, where we have a regulated wage market that takes little account of the profitability within individual industries and the manufacturing sector and of the extremely generous benefits that were provided to wage earners in the healthy economic period of the 1960s and 1970s—I am talking about annual leave of four weeks in many industries, more like seven or eight weeks in others if one takes into account rostered days off, the nine-day fortnight, the additional public holidays that have been granted, the 38-hour week, the 35-hour week and some people who are working as few as 33 hours a week in the Public Service—one must ask how Australia can possibly compete with overseas manufacturing companies where workers work six days a week with perhaps one week's annual leave. Workers in those countries are totally dedicated to the growth and development of their individual nations: Japan is a good example.

Other Asian countries are highly specialised in manufacturing skills, but the Victorian Government and the Federal Government are suggesting that the way to solve all of our economic ills is to boost manufacturing industry. I have always strongly supported a strong manufacturing base in this State because that is important in maintaining a level of employment; and it is important to provide maximum employment opportunities.

I am well aware of the employment opportunities in the electorate of Springvale because, in company with the former honourable member for Springvale prior to his death and several Labor Party members at the time, I toured the plant of a major car manufacturer in that area, the Nissan plant. It was an interesting experience as a member of the National Party to be invited to go out there and view the robots.

It is vital to encourage the manufacturing sector; but, in the present economic climate, it is not realistic for the Government to believe this will solve the economic ills of the State.

Victoria's wealth is still on the sheep's back. In fact, if wool and sheep meat, particularly lamb, had not held their value in the current year, this country would be in a far worse position than it is today because the wool industry has been the most significant earner of overseas revenue in the past twelve months.

Much of that revenue, of course, has come into the State of Victoria. The beef industry, similarly, has been going through a bitter period, largely because of the devaluation of the dollar, not necessarily because the returns overseas have increased dramatically. That industry has also been providing a valuable resource.

The reality is that in Victoria the most productive area from which to generate income is the rural sector. We are an intense agricultural State with the potential to generate hundreds of millions of dollars of export revenue if that sector is encouraged.

Governments are down-playing that role and the function of the rural sector and failing to provide the support that is required, particularly in relation to the difficulties experienced by many people in the rural industry at present as a result of higher interest rates. Some people are paying 18, 19, 20 and 21 per cent for the money they have borrowed and in the past five years in Victoria we have seen a transfer of equity away from the individual landholders and to our major lending institutions; and all that that deregulation has done in the banking sector is to make the lending institutions of the banks more generous in the allocation of finance; but at what cost? At the cost of higher interest rates.

If there were a 6 per cent reduction in interest rates in Australia at present, it would bring about a 50 per cent increase in profitability on the average farm. That action alone would dramatically increase the revenue available within Victoria and drastically increase the whole economy of the State.

It would mean a significant improvement because, at present, that revenue is being lost from those farms to the banking and lending institutions, which are showing excessive profits; the equity of the individual landholder is being reduced and the available economic resources that can be spent within and beyond those communities are also being reduced.

For example, the manufacturing sector of agricultural machinery is in an alarming situation. Many of our machinery dealers have been forced into bankruptcy in the past two years. One major company in the electorate I represent is tomorrow selling up virtually all of the machinery that it has held on the floor for the past two to three years in the hope that it will see an improvement, especially in the grain industry.

That economic improvement has not come about to date and the company has been forced to liquidate its stock for whatever it can get for it to reduce the huge cost of borrowing in order to keep the second-hand and new machinery on the floor of that particular business. They are paying interest rates up around the 20 per cent rate to major lending institutions.

If a person is paying an interest rate more than 20 per cent, and the bank charges are added, effectively every four years that person pays out the amount of the principal in interest. It is an impossible and hopeless situation, especially when people have borrowed minimums of \$100 000 but more likely between \$300 000 and \$700 000 and, in some instances, millions of dollars.

Back in 1975-76, a recession hit the rural sector but we had a more generous Government at the Federal level at that time. The coalition Government, led by National Party Ministers in the primary industry and trade portfolio, were able to help the rural sector.

Mrs Toner—They were big spenders!

Mr HANN—It is important to correct the statement made by the honourable member for Greensborough. They invested in the future of agriculture in this nation. They were prepared to inject hundreds of millions of dollars that were necessary under rural adjustment programs as an investment because they could see that an investment of \$100 million in 1976 would return an investment of several thousand million dollars in subsequent years if people were protected in their farms through the crisis period.

Instead of this policy, the present Federal Labor Government provides an interest subsidy that means, effectively, very little total cash is being provided by the Federal Government to assist the rural people who, at present, are in this debt crisis situation. Also, additional pressure is being placed upon the existing lenders of financial resources resulting in a failure to recognise the reality that if one invests \$100 million or \$200 million at this time to reduce those interest rates for the rural sector, it will turn around rapidly and the money will come back into Commonwealth revenue quickly and will

boost not only the rural sector but also all of the various manufacturing and commercial sectors beyond the farm gate.

The loss of that employment in country towns as a result of the closure of major machinery dealers but more importantly the loss of employment in places like Geelong and Sunshine and areas of Melbourne—where machinery manufacturers have closed down because of the Labor Government's economic policy—should be of concern to the Government, to the Premier and to the Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources as well as to the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs and the Minister for Labour. However, it appears that they have a head in the sand attitude on this whole economic philosophy.

The Government's philosophy appears to be totally committed to the principle of new technology and manufacturing industry, but we have missed the boat in that area, which explains the reason for this conservative push in the political scene in Australia, particularly led by grassroots people in rural areas but also in the major provincial towns and cities and by people who are sick and tired of revenue being taken from them in taxation and squandered by both the State and Federal Governments, which is having a dramatic effect upon the total economy.

The result is this ground swell of the "new right" and the new conservative movement; but it is not the new right—it is a group of ordinary Australians who say that they do not support the Government.

The most effective way to distribute resources, if one is looking at welfare distribution, is to achieve it within the family structure.

Mr Micallef—How?

Mr HANN—By protecting the family structure, for a start. Support and protection should be provided for the family to enable that family to distribute the educational resources and the health services and to handle the finances of those services; that form of assistance is far cheaper than that provided by a bureaucratic structure and set up and designed to absorb huge financial resources within government.

One of the most dramatic things to affect family life in Australia in recent years has been the changes to the Family Law Act, which were supported by members of all political parties, so I cannot sheet home the blame to one particular political party. However, the architect of that Act was the late Justice Murphy and this Act alone has done untold damage in the nation. It has virtually taken responsibility out of marriage for many couples.

When the Act was introduced, the Government was suggesting to young people, in particular, that if the marriage relationship were to break down, they should not work at trying to keep it together; they should separate for twelve months and then go on to enter new relationships with other partners and then everyone would live happily ever after.

All honourable members know that that does not happen; it is not true. Out of that process somebody gets hurt and often badly and tragically hurt; and the people being hurt are the children. Approximately 500 000 children in Australia have been affected by divorce since 1976, which is when the change was made in Federal Parliament to the Family Law Act.

As outlined in the Governor's Speech, one of the Government's major aims as part of its social justice policy is the issue of children in poverty. The large increase of children in poverty in the nation is a direct result of the change in legislation with the application of the Family Law Act. It has significantly increased the number of single-parent families.

All honourable members, particularly those who receive constant demands and requests for support and housing, will be aware of a change over the past fifteen years in the status of applicants for housing and support. Fifteen years ago, many applicants were young couples with children; these days, many applicants are single parents. Most are mothers

who, as a result of family breakdown, have to find alternative accommodation. Usually these mothers have three or four children—some in the electorate that I represent have up to six children and I am aware of cases of even larger numbers of children. They are single parents who are living on pensions, perhaps with some maintenance support. Certainly, there has been a complete change in the economic structure of families seeking public housing. As a result, children have been thrust into poverty.

Honourable members, particularly those with families—and most honourable members have families—will be well aware of the enormous costs associated with raising families these days. As one with a young family, it amazes me what it costs even for children who are very young; I hate to think what they will cost when they are older! The cost of living today is very high. For a single parent trying to look after children, it is a hopeless situation.

Approximately 80 000 children in this nation are estimated to be in poverty. That is a tragic indictment on a country like Australia, which is rich in resources, particularly agricultural resources. By interjection, the honourable member for Richmond says that it is happening in America. That is no reason why it should be allowed to continue in Australia, as the honourable member will agree. We need to examine the reasons. The solution is not to provide additional Government revenue. The reasons for family breakdown must be examined. Firstly, these reasons go back to the Family Law Act and the change in laws relating to marriage. I reiterate that the Family Law Act introduced no-fault divorce and the situation where, if one party to the marriage decided to bail out, he or she could do so and, in many instances, leave the other party with the children with no support whatsoever.

Likewise, the shortage of housing in this State has aggravated the situation. I know the Minister for Housing is very sincere in his endeavours to provide adequate public housing. It is a difficult area because of the huge costs involved, and it is aggravated by the policies of the Government on residential tenancies legislation. That legislation has discouraged people. I can give specific examples of people who have been discouraged from investing in private housing.

Mr Wilkes—It was not our legislation. It was the Liberal Party's legislation.

Mr HANN—That is an apt remark by the Minister. The Liberal Party initiated the residential tenancies legislation. The original Bill was modified dramatically; otherwise it would have been a total disaster. If the Minister agrees with me, why does he let his own Government continue in this vein by making it worse?

Mr Wilkes—You have not seen the proposed amendments.

Mr HANN—I have seen the amendments that we had to throw out. From experience, I can say that many more will need to be thrown out. In Echuca, in the electorate that I represent, it is literally impossible to obtain private rental accommodation, which means that all the people who in the past would have been in private housing are now on the waiting list for public housing. They have no chance of living in private housing; there is no incentive in the system as it operates at present in this State. It is not totally a State problem. It is also related to the taxation policies of the Federal Government, which wants these people to be housed in public housing. That is nonsense. We should be encouraging people to provide private accommodation to reduce the burden on the public sector. The people currently investing money in other perhaps non-productive areas, particularly the share market, should be encouraged to invest in private rental accommodation.

As the Minister for Housing obviously is aware, there has been a significant increase both in the number of people on the waiting list for public housing and in the waiting period. We are fortunate in the country that the waiting period generally is about twelve months to eighteen months; however, we are slipping back to a two and a half year waiting period. That is an indication to me that the availability of housing is not meeting the demand. That is the reason I have had to write to the Minister again to prompt him, as I do from time to time, to remember Echuca when he is considering the housing lists. He is

a good Minister; I have no argument about that. Many housing Ministers over the years have shown a great deal of sympathy.

What I see now are people living in poverty in housing that is totally unsatisfactory—for example, families are living in caravans, and that is an unhealthy situation. It is very difficult and there does not appear to be a solution to that problem. I suspect that one of the solutions is to consider lower-cost housing. However, that has an associated high maintenance problem. Down the track, we might well have to do it.

The figure suggested by the various social welfare organisations, as we move into the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, that there may be up to 100 000 homeless people in Victoria at any one time, is almost unbelievable. I wonder where those people are living. They cannot all be living under bridges, trees or in old ramshackle houses. It appears to be a reliable figure.

The simple solution to the maintenance problem associated with public housing is to sell more of these houses to their tenants, who will maintain them themselves. People do maintain their own houses. That factor was the big bonus of the old scheme. The reality is that most public tenants will never be able to afford to buy their own houses on a private market. Recently, I received a request from a person who asked why we could not go back to the old system which required a low deposit to purchase the home—perhaps \$200 and all the rental went towards repayments. If the responsibility of ownership is placed on these people they will maintain their houses more carefully than houses belonging to the Ministry of Housing.

A classic example of family breakup associated with inadequate housing is a family in the electorate that I represent where the wife is living permanently with her parents in Mathoura, New South Wales, and the husband in Echuca. He has employment in Echuca, but they cannot obtain rental accommodation in Echuca, which places a lot of stress on that family. This issue needs to be addressed.

Another area of concern in its impact on families in our society today, which I believe is related to the increase in violence that the police are having to cope with, to the additional security that homeowners are having to provide in Melbourne, and to the fact that our gaols are literally full of young violent criminals, indicating a growing tendency towards violence within society, is television. Part of the tendency towards violence is certainly related to the impact of television in our society. Three years ago the Children's Television Foundation provided statistics on television viewing. By the time a child reaches eighteen years of age the child will have had the potential to witness 18 000 television murders. One should consider that sort of conditioning process upon children, especially upon children as young as two years or three years of age. It will have an effect on them unless their television viewing is disciplined and they are prevented from watching those programs.

The American statistics show that by the time children are seven and eight years of age they are already showing violent tendencies. That has been put down to the impact of television. It has also been put down to violence in families and among parents but there is no doubt that television has had a significant impact on the family life of this nation.

Television has also had an impact on communication between people, both within families and among families and friends. It has discouraged people from visiting relatives and friends or even from communicating within their own families.

I read an observation recently that once upon a time the family was contained within an environment where it was protected from the violence and social and moral ills that existed in the outside world. These days, all of those issues are projected into the home environment by television, radio and newspapers. Media producers think nothing of showing films of dead or mangled bodies on their news reports which, because they occupy prime viewing time, will undoubtedly be seen by children. One television channel recently

showed graphic shots of a man committing suicide. A photograph of that suicide was also in the daily newspapers.

We must seriously consider the effect of this violence on individual minds. I shall recount a delightful story about my two-and-a-half-year old boy upon whom we attempt to keep some control over his television viewing. I recently roused on him for doing something naughty and he put his hand up and said, "pow pow". That must be as a direct experience from modern television. No doubt I was supposed to disappear. When my little boy did that, I became aware of the impact on him of television. Although it does not mean anything to a child at that age, if one allowed that type of television viewing to continue, one could be faced with an uncontrolled or difficult situation with that child in the future.

I have enormous respect for single parents. These women—and occasionally men—are given a tremendous challenge and I commend them on the way they care for their children on their own. It is a big enough task with two parents but it must be an enormous task for single parents who would be involved all of the time with their children and have to confront any traumas that might occur. The Government and society must seriously consider the provision of additional support for those people.

I shall speak about the education area and my continuing concern that the Ministry of Education has been continually restructured since 1979 and is about to be again restructured. The number of regions are to be reduced and job specifications of people, such as senior education officers and various personnel within the Ministry, are to be altered. Many of the central personnel are to be dispersed into country areas which will leave the central structure of the system weak and result in a lowering of morale within the system.

That action is encouraging more parents to transfer their children from the State public education system to the private sector. Although I strongly support the private sector, I also support the public sector and I believe it is imperative to retain a State education system.

When I entered Parliament in 1973, Victoria had a clear education structure. It was headed by a director-general who was in charge of various directors of the primary, secondary and technical divisions. Directors were responsible for the various administrative functions within those divisions. Inspectors provided a direct link between the schools, the principals and the staff with the then Education Department.

That system has literally been thrown out. That trend commenced in the days of the Green Paper and the White Paper that were introduced by Ministers in the Liberal Government and has been partly responsible for the system being constantly changed.

All that has saved the education system in this State has been the dedication of individual teachers and school principals. Beyond that, the system has been in total chaos and confusion for something like the past eight years. I feel a sense of frustration that the system no longer provides a means of accountability to the Ministry because the links between the schools and the Ministry have been eliminated.

In the past, an inspector was required to go into a school each year and report back through the Ministry. That report was ultimately available to the Minister. Currently, if a crisis develops in a particular school, the Minister cannot open a file and ascertain the situation at that school because that sort of information is no longer being fed into the Ministry.

What has been done to the State education system is a tragedy. The National Party believes the Ministry of Education needs a clear line of hierarchy of responsibility.

Some areas of promotion and job opportunity have been removed from within the Ministry of Education. One problem in this regard is faced in country areas with the reduction in the provision of teacher housing. The Government has a proposal to sell off

hundreds of teacher houses. Communities have worked hard over the years to have teacher houses provided adjacent to local schools within local communities and towns. However, because of a fringe benefit tax introduced by the Federal Treasurer, the Labor Government decided, first of all, to increase the rentals to market levels and to remove subsidies on teacher houses. Then the Government had second thoughts and indicated it would keep some of the houses in remote areas but sell off the remainder.

That decision has brought about a disastrous situation. A classic example is the Cobram High School where the principal has not been able to find a suitable house in which to live and has been paying \$270 a week to live in the RACV holiday village that has been established in the Cobram area. No suitable private rental accommodation was available to him, nor was he able to obtain accommodation in a Ministry of Housing house because of the Government's proposal to sell off those houses.

Another teacher in Echuca has not been able to find accommodation because of the proposal to sell off Ministry of Housing houses.

The Government obviously wants to sell off teacher housing and add the proceeds to capital funds that it can use in other areas. This will cause a danger because in the future teachers will not take up country positions because of a lack of accommodation. That is yet another example of this Government's attack on country people.

Another example of confusion caused by the Government was the withdrawal this year of integration aides in schools. One reason was because of the changes to the conditions of the Youth Guarantee Scheme where young people trained under that scheme had to be employed full time. I know of one child who was taught by an integration aide from another school who had to be employed full time so this child could obtain 0.2 time from that integration teacher and 0.1 time from another aide.

At the Lockington school, an aide was provided last year for three students and, after providing beneficial support for these students, the support was withdrawn this year. It is despicable of the Government to provide support for those handicapped children and then to withdraw it. I was appalled that the Ministry of Education would take that action.

Recently, the Minister for Transport turned the first sod for the construction of a new rail bridge over the River Murray at Echuca. It is something that V/Line, in particular, and the New South Wales community have been looking forward to for at least twenty years, probably longer.

The existing rail bridge combined as a road bridge but was limited in the total capacity of trains travelling over the bridge, which has effectively reduced the quantity of grain that can be transported over the bridge from New South Wales to Victoria.

V/Line has been losing approximately \$2 million a year as a result of the weaknesses in that bridge and it was anxious that a new bridge be constructed.

Numerous discussions and negotiations took place. My own file is approximately 12 inches high. The Ministry of Transport's file probably takes up several rooms. Finally, the matter was resolved and it was decided that a new rail bridge would be built but a new road bridge, so desperately needed, would not be built. The proposal is to refurbish the old bridge by spending approximately \$6 million on it. It is totally unsatisfactory for modern road conditions, and yet, because of the attitude of the historical and cultural organisations in New South Wales departments and in the Ministry of Planning and Environment—radical conservationist people who wanted to look at an old historical bridge—the bridge is to be retained. The only reason for its retention is so that some people can stand and admire an old bridge. It is not even the original bridge. The bridge has changed from its original design. It has graffiti plastered all over it. These conservationists have been successful in preventing the Government from proceeding with the proper course.

I give the Minister for Transport his due in that twelve months ago the Ministry acquired the money to commence construction on a new bridge downstream from the existing bridge, but the Government has come up with the most illogical and ridiculous decision I have seen any Government take in the years that I have been in Parliament. The Government has determined that it will build a rail bridge upstream and not build a road bridge.

The decision will involve an enormous waste of taxpayers money. Additional costs are involved in the construction of a rail bridge which will require a higher span. The only logical and proper location for both of those bridges was immediately downstream of the old bridge.

The former Minister for Planning, Mr Walker, agreed to that proposal. The Minister for Transport agreed with the proposal. I understood that the Minister responsible for tourism had examined the proposal and was supportive of it. Some people within the Ministry of Planning and Environment have been successful in stopping the project. I have no doubt that someone in the Ministry made representations to the equivalent body in New South Wales and induced the New South Wales organisation to place a cultural heritage order over the area to stop the Government from proceeding with the plan.

That person or persons—I am sure one could number them on the fingers of one hand—have effectively added at least \$1 million, probably \$2 million, to the cost of the rail bridge. Those people have also denied the people of Echuca, Moama, Northern Victoria, and indeed, the people of Melbourne—thousands of people come to Echuca to play the poker machines and visit the port area—the use of a new road bridge which is so desperately needed in the City of Echuca. A new four-lane bridge is required because 94 per cent of the commuter traffic is people travelling between Echuca and Moama. There is more traffic on that bridge in December than on the Hume Highway. Yet, this ridiculous decision has been taken not to construct a road bridge downstream because a few people want to look at an old bridge.

The stupidity of what they have done can be seen from the fact that the best views of the bridge are upstream on the paddle steamers that frequent the Murray. One has a broader panorama of the whole area. I have no doubt that in the future the most logical place to build the road bridge will be downstream, so effectively those people will have blocked the views of the old bridge from both sides.

It may require a change of Government on both sides of the border for a logical decision to be made. At that stage those small number of people who have blocked the Labor Government in Victoria from constructing a new road bridge downstream from the existing bridge will be denied their victory because nobody will look at the old bridge. This dishonest campaign has been supported by the Australian Conservation Foundation in material it put out, particularly on the front page of a recent document. The campaign was conducted because people knew that nobody was going to pay the money to maintain the bridge. One day a new Government will get rid of those people from the Ministry of Planning and Environment and commonsense will prevail.

The last matter I want to speak on is the way the Labor Government has completely restructured Public Service departments, which has affected the morale and political independence of the Public Service. If honourable members examine what the Labor Party has done since coming to power in 1982 they will find that virtually every major department has been restructured either through regulation or legislation. The one reason this has been done is so departmental heads can be transferred or replaced by Labor Party employees, especially employees who carry a Labor Party ticket. Undoubtedly, the only way one can gain a position with the Labor Government is to carry a Labor Party ticket.

Numerous examples of that have occurred with people being appointed to positions at all levels of the Public Service, right down from the senior levels. When I came into Parliament in 1973, I believed Victoria had one of the most effective public services across the nation. This was apparent by the independent, dedicated leadership shown by

departmental heads. If members of the National Party sought assistance or advice, those departmental heads readily gave it. The Labor Government has appointed its own people to various senior positions. The former Forests Commission, Fisheries and Wildlife Division, Lands Department and the Soil Conservation Authority, were most effective. The Government, by amalgamation of those organisations, has thrown them up in the air and let them sprinkle down. District foresters are looking after unused roads. People trained as forest foremen are working on gangs, but are still being paid as forest foremen. These people are disillusioned. Lands officers have been expected to act as inspectors for the fisheries and wildlife section of their department. It has resulted in a lowering of morale within the Ministry.

The Rural Water Commission has been restructured and regionalised. Effectively the local autonomy and decision making by district officers has been taken away. District engineers have lost interest in the general administration and the running of the commission. They have had this additional division or region superimposed on them.

When I came into Parliament, the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission had a proud record. It was an excellent organisation and had trained many senior personnel within the Government over the years. People like the head of the former Premiers Department, the coordinator of works with the former Treasury, the head of the former Treasury Division, and the current head of the Public Works Department. A range of people across the service had been trained through the commission. I doubt whether anybody would receive that sort of training within the Rural Water Commission today because the changes have been so dramatic that there is no effective departmental structure there any more.

That affects the morale of staff at all levels, especially at the local water bailiff level. Those officers are disillusioned, as are many public servants at various levels.

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs has attempted to regionalise its offices. It has changed its structure and introduced new regions. That has effectively taken away the autonomy and direction of the local district offices. A few days ago a departmental officer said to me that he now has five different bosses to whom he must respond. That is hopeless!

Mr Deputy Speaker, imagine your difficulty if you had to respond to five different Premiers. It is bad enough responding to one Premier, let alone five.

The policies of the Government have discouraged people from getting out to the private sector and using their initiative. Officers of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs are frustrated and I have been told that when they receive requests to go out into the field they do not believe it is worthwhile.

A similar situation applies to the Ministry of Education. Health Department Victoria has been restructured. The whole Public Service has been restructured. There has never been a lower morale amongst public servants than there is at present. Victorian public servants are totally disillusioned with what their departments have done and that has affected their efficiency and their attitudes to their jobs and it will ultimately affect the functions of their departments. Ministers of the Crown should be concerned about that matter.

My experience is that, if one appoints people who are relatively independent and have no political link, one will receive the right advice from non-political officers, as should be the case under the Westminster system. If Labor Party hacks are appointed, as this Government has done, one will receive biased, political and, more importantly, wrong advice.

I am aware that the Minister for Housing, who is now at the table, has been careful not to do that. I have not mentioned any restructuring in his Ministry because I believe the portfolio of housing operates effectively. I pay a compliment to the regional structure of his Ministry because I have received strong support in the electorate I represent from

Ministry of Housing officers. I have excluded housing from my comments because that area has not been changed and politicised as have most other departments.

The list of names of people who will have to be purged from public positions when there is a change of Government at the next election is enormous. Honourable members will virtually need a full session of Parliament to ensure that there is a complete purge of people who not only are political but also are giving wrong advice to the Labor Government.

The attitude of the Labor Government has surprised me. Some Ministers appear to distrust public servants purely because they have worked for a Government of another colour. Those people were not given sufficient time to see whether they were independent. They were simply shoved out of the system through retirement or resignation. The Labor Government has been responsible for a huge loss of this State's resources.

I advise honourable members that a big change is now occurring within Australia. Australians are sick and tired of the socialist philosophy. They wish to support a Government that encourages initiative and free enterprise. That is why Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen has been successful—he encourages people who are prepared to do something and put in an effort. Mark my words: there will be a significant change in the political scene in Australia over the next twelve months. The National Party, under Sir Joh's leadership, will come to the fore and we will get this nation back on its tracks again.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr HANN—I again advise honourable members to mark my words and to watch the scene. The responses of the Victorian Government and the Hawke Federal Government this week demonstrated that the Labor Party should be aware of its significant impact. The National Party has a man who stands up for what he believes. He is not afraid to stand up on moral or social issues.

Mr Norris interjected.

Mr HANN—Sir Joh is not like the honourable member for Dandenong, who stands up in this House and espouses his antagonism and opposition towards alcohol but votes for an extension of liquor licences. It will be interesting to see what the Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources and the honourable member for Dandenong will do with the Nieuwenhuysen report.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member for Dandenong will have the opportunity of making a contribution in the near future.

Mr HANN—In Australia 1987 will be a significant political year. The people of this nation are looking for strong leadership. They are looking for politicians who will encourage initiative and will support the family instead of increasing the number of community welfare services to regions and expecting that it will be controlled from there.

Mrs TONER (Greensborough)—In speaking on the motion for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech, I wish to send the good wishes of the people of the Greensborough electorate to His Excellency the Reverend Dr McCaughey. Dr McCaughey has brought to his high office a great deal of dignity, warmth and compassion. Yesterday was a wonderful day and all honourable members should thank His Excellency and Mrs McCaughey for their warmth and friendly attitude to honourable members and Parliamentary staff. The generosity with which the McCaughey family have opened up Government House is a further mark of their warmth.

A number of my constituents have visited Government House for the first time and I hope all honourable members encourage their constituents to take the opportunity of visiting Government House and being able to have the feeling that they are part of it.

One of my constituents, Mrs Nina Christensen, recently received an award in the Australia Day honours. It was a double delight for her in that she will receive an award for her contribution at the University of Melbourne to Russian language and literature and to

the ethnic community and that she will have the pleasure of receiving that award from Dr McCaughey, who was her former academic colleague.

The Governor's Speech referred to days when this nation rode on the sheep's back and on what was dug out of the ground. The Deputy Leader of the National Party referred to that and decried the reference to the changed times. Although honourable members are conscious that the National Party wants to live in the past, it was clear that the Deputy Leader of the National Party was making his commitment to Sir Joh. He spelt that out much more specifically than did the Leader of the National Party, who in recent weeks has reserved his options. The Leader of the National Party in Victoria has held back, so honourable members are unsure whether he is an Ian Sinclair or a Sir Joh supporter. However, the Deputy Leader of the National Party has unequivocally indicated that his party will go forward under Sir Joh and that honourable members should watch for that in the forthcoming year.

Queensland has enjoyed the benefits of National Party rule for many years. Honourable members are aware that it has the highest unemployment rate in Australia. All Victorians are conscious of the grave economic difficulties faced by that State. We are also conscious that the proportion of the Public Service per head of population is much larger in Queensland than in Victoria.

The Governor's Speech was a mature speech. It was the mark of a mature Government, which has been in office for five years and which will remain there for a long time to come. The Government was not asking the Governor of Victoria to make rash promises on its behalf. Rather, it was facing up to the difficult times being experienced. Therefore, the speech harked back to the time when we rode on the sheep's back.

The Deputy Leader of the National Party referred to the glorious times of the 1950s and 1960s—and they were good times. He said they were good economic times and that the price of wool was a pound for a pound. As somebody who lived in the Wimmera area at that time, I recollect the pleasure we had in those times. It was not difficult then for Governments to govern because vast resources existed. We did not have to try too hard—we had our wool and our minerals.

However, the world market scene has changed and the very urgings that the Governor made for us to face up to those changes and the challenge he presented have somehow been rejected by the Opposition.

The honourable member for Evelyn made a speech in which he seemingly read off a wish list. He asked for additional resources in the conservation area; he wanted more staff, more money and fewer national parks—we are quite clear on that. However, there was really no mention of the best use of resources. Yet the Government has moved towards restructure in order to properly utilise resources.

One cannot be a conservative and just continue to maintain Government departments in exactly the same way as they were 20 or 30 years ago in the light of changing needs, the changes in the world economy and changing resources.

Over the past five years, the Government has developed an economic strategy and has been involved in the business of carrying it out. All Victorians have received the benefits of that policy. While the rest of Australia is faced with difficult times in the world scene, we have been able to provide Victorians with a greater opportunity for jobs and their children with better education. Overall, we have been able to provide the best use of resources and the best Government of any State in Australia.

I commend the Government for enabling us to enjoy the benefits of the initiatives it has taken. The Cain Government is not resting on its laurels. It has faced up to the challenge and is aware that we must move into new areas.

That does not detract in any way from the importance of the rural industry. Indeed, the Governor's Speech indicated quite clearly that our rural industries continue to be our

largest export earners, but he spelled out that we can no longer depend on rural industry alone. As the Governor said, the Government is aware of world trade conditions; therefore, it encourages in every possible way tourism and the development of export markets and is extremely conscious of the necessity for manufacturing industry to be competitive.

Victoria has moved further down the path in that regard than have other States, and Victorians will pick up the benefits in subsequent years.

Once again, the honourable member for Evelyn detracted from the good work that has been undertaken. It is rather a pity that the Opposition and the National Party do not pick up on the initiatives that have been taken so that there can be a combined effort to promote Victoria. That should be the response to the Governor's Speech, which was not a political speech in any sense—it was a reasoned and rational Speech, the mark of a mature Government moving ahead in a responsible manner. Rather than making rash promises, it is facing up to the situation that lies ahead and to the need for a continued growth in employment in Victoria so that—as the Premier said yesterday during question time—the mums and dads of this State can continue to be conscious that their young people are more likely to obtain jobs in Victoria than anywhere else in Australia.

I certainly endorse the comments of the honourable member for Rodney about the importance of the family—we all do. Families have a number of structures; some of them are large like mine; and some are single-parent families. This Government has done its very best to support families and to maintain their capacity to make decisions about their lives, to stay together, and to retain the dignity that is so important for them.

At present, one of the suggestions of the National Party is a 25 per cent flat tax, about which my colleague, the honourable member for Melbourne, will speak at some length later. Under that system, some 80 per cent of people would be worse off, such as the ordinary family person, the ordinary wage earner, and the working woman—of whom there are many in this State. They would all be worse off. The greedy people who are already doing very well will be significantly better off under the National Party's tax proposals. The honourable member for Rodney, who talked about the family, does not seem to be aware of that fact.

The Central Highlands Province by-election will be held in the near future. I mention it because I believe it will be an important election. I regret that the Honourable Fred Grimwade has had to step down because of illness. He is and has been a gentleman at all times and I hope, with the support of his family, he can maintain his health and, through the peace of being away from this place, that he can enjoy the pleasure of being with his loved ones, engaging in some travel and receiving the benefits of being part of a supportive community. His departure is regretted, but, as a result, an important by-election now lies ahead.

Of course, the Central Highlands Province epitomises everything that is good and important about Victoria. The province encompasses both the urban and rural areas; it covers the beautiful hill country of the Dandenong Ranges. It covers seats such as Monbulk and Whittlesea, whose representatives are active Labor members who have worked extremely hard in their electorates.

The province also covers the seat of the honourable member for Evelyn, a member of the Liberal Party, and that of the honourable member for Benalla, a representative of the National Party. Therefore, the Central Highlands Province is a fair microcosm, as it were, of the whole State. It has the problems and difficulties experienced by developing areas.

I know those developing areas quite well, and also the country areas, because my seat is part of the Federal seat of McEwen which is very ably represented by my Federal colleague, Mr Peter Cleeland, who has a fairly large electorate to cover. I understand the difficulties in that area, and I work with Mr Cleeland in an attempt to solve the problems for the people of that area. Those in the far north of the Central Highlands seat are not lucky

enough to have a Labor State representative, but I hope they will have such a representative after the forthcoming election.

Women will play a crucial role in the forthcoming by-election for the Central Highlands Province. Women are satisfied with the performance of the Cain Government; they are satisfied because they like and admire the Premier because of the stability, honesty, integrity and consistency that his leadership provides. Women believe the Premier leads a competent Government that spells out its message and knows where it is headed. Women know that the Government works with integrity in the interests of all people in the State.

I have spoken to many women who live in isolated communities and in parts of Eltham, Yarrambat, Plenty, Diamond Creek and other areas to the north. They are extremely grateful for the initiatives the Government has taken in the area of public transport.

The increased bus services in my electorate have made a significant difference to the capacity of people to travel. There are many one-car families in my electorate, and the increased bus services have had a beneficial effect on those families. The Government did not simply rely on existing public transport services. It knew there have been movements of the population to different areas of the State. Not everyone lives near a railway line. There have been movements in population from the inner city areas to the outer urban areas, which may be regrettable in the eyes of some members of the National Party. The Government has attempted to accommodate those movements in population by restructuring its Ministries and moving decision making to the country areas. Yet there has been an outcry by the National Party against regionalisation!

The honourable member for Swan Hill interjects by describing regionalisation as a "joke". I should have thought that the honourable member would have been grateful for Government decision making to be made at a regional level. Some concern has been expressed that Ministers should move around and talk to the persons involved in the different levels of decision making. Ministers of the Cain Government do that. However, such concerns could have been lifted from speeches I made when the Labor Party was in opposition. There will always be someone who will squeal and express dissatisfaction regardless of which party is in office. Such people are always prepared to leak their complaints to the Opposition; that is the nature of the game, but there are fewer such complaints under this Government than there were under the former Liberal Government. When the Labor Party was in opposition people came knocking on the doors of Opposition members to tell them about the bad Liberal Government.

Women who live in Monbulk, Evelyn, the rapidly developing area of Whittlesea and in the country area of Benalla generally are satisfied with what the Cain Government has done. However, those women feel uncertain because of the confusion caused by the fact that neither the National Party nor the Liberal Party has formulated a policy on taxation and a whole range of other issues. It does not help Australia if there are divisions, discontent and fighting amongst opposition parties for leadership. Such fighting creates uncertainty. I hope the opposition parties get their act together so that they can provide more constructive advice to the Government on the important issues that confront society.

The Government has addressed the issues that are of concern to the electors of the Central Highlands Province. The issues that are of important concern Government priorities for children in poverty. The Government is determined to address that issue, in the same way that it is prepared to address the issue of long-term unemployment, the dignity and security of the aged, and human rights—the right of people to enjoy a reasonable standard of living and to be involved in decision making matters affecting their lives.

The Budget delivered last year was evidence of the Government's priority in these areas, despite the fact that recurrent spending was set at the lowest rate of growth for 25 years. The Governor's Speech maintained the Government's commitment not to present a "wish list" and not to make a plethora of promises. There will be no pork-barrelling in the forthcoming by-election. Rather, there will be a continuation of the Government's excellent

programs. The transport package did not suddenly emerge in such detail in the space of a couple of days.

For a long time the honourable member for Whittlesea has been pressing for the needs of the residents of Craigieburn and Epping, so those people will be most grateful for the increased bus services, just as I am grateful for services to the residents of Greensborough.

In addition, the home ownership assistance scheme will enhance the capacity of people who live in the growing urban areas to own their own homes.

From my experience through the satisfaction expressed by the people I represent, there has never been greater pleasure in the State's education system than there is at present. The regional education system is working well. The people I represent are delighted with the encouragement the Government has given to the local community to involve itself in education. They are delighted with the quality of schools through the school maintenance program. Although there are difficulties at times, generally Labor Party members work hard with the regional officers to ensure that education needs are met. The Minister for Education is a cooperative listener and, like his predecessor, he has ensured that education is working most effectively. I can confidently recommend to parents that the schools in my electorate will provide an excellent education for their children.

There has been some talk about law and order being an issue in the Central Highlands Province by-election. Of course, law and order is an issue at any time.

From my discussions with senior police officers about a number of issues, I learned that they consider the current Minister for Police and Emergency Services is the best police Minister Victoria has ever had. He has provided resources, through his representations to Cabinet and the Government, the like of which Victoria has not seen before. I have not told the Minister this before; I notice he is sitting at the table. He will be pleased to know that his police officers think highly of him.

People constantly cry out for more resources, as the honourable member for Evelyn did in relation to the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands. However, one cannot have a plethora of additional resources while at the same time preventing increases in taxation for the poor people of Victoria. I should like to know where the money is coming from to fulfil the "wish list" of the Opposition.

The Government has done an extremely good job in restructuring the conservation portfolio. It is important to articulate the priorities that were set out of restoring land and ensuring the survival of flora and fauna, protecting forests and so on. It is important that the resources available are used in an appropriate manner. That does not mean that unlimited resources should be provided by this or any other Government. The Government has been most responsible in this matter.

One has only to consider the rejuvenated waterways and parks of Melbourne. When I looked over the Yarra River area from the Rialto tower the other day when I was accompanying a deputation of some of my constituents to the Ministry of Education, I realised that the development of the Yarra River is an indication of what has been achieved in revitalising the city. In my travels around the country I have seen similar endeavours.

I point out that the garment must be cut according to the cloth that is available. Members of the National Party continue to call for unlimited resources and at the same time talk about a 25 per cent flat rate of taxation. I note that the honourable member for Swan Hill has been extremely vocal in his support for Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen. It will be interesting to note whether he is the one who is endorsed if Joh endorses candidates in the near future.

The proposed legislation to come before this Parliament is a mark of a mature Government. It flows from work that has been undertaken over the past five years and from the Budget. The proposed legislation shows that the Government has moved a long

way down the track. It is not necessary to introduce the number of legislative measures that were introduced in the Government's first term of office. The Government is in the process of establishing itself as a long-term Government. I am sure the women of Central Highlands Province, in particular, will consider the good leadership and good record of the Cain Government, and they will consider the welfare of their children and their families, bearing in mind what the Government has done in education and public transport and what it is doing for the benefit of future citizens in preserving Victoria's forests and the conservation measures it is taking to provide a beautiful State for future generations so that there is no further diminution of rainforests, in contrast with the way they were immoderately diminished under previous Governments.

I am grateful to the Governor for the grace with which he delivered his Speech yesterday. It was a splendid day. His address was such that honourable members have responded warmly to it and I expect that, after the next proroguing of Parliament, which will be after the next State election, the Labor Party will once again be in government, although one does not know whether Joh's party, the National Party or the Liberal Party will be on the Opposition benches, or who will be in leadership.

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

Dr WELLS (Dromana)—I am pleased to respond to the Speech of His Excellency the Governor of Victoria which was delivered yesterday. I convey to His Excellency the good wishes of the constituents of the electorate I have the honour to represent in this place—the Dromana electorate. We hope that we will be able to be host to His Excellency and his wife in our electorate sooner rather than later. I also invite His Excellency to convey to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the loyalty and good wishes of her constituents in the Dromana electorate.

I am often disappointed by debate in this place. One hears many words and much rhetoric but there is little serious debate about the issues that really matter today. What I am about to offer is offered with the serious intent of provoking good quality debate. I am not interested in attempting to debase the Government of Victoria. I am not interested in personalities, except for their capacity for efficiency in government.

Yesterday, honourable members heard a Speech that was obviously crafted by someone with a capacity for and sensitivity to the English language. It was full of fine words, fine phrases, fine concepts, good buzz words and good plans, but very poor on past performance and realistic future planning. It is time the Government, which has been in office for five years, stopped complaining about the past. In the business world, one year is a long time. It is a practical planning period. The Cain Administration has held office for five years and its rhetoric is running thin. I was provoked yesterday while listening to His Excellency the Governor, to decide that today I must talk about rhetoric versus reality. It is interesting to note that in the corridors of Parliament I have found other honourable members who reached the same conclusion.

In all seriousness I issue a challenge to members of the Government to take apart what I say phrase by phrase and prove it wrong or prove that I have strayed from identifying the Government's real performance. I shall deal firstly with economic management. Let us consider rhetoric versus reality. Honourable members were told yesterday that the Government inherited an extremely bad situation which it has turned into a creditable situation.

In the past four years of government the taxes and borrowings have increased by 70 per cent. Spending has gone up by approximately twice the rate of inflation. The last Thompson Budget was \$6 billion. The last Cain Budget in September was \$12.6 billion. The debt of Victoria in four years has gone up by 70 per cent as compared with one and a third centuries before that.

Public Service employment has increased by 27 000. The population of Victoria has declined by 56 000 as people have gone to other States. The current interest bill for the

State of Victoria for the public debt is approximately \$2 billion a year. The accumulated debt of public transport last year was \$2.5 billion; some \$2 billion has been put into capital investment in four years. Public transport is currently losing \$2.6 million a day. One should contrast that with the situation where this Government recently cut \$2 million from the \$18 million budget for municipal library services. That service is used by 50 per cent of Victorians.

What a magnificent performance that was! Some \$2 million was taken out of that service because all sectors of the community have to tighten their belts, as they have been told by the responsible Minister on repeated occasions. Yet, we are losing \$2.6 million a day on public transport.

Last year we lost in the order of \$1.5 million to \$2 million a day on third-party vehicle insurance. The Premier said he had not changed that situation because third-party vehicle insurance was a matter of social welfare. It is social welfare, apparently, to take taxes from families with children and use them to subsidise third-party vehicle insurance on sports cars and commercial vehicles? That is a great priority for social welfare, indeed!

One heard a lot yesterday about social justice and the quality of life. I shall turn to that subject in a minute. I want to summarise the effort of the Government in terms of economic management in a five-step process. These are the steps the Government has followed: spend the resources accumulated over a good many past years; borrow more; sell all the assets one can get away with; increase taxation; drain any trading profits from the statutory authorities year by year; and, finally, when one is really pinched for cash, stretch out and delay payments to those one trades with for as long as possible. On those five steps stands and falls the reputation of a Treasurer whom history will judge to have been discredited.

I now turn to social welfare and the quality of life. Let us look first at health management—a very important area for the whole State and especially for people as they age because we know that 50 per cent of the medical expenses of a human being's life are incurred in the last twelve months of life. Health maintenance is particularly important to people in the electorate of Dromana where one in three persons is a retired person over the age of 65 years. Surprisingly, the Government has established an office for complaints about the health system. I should have thought that would be the last thing the Government would do when in fact in its four years in office the waiting list for surgery has gone up fourfold. Some 31 000 people are on the waiting list suffering pain and anxiety. Some are even dying before they obtain necessary surgery. One should not blame the nurses. Last sessional period the Minister responsible for health matters in this House asked the Opposition whether it thought nurses should be paid any more because they received enough already. The judgment of an independent tribunal established that the nurses were entitled to more. What is wrong with the health service is simply that the Minister for Health, Mr White, and his hapless representative in this House, the Minister Assisting the Minister for Labour, do not understand people. If they got behind the nurses, the doctors and the administrators they would get the performance we need.

How many beds are closed in public hospitals now? Yet, we have four times the number of people waiting for surgery because we have no money and no nurses to do the job. Where is the social justice and quality of life in terms of health services for the electorate of Dromana where one in every three people is retired and the electorate contains a large number of children? It is a strange assessment.

I turn now to housing management. We have heard criticism of the past Liberal Government's performance. Yet, in four years the public housing waiting list has doubled to 16 000. I admire the ingenuity of the Minister for Housing in his remarks yesterday. I have great respect for the Minister, both personally and as a Minister, and he has been helpful to me to the limit of his capacity with cases I have taken to him. He said in the House yesterday, because he has to carry the can for the failure of his Government and the Federal Government, that the reason the waiting list has more than doubled is because the houses in the public sector are better now and people prefer to live in a Government

house and pay rent. That statement is surely denied and defied by the whole history of Australian society.

At the end of the last major period of Liberal Government—both Federal and State—we had perhaps the highest home ownership in the world. That has steadily slid downhill. I challenge members of the Government to bring forth one person who says he or she would rather rent a home than own a home. The Government offering in that area is absolutely discredited.

I am not saying that the Victorian Government is totally responsible for the great flood of people on the waiting list because a lot of the problems come from the poor economic policies of the Federal Government. However, the State Government has had its share in terms of damaging the economy and this is true certainly in terms of the proposed tenancies Bill. I know that in the electorate I represent, landlords will sell the houses they currently let on the day or week that the Government passes the Bill into law if ever it has the majority to do so. When one examines the situation in terms of housing management, claims by this Government of social equity and quality of life are not relevant.

I refer to human rights—something this Government trumpets loudly and frequently. Let me offer some illustrations for posterity to read in *Hansard*. Last year this Government proposed under the Guardianship and Administration Board Bill (No. 2) to create a Government committee that would have the final say in authorising the removal of vital organs, such as kidneys, from mentally incompetent people for donation to mentally competent people.

I had it put to me by Government members, "You would approve that if one sibling was incompetent and one competent". Honourable members should think about that as it relates to their families. Those mentally incompetent people in institutions would be the people with the least rights in society. They do not have the capacity to defend themselves. So may we take what we want from them? Where are the human rights in that situation?

I refer to the Wongabeena Association Incorporated in the electorate of Dromana which is a wonderful organisation looking after mentally incapacitated people and providing employment for them. Those people receive from the Federal Government a personal travelling allowance, not just to get to work, I might say, and the State Government has provided a travelling allowance for the institution.

Now, having lost so much money in everything else, the State Government is looking to see where it can pinch more tightly. It has told Wongabeena and similar organisations that if their people get an allowance from the Federal Government on a personal basis, that must be used to make up the State allowance which will be withdrawn.

Would any member of the Government party opposite be so brave as to claim that they could sit down and do a calculation that would justify deducting from a small allowance of a mentally incapacitated person, who has far higher costs of survival than we have, part of the cost of transport to work because the individual receives some support for overall travel from elsewhere?

That is social equity among those who are least able to defend themselves, is it not? A broader example is that of the Government's theoretically good idea of encouraging the less mentally competent members of our society to live in the community rather than in institutions. I support that theory in principle but I challenge every honourable member to say that he or she has not come upon—as I have—cases in the community of people who have been pushed out when there have been inadequate resources to care for them resulting in enormous strain on everyone concerned.

This brings me to the subject of child psychiatric services. It is estimated that in Victoria 2 per cent of all children need significant psychiatric assistance. If one happens to live on the Mornington Peninsula one has to travel to Melbourne to obtain that sort of psychiatric help. If a child happens to be a member of a family living on social welfare there is not the

money or the capacity to use those services. I challenge the Government to do something about this problem.

There is not one practising child psychiatrist south of Frankston on the Mornington Peninsula. Are we really debating social equity throughout Victoria? The argument may be put forward that few people live on the southern Mornington Peninsula but the Western Port region has a high percentage of Victoria's population. The rhetoric on social equity and the quality of life is fine but the reality is totally different.

The Government stated as one of its priorities that the elderly would live in dignity. Hospital waiting lists deny this. Cutting of the library grant has outraged the retired. Transport for the elderly in Dromana electorate is not adequately provided. For example, during the last petrol strike one of my constituents telephoned the Premier's office to ask about arrangements for petrol delivery. My constituent was told by the Premier's adviser to take a can and catch a train to Frankston where he could get petrol. There are no trains in the Dromana electorate! An even bigger problem is that there is no cross community transport either.

If one lives in the electorate I represent and one does not have a car or one is beyond the age of 70 years and has chosen not to drive, one has no transport. One hundred thousand dollars is spent each year by the Shire of Flinders on subsidising one community bus service. That is not social equity in the provision of transport.

I shall now deal with unemployment which is closer to the issues that might produce some economic income for the community and allow it to expand its resources. Before the Government came to office it launched a marvellous public relations campaign to advertise the Youth Guarantee Scheme. What did we get? Premier Cain gave a personal undertaking that every young person in Victoria would receive an education, a job or a combination of the two during the next term of office. Two years down the road, halfway through this term of office, I would doubt whether more than 1000—definitely not 2000—positions have been created under that scheme. Most of the positions that have been made available are in TAFE colleges or in Government departments.

The tragedy is that this scheme need not cost a significant amount of money and need not take a long time to find work for the young unemployed. I challenge the Government to conduct short six-month courses in computers and office work in my electorate and we will be able to find work for 50 young people each six months.

This exercise would have given those on the dole a challenge, a sense of dignity and achievement rather than leaving them to sit on their bottoms in the sun. It would have helped them to become useful citizens in future. The Government will stand convicted more and more as each year passes because it is not doing anything to help the young unemployed.

As many as 20 per cent of our young people may come out as impoverished human beings. They will reach their late teenage years with no educational or vocational skills. They will have no dignity and no capacity to make themselves get up and go. Not only will they become a burden to society but, tragically, they will also have to face a life of dissatisfaction in the decades ahead.

The Government is failing to grasp the nettle in dealing with youth unemployment. It should be trying to educate young people and to correct any deficiencies that may occur in the process of growing up so that they can face adulthood with the ability to cope for themselves. The Government has a disgraceful reputation in its handling of the Youth Guarantee Scheme; in reality its performance is quite unacceptable.

There is no significant commercial industry in the Dromana electorate, and this adds to the problem of youth and adult unemployment. I acknowledge that this aspect of the electorate is a development of history but there is also no vocational training in that area. It is unreasonable that there are only twenty or so apprenticeships in one and a half electorates.

There is no effective public transport in the electorate to take these people to places of work, yet Government surveys show that transport is the next most important factor in finding a job. The only option open to these youngsters is to sit around and accept the dole.

I understand that this area is a responsibility of the Federal Government but it is still important to mention it in the debate today. I wanted to train a couple of youngsters in my office. I could guarantee them jobs at the end of that training but I have been told by Federal Government authorities that because these youngsters are on the dole they cannot undertake more than 8 hours' training a week.

The Youth Guarantee Scheme is supposed to be an alternative to normal employment, yet all we receive is rhetoric and nothing in reality. It is time the Government came to grips with the problem and was prepared to debate the real issues of the day.

The Government has made much play of high technology and new industries. It has undertaken a superb public relations program in this area. It is not terribly difficult to identify the importance of this subject but if one examines Australia's performance, one will soon recognise that something needs to be done.

The last available figures for high technology based exports were provided in 1984. The figure for Australia was \$65 a head and for Switzerland \$2321 a head—36 times as much! In 1984 our total high-tech exports were \$1 billion. Had we had Swiss export levels it would have been \$36 billion. That would have made a difference to Australia's balance of trade just as Japan has demonstrated.

Of the 24 countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Australia ranks 23rd in terms of its high technology exports compared to imports. For every dollar of Australian exports in this field we import \$8 of such goods. The phrase "technological colonization" has not unreasonably been coined to describe Australia's situation. What has the Government's performance in this area been? It has gathered the names of firms struggling in this area to include in its policy statement that it has taken an equity share in small firms it has chosen to support and has established one or two centres.

However, in the past two years not one significant speech on science and technology has been given by a member of the Government. This place has given no recognition to higher learning. No broad brush attempts have been made to expand our knowledge base.

As the previous speaker said, Victoria's education system has been rearranged time and again. Victoria has reached the point where its teachers believe they have been deserted. They do not know what to do next. We have seen the dramatic proposals of the Blackburn report but no money has been forthcoming to implement them. The subject of education is close to the high technology industries about which I have been talking.

It must be a singularly important warning when, last year, for the first time in the history of this State every vice-chancellor of a university and every head of a tertiary college combined to issue a warning to the Government that its proposals to replace the matriculation examination threatened the continuation of life in our society as we have known it. Apart from my comments, nothing has been said about that.

Recently, I spoke with a representative of the Ministry of Education on a radio program, and that person said that it would not be until July this year or perhaps later when the syllabuses for the new subjects for the Year 11 component of the Victorian certificate of education would come through. Is it any wonder that the education system is in turmoil?

After five years in office, the Government has been unable to provide adequate mathematics and science teachers for secondary schools. Is it any wonder that schools are not producing students who are interested in those subjects and interested in pursuing those disciplines in their tertiary training to help Victoria develop high technology industries? Is it any wonder that the Government is hunting around abroad to try to find people it can attract to Victoria?

The Government has a long way to go if the calibre of the leadership it has been able to offer in the Department of Industry, Technology and Resources is to prevail. We are five years down the track and, in that time, places such as Singapore have ripped down and rebuilt their industries. Must Victoria wait another five or ten years?

One of the biggest problems facing Victoria is the rate of technological change and the incapacity of the Government to do anything significant about it. I am not certain whether it is because it is too busy out in public; however, I am certain the Government has the highest capacity in the State to attract intellectual support, to have surveys made and to put ideas together. In a sense, the Government has an unlimited purse in that regard and yet it has not done the job.

I shall refer to agriculture. It is a great sadness to me that the finest laboratories in this nation are being brought to their ankles. The Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs is top heavy with bureaucrats. The Government has taken on an additional 27 000 people in the public sector since it came to office. I challenge the Government to demonstrate how it has improved the quality of life of the average Victorian through the employment of an additional 27 000 public servants.

The Government has made many Ministries paper heavy with bureaucrats. If the Government does not consider the Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs and get a Minister who has experience in that area, the situation will reach a point of almost no return and it will take years to pull back. The Government is destroying the one area in this State where there was a favourable atmosphere. Scientifically trained people do not go somewhere just for a salary, as they can go anywhere in the world to work. They work in Victoria because they choose to, and that atmosphere has been virtually destroyed in Victoria.

I shall now refer to law and order. The Governor's Speech did not refer to law and order nor did it mention drugs. The Government has a fine reputation for increasing opportunities for gambling, alcohol and prostitution. Is it not abhorrent that the Government has changed the control of prostitution in this State but has not given the Vice Squad the capacity it needs? Can a staff of four in the Vice Squad handle the situation? Is that a reasonable assessment in trying to protect the youth of Victoria?

There are many areas in which the Government is strong on rhetoric but weak in reality. For the Government to talk of social equity and quality of life is an affront to any rational process of analysis. The Ministers to whom I have referred stand convicted by their performances as being inadequate in their jobs.

I respect the capacity of the Leader of the Labor Party—he is a good performer in the House. He is a man who is trained in the law and in analysis and he has a lot of experience of the human condition through law practice. He has sat at the helm of government in this place and has been more exposed than anyone else to the totality of life in Victoria. Therefore, it is with sadness that I see the Premier having to defend his record in reality. The Premier should take a serious look at what is happening and pull back from the brink of what will otherwise cause serious damage to our community.

Mr REMINGTON (Melbourne)—I congratulate the honourable member for Dromana on some of the points he made in his contribution. I appreciated his sincere honesty, especially when he stated that the Cain Government has a long way to go. He is dead right! The Cain Government does have a long way to go and Victoria is just about to enter the second half of the first decade of the Cain Labor Government in this State. That will not be interrupted.

I also liked the honourable member's realistic approach to the need for better technology in this State. He would know that, when the Labor Party took office, no technology courses were taught in Victoria's schools. The education institutes had no data processors and no computer equipment. That was a strange and alien idea to the then Liberal Government.

This Government has been foremost in recognising the need to train Victoria's young people in technological skills because that is where the future of the country is leading.

I was also attracted to the speech of the honourable member for Dromana by his praise of the Premier. Despite the rhetorical approach taken by honourable members, I am sure all of them would have the same respect for the Premier.

I am pleased to contribute to the debate. All things being equal, it should be the last opportunity on which I can contribute to such a debate.

Mr Harrowfield—We will prorogue Parliament again!

Mr REMINGTON—That is not beyond the realms of possibility.

Mr Trezise—The State needs you!

Mr REMINGTON—Other people also need me and, above all, I need myself.

I congratulate the Governor, His Excellency Dr Davis McCaughey, on the manner in which he delivered the Governor's Speech. It was not his speech; traditionally it is called the Governor's Speech but it is really the Government's speech. The Governor delivered the Speech with absolute ease and one would have thought that he had written it himself. I liked his confident manner and the sincerity with which he delivered the Speech. People know my position—I could never be classified as a royalist; I could be described as a democratic republican or a social democrat. I still carry the scars from the events of November 1975 because of the way the Governor-General violated his position.

I confess that the events of 11 December 1975 distanced me a great deal more from the right of politics, and I am an even more confirmed social democrat. However, the Labor Party is in government in this State and will continue to have the numbers for many years to come and, if we are to have a Governor, we cannot do better than have in that position a man of the people.

I cast no reflection on the previous Governor, but I recall him sitting there perspiring while he sweated and laboured through his Speech. He was ill at ease. Perhaps it was the heat of the day or the heavy regalia he was wearing.

On this occasion the Governor did not intend to exaggerate the situation. He set about outlining for Victorians the course ahead that the Cain Government proposes to take in the remainder of its term. As was said in the Speech, it is a long-term approach in which the Government is involved and we aim to finish it; there is no question of that.

Dr Wells—You have a long way to go!

Mr REMINGTON—As the honourable member for Dromana points out, the Cain Government has a long way to go. It would be foolish for anybody not to realise that the world is in extremely difficult economic circumstances, and that applies particularly to rural industry—the Government acknowledges that—and it grieves me deeply that people whom I regarded as strong friends of this country in a time of serious need—I will name particularly the Reagan Administration—have caused great harm to rural Australia with their economic policies. One would never have thought a Government could be so ruthless as the Reagan Administration has been in undercutting on every market the prices that Australians could reasonably expect for their rural produce.

Mr B. J. Evans—You don't know what you are talking about.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Stirling)—Order! The honourable member for Gippsland East will have his opportunity later.

Mr REMINGTON—He is wet behind the ears; he does not realise the harm America has inflicted on our grain growers. Everywhere we go we are confronted with the policies of the Reagan Administration in undercutting prices. It is extremely harmful not only to people on the land but also to the nation as a whole.

In his Speech the Governor correctly pointed out that we should never forget the position of this State five years ago. It was in shambles, chaos and disorder with disruption and a divided Government, and there is now a divided Opposition.

An Honourable Member—And the land deals.

Mr REMINGTON—Sure. The malaise was put on this State by waste, mismanagement and corruption and the land deals. We will never let the Liberal Party in this State forget its involvement in those scandalous events.

I see the great do-gooder racing into the Chamber, my old Methodist mate from Doncaster.

The land scandals had repercussions for the whole of the State. I can still see the almost savage face of that chairman of one of our leading insurance companies as he appeared on television viciously attacking the then Premier, now Sir Rupert Hamer, for literally driving the dagger into his back. We all know about the instability of the then Government, the letters that were circulated and the now frustrated ambitions of the honourable member for Polwarth. Honourable members all remember those events—a party divided.

An Honourable Member—It still is.

Mr REMINGTON—It still cannot solve its leadership problems at State or Federal level. What have we got in the Opposition? One does not know whether they are wets or dries. They are mostly wet behind the ears but, in economic terms, one assumes that the Leader of the Opposition is a wet—or is he a dry?

An Honourable Member—He is a drip.

Mr REMINGTON—He is a supporter of Peacock who has grabbed hold of Joh Bjelke-Petersen's coat-tails, a flat earther, a flat tax man; so, by analogy, the Leader of the Opposition must also belong in that category. That puts the followers of the Leader of the Opposition behind Peacock and behind Joh.

I should think that the shadow Treasurer, the honourable member for Brighton, does not know a great deal about economics. He is an advocate, but he is learning; give him a script and he does fairly well. I think he will shorten his speeches.

An Honourable Member—To 3 hours?

Mr REMINGTON—I do not think he will ever go to those lengths again.

An Honourable Member—He is a Howard supporter.

Mr REMINGTON—Is he? It is important to know where the Opposition stands. The Governor's Speech is built on the foundation of economic policies, particularly those of the Cain Government, and Victoria is dependent on the economic policies of the Federal Government.

If perchance, by some great disaster, Australia has a change of Government and finds itself with a 25 per cent flat tax—we will hear what the National Party has to say on its famous 25 per cent flat tax in due course—that will have a significant impact. If there were a change of economic direction and a 25 per cent flat tax, a consumption tax or increased indirect taxes were introduced, exactly what is the difference between the last two?

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr REMINGTON—Show me the difference. One is selective; the other is general, but the impact on the general economy is identical.

It is therefore important for the opposition parties to solve their leadership problems and to come out with a proper economic policy. What is their economic policy? They do not know. They are in opposition and they do not have a policy! Look at the great heap of diatribe and nonsense that is on the Notice Paper. They have made no attempt at all to

present an alternative economic policy; merely criticism, condemnation, whinges and complaint. That is what the Opposition is made of—the knockers of this great State.

Victorians have a right to know precisely where the Opposition stands—in particular, on the consumption tax. I call on the honourable member for Doncaster, a once proud economist with the Institute of Public Affairs, to tell us his views on a flat tax.

Mr Williams—I am opposed to it.

Mr REMINGTON—That puts you behind the shadow Treasurer. What are the honourable member's comments on a consumption tax? Speak up, man. Don't mumble. What are your views on that?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Stirling)—Order! The honourable member for Melbourne should address his remarks to the Chair.

Mr REMINGTON—I certainly shall, Sir, and I shall be fascinated to hear the views of the honourable member for Doncaster on a consumption tax. It would have a drastic effect on the Victorian economy. I ask the Opposition: what is the greatest economic problem confronting Victoria today? It is inflation, so the opposition parties want to bring in a consumption tax or a 25 per cent flat tax.

Mr Williams—Keating wanted a consumption tax.

Mr REMINGTON—It automatically increases the cost of everything that a wage or salary earner purchases. You will fuel the fires of inflation with your consumption tax.

Mr Williams—It is Keating's tax, not ours.

Mr REMINGTON—So the honourable member for Doncaster does not support a 25 per cent flat tax!

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Stirling)—Order! I again ask the honourable member for Melbourne to address the Chair.

Mr REMINGTON—The honourable member for Doncaster will no doubt advise the House later whether he is on the band wagon of this most disastrous consumption tax.

I sincerely hope that neither this Government nor the Federal Government increases direct or indirect taxation in their forthcoming Budgets. It would be dangerous to the economic affairs of the whole nation if they meddled in this area.

I turn now to examine the issue of the 25 per cent flat taxation on personal income. I am not sure whether there are many "flat earthers" in the Liberal Opposition but there are certainly plenty of Joh supporters in the National Party, so one could presume some of them support the 25 per cent flat tax.

I should like to know whether these members of the National Party have thought of the effect of a 25 per cent flat tax on personal income. National Party members should remember that their Federal colleagues will be vetted by "Jelke Joh" before they can get the endorsement—

Mr B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, It has been general practice in this House, over many years, not to disparage members of other Parliaments, particularly in light of the fact that they are not in a position to come into the House to defend themselves. The honourable member has directly referred to the Premier of Queensland as "Jelke Joh". If the honourable member wants to turn this place into a circus, I suppose that is his problem, but all honourable members are entitled to respect and reasonable behaviour from the honourable member for Melbourne and this type of behaviour is not at all necessary to make the point that he is trying to make in this House.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Stirling)—Order! The honourable member for Gippsland East is correct, and I ask speakers to refer to people by the correct titles.

Mr REMINGTON (Melbourne)—I acknowledge the correctness of the honourable member for Gippsland East and I therefore refer to the Honourable Sir Johannes Bjelke-Petersen with his crazy 25 per cent flat tax. I should be more interested to hear from the honourable member who raised the point of order as to his views on the crazy 25 per cent flat tax.

Mr CROZIER (Portland)—On a point of order, Mr Acting Speaker, I realise that in these debates there is traditionally a fair degree of latitude; however, I am unaware that it is a custom of this place to permit debate on a basically Federal issue.

The honourable member for Melbourne is referring repeatedly to the merits or demerits of the proposal for a 25 per cent flat tax on income. I do not know whether the honourable member is canvassing that taxing powers should be returned to the State but I suggest that he is out of order and straying from the Governor's Speech in which there was no mention of Federal taxation.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Stirling)—Order! There is no point of order; the debate is a broad one.

Mr REMINGTON (Melbourne)—The honourable member for Portland is certainly having a bad week. He was led into a foolish situation as the newspapers have quite correctly shown and I saw him on television recently in that foolish situation. He is a mate of mine and I was sorry to see him so embarrassed down at St Kilda. However, let us come back to the issue: I should like to know where the National Party stands on the issue of the 25 per cent flat tax. It is fundamental to the Governor's Speech because, as I pointed out when I began, the success of the Governor's Speech and the way in which this State progresses depends upon the economic policy of centralised Canberra. If honourable members think we live in a vacuum, they are mistaken. I do not believe there are many "flat earthers" in the National Party; I think members of that party probably do believe the world is round, but I should like to know where each and every one of them stands on this tax.

Its introduction would have disastrous effects on our rural community because, as they tell me time and time again—and particularly the honourable member for Swan Hill—the embattled man on the land confronts many difficulties. The man on the land will not be helped by Bjelke Joh's cut off point in income of \$26 000 per annum. That means that any farmer not earning \$26 000 a year is disadvantaged under the flat tax scheme. A husband and wife sharing an income would have to be earning not less than \$53 000 or they are disadvantaged.

Have I been hoodwinked previously? The National Party says that farmers are harassed, does it not? Everybody knows there has been a fall off in income of primary producers; therefore they should realise the stupidity, foolishness and economic madness of this crazy 25 per cent flat tax scheme.

As for the members of the Liberal Opposition, they would not know, unless they had read the Australian Bureau of Statistics figures, that 80 per cent of the whole Victorian work force, as with 80 per cent of the whole Australian work force, received less than \$26 000 a year, which is the cut off point for Sir Johannes Bjelke-Petersen's stupid flat tax policy.

Eighty per cent of the workers in every country town would suffer and in fact I suggest that the figure would be higher in the country. Ninety-four per cent of employed women would be worse off and 74 per cent of all male workers in the State would be similarly so affected. The Opposition ought to think it through and forget the rhetoric of Sir Johannes Bjelke-Petersen and look at the facts. Approximately 4.6 million Australian workers would be worse off under this 25 per cent flat tax scheme. I urge members of the National Party to think again. They have pledged themselves to the Queensland Premier.

I know that statistics are not always interesting to relate in a speech and, so far as possible, I tend to avoid quoting from them but in this case there is great economic debate

in Australia centering around the weird policy of the Queensland Premier. One of my notes here says that it is not surprising that he should be wrong as he was a supporter of that great charlatan, Dr Milan Brych. Where is Brych today? When he was in Queensland the Premier was an outspoken supporter of him and yet today that charlatan is rotting in a gaol in America where he belongs.

From my analysis, the Queensland Premier's economic judgment is, if anything, slightly worse than his judgment of his friend Brych.

Let us examine this great charade of the sunshine State and compare it with the magnificent achievements of the Victorian Government; no matter how hard the Opposition whinges, criticises, condemns and complains, it cannot deny the outstanding success of the economic policies of the Cain Labor Government in Victoria. In almost every area, it has led the economic recovery in Australia in extremely difficult circumstances and in perhaps the worst circumstances seen since the mid-1930s. When one considers the achievements of the Government, one should bear in mind the great malaise of the economy when the Labor Party took over.

I invite honourable members to compare the two States in the area of bankruptcy. I often hear the honourable member for Hawthorn spout off his bankruptcy figures. Queensland may be the sunshine State climatically but in economic terms it is the bankrupt State. I have with me the latest statistics up to December last year.

In Victoria in the six-month period to December there were 764 bankruptcies. Victoria has a population of 4.1 million. Queensland has a small population of 2.4 to 2.5 million. Queensland's bankruptcies were not 40 per cent of the Victorian total, or even 60 per cent in real terms as one would expect them to be. Victoria had 764 and Queensland 884. Queensland is the bankrupt State. That is what Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen has done. I remind National Party members that it is his ambition to do to Australia—and that means Victoria also—what he has done to Queensland. I can tell honourable members plainly what he has done to Queensland, but it would be most unparliamentary. It is no wonder he wants to vet Federal candidates. If they are not 25 per cent flat tax candidates they will not get the nod. I heard the Premier's son talk on television the other night—he does not want sex before marriage. Will the Nationals be vetted on that issue?

I am pleased and proud to say that the bankruptcy rates in Victoria are substantially less than the much smaller populated State of Queensland. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics figures, when the Labor Government came to power the number of bankruptcies was 1290 in 1981–82 and progressively, year after year, were brought down to 1107 in 1983–84 and 897 in 1984–85.

I am not attempting to mislead anybody. Of course there will be increases in the rate of bankruptcies across Australia during this current year. I assure honourable members that Queensland is the leader in the bankruptcy stakes in comparative percentages. It is an absolute shame and disgrace to that State that small businesses are going broke almost every day—in fact, it is more than one a day.

Mr Simpson—What about the unemployment rate?

Mr REMINGTON—I shall not dwell on the unemployment rate as it has been mentioned often. Everyone knows Victoria has had the lowest level of unemployment for 44 consecutive months. We all know that Queensland has the highest unemployment rate.

I shall refer to the economic policies and the effect of those policies on the disadvantaged and the unemployed in Victoria. As at January 1987, 113 401 Victorians received unemployment benefits. Victoria has 65 per cent more in the work force than Queensland. In Queensland, 123 000 people receive unemployment benefits—what a disgrace! One of the—

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member has 2 minutes.

Mr REMINGTON—I wish it were 2 hours, Mr Speaker! One of the great myths about Petersen, who is the loudmouth from the north——

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member for Melbourne will refer to the Premier as the Premier.

Mr REMINGTON—Did you know that Sir Johannes Bjelke-Petersen——

The SPEAKER—Order! That procedure is not correct. The honourable member should refer to the Premier of Queensland as the Premier of Queensland.

Mr REMINGTON—The “Peanut Premier”. One of the myths is that people go to Queensland to enjoy the sunshine and lie on the beaches while taking the dole. An examination of the statistics shows that to be a fallacy. The Australian Bureau of Statistics figures show that in a comparison of the number of people going to Queensland in the age group 15 years to 45 years and those leaving Queensland, the result is a net loss of 2600 people—more people in that age group are leaving Queensland than going to Queensland; that is the acid test of the great myth.

There is an air of confidence in the State of Victoria. It is certainly not among the Opposition, the doom, gloom, the flat earth and the flat 25 per cent tax people.

Mr STEGGALL (Swan Hill)—I take the opportunity of the Address-in-Reply debate to pledge my support to the Crown and also the support of the majority of people in the electorate of Swan Hill to Her Majesty, and also to congratulate the Governor yesterday on the delivery of his Speech. The opening of Parliament proceedings were very well handled and carried out.

It would seem that this year the National Party is receiving a little more attention than at any time in its previous history. I find it delightful that every member of the Government benches who has contributed to the debate has spent an inordinate amount of time on the interesting things that are happening in conservative politics throughout Australia. We have our clowns and characters in this place and we have heard a speech from the honourable member for Melbourne that probably did not do him justice. I have a lot of respect for him, but I was disappointed by his contribution.

Most members of this Parliament and also, it would seem, most people throughout Australia, have not understood what has happened in politics in this country over the past three or four weeks. One is seeing a livening up and a different direction in conservative politics across the board. For the first time in a long time politicians and people in the conservative parties have had to literally stop and think about where they are going. I am sure the election results of the past few years have shown how far and how close the conservative parties of this nation have come to the Labor socialist parties and socialist Governments that are in place. We have had literally fifteen years of socialist government at a national level in this country. We did not see that conservative people after 1975 had the ability to change the direction in which this nation had been going.

In the past few weeks the Queensland Premier has identified and tapped the thoughts and aspirations of the majority of Australians.

The contributions we have heard from Government members were supposed to be the killer of the taxation policy of the Queensland Premier. However, they dissolved into nothing because, unlike Labor Party factionalism, conservative politicians—especially country politicians—cannot be categorised and placed in little boxes.

Conservative politicians are experiencing a change in their thinking for the first time in quite a while. They are questioning the policies and directions of socialist Governments, especially where those policies have taken the nation in recent times.

The movement launched by the Queensland Premier has been accepted by almost every political commentator in this country. It sets out a conservative approach and creates a real danger to Labor Governments across Australia.

For the first time since I have been a member of Parliament, conservative thinkers from all parties are aware of the controls and restrictions that are being imposed on the people of Australia by the present centralised system of socialist Government.

The measuring sticks that people can use are the debt loads being carried by State and local government, the extent of unemployment and the lack of initiative that has been created by this socialist system.

The Governor has given his Speech and the Premier has stood in this House and given his schoolboy lectures on initiatives and incentives. However, when it comes down to taws, those initiatives and incentives have been taken away by the Government over the past few years and have been replaced by a central controlling mechanism.

If the honourable member for Greensborough were still in the House, I would remind her of the contribution she made earlier today about the State Government's attempts at regionalisation in country Victoria. Regionalisation is a joke in both metropolitan and country areas. The theory and rhetoric behind regionalisation was accepted by many people in this State but it has turned out to be nothing but theory and rhetoric because the Government has not delivered any services.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr STEGGALL—I refer honourable members to regionalisation in the areas of health, conservation, forests, lands and the water authorities. I shall speak about those areas of activity later.

One thing that makes me smile is the way that the Labor Government has picked up the taxation policies or principles of the Queensland Premier. All of a sudden, members of the Labor Party ask, "Are you for it? Are you against it?" They then try to put everyone in boxes. Let me tell the House where the majority of National Party politicians stand on the taxation debate that is going on in this nation at the moment. Like everyone else, we are confused as to the precise details of the policy that the Queensland Premier is putting up. Like everyone else you, Mr Speaker, appreciate that the policy has not been detailed. Everything that is going on in the debate at the moment is pure conjecture. So I suggest that honourable members opposite might hold back from their criticisms and let us make a judgment, as we will be making judgments, when these policies are known.

What has become obvious is that everyone realises that taxation throughout this nation is too high, as is Government interference and bureaucratic control in the lives of the people of this nation.

Labor Government backbenchers are asking what is the Opposition's policy on taxation. The role of the Opposition in this House is not to communicate policy, but to ensure the Government stays within its policies and be accountable for its actions. The policies of the opposition parties will be delivered and judged during election time. It is of no value for opposition parties to release policies two years or more before an election. The role of the opposition is to ensure that the Premier, Ministers and Government members are accountable for their actions.

Those who have followed the philosophies of the Australian Labor Party are beginning to realise how much control and interference these policies have on their day-to-day lives.

The electorate of Swan Hill is going through difficult times.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr STEGGALL—Honourable members who are elected to represent the Labor Party represent that party, but not their electorates. That is not right. Members in country electorates are different.

In the past few months a local government draft proposal has been introduced and circulated throughout the State. The Minister for Local Government, the Premier and

other people have sold the document as a draft Bill whereas it is not a draft Bill. It has caused enormous confusion throughout local government. The Government should give local government some direction and should explain to people involved in local government what will happen with the present Act. The draft proposal, as submitted, appears to indicate that a new local government Bill will be introduced as an amending Bill. The Minister for Local Government, by sleight of hand, will introduce an amending Local Government Bill. Honourable members will not find out about the real ramifications of the Bill, the directions, powers or controls that will be passed on to the community, the Minister and departmental officers.

An inquiry is being undertaken into the financial relationships between the State Government and local government. It is an interesting inquiry, but should have included Commonwealth-State and local government financial relationships. As honourable members are aware, previous debates on local government have indicated the financial tie up between those three tiers of government. Honourable members await with interest the results of that inquiry and also want to know about the delivery of human services and the funding, control and ability to make choices in the human service area. I hope the Minister for Local Government ensures, in discussing the social justice strategy that the Government talks so much about, that he outlines the Government's aims in the local government area.

The Minister should outline those areas before a final debate takes place on a new local government Bill, otherwise honourable members will be in the awkward situation of not knowing where local government is heading.

Regionalisation of departments has been a failure, of which the Rural Water Commission is a classic example. Regional managers have been appointed to the regions of the commission, but the staff of the commission are in utter turmoil. They do not have the faintest idea of what is happening in the commission, whether they will retain their positions or whether they will be transferred to a different position some time in the future. Almost every district office appears to be covered by temporary appointments of district officers. If the Government expects the Public Service to operate efficiently as mentioned by the honourable member for Rodney, the Government should ascertain the directions it wants to go and ensure that the staff of the Rural Water Commission know what their functions will be in the future, because at the moment the commission is in a mess.

Many honourable members representing suburban electorates would not know what is meant by the financial strategy package. It was designed as the great cure-all by the Minister for Water Resources and was a strategy to rearrange the finances of the Rural Water Commission. Honourable members know that the finances of the commission are in tatters. The strategy has failed; it was doomed from the start. Until the Government appoints Ministers who are able to control their departments, trouble will persist in the Public Service. Unfortunately the Minister for Water Resources does not have the control of his department and needs to get his house in order, because, although it is at the bottom of the Labor Party list of Ministries, it has a high priority for those people living in rural Victoria.

The electorate of Swan Hill contains the vast Mallee region, a wheat and grain growing area. This time last year farmers were negotiating and arguing over a crop planting program that would finance some crop plantings. The program was handled by the Rural Finance Commission and I congratulate the Government for the introduction of that program, which was designed to assist farmers in the planting of last year's crop. A lien was placed over the crop, so that the commission would have first call on the income from that crop. It was a successful operation. It worked well and gave many people the opportunity of examining where they were going, what their finances would be like and generally to reassess their position. Unfortunately, the program has not been continued this year and an enormous number of people in the grain industry are wondering whether they will be able to plant a crop. No assistance will be given under rural adjustment

schemes to people termed non-viable. Interest rate assistance is available to people whose creditors will support them and whose banks will help them to continue on the land that they own.

A large number of rural people and their families are sitting in limbo, wondering where to go and what the year will bring. Decisions must be made quickly by the banks and by the Government.

It is vital that the Government understands the problems faced by people in the northern wheat-growing areas of Victoria and what their options are for this year. The banks are currently carrying out reviews of the financial situations of all farmers. Those reviews are slow and are a long way behind schedule. Decisions must be made quickly when the season breaks and the autumn rains descend, which I hope will be soon.

A significant number of Mallee farmers are in limbo because the banks have told them there is no more money until a review is undertaken. Officers of the Rural Finance Commission have said that until farmers are told by their creditors whether they will be backed financially they cannot make a decision on interest rate assistance or offer any financial package.

The banks will examine the viability of the farms and will consider their incomes and expenditure but will not take into account the servicing of any debt. The banks will consider the financial operation of a farm in an average year with no debt components. If the property is making a profit, most banks will consider financing the farmer for another year and Rural Finance Commission assistance will be available on interest rates. When one applies the interest and servicing of the debt to the operating figures for the properties, one usually comes up with a figure of 12 per cent, which is roughly what the interest rate subsidy will be.

It is extremely difficult in many rural areas to get the banks up to scratch in reviewing the financial positions of farms, in obtaining the relevant figures and carrying out the necessary bookwork. It is unfortunate that many Mallee farmers will be caught in limbo when the season commences.

It is vital that the Government keeps a close eye on rural adjustment funds. At present money is available for a short time, but I ask the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs and the Premier to ensure that the rural adjustment program will operate to the maximum advantage of the farmer and will result in the largest funds that can be delivered by the Government through the Rural Finance Commission. Money is desperately needed by many farmers and it is important that no delays should result to rural communities, which are now at risk.

Honourable members might ask why the industry has not been restructured. I inform them that it is now going through a restructure period, but that it will take some time. If the Government is serious about its social justice strategy, it should consider a crop planting program this year.

The National Party has rarely enjoyed as much publicity, comment and reaction from politicians of all political persuasions as has occurred over the past few weeks. I welcome the controversy, debate and confusion that has been caused amongst conservative and non-conservative parties in Australia. This is the first time that the conservatives have been forced to put on their thinking caps.

Although the Minister for Local Government may smile, he and all members of the Government backbench should recognise that for the first time in years the conservative forces in this country have become involved in discussions and a good deal of work. They will deliver their policies to residents of the Central Highlands Province, Victoria and Australia in the next twelve months.

The sitting was suspended at 6.26 p.m. until 8.5 p.m.

Mr E. R. SMITH (Glen Waverley)—I have pleasure in responding to the Governor's Speech and confirming my loyalty and that of the constituents of Glen Waverley to Her Majesty the Queen and to her representatives in Victoria, His Excellency Dr Davis McCaughey and Mrs McCaughey.

The Speech is indeed full of laudable sentiments, but there are two areas that I should like to examine along with other members of the House because they are areas which people out in the suburbs would very much query. Although the sentiments in the Speech are quite laudable, it is very short on realism.

The first area to which I refer relates to comments made at page 2 of the Speech, that Victoria now leads the economic recovery which has been occurring in Australia. I am sure if one asks the people of Glen Waverley and other suburban electorates about the economic recovery, they will tell a different story indeed. They will say that interest rates are far too high at present. They will also say that home loan repayments—which are tipped to increase—are crippling them, particularly the single income families.

A great deal has been heard about Victoria being the inflation capital of Australia, which is a far cry from the statement that it is leading the economic recovery. I point out that Victoria has the highest inflation rate of any State in Australia—10.2 per cent.

Last night during question time the Premier said that Victoria was just marginally ahead of Tasmania. He poured great scorn on Tasmania but, whether the Premier likes it or not, this State is leading the country with its rate of inflation. That is because during the time of the Labor Government the public sector debt has increased from \$11.4 billion to \$20.3 billion. That puts Victoria ahead compared with the borrowings of any other State; Victoria's level of borrowings is slightly higher than that of New South Wales, which is a little more than \$19 billion.

State taxes in Victoria have increased by two-thirds, or 66.66 per cent, during the term of the Labor Government—from \$562 for each man, woman and child in 1982 to \$931 this year. During the same period the inflation rate has increased by 45.4 per cent. In other words, the taxes have increased by 20 per cent in real terms over the inflation rate.

Last night the Minister for Housing told honourable members that the waiting list for Government housing had increased to more than 32 000. When the Labor Party came to government in 1982, the figure was 16 268. According to figures that were released only yesterday, the current housing waiting list is 32 644.

Mr Maclellan—That is the number of families waiting for housing.

Mr E. R. SMITH—That is right. At the same time the hospital waiting list in the State that is supposedly leading the economic recovery has risen by 308 per cent, from 8400 to 34 308. By the use of simple mathematics, one recognises that the waiting list has multiplied four times. I have no doubt that the needy people waiting for beds in public hospitals are probably the same people waiting to move into Government housing.

Gas, electricity and water supply charges have increased because the State is taxing the authorities that supply those services. It is not that the authorities themselves are inefficient—although one would have to examine that point carefully—but that the State is taxing them, which has the effect of forcing up the prices of gas, electricity and water.

Library subsidies are also of concern to people out in the suburbs. After church on Sunday, a woman came up to me and asked, "What are you going to do about library subsidies? We are finding it tremendously hard now to borrow books from the Waverley library". I replied that I had already received some 52 letters and invited her to add to the collection so that we could start making a noise about it. It seems the only issue of which the Government takes notice is that about which people bitterly complain. The same woman said that traditionally she had been a Labor voter all her life but that she was not sure how she would vote in the next election—that she was sick of them. She said that the cut in library subsidies was the straw that would break the camel's back.

When one talks to people about the Government's claim that Victoria is leading the economic recovery, they very quickly remind one about the problem relating to integration aides and teachers in schools.

This afternoon I spoke with a representative of the Brentwood High School Council, of which I am a member. I was presented with some figures obtained from the eastern regional education centre, which showed that there were 110 requests for integration aides. Some time ago the Labor Party made a big song and dance about this issue when it promised it would assist the disadvantaged by providing an integration scheme whereby physically disadvantaged children would be able to attend mainstream schools. The Labor Party promised that it would deliver this service.

Mr Cathie—As resources allowed!

Mr E. R. SMITH—It is obvious from the interjection that I have struck a nerve. The Minister should listen to the figures.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member will address the Chair and ignore interjections.

Mr E. R. SMITH—There were 110 requests in the eastern region for integration aides, but funding has been provided for only 39, leaving 71 people who were led to believe that they would have this service delivered. More than half of the disadvantaged in the eastern region do not have integration aides. What about integration teachers in this area? Requests were made for 33 integration teachers, and only sixteen have been provided. In other words, seventeen disadvantaged persons, who were led by the Government to believe they would be provided with integration teachers, are now waiting for the Government to deliver its promise. Of those seventeen, twelve are in the primary area and five are in the post-primary area.

Mr Cathie—What is your policy?

Mr E. R. SMITH—The Liberal Party will be announcing its policy at the appropriate time. I should like to pay tribute to the principal of Brentwood High School. He is a highly respected man.

Mr Cunningham—He would not be a Liberal then!

Mr E. R. SMITH—Who knows what he would be! The man is apolitical so far as his job is concerned. He was recently honoured in the Australia Day honours list. I pay tribute to Mr Arthur Beaver, the Principal of Brentwood High School, who is also involved in a number of other areas of community works such as support for refugees from South-East Asia.

The Government claims that it does not have any money to support mainstream values. It is amazing how the Government can find money to finance projects such as the National Tennis Centre, yet the "little people" in the community do not get a look in so far as Government funding is concerned. It is not what Government policy states; it is what Government policy does not state.

What about youth unemployment? One-fifth of young persons between the ages of fifteen and nineteen years are presently out of work. When the Labor Party came to office in 1982, 41 500 young persons aged between fifteen and nineteen years were out of work. The figure has now increased to 51 800, in other words, a rise of 24·8 per cent. That increase demonstrates the hollowness of the Government's Youth Guarantee Scheme. It is an administrative shambles. Need I go on?

Public transport is in a shambles with a deficit of \$953 million for 1985–86. No wonder the media is highlighting the fact that public transport is costing \$1813 a minute.

What about the Government's social justice policy? I did some research to determine what the Government means by social justice, and it was very hard to find out what it

does mean. I found a copy of a speech made last year by the Victorian President of the Australian Labor Party, Mr Gerry Hand, MHR, on the launching of a book, *Winners and Losers—The pursuit of social justice in Australian history*, at the Australian National University. The book is by Dr Stuart Macintyre. In that speech, Mr Hand defines social justice according to the Labor Party. It was the first occasion I was able to discover what the Labor Party meant by social justice. In that speech Mr Hand states:

I regard the Victorian social justice strategy as potentially the most exciting and important policy initiative taken by any Labor Government in this area.

The strategy which is currently being pulled together is based upon developing concepts such as equity, access, civil rights, integration, cultural relevance, quality of service, employment and efficiency.

Again, those are laudable aims but listen to what the objective is. It is a Robin Hood objective. Mr Hand states:

Its primary objective is to develop an integrated and coordinated approach to services and programs which will provide a clear and explicit base for redistributed resources and opportunities from the advantaged to the disadvantaged.

In other words, the Labor Party is concerned about the distribution of wealth and not the creation of wealth. I thought that was a fairly reasonable starting point to illustrate what the Labor Party is talking about when it refers to social justice. In the Governor's Speech, on page 7, reference is made to the four areas of major rights in the pursuit of social justice. One of these areas, the Bill of Rights, is presently being considered by the Legal and Constitutional Committee. In the daily newspapers of 13 February this year the honourable member for Warrandyte was quoted as referring to the possibility of the introduction of a Bill of Rights.

One knows the fate of the Federal Bill of Rights. That Bill was shelved. When it was shelved, the former Chief Justice of the High Court, Sir Harry Gibbs, said that Australia did not need a Bill of Rights. Upon assuming office, his successor, the present Chief Justice, Sir Anthony Mason, also said that Australia does not need a Bill of Rights. The Chief Justice said that in place of that Bill is an elected Parliament, an independent judiciary and the common law.

There was a grave omission in that Bill of Rights in that there was no reference to any free enterprise rights. The United States of America representative at the United Nations between 1953 and 1960, Henry Cabot Lodge, fought hard against the representatives of the communist countries at the United Nations to have particular reference to free enterprise rights inserted in the United Nations Bill of Rights but the majority, including the communists, would not allow it. The Bill of Rights that the Federal Government wanted to introduce in Australia last year was similar to the Bill of Rights that one would find in communist states—the slave countries.

A freedom loving country has free enterprise rights, and what are those rights? The first is the right to own property and to live off the earnings of private property; the freedom of association and the right not only to join a trade union but also the right not to join a trade union. This is one of the major free enterprise rights, which was a convenient omission from the Federal Government's Bill of Rights. Another free enterprise right is the right to choose a State or private education.

A fourth free enterprise right is that of the traditional family to follow mainstream values but that right was also conveniently omitted from the Federal Government's Bill of Rights.

Victoria should not be contemplating the introduction of a Bill of Rights. It was thrown out at the Federal level and yet this Government is still persevering with the idea. I submit that social justice through the time honoured Bill of Rights of 1688 appears to have served this country very well.

When the Federal Government introduced its Bill of Rights, I wrote an article which appeared in the *Age*. In that article I said that the Federal Bill appeared to give far more

rights to the criminal class than to the victims of crime. At present the victims of crime should be given consideration at the expense of the rights of criminals.

Criminals have rights as well, but in a free enterprise society victims should have more rights. The *Age* article of 13 February that I mentioned earlier said that the police believe a Bill of Rights would hamper them. Most people in Victoria are aware of the feeling of insecurity such a measure may bring about. People of all age groups have visited my electorate office and said they are not prepared to travel on trains or walk the streets at night. They are frightened and very concerned because there is insufficient police protection to give them the security that previously existed.

I visited the Glen Waverley police station to check on its operational numbers. The Glen Waverley police station consists of 39 operational uniformed police made up of 2 senior sergeants, 7 sergeants and 30 senior constables. However, of those 39, 2 are in the Dog Squad; 1 is on maternity leave; 1 is in a district support group; 1 is on permanent light duties; 2 are on long-term sick leave; 3 are involved in courses until 13 March; 6.5 are on recreational leave—sometimes there are 5 on leave and sometimes there are 8, but the average is 6.5—3 deal with files and carry out duties such as writing out warrants and working with Neighbourhood Watch; 1 is a crime collator; 1 is a property steward; and 2 are on prosecuting duties.

Therefore, 23.5 police are unavailable for patrolling duties, which leaves only 15.5 for those duties. Of those, 2 senior sergeants are not available for patrol, except for attending VFL Park, because they are too busy to go out on patrol. Therefore, only 13.5 police are available for those duties.

It also came to my attention at the police open day last week that, of the more than 200 police on duty, more than half were on overtime. That would have cost thousands of dollars. At the same time, on that Sunday in district No. 4, which takes in Glen Waverley and Mount Waverley and is known as "P" police district, 1 sergeant and 1 constable were on duty at Glen Waverley and only 1 sergeant was on duty at Mount Waverley.

Honourable members will realise the staffing of police in that area has reached a critical level. No money is available for paying overtime for a perceived police presence on the streets or for those police in patrol cars, although there seems to be unlimited money available for the public relations department of the force to hold an open day. Surely, people in those suburbs like mine are entitled to better security than they are being offered at present. They are crying out for more police to give them better protection.

Page 7 of the Governor's Speech refers to dignity and security for the aged. In the past three months, following my involvement with the Retirement Villages Bill, I have learnt that all is not well for the aged population. I am not criticising the current Government, the previous Government or particular State or Federal Governments. It is a collective criticism and I raise it to generate debate on this subject in the community. Ten per cent of the Australian population is more than 65 years of age, totalling 1.6 million people, and 5 per cent of those people are in nursing homes.

I visited the Royal Cardiff Infirmary because I was told in Melbourne that the Professor of Geriatric Medicine there, Professor Pathy, is a world renowned authority in geriatric medicine. He informed me that in his opinion 90 per cent of nursing home patients in England and Australia should not have been placed in nursing homes in the first place. He has visited Australia in the past. When I returned to Australia I made the same claim to generate debate. I was informed by the Professor of Medicine in Geriatrics at the University of Melbourne, Professor Cape, that the figure is more like 25 per cent in Australia. The nursing home subsidy from the Commonwealth amounts to approximately \$1.1 billion and the State is involved in administering State nursing homes. If one realises that 25 per cent of people in nursing homes should not have been placed in them in the first place one begins to understand the extent of the problem.

The honourable member for Frankston North agreed with me in discussions yesterday that it is an all-party, bipartisan problem that must be addressed immediately because

over the next twenty years the percentage of people who are aged over 65 years will increase from 10 per cent to 15 per cent. In other words, the number of people will increase from 1.6 million to 2.4 million. I am not criticising nursing homes, but the way in which we administer the care of elderly people. One of the areas most at fault is the committing of the elderly to nursing homes. At the moment this is done with the approval of a social worker or family doctor, and the Government doctor is merely concerned with the recommendation without carrying out a physical examination. The subsidy each nursing home in Australia receives amounts to \$25 000 a bed.

The people who are committing the elderly to nursing homes must therefore have appropriate qualifications. At the moment in Victoria there are only twenty qualified geriatricians. I shall enlighten the House as to what a geriatrician is. A geriatrician is a doctor who, after completing the normal six-year course, completes an extra eight or nine years, sometimes part time, in a hospital in order to gain a Fellowship of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians specialising in geriatrics. With only twenty qualified geriatricians in Victoria, it is no wonder so many people are being committed to nursing homes without the necessary specialist examination.

This is not only my opinion but also the opinion of the medical experts, and I have documentation to back up the argument. I am not trying to lay blame in any particular area. If one assumes that \$275 million can be saved it can be done in two ways: one is to provide better specialist treatment sooner and save some of the \$275 million; and the other is to adopt a scheme used in Wales of offering sheltered accommodation. Many people are placed in nursing homes, tragically, because there is no one to look after them. They are often frail people who need support. Wales has developed a scheme called Carlin homes in which sheltered accommodation facilities comprising about 30 small flats are available. The Minister for Housing has already listened to this idea and is prepared to see how the project works when he is in Wales in April.

Very few people who are placed in nursing homes ever come out; many of them need supervision, such as those suffering from Alzheimer's disease or senile dementia. Those people do not usually need sedation but supervision. We need to provide hostels for the demented. Another area concerning the aged that must be dealt with is the problem of incontinence. In many cases in Australia at the moment, once an elderly person becomes incontinent he or she is placed in a nursing home.

The geriatricians to whom I have spoken say this is something that should not have to happen and that the people concerned could have been put into other places such as hostels. More than 95 per cent of people do not go into nursing homes but live at home or with their families until they die. People who have conditions such as Alzheimer's disease and incontinence can often receive tender loving care at home. What they need is not the nursing care—which is the expensive side—but more supervision by relatives or nursing aides. I am not decrying nursing homes. I admit that 75 per cent of people who are in nursing homes should be there. However, for the other 25 per cent surely we could get a program going that would start to give better quality of care for our aged. What we need to be doing when we are examining the dignity and security of the aged is to be adding life to years not years to life.

As I have said, the address given by His Excellency the Governor is full of sentiment. All honourable members can laud those ideals. However, the people in the areas such as those which I represent cannot abide the hypocrisy of it. They are saying that it is not what is in the Speech, but what has been left out of it.

We know the Government must be worried when it is spending upwards of \$26 million to tell us that Victoria is leading the economic recovery of Australia. Anyone who has to tell one that he or she is good—because people do not realise it themselves—obviously is not good.

I find that the person who says that he or she is honest, is the person one has to be careful of. People who say, "I am a caring fellow" are the ones to worry about. If one

cannot pick up from a person that that person is honest or caring, I submit he or she is not honest or caring. In the same way this Government, in claiming to be leading the economic recovery, has had to spend \$26 million to tell people about all the wonderful things it has done and is, therefore, hoodwinking the people of Victoria.

I seriously suggest that the Government has a problem. We are all aware of the great political dilemma in Australia. This is not because any one person has any great policies. What is happening is that the people are so dissatisfied with the way in which this Government and its Federal counterpart are operating that they are prepared to consider drastic alternatives and we Liberals have the policies to which obviously they will turn.

Mr NORRIS (Dandenong)—I am privileged to rise in this Address-in-Reply debate and I wish to support the motion moved by the honourable member for Monbulk. I congratulate His Excellency the Governor on a very splendid Speech delivered yesterday on the opening of Parliament.

It was a day of which all Victorians could be justifiably proud, but I believe one sour note was struck, especially in the press this morning, when I read a rather bitter and uncalled for criticism from both the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the National Party saying that the Governor's Speech was political and that the whole thing had been politicised.

Be that as it may, the Governor was doing what every other Governor has done since time immemorial so far as Victoria is concerned—he was delivering a speech written by the Government of the day. The difficulty with the Opposition is this: even though it is five years, virtually to the day, since it last sat on the Government side of the House, it has yet to accept the fact that it is in opposition. Unfortunately, the born to rule mentality still remains on that side of the House.

Members of the opposition parties heard, yesterday, a sensible, sound, forward-looking Speech presented by His Excellency the Governor—and might I say presented extremely well—and yet we get this carping nasty criticism about what should have been on what in my mind was a very proud day for this State.

Having said that, I now wish to make a couple of comments about some of the contributions made earlier in the day. This is a time of great political interest. I think it was Harold Wilson who said that a week is a long time in politics. Over the past couple of weeks we have witnessed amazing scenes. The only member of the Liberal Party who mentioned the events was the last speaker, who, in his closing remarks mentioned the fact that there was a lot of turmoil going on.

However, our colleagues in the National Party—the honourable members for Rodney and Swan Hill—have both spoken at length about the difficulties that their particular faction of conservative politics is now facing. What did surprise me was the degree of conservatism expressed in the speech by the honourable member for Swan Hill. He is a member who, no doubt, we all hold in great respect and I am sure he is a hard working member in his electorate. However, he did surprise me this afternoon with his degree of conservatism. Last night the honourable member for Monbulk quoted a newspaper article from the *Northern Times* which contained a quote from the honourable member for Swan Hill. I thought that quote must have been incorrect. However, the honourable member for Swan Hill actually repeated it himself today in his own speech—so the statement must have been correct.

What the honourable member for Swan Hill actually said demonstrates the degree of conservatism we are facing from members of the opposition parties. I shall quote from what the honourable member for Swan Hill actually said as reported in the *Northern Times* of 10 February:

When we have a change of Government we don't want another era like Fraser.

Socialism really continued with his Government. We are effectively in the fifteenth year of the socialist experiment and it hasn't worked.

What he is actually referring to is the coalition Government of Malcolm Fraser of which luminaries of the National Party were prominent members, men of the National Party of his conviction that he could not hold a candle to. I am speaking of Doug Anthony, Peter Nixon, Ian Sinclair and possibly Mr Hunt. The honourable member for Swan Hill is saying they were cohorts in a socialist Government. I do find that hard to take even from the honourable member for Swan Hill!

I should like to know how people of the calibre of Doug Anthony feel when branded as a socialist by the honourable member for Swan Hill. This is the degree of turmoil that is currently running right through the National Party.

The honourable member for Swan Hill also said, "We do not have any policies at present; I am having two bob each way on the flat tax idea". The honourable member possibly agrees with the 25 per cent flat tax. The honourable member for Swan Hill said that the Premier of Queensland had stimulated debate within the conservative parties for the first time.

So much for the colleagues who sit next to the honourable member for Swan Hill. I refer to the honourable members for Mildura and Gippsland East, who are two of the longest serving members in this place. They have made a great contribution towards conservative politics in this place and the honourable member for Swan Hill has said that for the first time they are starting to think!

It is the old recitation again calling for cuts in Government expenditure and less tax but, at the same time, the honourable member for Swan Hill comes up with the old carp, "Let us have more money spent in my electorate".

The honourable member for Swan Hill stated that he wanted the social justice strategy implemented in the electorate he represents, for farmers who are up against it! He wants more money for the social justice program which the Premier of Queensland would slice with his razor because he does not believe in social justice or welfare. That would be the first thing to go.

The National Party is in a state of confusion. It does not have any definite policy. I sincerely hope it eventually puts forward some new policies. I shall quote John Howard, who was considered by his Parliamentary colleagues in the Liberal Party to be a fair Treasurer and a fairly honest man. In talking about the great Messiah of the National Party, the Premier of Queensland, and about stringency, tax cuts and less expenditure, John Howard said that the person with the biggest wish list and begging bowl was the Premier of Queensland. Now the same person is talking about fiscal constraint!

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, can you rule, Sir, that it would be in order for the honourable member for Dandenong to refer to the Governor's Speech occasionally?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Fogarty)—Order! I must admit that the honourable member for Dandenong is straying a little. The debate is very wide and the honourable member should have every opportunity of refuting statements made by the honourable member for Swan Hill.

The honourable member has been allowed to stray a little because there are not many honourable members in the Chamber at present and because it keeps honourable members in a good humour at this time of night.

Honourable members on the National Party benches have been a little too rowdy and I call them to order. The honourable member for Dandenong will now return to the debate.

Mr NORRIS (Dandenong)—Mr Deputy Speaker, I was about to return to the Governor's Speech when the honourable member for Berwick made his point of order. The Governor said that five years ago Victoria was performing poorly in the national economy, which itself was far from impressive.

Working on that quotation—even though members of the Opposition hate to hear a recitation of past ills but I shall do it for their sake—I shall recite a little history because members of the Opposition and the National Party admit they are in a state of flux and creative agitation—only those with a sense of history can go forward.

When the Labor Party took office in this State, almost five years ago to the day, Victoria was the sixth State of the Commonwealth. It was once the jewel in the Liberal Party crown, the pride of the nation. When we took over, the State was on the ropes. The Labor Party inherited a massive deficit—the busiest roads in the State were those leading out of it! The State was clapped-out.

Victoria had a Liberal Government during the halcyon days of the 1950s and 1960s. Blind Freddy and his dog could have run the State! The former Liberal Government did well. The Bolte era saw tremendous growth and progress, which the Labor Party accepts, but then it struck rougher times in the passage of the economy, and this was felt not only in Australia but also worldwide. Victoria was caught up in it.

It was then that the former Liberal Government started to falter—the wheels fell off! That was when the population of the State became soured with a Government that had ruled for 27 long years. The Labor Party put forward policies and was voted in during a difficult fiscal era. It inherited a bankrupt economy that was once the pride of the nation.

Money was being withdrawn from the State and all confidence had been lost. As I said, the State was clapped-out. The Labor Party was voted in with an overwhelming majority; it had policies which the Opposition had ceased to put forward. In a way I believe the Liberal Party was rather pleased to be defeated; it was tired.

The Labor Government inherited unemployment, lack of investment, a diminishing economy and an exodus of brains from the State. It turned that situation around. Its great claim was jobs, jobs and jobs! It has delivered that promise, which was something the former Liberal Government could never achieve. Members of the Liberal Party cannot say that we have not lived up to our great promise of providing jobs.

I shall repeat what has been said time and again in this place and which is something that the Opposition hates to hear: for the past 44 long months Victoria has had the lowest unemployment rate in the Commonwealth. The Labor Government is proud of that record and will keep repeating it like a broken gramophone.

More importantly, last year of all new jobs created in the country, 43 per cent were created in this State. What a magnificent record! Members of the Labor Party are proud to be part of a Government that has delivered the goods. Without a doubt these are tough economic times and anyone who tries to pretend differently is living in cuckoo land.

One of the great challenges to Governments throughout the Western World—if one is being honest—is to dampen expectations. I am sure my conservative colleagues on the National Party benches would agree with me. One of the difficulties of the Westminster system is the wish list: what do you offer and we will top it!

One of the gravest difficulties confronting Governments is the massive personal household debt which has become a fact of life in this country. This problem should be discussed because unfortunately the capitalist economy can exist only on the build-up of debt and the build-up of household debt in particular. From 1960 to 1980 household debt—after tax—had risen from 22 per cent to 44 per cent. We live in a society of easy credit. One does not need money to do business; one only needs the plastic bankcard or whatever.

Unfortunately, our system also relies on people getting into debt and not paying their bills because then they can be hit with a 20 per cent plus interest bill. That is what makes the wheels go around. This subject leads me to the matter of the anti-poverty social justice strategy.

Many honourable members were pleased to receive funds from the Ministry of Consumer Affairs under the anti-poverty social justice strategy to be allocated to organisations in our electorates to train financial counsellors. That was a wonderful Government innovation. I was pleased to be able to provide funds to the Dandenong Credit Union Co-operative Ltd last year. Only a few weeks ago I received another cheque which will also be allocated to training voluntary financial counsellors.

The honourable member for Warrnambool should be interested to hear that financial problems account for 50 per cent of marriage breakdowns in this country. Surely the honourable member would agree with me on this point: financial counselling is a facet of the social justice strategy which has been an enormous success and which has delivered the goods. It gets down to the basics.

One-third of all children in this country have parents who are on social welfare benefits. I am picking the information out of the air, although I believe I am correct. Approximately 500 000 children in this country are children of broken marriages I would have thought that members of the National Party would be extremely interested in these figures.

The honourable member for Gippsland East has surprised me by his statements tonight that Malcolm Fraser, Peter Nixon and Doug Anthony were socialists. He has also surprised me by scoffing at the important figures I just mentioned. Surely we are interested in keeping families together and keeping the family unit tight and cohesive.

Honourable members should applaud the social justice strategy which has enabled people to be trained to assist Victorians when they get into problems with debts and other commitments. I congratulate the Minister for Consumer Affairs and indicate that, once again, the money was gratefully received by the Dandenong Credit Union Co-operative Ltd.

I shall now refer to another of my pet topics—law and order. The Leader of the Opposition has informed the House that law and order will be one of the main planks in his party's platform. What did the Liberal Party do for law and order when it was in government? The Labor Party inherited a clapped-out police system with run-down police stations and a Police Force that was dispirited, underpaid and underequipped.

There is never enough money for anything. We are in an era of escalating crime and those honourable members who have recently been abroad will know that it is a problem throughout the Western World. We are trying to tackle the problem in our own country, but honourable members should consider the figures.

The Government's capital works funding for the Police Force increased by 150 per cent in its first four years of office and it rehoused a large percentage of the force. Victoria's Police Force is better housed, better paid, better equipped and better superannuated than any force in Australia. The police have been granted a superannuation scheme that is second to none. The total spending on the force has increased by 64 per cent over and above what the previous Liberal Government spent. That is a considerable amount; it is still not enough, but it never is.

I shall now refer to police numbers, which the honourable member for Malvern is always on about.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Fogarty)—Order! He is always out of order, too.

Mr NORRIS—Police strength in this State has increased by 1038. To get the figures into perspective, it is helpful to compare the ratio of police to population in other States. The ratio of police to population in Victoria is one police officer to 461 members of the community; in New South Wales, there is one police officer to 517 members of the community; and Queensland—the State of law and order—has one police officer to 538 members of the community. Victoria's record is pretty good. It is not good enough, but the Government is still working on it.

Victoria is fortunate to have the best Police Force in the Commonwealth, and that is something of which Victorians should be proud and should guard jealously. Victoria is also privileged to have the best Chief Commissioner of Police in the country. Unfortunately, Chief Commissioner Miller will shortly retire and he will be greatly missed. He is a fine public servant and a police officer second to none. When he eventually retires, I am sure all honourable members will wish him well and thank him for a job extremely well done.

Victoria is extremely fortunate to have the best Minister for Police and Emergency Services in Australia. The Minister has had to go into Cabinet during difficult economic times and argue for his slice of the cake. Those honourable members who have been in Cabinet—and there are only two currently in the House—would know how difficult it is to argue for a slice of the cake when one's colleagues also want their slice.

Despite tough economic times, the Minister has been able to continue to increase the Police Force's proportion of the Budget. This year, the allocation increased by 9 per cent. Victoria is fortunate to have a magnificent Police Force, Chief Commissioner of Police and Minister for Police and Emergency Services, and I offer my grateful thanks and congratulations to the Minister.

Mr Simpson—The police had a vote of no confidence against the previous two Liberal Ministers.

Mr NORRIS—Tom Rippon is a trade union leader and he is out for the best deal for his members and, as the honourable member for Niddrie indicated by interjection, the Police Force voted a vote of no confidence in the last two Liberal Ministers.

I shall refer to another pet topic of mine—drugs and alcohol. Earlier in the evening the honourable member for Rodney called me a hypocrite. I could have taken a point of order and said that the remark was unparliamentary, but he spoke in the heat of the moment and he will apologise to me when he sees me in the corridor.

I have the honour of sitting on the board of the Western Port Drug and Alcohol Service. I am pleased that its funding continues to increase. As all honourable members know, a massive problem exists. Again, never enough money is spent, but the problem has been recognised and the Government is endeavouring to tackle it.

It is extremely difficult to induce public sympathy and response, even in a fundraising capacity, for any programs involved with drug and alcohol abuse. The public has the unfortunate attitude that the problem is self-inflicted and those affected should stew in their own juice. Hopefully, the mood will eventually change. Anyone who has been involved in fundraising for drug and alcohol services will know it is a hard row to hoe. Collecting money for the Royal Children's Hospital is easy because people give freely to that hospital, but people suffering from drug or alcohol abuse are fairly unattractive and do not evoke an emotional response. The Western Port Drug and Alcohol Service is grateful for the help given by the Government.

A few weeks ago, the Government made a grant of \$42 000 available to a group known as TRANX, which is a voluntary group that tries to help people in the community who have become addicted to mild tranquillisers. As the honorable member for Narracan would know through his professional experience, the use of tranquillisers has increased phenomenally. At least 16 per cent of women are addicted to mild tranquillisers as are approximately 6.5 per cent of men.

By mild tranquillisers we mean substances such as Mogadon, Serepax, Valium and so on. TRANX has been funded to the tune of \$42 000 to help train volunteer counsellors to cope with the ever-increasing numbers of afflicted people coming to them for assistance.

Alcohol abuse has been one of my hobbyhorses, and in the time left to me I repeat that we must tackle alcohol abuse properly; we must put our money where our mouth is. I shall not rest until alcohol advertisements have been banned from television. The Government must really face up to the tough option. Tobacco advertising on television has been

banned, but the greatest drug menace confronting young people in this community is alcohol, and yet our television screens are awash with the beer war between Elliott and Bond with the America's Cup and other sporting promotions. Sporting heroes like Greg Norman and Allan Border and entertainers like Daryl Somers are advertising alcohol, and they are the heroes of our youngsters. Young people see their heroes imbibing and think to themselves that those people are popular and successful, so our young people begin to drink as well. The problem must be tackled properly.

It is difficult to speak in opposition to the socially acceptable drug alcohol without being branded a wowsler. The Government has not tackled the advertising aspect of alcohol properly. The broadcasting authorities have banned the advertising of alcohol on television between 3 p.m. and 8.30 p.m. on weekdays. How pathetic! On the weekends it is open slather. They can advertise grog as much as they like at the weekend. These are supposed to be sane and sensible restrictions. They are a laugh! They are hypocritical!

My plea to the Minister is that, when next the health Ministers meet, he should go in hard and move for the absolute banning of alcohol products on television, the most persuasive of all advertising media. Unfortunately, our youth are awash with the affliction of this drug. I urge all honourable members, if they should happen to be at home next Monday night, to watch Peter Couchman's segment of *Four Corners* on which he will present a feature on alcohol abuse in this country. I am told it will be well worth watching.

Honourable members with experience of alcohol abuse in their electorates will agree with me. Unfortunately, in times past, Governments have given more publicity to the other, more horrific hard drug side of the question. A much smaller percentage of young people are addicted to hard drugs. The great drug menace remains alcohol and alcohol abuse. The Government must maintain eternal vigilance and must move for the absolute banning of all alcohol advertising from our television screens.

Having said that, I am happy to support the motion moved by the honourable member for Monbulk and to congratulate once more the Government on its magnificent record at the halfway mark of its current term of office; and I look forward to the next two great years that lie ahead for this State of Victoria.

Mr LEA (Sandringham)—In speaking on the Address-in-Reply debate I am pleased to declare once again my allegiance to the Queen and to congratulate His Excellency the Governor on the work he is doing.

I compliment the honourable member for Dandenong on his comments concerning alcohol and drug abuse. This is an important social problem, and I am sure members on all sides of the House will join with him in those sentiments.

I suggest that the honourable member for Dandenong spent an inordinate amount of time talking about Queensland politics. He was not particularly concerned about the Governor's Speech and made some naive comments, such as that the Governor's Speech is not a political document. I remind the House of the Speech delivered by Sir Brian Murray in April 1985 when I was a new member of this House, and I thought it may be salutary to remind the Government of some of the promises that were made on that occasion and to review the situation in the light of the Governor's Speech yesterday.

As recorded at Page 9 of *Hansard* of 3 April 1985, in his Speech the Governor said:

In the present term—as in the past—the Government will seek to keep increases in State taxes and charges to minimum.

After an increase of 66 per cent in taxes and charges in the past four or five years, one may well ask whether the Government has kept that promise very well.

I turn to the promise about WorkCare and remind honourable members of what the Governor said in respect of that matter at page 7 of *Hansard*:

A significant improvement in the competitive position of Victorian firms will be achieved through reform of the Worker's Compensation System.

We now have WorkCare, and we have it in large lumps! Hardly a week goes by without an employer coming to my home or my office and complaining about the system that loads employers with inordinate documentation and encourages workers to retire, resign or go off sick. I know quite a number of people who have abused and misused the system. The honourable member for Brighton has requested workers compensation statistics under the Freedom of Information Act and those statistics have not been forthcoming. What is the Government hiding? Honourable members will be staggered when they see the figures. If the Government had nothing to hide, it would produce the WorkCare figures. This scheme is imposing a heavy burden on the community.

As recorded at page 9 of *Hansard*, the Governor stated:

The Government places a high priority on continuing improvement to health services.

What a joke! The community has had a longstanding nursing strike. When this Government came to office, there were 8500 names on the waiting lists for elective surgery. Today 34 000 names are on the waiting lists. We need some 1100 or 1200 nursing home beds. The people who miss out with a poor health system are the people whom the Government most wants to help; those who cannot afford private health care. The deadlines and the promises have not been met.

In dealing with services for the aged the Governor said, as recorded at page 9 of *Hansard* of 3 April 1985:

The provision of nursing home beds will be increased in areas of greatest need and a State Aged Care Task Force has been established to help hospitals and community groups . . .

A large proportion of my time is spent in trying to obtain nursing home beds for aged people in the Sandringham electorate where more than 25 per cent of the population are more than 65 years of age.

In respect of housing the Governor said:

The Governor has set a target of at least 12 000 new public housing units during the next four years and will press the Commonwealth Government for an increase in funding support for a target of 15 000 public housing units.

Unfortunately for the Minister, the Commonwealth did not meet those funding arrangements and, because of the change in economic circumstances, waiting lists in the public housing sector have also lengthened. I warn the Minister that the situation is now perilous.

The Governor went on to say, as recorded on page 11 of *Hansard*:

The "Low Start Loans" new housing scheme will put over 2000 lower-income families into home ownership.

I invite honourable members to look at what Terry McCrann wrote in the *Age* of 14 September 1986:

Australia's deepening economic malaise and the quite unavoidable and clearly painful adjustments that are going to be imposed on us over the next five to 10 years should be flashing amber lights over the banking world's trendy concept of "Low-start" home loans.

The article says that, at the end of the first year of repayments, the mortgagee actually owes more than at the start of the loan.

The principle of the loan is that repayments will be made over a fifteen to twenty-year period provided that inflation and income are level-pegging.

Income in real terms is falling and inflation is high. The Government will bear the financial responsibility of people who do not meet their mortgage repayments under this scheme.

In 1985, the Government mentioned for the first time the term "social justice". In the Governor's Address-in-Reply, several references are made to social justice but I wonder

what kind of justice people are getting in this State in the area of housing, health, education, transport and community welfare.

I should like to raise the issue of the taxing and financial situation of the State. Victoria is the State of inflation. I have already mentioned the figure of 66 per cent, which is a proud record! In Victoria, every man, woman and child is paying \$931—\$369 more than when the Government came to office. It is a 66 per cent increase.

Victoria is also the State of debt. The State owes \$20 billion for public utilities, for the State Electricity Commission and Government instrumentalities. We owe \$20 billion of the country's \$100 billion. It is marvellous to be in league with Brazil and we are not far behind! It owes \$108 billion. It foreclosed on the capital payments; it is not paying interest.

Terry McCrann, in that article in September of last year, said we are a Third World country. The Federal and State Labor Governments have to take the consequences for us being demoted to a Third World country as our currency and rating overseas are absolutely zilch. Every man, woman and child owes \$5000 and is paying \$500 in interest to service this debt.

This is a proud Government with a proud record. I am sure that it will not be pleased with those results. It is amazing that the Government cannot see the state that the country is in. Its preoccupation with the "Joh factor" reminds me that the figures came out today showing that the Liberal and National Party coalition has 48 per cent of the vote and the Labor Party has 42 per cent. When Government members heard this this morning, they looked around them because they were wondering whether they would hold their seats at the next Federal election and in this State. Those are the realities.

I invite honourable members to examine the transport system: there were \$953 million of debts overspent in 1985–86. There were 45 233 lost days, which is a great record! Not only did we receive new trams and new trains but we sold them for \$500 million and leased them back, so that now we owe more than a billion dollars on those new silver trains and green trams we use.

I have already mentioned the disaster in health. No one in this House could deny that the Government has problems in health. The overall problem is poor leadership, poor performance and a situation that is tragic beyond belief for the people involved.

The honourable member for Dandenong made passing reference to law and order and mentioned, with a great deal of pride, the 150 per cent increase in the capital facilities. He talked about all the new buildings. The tragedy is that there are no people to go in them. Hundreds more policemen and police women are needed not only for the numbers to be up to strength but to take the place of people who are retiring now. There was even a hospital in Essendon that was built but had no staff! The Government is preoccupied with building buildings and not manning them. I find it hard to believe, but then it is a socialist Government!

There are some real concerns about crime and law and order in this society. People are frightened to walk out of their homes at night; they are frightened to walk through Melbourne after 11 p.m. and they are frightened to come home on the last train. You try being a woman coming home on the last train!

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Kirkwood)—I don't want to!

Mr LEA—I obviously do not mean you, Mr Acting Speaker. I was thinking generally. I wonder where the Minister for Education is right now because he says he is keen to save the State's education system and build up the State. I should like to show the House not only the drift from the State sector to the private sector but also the Ministry's forecast for 1996; it makes salutary reading.

In 1976, 624 000 students attended Government schools and 201 000 attended non-Government schools. In percentages, 75.5 per cent attended Government schools compared with 24.5 per cent in non-Government schools.

In 1984 the number of students at Government schools had dropped to 550 000, which is a decrease of 74 000 and the non-Government school attendance had increased by 49 000 to 249 000. Percentage wise, the Government attendance was 69 per cent and the non-Government was 31 per cent. I am quoting from the Ministry of Education figures.

I shall turn now to the forecast. If the Government is really good at saving State education, it should be attempting to reverse the scene, yet its forecast for 1996 is that 500 000 students will be in the Government sector and 292 000 will be in the non-Government sector. Therefore, from 1976 to 1996 there will be a decline of 124 000 in the Government sector and an increase of 92 000 in the non-Government sector. This means 63 per cent of students will receive State public education and 37 per cent will be in non-Government schools. This is the forecasting by the Ministry.

Is the Labor Party really serious about State education? I am sure that the Government is not convincing the public about that issue.

I should like to examine some of the factors that have caused this rapid decline in figures. Teacher performance is one factor. The overwhelming majority of teachers do an outstanding job. Parents try to do their best and are involved in the schools but teacher morale is at an all-time low. Discipline has fallen since the former Minister's disciplinary procedures in February 1983 and now principals are not in control of their schools and teachers are not in control of their classes.

The failure of this State to back up principals and teachers is horrific. The Labor Party is obsessed with the needs of the badly behaved students and it forgets about the well behaved and the average person in the same way as it is obsessed with the person in criminal trouble before the law as against the ordinary decent human being in the street.

I suggest that the Government will lose office and it will not win the Central Highlands Province by-election because it is not concerned with mainstream public opinion and that is a terrible indictment.

All of the schools in the south-central region are suffering from declining enrolment, and rationalisation of schools is necessary. This impacts on teacher morale.

It is not hard for one to imagine how difficult it would be to be a teacher in one of six schools when only four were to survive. It would be difficult facing the prospect of having to move into another area. It is like six people trying to jump into a life raft when there are only four places.

The situation in schools is perilous and I know many teachers are very dissatisfied with the situation. On a philosophic note, decision making in schools and teacher and parent involvement is such that this Government is absolutely outstanding in talking about democratic participation in all kinds of fields in the public sector schools. What it does is talk about democracy and dictatorially hands out decisions and papers, political or not, and gives favours to people in the Public Service, particularly members of the Labor Party. Really, it has to match practice with rhetoric. The public is confused as the Government is lacking in integrity—it does the opposite to what it preaches. After five years of incessant change, the community, parents and teachers have had enough. The Minister for Education should stop the processes of change, review what is going on and look more closely at how these changes are affecting students.

There has been a third Ministry change since the Government came to power. This Government is acting with the ungainly haste of the Whitlam Government when it knew in 1974 that its days were numbered and that it was soon to be voted out of office. We have a party that looks at social justice for the few. It looks at social justice for small groups and minorities, the people before the law, the badly behaved in schools, and the fringe groups. The large groups and the mainstream people do not receive the support that they would get from the Liberal Party.

I refer honourable members to the latest Australian Teachers Federation conference. The president referred to the term "democratic excellence". The Labor Party has had considerable difficulty in recent times in coming to terms with the term "excellence". Excellence is elitist. The Labor Party does not believe in excellence, therefore, we cannot compete on world markets and industrially—we must group together in a cooperative brotherhood.

The Australian Teachers Federation president, Mr Graham Marshall, came up with a new term and I wonder if this Government and the Minister will latch on to it—"democratic excellence". What a laughable term—I wonder how one achieves it?

The Labor Party cannot come to terms with its economic foundation because of its inability to solve its social justice problems. Excellence is needed urgently in this community. We need to better our competitiveness and we need to make Victoria great and that cannot be done by giving adherence to mediocrity. We need people to do their very best at all times and to strive at what they do.

As a former teacher, and having visited country areas on a number of occasions, I regard the attitude of the present Minister for Housing to teacher housing as incredible. How is one going to get teachers to go to Ouyen, Nhill or Swan Hill when they cannot have some subsidy for housing? Teachers today can stay in the city and do emergency teaching. The Minister for Housing is not concerned about country teachers and country education. The Government should review its policy, otherwise it will destroy education and chances and opportunities for country people.

This morning I read in my local paper how the Government has not excelled itself in the area of library funding. The *Moorabbin Standard* of Monday, 23 February 1987, stated:

Friday the 13th at Moorabbin Library was a day of mourning—librarians wore black and mourned what they claimed was a black day for the State's libraries.

Moorabbin librarian John Simpkin said the idea of the day was to focus attention on the plight of libraries and the black period they faced if sufficient funding wasn't forthcoming.

I listened to the Minister for the Arts today attempt to contradict the statistics. Under the previous Liberal Government, the funding potential from the Government was 46 per cent. It has dropped now to 36 per cent of library funding and these cuts propose a further fall to 29 per cent—ban the books, burn the books, back to the dark ages! Here is a Government that should be committed to technology and advancement and development. It should not be destroying the very resourcefulness of the country. We must also consider the elderly people who seek the comfort of reading books in front of their fires at night and take heart in the situation where there has been much fuller funding.

I hope the Minister for the Arts returns to the fuller funding of the Liberal Government of 46 per cent of State funding. What is happening in Moorabbin is happening throughout the State. It is very hard to understand this Government's funding priorities, let alone its economic policies.

I compliment the schools in the Sandringham electorate. It is a varied group of independent schools, Catholic schools, technical schools, high schools and primary schools. They are working under difficult circumstances and they are doing an excellent job.

The Sandringham hospital has been struggling over the past two years to get 30 extra nursing beds despite the fact that more than 65 per cent of the people in the Sandringham electorate are over 65 years of age. Both this Government and the Federal Government refuse to fund nursing beds. It is a cruel and terrible injustice. The hospital itself is doing an excellent job. It has come through the nursing crisis and it is continuing to offer a great service to the people of Sandringham.

The Highett railway station completion took nearly three years. The former member representing the Sandringham electorate and the former Minister for Transport promised a new railway station. I also pressured the present Minister. Highett residents are very

pleased that the railway station is now in service. It is an historic design and it is serving the people of Hightett very well.

One area that causes me concern is the Cheltenham District Centre. The present Government has proposed new district centres in suburbs throughout the Melbourne metropolitan area. In Cheltenham, extensive buildings at Southland, the Cheltenham Market, plus construction in the Cheltenham business district have resulted in the selling of a number of houses and problems for residents who are in "no man's land" in a development centre.

Because of their dreadful plight, I hope the Government will view kindly the problems being experienced by people who live behind Balmoral Motors and the Cheltenham railway station. They cannot sell their homes and they cannot move to live elsewhere. The central district plan has served residents badly.

I commend the work undertaken by the Southern Family Life Counselling Services in marital counselling. The honourable member for Dandenong mentioned the need to help families that have broken down. That counselling service does an excellent job. I am disturbed that its funding until 30 June has been cut back by \$40 000. I suggest to the Minister for Community Services that some of the cuts being made to achieve the Government's objective of an overall 1.5 per cent reduction in expenditure are ill-conceived and ill-considered. I implore the Minister in another place to review the funding allocation for the Southern Family Life Counselling Services.

The Government states that it has an employment record that is second to none. I remind honourable members that 40 000 more people are unemployed now than in 1982. The Government can forget about Victoria having the best employment record in Australia because this State is experiencing bad times. There is no joy in being bottom of the unemployment table if the position today is worse than the situation five years ago.

My final concern is with the elderly unemployed. A number of people aged 55 and over who are in dire straits have come to me seeking help. These people have been unemployed for more than eighteen months or two years.

The difficulty is that people who are pensioners receive rebates in their rates but those who are unemployed for lengthy periods do not. The Government targets its employment programs to people who are young, Aborigines or needy people. However, the elderly unemployed are not included in the needy category. That is a matter that the Government should consider.

In conclusion, with a massive record of financial indebtedness and poor performance in the major Ministries, is it any wonder that the Labor Party will have no success in the Central Highlands Province by-election? The Liberal Party will have a resounding win in that area. The Government has no performance record that would warrant support from the people of Monbulk, Whittlesea, Lilydale and Benalla.

I am proud to be the representative of the people of Sandringham and I hope to give them and the Parliament good service in the years to come.

Mr W. D. McGRATH (Lowan)—It gives me pleasure to contribute to the debate on the motion for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Speech given by His Excellency, the Governor, Dr J. Davis McCaughey. It is pleasing to have a man of his stature come into this Parliament and it is further pleasing that the tradition of the Westminster system is being continued. Dr McCaughey and his wife are carrying on that tradition with dignity.

We owe a debt of gratitude to the monarchy and to the flag as we know it today. Many people perceive that Australia needs a new flag under which its people should assemble. The flag we have today is adequate and proper and should be flown by all Australians as they develop more pride in their lifestyles within their communities. By assembling under that flag, Australians develop pride in their country, pride that will stand the test of time and overcome the economic ills that may beset the country from time to time.

The honourable member for Dandenong raised some interesting issues. I know he is concerned about drug and alcohol abuse and honourable members sympathise with the remarks he made on that subject. Alcoholism is reaching massive proportions in this country and many people, especially young people, are in sad circumstances because of alcohol abuse.

In some cases, the younger generation should not be blamed because they have been influenced by an older generation or even by their immediate peers. Perhaps it comes back to a poor example being given by the generation of which the honourable member for Dandenong and I are a part. Perhaps our example has not been good enough or strong enough.

Although the honourable member for Dandenong was being sanctimonious about this issue, I asked him where he was when the debate on the extension of liquor trading hours took place. A number of cafes and night clubs extended their liquor trading hours to 3 a.m. and some to 7 a.m. If he was fair dinkum about his concern for alcohol abuse, he should have been here when the vote was taken on the extension of liquor trading hours.

The honourable member for Dandenong and other Government members mentioned the new concern in politics in this country. They are making a laughing-stock of what is called the Joh factor. The latest issue of the *Bulletin* of 3 March 1987 carries the headline, "Labor joins the losers in the Sir Joh crusade".

Mr Simpson—You are Joh men!

Mr W. D. McGRATH—Yes, we are, so long as he stays within the National Party structure. I assure the honourable member for Niddrie that he will be staying.

The Bulletin reports:

The Morgan Gallup Poll, exclusive to *The Bulletin*, brings grim news for the Labor Party as the Bjelke-Petersen federal crusade rolls on. The ALP joins John Howard and Ian Sinclair as potential victims of the Queensland Premier.

The Labor Party appears to have been the big initial loser from Sir Johannes Bjelke-Petersen's dramatic intervention in federal politics. The first door-to-door poll taken since the Queensland Premier launched his Canberra crusade showed support for the ALP down four per cent to 42 per cent. Liberal Party support was down two per cent to 35 per cent but support for the National Party increased by four per cent to 13 per cent.

No wonder Government members are trying to ridicule the situation. They are attempting to cover up their nervousness and fear. It is no wonder they feel like that because a change is coming over this country. I shall quote from the Governor's Speech because it is applicable to this subject. Early in his Speech, His Excellency stated:

Five years ago, Victoria was performing poorly in a national economy which itself was far from impressive.

It is apparent that Victoria had stumbled into the modern economic era still burdened by the baggage of an earlier one—those days when it was possible to think that this nation rode on the sheep's back, and on what could be dug out of the ground.

I invite honourable members to consider the period from the time of Federation to 1982. That was five years ago and the debt of Victoria, through all that time of government, had gone to \$23 billion.

The national debt is \$101 billion. In the three to four years that the Hawke Labor Government has been in office, the national debt has more than tripled. Today, every man, woman and child will have an indebtedness of \$6500 per annum; 40 cents of every dollar raised by Federal Government revenue will go into servicing the foreign debt. Australia's current inflation rate is four times that of countries belonging to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. It is three times that of Great Britain and eight times that of West Germany and Japan. Australia's interest rates are three times the rate of Japanese interest rates and twice that of interest rates prevailing in the United States of America.

What has happened in the same period at State level? The State of Victoria, in 1982, had a deficit of \$11 billion. Today, the Estimates Committee report shows that the State debt is approximately \$21 billion. It has increased by \$10 billion over the period of the Labor Government; almost a 100 per cent increase. State taxation charges have gone from \$529 for every man, woman and child to \$850 for every man, woman and child.

The first Labor Government Budget allocated \$5.5 billion. Today it is in excess of \$11 billion. One must ask oneself whether it is any wonder that people are concerned about where the country is going.

I am not asking for increases in Government expenditure, certainly not for my electorate, but I ask myself, when the State Budget has doubled in a four-year period, why I have got to defend the retention of libraries in regional areas; why I have to continue defending the retention of police personnel and police stations; why I have to continually fight to retain hospital services in country areas; why I have to fight to retain rail services; why I have to continually fight for road funds; why I have to continually fight for adequate housing for teachers.

The Budget has expanded greatly; these things should be provided, but they are not. Where is the money being spent? I do not ask for higher taxes, as I indicated, but I do ask and demand to know where the money is being spent when there is a reduction in services in country areas. If the Government can produce those answers then country people may say that it is doing a fair job.

Country members worked hard during November and December of last year in representing school councils in their districts to try to retain teacher housing and teachers for the small country communities that they represent. I acknowledge that the Minister for Education and the Minister for Property and Services are adopting a different philosophy and have indicated that if school councils place submissions before the Ministry of Education and the Department of Property and Services a review will be conducted in March to ascertain whether teacher housing will be retained. The Ministers have also indicated that rental agreements that have already been established will be honoured. That is good news. Having teacher residences in country areas, in many cases, are the incentives needed to bring teachers to country Victoria to provide educational opportunities for country children.

The honourable member for Sandringham mentioned the dramatic falling enrolment figures in the State education system. If these enrolment figures are to be increased, there needs to be a proper examination of the standard of school facilities and residential facilities in country areas, or parents will opt to take their children out of the State school system and place them in the private school system.

His Excellency, in his address to Parliament, spoke about the introduction of public transport to areas previously unserved. His Excellency indicated that, during this financial year, significant improvements involving some 500 000 bus kilometres have been introduced to the Greensborough, Frankston and Werribee neighbourhoods. I do not criticise extension of services to those areas but I do ask what sort of cost recovery will those services have. Will there be a 20 or 30 per cent recovery on the public transport system? If that is the case, where is the equality when Victorian grain growers have to provide a 100 per cent cost recovery?

A Victorian grain grower who grows 500 tonnes of wheat receives a first payment of \$117.56 a tonne, which comes to a gross of \$58 780. Deductions of \$20 200 are made from that gross payment. Deductions consist of the freight component of \$11 000, based on a charge of \$22 a tonne, being the average cost out of the Wimmera and Mallee areas; Grain Elevators Board handling charges of \$7300, loading facility charges at the port and wheat board charges which make up that \$20 000. The Government is taking away all the incentive from a great industry. The industry has been responsible for much of the economic growth over a number of years. Because of the ridiculous Government charges, particularly with freight, many farmers are moving out of wheat production. Farmers are

turning to alternative crops, to the sheep industry and, of course, V/Line is losing business. Grain farmers are opting to cart their own grain from farm to seaboard. Alternative crops are not being transported on the V/Line system.

I support the V/Line concept, because I believe that a train moving 2000 tonnes of produce on a steel line is the most economical way to transport produce. However, the ridiculous situation has emerged where farmers have put field peas into a bunker at the Murtoa railway siding, alongside the rail line, and the commodity has been transported from Murtoa to the seaboard by rail. Where is the economic sense or justification in a road transport moving 25 tonnes, with one truck and one driver, when it is more economic for a train to move 2000 tonnes? I would like the Minister for Transport to answer that question. The Minister should be addressing those sorts of issues to ensure that the V/Line system can continue, and the only way it can continue is by having volume and throughput.

The Ministry of Transport issued a discussion paper called, "Transport Development, Policies and Process". It was issued for discussion by Mr Steve Crabb, the then Minister of Transport, in July 1983. The book indicated that the road system moved 197 million tonnes, 94 per cent of all freight and that the rail system moved 12 million tonnes or 6 per cent of all freight.

One wonders how long the rail operation will last in Victoria when one sees the continual move to road transport of bulk grain commodities. That has occurred because the Minister for Transport and the Government cannot get their act together with V/Line to make it a proper, economical proposition for Victorian producers to use that bulk carrying system from country centres to rail terminals.

I now turn to housing. It has been claimed that housing is a good economic indicator. The number of people building new homes has decreased by 16.4 per cent over the past year. Yesterday the Minister for Housing announced that Victoria had a public housing waiting list of 32 000 people. It is obvious that people who cannot afford to buy their own homes look to the Government to provide housing for them. That is another illustration of the economic instability of Victoria.

One of the reasons why the Liberal Party lost government in 1982 was because first home buyers and new home buyers were unable to pay 14 per cent interest on home loans. Today new home buyers are faced with paying in excess of 15.5 per cent interest.

The Government had a scheme in which it provided a little incentive to first home purchasers by not applying stamp duty on first homes, but that has now been abolished. Another nail has been driven into the coffin of people who wish to purchase new homes. The Government should examine those economic factors and come up with an appropriate rationale.

The Speech delivered by the Governor yesterday also referred to the tourism industry, on which the Government has placed significant emphasis. When Sir Rupert Hamer was Premier, he said that tourism would become the biggest industry in Victoria by the year 2000. There is probably some merit in that proposition, but I believe agriculture is and should be Victoria's biggest industry and that it should be further protected. It is unfortunate that the Government has not given the same emphasis to agriculture as it has to tourism.

It must be attractive to overseas visitors to come to Australia, with the current value of the Australian dollar. However, the facilities for tourists are inadequate. Where are the roads that have been promised by the Government to service national parks?

The Government has made much about the magnificent Grampians National Park, which is tremendous, but insufficient money has been provided by the Government for tourist facilities. Reduced funds are available for the construction and maintenance of roads and moneys have been hived off to other, airy-fairy programs.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr W. D. McGRATH—I am not referring to increasing taxes. The motorist is already faced with high taxes but that money is not being allocated to roads. The honourable member for Bendigo West should examine the position faced by local government in his electorate.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Fogarty)—Order! The honourable member for Bendigo West is out of order and out of his place. The honourable member for Lowan is also out of order and should address his remarks to the Chair.

Mr W. D. McGRATH—One has only to speak with the people who provide various facilities near Rose's Gap and areas on the northern side of the Grampians to find out about the road system. People in that area are continually lobbying local members, local councils, the Road Traffic Authority and the Road Construction Authority in an effort to have road improvements carried out.

The roads carrying tourists to the northern slopes of the Grampians must be improved so that all Victorians and interstate and overseas visitors can explore that beautiful and picturesque area. Tourists are not encouraged at present because the road network is not up to standard. Many bus companies are not taking tourists along those roads and many motorists are reluctant to travel along the roads and are staying on the main highways.

Honourable members should examine what has been provided by the Government and ask why funding has not been made available for roads. If one considers Victoria's estimated share of the bicentennial road funds for 1986–87, which is expected to be \$93 million, one recognises that something is wrong. The fuel levy imposed on petrol sold in Victoria during 1985–86 yielded \$210 million. Licence fees provide another \$130 million. Some 90 per cent of revenue from motor registration fees is directed towards road programs. Despite all that, the Shire of Stawell had its allocation for road funds reduced by \$180 000 last financial year; the Shire of Wimmera had its allocation reduced by \$100 000; and the Shire of Mildura had its allocation reduced by \$200 000.

A roads seminar is being held in Horsham on Friday and the Minister for Transport will address those shires and other interest groups. I hope he has some good answers for the many people involved in local government, the tourism industry, the Road Construction Authority and the Road Traffic Authority.

North-western Victoria has been treated dismally by this Government. People believe they have been cheated by the Victorian and Federal Labor Governments and that is why they are now becoming so vocal about the funding of roads.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr W. D. McGRATH—I have already given the honourable member for Bendigo West an explanation about the "Bjelke" factor. I am certain all honourable members have heard about the Ayatollah of Bendigo.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Fogarty)—Order! If the honourable member for Bendigo West wishes to interject, which is unparliamentary and out of order, he must do so from his seat on the back bench.

Mr W. D. McGRATH—It is interesting that the Bendigo City Council has referred to the honourable member for Bendigo West as the Ayatollah of Bendigo. If something must be done, councillors know that they had better go to him because he will not go to Bendigo to see them. He is too busy making interjections in this place.

Mr Kennedy interjected.

Mr W. D. McGRATH—I will not go into politics. The press releases are sufficient.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Fogarty)—Order! Although the honourable member for Bendigo West is back in his rightful place, I advise him not to have a heart attack.

Mr KENNEDY (Bendigo West)—I raise a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I should like to know whether the honourable member for Lowan could give the names of the members of the Bendigo City Council who are members of his party.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Fogarty)—Order! There is no point of order, but the honourable member for Lowan has heard the question.

Mr W. D. McGRATH (Lowan)—What a ridiculous statement from the honourable member for Bendigo West! One of the problems at present is that we are providing capital for speculative purposes rather than for productive purposes. If that money is being provided for productive purposes, the interest rate is far too high for anyone in the private sector to really be able to win.

At present in Australia it is much more advantageous for an investor to place his money with a financial institution where it will earn approximately 15 per cent interest. If he places his money into a business, a farm or into the private sector, he will be lucky if he achieves a return of between 3 per cent and 5 per cent.

That is one of the real ills of this country at present. It is easier and safer to invest with a financial institution than to become an entrepreneur and put one's money into a business and begin production.

If the trade balances in this State are to be turned around—and no one can deny that our present trade balance deficits are alarming, at the very least—we cannot continue to follow that path.

I liken the situation to running a farm. If one is not earning more than one is spending, it is not very long before one has to sell one's farm or lose it. The point is, when one operates a farm, one spends money on making fences and putting in dams so as to get the productivity running and the money rolling in. That is not happening at present. We are spending money on the non-productive sector, and we will continue to go down that path of spending much more than we earn.

Until that situation is turned around, the foreign debt of \$101 million at Federal level will continue to grow. The debt incurred by the State of \$21 million, which has increased by 100 per cent since the Labor Party has been in office, will continue to grow also. That has to be turned around if we are to survive in this State and in the Australian economy.

Mr SHELL (Geelong)—It is with pleasure that I join the debate tonight to convey to the Governor of Victoria my loyalty and allegiance and that of the members of the Geelong electorate. I congratulate His Excellency the Governor on the Speech that he delivered to Parliament yesterday, to which I am happy to make a response.

Earlier tonight some honourable members referred to the flag during their contributions to the debate. I support the Victorian flag, and also the Australian flag as it is now, but it must be understood that the Victorian flag evolved over a long period.

The first flag that was flown in Victoria was the Union Jack. The blue background was then introduced, and then the shield and stars, and finally the imperial crown. The last change to the Victorian flag occurred in 1901 when the imperial crown was replaced by the St Edward crown. Our boys fought under the previous Victorian flag in 1901 in the Boxer Rebellion.

I believe our flag should reflect the society as it exists at the time, and there will come a time in the near future when we will need to change that flag to reflect the changing nature and culture of this land.

I was pleased to hear the Governor speak about Victoria's manufacturing base.

Mr Leigh interjected.

Mr SHELL—I thank the honourable member for introducing the subject of submarine construction. Victoria has the ideal manufacturing base and infrastructure to undertake

the submarine construction project, which is a little different from what would have occurred if the Liberal Party, perchance, were in power; because if it were in power, we would not be building submarines in Australia, Victoria, Geelong or anywhere else because nuclear submarines would be built and, consequently, that construction would not occur in Australia.

However, through the efforts of the Victorian project team involved in the submarine proposal, which is promoting not only the manufacturing base of Victoria—and this State is in an excellent position to pick up that work—but also the Geelong site, which is a greenfield site and the best site in Australia for the construction of those submarines. It is better than the site in South Australia, which is a swamp, and it is better than that in New South Wales.

Geelong has an industrial record unsurpassed by any other place in Australia. That is as a result of the work of the Geelong Trades Hall Council and Mr Bernie D'Arcy, the former secretary, and Mr Malcolm Brough, the current secretary, in conjunction with the Geelong Chamber of Commerce, the Australian Chamber of Manufactures and the Victorian Employers Federation. Therefore, if such organisations get together, things can happen.

For example, the Geelong Market Square site, which was developed during the term of this Government and which the Government supported——

Mr Gude interjected.

Mr SHELL—It relates to the industrial disputes that have occurred during the time of the Cain Government, which the Governor kindly mentioned in his Speech.

Not a day was lost through any local dispute during the development of that site. Some days were lost as a result of national and State disputes, but not because of local disputes, because of the good relationship between the organisations that I mentioned.

A flourishing tourist industry exists in Victoria, but for decades Geelong has missed the boat in that regard. Although an extremely large number of people travel through Geelong, they usually end up at seaside beaches rather than stopping in Geelong.

Geelong needs a place for people to stay; it needs something to attract people, such as exists at Sovereign Hill, Swan Hill, Mildura or Bendigo.

Mr Gude—Was it your idea?

Mr SHELL—It is not my idea so much as that of the Geelong Tourism Authority.

Mr Gude interjected.

Mr SHELL—I shall not remind the House how the honourable member for Hawthorn lost his seat on the last occasion. In conjunction with the Westcoast Tourist Authority, the Geelong Regional Commission and the Geelong City Council and the employer organisations—the Geelong Trades Hall Council and the Port of Geelong Authority—the Geelong Tourism Authority is cooperating to get things moving in Geelong to create a major tourist attraction.

One of our greatest tourist attractions is the Geelong football team, and I trust the honourable member for Hawthorn has not lost his loyalty in that regard.

I should like to mention the reforms that the Government has made, as did the Governor, in respect of WorkCare, occupational health and safety provisions, the expansion of legal aid, the reform of adoption legislation and the expansion of public rental housing.

The implementation of WorkCare has relieved a financial burden that was crippling Victorian industry. Time and again, as the honourable member for Hawthorn should be aware, industry expressed concern about the hidden costs behind the old workers compensation scheme, which involved escalating premiums over which the Government

of the day had no control; the premiums just increased again and again. The implementation of the WorkCare scheme has been the greatest boost to industry that ever existed.

Under the astute leadership of the Premier, the former Minister for Community Welfare Services—the honourable member for Greensborough—implemented new adoption legislation that created more equity. Those reforms were welcomed by both the community and the National Party, which does not always support change.

The Governor's Speech also referred to a Bill to provide for a more modern and progressive system of local government. The current Local Government Act says, "Do not do this. Do not do that. Do it this way". The foreshadowed Bill will provide more flexibility, confer more power upon local government and enable it to be more independent by making decisions in a more concrete and positive manner.

The Government has also foreshadowed a Bill to deal with shop trading anomalies so that consumers have adequate access to the goods they require; a diverse and competitive retail system is developed; special provisions are available for holiday and tourist areas and for special events; and that retailers and employers have a fair and equitable regulatory framework for the industry.

The previous Liberal Government was not prepared to tackle the issue of shop trading hours except to amend the Labour and Industry Act to such an extent that it now represents a conglomerate of confusion.

What has the Cain Government done for Geelong? It has provided leadership in Geelong where none existed before. In the dying stages of the Liberal Government a hole was dug on the site of the present north wing of the Geelong Hospital.

Mr Leigh—Who provided the money?

Mr SHELL—The former Liberal Government provided the money to dig the hole but when building was about to commence it was discovered that the hole was not big enough, so more money had to be spent to enlarge the hole.

The Geelong Hospital is ably administered under the leadership of Mrs Patricia Heath, who is one of the Government's across-the-board appointments to hospital boards. She has ensured the continuing efficiency of the hospital. The Ford Motor Co. of Australia Ltd at Geelong and the Government have developed a skills centre. Approximately a fortnight ago the Premier and his wife visited the centre and spoke with apprentices.

For the first time in 100 years a new prison is to be built in Victoria. A training prison will be constructed at Lara.

The Cain Government has also continued the work commenced but not finalised by the former Government by constructing the overpass at Latrobe Terrace. It is planned to complete the bridge over the Barwon River some time in 1988–89. Last year, \$4 million was provided to build an extension to the Gordon Technical College.

The development of a national wool centre will proceed on the foreshore at Geelong. Recently the Premier announced a grant of \$4.5 million towards the total cost of \$10.5 million for that project. It will become a self-sufficient tourist attraction in Geelong. The first wool sale to be conducted in that building is expected to take place on 31 August this year. The Premier has been invited to attend the opening ceremony.

When the Liberal Party was in office Geelong had an unemployment rate of 13.5 per cent. Since the Labor Party has been in office that rate has dropped by 5 per cent—a drop of 1 per cent for each year in office. Approximately 85 per cent of the jobs are provided in the private sector. Recently when the Premier visited Geelong he said that the role of Government is to provide the economic climate for private enterprise to act, to invest and to develop. Representatives of the private sector who attended a meeting addressed by the Premier applauded him for those comments.

The Geelong Tourist Authority is anxious for the "City by the Bay" project to proceed in the development of the foreshore area so that people will visit a modern tourist attraction in Geelong. That modern attraction will combine with the wool store area, thus combining some of the history of Geelong with a modern structure, such as will occur with regard to the foreshore development on Eastern Beach.

Hotel costs in Geelong are comparable not only with hotel costs in Melbourne but also with hotel costs interstate and overseas. Geelong is ideally suited as a stopping off point for visitors to various beach locations in the western half of the State.

For some years I have been concerned about the Melbourne-Geelong railway line. I was a commuter on that line for approximately twenty years. The old railway carriages, which were referred to as "dog boxes" or "sweat boxes", no longer exist. The new railway carriages are equivalent to the modern car in that they provide the same level of comfort. The timekeeping of trains has improved, with a few hiccups, unlike the continual delays that occurred in the days of the previous Liberal Government.

The new locomotives are more efficient and the Geelong railway line is profitable as a result of increased commuter traffic and rail wagons carrying cement products.

The Geelong bus system has dramatically overtaken what was an ailing industry prior to the Labor Party coming into office. When the Cain Government assumed office, patronage was falling on the Geelong bus service. The cost of subsidy to the private bus operators in Geelong was escalating.

The previous Liberal Government did not have freedom of information legislation and would not supply the then Labor Opposition with figures on the cost of subsidising the private bus operators. The then Labor Opposition discovered that the then Liberal Government was subsidising the private bus operators to the tune of \$900 000 a year, and patronage was falling. The Labor Government injected \$300 000 into the system and updated the service by purchasing more buses and providing a flat fare system. Patronage of the service has increased by 30 per cent and it is continuing to increase. The Geelong bus service is the flagship of the State's bus system.

The Government is on target with the extension of its public housing program in Geelong. The Government promised it would provide 500 additional units for public housing in Geelong over a four-year term. Approximately three or four weeks ago the Minister for Housing visited Geelong to open the Goldsworthy estate at Corio. The Shire of Corio was delighted the Minister could visit the shire. The honourable gentleman, in company with the honourable member for Geelong North, made an excellent speech.

The new estate provides modern housing, a community service centre and small garden frontages. It is a comfortable place in which to live for the residents who have moved from Geelong West.

The Ministry of Housing is building houses, flats and units that are indistinguishable from the other dwellings in the streets in which they are erected. That is the way it should be and the way I am sure the honourable member for Bulleen would expect public housing to be provided.

The Labor Government has had an advantage from being in government, in that it has been able to use funds more effectively, injecting twice as much funding as the Liberal Government into this area, because it has not had to worry about land deals.

The Labor Government has instituted a program in education that has devolved more and more responsibility down to school councils. They are welcoming the integration program the Government introduced. Although it was initially received with scepticism by school councils and teachers, it is now a resounding success; so much so that the people who want their children to go to normal schools instead of special schools find that they cannot be accommodated. More money and more time must be spent in developing the integration program that has been successful at Karingal.

Mr Kennett—You know that is not true.

Mr SHELL—It is true. Karingal operates a special school for disabled people with a workshop and activities for disabled people. According to Government philosophy, a disabled child should be placed amongst the community to learn and to grow in the community as much as possible, and Karingal is developing facilities around that concept. It is fully supported by the Government.

Karingal is critical of the fact that the Government is not providing enough residential homes for the disabled, but one must bear in mind the fact that Karingal was the leader in its field 20 or 30 years ago. The people concerned would not send their children to institutions in Melbourne but preferred to keep them at home. The parents who looked after their children in that fashion are now approximately 70 years of age and are no longer able to care for their children. Therefore, the Government is correct in spending money on residential accommodation. It must continue to assist Karingal, under the leadership of John Gorman, to do more in that field.

The Opposition and the National Party, in particular, have criticised regionalisation. If it were not for regionalisation there would be fewer jobs in the country areas. All jobs would be located in Melbourne and the Government would not be making appointments to statutory bodies and authorities in cities and towns that have favoured no one political party, especially in Geelong. The controlling bodies of the Geelong Hospital, Grace McKellar House, the port of Geelong and the Geelong Performing Arts Centre have attracted across-the-board appointments, which is something the Liberal Government never considered. The former Liberal Government would not allow trade unions to have any place in this area. The Government recognises trade unions and is prepared to work with them if they are performing properly.

Geelong will soon have a new police complex, something merely talked about by the former Liberal Government. The new police station is in the process of being built at Corio. New police stations are also being built at Drysdale, the central part of Geelong and at South Barwon.

In 1986–87 expenditure on police capital works is estimated to be \$46 million, and at Werribee \$3.76 million will be spent. A new Forensic Science Laboratory is also being built. The effective strength of the Police Force has been increased by 1038 to 8958, comprising 760 police and 278 public servants, who are being appointed to release the police for police duties. That is a responsible management program, and I dare the Liberal Party to criticise it. It is management oriented and business oriented.

The police population ratio in Victoria is 1 to 461, and the comparable figure in New South Wales is 1 to 517. In Queensland it is 1 to 538. This year, the police have taken up two new boats, a 23-foot vessel and a 42-foot vessel. Two new twin-engined helicopters costing \$4 million have been provided, and for the first time all police stations, including one person police stations, are receiving motor vehicles. Police communications are being upgraded at a cost of \$25 million. The Minister for Police and Emergency Services is an excellent Minister.

Victoria leads the way in health services and constituents in my electorate say that the Government handled the nurses' dispute last year in a proper and responsible way. It is true that Victorians, including some previous members of this House, retire to Queensland, but they return from Queensland to die in Victoria. Why do they do so? It is because health services in Victoria are so much superior to those in Queensland.

The honourable member for Glen Waverley raised the matter of free enterprise rights. He said everyone should have the right to join a union or the right not to join a union. He was silent about the benefits that one obtains from joining a union and he did not say whether a person who does not join a union should receive the same benefits as someone who does join a union. Is he talking about equal rights and equal opportunities? It is nonsense.

I shall remind the Liberal Party about the National Party. One knows that the National Party grew out of farmers and graziers' organisations in the past and its only concern is to look after the person on the land. If it is socialism out in the bush, that is fine, but if it is socialism in the city, that is wrong. The National Party wants to subsidise the bush but not the city. Where was the National Party when 2000 people in Geelong lost their jobs at International Harvester Australia Ltd? Why were National Party members not buying International Harvester tractors? There was no sympathy at all. They were buying tractors from China, of all places!

The honourable member for Lowan asked where the money is being spent. He obviously does not read the Budget Papers because they clearly define expenditure, which is more than the former Liberal Government's Budget Papers did. There are no misleading comments and no misleading figures. The Estimates Committee could not find anything wrong with the Budget because the Cain Government, through its Treasurer, has produced a Budget that has been spot on.

The community accepts the Budget of the Cain Government because it knows that the Budgets handed down by the Government have been responsible and have created jobs not just in the public sector, but also in the private sector. Those Budgets have got industry going.

The honourable member for Lowan had the nerve and the audacity to criticise the honourable member for Bendigo West. Little does he know that the honourable member for Bendigo West is the best advocate for Bendigo that there ever was and probably ever will be. There is no doubt that the honourable member for Bendigo West will retain his seat at the next election.

I now deal with the subject of library funding. Under the library system as we know it, most of the books purchased are purchased overseas. With the devaluation of the dollar the price of overseas books has skyrocketed. Most local government bodies over the past two or three years have picked up the imbalance that used to exist. That was a decision made by local government.

Mr Cooper interjected.

Mr SHELL—Is the shadow Minister for Local Government decrying the decision of local government to pick up the extra funding? If so, let him say so.

It is right and proper that the Government should review its expenditure in accordance with its promise to keep taxes and charges within the consumer price index. The Government has done that and will continue to do so.

The responsibility for the funding of libraries will remain as it is. It will remain with the State Government contributions and local government contributions. What we have to really understand is whether library services should stay the same. One sees people going out every night of the week to rent videos for between \$2 and \$5. Are videos replacing the traditional library services as we know them?

On the motion of **Mr PERRIN** (Bulleen), the debate was adjourned.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Brewery dispute—Interim development order at Melrossa estate, Traralgon—Fire hazards in central business district—Police staffing in the Shire of Flinders—Warrnambool Education Support Centre—Promotional advertising—Unoccupied granny flat

Mr FORDHAM (Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources)—I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr GUDE (Hawthorn)—I direct the attention of the Minister for Labour to the current brewery strike which is more than two weeks old. Pickets are located outside the brewery stopping deliveries to metropolitan hotels. The situation is that approximately 50 per cent of metropolitan hotels—and hotels throughout Victoria for that matter—are currently out of draught beer and supplies from interstate are difficult to obtain.

Staff in many hotels are being laid off. Put succinctly and clearly, a secondary boycott is in existence. Today the Opposition gave notice to the Government that it will introduce a Bill to prevent this type of insidious action. The Opposition gave notice today that it will introduce a Bill to prevent secondary boycotts. The Opposition is asking the Government to assist in the passage of this Bill to demonstrate the sort of relationship it often speaks about but does not deliver. I was reminded when I read in the *Herald* today of the so-called busman's holiday. The article states:

In England they pioneered the flying picket; in Bouverie St they have refined the Australian concept into something more homely.

Members of the Transport Workers Union employed by Carlton and United Breweries have, with the tacit support of the Municipal Officers Association set up something resembling home outside the CUB building, with two buses, a barbecue and a 44 gallon drum doubling as a heater.

A further article on the front page of today's *Herald* refers to a meeting of by-laws and traffic officers which was called last night by the Municipal Officers Association which decided to support the Carlton and United Breweries Ltd strikers by ignoring infringements in Bouverie and Swanston streets between Victoria and Queensbury streets.

I call on the Mayor of the City of Melbourne, Councillor Trevor Huggard, to show responsibility with respect to this dispute. I call on him to require officers of his council and members of the Municipal Officers Association to carry out the functions for which they are well paid. If they will not carry out their functions and perform their duties it is the responsibility of the mayor, as the principal officer of the City of Melbourne, to ensure that they lose their jobs and pay the price for not carrying out their duties. If the mayor does not have the courage to see that come to fruition he ought to give his job away and give it to someone else to take on.

The Government should use what little influence it has left with its union affiliates—its Trades Hall Council affiliates of the Australian Labor Party—to move to support the employers' action in both the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission and through the inevitable common law action that will take place as a consequence of this dispute.

The members involved in this strike—members of the Transport Workers Union—are just begging the employers to take common law action. If they had any care or real concern and interest in the industrial relations system in this country they ought to take stock and withdraw from the stupid situation in which they find themselves.

The situation is that the company has offered something like a \$6.5 million redundancy package to those people. The Linfox organisation has offered to protect each and every one of those people by providing employment, but still they seek to hold the people of this State to ransom. They seek to use industrial muscle to flout the laws of the land.

While all this is going on the Minister for Labour is silent; he is mute. The Minister is not taking a leading role in this issue. He is not making any genuine effort to bring about a resolution to the dispute. I invite the Minister to tell us precisely what he has achieved. The answer is that he has not achieved a single thing.

The strike has been going on for two weeks and there is no resolution in sight. The companies are taking all the initiatives. The Minister has not made one solitary effort and there is not one shred of evidence of any effort on the part of this miserable Minister.

Mr WALLACE (Gippsland South)—I direct the attention of the Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources to a problem that exists at the Melrossa estate at Traralgon with respect to an interim development order that was placed on State Electricity

Commission land. On 13 December a property owned by J. and V. Golcic at Lot 9 Minniedale Road, Traralgon, was put up for auction and passed in at \$130 000. The reserve on the property was \$175 000.

These people are having enormous problems and it is not through their fault—it is the fault of the interim development order that was placed on the land at the time. The problem is becoming very serious. On 6 January 1986 the State Electricity Commission wrote to the real estate agents handling the Golcic property. The agents had tried to auction the property once before and did not receive any bids.

As a consequence of the redefinition of the State Electricity Commission's coal allocations, the commission had no interest in further purchase of the land in this area. The coal allocations had been redefined in the energy policy statement *Victoria Brown Coal* of July 1984 but it took more than eighteen months for landowners to learn of the impact of the new policy.

In about mid-1986 the Ministry for Planning and Environment said that the State Electricity Commission was not compelled to buy properties in the area because the land was not part of the Category A coalfields or in an associated development area. The Minister said that action was being taken based on the "Framework for the Future" report to overcome problems in the Melrossa estate. The action included: removing the requirement for the commission to purchase lots in the area; removal of a prohibition on houses on the Melrossa lots in the Traralgon buffer zone and coalfields area; and the sale of some lots owned by the commission.

The problem has become serious. Page 46 of the report "Framework for the Future" points out that specific steps are proposed to overcome problems in the Melrossa estate. In effect, the Government and the State Electricity Commission are freeing themselves of any responsibility for any problems facing the landowners in the Melrossa estate.

The problems have existed for many years as a result of the development of the Loy Yang power station. The landowners have suffered hardship, ill health, nervous problems and financial losses. The landowners have been unable to sell their land and properties and the Government will not pay them compensation.

I have made many representations to the Minister on this matter and again I ask him to comment on the problems faced by residents on the estate. Today boards were erected outside the properties notifying that the land was to be resold. It is disgraceful that the Minister has been aware of the problem yet he has allowed it to continue without taking action. It is time the Government and the Minister responsible took a strong stand and attempted to overcome the problem.

Mr GAVIN (Coburg)—The matter I direct to the attention of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services concerns the fire risks posed by buildings in the Melbourne central business district. The matter was directed to my attention in a copy of the fire report made for the Australia Hotel in Collins Street. Many honourable members would have received a copy of this document.

The fire report is dated 12 November 1986 and was prepared by Mr N. Shaw. Under the description of fire protection for the Australia Hotel the building is described as twelve storeys high, including an arcade, a cinema centre and ten storeys of accommodation. The fire report directs attention to the bad standard of fire safety in the building and under the heading "Fire Protection" states:

Existing sprinkler system only provides partial protection for the premises.

.

Existing hydrants and hose reels do not provide adequate cover for the premises.

.

A standby hydrant booster pump is not provided.

It also states:

Construction of a number of existing stairways do not comply with the requirements of the Victoria Building Regulations.

.

Stairways are being used for storage areas.

.

Unenclosed electrical switchboards are located within required exit paths and stairways.

Under the heading "Recommendations" the following is listed:

The brigade is of the opinion that due to the height and use of the building the existing sprinkler system should be extended to provide protection to the entire complex . . .

The report also states:

Stairwells shall cease to be used as storage areas.

The brigade expressed the hope of holding discussions with the owners and the Melbourne City Council.

As a result of the fire report an article appeared in the *Australian* of 7 February 1987. Many people received a copy of this report, so it is not unusual for an article to be written on it. The article, which was published in the property section of a Saturday edition of the newspaper under the heading "Hotel Australia a fire risk: brigade", was written by Grant Muller.

The article is even more alarming than the fire report and in the second paragraph states that the Australia Hotel:

. . . is among 80 buildings in Melbourne identified as dangerous to their occupants.

.

A spokesman for the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, Mr Geoff Godfredson, said . . . the hotel's fire risk is similar to many of Melbourne's older commercial properties, built more than 40 years ago when fire and safety regulations were less stringent.

There are problems related to fire safety but it's a problem with all older buildings . . .

.

Other hotels along Spencer Street were also fire hazards.

Most of the buildings recognised as dangerous were in the central business district (CBD) and Mr Godfredson said many buildings "had not had a fireman set foot in them in 40 years".

Some of Melbourne's oldest and most beautiful buildings are in the "most dangerous" category.

I am concerned that the Melbourne City Council has not been active in the area of fire safety and in many ways has been complacent about the condition of many old buildings. A few names of councillors have been mentioned to me but, as I have no proof of the charges, I shall not name them in the House.

If 80 buildings in the City of Melbourne are considered fire risks the Government should be seen to be doing something to reduce the potential risk to tourists and others in the central business district. This is especially important when one considers that one of the buildings is an hotel.

I ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to outline the action he is taking to ensure the hotels in Melbourne are not fire risks in the future.

Dr WELLS (Dromana)—The matter I direct to the attention of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services is the 24-hour staffing of the proposed regional headquarters at Rosebud. The Shire of Flinders wrote to the Minister on 6 November and pointed out

that on 6 October 1983 the Minister and the shire entered into an agreement. It was agreed that land would be sold to the State Government so that a regional headquarters could be built on it.

Part of the agreement was that on completion of the headquarters a 24-hour service would be provided and the staff would be increased accordingly. Construction was to begin in 1984-85; in fact, construction did not begin until 1986 and is not due for completion until mid-1987. This has meant that the area is being greatly retarded in developing the necessary services.

In an area such as the Mornington Peninsula where one has the normal number of domestic dwellings as well as a large weekend and holiday contingent with people coming and going there is a need for police services. The Minister acknowledged this fact in one of his letters. The services in this area are not good; the police are grossly undermanned and overworked.

Members of the Police Force are being lost due to ill health, and early retirement in large part is due to pressures being brought to bear on the police. As a result of these sorts of pressures and the delay in the construction of the headquarters, the Shire of Flinders wrote again to the Minister in November. Also last year I raised with the Minister the possibility of having the 24-hour service instituted ahead of the building program.

The officers concerned agreed that they would use the cramped conditions if the extra staff were provided. Each summer the staff is enlarged to enable a 24-hour service to operate. The Shire of Flinders wrote to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services when that occurred in the last summer season, asking that the arrangements continue into the new year using the old quarters. The shire raised a number of questions with the Minister. On 9 February, the Minister wrote back stating that the summer service would cease on 7 February and that the police operations department had identified the requirement for personnel increases at Rosebud to enable the new complex to operate on a 24-hour basis. The Minister then added that:

Appointments will be made when resources permit.

That is a crucially important comment. In a formal exchange of letters, the Government had undertaken that when the headquarters was completed, it would be staffed on a 24-hour basis. The Minister has now made the comment that appointments will be made when resources permit.

The Minister concluded his letter by stating:

It should be noted that burglary reports substantially increase during October and November on the Mornington Peninsula, when holiday home owners visit their properties to prepare them for the summer period and find that their homes have been burgled.

That is the end of the letter and it is not a satisfactory answer to the problem of maintenance of law and order on the Mornington Peninsula, which has a chronically unsatisfactory record.

I specifically ask the Minister whether he will confirm that a 24-hour service will be provided when the station is completed and will he now indicate when he expects it to be completed.

Mr J. F. McGRATH (Warrnambool)—I raise with the Minister for Education the withdrawal of funding for the position of officer in charge at the Warrnambool Education Support Centre. The position has been occupied for some fourteen years and has been reviewed yearly.

Under its existing officer in charge, the centre was seen as a pioneer of that type of centre and it has been a model for other centres that have been established throughout the State. The decision of the Ministry of Education to withdraw the position of officer in charge has created much concern in Warrnambool. I am not referring only to school communities but also to the local community. I have received submissions from school councils,

principals, school communities and local government, who have formed a group to deal with this matter.

At the request of that group, I convened a meeting in Warrnambool to consider the course of action to be taken. The meeting drew up a unanimous resolution of action that a deputation, selected by the Warrnambool Education Support Centre Committee of Management, be made to the Minister to request the immediate reinstatement of the position of officer in charge at the centre.

The request was conveyed by me to the Minister who, in his wisdom, rejected it. He has instructed Ministry officers to liaise with the Barwon regional director and indicated that he has been advised that several proposals are under consideration, and that the regional director would discuss those with the relevant people.

I direct the attention of the Minister to the fact that there has been no consultation or discussion with the people of Warrnambool and the matter is no further advanced than when the original letter was sent to the Minister.

It has been brought to my attention that of the five consultancy positions in the Barwon region of the Ministry of Education, only two are filled. The Ministry has now decided that the position of officer in charge can be filled by a dual role with the regional education officer.

On the night of the public meeting at Warrnambool, an article from the *Government Gazette* of October 1986 was read out. The article listed the duties—seventeen in all—of the officer in charge. It referred to the types of skills a person should have to hold that position. Added to that list of seventeen duties was a substantial list of duties and responsibilities of the regional education office.

The people of Warrnambool have convened another meeting and have invited me to attend. They have asked me to ensure that the Minister sends the director of the Barwon region to present himself at the meeting to explain the situation. They have advised me that if that does not occur, they will resort to further action. I ask the Minister to inform me whether he will send the regional director to Warrnambool to resolve this important issue. In a Ministry of Education booklet, it is stated that the Government supports the ongoing development of education support centres because of the valuable contribution they make to curriculum development throughout Victoria.

Mr NORRIS (Dandenong)—I ask the Minister for Consumer Affairs, who is at the table, to convey my remarks to the Minister for Planning and Environment in the other place. My remarks refer to the Metropolitan Planning Scheme and the distinctions that exist within the scheme to advertising hoardings; a distinction exists between business signs and promotional signs.

As honourable members would be aware, a business sign is a sign that is affixed to premises advertising products sold or activities undertaken by the business occupying the premises. A promotional sign, which is commonly known as a hoarding, promotes goods that have nothing to do with the establishment to which it is affixed.

I am concerned about a promotional sign that has appeared on a building at 9 Buckley Street, Noble Park, which is the building where my electorate office was formerly situated. The premises is now occupied by the City of Springvale Youth Resource Centre.

The City of Springvale objects to promotional signs as a matter of principle and has strict guidelines on the types of signs it will grant permits for. The large sign affixed to 9 Buckley Street advertises IC Cooler. Along with the city planner, I believe it is most inappropriate that IC Cooler is advertised on the side of a building that presently houses the City of Springvale Youth Resource Centre.

Springvale is fortunate to have such an active and socially-aware council which funds many youth workers. Also funded by the city under a community services program is a youth attendance centre project. It is an active office, is highly visible and is an extremely

busy and socially-aware centre. Attached to the side is a large IC Cooler advertisement without the appropriate permit.

It has been brought to my attention by the city planner, Mr John Moore, that the normal procedure these days is that a promotional sign is put up without a permit and, when someone squeals about it, a permit is applied for. If that is not backed by the city, they then go to the Planning Appeals Board, and I understand that approval is granted in approximately 50 per cent of cases.

As honourable members are aware, tremendous problems occurred recently concerning the promotion of wine cooler drinks, and I congratulate the Government on its firm stand in the matter. These cooler drinks are directed particularly at the younger women in the community. These drinks are an alcohol phenomenon. They come from the west coast of America and last year in their first year of operation in Victoria, more than \$50 million worth were sold. The projection this year is \$82 million worth of cheap white wine mixed with citrus juice, cleverly marketed like soft drinks with advertisements suggesting, "We have surf, sun, sand and lovely bodies. You are not really drinking grog; you are drinking soft drink." I find the whole cooler promotion utterly offensive, but to make matters worse this sign is attached to the side of the Youth Resource Centre.

I ask the Minister to direct my remarks to the Minister for Planning and Environment with a request that he look into the whole area of alcohol and tobacco advertising from hoardings. Currently, 60 per cent of all outdoor promotion is alcohol and tobacco advertising. Alan Bond recently paid \$1 million for the top of the Taiping restaurant at St Kilda Junction to advertise his Swan lager. The whole business of grog and tobacco industry advertising is getting out of control. Much stricter guidelines must be brought down by the Ministry for Planning and Environment on the outdoor advertising of these most socially destructive drugs, the two most destructive drugs facing young people in this country.

Mr JOHN (Bendigo East)—I ask the Minister for Consumer Affairs to direct to the Minister for Housing an issue concerning public housing, in particular, the matter of granny flats in this State. In my region a Mr Peter George of Marong, who owns a caravan park, has had an unoccupied granny flat left on his property for more than four months, and I have identified three or four others that have been left unoccupied for up to eight months despite a desperate need for this type of housing, despite waiting lists that require applicants to wait for twelve months and despite repeated requests that these dwellings be removed. The Government has failed to remove them for utilisation by people who are in desperate need of housing.

It is deplorable that, in the face of such a desperate need for public housing, a granny flat at Marong can be left vacant for more than four months. What is even worse is that the owner of the caravan park has lost some \$3000 in rental income because this unoccupied granny flat is standing on a powered and sewered site.

This is a disgraceful indictment of the administration of public housing by a Government that purports to care so much about the poor and the elderly who are in desperate need.

The SPEAKER—Order! Before calling on Ministers to respond, I remind the House that earlier today in question time I was asked by the honourable member for Forest Hill to request the Minister for Consumer Affairs to withdraw certain words to which the honourable member took offence. I undertook to check the record. I have done so and it appears that the Minister used the words:

He supported any shady operator.

The honourable member for Forest Hill claimed that those words of the Minister associated the honourable member with shady characters. From there on the words "associated with shady characters" are used as being the offensive words.

The honourable member for Forest Hill requests, in accordance with his right, the withdrawal of expressions in which he finds an imputation. I call on the Minister for Consumer Affairs.

Mr SPYKER (Minister for Consumer Affairs)—I am not quite sure what to withdraw, but I will withdraw whatever the honourable member finds offensive.

The SPEAKER—Order! I now call the Minister for Consumer Affairs in response.

Mr SPYKER (Minister for Consumer Affairs)—The honourable member for Hawthorn raised with the Minister for Labour the question of the Carlton and United Breweries Ltd dispute and asked what was being done in the matter. The honourable member would be aware that, in instances where Government assistance in a private sector dispute is requested, over which the Government has no jurisdiction, our good offices are always available. A hearing has been set down in the Arbitration Commission for Friday, when I hope the dispute will be resolved.

The honourable member for Gippsland South raised a matter for the Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources concerning problems on the Melrossa estate in his electorate regarding a dispute with the State Electricity Commission. I shall refer that matter to the Minister.

The honourable member for Dandenong raised a question concerning the Melbourne metropolitan business plan as it relates to a sign at 9 Buckley Street, Noble Park, in the City of Springvale, which the honourable member finds offensive, especially as it is on the side of the Youth Resource Centre. It is a promotional sign for a wine cooler.

I agree with the honourable member for Dandenong, when we are concerned both as members of Parliament and as parents with under-age drinking, that that is a most inappropriate place to put such a sign. I shall direct the attention of the Minister to the matter and ask him to take urgent action.

The honourable member for Bendigo East raised with the Minister for Housing a matter concerning a granny flat in his electorate which has not been occupied for four months. I shall bring that matter to the attention of the Minister. I am sure the Minister will want to have the unit moved as quickly as possible because it is important to ensure that available accommodation is effectively used.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—The honourable member for Dromana directed my attention to the fact that a major new 24-hour police complex at Rosebud is approaching completion. If the honourable member were in any doubt about the seriousness with which the Government takes its obligation to provide proper law enforcement facilities on the Mornington Peninsula, the provision of that fine complex should provide him with his answer. Obviously, the police will be anxious to ensure that the best possible use is obtained from this facility. The honourable member can count on the chief commissioner staffing it on that basis.

The honourable member for Coburg directed my attention to a report on fire safety concerning the Hotel Australia and referred to a report suggesting that a number of other city buildings may be the subject of similar reports. The honourable gentleman will appreciate that the fire safety of major city buildings constitutes a large area of the responsibility of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade. The brigade admirably demonstrated its zeal in that connection last weekend in Operation Wildfire that took place in the soon to be demolished CRA building in Collins Street.

I am advised that discussions between the brigade and the Hotel Australia authorities are continuing and I can assure the honourable gentleman that any action the brigade believes is necessary with regard to that particular matter will be taken.

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Education)—The honourable member for Warrnambool questioned the effect of the withdrawal of an officer from the Warrnambool Education

Support Centre and, equally, the effect that reductions in consultancies at the regional and sub-regional level will have upon educational programs and services.

I make it clear to the honourable member for Warrnambool that he is not alone among members of the National Party who continually raise matters in this House seeking more and more expenditure from Government.

They have never had the responsibility of having to say from where the money will come to fund all of these programs that they demand. At least the Leader of the National Party has had the honesty to say to the coalition Government that it will greatly reduce Government expenditure. It should be realised that if one greatly reduces Government expenditure, one certainly also reduces expenditure in education.

The Government has had to take up the reduction of Commonwealth programs in some vital areas. That has included English as a second language, computer education and the whole range of professional development for both teacher and parent members of school councils.

The Government has made the decision to fund those programs and, of course, it has been at a cost; funding those programs has meant that other programs have not been funded.

If the National Party is prepared to show me where it will find the funds to provide the range of programs about which it continually writes to me, demanding more and more money, I will be prepared to listen to it. Nevertheless, I have made it clear that several proposals are currently being investigated by the region and certainly, through the schools restructuring unit, the stage will be reached where staff can be taken out, particularly in the curriculum and consultancy areas, from the centre and placed in regions, sub-regions and schools, but it will take some time to bring together both the Budget procedure and the Ministry restructuring procedure. Nevertheless, the Government is determined to achieve that result.

I shall ensure that discussions are held with the people in Warrnambool about the way in which we meet the present position and the way in which the Government can at least continue with the largest range of programs that is necessary; but I am not prepared to direct a particular officer to go down to Warrnambool to a meeting that has been organised there by an honourable member.

I shall ensure that appropriate discussions are held with the people in Warrnambool about the range of services that we can provide through the regional office.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.13 p.m.

Thursday, 26 February 1987

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds) took the chair at 10.35 a.m. and read the prayer.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

POLICE INVESTIGATIONS OF GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

Mr KENNETT (Leader of the Opposition)—I was going to ask my question of the Premier of Queensland, but as he is not here yet I address my question to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. What are the State Government departments and instrumentalities that the police are investigating and what are the reasons for those investigations?

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—The police are not in the habit of providing Ministers with detailed briefings on day-to-day activities. Since the honourable member asks a question requiring such detailed information I shall gladly ask the Police Department for it and provide it to him.

MELROSSA ESTATE, TRARALGON

Mr WALLACE (Gippsland South)—Can the Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources advise the House why he has continually refused to resolve the question of providing adequate compensation for landowners in the Melrossa estate at Traralgon, considering that the State Electricity Commission of Victoria has aggravated the situation by releasing further blocks of land and houses in the interim development order area?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources)—Do not worry about things like that; the honourable member is trying to trick me. I bet he is one of the politicians from Victoria! I am endeavouring to resolve what clearly is a very complex issue, and the honourable member concerned should know that. The local member of Parliament, Miss Callister, the honourable member for Morwell, has made representations to me on this issue. I have met with a number of her constituents and discussed the matter with people from the planning Ministry, my own Ministry and the State Electricity Commission. The action by the commission to release further land in that estate area has my wholehearted support.

People moving into the Latrobe Valley region need to be convinced that the area is available and should properly be developed in the future with housing. The State Electricity Commission, by reducing the land and existing houses it has in the area, will demonstrate to the market that its present and future potential is assured. That certainly will improve the property values for the landowners concerned. In addition, I am making arrangements for the Valuer-General to obtain valuations for the three properties concerned, of which the honourable member is aware. I shall keep him informed in view of his interest in this matter. It is a complex and difficult matter and will be dealt with as expeditiously as possible.

NATIONAL TENNIS CENTRE

Mr REMINGTON (Melbourne)—I ask the Premier to advise the House of the progress of the National Tennis Centre at Flinders Park.

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The National Tennis Centre is now half complete. It is on schedule and within budget. Half the retractable roof will be in place within three weeks. Work commenced last week on the indoor courts. Surface selection is a matter of some contention

and the tennis experts will have to sort that out. That will, I understand, be resolved very shortly. During recent months when international tennis personalities and players have been here for the Davis Cup and the National Tennis Championships, players and journalists gave the stadium rave reviews. Jack Kramer, who will be remembered by many, said that it was by far the greatest stadium in the world. Overseas tennis writer, Rex Bellamy, who has covered 81 Grand Slam tournaments around the world, said that other centres look sick by comparison. David Irvine and John Roberts from the United Kingdom were enthusiastic about the stadium. We even received a favourable report from Sydney's journalist for United Press International, Brian Dewhurst, who said that we should be pleased with the stadium.

I commend the work of the trustees during the past sixteen months, especially that of the Minister for Sport and Recreation, the Minister for Housing, the Leader of the National Party and the Honourable Lindsay Thompson, my predecessor, who have all contributed to the work of that trustee body. The approach taken by those four people and others has been truly bipartisan. Problems have occurred and occasions have arisen when the Leader of the National Party, the Honourable Lindsay Thompson, or one of the others could have sought to take a short-term political stance and refused to communicate on various problems. That did not happen, and I commend them for the attitude they adopted.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr CAIN—I am delighted to hear the Leader of the Opposition offering his support because no-one in the Liberal Party has offered support for the work of the committee until now. There has been a lot of carping and criticism, about which the trustees have been concerned.

The trustees and Tennis Australia want the National Tennis Centre to stretch across the political spectrum. I shall be delighted if it does.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr CAIN—The honourable member for Gisborne is a constant critic. On Tuesday he gave notice that he intended to move a motion about car parking at the National Tennis Centre. One can find all sorts of petty complaints if one wants to. The Leader of the Opposition interjects that there are problems. If there are problems, the Government and the trustees will work through those problems.

I ask honourable members to bear in mind what this centre will mean to this country. Melbourne will join London, Paris and New York as one of the top tennis centres in the world. That is where tennis, a sport that is played right across the world, will be centred in Australia.

Mr Williams—It will be for the elite.

Mr CAIN—The honourable member for Doncaster is wrong again. It is not only for the elite but also for the ordinary player.

Not for a couple of days, but for two and a half weeks in January of every year, this city will be the centre of attention in the sporting world. I should have thought all honourable members would support that. I knew the Government was on the right track when opposition came from some sections of the Liberal Party and the Melbourne City Council. I do not include the honourable member for Gisborne in that remark; he will learn that the Government is right.

I ask all honourable members to support the trustees and to ensure that the project enjoys strong support. This is the greatest sporting achievement for Melbourne since the 1956 Olympic Games. However, the Australian Open, which will be conducted at the centre, is not an event that will last for two or three weeks in a lifetime; it will mean that every year this city will be the centre of world attention. The project should be supported because it will mean so much to this State and this country.

TITLES OFFICE

Mr CROZIER (Portland)—I ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services whether the Police Fraud Squad has the Titles Office under investigation. If so, will the Minister advise the House of the malpractices being investigated?

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—It is not appropriate that the Minister for Police and Emergency Services should involve himself directly in the operational affairs of the force, nor do I propose to adopt that practice. I suggest that is an example that honourable members opposite may do well to observe. If they were to learn that example they would less often find themselves involved in inexcusable errors involving damage to the reputations of innocent people.

A good example was provided recently by the honourable member for Hawthorn when he said in this House in reference to the Victorian Prison Industries Commission that the new horticultural manager's qualifications are not recognised by the Public Service Board.

Mr CROZIER (Portland)—On a point of order, my question had nothing to do with horticulture. I was referring to corruption.

The SPEAKER—Order! There is no point of order.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I realize that I was getting too close to the bone for the comfort of the honourable members for Portland and Hawthorn.

Mr KENNETT (Leader of the Opposition)—On a point of order, the Minister was reading his answer prior to the last point of order, and he is now referring to typed notes. I ask that he table the documents from which he is reading.

The SPEAKER—Order! I do not uphold the point of order. If the Leader of the Opposition wishes the documents to be made available to the House the Minister may do so.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—With the greatest of pleasure I shall make the documents from which I am quoting available to the House. The Leader of the Opposition and the honourable member for Portland tried to stifle my remarks about the honourable member for Hawthorn telling the House, in regard to the Victorian Prison Industries Commission, that the qualifications of the new horticultural manager are not recognized by the Public Service Board. He said, "He is a basic clerk grade 3, but he receives a higher duties allowance for being the fund manager and his travel from Kilmore to Melbourne each day by car is paid by the taxpayers. The rest of us must pay for our own travel to and from work, but not that fellow. He is one of Mr Buck's buddies and he has been fixed up. How did he get the job?"

Mr PLOWMAN (Evelyn)—The honourable member for Portland asked a clear question about investigations into the Titles Office. The answer being given by the Minister bears no relevance to the question. I suggest that if an answer has no relevance to the question it should be ruled out of order.

The SPEAKER—Order! As the honourable member for Evelyn is well aware, the Minister's response does not have to have relevance. The honourable member is well aware of the practices of the House that have been maintained by previous Presiding Officers. The only qualification is when debate is out of order. I ask the Minister to come back to the question and finalise his response.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I was simply illustrating for the benefit of the House the embarrassment that often follows when Opposition members set out to smear and defame people in this House. In the present instance the man fingered by the honourable member for Hawthorn happened to have been the former

farm manager of the Honourable Fred Grimwade. I refer to a letter addressed to the honourable member for Hawthorn.

The SPEAKER—Order! I ask the Minister to observe the practices of the House. I ask him not to use the variety of documents that he appears to have with him and to come back to the question or cease his reply.

Mr MATHEWS—I have made a point which I believe honourable members would do well to observe. At the request of the Leader of the Opposition I table the letter which was addressed by the gentleman concerned to the honourable member for Hawthorn. I think that letter will speak for itself to all those people who will now study it.

THIRD-PARTY INSURANCE FOR MOTORCYCLISTS

Mr W. D. McGRATH (Lowan)—The Treasurer will recall the accident compensation legislation that was agreed to by all parties. There was a fair understanding that there would be a 20 per cent to 25 per cent increase in third-party premiums. Will the Treasurer justify why there was a 130 per cent increase for the motorcyclists of this State? On what basis can he justify that increase? If he cannot do so, will he agree to a review of what would appear to be an excessive increase in third-party insurance premiums for motorcyclists?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—I remind the honourable member for Lowan that he should examine the position in Queensland in respect of motorcyclists. He will find that, in the case of large motorbikes, the owners pay equal to or more than the third-party premiums for motor vehicles in that State as well.

I further point out that during the period leading up to the introduction and finalisation of the third-party insurance legislation there were proposals around, which were supported by the National Party, that sought to retain common law which would have increased premiums from the agreed \$250 to \$450. Those were the proposals initially put by lawyers, supported by the Liberal Party and by some of the colleagues of the honourable member for Lowan as well.

In respect of motorcyclists, the relativities issue was made known right from the start of negotiations and there was not one word said about those proposals by members of either the Liberal Party or the National Party.

Mr Stockdale interjected.

The SPEAKER—Order! I ask the Treasurer to resume his seat. I shall not warn the honourable member for Brighton again. I will take action against him if he uses that form of interjection. He is totally out of order.

Mr JOLLY—With respect to the motorcyclist issue, it is important to recognise that it is based on claims experience, which illustrates that the claims for motorcyclists are in fact higher than claims for motorists. In the reform package we have brought motorcyclists' premiums up to the level of premiums charged for motorists and that obviously reduces the degree of cross-subsidisation that existed under the previous system.

Mr Brown interjected.

Mr JOLLY—If the honourable member for Gippsland West examined accident compensation figures in 1985–86 he would find that, in cases where motorcyclists were involved in accidents, in 47 per cent of cases, no other vehicles were involved.

Clearly that demonstrates that motorists were not at fault. Obviously the honourable member for Gippsland West has been sucked in by propaganda. However, that is not surprising because that is the usual way in which he behaves with respect to information put out.

Motorcyclists have said that something like seven out of ten accidents were not the fault of motorcyclists. The reality is this: the claims experience of motorcyclists is greater than motorists and the proposals that have now been introduced are bringing the motorcyclists, in the case of large motorcycles of more than 500 cc, up to the level of motor vehicles.

There are still elements of cross-subsidisation to those motorcyclists, but not as much as before.

I assume that the honourable member, in supporting the cause of motorcyclists, is advocating increasing the premiums of motor vehicles. I do not support that proposition. That is the logic of the position that the honourable member puts. Both the Liberal and National parties support a fully funded system. Effectively that means if premiums of one group, for example, motorcyclists, are reduced, then the premiums of other groups must be increased. There is no other way one can do it.

It is clear that the honourable member for Lowan is out of his depth. If the honourable member examined the situation in Queensland he would note that owners of large motorcycles are treated in the same way, relatively, as they are treated in Victoria.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING FOR YOUNG VICTORIANS

Mr ANDRIANOPOULOS (St Albans)—Can the Minister for Labour advise the House what recent steps have been taken under the Youth Guarantee Scheme to promote apprenticeships and training opportunities for young Victorians?

Mr CRABB (Minister for Labour)—When the Labor Party came to office in 1982, the apprenticeship system was in a state of crisis. The number of new apprentices was approximately 10 000.

This year the number of young people starting apprenticeships will be approaching 16 000, an all-time record, on top of last year's figure of nearly 15 000, an all-time record, which was on top of the previous year's figure of 14 000, another all-time record.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! I advise the honourable member for Frankston South that I will not warn him again to cease interjecting. The same advice is given to the honourable member for Malvern.

Mr CRABB—As I indicated, this year there will be an all-time record for the intake of apprentices in training. The number passed the 40 000 mark last year and there is every expectation of passing 50 000 this year.

Never before in the history of the State has the apprenticeship system been in such a healthy condition as it is today. Not only is the general apprenticeship program working exceptionally well because of the determined efforts of the Government over the past five years, particularly by my predecessor, now the Minister for Local Government, and myself, but the apprenticeship intake has been at the highest level it has ever been.

I am pleased to inform the House that the establishment of the group apprenticeship schemes has meant that last month the target of 1 300 enrolments in twenty group schemes was achieved right across the State. It has particularly assisted young women to take up trade training.

The Australian traineeship system has been developing at a significant rate. This year the Government has launched traineeships in a number of private sector areas, including hospitality, telecommunications, electronics and travel agents. Many of these programs are in the pipeline and the Government expects to implement traineeship programs throughout the private sector during the course of this year.

Not only is the Government increasing the number of young people in training and in apprenticeships, but also a significant amount of resources have been put into lifting the

quality of training. In 1982, only one skills centre program was operating, but the Government has increased that program to twelve centres. The Government has invested approximately \$9 million in cooperation and in conjunction with employers in industries and trade unions.

More recently, to assist the manufacturing industry, which is extremely important to the economic strategy of the State, the Government, with major metal industry employers and unions, is revamping metal industry training for apprentices in an endeavour to lift the manufacturing industry out of the doldrums that the previous Liberal Government left it in.

The Government will provide \$650 000 to establish a Metals Industry Foundation to train apprentices in the necessary skills to use the most modern types of computer-aided manufacturing technology and design.

When the Labor Party came to office, apprenticeship training facilities were in a disastrous condition. I am pleased to say that today those facilities are in better shape than they have ever been and next year they will be better still.

POLICE DRUG SQUAD

Mr E. R. SMITH (Glen Waverley)—I ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services whether the Government has complete and total confidence in the head of the Police Drug Squad following his statement that the Attorney-General has achieved his objective of effectively making the Listening Devices Act unworkable for the police and that that could lead to a member of the Police Force being shot.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—The Drug Squad in this State stands high in the esteem of Police Forces throughout Australia. Only recently it pulled off very notable coups against drug dealers in Victoria. I am surprised that the honourable member for Glen Waverley should bring the matter into question.

"G'DAY BEGINS IN MELBOURNE" CAMPAIGN

Mr POPE (Monbulk)—Can the Deputy Premier outline the overseas response to the Victorian Government initiatives in tourism, specifically the current campaign being conducted in the United States of America?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources)—I thank the honourable member for his question and for his continuing support for the tourist industry both throughout Victoria and within the Monbulk electorate. The honourable member made specific reference to the successful "G'Day Begins in Melbourne" campaign initiated in North America.

Honourable members would be aware that there has been a significantly increased interest shown by North Americans in Australia as a tourist destination, especially since the Paul Hogan advertisements appeared under the Australian Tourism Commission banner. Last year Victoria announced that it would take advantage of that opportunity by being the first Australian State to embark on a major initiative in its own right.

I was delighted that Olivia Newton John, who was a Victorian for many years and who is well known to most honourable members, has agreed to work with the Victorian Government and the Victorian tourist industry in this important campaign, which is being conducted in association with the Australian Tourism Commission. I thank John Haddad and John Rowe from the commission for their cooperation.

The advertising campaign was launched on 20 January 1987, based on four large North American cities, namely, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago and New York. The conclusion of the advertisements contains a toll-free telephone number inviting interested persons to seek further information literature on Victoria as a tourist destination.

I am pleased that the campaign has been a spectacular success. For example, since the joint campaign began five weeks ago, more than 120 000 telephone calls have been received in those four cities. That figure is well beyond the expectations of the people concerned, both in North America and Victoria, and demonstrates the great success that the campaign is enjoying in stimulating further North American tourist interest in Melbourne and Victoria as a whole.

It is expected that more than 200 000 Americans will receive the campaign brochure. Arrangements have been made to reprint the brochure. Keith Dunstan was a tremendous help in finalising the brochure. Also, the top rating American *Today* show was televised live from Melbourne and, as a result of that program alone, approximately 13 000 telephone calls were received in North America.

That has proved to be a successful initiative. It is part of the Government's commitment to have a proper tourism policy and effectively to market that policy for tourist opportunities not only in Melbourne but also across the State.

I believe honourable members representing country electorates are aware of the great potential that is being realised by international tourists taking advantage of what Victoria has to offer.

I take up the interjection from the honourable member for Murray Valley. The north-east central highlands area has important opportunities for tourism. The Premier was there only last week advertising important initiatives.

Mr Cain—He stuck to me like a leech!

Mr FORDHAM—I understand that the honourable member for Murray Valley was very happy and sought opportunity after opportunity of being photographed with the Premier.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! If the honourable member for Murray Valley wishes to defy the Chair, I shall offer him the same advice that I have to other persistent interjectors: I will have him removed from the House.

Mr FORDHAM—The Government is proud of the repeated invitations it has received from members of the National Party asking Ministers of the Crown to visit their electorates and be part of announcements involving new initiatives that the Government is constantly undertaking in country Victoria.

In conclusion, I believe the Victorian tourism industry has responded positively to the opportunities the Government is now creating through this international campaign. It is a three-year commitment and I assure honourable members that it will bring great economic benefits for the future of this State.

PETITIONS

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

Birth, death and marriage records

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

The humble petition of the undersigned citizens of the State of Victoria sheweth that, seventy-four (74) days after the release of the indexes to pre-1896 birth, death and marriage records for Victoria held by the Office of the Government Statist, the cost of obtaining certificates was increased by ninety per cent for those records most commonly used for historical research. The cost has been increased from \$5.00 to \$9.50 for pre-1896 certificates, provided the reference number from the indexes is supplied with the request; from \$10.00 to \$19.00 for the certificates for the period 1896 to 1911 and from \$18.00 to \$19.00 for the period 1911 to 1985.

By **Mr Sidiropoulos** (17 signatures)

Prahran and Richmond tram services

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

The humble petition of the undersigned residents of Victoria sheweth that two tram-services, 77 and 79, which have provided an essential part of public transport travel for residents of Richmond and Prahran in and around Chapel and Church Streets were discontinued in November 1986 by Metropolitan Transit. The loss of the tram-service has substantially limited the capacity of residents, particularly the aged the disabled and children, to travel to the City or St Kilda and back. This has caused a considerable degree of frustration and unhappiness amongst affected residents.

Your petitioners hereby present their protest at this action and therefore pray that the Government of the State of Victoria revoke this decision and re-establish the 77 and 79 tram-services. And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

By Mr Sidiropoulos (487 signatures)

Meat trading hours

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER, MR C. T. EDMUNDS, M.P. AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY IN THE PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA ASSEMBLED:

We, the undersigned being proprietors and/or employees in the meat industry present this petition supporting the Meat and Allied Trades Federation of Australia (Victorian Division)'s policy that the present hours of trade for butchers' shops contained in the Labour and Industry Act 1958 section 81 (1) should be maintained.

We respectfully submit that the present trading hours for the sale of red meat provide for an orderly marketing system and any alteration to these hours would not be in the best public interest.

We firmly believe it is essential to provide competition at a fair and reasonable level thereby giving the consumer the freedom of choice in the marketplace, competitive prices and the availability to service.

We respectfully urge all members of the Parliament to support an amendment to the *Shop Trading Act 1986* to maintain the status quo.

By Mr Pope (3319 signatures)

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

PAPERS

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

Country Fire Authority—Report for the year 1985–86.

Metropolitan Fire Brigade Board—Report for the year 1985–86.

Museum of Victoria Council—Report for the year 1984–85.

GOVERNMENT POLICIES ERODING LIVING STANDARDS

Mr KENNETT (Leader of the Opposition)—I move:

That this House condemns the Government for pursuing policies which have seriously eroded living standards for Victorian families and individuals by—(a) making Victorians the highest-taxed citizens in Australia; (b) accumulating a record official debt which has burdened Victorians with crippling debt servicing costs; (c) instituting and supporting policies which have made Victoria the inflation State of Australia; (d) imposing hidden taxes on gas, electricity, water and other State services; (e) reducing essential services against the community interest; and (f) discriminating against people and industries in country Victoria.

The people of Victoria, the families of Victoria and businesses, especially small businesses, are hurting because of the insensitivities and callous action of this socialist Government. The policies of this economically incompetent Government are seriously eroding the living standards of every Victorian family and citizen. The hurt and pain being felt by Victorians will only get worse until either the Government dramatically changes its economic policies or is thrown from office by a community disillusioned and dejected by

the Government's irresponsible attitude to the Victorian economy and the social security of an increasing number of Victorian families.

Over the past five years, and as late as last Tuesday, the community has had to listen to the Premier and Treasurer make deliberately misleading assertions that Victoria is leading Australia's economic recovery. The community has had to pay the massive costs of the Labor Party's self-promotion campaign of misinformation, which amounts to more than \$26 million a year.

The claim that Victoria is leading Australia's economic recovery is grossly and obviously incorrect on two counts, the first being that the Australian economy is not recovering. Everyone knows that Australia's economy is not recovering and the current economic management has left distress and concern throughout the community. Australia now has a record debt of more than \$100 billion and its inflation rate is totally uncompetitive with the rates of those countries with which Australia trades.

The value of the Australian dollar has been dramatically reduced as a result of overseas countries and businesses having lost confidence in the economic management of the nation. Australia's interest rates are unacceptably high and, according to current trends and reports, they will continue to increase. That is a result of failed policies at both Federal and State levels. In other words, the Australian economy is not recovering and the management of it has been given a massive thumbs down by overseas countries and businesses.

With that factual assessment of the Australian economy, the Premier and the Treasurer have the audacity to continue to state that Victoria is leading Australia's economic recovery. As I have indicated, the Australian economy is not recovering.

The second ground on which the Government's claim that Victoria is leading that non-existent Australian economic recovery fails is the fact that Victoria is not enjoying an economic recovery. It is not the figures of the Opposition that say that, but independent figures provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Victoria has the worst State figures in Australia on debt, inflation and taxes. In fact, the only truth in the Premier's and the Treasurer's often repeated claim that Victoria is leading Australia in this non-existent economic recovery is the word "leading", for Victoria is leading the other States in the three worst economic indicators produced by independent statisticians. Those indicators point quite clearly to Victoria's poor performance in the areas of debt and borrowings, inflation and taxation levels.

In February 1987 Victorians are hurting; they are bleeding, and their living standards will be further eroded throughout 1987 and 1988 unless the Government responsibly changes its economic policies or until it is thrown out of office.

Sadly, those Victorians who are being hurt most are those who have been traditional Labor supporters—the low income earners and particularly the disadvantaged. Throughout Victoria those with less and those on very low incomes are being hurt badly as this Government, through its arrogance, continues with policies that are undermining the Victorian family, the individual and business.

Having stuck the knife of socialism into the underbellies of those least able to protect themselves, the Premier and the Treasurer are now screwing that knife and drawing out the lifeblood of thousands of families and tens of thousands of citizens of this State.

If they doubt my words, I invite the Treasurer and the Premier to join me over the next few weeks at any railway station that I may visit and to listen to what the citizens of this State are saying about the Government and the way in which its taxes, charges and economic policies are causing them very real hardship.

To prove the Opposition's case quite clearly, I shall go through and prove each of the various areas mentioned in the motion. My first point is that the Government, in pursuit of policies that have seriously eroded the living standards of Victorian families and

individuals, has made Victoria the highest taxed State and Victorians the highest taxed citizens in Australia.

Victoria's per capita tax burden in 1986-87 will be \$931, an increase of 66 per cent or \$369 since the Labor Party came to power in Victoria in 1981-82. The Opposition estimates that State Government taxation will be \$3.9 billion in 1986-87, an increase of \$1.8 billion or 87 per cent since the Labor Party came to power.

New taxes that have been introduced by the Cain Government include the financial institutions duty, which will produce approximately \$117 million in 1986-87, and the energy consumption levy, which will produce approximately \$15 million in 1986-87.

The major growth taxes under the Cain Government have been stamp duty, which has increased by 101 per cent or \$368 million in the first five years of Labor Government; and payroll tax, which has increased by 62 per cent or \$490 million in five years. In particular, it is clear that public authority dividends have increased by 311 per cent or \$342 million during the term of the Cain Government.

Public authority charges grew considerably faster than Victoria's inflation rate in the first two years of the Cain Government. The growth rate, however, has slowed down significantly since then.

The Port of Melbourne Authority charges, however, are as much as 37 per cent more than in Sydney—and we wonder why the Port of Melbourne Authority is attracting less and less business!

One should examine how living standards have been savagely eroded just since Christmas: without even considering the overall statistics mentioned, since Christmas alone the Government has broken its election promise because of its own mismanagement in the health area by increasing hospital charges by a massive 20 per cent.

A new water tax is about to be introduced for Victorian families and regardless of whether the Government has lowered the impact of that tax, every Victorian family in the State will be paying considerably more in Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works rates this year because of the new tax that the Government is expecting home-owners to pay. Again, this is because of the Government's economic mismanagement.

Already mention has been made in Parliament about third-party insurance. The onus and responsibility for the massive increases in third-party insurance lie directly with the Government. For four years it failed to do anything while a huge debt was built up in this State and now the problem has to be addressed. After four years of inaction, the poor travelling motorist pays the price.

The Opposition quite rightly defended the right of some people, under certain circumstances, to claim under common law but it is not the common law claims that have led to the massive increases and the Treasurer knows that; it is because, in his grab for more money, he has changed the zoning, and people in places like the central highlands and particularly Monbulk are paying a high penalty indeed.

The Treasurer says, by interjection, that I am a hypocrite. I do not mind him saying that and I do not want him to retract it because I can prove how stupid this Treasurer is and how he either does not realise the impact of his changes or is not honest enough to admit it.

The other day in Lilydale I was approached by a citizen who owns a 1963 Morris Elite. That car is 24 years old; it is hardly an elite car. Under the third-party insurance changes implemented by the Treasurer, that person's insurance has risen from \$162 to——

Mr Jolly—They would have paid \$100 more!

Mr KENNETT—The Treasurer says they would have paid \$100 more. Listen to this, boy Treasurer: this person's premium for a 1963 Morris Elite has increased from \$162 to

\$260—an increase of \$98 for a car that is 24 years old, and the Treasurer calls me hypocritical!

I challenge the Treasurer to come with me tomorrow out to Monbulk to speak to the people who are having to pay that sort of increase in premiums. It has nothing to do with anything but the Treasurer's rezoning and I can give honourable members an example of this.

The Treasurer, by interjection and quite irresponsibly, says that the changes were supported by the Liberal Party. That is an absolute lie. The Liberal Party was not involved or consulted on any rezoning proposals nor was it part of any discussions. If the Premier wants to come into Parliament and lie——

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Fogarty)—Order! The Leader of the Opposition should speak through the Chair. I am surprised that no honourable member has risen to his feet yet because the statements made by the Leader of the Opposition are bordering on unparliamentary.

Mr KENNETT—Given that the Treasurer has not got to his feet he obviously accepts that they are lies.

Mr Jolly—You are a liar, not me!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—Order! I may have let the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition go past, but the Treasurer has used exactly the same word.

Mr KENNETT—The Treasurer is not being honest by in any way associating the Liberal Party with support for changes in compulsory third-party insurance that had anything to do with restructuring of zones. Restructuring of the zones has led to a massive increase in third-party insurance. That has nothing to do with it; nor was it ever mentioned in the discussions. If the Treasurer wants to come into this House and again be totally untruthful, so be it. The people in the Central Highlands Province who have to pay the bill, together with the rest of the public, will come out against it.

Mr Jolly—You did not mention it.

Mr KENNETT—We did not mention it—nor did you. We did not mention it because it was not on the agenda for discussion. We will see what will happen after it is changed, and you will bear the odium. The Treasurer is now getting down to personal vitriol because he knows the public is rejecting what is being done.

The Treasurer promised there would be no increases in taxes and charges above the consumer price index. He should go to Lilydale station and speak to people whose train fares have gone up from \$17 to \$19—again in excess of the consumer price index. I am pointing out that these increases above the consumer price index make a mockery of the Government's promises. Importantly, they are eroding the capacity of families to pay. The Treasurer does not care about those on low and middle income salaries and those who are disadvantaged. Whether it is third-party insurance, hospitals or transport, in each case the Government has broken its promises. Families do not have the capacity to pay.

Victorian wage and salary earners have no capacity to pay the massive increases that are being levied on them by this Government. It is totally irresponsible and against the Government's professed promises. Nor should the public have to pay. Why should the average family in the electorates of the honourable member for Springvale and the Treasurer have to pay those massive charges? They cannot pay them because their salaries and wages are not increasing at the same rate. Thus, their living standards are being eroded. This Treasurer is making every Victorian family and citizen pay a very high penalty for the Government's mismanagement.

Mr Micallef—Pie in the sky.

Mr KENNETT—The honourable member for Springvale knows it is hurting people—that is why he is silent now. You, Mr Deputy Speaker, know it. People in this State are

being taxed and charged in a way that they have never been before. The Premier and the Treasurer are guilty of gross deceit in their publicity and are certainly charged with having a disastrous economic management record.

Having clearly established that living standards are being eroded in just four indicators that are currently being imposed on Victorian families, the second area to which I refer in my motion is that the Victorian Government, by pursuing policies which have seriously eroded the living standards of Victorian families and individuals, has accumulated a record official debt that has burdened Victorians with crippling debt servicing costs, costs which are being passed on irresponsibly by the Treasurer to Victorian families and citizens and to future generations of Victorians.

If one takes away the normal erosion that follows from massive increases in taxes and charges, and combines it with the debt Victoria is facing, one finds an horrendous financial problem that is borne not by politicians but by the communities they are elected to serve. The Labor Party has turned its back on Labor voters and traditional Labor supporters.

Let us consider the public debt. As I said, Victoria has the largest public sector debt of any State in Australia. Victoria is leading Australia, as the Treasurer and Premier have said, but it is leading Australia in the worst and most irresponsible way. According to estimates by the Department of Management and Budget, the Treasurer's own department, the net debt of the Victorian public sector as at 30 June 1986 was \$19.3 billion. The net debt of the Victorian public sector has increased by 69 per cent or \$7.9 billion since the Labor Party first came to power in 1982.

The per capita net debt of the Victorian public sector as at 30 June 1986 was \$4639 for each Victorian. The estimated cost of servicing the Victorian public sector net debt was \$2.1 billion in 1985-86, or nearly \$500 for each Victorian. It should be noted that Victoria's public sector liabilities have yet to be quantified, although they are likely to exceed considerably the State's public debt. In other words, Victorians are paying \$2.1 billion a year because of the borrowings of the Treasurer over the past few years.

Let us look at the borrowings and deficit and the sale and lease-back of assets. Victoria is also leading the country by having the highest public sector borrowings of any State in Australia. The Federal Government has been claiming that it will have to pull in the reins on State Government expenditure and borrowings. The Premier makes no commitment, and the Treasurer makes no commitment; they are not concerned and they are not responsible. They will borrow as much as they can. Victoria's public sector borrowing limit for 1986-87 is \$3.1 billion. The total Budget for the year is \$10 billion. The Government is borrowing one-third of the total Budget for 1986-87 and, given that 60 per cent of the Budget is allocated to salaries and wages, I ask how Victoria will ever be able to repay the money borrowed or the interest on that \$3.1 billion, of which 60 per cent this year is for new borrowings as opposed to refinancing.

Surely, one of the ways of overcoming the economic problems in Victoria is to restrict new borrowings. Why does the Government engage in new borrowings? The Treasurer is quiet; he has no answers. The Federal Treasurer has every right to tell the Victorian Government to reduce its borrowings substantially. If the Treasurer has nothing to hide about the level of borrowings, and if he and the Premier continue irresponsibly to support having the highest levels of borrowings in 1986-87 of any Government in Australia, they should make available the details of the \$3.1 billion and tell the public from where they borrowed the money, at what interest rates and how the money has been applied.

If the Government has nothing to hide and the borrowing of that money is worthy of public support and Opposition support, the Government should come clean. However, I guarantee it will not do so. It will not tell the people of Victoria why it continues to borrow and why it continues to impose considerable costs on Victorians today and on future generations, at the same time eroding their living standards. The figure is \$3.1 billion this year alone, and the Treasurer and the Premier have made no commitment to reduce borrowings.

I call on the Treasurer and the Premier immediately to disclose the details of the \$3.1 billion that has been borrowed, such as where the money has come from, what the interest rate is and, importantly, how that money has been applied.

Mr Jolly—There is no such thing as interest rates; you should know that!

Mr KENNETT—If the Treasurer has nothing to hide, he should make it public. He is the person who promised open government, but we have never seen more closed government in years.

It is interesting but sad to note that public authority taxation has grown by 311 per cent, or \$342 million, under the Cain Government. Public authority charges grew considerably faster than Victoria's inflation rate in the first two years of the Cain Government but the growth rate has slowed significantly since then.

I predicted before the last Victorian State election that, if Labor Governments, both in Victoria and federally, did not change their economic policies, Australia would end up with a debt larger than that of Argentina. What happened? The boy Treasurer came out and accused and abused me, but the fact is that today our national debt far exceeds that of Argentina; and our State debt, if one adds together the on-Budget and off-Budget sector debt, is so close to Argentina's debt that it does not matter. In other words, ignoring the Australian situation, Victoria is heading down the road to ruin.

The people who will pay for it are the average citizens of this State who should not have the responsibility of picking up the bill for the failures of this Government. The hardship that people are feeling now will increase dramatically.

On another aspect of this debt, I shall make a small wager with you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that part of the borrowings will be irresponsibly used for recurrent expenditure to meet the cost of the day-to-day operations of this Government. I predict that part of these borrowings will be used to pay interest on borrowings already undertaken. No-one in business or in his own home would continue to borrow money to pay the interest on money already borrowed.

The Treasurer does not refute that claim, so it is obviously correct.

Mr Jolly interjected

Mr KENNETT—I ask the Treasurer to prove that he is not borrowing money to meet interest bills.

Mr Jolly interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Fogarty)—Order! The Treasurer has the right of reply at a future time.

Mr KENNETT—I challenge the Treasurer to prove me wrong; to prove that some of that \$3.1 billion of borrowings is not being used to refinance recurrent expenditure or to meet interest on existing debt. I suggest the Treasurer does that this week.

The Government is taxing public authorities which no longer have the capacity to pay and must therefore borrow to pay a dividend to the Government. That is nothing short of criminal because the Government is using the loan raising limits of these authorities to provide money for a Government which, if it were a private business, would have been in the hands of liquidators months ago. One needs only to consider the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands to realise that.

Fancy a statutory authority, which is not making sufficient profit, having to go on the open market and pay huge interest rates to borrow money to pay a Government dividend. It is quite absurd. This highlights the irresponsible management of the Government.

The third area to which I refer is that the Government, in pursuit of policies which are seriously eroding the living standards for Victorian families and individuals, has instituted and supported policies which have made Victoria the inflation State of Australia.

The Opposition has already established that Victoria has the biggest debt of any State. It has also clearly established that Victorians pay more tax than citizens in any other State. Let us now look at our inflation rate.

According to the latest figures—they are not Opposition figures; but again, figures from an independent body—Victoria had the highest inflation rate of any Australian State in 1986. Victoria registered a double digit inflation rate of 10·2 per cent in 1986. Victoria's accumulated inflation rate since Labor came to power in 1982 is 46 per cent.

There are three prime ingredients where the Government, through its action, has caused Victoria to become the biggest debt State, the biggest taxing State and the biggest inflation State. Why does Victoria have such a large inflation rate? It is partly because of the reasons I have already explained. Victorians pay more taxation than citizens in any other State and this leads to increased costs for goods and services produced or delivered within the State. That flows through to the consumer price index.

Victoria also borrows more than any other State. Victoria's interest rate obviously keeps the inflation rate high in terms of overseas assessment in Victoria and Australia. The same can be said for Victoria's debt charges.

One of the most important ingredients is the Government's policy of automatically indexing its taxes and charges. There is no way we will break the inflation cycle if the Government automatically and secretly indexes its taxes and charges in line with the consumer price index. Victoria has an inflation rate of 10·2 per cent and the Government will, in many cases, automatically increase charges to Victorians by 10·2 per cent. Victoria's inflation rate cannot come down; it can only go up.

How does the average citizen, whose wages or salary goes up by only \$10 or \$20 a year or by 2 per cent a year, cope with that continuing and creeping inflation rate? The answer is that the average citizen cannot cope. Therefore, Victorians are being heavily penalised by a Government that is caught in an inflation spiral and, by its own policies, intends to stay there. Such economic policies are totally unacceptable.

I now refer to the fourth area in which the Government's policies are eroding Victorians' living standards.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Fogarty)—Order! Before the Leader of the Opposition deals with the fourth aspect of his argument, will he advise whether he will be tabling any documents?

Mr KENNETT—Most of my notes are handwritten.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—Order! Will the Leader of the Opposition be tabling any documents in the future?

Mr KENNETT—I have a number of documents, but I am not asking for anything to be tabled.

Fourthly, the Government, in pursuit of policies that have seriously eroded the living standards for Victorian families and individuals, is imposing hidden taxes on gas, electricity, water and other State services. Again, I have referred in part to those hidden taxes and proved the Opposition's claim quite conclusively.

It does not matter whether one refers to the public authority dividend tax, increasing taxes and charges or the automatic indexation of taxes and charges in line with the consumer price index, one realises the Government is now transferring the burden of equitable taxation for people who are receiving genuine services to the electorate at large.

This applies right across the board and includes land tax. The other day the Premier glibly said that the Government had provided relief in respect of land tax. The total amount is \$70 000 in a year. Land tax collections are growing dramatically. Therefore, no relief has been provided and land tax is spreading.

We have now seen the Government introduce a new water tax which is nothing less than a greedy grab for money so that householders and families can contribute to the failures of the Treasurer and the economic policies of the Government.

As I indicated earlier, hidden taxes such as the public authority dividend tax ultimately have to be paid by the people of Victoria. The massive increases in fines imposed upon people who break the road speed laws have nothing to do with improving safety on our roads, but have everything to do with using policemen associated with patrolling the roads as taxing agents. The police do not like it; they do not want it. It does not build public confidence in those people whom we charge with enforcing State laws.

At the same time as the Government is collecting money from those sources, it is closing some police stations and reducing the services of others. Extra money is coming into Government resources but services to the public are being reduced.

It does not matter whether one talks about the role of police in 1987 or whether one believes in the old philosophy that one's home is one's castle, every person is being taxed, and taxed savagely, through hidden taxes and other State taxes, charges and levies.

I do not know of any citizen who is in receipt of bills from any Government department or State authority where the increase is less than the consumer price index increase. The average family has no chance of meeting these massive increases in State taxes and charges without an erosion of their living standards.

Perhaps the Treasurer does not believe people are bleeding and hurting. The Government has stuck the socialist knife into the underbelly of low and middle income earners, including those who are disadvantaged, the traditional supporters of the Australian Labor Party, and is now screwing that knife and drawing the lifeblood from the citizens and families of Victoria.

A massive change is going on in the electorate and people and families feel disillusioned, let down and hurt by this socialist Government. Unless the Government immediately changes its economic policies, it will not just leave office at the next election; it will be thrown out, and it will deserve to be thrown out.

My fourth point is that the Government by pursuing policies that have seriously eroded the living standards of Victorian families, individuals and the position of businesses, is substantially reducing essential services against the community interest. I ask the House to rely on the Government's own figures to see whether that is the case. Victorians know that the Government is borrowing more money. They know that the Government is taxing people more than ever before, but where is the money going? Is it going to maintain the efficient and effective services that are provided to the people of Victoria?

Mr Maclellan—Stuart Morris has done well!

Mr KENNETT—Yes, Stuart Morris has done well. Where has the money gone? Mr Deputy Speaker, have hospitals or pre-schools in your area been improved? Although the cost of the debt, taxes and charges have all gone up, services have been reduced.

I ask the House to examine some indicators. When the Minister for Transport was the Minister of Health after the 1982 election, he started his media campaign—using taxpayers' money—with large advertisements that said that the Labor Government had inherited one of the best health services and hospital systems in Australia. That is one of the few times that the Opposition has agreed with the Minister for Transport.

The public hospital waiting list has risen by 300 per cent! Who is hurting? It is not the honourable member for Eumemmerring Province in another place, who has been extremely

ill, because as a member of the Government he knows the public hospital waiting list is at a record level, so when he needed an emergency operation he went straight to a private hospital. Government members who are ill will not be put on the public hospital waiting list. If the honourable member in another place had waited, he may not have been alive today.

There are 34 000 low income earners, disadvantaged senior citizens and others who are in pain and suffering. Many of them are traditional Labor Party voters, who will never survive to have their operations. Why? It is not the fault of the Liberal Party because the Labor Party admitted that it had inherited the best public hospital system in Australia. However, the Government will now have to pay a massive price for having wrecked the system substantially.

Government members should visit public hospitals to speak with the staff trying to provide adequate care. Irrespective of whether hospitals are in metropolitan Melbourne or in country areas, Government members will be told that Labor Party economic policies have totally failed and that the social ramifications mean that 34 000 Victorians are awaiting public hospital care. The Government cannot deliver. What is the final analysis?

Mr Maclellan—It was Irene's fault.

Mr KENNETT—The Government will try to blame Irene; it will try to blame anyone. In the past the Government has been critical of the private hospital system yet, when its policies fail, it is prepared to utilise that system in an attempt to reduce the numbers on the public hospital waiting list. That sounds like privatisation to me!

From where will the Government get the money to finance the extra cost of private hospitals? Will the Government try to strike a deal with private hospitals? How many patients can it afford to admit to private hospitals on the public purse and whom will it select out of the 34 000 already on the list? Mr Deputy Speaker, will they be people from the electorate that you represent or that I represent? During the next four weeks the Premier and the Treasurer will scan the list and pick out the people who live in the Central Highlands Province! What a way to buy votes; by putting people who are awaiting public hospital care into private hospitals!

I shall turn now to the Government's so-called record in housing. The Minister for Housing recently stated that the reason the public housing waiting list is longer than it was when the Labor Party came to office is that more people want Government houses because they are better. What a load of poppycock! Can honourable members imagine anyone who had any resources wanting to be managed by the Ministry of Housing? I do not know of one such person.

Most people who are on the waiting list for housing wish to be independent of the Government and to own their own homes. The reason the public housing waiting list has doubled in five years is that the Government's policies have failed.

Mr Maclellan—That must have been Norm Gallagher's fault.

Mr KENNETT—Again, the Government will try to blame someone. The Government says that it cares about people but because of its economic mismanagement it has forced more people to apply for Government support.

Mr Maclellan—They are living in caravans.

Mr KENNETT—Yes, many are. The Government has forced these people into support networks which it has no money to fund. The 34 000 applications for public housing do not only represent individuals, they also represent families, single-parent families and, most importantly, children, most of whom will grow up in an environment in which they have no confidence in their future unless the Government changes its economic policies.

The Treasurer constantly refers to Victoria leading the economic recovery. The Opposition has proved that there is no economic recovery in Australia or in Victoria. The

social impact of the Government's policies are clearly illustrated in the health and housing areas.

What is the position with education? The Government says that it cares about people. However, members of the Government should travel around Victoria and try to discover a school that is satisfied with the curriculum that is being taught, with the quality of teaching or, outside the metropolitan area, where teachers are encouraged to attend. The Government has introduced a policy of getting rid of teacher housing in rural Victoria.

What about the children of low and middle income earners or disadvantaged families from rural Victoria who wish to come to Melbourne to attend a tertiary college? There is no way for that to occur because the Government has done away with all the hostels that previously were available to these children.

The honourable member for Morwell would be aware of that because she has received complaints from her constituents about the lack of access to hostel accommodation for country Victorians.

It does not matter what issue I raise in the debate today. I know that in the hearts of members of the Government they also believe what I am saying is true. They are aware that the disadvantaged and poorer families are being ripped off.

I have referred to higher taxation, larger debts and greater debt servicing and, of course, the fact that Victoria has the highest inflation rate in Australia. I have referred to the reduction in services for health, housing and education.

What is the position with libraries? The Government had some marvellous policies about libraries when it came to office, particularly for those who cannot afford books. The old and the disadvantaged previously had access to the comprehensive library service that the Liberal Party handed over to the Government in 1982.

What has the Government done? It has withdrawn support and funds for libraries. The Government is making it more difficult for people to educate themselves or to gain pleasure from the written word. The Government is trying to tax knowledge by reducing operating hours or closing libraries down altogether. In other words, people are having a fundamental and basic service withdrawn, but the Treasurer just scoffs. I do not know where the pluses are in his administration.

Mr Jolly interjected.

Mr KENNETT—The Treasurer might not have that opportunity. It is obvious that the social impact of the Government's policies are being keenly and deeply felt by all Victorians.

I now turn to another area that is on the minds of all Victorians: their own safety and the security of their property. The Government has procrastinated in giving to the Police Force the power and wherewithal to look after our homes and families. Out on the streets today there is an increasing fear felt by citizens about their personal safety, the safety of their children and the safety of senior citizens and the security of their property.

Although Victorians are paying higher taxes to the Government, not much is getting through to the Police Force. I shall refer the House to the Burwood electorate and the surrounding area covered by the East Yarra Province. There are five police stations in my electorate and all of them are being closed or downgraded. I repeat: every police station in my electorate is either being closed or downgraded. What is the sense in that when the greatest measure a Government can undertake to prevent crime is to ensure that a police presence is eminent? The Government is attempting totally to withdraw that presence and it stands condemned for that.

I could go on outlining other services that are being withdrawn, but I shall mention only one more—transport. As honourable members know, I keenly participate in every by-election campaign and, over the past few mornings, I have visited many railway stations. This morning, I was at Craigieburn railway station, which was the third station built in

Victoria. It is a lovely, antiquated little station which has in charge of it a young stationmaster who is efficient, effective and obviously does his job to the best of his ability.

Basically, only three trains go through that growing area. The first train this morning arrived at 6.35 and it had only one carriage. V/Line sent buses along to the station because it realised that not everyone would fit on the train. The single carriage was full and people were standing. Some people had come from as far as Seymour. It is not a short distance from Seymour to the city, but the policy of this Government is, "Stand up or walk". The people who could not fit on the train got on the buses.

The second train came approximately 20 minutes later and it had three carriages. The rolling-stock was approximately 60 years old. Again, people had to stand. The circumstances were similar when the third train arrived. The decline in services is totally unacceptable. The debt of V/Line exceeds \$1800 every minute, but the system does not provide the comfort and reliability one expects.

Recently, the Government increased the rental for people occupying V/Line housing, as it has done with other housing stock. The Government does not recognise the fact that housing must be provided to attract people to those stations, especially in rural Victoria. Massive increases have been incurred by the people renting V/Line accommodation, but their wages have not increased.

I have clearly made the point that the Government is reducing essential services against community interests. I challenge the Treasurer to indicate what he is on about when he refers to services that have improved.

The motion also refers to the Government discriminating against people and industries in country Victoria. That has been going on for the past five years, but there is no better evidence of it than the irresponsible and political speech written by the Government for delivery by the Governor. On the first page, the Government spelt out that it had inherited the baggage of previous years when the community believed it could live off the sheep's back or from the mining industry. The Government referred to the 40 per cent of Victorians who elect to live outside the metropolitan area as baggage. It is obvious that the Speech was not proof read before it was delivered.

After having abused rural Victorians in the most offensive way, the Government went on to say, "Although you are baggage, we still recognise that you are responsible for the biggest proportion of the State's export earnings".

Incredible discrimination between metropolitan and rural Victoria has been in place ever since the Labor Party came to office in 1982. As it desperately tries to hang on to office, the discrimination grows, and I shall provide a few examples.

The Government now imposes third-party insurance premiums on farm-fire vehicles that are used seasonally and are generally used off the road. Those premiums have jumped not by the rate of the consumer price index but by 500 per cent. The Opposition knows of one case where the premium increased from \$32 to \$150. That is a tax on some citizens in the community who are facing devastation due to the Government's current on-cost policies.

There is no justification in the short term for that type of treatment with no real relief promised. Again, the Government's promises are worthless. The policy is irresponsible and dangerous in the long term if the increase in premiums results in a reduction in the number of farmers taking responsibility for maintaining their own fire vehicles.

What happens when a major fire occurs and farmers can no longer afford to keep their machinery to protect the community? Will the Government provide the services? Of course not; it cannot and it will not! The community must rely on the goodwill of the Country Fire Authority and the thousands of farmers in this State to provide fire equipment at their own cost. However, what has the Government done? It has spotted this as another area that it can tax so it has increased premiums by up to 500 per cent.

The Government has made a mockery of the offer to negotiate with the Victorian Farmers Federation on freight rates for the 1986-87 season by determining the rate before the federation had been fully consulted. What an arrogant Government to promise consultation then set the rate before consultation is finalised! Approximately 30 per cent of the costs of wheat farmers are taken up by either V/Line or Grain Elevators Board costs. Is that fair? Of course it is not, and the Treasurer knows it!

I shall now refer to the Lloyd report, which was to provide the Government with hard economic data and details of specific action, a bit like the social justice policy, I suspect. However, almost two years after the report was announced, and six months after the report was presented, the Government has still not made any moves to take specific action. What humbug is the Treasurer going on about when he claims to care about rural Victoria?

The Government discriminates against rural Victorians in the education area. Hostels for country post-secondary students have been closed, and that has restricted opportunities for country students and acted as a disincentive for them to continue on at school at a time when so much emphasis is placed on encouraging people to pursue further education.

Teacher residences are being sold, making it more difficult for schools to adequately staff the specialist areas, such as maths, science and keyboard studies. Teachers have resigned because of the housing problem. The Minister for Education is outside the door of the Chamber and he is nodding his head in approval. He knows resignations of teachers have taken place. The Minister is now laughing—he thinks it is a joke! That is typical of the Government. It discriminates against people who choose to live outside the metropolitan area. Not only does the Minister agree with the discrimination, but he also laughs about it!

The elimination of the students' conveyance allowance has created enormous difficulties for country students who already must travel a long way to get to school. Despite that, just because there is a by-election next month, the Government has announced new bus services to provide better facilities for metropolitan school students. It is only a promise—the Treasurer does not have \$8 let alone \$8 million.

The neighbourhood schools scheme affects country students whose choice is already limited. Students must attend the closest school and cannot choose between high and technical schools. Again, that is certainly discrimination.

Subject consultant funding has been cut by 40 per cent, and that has more dramatic effects on education in the country than in the city because of the more limited resources available for teachers in country areas. The Correspondence School has been moved to Brunswick. Attendance at seminars in Melbourne has been made a requirement of attending the school, making the problem doubly difficult because it creates unnecessary transport difficulties.

Let us examine the general flow-on in the economic area. The transfer of personnel in areas such as police, soil conservation, water resources and park rangers from smaller towns to regional centres has a destabilising effect on small town economies by impinging on school enrolments and the supply of fixed income money in a community pool.

This Government does not understand that small communities are beautiful. Big communities are not always better. Every time someone moves from a small community, part of the economic base is removed, as is part of the community spirit of that community. Nevertheless, the Government moves these people.

During the debate on the Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech, my colleague, the honourable member for Evelyn, pointed out in a well articulated manner the difficulties within the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands.

In the past two weeks I have visited Orbost and the northern part of the electorate and I have also talked to officers of that department in metropolitan Melbourne. The

management of that department is an abject disgrace. Tractors and other equipment are up on blocks because the department cannot afford the petrol to run them.

Some departmental staff are literally crying because they cannot work as they do not have the necessary equipment. The clearing of our forests and the maintenance of firebreaks have been neglected.

If a fire occurred today, the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands would not have any impact on restricting that fire; therefore, by not being able to do its job, it would endanger the lives of many Victorians.

Most traders will not deal with the department except on a cash-on-delivery basis. Whether the goods be petrol, tree stumps, wire or paint, nobody will trade with the department because its bills are so long overdue.

Only about two weeks ago, the staff of the department went on strike. What an outrageous position exists! This affects not only country Victoria and rural families but also metropolitan people who genuinely care about our resources. The genuine conservationists and environmentalists are equally perturbed about the Government's failure in this area.

I shall now talk about transport to prove the Government's social discrimination against rural Victoria. It has demanded 100 per cent cost recovery for grain freight while tolerating only 50 per cent cost recovery for metropolitan passenger services. Why should one group of citizens be treated differently from another? If the Government asks for 100 per cent recovery from country areas, it should also seek 100 per cent recovery from metropolitan people. However, I guarantee that it will not do that because its electoral base is in the metropolitan area. It is not prepared to treat all Victorians equally.

We are all responsible for paying taxes. We will all have to pay for the growth in debt and bear the social discrimination that comes about from increased inflation. Therefore, if we all pay the same social cost, we should all expect to be treated equally in the services the Government provides and the charges it makes. However, the Government does not treat everyone equally. It treats differently those outside the metropolitan area compared with those within it. People should be treated equally across the board.

The Government, which is against rural Victoria, has been dismantling decentralisation incentives—and generally those for country industries. Only one or two industries have received assistance. Some have received \$1 million or \$2 million, but, when one examines the situation one finds that, invariably, the biggest industries are receiving that assistance: if it is a big industry with ample access to resources and finance, this Government will provide \$1 million or \$2 million; if it is a small business in decentralised Victoria or a farmer who requires assistance, the Government is not interested in hearing about it.

What about the reduction in staffing of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs while city departments are fattening? Much has been heard about the Government's so-called concern for rural communities and particularly for country industry. The Government set up the Office of Rural Affairs, which has to be described as a wank in anyone's terminology. It is a department that one has when one has no compassion and, therefore, one sets up a new bureaucracy.

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs does provide most of our agricultural revenue. It is an extremely important component of our economic matrix, particularly in terms of employment opportunities. However, the Government has substantially reduced extension services and research into the development of new agricultural products. As a result, there is a very clear area of Government discrimination, although the growth in city departments has been quite extreme.

Another economic indicator which the Treasurer has not mentioned is that Victoria is leading Australia in the number of public sector employees appointed over the past three years. Some 20 000 additional people have been employed, which is more than in any other State.

Has the Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs been able to maintain its staffing levels? No; the staffing levels in that department have declined substantially. Where have all the additional staff gone? They have gone into the departments, into deals with the Hospital Employees Federation of Australia and a whole range of non-productive and quite destructive areas.

The regionalisation of hospital services will mean the closure of some country hospitals and the reduction of other services in other parts of Victoria. Again, it is the Government's mentality that there should be a central bureaucracy, that there is a need to employ more people and, therefore, there should be regionalisation; so it has set up regional health administrations; it has set up two lots of bureaucracies both competing and reducing the pool of money available to provide the basic health care required by the community. As a result, the allocation of funds to hospitals in rural Victoria is being made in such a way as to ensure that metropolitan losses are reduced.

I shall give an example. I may be wrong, but the honourable members for Portland and Warrnambool can assist me. The Government is rearranging its financing this year to reduce or reallocate funding to rural hospitals to the tune of about \$9 million. Two hospitals will receive increased services.

An additional \$2 million or so will be spent on the Portland and District Hospital. That will not in any way meet the needs of the people of Portland, given the massive investment that has occurred there. The allocation to the Geelong Hospital will be increased quite substantially because it is a growing provincial area; but Geelong is one of the major sites of regionalisation of this new bureaucracy being put into place by the Labor Government.

However, the Warrnambool and District Base Hospital will lose about \$3 million; the Hamilton Base Hospital will lose about \$3 million, and the Shepparton hospital will lose about \$900 000.

Mr Micallef—Where do you suggest the money should come from?

Mr KENNETT—I am not suggesting more money should be made available but that the Government should examine its own policies, which have led to massive increases in staffing but a reduction in services. Hospitals in rural Victoria will have to pay a very high price for this Government's policy, which has been managed in a totally unfair manner.

Some hospitals receive more but others have had their funding reduced and it will lead to closures.

Another area of discrimination in rural Victoria is the roads. They provide a classic example of bad misadministration. The priorities for road funding have been substantially reduced and municipalities are receiving notification of the allocations later and later in each financial year so that they cannot plan properly and then they are actually receiving the cash later again.

Therefore, in some cases, many rural communities and municipalities cannot spend their money; not because they have no need for it but because they are not given enough planning time to do it properly.

At the end of the last financial year the Government telephoned some municipalities and said, "We have found out that you have not spent your money. Can you spend \$200 000 in four weeks?" That is not good management!

One needs only to drive around and look at Victoria's roads to see that they are deteriorating; they are not being maintained and, therefore, the cost of repairing and upgrading them in years to come will be substantially higher. If one drives around the metropolitan area, one sees that the crowns on many roads are breaking and the roads are deteriorating into potholes. In the country, roads are deteriorating before one's very eyes and the Government does not care.

Those fairly limited examples clearly demonstrate that the Government's policies are discriminatory against people in industries in country Victoria and because they are discriminatory, the living standard of these people is reduced.

What a litany of failure and a record of shame the Government has created through its own activities! In both rural and metropolitan Victoria, people are bleeding because the Premier and Treasurer simply do not care; they just go on screwing that socialist knife into the belly of every Victorian and drawing out the lifeblood of our citizens.

Apart from Labor's blind commitment to socialism, I happen to believe there is one other reason for the Government pursuing the economic policies it has. This reason lies with the ability of the Treasurer to be Treasurer. He has never run a business; he has never had to make a profit; he has never had to employ people; to occupy his time filling out forms to comply with Government regulations; or to deal with the imposts of regulation and legislation. He has never been involved in private business.

If he has not been any of these things, what has he been? This is one of the major elements of the massive problems today. The Treasurer has been an Australian Council of Trade Unions advocate and what do advocates do, particularly those in the trade union movement? They go before a conciliation and arbitration commission or they go out to employers and either demand or ask for more and more resources from the creators of wealth, regardless of the ability of those people to produce the wealth.

Therefore, in Government, the very young, keen advocate for the Australian Council of Trade Unions all of a sudden is handed the responsibility of being Treasurer of a State where he can get his greedy little fingers on the community's money and, having the mentality of demanding more and more, he translates that, when in government, into giving people more and more, regardless of any accountability to the people of Victoria and regardless of any commitment to Victoria's long-term development.

His friends have done exceptionally well. We all remember, after the Labor Party came to office, the big deal it struck with the teachers to buy back the I.O.U. it had organised before the 1982 election. It cost hundreds of millions of dollars.

We all remember the deal it did with the Hospital Employees Federation to try to buy industrial peace in the health area. Again, the friends of those for whom the Treasurer had been advocating before he came to Parliament were the major beneficiaries, and still are.

The Government has politicised the Public Service more than any other Government in Australia has. It is now commonly recognised that Victoria has the most politicised administration in the Australian public sector and friends of the Treasurer have benefited. If one gets a Lord Mayor into trouble, and he has no qualifications, what does one do with him? One gives him a job in the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands. People are asking why that department is being so mismanaged. It is because the Treasurer, who was always demanding when he was an advocate is now giving, and he is ensuring that those who demanded before have access to the resources of the community.

I hope that you, Mr Deputy Speaker, will be able to follow this thought through because I know that the Treasurer will not: because he has borrowed so much money and because we are paying for it in more interest every year——

Mr Jolly interjected.

Mr KENNETT—The Treasurer's Waterloo is coming. He will go down in history as the most irresponsible Treasurer.

Mr Jolly—You don't have the leadership numbers!

Mr KENNETT—I am still here!

Mr Jolly—Not for long!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Fogarty)—Order! The Leader of the Opposition will speak through the Chair and not across the table.

Mr KENNETT—I will be here a lot longer than you because you will meet your Waterloo.

The people of Victoria are seeing through the misinformation being put around by the Government and they are looking for electoral change. I wonder how the Treasurer will feel when he is sitting on this side of the House and the Opposition, which will then be the Government, reports to the people of Victoria the information that the Treasurer will not give now because he is too scared to do so.

Mr Jolly—No I am not!

Mr KENNETT—If that is the case and because the Treasurer has borrowed so much, he should supply the House with the borrowing figures.

We are paying more in interest, as a community, every year and the amount is now in excess of \$2 billion a year. How does the advocate Treasurer pay the interest on the money he borrows? There are only two ways to do it: by raising taxes and charges, which is what he is doing—above the Consumer Price Index—or by borrowing more money, and he has also been doing that.

Therefore, having borrowed in the first place and got into debt, the Treasurer now finds himself, on day “X” saying “I have big interest bills here”. He puts his hands into the coffers, finds there is no money, and so taxes the people of Victoria more or borrows more money not only to meet his recurrent expenditures but to meet his existing interest bills.

There is no doubt that the people of Victoria will see a massive deterioration in their living standards over the next two years if the Government continues to increase taxes and charges or borrowings. Such a course would be totally irresponsible.

I look forward to the day, after the next election, when the Opposition returns to government because the present Treasurer will not dare to come into the House because of his lack of qualifications and his appalling management record.

The cycle goes on and on—more expenditure, more public servants and more special deals with the union movement. It was all advocated by the Treasurer before he came to Parliament. Now that he is in Parliament, he is the greatest giver of all time and the citizens of the State are paying for it.

Worse than you and I paying is the fact that our children and grandchildren will have to pay. We will pay very dearly indeed, not only now but also in the future because as this cost increases opportunities will decline substantially. The public wants a change of Government. There is no doubt about that and the Government will get a very clear message throughout the Central Highlands Province on 21 March.

The public wants good and responsible managers back on the Government benches. Victorians have been disillusioned, let down and deliberately misled by the Government as to the State's true economic position. They no longer trust this Government. The people of Victoria deserve better. They are well educated. As I said before, they are starting to understand what socialism is really all about. What they are looking for is not a Government that comes along and makes a whole range of promises just to buy votes and, before a by-election, suddenly announces an \$8 million expenditure on public transport.

They do not want a Government that, as a result of a by-election, sends letters and makes telephone calls to country fire brigades and municipal officers saying, “Please, we have a by-election, have you anything to open within the next two weeks because the Premier will be happy to open it?” One municipal officer responded to that request from the Premier's department and said, “You have cut back our funding so much that we have nothing to open; we are not building anything.” The person at the department was so upset that he went away and then telephoned the municipal officer back and said, “Look,

I understood your response, but you cannot be serious—have you anything the Premier can open—we desperately want him to open something in your municipality?” He said, “No”.

Has there ever been such grovelling? It is so much so that the Premier has had to use his own personnel to telephone the fire brigades, police stations, railway stations and municipalities, to say “Please, we are in diabolical trouble, let us do something, let us open something.” The best the Government can offer is the Minister for Transport’s latest promises. This is the man who destroyed the best health system in Australia! He is now going out making promises that the public knows will not be kept. It is an absolute joke.

The public wants honest politicians—they are on the Opposition side of the House. We do not have to spend \$26 million a year of public money on deliberately misleading advertisements. That is what this Government is doing—it is dishonest advertising.

I refer to one instance: the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works has just introduced a new water tax which will hit all citizens in this State. It will erode family living standards. The Board has seen fit to run a series of advertisements at great cost to you and me on a new industrial treatment plant. Thousands of dollars are being spent on advertising. At the bottom right-hand corner of the full page advertisements is a small coupon which states, “If you want more information ring this number”. I was absolutely stunned when I saw the advertisement because, from the way it was written, it seemed as though we had a treatment plant.

I telephoned the number and said that I wanted more information. I asked, “Where is the plant?” The person to whom I spoke said, “We have not made a decision on where it is to go.” I said, “I beg your pardon?” and he said, “No, the Government has not made a decision.” I said, “When will you make that decision?” and the reply was, “We hope to do it before Christmas.” I asked, “Am I right, has a decision not been made on where the site will be?” and he said, “Yes”.

I said, “That is misleading advertising. The Minister for Consumer Affairs is always talking about misleading advertising. He should surely raise this matter in Parliament. I feel it is misleading”. The officer said, “Yes, I think it is misleading, but I have been instructed to respond in this way by the Government”. I then said, “All right, you have no site, can you tell me when it will be built?” He said, “Oh, well, the Government hopes to have it built by the year 1990.”

At the same time as the Government is destroying the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands and imposing taxes on citizens, including a new water tax, a Government instrumentality is running a campaign that is dishonest and absolutely wasteful to try to shore up support for this failing Government.

Since Christmas the Government, of which you, Mr Acting Speaker are a part but about which you have very serious reservations at times, has spent more than \$2 million in self promotion. That \$2 million is exactly the same amount of money that the Government intends to withdraw from library funding next year. This self promotion is conducted in a misleading and dishonest way by a Government that at the same time intends to withdraw from people access to knowledge! What hypocrisy! People in Victoria want honest politicians who will not mislead, who will not waste their money and who will run this Government responsibly and efficiently.

For the last election campaign the Liberal Party developed 37 different policies. All were well costed, all totally in line with our philosophy, and all have now been accepted generally by the community at large. Most of them have been accepted by and included in the political agenda of other Labor Governments as well as other Liberal Parties throughout Australia.

I refer to the reduction in size of Government and Government structure, to policies that looked at utilisation of resources and perhaps putting into the private sector some of the functions now being done by Government. This Government has just done that with

health. The policies we advocate are right and good for the people of Victoria. They have one fundamental ambition—that is, to make Victoria the low-tax State of Australia. The people of this State deserve to be able to retain more of the income they earn and to spend it as they see fit rather than the Government taking it from them.

We recognise that this objective cannot be achieved unless some fundamental changes are made. Therefore, the Opposition has set priorities to achieve that goal. Until this area is addressed first, the people of Victoria will continue to be taxed and taxed and taxed. We intend not only to put up these priorities as part of our economic policy, but also to act upon them as soon as the Liberal Party wins government.

I reiterate that this Government's policies are hurting the community. We cannot continue to tolerate a situation in this State where the priorities of Government engender such hurt and cost to the people of Victoria. I shall mention the areas the Liberal Party will address. The first objective is to reduce—and I emphasise the word “reduce”—the level of Government borrowing and the resultant repayments. Unless a Government is committed to reducing the level of borrowings then, of course, there is no way in which genuine relief can be provided to the people of Victoria. Secondly, we will reduce Government expenditure. We will do that very easily across the board in areas that do not affect services.

Thirdly, the Liberal Party will put an end to the automatic indexation of Government taxes and charges. When I was talking about the inflation rate and the way in which it is impacting on the living standards of Victorians, I said one of the key factors was automatic indexation of taxes and charges. An honest government is prepared to be accountable to the people every time it increases taxes and charges, but the Victorian Government is neither honest nor accountable.

My party proposes to put an end to automatic indexation. It will do so the moment it gets into government. I challenge the Treasurer immediately to put an end to automatic indexation. The Government is maintaining the inflation spiral. It is maintaining a policy that will ensure that the inflation rate remains high and further impacts on the Victorian community.

When I say my party will stop automatic indexation, I mean that as a Government my party will ensure that every tax or charge increase will be by an Act of Parliament without there being an automatic flow-on without any accountability.

The fourth objective my party will work towards achieving is to reduce the quantity of State legislation and regulations. Some time ago in another place my colleague, the Honourable Alan Hunt, introduced legislation that sought to bring about deregulation. The Government took that on board, and the Opposition was happy that the Government had made a start in this area. The Opposition intends to extend that process considerably to provide relief for families and businesses by removing the amount of legislation and regulations on the statute book. This will make people freer to do with their lives as they see fit.

Before the last election my party had a policy, which was once again an Australian-first, that will be implemented when my party goes into government. It is a policy that will demand, by legislation, that every statutory authority and Government department reduces by 10 per cent a year the paper used. That will reduce the administrative burden and the cost to families and businesses. I have never been aware of such a massive paper war as that which confronts Victoria at present. There has never been so much paper used, yet the Government claims it believes in conservation of resources. It has been responsible for a significant destruction of Victorian forests in allowing the massive increase in the use of paper. It is totally unacceptable to the community at large.

Mr Fordham interjected.

Mr KENNETT—Will the Minister move an extension of time to allow me to continue? He will take note of what the public thinks on 21 March.

The fifth area to which my party will give attention in order to provide genuine relief to the Victorian people is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government itself. Government at the moment is too big; its costs are too large and its functions are too many. Victoria has developed a massive bureaucracy, which is now crippling growth and development.

I heard the Premier on a radio broadcast today mention one of the most amazing figures I have heard. I have already indicated that Victorian public sector employment has grown by 27 000 over the past three years. The Premier has argued that most of that growth has been in the private sector. The Premier did not indicate that, of all new public sector appointments in Australia in the past three years, including both Federal Government and State Governments, 50 per cent have been made in the State of Victoria. Victoria has appointed as many new public servants as all the other Governments in Australia combined.

Mr Fordham interjected.

Mr KENNETT—They are comparable, and the Minister knows it. I have never known such growth in the public sector as that which is occurring in Victoria now. Victoria is leading Australia in this respect, and it is unacceptable.

The other area my party will address is the reduction, where applicable, of functions of government that can be better and more efficient in the delivery of services. It may be through the private sector, or it may be through the voluntary sector, but it will occur only where the service is necessary and where it can be delivered more efficiently and effectively. Since the Government came to office it has been taking more responsibility, more services and more functions under its wing.

For instance, in the health area the Government has taken on laundry services. It is less efficient and more costly to do so, as the private sector could provide the service more cheaply and more efficiently. The reason the Government has done that is to ensure employment for members of the Hospital Employees Federation of Australia; it was a sop to the union movement.

Finally, the Liberal Party will immediately stop providing grants to minority groups which, for the past five years, have been solely politically motivated. I shall give two examples. The first example concerns the honourable member for Richmond. I shall not say his name or speak too loudly because I may awaken him. He was able to use his special ties with the Government of the day to get \$166 000 for his pet project. What an abject waste of the community's money!

There have been many groups of that kind. The Labor Government has become associated with all the fringe groups that want to destroy family life—groups such as lesbian clowns in the Latrobe Valley. If one wants money, one approaches the advocate Treasurer because he will give one money, especially if one represents a homosexual group—one has only to show oneself to him.

Good organisations, such as the Scout Association of Australia and the Girl Guides Association of Victoria, which have made worthwhile contributions to the Australian fabric of life, were criticised in an illustration used by the Minister for Labour, who said that it is obvious that support for those organisations had declined and that those groups no longer cater for the needs of the community. What he did not say was that the Government has abolished any assistance to those organisations or may have reduced assistance to only \$5000. I am not sure which is the case. How can the Government justify giving \$166 000 to the honourable member for Richmond and his little group or \$176 000 to homosexual groups, when it will not give any support to the boy scouts or the girl guides?

Mr Walsh interjected.

Mr KENNETT—If the State were bankrupt, how would it pay the homosexual groups—the former Liberal Government did not give them the money you are giving them!

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member will address the Chair.

Mr KENNETT—I ask the Minister responsible for youth affairs: If the State is bankrupt and can no longer give anything to the boy scouts, or only \$5000, why is it that it has suddenly found \$166 000 for a Greek cooperative, \$176 000 for homosexual groups or \$86 000 for a group of lesbian clowns? The State must be bankrupt! I shall tell the Minister where the money is coming from; it is coming from borrowings. The Government has probably borrowed money to promote the interests of homosexuality.

In those areas, I have clearly outlined the way in which the Liberal Party in opposition—and in government after the next election—will reorder the priorities of this society to create genuine tax relief.

Our motivations are twofold: concern for the family and concern for business. Our policy development and our new economic priorities are vastly different from those of our political opponents. We will ensure that we create an environment in this State in which families can be more secure and more confident. We will reduce the numbers of those who are currently in the social welfare net. That will not be easy to achieve. However, we have been responsible in opposition, and we have made only three taxation promises that are binding on us in opposition and will be acted on when we are in government.

Other promises may be made at a later stage but no others are authorised at this stage. The Liberal Party has promised to abolish land tax on the principal private residence: that will cost \$20 million to \$25 million to implement. Our second promise is to abolish the tax imposed by the Government on the Grain Elevators Board, at a cost of \$4 million. Our third promise is to restore to the Victorian High School Principals Association the \$100 000 that the Victorian Government has taken away from that organisation but which is necessary for principals to do their work in the interests of the community at large.

Those are the only three promises that have been made by the Liberal Party. Any commitments we give in the future will go through the process of being approved by the Liberal Party shadow Cabinet and by the party room. That approval is necessary because, if we are to restore living standards to the people of Victoria, we will need to have responsible policies. We will ensure that we do not do what this Government is doing leading up to the Central Highlands Province by-election, simply going out to win votes.

Mr Speaker, I know that your electorate and mine are made up of people who are a lot better educated than ever before. Those people do not believe politicians—especially Labor politicians—who offer goods simply to ensure they get back some political value. The people in our electorates know that their living standard has been eroded. That is why the people of Victoria look to the Liberal Party to be responsible with development of policy and the offers that are made to the people.

We have a concern about an ever-increasing number of Victorians who are finding it more difficult to survive, independent of the Government. They are not all Liberal voters; some support the National Party; one or two support the Australian Democrats, and of course, some support the Government. People throughout Victoria are hurting. They are disillusioned and they do not know how they will manage through this year, let alone next year.

On top of the normal taxes and charges, they are all subject to massive increases in housing interest rates. Interest rates are conditioned on the Federal Government's failed economic policy. The Federal Government has given money to the banks to buy low interest rates until the end of this month or early next month. When that period runs out, new negotiations must take place. Either the Federal Government will give X million dollars as a bribe to avoid an electoral backlash or the marketplace will take its own course. If that happens, the reduction in living standards that I referred to will occur, and the pain of so many families will be dramatically increased. People will be pushed out of their own independence, possibly out of their own homes onto a Government waiting list.

Whether it likes it or not, the Victorian Government is just as responsible for anything that happens to interest rates as is the Federal Government because the Victorian Government, by having the biggest debt of any State in the Commonwealth, by having the highest inflation rate and by charging Victorians more in charges than any other citizens in Australia, is leading the nation in destroying the opportunities of its citizens.

The threat of higher interest rates for housing is absolutely unacceptable. As we go through the next four weeks of our representation to the Victorian community, one of the areas on which we shall concentrate is the housing interest rate area.

I notice that the honourable member for Wantirna has returned to the Chamber. She played a major role in establishing a housing interest rate group during the past two State elections. That group highlighted the problems that are caused to families by escalating interest rates. The honourable member for Wantirna has been extremely silent over the past few years.

Mrs Hirsh—You have not been listening!

Mr KENNETT—She has probably been silent because a lot of people do not know where the funds contributed to that organisation went and because she knows that, if interest rates move higher—and they are already unacceptably high—she will lose her seat, as will other Government members both in Victoria and around Australia.

The high interest rates that people are paying today and will pay in the future are not the responsibility of previous Liberal Governments. That situation has been generated by this Government that has moved Victoria from a responsible economic management State to an irresponsible economic management State with the highest debt, the highest taxes and the highest inflation rate in Australia.

It is amusing that any time the Government receives any publicity, it never refers to the three major indicators that condition the lives and environment of the citizens of this State.

Mr Jolly—What about the lowest unemployment rate?

Mr KENNETT—The Treasurer is sounding off like the boy advocate that he is. He is always talking about Victoria having the lowest unemployment rate. It is true that Victoria has a low unemployment rate. That is because of the industrial base that was formed by the Liberal Government during its 27 years in office.

What the Treasurer has not talked about is that, since his party came into office, the unemployment rate has risen one whole percentage point, from 6.1 per cent to 7.1 per cent. In other words, there are now more unemployed people in Victoria than ever before. I did not intend to refer to that angle but, as the Treasurer has brought up the matter, I shall give the House some figures on unemployment.

I shall speak specifically about youth unemployment. Victoria's youth unemployment grew by 4900 persons in 1986. That is, thirteen young people each day have joined the unemployment list in Victoria. The Treasurer comes here and says, "We are proud of that; we are proud more young people are being unemployed".

The Victorian youth unemployment rate in December 1986 was a massive 20.9 per cent. That means that one in five young Victorians between the ages of fifteen and nineteen are unemployed. The Treasurer is proud of that!

In rural Victoria, around Bendigo and Ballarat, one would find that the unemployment rate of fifteen-to-nineteen-year olds is closer to 50 per cent. The Treasurer is proud of that!

The most significant trends in youth unemployment in Victoria since the Labor Party came to power show that, since 1982, there has been a 123 per cent growth in teenagers looking for part-time work and 10 000 full-time jobs for young Victorians have been lost.

The Treasurer may argue that Victoria has the lowest rate of unemployment. What he does not tell people is that more people are now unemployed in Victoria than ever before. The people who are bearing the brunt of that are the young people, the producers of tomorrow who will increasingly depend on the Government unless they can be given independence and hope.

The policies of the Labor Government are creating social instability and social insecurity. Those policies are destroying the living standards of so many families—not just of the parents or their children but also of their grandchildren. Can one have any confidence that one's grandchildren will obtain work when they grow up? One cannot, on these figures.

Who is responsible? The advocate Treasurer is.

In accordance with Sessional Orders, the debate was interrupted.

The SPEAKER—Order! The time appointed under Sessional Orders for Government Business to take precedence has now arrived. I shall resume the chair at 2 p.m.

The sitting was suspended at 1 p.m. until 2.5 p.m.

VICTORIA GRANTS COMMISSION (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr SIMMONDS (Minister for Local Government)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The main purpose of the Bill is to make provision in relation to the allocation of general revenue funds to municipalities as a consequence of the changes to the Commonwealth legislation which provides the funding for the allocations.

The allocation of general revenue grants from Federal to local government up to 1985–86 has been undertaken through the Commonwealth Local Government (Personal Income Tax Sharing) Act 1976. This legislation has been complemented by the Victoria Grants Commission Act 1976, which establishes the Victoria Grants Commission.

A primary function of the commission is to determine the amount of general revenue grants to be allocated to each municipality in the State for the ensuing local government financial year.

As a consequence of the national inquiry into local government finance, the Commonwealth has repealed the Local Government (Personal Income Tax Sharing) Act 1976 and replaced it with the Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1986. This Act makes major changes to the basis for determining the amount of funds available for local government.

For the years 1986–88, the actual payment will be a base level figure multiplied by the increase in the consumer price index or by the percentage change in Commonwealth general purpose payments to the States, whichever is the greater.

For subsequent years, payment calculations will be based on the percentage change in Commonwealth general purpose payments to the States.

A further significant change is that the interstate distribution will be adjusted each year to 1989. For 1989 and onwards the distribution between States will be on a population basis. Victoria will benefit significantly from this change.

The Commonwealth Act also includes some amendments that affect the operation of the various State grants commissions. In particular, each State will be required to formulate principles to be used by its grants commission for the purposes of allocating amounts payable to the State. The principles, which have to be consistent with the Commonwealth legislation, have to be made available to the Commonwealth before 1 July 1987.

The new Commonwealth legislation, in so far as it relates to the operations of the State grants commissions, will have little immediate effect for Victoria. The membership of the

Victoria Grants Commission already conforms with the new requirements and the commission has been including details of the methodology used in the allocations process in its annual report each year.

The main amendments proposed in the Bill to bring the Victoria Grants Commission Act into line with the Commonwealth legislation are:

(a) the members of the commission are to have had an association with local government in the State, rather than to have a knowledge and understanding of local government;

(b) the matters to be taken into consideration by the commission prior to making a determination under the Act are to be brought into line with the principles in the Commonwealth Act;

(c) the Act is to be amended to ensure that the determinations of the commission are not released until they are approved by the Commonwealth;

(d) section 17 is being amended to require details of methods used by the commission to be included in its annual report to Parliament at least once every three years. This is in accordance with the Commonwealth legislation.

The opportunity has also been taken of amending the Act to introduce gender neutral language. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr COOPER (Mornington), the debate was adjourned.

Mr SIMMONDS (Minister for Local Government)—I move:

That the debate be adjourned until Wednesday next.

Mr COOPER (Mornington)—On the question of time, the understanding is that this Bill is not any different from the Bill introduced during the last sessional period. In that case, the Opposition will agree to the debate being adjourned until Wednesday next, provided the Government will agree to an extension of time, if required.

The motion was agreed to, and the debate was adjourned until, Wednesday, March 4.

NATIONAL PARKS (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Education)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this Bill is to provide for the declaration of six new State parks in the National Parks Act and to make changes in the boundaries of five other parks.

It continues the implementation of a policy created by the Government to "further expand the system of parks and conservation reserves to ensure that representative and ecologically viable samples of all Victoria's major natural ecosystems are permanently protected".

I wish to remind honourable members that State parks are significant conservation reserves. Together with national parks they make up the backbone of the representative system of parks that this Government has set out to achieve. State and national parks are complementary parts of this system and often the only significant difference is that State parks are smaller in size.

The six new state parks are: Barmah State Park, French Island State Park, Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park, Mount Lawson State Park, Angahook-Lorne State Park and Black Range State Park. All of the new parks stem from Land Conservation Council recommendations involving land which is currently managed by the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands.

Two of these parks—French Island and Angahook-Lorne—were approved by the previous Government, but not implemented.

Mount Lawson was accepted as a multipurpose park under the previous Government. In the Land Conservation Council recommendations, some timber areas have been removed from the multipurpose park and it has been recommended as a State Park, without timber harvesting.

It is important to recognise that, although the total area covered by these State parks is not large—some 80 000 hectares—the six areas are each very important contributions towards achieving the goal of a fully representative and viable park system. For management reasons, French Island and Barmah State parks will be proclaimed as soon as possible after passage of the Bill.

The other new parks will be proclaimed as resources become available and satisfactory arrangements can be made for their management as State parks.

It should also be recognised that there is considerable backlog of council recommendations for parks which require implementation, and there are more recommendations in the pipeline. Part of this backlog is due to the lack of action of the previous Liberal Government on some of the recommendations which it accepted. This, and the Government's decision to bring all State parks under the National Parks Act, means that it will be necessary to introduce a number of Bills in the next few sittings of Parliament to ensure that Government policy is implemented.

During the life of the Government, the park system has been expanded by some 25 per cent to include such magnificent parks as the Grampians National Park, four State parks in north central Victoria, the Mitchell River National Park and the South Gippsland Marine and Coastal Parks.

But this Government has not only created parks. It has also implemented a program of works designed to enhance visitors' enjoyment of the parks. For example, visitor centres have been completed or are under way at Wilsons Promontory, Hattah, Grampians, Baw Baw and Mount Buffalo National Parks. Interpretation programs are a most important educational activity offered in parks during holiday periods, to which we commit substantial resources.

I should add that Victoria leads most of the States in providing and resourcing a representative system of parks. The percentage area of parks in Victoria—some 5·8 per cent of the State—is exceeded only in the Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania, and the level of expenditure per hectare is higher than in any other State—our parks are well researched, well resourced and well used.

As a result of the restructure of the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands, which allows redeployment of resources to priority areas, the Government can ensure that all approved parks will have sufficient resources for them to be managed to the high standards required for such important conservation and recreation areas.

In addition to the six State parks, enlargement and boundary variations to five existing parks are also proposed. These enlargements are mainly the result of significant land purchases or donations. The enlarged parks are:

Warby Range State Park—as a result of a gift of land;

Warrandyte State Park—as a result of the Yarra Brae and Stane Brae purchases;

Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park—as a result of the inclusion of land given to the State;

Mount Richmond National Park and Discovery Bay Coastal Park are enlarged by the inclusion of land purchased by the Government. All of the parks and additions have high conservation value, and are important additions to the State park system.

BARMAH STATE PARK

The Barmah State Park is part of an area of national conservation significance containing the most extensive and best developed example of river red gum forest ecosystem in

Australia. This extensive and regularly inundated ecosystem with its swamplands and distributaries is poorly represented elsewhere in the park system.

The Barmah wetlands are of such value that they are included on the world list of wetlands of international importance, indicating their worldwide significance.

Barmah has a range of historical features associated with river transport and sleeper cutting. It is strongly identified with Aboriginal history and culture and contains many archaeological sites. Immediately adjacent to Barmah is the Dharnya centre, an educational complex built and managed cooperatively by the local Aboriginal community, the white community and the Government.

Located on the River Murray near Echuca—a major tourist destination in the Government's Riverland tourist zone—Barmah offers both vehicle and river access. Tourist paddlesteamers visit from Echuca, as do private and hired houseboats and canoes. Barmah enjoys enormous popularity for its riverside camping, historic features and opportunities for nature study in red gum forests, swampland and waterbird habitat. For both conservation and recreation, Barmah State Park will be one of the most important in the State system.

FRENCH ISLAND STATE PARK

This contains one of the least disturbed areas of vegetation in the State. It is also floristically rich and free of introduced species. Its salt marsh system is the best developed and most intact in south-eastern Australia. Excellent examples of mangrove communities are present; these are poorly represented in the parks system. The proposed park also contains significant heathland and deep freshwater swamps. Approximately 80 significant plant species occur in the park. Because of its outstanding faunal values, the park is also part of a site of national zoological significance.

French Island is a little known relatively untouched sanctuary virtually on Melbourne's doorstep. The island is accessible from the Stony Point–Cowes ferry service and forms part of the day trip corridor from the Central Melbourne tourism zone along with the nearby Phillip Island penguin parade.

ANGAHOOK–LORNE STATE PARK

This proposed park, comprising much of the coastal fall of the eastern Otway Ranges, supports forests ranging from red ironbark in the north to blue gum and mountain grey gum in the south.

Angahook–Lorne is adjacent to the Great Ocean Road, along a corridor linking the Central Melbourne and West Coast tourism zones, and the seaside resort towns of Anglesea, Lorne, Wye River and Kennett River.

Creation of the park will incorporate popular tourist destinations, such as Erskine, Grey River and Kalimna Falls which are visited by more than 70 000 persons annually.

Considerable areas of the park were burnt in the Ash Wednesday fires. Particular attention will be given to fire protection in preparation of the management plan.

I commend the Opposition for recognising that both French Island and Angahook–Lorne should be State parks, and I am pleased to have the opportunity of implementing their decisions.

ARAPILES–TOOAN STATE PARK

Arapiles–Tooan contains examples of Wimmera plains vegetation, now almost completely cleared for agriculture—including grey box-yellow gum woodland, black box woodlands, yellow box woodland and buloke. Marginal fragments of Mallee occurring in the park are of considerable botanic interest.

Arapiles–Tooan lies adjacent to the Wimmera Highway west of Horsham. The rock faces of the Arapiles have a reputation as Australia's premier rock climbing venue, offering climbs for both beginners and advanced climbers. In late 1986 the climbing fraternity held its international climbing meeting in the park.

MOUNT LAWSON STATE PARK

Mount Lawson lies south of the Murray Valley Highway, east of Tallangatta. The proposed park contains excellent examples of narrow-leaf peppermint forests and significant woodlands of black cypress pine, in a relatively undisturbed state, which are poorly represented in the park system. There are many rare and uncommon plant species. It contains significant Aboriginal rock shelters and rock paintings on Mount Porcupine, and its diverse landscapes offer a variety of recreational uses.

BLACK RANGE STATE FOREST

Black Range contains significant yellow gum-grey box woodlands, which require representation in the park system. The Black Range Aboriginal art sites, in conjunction with those in the Grampians, represent a significant component of Aboriginal heritage in Victoria.

A western outlier of the Grampians Ranges, Black Range is an important scenic feature. The rugged ridgeline repeats, in miniature, the rock formations of the Grampians. At Halls Gap, in the Grampians National Park, an Aboriginal cultural centre is being developed in conjunction with western Victorian Aboriginal communities. This is a major tourism initiative funded by the Victorian Government. The \$1 million centre will deal with Aboriginal culture in the Grampians National Park and Black Range State Park.

The park is part-bordered by Rocklands reservoir, itself a popular fishing and water sport resource. The park offers outstanding opportunities for scenic forest drives and viewing of wildlife.

WARBY RANGE STATE PARK

The park will include a most significant gift of land. The Mason family of Wangaratta gave approximately 205 hectares on either side of the Taminick Gap Road at the southern end of the Warby Range to the Victoria Conservation Trust. The trust transferred the land to the Crown and it is now to be included in the State park. Miss Mason, donor of the land, has a long association with the area and was active in the campaign carried out by local groups and municipalities seeking the declaration of the Warby Range State Park.

EXTENSIONS TO GIPPSLAND LAKES COASTAL PARK

The Government has acquired from Terrell Pty Ltd certain lands next to Lake Bunga on the Boole Poole Peninsula. These lands are to be included in Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park. The area of 566 hectares has been acquired by the Government as part of an arrangement under which other parts of the property can be subdivided. Both the Government and the Rosedale Shire Council agree that this arrangement is in the best interest of the community as it preserves a large area of the Boole Poole Peninsula, which possesses natural vegetation, and abundant wildlife population, is surrounded by navigable water and is a valuable recreational asset.

EXTENSIONS TO WARRANDYTE STATE PARK

Under the previous Liberal Government a decision was made to acquire the Yarra Riverside portions of the Stane Brae and Yarra Brae properties upstream from the Warrandyte State Park. These portions were to be acquired as a major recreational and landscape protection measure to expand this valuable park in close proximity to the populous areas on the eastern side of Melbourne. The cleared area of the Stane Brae will be used for additional public recreation facilities.

MOUNT RICHMOND NATIONAL PARK AND DISCOVERY BAY COASTAL PARK

Mount Richmond National Park was established in 1960 and now has an area of 1707 hectares. Discovery Bay Coastal Park was established in 1979 and has an area of 8530 hectares along the coastline from the Bridgewater Lakes to the South Australian border. Since 1975 governments have negotiated with the Fenton family to acquire a connecting corridor between these two significant areas of public land. In 1986 the Government completed the acquisition of 58 hectares of land which provides an excellent link between the two parks. The property is in an unimproved condition and is an important wildlife corridor between the two parks.

PINK LAKES STATE PARK

The boundary of Pink Lakes State Park is also corrected to exclude a road alignment shown on titles of land adjoining the park.

RESOURCES

With regard to resources for managing the new parks, it should be clearly understood that the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands is currently managing all of these areas. In keeping with the general policy of providing a high standard of management of parks, and, in particular, to enhance tourist use, some additional resources will be required. These will be provided through redeployment of existing resources in the department. For example, an additional five rangers will be required for the new parks and the extensions, these positions will be created from within the current resource levels of the department.

GRAZING AND TIMBER HARVESTING IN BARMAH FOREST

I now wish to provide some additional information on particular aspects of Barmah State park, which will be of interest to honourable members. The proposed Barmah State park includes 7900 hectares of the 30 000 hectares that comprise the Barmah forest.

Local graziers agist cattle in the Barmah forest, and the park provides part of the grazing in both summer and winter. Grazing alters the structure and composition of the vegetation, and, in order to return to a more natural system in keeping with the objectives for State parks, particularly in the wetlands, grazing will be phased out over a period of three years.

A survey conducted in conjunction with the graziers and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs indicated that 73 per cent of the summer grazing potential is located outside the park, although grazing tends to concentrate on the Moira Grass Plains in the State park during summer. Approximately 76 per cent of the potential winter grazing is outside the park. The Government's decision will provide for the current stock levels to be maintained.

The Government has made every effort to accommodate the graziers while ensuring the most important areas of public land are preserved. One should not forget that the access of graziers to public land for grazing is a privilege, not a right.

Grazing contributes to fire protection and will continue in nearly three-quarters of the forest, including the area adjacent to private land. If necessary, it can also be considered for use as a management tool for fire protection in the park, along with low intensity fuel reduction burning.

The Barmah forest will maintain a small viable timber industry. There are four sawmills licensed to take sawlogs from the forest. One of these draws part of its supply from New South Wales. The mills provide about 35 full-time and part-time jobs.

The recommendations allow sawlogs to be harvested in the current cutting cycle and consequently there will be no impact on sawlog availability to the next cutting cycle in ten to fifteen year's time. Nearly three-quarters of the Barmah forest will continue to be available for sawlog production.

There are eleven sleeper cutters in the Barmah forest and the proposals allow the sleeper resource, available in the park over the current cutting cycle, to be harvested. A survey is being conducted to establish the future supply of sleepers, the rate of cut in the remaining three-quarters of the forest and elsewhere in the Murray Valley area, and the future employment of apprentices.

The phase out of timber harvesting from the State park will be extended from three years, as recommended by the Land Conservation Council to five years, although the total volume of timber harvested will not be increased.

Hunting is one of many recreational activities. In accordance with the Land Conservation Council recommendations, hunting will not be permitted in the State park, but will continue in 73 per cent of the Barmah forest outside the park.

Although existing departmental resources should be able to supply much of the staff and labour required for the park, it is estimated that an additional two park rangers and two vehicles will be required, together with some additional funding to cover operational costs. Funding to cover the cost of fencing of at least the two reference areas, spread over three years, will be needed.

Creation of a State park in the Barmah forest will further encourage tourism and, if the park is promoted, it is likely that visitor levels to the forest will increase with attendant benefits to the regional economy.

There has been extensive consultation about the Barmah recommendations both during the processes following the Land Conservation Council, and after they were presented in May 1985.

The Ministers for conservation, forests and lands, agriculture and rural affairs, and planning and environment have visited the area and met with local groups.

An advisory committee will be established for the Barmah forest covering the area recommended as State park, State forest and reserve along the Murray. It will include representatives of the municipalities, agisters, recreation and conservation groups, Aborigines, unions and the timber industry. The committee will advise the Director of National Parks and the regional manager on the development of a management plan for the whole area.

The Bill seeks to achieve the Government's election policies, and implements important decisions to preserve our environment and to ensure that the Government will retain for future generations a more representative parks system. I trust that the bipartisan approach declaring new national and State parks on the basis of the Land Conservation Commission recommendations, which had worked well in the past, will be continued with the Bill.

I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr PLOWMAN (Evelyn), the debate was adjourned.

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Education)—I move:

That the debate be adjourned until Wednesday next.

Mr PLOWMAN (Evelyn)—On the question of time, Mr Speaker, the Opposition agrees to the adjournment of the debate until Wednesday next, provided there is no change in the Bill from the one originally discussed by the parties. From a quick summary, it appears that some clauses have been changed but they do not appear to be of major consequence and possibly will improve the Bill.

The Opposition agrees with the date of adjournment provided that no major changes in the Bill are anticipated.

The motion was agreed to, and the debate was adjourned until Wednesday, March 4.

HEALTH SERVICES (CONCILIATION AND REVIEW) BILL

Mr ROPER (Minister for Transport)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This is an important Bill, and it is consistent with the progressive policies of the Government. It is aimed at improving the quality and responsiveness of health services in Victoria to the needs of consumers. Its purpose is to establish an office to conciliate and review complaints about health services. The office will provide an independent and effective mechanism for the resolution of consumer complaints about health services. The Bill also sets out the relationship between this new Ombudsman-type function and other complaints and review bodies. The Bill describes the powers and the functions of the Health Services Commissioner and his/her office, whose role it will be to implement the legislation and develop a system for conciliating and investigating complaints about health services and reviewing health issues generally.

The proposal to establish a health services grievance system arose out of the findings of an inquiry into complaints procedures against health services conducted by the all-party Parliamentary Social Development Committee. That reference was made following the Cain Government's election to office in 1982.

The committee found that existing complaints mechanisms were inadequate and, in its interim report, recommended improvements to the existing mechanisms that are designed to resolve complaints within the health sector. In response to this, a network of health service liaison officers has been established in public hospitals, community health centres and other public health institutions. Uniform procedures for recording and investigating complaints against health services have also been developed.

Existing health review mechanisms include professional registration bodies which have a responsibility for dealing with consumer complaints in relation to professional conduct. The committee found that these bodies were either not known by or not accessible to the majority of health service consumers. The committee also reported that a strong view is held in the community that the attempted resolution of complaints by these bodies is not satisfactory, particularly as they often present the only avenue of inquiry for consumer complaints. The committee's findings indicated the need for a mechanism that will be seen by consumers and providers alike to be independent and efficient in dealing with complaints.

Based on the committee's recommendations, draft proposals for the establishment of a health services complaints office were developed and distributed for public comment in April 1986. Responses were received from a broad range of interest groups including consumers, professional groups and individual providers during the three-month consultation period.

The draft proposals were received on the basis of comments received and the Bill now before the House has taken account of the views, suggestions and concerns expressed throughout the consultation process.

The Office of the Health Services Commissioner has two main objectives: to assist consumers and providers to resolve complaints about health services and, through the monitoring of complaints and the analysis of comprehensive data across the whole health system, to recommend improvements in the quality of health service provision.

The Bill outlines guiding principles for providers and users in the Victorian health care system, thereby assisting consumers to identify what might constitute a complaint and encouraging an awareness among providers as to the nature of community standards in the provision of health services.

In carrying out its functions, the Office of the Health Services Commissioner will work in cooperation with and be complementary to complaints systems now operating within public health bodies and registration boards. Where registration bodies do not exist, such

as for practitioners of alternative medicine, the office will be able to offer a major new system for the investigation and resolution of complaints.

The office will not duplicate the functions of professional registration boards in relation to complaints regarding the professional conduct of their members.

The relationship between registration boards and the commissioner will be one at "arm's length" so that their respective roles are distinct. I should expect that over time relations between the boards and the commissioner will reflect respect of each other's quite separate functions and statutory obligation.

The Bill requires the Health Services Commissioner to consult with the boards on complaints that relate to registered providers. The commissioner will refer complaints on to the relevant board where it is determined that it is within the board's power to deal with the matter. The relationship between the boards and the office is seen to be of vital importance and will be further addressed under the current review of registration bodies being conducted by Health Department Victoria. This review is examining issues such as consumer representation on boards, common administrative procedures and upgraded disciplinary powers. A further discussion paper will be available over the next few months detailing proposals that are currently being examined. In the case of several boards, for example, the Medical Board, two issues acknowledged as requiring action are provision for a legally qualified president of the board and allowing legal representation before the board.

Whatever the outcome of the review of registration boards there is an ongoing need for an office to conciliate and investigate complaints against health services and to review the operation of health services generally. This is especially so because of the range of complaints that do not relate to registered providers; and the fact that some complaints about registered providers do not come within the jurisdiction of the relevant registration board.

Where possible the process of conciliation will take place in the absence of representation, but in circumstances to be described in the code of practice the commissioner will exercise his/her discretion to permit representation of parties. Certainly, conciliation should not be seen to have failed until parties who wish it have been given the opportunity to be represented or assisted in the conciliation process.

The conciliation and investigation functions of the office will be completely separate to ensure confidentiality and to reinforce the expectations that complaints will in the main be resolved by conciliation. Those complaints not amenable to conciliation, and not the responsibility of a registration board, may then pass into an investigation phase.

Certain powers will be available to the commissioner in order properly to conduct investigations into complaints. These are reserve powers and are subject to substantial checks and balances. For example, should the commissioner require entry to premises to investigate a complaint, for example, to inspect premises that have been complained of, she/he will need to obtain a magistrate's warrant clearly specifying why entry is required.

The commissioner and his or her officers will be subject to a code of practice that will set out how matters under consideration of the office should be handled. The code of practice will be in the form of a regulation to the Act so that it will be subject to the fullest consultation under the subordinate legislation processes. Though not expressly provided for in the Act it is my intention that the commissioner develop and be subject to the code of practice within twelve months of the Act being proclaimed.

The Health Services Commissioner will report directly to Parliament and will be able to identify trends and highlight gaps and problems in the delivery of health services in Victoria through the monitoring of complaints and health issues, thereby providing a much needed source of information. In providing an effective means of inquiry for consumer complaints, the Bill will satisfy a well recognised need and represent a major Government initiative aimed at improving the quality of health services in this State.

The development of the office represents a major initiative that should be subject to ongoing evaluation. This will occur through the advisory council established under the Act.

In addition it is proposed that the Act contain a three-year sunset provision. At the end of three years the conclusions drawn from regular evaluation by provider and consumer groups will contribute to an assessment of the Act, the extent of the commissioner's powers and the role of his or her office. The Australian Medical Association has already expressed interest in such an evaluation and its offer of assistance in this process is welcome and will be taken up.

The process of evaluation will be assisted by the statistical reporting mechanism contained in the Act. The Government's intention is not to burden individual practitioners with the requirement to complete statistical returns. Major health service institutions are likely to be affected but in drafting the requisite forms regard will be had to the costs associated with the reporting requirement.

As noted in the Ministerial statement of the Minister for Health on 14 August 1985, the conciliation, investigation and review procedure proposed will offer the community a long overdue means of quality control and, it is anticipated, will lead to the development of new attitudes towards the provision of professional services in the health industry.

As the proposal breaks new ground there may be some groups who have concerns about its effects on their professional activity. It was clear to the Parliamentary Social Development Committee in 1984 and remains clear to the Government today that individual users of health services do not have available to them a broad framework in which their concerns about health services can be addressed. It is reasonable for members of the public to be able to have their complaints inquired into and nothing in this proposal should be seen as inconsistent with the high regard in which health professionals are held.

I pay tribute to the excellent work of the Social Development Committee in producing its report on health complaints procedures and for its assistance to Health Department Victoria in the implementation of its recommendations. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr WEIDEMAN (Frankston South), the debate was adjourned.

Mr ROPER (Minister for Transport)—I move:

That the debate be adjourned until Wednesday, March 4.

Mr WEIDEMAN (Frankston South)—On the basis that the Government introduces no major amendments to the Bill, the Opposition accepts that the debate be adjourned until Wednesday, 4 March.

Mr WHITING (Mildura)—The Bill is important for health services in Victoria. It was introduced during the last session of Parliament. However, when the notice to prorogue Parliament was made, a number of people in the medical field ceased to carry out further investigations. They would have expected that the debate be adjourned for two weeks, which is the standard practice of Parliament. Tuesday week would be an appropriate date for a resumption of the debate. However, if that is not possible, I seek an undertaking from the Minister that if a member representing a country area requires additional time, it will be granted.

Mr FORDHAM (Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources)—As the honourable member for Ripon knows, an arrangement was made between the parties for a limited number of Bills to be ready for debate next week, and this is one of those Bills. The issue is not new; it has been around since 1980.

I suggest that the honourable member for Mildura consult with those he sees fit to consult and, if he has any difficulties, I ask him to inform me early next week and I shall endeavour to accommodate him.

The motion was agreed to, and the debate was adjourned until Wednesday, March 4.

SHOP TRADING BILL

Mr FORDHAM (Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill is essentially the same as the Shop Trading Bill 1986. It seeks to give legislative effect to the Government's commitment to review the anomalies and penalties relating to shop trading matters contained in the Labour and Industry Act 1958.

The Regulation Review Unit, headed by Mr Robert Miller, was requested to inquire into these matters in 1985. The unit's report was released by the Government in 1986, and following extensive community consultation, the Government has announced its intention to legislate on the major recommendations of the report.

The Miller report has been widely accepted as the best researched and most thorough analysis of regulation of retail trading hours in Australia. Its major recommendation calls for replacement of the frequently amended provisions of the Labour and Industry Act which relate to shops, with a simpler, cohesive, Shop Trading Act drafted in plain English. Consequential recommendations call for simplified and streamlined systems of shop registration, shop classification and administration. The Government has adopted some 32 of the 34 recommendations contained in the report's executive summary.

The aim of the Government in introducing the proposed legislation is to ensure that consumers have adequate access to the goods that they require, to encourage the development of a diverse and competitive retail industry, to make special flexible provisions in relation to holiday and tourist areas, festivals, markets and charitable activities and to provide retailers and their employees with a fair and rational regulatory framework for the industry.

The Government has not included in the Bill implementation of the Miller report recommendation that hardware shops should be included in the list of "exempt shops" permitted to trade all weekend and on public holidays. During the public consultation process, many hardware shop proprietors and organisations such as the Hardware Retailers Association, the Victorian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association submitted to the Government that implementation of this recommendation would represent a fundamental change for large sections of the retail industry. It was submitted that such a change addressed wider general trading hours issues rather than merely rectification of "an anomaly".

The Government accepts this view and will address this issue in the context of Government policy on general trading hours. In this regard, during the course of this year, I will be seeking the views of the various groups concerned with the retail industry on the need for a re-examination of the adequacy of general weekend trading hours.

A further recommendation of the report which the Government does not propose to implement at this time is recommendation No. 9 in the executive summary. This calls for raising the permitted employment level of businesses conducting exempt shops able to trade all weekend from 'less than twenty' employees to 30 employees. Some small business groups submitted during the consultation process that the present employment ceiling should be lowered rather than increased. After examining this issue in detail, the Government has decided that the existing provision has operated effectively in the interests of small business and of a diverse Victorian retail sector, and no change in this employment level is proposed.

One matter not specifically mentioned in the report is contained in the Bill. This is a provision giving the Governor in Council power to proclaim shops exempt from ordinary closing requirements in special circumstances for up to four days in any year. The temporary provisions for additional pre-Christmas shopping hours last year have directed attention to the need for such a provision.

Part 1 of the Bill sets out, in simplified form, definitions, objectives and ordinary closing days. It also contains the basic classification system under which shops will be permitted to trade all weekend and on public holidays if, in the view of a reasonable person, the business carried on in the shop is of a type listed in the schedule.

The schedule listing "exempt shops" includes, with minor drafting amendments, the types of shops permitted to trade without restriction under the Labour and Industry Act and its Fifth Schedule. Additional types of shops included in the proposed schedule are shops for the sale of records, cassettes, tapes or video cassettes, and souvenir shops.

Mr Leigh—Mr Acting Speaker, I direct your attention to the state of the House.

A quorum was formed.

Mr FORDHAM—Part 2 of the Bill deals with shop closing hours, including proposed new trading hours for butchers' shops. These would require shops selling fresh, uncooked meat to close at 6 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, at 9 p.m. on Fridays and at 1 p.m. on Saturdays. This will provide trading hours for "red meats" more closely related to the opening hours, in practice, of other food retail outlets and should significantly improve customer convenience.

This part also contains provisions covering hours for motor car traders which are, as recommended, unchanged. Motor car traders will continue to be able to trade until 6 p.m. on Saturdays.

This part of the Bill also continues the general trading hours pattern that operates under the Labour and Industry Act, which provides for other types of shops, unless exempt under the Act, to close at 1 p.m. on Saturdays and all day on Sundays and the listed public holidays. I remind honourable members that this provides for up to 133 hours of general retail trading each week.

In one minor variation from the 1986 Bill, this Bill continues the present provisions of the Labour and Industry Act in relation to the Melbourne Cup Day, Royal Melbourne Show Day, and Geelong Cup Day local holidays, when certain shops are required to close. The Government believes the inclusion of these important local holidays in the Bill reinforces traditional custom and practice and avoids the possibility of any undesirable confusion and disruption.

A more flexible procedure of dealing with applications for exemption from the ordinary shop closing requirements is set out in the Bill. Municipal councils will be able to seek exemptions for an area, or for particular shops in an area, to be able to trade for longer than the generally available 133 hours a week. Such applications will be based mainly on holiday and tourism considerations, but similar provisions will apply to market sites and festivals. Existing provisions relating to exemptions for charitable functions and for exhibitions are continued.

My department will shortly be issuing guidelines to municipal councils and any other inquirers setting out the broad requirements for information which should be included in exemption applications.

Part 3 of the Bill covers registration of shops and registration as an exempt shop. Care has been taken to include natural justice considerations in the Bill, and an appeal will be available to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal against a decision not to classify a shop as exempt. The Minister is empowered to revoke registration as an exempt shop and there is also a right of appeal to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal against such a revocation.

Similar provisions apply to the registration of market sites, although the Bill embodies recommendations about tidying up the requirements for registration of market sites and market stalls. Both shopkeepers and market stallholders will be required to have their current certificate of registration on public display while conducting business, and this is considered to be a significant advance in consumer protection.

The miscellaneous provisions of Part 4 of the Bill cover powers of inspectors, the provision of reasonable assistance to inspectors, appointment of inspectors under the new Act, and offences.

The Government has adopted the recommendations of the Miller report relating to offences. The Bill therefore includes a sliding scale of penalties with the maximum penalty for a tenth or subsequent offence of 100 penalty units which is currently \$10 000. This brings Victoria broadly into line with the maximum penalty for similar offences applying in other States. Obviously, a court would impose the maximum penalty only for frequently repeated, serious and wilful breaches of the new Act.

In accordance with Government policy, I direct the attention of the House to clause 24 (1), particularly paragraphs (d), (e) and (f), which place the onus of proof in certain circumstances on the defendant. These provisions are taken directly from section 192 (1) (d), (e) and (j) of the Labour and Industry Act.

The proposed transitional arrangements continue registrations and exemptions under the Labour and Industry Act, while the only amendment of other legislation of major significance is the removal of the appellate jurisdiction of the Industrial Relations Commission over shop trading matters. The Government accepts the report's recommendation that appeals on shop trading matters should properly be dealt with in the courts rather than the commission.

The Bill represents a major step forward in the review and updating of old and sometimes confusing laws. It seeks to provide a forward-looking, rational, fair and flexible legislative framework for the retail industry. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr GUDE (Hawthorn), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, March 17.

CONSERVATION, FORESTS AND LANDS BILL

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Education)—I move:

That this Bill now be read a second time.

The Bill will provide the necessary legislation to finalise the administrative restructure which brought about the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands.

The department was created in 1983, following bipartisan support for the "four-into-two" restructure of previous administrative units for conservation, planning, forests and lands. At the time, it was decided that legislation should follow rather than precede the establishment of the department.

The past three years have seen the reorganisation of the previous Department of Crown Lands and Survey, the State Forests Department and the Forests Commission and major parts of the Ministry for Conservation—including the National Parks Service, the Fisheries and Wildlife Division and the Soil Conservation Authority—to form the new department. The primary objective of the new department is to manage the State's public land and its natural resources in an integrated and balanced way.

The Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands is structured to deliver improved on-ground service at the local level. It is highly decentralised with eighteen regions across the State. These regions are servicing local communities in the areas of protection of wildlife and habitats, productive forests, fisheries and soils, and a variety of recreation opportunities.

It is appropriate that legislation be now introduced to provide the legal framework for the department to operate efficiently and effectively. This Bill will bring the restructure process to conclusion.

The purpose of this Bill is to remove redundant provisions of existing legislation and to simplify and centralise the legislative machinery by which the Minister is to achieve the Government's objectives relating to the integrated management of public land and its resources. The new elements of this Bill are the ability for delegation of powers by the Minister and the director-general, and the public participation provisions for codes of practice.

It is the first of several Bills proposed for the portfolio and provides the legislative framework for the department. In all, fifteen separate statutes will be reduced to six Acts of Parliament. This will allow for improved efficiency of administration and clearer definition of statutory roles and responsibilities. Thus public accountability will be improved by the ease with which the new legislation may be understood.

Broadly, the Bill consolidates machinery provisions for the major areas of administrative responsibility in the portfolio. These relate to advisory bodies, finance, enforcement, powers regarding property and land management cooperation agreements.

The proposed legislation will formally abolish a number of bodies which are now defunct, and whose roles and responsibilities are to be performed by the Director-General of Conservation, Forests and Lands. These are the Forests Commission, the Soil Conservation Authority and the Vermin and Noxious Weeds Destruction Board. The director-general will become an incorporated body to facilitate the continued performance of these functions.

The proposed legislation establishes clear procedures for the promotion of better land management practices on private and public land. A key tool will be the code of practice, which will be primarily an educative instrument to advise land managers on practical procedures in matters such as conservation farming, control of pest plants and animals, and forestry practices.

Each code of practice may be prepared following specific public participation procedures. Codes will not be regulatory in themselves, although compliance can be required, when appropriate, by a regulation or other legal means, such as being made a condition of a licence. This would be the case in forestry operations.

Voluntary conservation workers, such as the Friends of the National Parks, will continue to be encouraged. There will be an ability for compensation to be paid in the case of injury to voluntary workers.

Provision has been made for certain land disturbing works and activities of public bodies—for example, dams and river management works—to be referred to the director-general for comment. This will enable advice to be given on measures which should be taken to protect land, water and wildlife, both during construction and operation of the project. The list of works will be specified in a schedule to the proposed legislation.

The Bill also provides a central mechanism to facilitate the entry into voluntary agreements between the Director-General of Conservation, Forests and Lands and individual landholders. The purpose of these agreements will relate to land management practices, which will further the objectives of conservation, production or recreational use of the State's natural resources.

There is provision for the director-general to provide certain assistance to the landholder. These provisions will enable the Government's and landholders' broader and longer-term objectives for natural resource management to be fulfilled on privately-held land. Agreements can also enable a group of owners to seek conservation of a particular habitat or feature which may extend across individual boundaries.

With the introduction of this provision, a general legislative framework will exist upon which any assistance scheme can be based. It will provide an opportunity to simplify existing legislation by removing unnecessarily specific legislative schemes, such as those applying under the Wire Netting Act 1958 and farm forestry agreements under the Forestry

Act 1958. These and other schemes can readily be provided for by this new general enabling provision combined with the use of an appropriation.

During the preparation of the proposed legislation there has been wide consultation with groups that have an interest in the portfolio and broad agreement has been reached on the provisions of the Bill. In summary, the Bill is part of a new package of legislation for the portfolio and is essentially establishing the legal machinery for the administration of conservation, forests and lands.

The major benefit of the Bill is that it provides a simplified and easily comprehended legal mechanism for the efficient administration of the conservation, forests and lands portfolio. As I said earlier, the Bill is essential for the completion of the restructure process and I trust that the bipartisan approach that initiated the "four-into-two" restructure will be continued in relation to the passage of the Bill. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr PLOWMAN (Evelyn), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, March 17.

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT BILL

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Education)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

A Bill to reform the law relating to planning was introduced last September but was deferred by the Legislative Council.

Honourable members will recall that the Bill is a total overhaul of the now outdated Town and Country Planning Act. I do not intend to waste the time of the House in repeating the many positive aspects of the proposed legislation, which I explained then. However, I must reiterate what the Government sees to be the purpose of the proposed legislation because the Government has received many submissions by people who have misunderstood the purpose of the Bill.

The submissions have generated substantial debate about the scope generally of planning. Planning as envisaged by the Bill is about the use and development of land. Although this requires taking into account a very wide variety of issues, they are to be taken into account in so far as they affect the use and development of land. Conversely, other kinds of planning may have an effect on the way land should be used and developed, and they could be implemented, where appropriate, through planning schemes.

Planning schemes should not in themselves be seen as major statements of social or economic policy. Where it is desirable to influence the use and development of land to implement such policies, they should be stated or referred to in planning schemes.

It was never intended to introduce a planning Act to define precisely the scope of planning or tell planners, councils or anybody else how to plan. The Bill enables planning proposals to be implemented. Most planning, as such, does not need specific legislation.

Legislation is required to give powers to councils and other statutory authorities to control the use and development of land. As the proposed legislation abbreviates rights to property which would otherwise exist, it is fair to expect that statutory powers and rights of those affected should be set down in detail. It is wrong to conclude just because these provisions are detailed, that the thrust of the proposed legislation is about powers and rights.

Some submissions have stated that "planning" ought to be defined. There is no need for an Act to define "planning". It would be highly undesirable to try to do so, because the boundaries would inevitably be artificially constrained. Even if a definition detailed enough to be used or to mean anything could be agreed, it would quickly become out of date as new issues arose. This has been the experience with the current legislation, so there is no

attempt in the Bill to define or describe planning or to tell authorities how to plan. Planning is as wide as planning authorities make it.

Contemporary planning almost invariably involves restrictions on the way land or buildings may be used or developed. It is for this aspect of planning, where property rights are affected, that legislation is needed. Essentially, planning legislation should:

- recognise that planning is an activity involving elected officials, appointed advisers, interested members of the public, individually or in groups, and professional practitioners;

- provide for continual strategic planning, attempting to clarify our view of the future;

- ensure that values can be made explicit, through articulation of objectives and policies;

- provide an ability to set rules about the use and development of land;

- establish a framework for making, amending, administering and enforcing those rules by appropriate levels of government;

- provide a framework for the resolution of disputes about the way land should be used and developed;

- provide for compensation for those whose land is or will be required for a public purpose.

Mr Delzoppo—Who wrote that rubbish?

Mr CATHIE—I do not think it is rubbish. That indicates the deplorable standards of the Opposition if it regards the Bill as rubbish.

In accordance with the above principles, the Bill has been restricted to the essentials. Much of the policy of planning can be better dealt with in planning schemes—in State, regional and local sections—or through guidelines. Administrative matters can be covered by regulations and administrative procedures. It is to be noted that the Bill is approximately half the length of the Town and Country Planning Act.

It has been claimed that the Bill does not make provision for strategic planning and that the emphasis on the Bill should be in this direction. The fact that the Bill makes its provisions briefly and does not set out detailed procedures on how to plan strategically and have these plans adopted does not make them inadequate. The relevant provisions are:

- a planning scheme may set out policies and objectives;

- a scheme may incorporate a document which consists of recommendations or guidelines about the use or development of land;

- it is a specific duty of a planning authority to provide sound, strategic and coordinated planning of the use and development of land in its area; and

- amendments to planning schemes must be approved by the Minister, and the Minister may need to be satisfied about the strategic planning foundation of important amendments.

The Bill as now presented incorporates some detailed changes arising as a result of the submissions and comments on the Bill previously considered. Most of these are of a minor and technical nature to improve the operation of the framework established by the Bill. The principal ones are:

- planning schemes are to be specifically able to regulate development in areas which are or may become hazardous—for example areas which are prone to bushfires, or near hazardous chemical storages;

objections and submissions made to a responsible authority about a planning application are to be public documents, like the application itself. As objectors have a right to inspect an application, so should applicants have a right to see submissions;

provision is made enabling an appeal by an applicant against unreasonable requirements to give notice of an application. This will ensure that responsible authorities do not use excessive notice requirements to stifle development;

provision is made so that an enforcement order can be withdrawn only with the agreement of the person on whom it was served, or with the agreement of the Planning Appeals Board. This will prevent capricious issue and withdrawal of orders by responsible authorities;

the Bill originally proposed the repeal of the Development Areas Act. This Act ought to be retained as it is expected to be useful in implementing urban strategy proposals;

an amendment is to be made to section 512H (8) of the Mines Act to ensure that, in accordance with recent amendments to that Act, planning procedures are streamlined when a mining project is of "major economic significance"; and

the Port Phillip Coastal Planning and Management Act is to be amended to bring application and appeals procedures under that Act closely into line with those proposed under the Planning and Environment Act.

Other submissions sought various changes to the Bill. Many of these were mutually incompatible or were based on a misunderstanding of the principles and detailed working of the system proposed.

Other submissions sought changes which, if made, would undermine key concepts in the new system proposed in the Bill, which were explained when the Planning and Environment Bill 1986 was introduced. These would seriously impair the effectiveness of the proposed legislation. These, of course, cannot be accepted by the Government.

In conclusion, the Bill is a major step in the reform of the law about planning land use and development in Victoria. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr HEFFERNAN (Ivanhoe), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, March 17.

GAS AND FUEL CORPORATION (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr FORDHAM (Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill is essentially the same as the Gas and Fuel Corporation (Amendment) Bill 1986 and forms part of the Government's program of streamlining legislation and the elimination of duplicated regulatory processes, whilst at the same time preserving necessary consumer and general community protections.

Since the formation of the Gas and Fuel Corporation of Victoria, the introduction of natural gas and the absorption of the remaining private gas companies, the nature of the industry has changed substantially.

Generally, the Gas and Fuel Corporation Act 1958 created a public authority of the State and provided the means by which the State of Victoria has been able to secure the ultimate coordination and unification of gas undertakings in Victoria.

The successes of the corporation are well known; and the people of Victoria, as does the Government, recognise that, through the corporation, Victoria has a safe, economical and effective supply of gas, backed up by a consumer orientated service organisation.

Apart from the Gas and Fuel Corporation Act itself, regulation of gas supply and other aspects of the gas industry is at present covered by three separate Acts. The substance of the most important of these, the Gas Act 1969, dates back many years to the time when the industry consisted of a number of private companies acting as gas utilities. The other two are comparatively recent, but the circumstances leading to their introduction have materially altered.

This Bill is introduced to repeal these three Acts and to incorporate within the Gas and Fuel Corporation Act updated provisions of the kind previously covered by the Gas Act; to provide for the regulation and control of the supply of gas by reticulation within Victoria, and the adoption of new roles for the corporation and the Ministry of Consumer Affairs relating to matters associated with gas quality, metering, billing and adjustment of consumer accounts.

I deal first with the two relatively less important Acts to be repealed.

A review of the Gas Franchise Act 1970 was carried out with input from industry and it was universally agreed that both consumers and the industry would benefit from deregulation of the bulk LPG market. Accordingly the decision was made to repeal this Act and to allow all liquefied petroleum gas marketing companies, including the heatane gas subsidiary of the Gas and Fuel Corporation, to be free to compete throughout Victoria.

The Liquefied Petroleum Gas Subsidy Act was introduced in 1980 to enable the Federal Government to implement its plan to subsidise the supply of liquefied petroleum gas to certain classes of customers. The Federal Government terminated the subsidy more than twelve months ago and is unlikely to restore it. The Act is therefore redundant.

The main substance of the Bill relates to the new provisions to be incorporated in the Gas and Fuel Corporation Act.

There are eleven main aspects covered by this Bill, as follows: definitions; responsibility for gas supply; terms and conditions of supply; meters and inspections; powers of officers and employees; emergency procedures; offences and legal proceedings; reporting; saving clauses; the making of regulations and by-laws; consequential amendments to various Acts.

The new provisions are simpler than the old system but continue to provide consumer protections such as regulation of the quality of gas supply, the right of consumers to an organised meter test and adjustment of bills where, because of error in determination of the quantum of energy supplied, the consumer has been incorrectly billed.

The corporation, since the various mergers of the early 1970s, has been effectively the sole franchise operator of reticulated gas systems throughout Victoria.

The Government sees great benefit for Victoria in having reticulated gas supplied through a single operator and hence the right of supply anywhere in this State through reticulation is being given solely to the corporation, subject only to certain longstanding contractual arrangements with Esso and BHP.

However, the Government is also making provision for other reticulators to establish themselves in certain situations. These local reticulation schemes will be controlled through Orders in Council in a similar way to that applying in the electricity industry. As presently perceived, the most likely situation for such undertakings to be established is to service alpine resorts.

Much of the detail presented under the heading "terms and conditions of supply" restate desirable features to be retained after the repeal of the Gas Act.

The role of the gas examiner under the Gas Act is to be split and taken up, in part, by the corporation itself with the Ministry of Consumer Affairs taking responsibility for certain aspects, where input from an authority independent of the corporation is desirable.

In passing, I pay tribute to the able work of John Kilmartin who has filled the role of gas examiner for the past fourteen years in addition to his many other responsibilities for hazardous materials.

The office of the gas examiner has been responsible for the testing and sealing of meters prior to their introduction into service. To a great degree, this duplicates the work necessarily carried out by the Gas and Fuel Corporation and, with the demise of the privately-owned gas undertakings in Victoria, it is advantageous now to place the statutory responsibility squarely on the corporation. Much of the detail will be taken up under regulations and the concepts modified to encompass the latest technology in the area of gas metering.

The corporation will be required to submit a comprehensive report annually to the Minister, detailing its execution of these new duties and responsibilities.

I mentioned earlier certain new roles for the Ministry of Consumer Affairs. Included among these will be the role of arbitrator when the corporation and a domestic consumer cannot resolve a problem relating to metering or billing, or both.

In particular, the Government has retained the concept of an independently organised meter test. This is to be a test organised under the supervision of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, to assure domestic consumers of fair play in instances where a meter reading is the subject of dispute.

Another role for the Ministry of Consumer Affairs will be to approve the procedures adopted to change the prescribed life of particular makes and models of meters in service, before they are brought in for checking and retesting. At present a general rule of ten years service life is adopted.

Thus the Bill will give to the Ministry of Consumer Affairs some functions comparable to those of the gas examiner under the current Gas Act.

The corporation's relationship with the consumer has many aspects and the Bill restates various provisions considered necessary to permit employee entrance to consumer premises to read meters, to cover emergency situations which might endanger life or property if not detected and rectified or to interrupt supply for maintenance and repair work. Under the Bill, disconnection for non-payment of accounts caused by insufficient income on the part of a consumer will not occur automatically.

Procedures for notification and assistance to consumers at risk of disconnection will be adopted by the Gas and Fuel Corporation in line with those recently included in the State Electricity Commission Act. These procedures are compatible with practices which have been already adopted by the corporation for some considerable time.

Because of the variety of circumstances likely to be experienced in the supply of gas to consumers, the Bill contains revised provisions to empower the Governor in Council to issue proclamations when needed to protect public safety and to secure the gas reticulation system in the event of a shortage of supply. Provision is then made for dealing with the emergency.

The corporation's officers have a clear duty to ensure that in any hazardous situation action is taken to protect life and property very promptly and suitable powers are included in the Bill which will be complementary to the powers of police and emergency services.

Many of the provisions covering offences and legal proceedings are substantially the same as those currently in force under the Gas Act but, where considered appropriate when dealing with matters of importance to the community, such as public safety, theft, fraud and dangerous practices, they have been modified and converted to penalty units prior to taking them up in the Bill.

At the time of the introduction of natural gas to Victoria a number of contractual rights were recognised in the Gas Franchise Act, such as the rights of Esso Exploration and

Production Australia Inc. and BHP Petroleum Proprietary Ltd to sell gas direct under certain circumstances. The Bill provides for these to continue.

Two new sections have been included to formalise the corporation's role when supplying and charging for hot water from bulk installations serving multiple residential units and to indicate clearly that the corporation is not liable to any action for damages on account of its approval under the regulations of any gas installation or fitting in a consumer's premises.

In summary the Bill: eliminates out-of-date and unnecessary elements of current legislation relating to the gas industry; updates and restates in more clear and concise form necessary legislation requirements; preserves and enhances traditional consumer and general public protections and rights; and provides greater flexibility for adjustments in the future in response to advances in technology and new consumer and community needs. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, March 17.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

Address-in-Reply

The debate (adjourned from the previous day) on the motion of Mr Pope (Monbulk) for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech was resumed.

Mr AUSTIN (Ripon)—I express my loyalty and the loyalty of the constituents of the electorate of Ripon to the Crown and the Queen. The men, women and children of that electorate are thankful and grateful for the work of His Excellency Dr Davis McCaughey and Mrs McCaughey throughout rural Victoria. They have carried out their duties responsibly and have followed the traditions of their predecessors, particularly the tradition of paying special attention to school children. The strong and worthwhile link of the governorship of Victoria has been continued by the present Governor and his wife.

One must wonder why the Premier decided to prorogue Parliament in view of the criticism he levelled at the previous Liberal Government for proroguing Parliament. The Premier's actions convey a double standard. He did not hesitate to prorogue Parliament in the life of his Government. One may have thought that Parliament was prorogued so that the Government could set out in the Governor's Speech some worthwhile and exciting programs for Victoria for the remainder of the term of this Government, but the Speech gives the people of Victoria very little hope. There is nothing in the Government's proposed program to give even a glimmer of hope to the tens of thousands of economically distressed farmers across the length and breadth of Victoria. Of great concern is the dismal fact that after some five years in office there is no indication that this Government understands the nature, the extent and the harsh reality of the rural crisis and of those people committed to agriculture and rural pursuits.

Who can blame the farm community if it concludes that the Cain Government neither cares nor understands the extent of the economic crisis? Who can blame them if they conclude that the Government is unwilling to initiate steps to alleviate that part of the problem that is within the power and scope of the State Government to alleviate?

Over recent months there has been a change in the visits of the Premier and Ministers to country areas. There have been many Ministerial trips to centres and towns throughout country Victoria. Unfortunately, most of these trips have been glorified public relations exercises. Country people always welcome Ministers to their localities, irrespective of the political party to which the Ministers belong. However, it is disappointing that at the end of the visit there is little or no benefit to the farming and rural community. Nothing has been done to alleviate the cost burden on people throughout Victoria.

It is amazing that the Premier should claim in Parliament that he has been very well received in country areas, that those whom he meets agree with his policies, that he has their full support and that there is no support for the opposition parties. Either the Premier is a very bad judge of what he sees and hears or the people to whom he is speaking are pulling his leg. Unfortunately, most of the Ministerial trips to country areas have only added to the despair and frustration of country people.

There is no excuse for the Government not fully understanding the real position of agriculture in the State. Official sources confirm that farmers are walking off properties at the rate of 3000 a year and that the farm labour force has been cut in half. Rural industries nationally now contribute 6 per cent of the gross domestic product compared with an historic figure of 20 per cent. Throughout the years the farm debt, as it is expressed in 1985 dollar terms, has increased. For sheep properties carrying 200 or more sheep, the farm debt has risen from \$13 000 in June 1953 to \$80 000 in June 1985. Government figures, which are estimates, show that the average farm income in 1983-84 was \$23 200 and that the figure dropped in 1984-85 to \$19 800; in 1985-86 the average farm income is projected to be \$6700—that is about \$3800 per family worker.

I have pointed out frequently, as have other members of the Opposition, the extreme discrimination practised by the Government against people in country Victoria. Today, a demonstration was held outside Parliament to protest at the Government's intention to reduce funding for public libraries, which will badly affect regional libraries. It is another example of the Government's discrimination against country people.

I highlight the fact that in June 1985 the Government announced that a rural economic study would be undertaken to provide the Government with details of "specific action that can be taken to enhance growth in Victoria" and to provide "hard economic data on the impact of Government decisions on the rural sector".

Other terms of reference of the rural economic study were to identify Federal issues as they affect rural Victoria and the best means of communicating with people in rural Victoria. Now one finds that nearly two years after the study was commenced, and six months after the report was presented to the Government, no hard economic data has been acted upon.

The Federal issues are plainer than ever. The Government communication with the electorate is costlier than it has ever been. One of the major recommendations of the report has been rejected out of hand. I refer to the public authority dividend tax. We all know that was an iniquitous tax imposed by this Government. It should never have been imposed. It is an unfair tax and it taxes funds which belong to the grain growers of this State. The Opposition has stated unequivocally that the tax will be removed when the Liberal Party comes to office.

When one examines the wheat industry one finds that post farm gate costs absorb 47.3 per cent of the free on board price of wheat. Unhappily it is true that this Government has always been prone to blame factors over which it says it has no control, particularly for the plight of the grain industry. The Government tries to escape the blame for the costs involved and blames the plight of the industry on overseas factors.

Most honourable members will be aware of what those numerous factors are. They include the policy of the European Economic Community, the United States of America farm Bill policy, Japanese quotas, the oversupply of world agricultural products, declining demand, the recession in many parts of the world, increasing self-sufficiency and declining world prices. They certainly contribute to the problems of the rural community, but only in part. The domestic policies of government distort the pattern of agriculture.

I mentioned the 47.3 per cent post farm gate cost factor and the authority for that is the discussion paper of the Royal Commission into Grain Handling, Storage and Transportation. The components of that 47.3 per cent, with one exception, are in the hands of the State Government and include freight, Grain Elevators Board charges, port

loading costs, Australian Wheat Board carryover costs, headquarters development fund costs and research provisions, as well as wharfage and sea freight.

Recently the honourable member who represents the North Western Province in another place quoted figures in relation to his own particular farming enterprise and the response of the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs was both remarkable and reprehensible. The Minister ridiculed the claim made by the honourable member and accused him of putting at risk the credit that could be supplied to wheat farmers.

The Minister said that banks, financial institutions and country businesses would be reluctant to extend credit if they saw the figures and the quotes made by the honourable member. That seems to me to be most misleading. It was an ill-informed comment on the part of the Minister and it suggests that those particular institutions are not aware of the financial situation that exists amongst the farming community.

The Minister is suggesting that we should hush up the facts, that we should not speak about them and pretend the problems do not exist. As a parting shot, the Minister said that post farm gate costs were under review by the Royal Commission into Grain Handling, Storage and Transportation. He said that, in preparation for its first hearing, the commission had produced the identical figures that had been quoted.

In speaking about farm costs it is worth mentioning that for every percentage increase in fuel costs and interest rates \$100 million is added to farm costs. Many honourable members would agree that there is a problem in the grain industry and that farmers in the Wimmera and Mallee are facing difficult times. They accept that as part of the changing cycle of the farm situation. They go on to say, "What is wrong with the wool, dairy and meat industries?" Honourable members should not for a minute believe those industries are in good shape. Unfortunately, the community is continuously subjected to propaganda and information that does not accurately portray the true situation of the farm sector.

When one considers the dairy industry, one would have to admit that it is not in the desperate situation it was in a short time ago. However, for the seven days a week that dairy farmers work, the return is very poor indeed. The lamb industry is better than it was last year, but that was an improvement on what was a well-under-cost-of-production situation. One could certainly say that the wool industry is better than it was a year or so ago but, once again, when one hears informed statements from people who really know what they are talking about, one finds the situation is not what most people would imagine it to be.

The President of the Wool Council of Australia, Mr Hugh Beggs told the national agricultural outlook conference that the present prices for wool were in fact a disaster. He said that they were equivalent to the prices received in the 1928–32 depression years. Those prices are also equivalent to the 1970 wool price crash.

The other danger, of course, with the declining grain industry and what, on the surface, may appear to be a more lucrative wool industry, is that there may be a swing from grain to wool and lamb. Some opinions may vary on that matter but most of the key Bureau of Agricultural Economics speakers at the outlook conference pointed out the real dangers of that occurring.

More recently, Mr David Asimus of the Australian Wool Corporation supported those views. Those people are nervous and concerned that that swing may take place and that it will be very detrimental to total wool production and, therefore, the price thereof.

Recent trade figures show that exports—which are mainly agricultural products—have declined by a massive 23 per cent. During that same period imports have risen by only 3 per cent. I challenge the Government—and specifically the Victorian Labor Government—to face up to the heavy burden of taxes and charges.

Rural people and the farming community cannot continue to bear consumer price index increases. If those increases continue in their present form, an ever increasing number of farmers will be walking off their properties.

Unfortunately, we have seen recently what I call a damaging thrust on the part of both Federal and State Governments in boosting the manufacturing sector as the framework of the economic prosperity of this State and nation. I would be the first to support manufacturing industry. A number of manufacturing industries are doing well in the electorate I represent.

However, one has to look at the facts and recognise that widespread evidence exists that Australia's secondary industries are less competitive on world markets. Recently Mr Brian Haig of the Australian National University made a comparison between Australian agriculture and Australian manufacturing performance. He compared Australia with the United Kingdom the United States of America and West Germany.

Mr Haig found that each Australian farmer produced 51 per cent more than his American counterpart; 155 per cent more than his counterpart in Great Britain and 220 per cent more than his West German counterpart.

The figures tell a different story in the manufacturing industry. Australia is ahead of the United Kingdom; behind West Germany, and has half the productivity of the United States of America. The message the Government should have is to direct its resources to those industries where Australia is performing best. Yet the State and Federal Governments are pinning their faith for the economic future on industries that do not perform as well as Australia's competitors.

The increase for primary industry in the current Federal Budget was less than 1 per cent, which was a decline in real terms. The Victorian Government's allocation, through the Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, rose by only 0.9 per cent, a serious decline in real terms.

There is room for Governments to reconsider their priorities, especially if they are genuine about their publicly stated support for rural industries. The recent study of the Economic Planning Advisory Council into the medium-term outlook for the farm sector stressed that domestic policy incentives were more likely to be successful in improving farm productivity than dependence on decisions taken overseas.

The Opposition calls on the Victorian Government to reconsider its economic strategy and to ensure that the State's resources are wisely used so that no one sector suffers because of preferential treatment of others.

As an example of how Australia is seen by people from other countries, recently a group of Japanese business advisers visited our country and not only were they critical of the state of the economy, but they also made it clear that there was no hope of significant Japanese investment until the Government got its economic policy heading in the right direction.

The Opposition recognises the need for restraint and for tighter economic management. I am not suggesting that the Government ought to spend large sums of money in the rural sector or any other sector; rather, I am criticising and questioning the Government's overall policy, particularly regarding taxes and charges. I am saying that there are two glaring weaknesses in the Government, the Ministers and the Premier's philosophy: firstly, that they do not listen to the problems of rural Victoria; and, secondly, that they do not spend money in the right areas.

I shall cite one example; Grandiflora is a company situated on the way to Hastings, which grows flowers under glass. It produces a wide variety of flowers in an efficient manner, and it is recognised as being competent in its technology and work. The company has turnover of \$3.5 million a year and employs 167 people. Its glasshouses are established on 27 acres of land and each acre cost \$1 million to establish. That company has been

struggling to survive, but it has real export potential. It is currently exporting a small amount of produce to Singapore, Hong Kong and Vancouver. However, even though it is making a small profit, the company is having difficulties because of the heavy costs involved. It asked the Government for assistance but received absolutely nothing.

Another company, Carjene Pacific, which has a similar operation in the flower growing business, receives \$1 million a year for research. Those are the sorts of things to which I thought the Government was going to pay special attention—new industries, particularly those with export potential in the horticultural area. The Government should have given Grandiflora greater consideration when it asked for assistance.

Honourable members should not underestimate the severe situation that faces many farmers across the length and breadth of Victoria. The rural community has enjoyed two good seasons; otherwise, the situation would be far worse. In New South Wales hundreds of farmers are leaving their land week by week. Four suicides have taken place in one area. If the Government does not change its economic policies towards the farming community, the same sort of thing may happen in Victoria particularly in the Mallee region, where many farming communities are so desperate that there is no way now that approximately 10 or 12 per cent of farmers can survive. They will be forced off their properties.

It is essential that Governments do all in their power to ensure that the next 10 or 15 per cent of farmers do not fall into the same pit of despair.

Mr GAVIN (Coburg)—I am delighted to participate in the debate in the motion for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech. I congratulate His Excellency for his performance in opening Parliament and in general. He is a far better Governor than the previous Governor. I am not a Royalist, but a social democrat, so I am not supportive of these things; but I do acknowledge that the present Governor is one of the better Governors that Victoria has had.

In his address, His Excellency referred to leadership both in the economic and social areas and indicated that the Victorian Government was performing extremely well. He mentioned the Government's performance in achieving an economic recovery, job creation and high employment rate. Victoria has achieved the lowest unemployment rates of any State in 44 consecutive months.

His Excellency referred to the social justice strategy and said that Victoria was ahead of all other States in its social policy.

The opposition parties are acknowledging the Government's performance in these areas as outstanding, because yesterday the honourable member for Swan Hill indicated that opposition parties should not develop policies until election time. It is an indication that the Opposition supports Government policies in these areas. It is a backhanded compliment on the Government's performance.

His Excellency also referred to the necessity for leadership in these areas. James Madison, in *The Federalist Papers* stated:

The aim of every political constitution is, or ought to be, first to obtain for rulers men who possess most wisdom to discern, and most virtue to pursue, the common good of society.

Mr Madison was indicating the real need to develop leadership in political constitutions.

President Ronald Reagan of the United States of America—honourable members opposite would acknowledge that he is a better leader than most—stated:

As worthless as an army in all its organisational forms is without officers, equally worthless is a political organisation without the suitable leader.

President Reagan is acknowledging the need for leadership.

I researched to find some quotes used to describe the qualities of leadership. The ancient Roman historian Publius Cornelius Tacitus, said that "reason and judgment are the qualities of a leader". That description was unsatisfactory, so I researched further to find

a few more references. I discovered two authors who described seven qualities that make a good leader.

The first to refer to them was Joseph Kallenback in his study, *The American Chief Executive*, written in 1966, and then Philip Williams in *Hugh Gaitskell*, which was published only about three years ago and which won an enormous number of awards for a political biography.

I have identified the seven qualities that make a successful political leader: willingness to take responsibility for hard decisions; audacity and a zest for combat; a sense of proportion and perspective; a capacity to withstand unfair criticism; a skill in judging men; an ability to inspire confidence and loyalty; and political sensitivity and timing.

I shall compare those qualities in the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the National Party, the Queensland Premier, a few Liberal Party pretenders and the Premier. I shall point out who is the best leader. The pretenders in the Liberal Party are the honourable members for Hawthorn, Polwarth and Gippsland West.

The first quality was the willingness to take responsibility for hard decisions. Generally, the Opposition does not need to make any hard decisions, so it is hard to assess whether the Leader of the Opposition has that quality. Last year he was put to the test when he was challenged on the leadership of his party. He made a hard decision when he decided to use his own vote to save his leadership.

Mr Simpson—That was more desperation than a hard decision.

Mr GAVIN—It was a desperate ploy but, nevertheless, it could be considered a hard decision for the Leader of the Opposition. I think his decision was a failure.

The Premier has demonstrated his ability to make hard decisions on many occasions. For example, he deregistered the Builders Labourers Federation even though it was affiliated with the Labor Party. It was a hard decision to take but he took it. The Premier also made a decision to sack the Richmond City Council, which was also a part of the Labor Party.

Mr Perrin—That is not true.

Mr GAVIN—We sacked the Richmond City Council; it was one of the first things the Government decided on in 1982. That was before the honourable member for Bulleen was elected to Parliament, so he would not understand what I am talking about. Either that or his memory is bad. The decision to sack members of our party was tough but we did it.

Another tough decision taken by the Premier was to agree to Government involvement in the Portland aluminium smelter, which the former Liberal Government let slide and nearly destroyed. The Government decided to get the smelter operating and it achieved that. Only recently the smelter exported its first load of aluminium.

Another indication of the Premier's ability to make hard decisions was the decriminalisation of prostitution. Perhaps that should have been done a long time ago but it took this Government to do it. On any scale, on the first quality the Premier is miles ahead of the Leader of the Opposition.

The second quality is audacity and a zest for combat. The Leader of the Opposition is audacious but the Premier is far more aggressive, and any Leader of the Liberal Party who has confronted him in debate has failed. The Premier got rid of the former Leader of the Liberal Party, the Honourable Lindsay Thompson; and he is demolishing the current Leader of the Opposition, who is at the stage where he relies on his own vote to retain leadership.

Because of the Premier's dominance, the pretenders in the Liberal Party do not really want to become Leader of the Liberal Party. Their efforts are only half-hearted.

The third quality is a sense of proportion and perspective. Here the Leader of the Opposition also fails. To illustrate his lack of proportion and perspective I shall quote a comment he made in the House in 1976 during the debate on the Nepean Centre for Physically Handicapped. The Labor Party Opposition had complained that the siting of the centre was dreadful because it was built on top of a hill with steep slopes. At the time the present Leader of the Opposition said in answer to that complaint that "the exercise will do them good".

Mr Weideman—Did he say that in the House?

Mr GAVIN—Yes, he said that in the House and it is reported in *Hansard*.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Hockley)—Order! The honourable member for Frankston South is disorderly. He will cease interjecting.

Mr GAVIN—The Leader of the Opposition has no sense of proportion or perspective; generally, he goes over the top. However, the Premier has a vision for Victoria. He is more interested in the redistribution of wealth, which is something the Opposition parties criticise. The Premier has implemented both an economic and a social justice strategy to achieve his vision.

The fourth quality is a capacity to withstand unfair criticism. Obviously, the Leader of the Opposition is suffering badly from heaps of criticism that has been unleashed upon him by his party colleagues. He cannot accept that criticism. In contrast, the Premier, who is greatly criticised during question time, handles criticism well. It is known that he does not tolerate fools or nonsense and he handles any question asked of him appropriately. He demonstrates his ability during question time every day.

The fifth quality is the skill to judge men. The Leader of the Opposition has shown his ability to judge men but not women. The only talented member of the Opposition is a woman and she is not on the front bench. The Leader of the Opposition wants only mediocre men around him to allow him to dominate the Shadow Cabinet at party meetings. He ignores his more talented colleagues, especially the honourable member for Kew.

The attitude adopted by the Leader of the Opposition reminds me of an ancient French royal house of the fifth century, called Merovingian. Under the Salic law of the time, women were excluded from succession to the throne. It appears the Leader of the Opposition is adopting a similar policy 1500 years later!

As I said, the Leader of the Opposition prefers his more talented colleagues to remain on the back bench.

Mr Simpson—Like the honourable members for Berwick, Benambra and Polwarth?

Mr GAVIN—Yes. Others are the honourable members for Frankston South and Forest Hill. The Premier prefers to have a talented front bench and it is acknowledged throughout Australia that it is the best. The Premier is well on top of the Leader of the Opposition.

The sixth quality is the ability to inspire confidence and loyalty. The Leader of the Opposition has a problem. He inspires a lot of confidence but no loyalty. He is a confident person but he has had two challenges to his leadership. He survived the last challenge only by casting his own vote. There are always little groups of Liberal Party members around the corridors having discussions and planning damage to or a coup d'état against the Leader of the Opposition.

However, the Premier inspires loyalty and confidence. No-one has challenged his leadership. The Premier has had a free rein in his period as Leader of the Labor Party. There has not been any challenge because he has been able to inspire loyalty over many years. There is no lack of confidence in the Premier within his party or within the community. That has been demonstrated at the ballot box in the past two State elections. There has been significant business investment in Victoria in that time, so the business community obviously has confidence in him.

Therefore, on the sixth quality of leadership the Premier again has demonstrated that he has what it takes.

Mr Simpson—He has a 60 per cent popularity rating!

Mr GAVIN—Yes, the Premier has a 60 per cent rating while the poor old Leader of the Opposition has only 27 per cent, which is rapidly reducing.

The seventh and final quality of a leader is his political sensitivity and timing. The Leader of the Opposition has performed extremely poorly in that area. I have already referred to the example involving a centre for physically handicapped people when the Leader of the Opposition suggested that those people should walk up and down the slopes of the nearest hill because the exercise would do them good. The Leader of the Opposition also performed extremely badly at an Italian charity function a few months ago; he is now known in those circles as the "Italian stallion".

Mr Delzoppo—Mr Acting Speaker, more members of the House should be present to listen to this fascinating speech. I direct your attention to the state of the House.

A quorum was formed.

Mr GAVIN—I was referring the House to the seventh quality of leadership, which is political sensitivity and timing. I stated that the sensitivity and timing of the Leader of the Opposition is not good. Another example of his lack of timing was when he decided not to invite the Federal Leader of the Opposition to Victoria during the forthcoming Central Highlands Province by-election. The Leader of the Opposition was castigated by the Federal Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, Mr Brown, who said that the Victorian Leader was displaying bad manners in not inviting the Federal Leader to Victoria. The sensitivity and timing of the Leader of the Opposition is appalling.

I contrast that to the sensitivity and timing of the Premier, who has had to deal with the economic climate of the past few years and the increasing cost of imported and manufactured goods. A Government must be selective, sensitive and aware of the prevailing strengths and the Cain Government has been able to do that and to provide massive job growth and significant reforms in a number of areas. In comparing the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition, it is obvious that the Premier wins hands down.

I suggest to the Leader of the Opposition that he should read chapter 19 of Machiavelli's *The Prince*, which is headed "On avoiding being despised and hated". I shall not read that short chapter of six pages, but the Leader of the Opposition is performing so badly in many areas that he should read it in an attempt to improve his performance.

The Liberal Party has reached the stage where it suffers from varying degrees of internal suspicion, rivalry, competition and outright strife, which has caused a number of its members to become frustrated and discouraged. A number of Liberal Party members are now spending more time at the races. The honourable member for Kew has decided to undertake another course at university. The honourable member for Doncaster spends all his time at the Stock Exchange. It is obvious that they are discouraged and do not believe the Liberal Party can win at the next election.

The Labor Party is well aware that the Premier has dignity and strength and is held in high esteem by the community. The next State election will be a lay down misere for the Cain Labor Government. It is clear on any scale of leadership that the Premier is a much better performer than the Leader of the Opposition.

A second issue that has been debated in recent days is the performance of the Queensland Premier, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen. I refer honourable members to the comments made by Ian Macphee, who is a Federal frontbencher of the Liberal Party. His comments in the *Advertiser* of 18 February 1987 are extremely enlightening and should be supported by all Liberal Party members. Mr Macphee is reported as having said:

Sir Joh was beginning to sound like a "travelling medicine man of old".

Mr Macphee challenged the Queensland Premier to participate in a debate in Mr Macphee's electorate. The article continues:

His magic elixirs are slogans and clichés. They may sound attractive to some people but they lack substance. He is committed to power, not democracy. The voters will want facts and they will get them from me. All they will get from Sir Joh is slogans and "Don't you worry about it. I'll deal with that further down the track".

Mr Macphee also asked where the money was coming from to back Sir Joh. He is reported as having said:

Is it from the land speculators and gambling interests which have prospered under Sir Joh?

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster)—On a point of order, Mr Acting Speaker, I believe the honourable member for Coburg is indirectly reflecting on the Premier of Queensland, which is not permitted under Standing Orders. I regret that no members of the National Party are present to defend the Premier of Queensland. I, for one, fear Sir Joh's wrath and do not believe he should be slandered.

Mr SIMPSON (Niddrie)—On the point of order, I have listened closely to the contribution made by the honourable member for Coburg and I am certain that he has quoted extensively and accurately from the comments of a Liberal Party Federal member, Mr Ian Macphee. The honourable member has not made any comments of his own in that respect, so I suggest that the honourable member for Doncaster is out of order. The comments attributed to the Premier of Queensland have been clearly from the mouth of Mr Macphee, who is a Liberal Party member of the Federal Parliament.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Hockley)—Order! This is a wide ranging debate and I do not uphold the point of order.

Mr GAVIN (Coburg)—I am amazed that a Liberal member of Parliament would be critical of one of his Federal colleagues, a former Minister of the Crown. That is a further demonstration of the split in the Liberal Party.

Mr Macphee continued:

Queensland had a more depressed economy than other States, higher unemployment, lower average weekly earnings, a public service with the highest growth rate, highest growth in public spending, greatly increased taxes and charges, increased debt, increased regulation of industries and cronyism on a grand scale which makes even the New South Wales branch of the Labor Party look saintly.

One would not expect Mr Macphee to be a supporter of the New South Wales Labor Government, but he has stated that the Queensland Bjelke-Petersen Government is worse than any in the country.

Mr Macphee also stated:

These incontrovertible facts make a mockery of Sir Joh's claim to stand for lower taxation, lower government spending and less regulation.

Queensland has been called the red tape State and Sir Joh has regulated his rural industries more tightly than any socialist Government has dared to do in Australia.

By contrast, "the white shoe brigade" associated with land speculation and gambling, would like to get even richer by exploiting other Australians as they had already done to Queenslanders.

A prominent member of the Federal Liberal Party has castigated the Queensland Premier and his Government.

The Queensland Premier is the "great divider": he has divided the Federal National Party and the Federal Leader is divided from the Queensland Premier. He is doing the same to the Federal Liberal Party where members are dividing on whether to support Mr Howard or Mr Peacock. On top of that, the Federal coalition is about to split. Federal National Party members are serving it to Federal members of the Liberal Party who, in turn, are serving it back to members of the National Party, and that process is spreading to Victoria. The Queensland Premier wants to keep the divisive process going and he is doing a dreadful job in dividing the community.

In many ways, the Queensland Premier reminds me of some of the more stupid people in the British Labour Party. I was fortunate enough to hear an address by Tony Benn in 1983 when he denied the history of the party up to that date. In the 1983 election, the party gained 28 per cent of the vote, which was the lowest it had ever got. Tony Benn said that it was the first time the British Labour Party had gone to the people on a socialist program, and it won 8 million votes. He thought that was wonderful and the fact that the party gained only 28 per cent of the vote was immaterial.

The Premier of Queensland is denying the involvement in the conservative parties of people such as Malcolm Fraser, Doug Anthony and Peter Nixon and others who were successful Ministers during 1975 to 1983 and frontbenchers in the Opposition until 1975. He is claiming that that period of government was part of the socialist experiment started by Mr Whitlam. By doing that Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen is denying the history of the conservative parties. He is claiming that those people were not pure and did not adopt the right policies and is trying to shove them from the history of the party. I am pointing out to some of the conservative members of Parliament that Sir Joh will help to destroy their parties.

The *Northern Times*, a Swan Hill newspaper, has reported a number of comments made by the honourable member for Swan Hill in support of the Queensland Premier. He stated that:

The electorate was dissatisfied with the present conservative leadership.

That comment applies to the Leader of the Opposition as well as the honourable member's own Leader. The members who are backing the Queensland Premier are being disloyal to their own Leaders and the history of their parties. I hope the more sensible people in the Liberal Party will get behind Ian Macphree and Steele Hall and strongly resist the stupidity of the Queensland Premier and his supporters in this Chamber. If they do not, their parties will be finished at the next election and a new third force will have to develop to revive the Liberal and National parties.

Mr PERRIN (Bulleen)—It is a pleasure for me to respond to the Governor's Speech. I pledge my loyalty and the loyalty of the constituents of Bulleen to Her Majesty the Queen.

The Governor's Speech was disappointing, not because the Governor did not deliver it well, but because of what it did not include. It is obvious that the staff of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet who wrote the Speech do not know what is going on in the electorate.

The speech honourable members have just heard from the honourable member for Coburg was one of the most trivialised speeches I have heard in this place. I pity his constituents. The honourable member had the opportunity of making a valuable contribution to this important debate, but he trivialised it.

The Governor's Speech had two major themes; firstly, the Government's economic strategy; secondly, the Government's much vaunted social justice strategy. They are both myths!

I shall deal firstly with the economic strategy, which is obviously not working. Victoria currently has the highest taxation in Australia, the highest level of debt in Australia, the highest inflation in Australia and the highest growth in the Public Service. New car registrations in Victoria dropped dramatically in 1986, 250 000 working days were lost through strikes during the last financial year and our State has record high interest rates.

If that is what the Government has set out to achieve through its economic strategy, it has been extremely successful. The factors I mentioned clearly indicate that the economic strategy is not working.

As I stated, Victoria is the highest taxed State in Australia with every man, woman and child having an annual tax burden of \$931. That represents an 87 per cent increase in taxation since the Cain Government came to power, which is well above the rate of

inflation. Victoria is the highest taxed State in Australia. The two lowest taxed States are the two Conservative States of Queensland and Tasmania.

When one compares the highest taxed State, Victoria, with the lowest taxed State, Queensland, one notes there is a difference of approximately \$330 in the amount of tax paid per capita per year; that works out at approximately \$1300 per family—that is, two parents and two children. It is an indictment of this Government that Victorians have been placed in that situation.

I shall refer to a couple of areas of taxation which are clearly skyrocketing. Stamp duty has increased by 100 per cent since the Cain Government came to power. Petroleum franchises have increased by 140 per cent and tobacco franchises by 183 per cent. The financial institutions duty was introduced by the Cain Labor Government—this State previously had no such tax—so all of it represents an increase in taxation. Motor car drivers' licence fees have increased by 142 per cent, and the public authority dividend tax has increased by 311 per cent since the election of the Cain Labor Government.

The second area which gives the lie to the claim of success for the Government's economic strategy relates to debt. My view of debt is that it should include both borrowings and liabilities of the State; that is the proper way of working out the per capita debt. One must include the other liabilities, such as the deficit that has been run up on State superannuation funds, which amounts to approximately \$6000 million.

When one considers that and adds all the other liabilities and the losses in the State Insurance Office and other areas, the total is approximately \$9000 per head of population, or \$36 000 for each family in this State.

I am deeply concerned that that debt, which has escalated markedly during the term of the Cain Labor Government, will require massive debt servicing costs because the money has been borrowed during a time of high interest rates and a drop in the value of the Australian dollar. That will become a burden on Victorians. The present debt servicing costs work out at approximately \$490 per person, or approximately \$2000 for each family.

One has only to refer to the statistics that were released a couple of weeks ago to find that Victoria has the highest rate of inflation in Australia. If that is what the Government sought to achieve by its economic strategy, it has been successful. Victoria's inflation rate is 10.2 per cent.

When one examines the inflation rates of our trading partners overseas, one notes that Germany has negative inflation—it actually has deflation—and that Australia has an inflation rate that is approximately eight times that of Japan. That is an indication that the Government has its economic strategy right out of kilter with the needs of the Victorian people.

During the recent Parliamentary recess I undertook some investigation of this matter and of the policy of the Government on public returns and dividends. An examination of the figures indicates how bankrupt the policies of this Government are.

I shall refer to three statutory authorities. The information is taken from the annual reports of those bodies. In 1985–86, the State Electricity Commission made a profit of \$40.8 million; and the Government took that profit and some more from its own reserves to collect a dividend of \$80 million. That is a recipe for bankruptcy.

Similarly, the Board of Works made a profit of \$18.6 million, and the Government took from it a dividend of \$60 million. Again, that is a recipe for disaster, and a fraud on the people of Victoria and their children.

The Port of Melbourne Authority made a loss of \$9.4 million. Of course, it was disguised in the annual report—an \$11 million insurance reserve was written back in, which had been built up over many years—but the real trading loss was \$9.4 million, and the Government took from it a dividend of \$5 million. That is insolvency if ever I have seen it!

Another area that is gobbling up an enormous amount of funds in this State is the public transport system, which is so burdened with debt and debt servicing costs that there is no doubt that drastic measures will have to be taken soon.

The transport deficit in 1985–86 alone was \$953 million—that is, almost \$1 billion in only one year. Since the Cain Labor Government has been in power, approximately \$3000 million worth of deficits have been run up in the public transport system. That is a policy for economic disaster.

Approximately \$3000 million worth of debt has been incurred in the past few years, at record high interest rates. If the public transport users believe transport fares will not increase or that services will not be cut, they are in for a surprise.

We already know that every piece of rolling stock in the public sector transport system is owned not by Victorians but by overseas corporations, most of which come from Japan. All the rolling stock was sold off by this Government as a particularly bankrupt short-term policy.

All these massive losses that are occurring have the effect of taking money away from a valuable area of the economic infrastructure of this State—road development.

I am concerned that, as a result of the way in which the debt has been accumulated, the debt servicing costs will be exponential to the point where there will be no stopping them. It is not working. If that was the Government's aim it is not in the interests of the people of Victoria. Those facts certainly give the lie to the claims of success for the economic strategy.

I have also undertaken some research of the State Electricity Commission. I have no doubt that, technically, without the Government guarantees, the commission would be bankrupt. During the past four or five years the commission has incurred foreign exchange currency losses totalling approximately \$650 million. Most of those losses have not been included in the trading figures of the commission but, rather, have been put into reserves to be written off over the period of the loans. Future young Victorians will have to pay back those losses.

I refer now to the social indicators because much was made in the Governor's Speech of the social justice strategy and its importance. Therefore, one must ascertain whether people are faring better or worse from the social justice standpoint under the Cain Government.

There are very few statistics on social factors, but I shall refer to the few that exist. Since the Government has been in power the number of people on hospital waiting lists has increased by a massive 269 per cent. Those human beings are waiting in pain to have surgery. In my electorate a woman with a heart condition has been placed on a waiting list for elective surgery because she cannot be placed in the Austin Hospital. She has visited my office and begged me to try to get her into a public hospital. She is a pensioner and her life is at risk. For three days before she enters hospital she must stop taking medication, and four times she has been to hospital, having stopped the medication, and been told that she does not have a bed. She is a migrant to this country and has contributed to it, but is now one of the many on hospital waiting lists.

The second area about which the Government should be ashamed is the 101 per cent increase in the number of families on housing waiting lists. The people on those waiting lists are those from lower socioeconomic groups. They are people who need housing. While they are on the priority waiting list or the general waiting list they must live somewhere and they are generally living in substandard housing and paying exorbitant rents or, alternatively, living in caravan parks. That is an indictment of the Government and an indication that the social justice strategy is falling down.

The third area where the Government's policies are not working is in unemployment. The Government stacks the Public Service with new people as part of its job creation

schemes to overcome unemployment. The unemployment figures are being held down because of that fact. When the Liberal Government left office in 1982, unemployment was 6.1 per cent, or 110 800 people. In December 1986, 7.3 per cent, or 149 600 people were unemployed, which is about 40 000 more than there were when the Liberal Party was in government. That is an indication that the social justice strategy is not working.

Where is the strategy impacting? The Leader of the Opposition earlier today indicated that young people between fifteen and nineteen years of age are taking the brunt of it. These future generations of Victorians, future leaders and future builders of the community have been let down. This indicates that the social justice strategy is a lie; it is rhetoric and it is not working.

Another area where the strategy is not working is in the operation of interest rates. Interest rates are impacting right across the board, whether people are renting or buying houses. For those renting houses, landlords are paying high interest rates and passing on those costs in higher rents. I refer the House to the latest statistics published by the Real Estate Institute of Australia and MGICA Ltd, which every quarter carry out an analysis of what is called "home loan affordability" in Australia. The figures indicate that Victoria is one of the three worst States in terms of interest components and repayment components of housing loans. The two States with worse ratios of average home loan repayments to median family incomes are the socialist States of New South Wales and South Australia. The summary of the Victorian analysis for the year to September 1986 stated:

Over the year to the September quarter 1986, average monthly loan repayments in Victoria increased by 24 per cent.

The loan repayment debt that must be repaid by ordinary families in the community has become an intolerable burden. They cannot afford to pay off their own homes. High interest rates are also having an effect on businesses, particularly small business. Many are scaling back business operations to meet interest commitments. However, according to today's newspapers the Federal Minister for Education, Senator Ryan, made the admission that interest rates would not come down and, in fact, they may increase if anything. The National Australia Bank Ltd has made the same statement. Interest rates will increase, not decrease.

The social justice strategy is certainly not in the best interests of the ordinary people of Victoria. I shall refer to other areas which indicate where the Government is going wrong. The Australian Bureau of Statistics figures for school enrolments in both the Government and non-Government sector indicate that while the Cain Government has been in power Government school enrolments have decreased by 50 000 pupils and private school enrolments have increased by 20 000 pupils.

The parents of school children are voting with their feet. They are leaving the State system and going to the private system. Confidential documents, which the Opposition knows the Ministry of Education has, indicate that the trend will continue to the point where, by about 1995, the ratio of Government school to private school enrolments will be 50/50. One may call it privatisation in education. I am waiting for the left of the Labor Party to start talking about cutting funding for private schools, because that is where the argument will be, not what is available for the Government school system to attract back pupils.

Another area where the social justice strategy is not working is in home security and protection. Since the Government has been in power, crime has increased 42 per cent. It is an indictment of the Government that people can no longer leave their homes without the fear of being burgled, or can no longer walk down the street or engage in any activities without some sort of fear. There is a clear need for more police to overcome the deficiencies. There has not been a 42 per cent increase in the number of operational police. There is obviously a need for police to have more powers. When my party is in government it will provide more police powers.

Yet another area of concern is the revolving door policy in prisons. When a judge sets a minimum sentence, that should be it, and the criminal should serve that sentence. The bail system should be tightened up so that no criminals are allowed back on the street. If that were done, rates of crime would be reduced. I am pleased to espouse those options for the people of Victoria as the policy of a future Liberal Government.

I shall also consider short-term policies of the Government. In my electorate of about 30 000 constituents, which covers half of the City of Doncaster and Templestowe, there has been a massive sell-off of land. A large area of railway land in Doncaster was sold off. The Government must have made \$10 million from land sales in Bulleen, Lower Templestowe and Templestowe. Two police station sites in Bulleen were also sold off.

One police station site in Anderson Street, Templestowe; one secondary school site in Porter Street, Templestowe—a developing area of new housing estates—that netted the Government \$3 million; a secondary school site in King Street, East Doncaster, for \$1.2 million; a primary school site in Smiths Road, Templestowe; other Ministry of Education land in Blackburn Road, East Doncaster; special development school land in Reynolds Road, East Doncaster; some Board of Works land in Reynolds Road, Templestowe; and the school grounds and oval of a closed primary school in Ayr Street, Doncaster, have been sold off by the Government.

That is an indication of what is happening in one electorate where massive sell-offs of high value land are occurring. It is an indication of the short-term policies of the Government because not 1 cent of that money is coming back to address the problems of the residents.

In the last few minutes available to me, I shall speak about the massive waste of Government funds. I am a member of the Liberal Party's Waste Watch Committee, which has identified \$186 million of funds that have been wasted by the Government. Clearly cuts could be made in those waste areas. By the time of the next election, that committee will have identified in excess of \$300 million of wasted taxpayers' funds. Information is pouring in at the moment and, as time goes on, we will release more and more information to the people about the enormous waste of money by the Government.

The Liberal Party also has a Tax Watch Committee that examines Government charges. It has identified areas in which taxes and charges have outstripped rises in the consumer price index. It does not matter whether one has the capacity to pay or whether one's business is making a profit or a loss; one must nevertheless pay any specified increase in taxes and charges. No consideration is given to people and their needs. It is a case of the Government wanting more money so it just grabs, grabs and grabs. The Tax Watch Committee will continue its work and will make reports available to people from time to time.

At the last State election, the Liberal Party went to the people with 37 different policies. Those policies were wide ranging and indicated the depth and understanding by the Liberal Party to the needs of the community.

Members of the Liberal Party spent three days last week at a seminar. Those three days were beneficial to Liberal Party members. An enormous amount of work was done; many matters were clarified and new policies were agreed to which will be announced well before the next election so that the people of Victoria, when they go to place their votes in the ballot boxes, will have a clear alternative to the Cain socialist Government.

One policy of the Liberal Party, which is not a rerelease or a residual policy but our policy of restraint in government, indicates where our party considers it is going. I shall read a summary of that policy which will show an alternative to the horrors of the Cain Government:

1. The provision of many Government services will be contracted out to the private and non-profit sectors.
2. In appropriate cases Government businesses will be shifted to the non-Government sector.

3. No new Government programs will commence except by Cabinet decision after an assessment of priorities including whether any existing program should be ended.

4. A reduction in public sector employment will be achieved through voluntary redeployment and natural attrition. There will be no retrenchments.

5. Regulations and paperwork requirements will be vigorously pruned.

That is a policy on which the Liberal Party went to the last election and it will not be substantially altered at the next election. That will be the type of policy that the people of Victoria will be crying out for when they are seeking tax relief from this highest taxing, highest borrowing Government.

Liberal Party policy at the next election will be clearly aimed at the families of Victoria, who are the people hit hardest by the policies of the Cain Government. These families have had to put their hands in their pockets for more and more money to pay for basic services such as third-party insurance and so on. Those people are now realising that they are paying more and getting less.

Mr Tanner—What about social justice?

Mr PERRIN—The Labor Government has destroyed its social justice policy. The people will be asking the Liberal Party to provide a Government of restraint and low taxes and to stop the escalation of debts in this State.

The debts in this State are killing the families, individuals and small businesses in this community. The cry from these people will commence in the Central Highlands Province by-election. People will come on 21 March and make it clear that they want an Upper House controlled by the Liberal Party, and they will go further in the next two years and make it clear that they want a Liberal Government in this House to provide stability and commonsense and bring some decency back to ordinary Victorian citizens.

Mrs HIRSH (Wantirna)—I offer my congratulations to His Excellency the Governor on his Speech at the opening of Parliament this week and I send the good wishes of the people of the electorate of Wantirna to the Reverend Dr Davis McCaughey and Mrs Jean McCaughey, who have brought a new light and new feeling to Government House in this State. It is extremely pleasing for the people of Victoria and the people of my electorate, some of whom have taken the opportunity of visiting Government House for the first time.

The Governor's Speech points out the achievements to date of the Cain Labor Government after five years in office—at the commencement of the sixth year into its first decade of office. His Speech points out some of the future directions of the Cain Government and clearly demonstrates to the people of Victoria the benefits that have accrued and will continue to accrue to them in the foreseeable future under the Cain Government.

The Governor pointed out that the Cain Government is bringing modern government to a modern society. He stated that the Cain Government seeks to redress injustice where it presently exists, and equally to take the maximum advantage of all those opportunities which a rapidly changing world presents. It seeks, in other words, nothing less than a humane and prosperous society: an enlivened, modern society.

The prosperity of this State is being enhanced by the Cain Government's economic strategy, the first such strategy to be developed in this State, and the statistics which in fact go to point out the effects of the economic strategy of the Government have significant social meaning to the people of Victoria. The economic strategy lies at the heart of Victoria's lead in the economic recovery taking place in this country.

The Governor's Speech describes the pursuit of a range of measures to facilitate private sector development, which is contributing enormously to the economic recovery. The

spin-off here, of course, is of particular significance to people in the Wantirna electorate, and that is jobs; jobs in the private sector as well as in the public sector. The Government's economic strategy is encouraging this.

These policies will create jobs for ordinary people—not simply for the white shoe brigade at the Gold Coast. I notice that members of the National Party have decided not to sit through a day in Parliament. They are displaying disrespect for the Parliamentary processes by their absence from the Chamber. I wonder what their attitude will be when Joh takes them over in Victoria and whether he will ensure that they remain in the Chamber and try to do something. It is very difficult to know what members of the National Party in Victoria are doing because they are not telling.

The encouragement given to private sector development by the Cain Government in Victoria is different from private sector development up north, which is available only to the rich and benefits no-one but the rich, who get richer. In Victoria, private sector development is creating a record number of jobs. This is clearly manifest in the Wantirna electorate. For example, in the City of Knox, in which the electorate is centred, over the last six months of 1986 100 new factory premises were constructed. This demonstrates strong and firm private sector development.

As these factories and other industrial and commercial premises are constructed, employment is being made available to local people. The Government is providing roads and other infrastructure to facilitate the rapid development of these premises. The high and rapid growth occurring in the Wantirna electorate is taking place in a climate of confidence and optimism. It is worth seeing. It is being noted by the people who live in the locality because as their children are leaving school they are being placed in jobs, in apprenticeships and in further education at the new technical and further education college that was opened recently by the Government.

Victoria's lead in the job market is emphasised by recent Statewide figures. There are far fewer long-term unemployed people in this State than in any other State of Australia. This is due to the Government's economic strategy and to its encouragement of the private sector. Of course, as all honourable members are aware, Queensland has the highest unemployment rate in the nation. It provides a strong contrast to Victoria.

Victoria has an excellent record in youth employment. The Australian Bureau of Statistics figures for the twelve months to December 1986 show that the full-time employment of fifteen to nineteen year-olds grew by 14 100, representing a growth of 12·7 per cent compared with an Australia-wide growth of only 3 per cent. These figures dispute the rubbish that the honourable member for Bulleen carried on with in his speech. They are facts and figures and they show where Victoria is and where it is going.

The employment of fifteen to nineteen-year-olds is an important aspect in outer urban areas such as Wantirna where there is a large population of young people. The policies of the Cain Government on youth employment are very much appreciated by those families. The Cain Government has a wonderful record of achievement on apprenticeships. Generally, apprenticeships are increasing rapidly. In the Wantirna electorate, the group apprenticeship scheme makes a strong contribution to the employment of young people and last year, of the 15 500 apprentices Statewide, the group apprenticeship scheme had 1300 enrolments throughout the State. The outer east apprenticeship scheme contributed more than 100 apprentices to the employment figures of the State.

The group apprenticeship scheme is an important initiative of the Cain Government and the advantage is that smaller employees who are unable to afford full-time apprentices are able to train apprentices part time. Responsibility for the apprentices is undertaken by the scheme. For instance, if an employer requires a second-year or third-year apprentice, the employer will be provided with someone who has already undertaken initial training; if an employer is able to train a new apprentice, that apprentice can be provided. The outer east scheme, which had 113 apprentices commencing in 1987, has been successful in the metal, vehicle and building industries. At present, an extension is being considered

to include horticulture because there is a great demand for apprentices in that industry in the outer east, as there is also in cooking and catering. Some girls are being employed under the scheme and it is hoped that as the year progresses more apprentices will be able to be employed in other areas and that more girls will be attracted to the scheme.

The honourable member for Bulleen talked a lot of rubbish about youth unemployment. He should listen to what the Cain Government has done generally for young people. For instance, 50 per cent of fifteen to nineteen-year-olds attend school full time, 8 per cent in higher education; 32 per cent have full-time jobs. Of the 350 000 fifteen to nineteen-year-olds in the State, only 5 per cent are unemployed and not in full-time education. That is in contrast to the figures being bandied about by the honourable member for Bulleen on unemployment and represents a fairly small group of people whose needs should be and are being addressed by the Government. The honourable member's figures are incorrect. He should research and investigate them to determine clearly what the Government is doing for young people in work opportunities and education.

The prime purpose of any economic development should be the pursuit of social justice. This week, the Government pointed out clearly that the commitment it has to social justice is an ongoing commitment. It is important. Members of the Opposition and the National Party will benefit from reading that sentence in the Governor's Speech:

Compassion—manifest compassion for the underprivileged—is also a hallmark of any good society.

As the economic strategy that has been undertaken by the Government achieves its aims, the social justice strategy, which is concerned with the way in which a bureaucracy responds to the needs of a population, will begin to have an effect on groups such as people who are living in poverty, people who are suffering from long-term unemployment, the aged, and so on, and it will concern itself generally with human rights.

The ways in which a bureaucracy should respond to a population—because that is what a bureaucracy is for—are contained in the Governor's Speech:

These necessarily include fair, efficient, accessible services, the protection of citizens' rights, and the extension of the individual's democratic right to influence decision, which affect him or her.

The priorities under the Government's social justice strategy include major issues of public transport, road development, housing, education and the areas I mentioned previously.

I should like to discuss in some detail some of the areas of social justice that the Government has been successfully pursuing for five years and will continue to pursue, as I said earlier, well into the future.

So far as public transport is concerned, at least in the outer east, properly organised bus services are finally being provided. When I was elected to the seat of Wantirna in 1985 there were virtually no buses and one had to own a couple of cars to move outside one's house. There were some extensions to bus services in the first twelve months after I was elected.

Recently new services have been announced which are providing proper peak hour services to the people who live away from any other form of transport and providing accessible and regular off-peak services for commuters, school children and those people going to shopping centres and connecting with other forms of public transport.

Buses down to the East Burwood tram will continue to run more frequently enabling people to travel into the city with some ease. Bus services to the stations along the outer eastern string of railway lines are also increasing in frequency to the degree that it will become convenient for people to move about without requiring a car.

Road duplication, which in the Wantirna electorate was virtually zero a few years ago, is now taking place with some speed. Those dangerous roads, which could never in the past keep up with development, are finally being duplicated by the Cain Government. It took the Cain Government to examine these roads and begin the necessary duplication.

The duplication of Ferntree Gully Road has commenced and the duplication of the Mountain Highway is long overdue. It should have taken place during the 1960s. However, because of inadequate, inappropriate and total lack of planning by the former Liberal Government during the 1960s and 1970s, nothing was done until such time as the Cain Government developed proper planning and strategies that enabled resources to be placed where they are required.

With respect to housing, which was mentioned in the Governor's Speech, the Cain Government has done more for housing than any other Government before it. Some 300 public housing units are being built this financial year and for the first time people who want to live in the outer east in public housing are able to do so. This was never done before.

The Opposition, when in government, considered that the only places people should have public housing—because they were people who were underprivileged—were in the inner suburbs. No choices were given. Therefore, a person reared in the outer east who required public housing had to move. Those persons could not stay in their own area.

Now, through the spot purchase programs and small scale developments, attractive public housing is available in the outer east. This is extremely popular with the people who live there and who prefer not to move from the area in which they are already living.

There is a tenants' advice service in the outer east. Such a service was never provided by previous Governments. The service now provides advice for up to 20 hours a week. The service is extremely busy and organises advice and placement for tenants. It has commenced a program of arranging shared housing for people who desire it.

Churches in the outer east, especially in the Wantirna electorate, are taking an interest in housing and are beginning to provide emergency housing for people in difficulties. The social responsibility beginning to be shown by such organisations as church groups and other community groups in that area is highly commendable and should be taken up by groups in other areas. I congratulate the Bayswater Uniting Church and other church groups which have shown an interest in housing.

The State Government's mortgage relief program is in operation and proving to be useful. Honourable members should remember that building societies requested an increase in interest rates. The Treasurer has reassured people that they will not be increased in the near future.

Another area of social justice about which the Opposition does not know about concerns education, especially integration and the provision of programs for Years 11 and 12.

It is important to provide a few figures to show what the Cain Government is doing in the integration field. In 1985 there were 80 integration teachers and in 1987 the figure will rise to more than 180. There were 240 integration aides and there will be up to 461 integration aides appointed this year. A grant in the paramedical area of almost \$407 000 will be made this year and it must be remembered that very little assistance was received for this purpose in the past. In 1985 equipment grants amounted to \$130 000 and in 1987 the amount provided will increase to \$321 000. That is what integration is about—the provision of resources in schools.

At the same time the Government has continued to support all components of the segregated special education system that has been running for many years. Some parents prefer their children to remain in a segregated setting and some children are better off in such a setting.

I say this as a person who has worked in special education for many years and it is important that, as well as providing integration resources, the resources be retained in the segregated settings. Some children want to stay in those settings, their parents want them to stay and they are often better off staying in a special school for either intellectually or physically disabled children. Some parents prefer this form of education for their children.

Some children need a combination of both settings and may benefit from some time in a segregated setting and some time in an integrated setting.

It is important for honourable members to recognise what the Cain Government is doing in this area. In previous times if one wanted to place a child with a disability in a regular school, one could not do so because the resources were not available. No choices were available and children were forced into segregated settings.

Now a choice is available and one can put one's child in an integrated setting if that is desired. This program will continue as resources become available, but children can be left in segregated settings if that is desired. It is important that the choice remains. Because of its complete commitment to caring for those people who are unable to care for themselves, the Cain Government will continue to provide this sort of service.

So far as education for Years 11 and 12 is concerned, I believe a tremendous amount of misunderstanding is occurring. In his speech yesterday the honourable member for Dromana showed that he clearly did not know anything about the matter and gave some incorrect information. The idea of a Victorian certificate of education, which will commence at Year 11 level in 1989 and Year 12 level in 1990, is to provide for the young people of Victoria an education to achieve the degree of specialisation that is necessary for whatever they wish to do after leaving school and an exposure to a broad range of curriculum provisions.

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board, of which I am a member, commenced operating last year and has been working extremely hard over the past seven months to develop a program for the Victorian certificate of education. Programs for this year's certificate have already been in place for some time. The programs are still the old higher school certificate programs; and the technical Year 12 certificate, the schools Year 12 and tertiary entrance certificate and the tertiary orientation program have not been changed. The new programs will not be used in schools until they have been carefully developed.

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board has developed a policy statement which is readily available. Thirteen fields of studies have been developed as broad study areas. The board has appointed a group of people in each of those thirteen subject areas who are responsible for the development of units of study in a clear and careful manner. An options paper for such complicated things as matters of special provision, cross accreditation, recording formats, implications for school organisations and so on are some of the matters that options paper will develop. It will also examine curriculum assessment and tertiary entry requirements, which are major issues to be addressed by the board over the next twelve months or two years. Programs are already in place and this year's Victorian certificate of education has started smoothly for all students concerned. The new courses will allow much higher participation and will provide a much broader education, as well as greater specialisation for students.

The Cain Government, in its second term of office, is undertaking a reform of the liquor laws. I have been concerned for many years about under-age drinking. It is a problem throughout the State, particularly in areas with large populations of young people. The Government has addressed a number of difficulties that have arisen in this area of under-age drinking, and the development of wine coolers is important. The Government, in conjunction with health Ministers of other States and in cooperation with the industry, has announced a number of changes to improve the labelling of wine and fruit juice mixtures. The industry has agreed to reduce the alcohol content of coolers so that they will be less harmful to young people. Wine coolers will not be sold in milk bars and will require the word "wine" to be included in front of the names to ensure that young people are aware that they are alcoholic drinks. These drinks will be available only from liquor outlets and will not be available in packages smaller than 1 litre.

As I indicated, the Government announced these initiatives after a meeting some weeks ago between State health Ministers, but it was a Victorian initiative.

The Cain Government is addressing social justice issues through a carefully organised economic strategy which is succeeding in assisting the people of Victoria. People now have access to a caring Government which will look after their interests before the interests of the wealthy.

I congratulate the Governor on an excellent address to Parliament, and I look forward to participating in a continuation of the economic and social enrichment of the State over the years to come.

On the motion of Mr COLEMAN (Syndal), the debate was adjourned.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Police services for Frankston—Thomastown and Epping police stations—Victorian Young Farmers—Ballot papers for Central Highlands Province by-election—Richmond—Brunswick powerline—Allegations made by honourable member for Hawthorn—Painters in Parliament House—Interest rates

Mr FORDHAM (Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources)—I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr WEIDEMAN (Frankston South)—I raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Last Friday week, he and the Minister for Water Resources as the local member, were present at the police station at St Kilda to jointly announce a development project costing \$1.5 million. A press report of that announcement was made and the Minister was concerned that the press did not present the facts correctly.

On behalf of the constituents of Frankston South and in view of promises made in 1982, I asked that a new police station be provided at Frankston. In 1985 the then member for Frankston South, now the honourable member for Frankston North, requested that a police station be provided for Frankston to cater for the 96 members of the Frankston police.

The shadow Minister for Police and Emergency Services indicated in a press release that the Police Department had informed him that the Seaford police station was under threat of closure. That station had a membership of one sergeant and four officers. It is one of the busiest police stations in Victoria. When police representatives made a submission to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services they were informed that the station may be closed and that the Frankston police station would be improved or a new station built.

I ask the Minister to tell the House and the people of Frankston that they will have a new police station. I invite and encourage the Minister to come to Frankston at any time to make that announcement, if he so wishes.

My colleague, the honourable member for Dromana, indicated the need for a police station in Dromana and/or Rosebud, which should operate as a 24-hour police station. There is a dramatic need for police and police services on the Mornington Peninsula.

Promises were made by the Labor Government in 1982 and in 1985 to build or develop a police station in the Frankston area so that it could house the Criminal Investigation Branch, police officers dealing with road laws and the Z district, I ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to make the announcement now so that I, in turn, can announce the establishment of a new police station in the local press.

Mrs GLEESON (Thomastown)—I direct to the attention of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services a statement made by Mr Rippon, Secretary of the Victoria Police Association, which was reported in the *Whittlesea Post* earlier this month.

Mr Rippon stated that the Thomastown and Epping police stations would definitely be closed. He said that he had a document to back up his comment. When the honourable member for Whittlesea and I called upon Mr Rippon to produce the document he said that he still had it and that anyone who refuted his statement was only protecting his or her political party.

Mr Rippon's statement on the closure of the police stations is reprehensible in view of the fact that in September last year, only five months ago, the Minister for Police and Emergency Services visited my electorate and announced that a new police station would be built in South Morang area in the Shire of Whittlesea. That area is about half a kilometre outside the Thomastown electorate.

In view of the Minister's announcement five months ago and Mr Rippon's refusal to produce the document that he claimed he has, and from which he quoted, I can only surmise that the motive behind Mr Rippon's statement is to influence the forthcoming by-election in the Central Highlands Province on 21 March. The Epping police station is situated in the Central Highlands Province and the Thomastown police station, which provides a 24-hour service, services a large part of the western sector of that province.

Mr Rippon is using this matter to stir up local emotion against the Minister for Police and Emergency Services in an attempt to disadvantage the Labor Party in the by-election and to unduly scare the residents of the Central Highlands Province when there is absolutely no need to do so.

I ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to reaffirm his announcement of a new police station to alleviate the unnecessary fear caused to the residents of the Central Highlands Province.

Mr AUSTIN (Ripon)—I direct the attention of the Treasurer to the cutbacks in State Government funding to the Victorian Young Farmers. In 1983 funding to that organisation was cut back by \$57 000, and again in 1986–87 by \$29 600.

Government members might not understand what the young farmers movement is about. The slogan tells the story: "One does not have to be one to be one." The movement is not really organised by sons or daughters of farmers or people who are necessarily engaged in farming activity; more than half the membership are rural people who are not directly connected with farming.

The organisation is run mainly through the advisory officers who play a vital role in helping young people with counselling, personal development and the development of leadership skills, which assist community development. In many country areas the advisory officers are the only youth workers available.

The movement has approximately 4000 members aged between 16 and 26 years. If the financial cutbacks continue, the number of advisory officers will be decreased from five to four. If that trend continues this organisation, which has been in operation for 50 years, will be terminated.

In another debate today I referred to the failings of the Government in many areas. One important issue I raised was the Government's inability to get its priorities right. When one discovers that \$400 000 has been allocated in the Budget to the Office of Rural Affairs, one wonders whether country Victorians have seen any specific benefit from that expenditure. I should have thought part of that money would be better spent by looking after an existing organisation that has proved over 50 years to be of enormous benefit to the youth of country Victoria.

Mrs TONER (Greensborough)—I wish to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Property and Services, but in his absence I direct it to the Minister for Local Government, who is at the table. It is of concern to me and to many people who have contacted my electorate office that Dr Peter Radford has been sacked as the National Party

candidate for the Central Highlands Province by-election. Many people from that province have asked about the conduct of the forthcoming by-election.

I understand that tomorrow is the day on which nominations close. The party to which a candidate belongs will be included alongside his or her name on the ballot-paper. Residents of Central Highlands Province, which is north of the electorate I represent, are asking——

An Honourable Member—What is this about?

Mrs TONER—The matter relates to the responsibility of the Minister for Property and Services whose portfolio covers the conduct of State elections. Will Dr Peter Radford, who has now withdrawn, be listed as the National Party No. 1 candidate and will there be a National Party No. 2 candidate simply because Dr Radford has declared himself a socialist?

The SPEAKER—Order! I have listened for 2 minutes to the honourable member for Greensborough attempting to relate this matter to the responsibilities of the Minister for Property and Services. So far as I am aware, nominations for the forthcoming by-election have not closed. At this stage I cannot see what responsibility the Minister has that would require the honourable member to raise the matter for his urgent attention. If the honourable member for Greensborough can show me the relevance, I shall hear her.

Mrs TONER—It does have relevance because confusion has been caused in the community. I want to know whether additional expense will be necessary because ballot-papers have already been printed and whether Dr Radford, as he is not now to be the National Party candidate because he is a declared socialist, will be the “national socialist” candidate.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member for Greensborough is out of order. The matter that she is attempting to introduce as a responsibility of the Minister is not his responsibility. I ask her to conclude her remarks.

Mrs TONER—Mr Speaker, I believe I have raised the point about confusion in the minds of the community. It has been a chaotic mess. I wonder whether the problem would have occurred if the honourable member for Benalla were the Leader of the National Party.

Mr HEFFERNAN (Ivanhoe)—I wish to raise with the Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources a matter concerning the Richmond to Brunswick powerline. I request the Minister to once again review the direction the Government is taking with the construction of the powerline. Before taking the next step the Government should be completely certain that no danger exists in the erection of the cable.

It has been brought to my attention that drilling has started in the valley for the construction of the powerline. Therefore, it is important that the Minister takes immediate action. A report by Mr Paul Savity commissioned by the United States of America Electric Authority failed to state categorically that the erection of the powerlines does not pose a danger to public health. That was followed by a recent report by Professor Bruce Armstrong, which similarly stated that the Government is not 100 per cent certain that no danger exists to public health.

At a recent meeting, the Minister for Planning and Environment expressed sympathy for the concerns of people in that area, and that indicates that the Government is having second thoughts about the direction it is taking. Its position should be re-examined. It is amazing that in 1987 the Government is contemplating destroying the valley.

I ask the Minister to make a statement as soon as possible to allay the fears of the people in the area. The Government should defer the erection of the powerline until all thoughts of possible dangers are removed.

Mr SIMPSON (Niddrie)—I direct a matter to the attention of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the representative in this House of the Attorney-General, who is

responsible for prisons in Victoria. I refer to a letter tabled in Parliament earlier this day at the request of the Leader of the Opposition. The letter was addressed to the honourable member for Hawthorn from Mr Geoff Foletta. I shall read some extracts from the letter and I shall then ask the Minister to take certain action.

The letter is dated 12 January and states:

Dear Sir,

I was deeply disturbed and disgusted to read in *Hansard* your speech to Parliament on 4 December 1986 referring to the Victorian Prison Industries Commission. Though you didn't mention me by name it must be presumed that I am the new horticultural manager referred to.

It seems to me that you have been fed entirely misleading information, for one reason or another, and the records should be set straight to my involvement with VPIC in an attempt to clear my name and involvement of the butchery operations.

The letter further states:

When I first started with the commission I was living at Broadford on the property of Mr Fred Grimwade, MLC, whose property I had managed for eight years.

The letter goes on to state:

Attached is a copy of my application for the position and reference from Mr Fred Grimwade MLC.

I don't take very kindly to being aligned to the Labor Party or any other party for that matter when it comes to my employment, but I know it will be very hard to assist the Liberal Party with any future elections as I have done at every election for the past fifteen years or so. Especially given that members of my immediate family were partly instrumental in the foundation and later activities of both the Liberal Party and Young Liberals.

The letter concludes:

I consider your attack on my character is highly defamatory without any foundation, and it disgusts me to know that the Liberal Party is prepared to slander a person or persons without at least confirming the information.

Along with other members of this place, I cherish the propriety and privilege that we have as members of Parliament, and it is outrageous to think that, if we ever use this place for slandering other—

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member is raising a matter that originated from the making available of a letter to the House this morning. It is not a matter for the Attorney-General, who is represented in this place by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, to decide what action can be taken on this matter.

If the honourable member can demonstrate to the Chair that there is some action that the Minister can take, I shall hear him; but if the honourable member is simply outraged by the letter, that is a matter for the honourable member alone.

Mr SIMPSON—I ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, as the Minister in this place who represents the Attorney-General—who is the Minister responsible for prisons in this State—whether he will raise the contents of this letter with the Attorney-General, and whether the Attorney-General will, in turn, take whatever action he believes appropriate so that any unwarranted imputations of impropriety or slander can be removed.

The SPEAKER—Order! It appears to me that the honourable member is inviting the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, who is the representative in this place of the Attorney-General, to take private legal action against the author of the letter. I do not consider it to be the responsibility of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, as the representative of the Attorney-General, to take any action whatsoever.

Mr SIMPSON—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, I am merely asking that the Minister representing the Attorney-General makes sure that this material is brought to the attention of the Attorney-General for whatever action that honourable gentleman believes is necessary.

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill)—On the point of order, Mr Speaker, it is clearly a spurious point of order. You, Sir, have ruled quite clearly and specifically, and I should

have thought, from the precise nature of your ruling, that there was no room for the honourable member for Niddrie to devise—no matter how skilfully—some extraneous point of order which would question in any way the decision which you announced in your ruling on the matter.

I therefore put it to you, Mr Speaker, that the honourable member for Niddrie has no point of order and that the ruling that you announced to the House should stand in its entirety.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—On the same point of order, Mr Speaker, the gentleman who is the subject of the remarks of the honourable member for Niddrie is an employee of the Victorian Prison Industries Commission; he is the agricultural manager of the commission, which, of course, is the responsibility of the Attorney-General in his capacity as the Minister responsible for corrective services.

I should expect that the Minister responsible for corrective services would want to take action on the facts of the matter as they have been put before him in the submission from the honourable member for Niddrie. In fact, once that material is directed to his attention, it is within that honourable gentleman's capacity to put the record right and make known publicly the facts as they are known to him.

The SPEAKER—Order! It is difficult to rule upon a point in respect of a private letter from an individual—wherever he is employed—to a member of Parliament, its contents being referred to the Minister and then to the Attorney-General.

I am prepared to uphold the point of order and I advise the House that I shall allow the matter raised by the honourable member for Niddrie to be answered by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to ensure that the Attorney-General is aware of the contents of the letter.

Mr GUDE (Hawthorn)—I raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Public Works. Last Friday a number of employees of the Public Works Department were painting the National Party room on the second floor of Parliament House. Either a few of them were working, or those who were working had small brushes, because the work performed was not really adequate. I am told they took time off to have a morning tea-break and went out to the van at the back of the building. At that point, down came the rain, and that was all that was needed for those employees to take the rest of the day off.

I ask the Minister for Public Works whether they left the premises under a legal agreement or some agreement with the Public Works Department and, if not, whether they were allowed to walk off the job. I do not understand why the painters could not paint inside the National Party room when it was raining outside. I understand that when the painters were approached, they said it was raining and that they never work when it rains, and then went home. They were asked how they would get to their cars because, presumably, they would get wet in the process. That did not have any effect on them, and off they went.

The Opposition and the people of Victoria would like to know the cost of this excursion into the wide blue yonder by those people. Will that practice be allowed to continue in future, and is the agreement binding on other employees and other projects? If it happens at Parliament House only, why is it so? How many employees are the beneficiaries of the agreement?

Some honourable members will recall an industrial dispute involving the same men about five years ago when they went on strike to get a portable toilet located in a portable room at the back of Parliament House. I am reliably informed that the toilet has not been used for a long time. I wonder what the cost is of maintaining that portable toilet.

The Treasurer probably knows who the informers are, and that is why he is looking so embarrassed. He may have been the Minister responsible for negotiating the original agreement. That leads me to ask also: who was the Minister responsible when the original

agreement was struck with the employees to allow that type of port to take place? It is not good enough and it is not acceptable.

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—I raise with the Treasurer the issue of the appallingly high interest rates currently prevailing in the Victorian economy. It has been pointed out to me that the Cain Government has washed its hands of responsibility for the high interest rates and has blamed it all on Canberra. The Federal Government has made it clear that interest rates are likely to remain as they are. Melbourne has become the inflation capital of Australia with borrowings of approximately \$3.3 billion last year by the Government, which, added to the huge pressure of interest rates, is causing hardship to many hundreds of Victorian families.

Is the Treasurer prepared to place on the public record his projections of interest rates for the next twelve months? Does he agree with the Prime Minister that interest rates will fall before the end of the year, or does he agree with the Federal Minister for Education, Senator Ryan, that they will continue at high levels? What action will the Treasurer take to help correct this appalling situation?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—If the honourable member for Balwyn had been in the Chamber the other day and listened to my answers at question time, he would realise that the preconditions have been set for a reduction in interest rates during 1987, and that the general view is that the movement in inflation rates has peaked not only here in Victoria but also across the nation.

Declining inflation rates, which are likely to occur through 1987, will create downward pressures on interest rates. Secondly, it has been acknowledged generally that the major factor in keeping up interest rates across the nation—including Victoria—has been the need for the Reserve Bank to take action to stabilise the value of the Australian dollar. Currently, the Australian dollar is hovering around the 67 cent mark vis-a-vis the American dollar. Clearly, a greater degree of stability now surrounds the Australian dollar than twelve months ago. When one takes those two factors into account, there are grounds for optimism about the interest rates during 1987.

Housing loan costs have been kept to an absolute minimum because of the activity of the State Bank in Victoria. I remind honourable members that the State Bank has been lending approximately 40 per cent of housing finance in Victoria. The bank has been able to lend that proportion only because this Government, unlike the previous Government, has encouraged the bank to become a more competitive and dynamic organisation.

In summary, I share the Prime Minister's optimism about interest rates and I would anticipate, given that present conditions have been set, that some reduction in interest rates during 1987 will occur.

The SPEAKER—Order! Would the Treasurer respond to the remarks made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition?

Mr JOLLY—I was not present in the Chamber at the time.

The SPEAKER—Order! I shall ask the Minister for Local Government to reply.

Mr SIMMONDS (Minister for Local Government)—The Deputy Leader of the Opposition raised the matter of some organisation of young farmers with approximately 4000 members and the threat to the employment of one of the five people who service the organisation. It is a question of priorities. I shall direct the attention of the Treasurer to this situation and no doubt he will respond accordingly.

The honourable member for Ivanhoe expressed concern about the Richmond-Brunswick powerline. I shall convey that concern to the Minister responsible.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—The honourable member for Frankston South told the House that he did not want to find himself in the embarrassing position in which the honourable member for Portland and the honourable

member for Monash Province in another place found themselves a week ago over the matter of the St Kilda police station project. I can well understand that the honourable member for Frankston South would want to avoid embarrassment as acute and painful as was experienced by those two honourable members on that occasion. They went to the St Kilda police station with a rent-a-crowd of their followers and released the statement that the Government was not proceeding——

Mr LEIGH (Malvern)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, I take personal offence at the remark “rent-a-crowd” because I believe the people involved were concerned citizens of the community.

The SPEAKER—Order! I do not find that to be a personal reflection on the honourable member for Malvern, and I will not hear puerile points of order raised during the debate on the motion for the adjournment of the sitting.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—On the day in question, the Minister for Water Resources and I were also present at the St Kilda police station to make the announcement that tenders for the St Kilda police station project would be called next month; that I had been successful in my negotiations with the Attorney-General for a takeover of the site of the former St Kilda police station, and that, as a result, it would be possible for this police station to now go ahead on a much larger site than would previously have been the case.

The honourable members for Portland and Monash Province ended up with egg all over their faces, and I am sure that the honourable member for Frankston South would not want to be in that predicament.

The honourable member for Frankston South asked me when the police station at Frankston is to proceed. I would want to consult the police about that matter because I am aware that the police are acutely conscious of the changing nature of the Frankston community and that consideration is being given to a movement of that project on the police priority list. I am aware that the project is to be a 24-hour police station, that it is to be a district headquarters and that there is to be provision for the Criminal Investigation Bureau and traffic operations group on the premises. Obviously, it is a major project comparable with those going on at present at no fewer than four locations throughout the metropolitan area, and I would want to be exact on the information that I give following the review that the police are undertaking already.

The honourable member for Thomastown raised with me the intentions of the police concerning police stations at South Morang, Epping and Thomastown and her concern about this matter was voiced in the context of yet another instance where the honourable member for Portland has been caught out in grossly misrepresenting the position of the Police Force and inciting raging anxiety in the community about the future of the number of police stations.

Some weeks ago the honourable member for Portland called a press conference at which he released a document that had been prepared by a chief inspector of police for a working party associated with the report of the Neesham inquiry into the Victoria Police. The honourable member for Portland passed off that document prepared by the chief inspector as being the official policy both of the Police Force and the Government. The Chief Commissioner of Police, Mr Miller, has since advised me that this document did not have his authorisation, nor did it have official status of any kind, and that none of the closures listed in that document had at any stage been intended to proceed.

I hope that announcement by the Chief Commissioner of Police will put an end to the running of the 28 hares that the honourable member for Hawthorn touched off by his statement at the time. Unfortunately, the statement of the honourable member for Portland on station closures was picked up by the Secretary of the Victoria Police Association, Mr Rippon, concerning the South Morang, Epping and Thomastown police stations. Mr Rippon purported to be in possession of a document that he claimed would have borne

out the authenticity of the statement of the honourable member for Portland, but Mr Rippon undermined his credibility about having possession of such a document by refusing to produce it when he was called upon to do so.

I have been following up the representations of the honourable member for Thomastown, who is jealous of the law enforcement needs of the electorate that she represents and constantly draws them to my attention. I have consulted the police and I have received the following advice over the signature of the Metropolitan Coordinator for Assistant Commissioner (Operations). He wrote:

The Minister for Police and Emergency Services has requested advice regarding the proposed policing strategies for the South Morang, Epping and Thomastown areas.

The Minister may be advised that the Capital Works and Properties Division Forward Look Program 1987/1993 identifies the construction of a new twenty-four hour police station and Divisional Office at South Morang. This project is listed under "New Works (1989/90)" at a cost of \$4.3 million. Planning is currently being undertaken to achieve this proposal, subject to the allocation of funding for construction and staffing.

The Forward Look Program also identifies the construction of a new twenty-four hour station in the Epping, Lalor area. This project is listed under the "New Works (1991/92)" at a cost of \$2.3 million. This project is also dependent on the availability of funds for construction and staffing.

There is no proposal to close or reduce the current police services at Thomastown.

When the chief commissioner drew to my attention the fact that the document which the honourable member for Portland had asserted was Government policy and police policy in regard to the future of the 28 police stations, he, at the same time, reminded me that only once in the five years I have been Minister for Police and Emergency Services has a police station been closed.

It is true, however, that just as only one police station has been closed over that period, a very great number of new police stations have been opened and a similar very great number of police stations have had major renovations and extensions completed. In all, 26 new police stations have been constructed under the Cain Government. These police stations are at Yarrowonga, San Remo, Glen Waverley, Barwon Heads, Donald, Rosedale, Euroa, Wallan, Sunbury, Woodend, Yea, Orbost, Eaglehawk, Dimboola, Drysdale, Neerim South, Walwa, Sea Lake, Yarra Junction, Corryong, Inverleigh, Heyfield, Bendigo, Minyip, Dromana and Trentham.

The 21 major renovations and extensions completed comprise Lara, Warragul, Benalla, Mildura, Orbost, Whitfield, Wedderburn, Echuca, Leongatha, Morwell, Footscray, Foster, Robinvale, Wangaratta, Ararat, Kyneton, Castlemaine, Mansfield, Olinda, Kyabram and Springvale.

In addition, there are currently under construction new complexes at Corio, Rosebud, Werribee and Winchelsea and, as of next month, at St Kilda. Major renovations and extensions are under way at Portland and Cheltenham.

That record speaks for itself. This is a Government which opens police stations not closes them. I very much doubt that there has been another Government in the history of this State which can match the Cain Government for its record in that respect.

The honourable member for Niddrie raised with me a letter which was addressed by the agricultural manager of the Victorian Prisons Industries Commission to the honourable member for Hawthorn following remarks that the honourable member for Hawthorn made in this House some time ago.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr MATHEWS—He sent copies to the Leader of the Opposition and the honourable member for Gisborne, did he not? So, there are other options, as the honourable member for Hawthorn may realise when he reflects on the whole matter.

I tabled the letter in Parliament today at the request of the Leader of the Opposition—a letter that can be described only as deeply damaging to the rival of the current Leader of the Opposition for the leadership of the Liberal Party.

The letter demonstrated that the charges levelled against Mr Foletta in Parliament by the honourable member for Hawthorn appear to be totally without foundation and, in Mr Foletta's own words, is both "disturbing and disgusting".

The situation, as it was revealed by the remarks of the honourable member for Niddrie, exposed the honourable member for Hawthorn as having selected as a target for Parliamentary smear tactics a man who, until recently, was a farm manager for the former President of the Legislative Council, Mr Fred Grimwade and a Liberal Party campaign worker in the Central Highlands Province for the past fifteen years. He is a man who will not be working for the Liberal Party this time!

The letter further reveals Mr Foletta's deep disillusionment with the Liberal Party as a result of the brutal defamation that he has been subjected to in Parliament by the honourable member for Hawthorn.

The Leader of the Opposition knows that the honourable member for Hawthorn's outrageous comments will eventually cost the Liberal Party support in the coming by-election in the Central Highlands Province, where Mr Foletta is highly regarded.

The honourable member for Niddrie asked me to refer this letter to the Attorney-General in his capacity as the Minister responsible for corrective services, but I believe I should do so in conjunction with a reference that has been provided over the signature of Fred S. Grimwade. The reference reads:

I am delighted to give the highest reference to Mr Geoff Foletta, who has been the Manager of Glenaroua Homestead for almost eight years. In that time he has shown himself to be an intelligent, energetic and vigorous manager, capable of implementing the most progressive agricultural policies on a farm that runs stud cattle, commercial cattle, stud sheep, commercial sheep, cropping, an irrigation program as well as conservation measures.

The reason that Geoff is seeking employment rests entirely on the fact that my son has finished his agricultural training, has had overseas experience, and now as a part owner has returned to run the property.

Geoff has had wide experience and has fully lived up to my expectations as an excellent manager, and I have no hesitation in recommending him as a capable person of the highest integrity who would be a most competent Manager.

The Attorney-General, in his capacity as the Minister responsible for corrective services, should set the record straight where this unfortunate man is concerned, who has been the victim of an extraordinary and unscrupulous defamation in the Parliament.

Mr WALSH (Minister for Public Works)—It appears that the honourable member for Hawthorn was spying on the National Party rooms when he saw some painters come out of those rooms instead of the social democrat who has been sacked today by the National Party. The honourable member for Hawthorn must have tailed those painters to the van where they have their rest period and there spied on them to see what they were doing. I do not know whether the honourable member was watching what those painters were reading, but it is obviously not satisfactory for members of Parliament to spy on workers.

The workers at Parliament ought to watch out for the honourable member for Hawthorn, and when he comes around they should make out they are working conscientiously because he may inform on them if they have an occasional rest after they have done considerable work.

The honourable member for Hawthorn must also investigate toilets, so we all must be careful when sitting in the toilets.

It is a sad day when a member of Parliament is spying on workers and party rooms of other parties. However, the honourable member has raised a matter that concerns me and I shall investigate it.

I take the opportunity of thanking the Liberal Party for the letter it sent thanking the painters for the excellent job they did on the Liberal Party room. The Liberal Party often forgets the good things that workers do but too often wants to rubbish workers for things that it is not happy about.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 6.5 p.m. until Tuesday, March 3.