

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 22nd October, 1991

Mr Speaker (The Hon. Kevin Richard Rozzoli) took the chair at 2.15 p.m.

Mr Speaker offered the Prayer.

PETITIONS

Aboriginal Land Rights Act

Petition praying that because of the many benefits brought by the Aboriginal Land Rights Act to the Koori people and to the wider community, the House will support the retention of the Act as amended and the three-tier land council structure, received from **Mr Markham**.

Illawarra Housing for Developmentally Disabled

Petition praying that the House as a matter of priority allocate sufficient funds to build or acquire additional group homes for mature developmentally disabled persons in the Illawarra region and immediately allocate additional respite and day care resources for developmentally disabled adults and their carers in the region, received from **Mr Markham**.

Family Relief Bill

Petitions praying that the House give financial relief to families in New South Wales during the present difficult economic conditions and pass the Family Relief Bill to ensure that household charges do not increase each year by more than the latest increase in the consumer price index, received from **Mr Markham and Mr Sullivan**.

Warrawong Police Foot Patrols

Petition praying that police foot patrols be provided for the Warrawong and surrounding areas, received from **Mr Sullivan**.

St Joseph's Hospital

Petition praying that the Minister for Health Services Management intervene to save St Joseph's Hospital from closure and that the necessary funding and support staff be provided to allow it to continue to operate as a public hospital, received from **Mr Shedden**.

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Casinos

Petitions praying that the Government will take no steps that will legalise casinos and further expand gambling and organised crime in New South Wales, and that the Government will close existing illegal casinos, received from **Mr Armstrong, Mr Peacocke, Mr Petch and Mr Photios**.

Unanderra Police Station

Petition praying that the Government and Minister for Police and Emergency Services reappraise the staffing formula for Unanderra police station and upgrade the staffing-manning level to at least six officers, received from **Mr Rumble**.

Public Schools Middle Management

Petition praying that the Parliament not sanction the downgrading of existing middle management positions which are vital to the maintenance of quality education in the New South Wales public school system, received from **Mr Ziolkowski**.

Canterbury Hospital

Petition praying that the House take action to ensure that the Canterbury Hospital is upgraded to allow it to satisfy the present and future health needs of the Canterbury area, received from **Mr Moss**.

Health Services

Petition praying that funding cuts to health services and hospitals cease and that funding be provided to ensure that waiting lists for hospitals and operations are eliminated, received from **Dr Refshauge**.

Royal Agricultural Society Showground

Petition praying that the House will prevent the sale by the Government of foreshore and public parklands, including the Royal Agricultural Society Showground, the E. S. Marks Athletic Field and part of Moore Park, and that residents be included on their administrative bodies, received from **Ms Moore**.

Sydney Harbour Foreshores

Petition praying that the House stop the sale of publicly owned land on the foreshores of Port Jackson and its waterways, including that currently leased from the Maritime Services Board, and retain such land in public ownership; acquire for the public foreshore land whenever the opportunity arises; and optimise public access to the foreshore, received from **Ms Moore**.

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Walker Estates

Petition praying that the Government preserve the Walker estates, including Yaralla, for public use, received from **Ms Moore**.

Cooks River Pollution

Petition praying that the House take steps to restore the Cooks River to its original condition, received from **Ms Moore**.

Woollahra Traffic

Petition praying that the House take all necessary steps to reduce the traffic volume in Ocean Street, Woollahra, and that Ocean Street be returned to a safe and pleasant street consistent with residential neighbourhood values, received from **Ms Moore**.

Royal Hospital for Women

Petition praying that the House provide funding to the Royal Hospital for Women to ensure that it maintains its leadership role in women's health care, received from **Ms Moore**.

Paddington Traffic

Petition praying that the House remove clearway conditions from Oxford Street, Paddington, received from **Ms Moore**.

Chaelundi State Forest

Petition praying that the proposed logging of the Chaelundi State Forest not be proceeded with and that the area be declared an extension of the Guy Fawkes River National Park, received from **Ms Moore**.

Lake Macquarie Council Rating System

Petition praying that the Minister for Local Government instigate an inquiry into the anomalies in the rating system of the Lake Macquarie council and its failure to apply a differential system of rating, received from **Mr Peacocke**.

Liverpool Public Sector Services Funding

Petition praying that the Government not cut funding to government services in the Liverpool area but that it immediately review its Budget and reallocate resources on the basis of social justice and equity principles, received from **Mr Anderson**.

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STANDING ORDERS AND PROCEDURE REFORM

Ministerial Statement

Mr MOORE: I wish to make a short ministerial statement with respect to the progress achieved in reforming the standing orders of the Parliament.

Mr Whelan: Will the Minister permit me to reply?

Mr MOORE: In response to the interjection of the honourable member for Ashfield, and with the leave of the House, I inform him that I would be happy that he replied to my statement rather than the Leader of the Opposition.

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will proceed with his ministerial statement.

Mr MOORE: The Standing Orders and Procedure Committee met this day and made substantial progress in providing a formal framework for sittings on Thursdays that will dedicate the activities of all sitting Thursdays to private members' business, with the House commencing to sit at 9 o'clock on Thursday mornings. Provision has been made for the introduction and debate of private members' bills, which, over time, will provide the opportunity for the House to

determine the order in which such private members' bills will be dealt with. As a corollary of that, the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee has agreed that there shall be a minimum of 10 questions and a minimum of 45 minutes for question time. The committee will meet further tomorrow to discuss a program for the adoption of sessional orders dealing with matters of public importance and the like. I anticipate that a notice of motion for these further reforms will be given by me next week to take effect after the end of the next sitting week.

Mr WHELAN, by leave: The Leader of the Government has said that the Government is not willing to allow supplementary questions during question time. I give notice that at the next meeting of the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee I shall be putting that proposition to the committee. With regard to matters of public importance, the proposal relates more to an amendment to or revamping of Standing Order 49 than it relates to matters of public importance. Other than matters relating to variations of time available to members to speak and the problems confronting the Speaker I was of the view that this matter was to be considered at the next meeting of the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee, and that will take place tomorrow. The committee will consider whether matters to be debated should be posted for the information of honourable members in the Speaker's gallery or elsewhere. The matter relating to the routine of business with regard to private members' bills was adopted in principle on the understanding that the opportunity would be given to consider this proposal. There is no use private

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members' bills being introduced into the Parliament unless they will ultimately be deliberated upon and finalised. The proposal at present is that private members' bills may be introduced, as they are now, but no guarantee is given that the bills will be dealt with and referred to the upper House. Similarly, there is no guarantee that even if a bill were dealt with and referred to the Legislative Council, it would be given assent and, therefore, would become an Act of this Parliament.

LABOR COUNCIL CONDEMNATION

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders

Mr GREINER (Ku-ring-gai), Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Ethnic Affairs [2.23]: I move:

That so much of the standing and sessional orders be suspended as to permit a maximum of three speakers in favour and three speakers against (each speaking for 10 minutes) with a reply of 10 minutes to consider of the following motion forthwith:

That this House condemns the Labor Council of New South Wales for its:

- (1) Defiance of the rulings of the New South Wales Industrial Commission which has held that public sector unions would be acting illegally in participating in a general strike;
- (2) Seeking to cause massive disruption to the economy of New South Wales at a time when workers in the State are suffering from the Federal Labor policies which caused the current recession.

And calls on the Council to cancel tomorrow's strike forthwith.

Standing orders should be suspended so that this House and this Parliament might debate what is undoubtedly the greatest act of industrial bastardry in the past 50 years. It would enable the House and the Parliament to debate the matter without a disruption of question time. It would give the Parliament the unique opportunity to say to the trade union movement that the

days of industrial anarchy are over, because no one doubts that this strike is about mob rule by union leaders and industrial thugs. Alternatively, if the House believes that the strike is in the public interest and ought to go ahead then the Parliament and the parties in it ought to be prepared to say to the people of New South Wales that the strike is a good idea, that it is in the public interest and that we support it. If the Parliament wants to say that then it ought to live with it. It ought to live with that expression of opinion to the people of New South Wales. Suspension will allow this House to send a clear message to Sussex Street that the Parliament will not tolerate this sort of economic vandalism at a time when the people they are supposed to represent are being crippled by the Federal Government's recession. It will enable us to show the absolute unadulterated madness -

[Interruption]

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Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Mr GREINER: - of a general strike which will cost each and every worker in New South Wales about \$70 in a day, or \$100 for a family on average earnings, at a time when unemployment is forecast by the Federal Labor Government to be going through 11 per cent, when the Federal Treasurer concedes that we are in the worst recession in 60 years. As a Parliament we should be saying to the trade union movement that this particular sort of protest, this strike, is not on. Standing orders should be suspended so that the Leader of the Opposition could have an opportunity to crawl out and tell us exactly where he -

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Gosford to order.

Mr GREINER: - and her Majesty's Opposition in New South Wales stand with regard to the proposed strike. Suspension will enable him to tell us exactly how he feels about a Labor Council -

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Ermington to order.

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Blacktown to order.

Mr GREINER: - which is prepared to bludgeon and threaten its members with fines and sanctions if they do not toe the union line. The Leader of the Opposition will be able to tell us if he favours the Labor Council's proposals to fine individual workers \$200 if they defy the strike order, or if he agrees with long-term bans on transport companies supplying foodstuffs or perishables or taking kids to school or fulfilling any number of social purposes. If standing orders are suspended the Leader of the Opposition can tell us if he supports the union ban on private bus companies which have offered as late as today to take school children to school. This debate is vital not only to the Parliament but also to the Opposition. So far the Leader of the Opposition has been silent on all this. So far he has been a coward. So far he has not even been telling lies about the strike. Honourable members could only imagine how much he does not want to say anything about it.

This is a very real opportunity for the Leader of the Opposition. He likes to take about Ben Chifley and Jack Lang. Just imagine what Ben Chifley and Jack Lang would do. They would be asking: "Is this in the interests of the people, of the

workers? Is this in the interests of struggling families?". As I said at the outset, suspension of standing orders would give a clear opportunity to the House and every member in it. It may be that members in this House believe the strike is justified. Let them say so. Let them stand up and be counted. Debate will enable us to expose some of the Labor Council lies about the process of passing the industrial relations legislation. Debate will enable us to show that this is a phoney strike by phoney union leaders interested only in their self-preservation and their capacity to milk funds from the workers, funds which have been used to wage a phoney war.

Debate will enable us to tell the House how the Labor Council spent hundreds of thousands of dollars urging workers to go to their nearest Leagues club or RSL club last night to watch the great Labor Council teleconference starring none other than the Leader of the Opposition and the Secretary of the Labor Council. Debate will enable us to show how interested the workers of New South Wales were last night in what the Leader of the Opposition and Mr Easson had to say. Debate will enable us to show that in fact the program was not even on view at Parramatta, Rockdale, Rooty Hill, Ashfield, Kogarah or even at Balmain. The only place we could find where they showed the program was at Johnno Johnson's Randwick Labor Club. What happened there was that six people turned up to watch the teleconference and a lady patron complained that everyone was watching reruns of the 1967 Rugby match and they were not watching the teleconference.

To have only six people at the Randwick Labor Club summarises the strike and says volumes for the sincerity, or lack of it, of the unions on the one hand and, on the other hand, for the real feelings of the ordinary rank and file union members, and, indeed Labor supporters. Suspension of standing and sessional orders would enable the House to show the hypocrisy of the union movement which claims that the Government wants to destroy the Industrial Commission yet - when that same commission makes an order against 150,000 people in public sector unions providing services to the public of New South Wales, and that the strike is illegal and is banned - also states, "We don't give a hang. We are going ahead with the strike, anyway". They are in contempt of the very commission that they say the Government is trying to destroy. In simple terms, suspension of standing and sessional orders will enable the Parliament to express a view on the disastrous effect the strike will have on the economy of New South Wales, an economy that the Government and, indeed, this House have battled to save from the ravages imposed on it by the Federal Labor Government.

There is room for reasoned debate on this or other legislation; there is room for opposition to this or any other legislation; there is room for reasonable protest in the streets, or anywhere else, to this or other legislation; but there can be no room for sacrificing the well-being of the State, of hundreds of thousands of struggling families and thousands of struggling businesses on the altar of arrogance of the Labor Party and the Labor Council and, indeed, their self-interest, because that is all it is about. Parliament must be allowed to express a clear and unadulterated view on this strike, and it must be able to show real leadership to the people of New South

Wales. Suspension of standing orders would enable this Parliament, as an institution, to stand up, to be counted and to express a view on the most important industrial matter in this State in more than half a century.

Mr CARR (Maroubra), Leader of the Opposition [2.32]: Mr Speaker -

[*Interruption*]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Burrinjuck to order.

Mr CARR: A debate on this motion will enable this House to condemn the worst and most insolent striker in the State's history - the Premier - who has been on strike since 25th

May. He has not been able to get started with the leadership of New South Wales since he suffered that fatal bout of concussion on the night of 25th May.

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Ermington to order for the second time.

Mr CARR: Apparently, the Premier is saying that he will spend tomorrow morning picking up people in his car to give them lifts to work.

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is far too much interjection. The Premier was heard in reasonable silence. I ask members to co-operate and hear the Leader of the Opposition in silence.

Mr CARR: As a gimmick that ranks with the suicide hotline and with that other appalling exercise, the setting up of the battlers' unit -

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Monaro to order.

Mr CARR: It ranks with the budget morning baked beans breakfast as the gimmickry of a last legs government. I expect to see a photograph of the Premier in tomorrow's newspaper distributing baked beans at bus stops. The simple fact is that the Premier has got industrial relations wrong, just as he has got health, education and budget deficits wrong and all the great issues of policy that confronted this Government in 1988 or after May this year as the coalition parties limped into their second term. The Government was saved by a rort on ticks and crosses. It had no mandate for anything - not even a mandate to scratch its nose. It limped back on ticks and crosses. It became clear that the Premier had no answers to any of the problems that confront the people of New South Wales.

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[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Bega to order.

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is far too much interjection from the Government benches. A number of Government members have already been called to order. This is early in the proceedings. I ask all members to co-operate and to give the Leader of the Opposition a reasonable chance of being heard.

Mr CARR: See this bedraggled mob of yesterday's men. The Minister for the Environment looks more than ever before like he has just been fired out of a cannon. There is the mad, jabbering Minister for Housing. The Deputy Premier is longing to limp off into retirement to see out his days in the hot springs of Moree. What did the Government produce? After fouling up education in its first term -

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Burrinjuck to order for the second time.

Mr CARR: - after making a mess of health in a mere three months, the Government has brought all its collective genius to apply to industrial relations.

Ms Machin: On a point of order. I am aware of your previous ruling about allowing some latitude in debate on motions for suspension of standing orders. However, I draw your attention to the fact that the Leader of the Opposition has been speaking now for four minutes and has yet to address the issue of suspension or the substance of the motion. I ask you to draw him back to the subject-matter of the motion.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The requirement of a person speaking in reply is less onerous than that placed on the person who moves for the suspension of standing orders. However, it is incumbent in the spirit of the debate that it is a reply. The honourable member for Port Macquarie is quite correct. The Leader of the Opposition does not appear to have addressed himself to the nature of the motion before the Chair. I ask him to direct himself to that.

Mr CARR: This State has a great and valuable resource - the resource of a trade union movement more moderate and more responsible than that of any other State in this federation. It takes a special application of arrogance, which this Premier possesses in full measure, to turn that union movement towards a one-day strike, the like of which the State has not seen since 1976, or before that in 1917. But that is what these fools have done, to the detriment of New South Wales. Never has there been a government faced with a more co-operative or responsible trade

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union movement than the New South Wales Government. The Premier was praising them until recently. Three months ago he was quoted as having said that the Labor Council leadership in New South Wales was working closely with the Government of the day on vital microeconomic reform. Gary Sturgess rushed into the fray to point out that the trade unions of New South Wales had presented no obstacles at all to the progress of microeconomic reform in this State. That is a vivid contrast to the situation in Victoria. Any government worth its salt would have looked at capitalising on the asset that the resource of moderate trade unionism in New South Wales represented. Instead, this arrogant Premier has provoked an industrial dispute with his arrogance and the extremism of the statute, an industrial dispute that does New South Wales no good. None of the Premier's gimmickry, none of his battlers' units, his baked bean breakfasts, his suicide hotlines or his bus stop emergency measures tomorrow -

[Interruption]

Mr CARR: Yes, a suicide hotline for the honourable member for The Entrance, who is sinking by the day. None of the Premier's measures provide answers to the people of New South Wales, nor does his Industrial Relations Bill. A bill that takes away from workers of this State industrial rights and recognition they have enjoyed for as long as anyone can remember was bound to provoke an industrial reaction. The Opposition welcomes a debate that will enable us to point out that there is an alternative to industrial action: nothing less than a defeat at the first opportunity of this Government, whether that comes through a vote in this House or a vote by the people of The Entrance. I give the undertaking I gave yesterday, that in our measures in the first sitting of a Carr Labor government will be the repeal of the Industrial Relations Bill and -

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for The Entrance to order.

Mr CARR: - its replacement with legislation that protects and enshrines the industrial rights of workers and allows full scope for enterprise bargaining.

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is far too much interjection.

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Kogarah to order. In the matter of interjection almost no member of the House is in a better position than any other. The Leader of the Opposition has the call.

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Mr CARR: Our legislation, our positive and constructive alternative to the wreckage of these people, is legislation that protects an independent tribunal for conciliation and arbitration of industrial disputes with an active role in assisting award restructuring. Our legislation shortly to be introduced into this House will assist enterprise agreements which boost productivity subject to monitoring by the commission and opportunity for trade union involvement. Our legislation will provide for effectively no extra claims and no strike commitments by unions and employers for a defined period. There will be flexibility under our industrial system for a choice between awards, industrial agreements and enterprise bargains.

Mr Cochran: On a point of order. The motion is quite specific. The Leader of the Opposition is now giving the House a recitation of the policies of the Labor Party.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! No point of order is involved.

Mr CARR: For all these reasons, for the opportunity it presents for us to outline our alternatives, we welcome this debate.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition has exhausted his time for speaking.

Motion for suspension of standing and sessional orders agreed to.

Motion

Mr GREINER (Ku-ring-gai), Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Ethnic Affairs [2.44]: I move:

That this House condemns the Labor Council of New South Wales for its:

- (1) Defiance of the rulings of the New South Wales Industrial Commission which has held that public sector unions would be acting illegally -

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Baulkham Hills to order.

Mr GREINER: I continue:

- in participating in a general strike;

(2) Seeking to cause massive disruption to the economy of New South Wales at a time when workers in the State are suffering from the Federal Labor Policies which caused the current recession.

And calls on the Council to cancel tomorrow's strike forthwith.

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This motion is not about the merits or otherwise of the legislation which is presently going through the Legislative Council. It is purely and simply about this Parliament taking a stand on the reaction of the Labor Council to that legislation. It is purely and simply about whether on this day or tomorrow in 1991 calling a general strike in New South Wales is an appropriate form of protest or whether it is, as we would contend, an unmitigated act of treachery to the very working people that the Opposition says it defends and we believe will be benefited by that industrial relations legislation when indeed it is passed by the Legislative Council and brought into practice. This motion is about the Parliament setting a lead as to what is an appropriate form of protest and what is not. It is about protecting the people of New South Wales from the absolute ultimate in union arrogance. It is about the New South Wales Labor Party coming clean. Honourable members still have not heard it come clean after the last 10-minute tirade. Does the New South Wales Labor Party support the strike or not? Which Labor Party members are prepared to say they support a general strike? That it is a good idea. None of them. Not one of them is prepared to indicate that they support the strike.

As I indicated in my previous speech there is room for protest, room for opposition, room indeed for voting when the next election comes around to change the Government if New South Wales wants to change the industrial relations legislation. There is room for all that but there is not room for using the absolute heel of the boot of the union movement to grind small businesses and the ordinary people of New South Wales into the ground to achieve absolutely nothing at all in terms of this legislation.

Indeed, all that this strike tomorrow will do is reinforce the merit of the legislation which is presently before the upper House and which has been passed through this House. All this is happening, as we all know, in the climate of the worst recession for 60 years when all the families, all the businesses of the State are battling to keep their heads above water. What they have been told to do is sink, sink, sink. They have been told that they can perish simply to try to prove some sort of nonsense so far as a political point is concerned. The strike is historic, it is futile, but above everything else it is monstrously unfair to the men and women of New South Wales. The economic impact of the strike is clear. Tomorrow \$565 million in output will be lost if this general strike proceeds; \$100 for every man, woman and child for New South Wales down the drain. For what? For nothing at all.

[*Interruption*]

Mr GREINER: Not for the staff of the Leader of the Opposition. They got a dispensation. What about a dispensation for the millions of people of New South Wales? Why are they not entitled to exactly the same sort of dispensation to exercise their right to work, which is absolutely as good as the right to work of the staff of the Leader of the Opposition? It goes on. The worker on average weekly earnings will lose about \$67 tomorrow. If he has average family earnings, as most families do these days, the average family will lose \$100 if coerced into participating in this strike. That means \$100 will be taken from the average family for absolutely

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nothing. The payroll tax of the Government, the people's tax, will go down by more than over \$11 million. On 2KY, the Labor Council station, those great people, Peter Peters and Greg

Hartley, knew what was going on. They said it would be good business for 2KY to honour its contracts. What about all the other contracts of the people of New South Wales and of all the businesses of New South Wales? Of course it would be good business for us to honour them and, conversely, it will be the worst of bad business for businesses in New South Wales to be forced into the situation tomorrow of not being able to honour their contracts. When even Peter Peters and Greg Hartley can get it right, one would think the Labor Party and the Labor Council could get it right.

The impact on overseas investors and visitors is so evident that it is painfully obvious. We are competing in a difficult world where we are failing to match our competition in terms of productivity, and what do we do? For no reason, except just because the Labor Council feels like it, a general strike is called and then we wonder why the reputation of Australia continues to decline in the eyes of overseas investors and visitors. It is a straight-out disgrace that this strike is being imposed on the people of New South Wales and their State. What about fairness? The Labor Party likes to talk about fairness. Australian Bureau of Statistics figures show that 41 per cent of the work force in New South Wales is unionised. What about the rest of them? Why are they not able to have a say? Why are they not represented? Do they want to go on strike? Of course not. Yet the reality is that today the Industrial Commission has granted employers provision for stand-down orders, which means that many people who get to work, when they get to work because they want to work, will not be able to work because of the actions of the union leadership.

The 150,000 men and women in the public sector are generally hard working and committed to what they are doing. We have now been told that schools will not be open. The Teachers Federation, as usual, is trying actively to undermine the interests of the children of New South Wales, even wanting to pull on a phoney strike. Last week we had a strike in relation to hospitals which achieved nothing. Fifty per cent of health workers turned up. Now another strike is being pulled on tomorrow. The only people who will suffer are those who are sick and who need the services of the hospital system. Child care is out the window. Transport for pensioners and children is out the window. The Industrial Commission is at the heart of what the Labor Party says we should be preserving in New South Wales. On Friday the full bench said to the public sector, "We accept that this strike is illegal". To the private sector it said, "This is an extraordinarily costly and wasteful form of protest which should not take place". This was said by the full bench of the Industrial Commission, which the Labor Party says ought to be held up as an important part of the system in New South Wales; and we also believe that. What are Labor members saying? They are saying: "We do not care about the Industrial Commission. We do not care about its President. We do not care about the full bench. We do not care whether the strike is illegal or not. We do not care if it is a monstrous waste of time, money and energy. The Industrial Commission has made a decision that we do not like and it can go hang". That shows the hypocrisy of the Labor Council and the Labor Party.

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The Leader of the Opposition concedes that his Federal colleagues have produced the recession and a totally unacceptable level of unemployment. He then turns around and endorses the strike. He goes on television to explain the strike to those few people who chose to watch. There is one very simple thing that the Leader of the Opposition, this two-faced fraud that we have parading in this House, can do to help the people of New South Wales: to say today, now - because it is not too late - that the strike should be called off. That would serve the interests of the people of New South Wales. Alternatively, he should stand up to be counted and say, "I support this general strike". He has not had the courage to do that in the past two or three weeks. He has been notably absent. We could not see him for love or money speaking on this matter. This motion gives the Parliament the opportunity to say to everyone in this State: protest if you like; vote if you like at elections and express your views at other opportunities; but do not punish your community by causing untold loss and hardship just

so the Labor Council and the Labor Party can wallow in the muck of their own failure as an institution in New South Wales. The Liberal and National parties loudly and clearly endorse this motion. So should the Parliament.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the next speaker I make the comment that it is inappropriate for the Chair to elicit information from a member before giving him the call with respect to whether he is for or against the motion. The text of the motion indicates that I should call three speakers in favour of the motion and three speakers against it. I shall interpret that as being six speakers in all in the debate, three from the Government side and three members not supporting the Government.

Mr CARR (Maroubra), Leader of the Opposition [2.53]: There is a great difference between this Parliament and the last one. In this Parliament I suffer a great pang of conscience. I feel terribly sorry for the little blighter.

[*Interruption*]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for North Shore to order.

Mr CARR: You go and pay some of your taxes. That will be a big change for you. It will be a big improvement for you. Get out a new press release.

[*Interruption*]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The cross-interjection will cease. The Leader of the Opposition will address the motion before the Chair.

Mr CARR: Mr Speaker, I saw in the newspaper this morning a photograph of the Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Further Education, Training and Employment and that other genius the Minister for Transport. They were

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resolving it all. They had an emergency strike plan. You know you are in deep trouble when the crisis is being resolved by the Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Further Education, Training and Employment and the Minister for Transport. They are both leadership aspirants. The Minister for Transport has Max Moore-Witton as his campaign director trying to whip up a bit of corporate and Liberal Party support for the inevitable challenge. The Minister for Industrial Relations is a little embarrassed about his name being invoked, but if the Attorney General makes the first move he will be in there like a shot.

The difficulty about this Parliament is that I feel sorry for the little battler. Everything he has touched, every policy area he has involved himself in as a priority of this Government since April 1988, has been a disaster. The Budget is a disaster; health is a disaster; education is a disaster. And now industrial relations is a disaster - a mess. The Government had every chance to do something decent and constructive in New South Wales because it had in this State a great resource - a moderate and constructive trade union movement. That contrasts with the position in Victoria. Even spokespersons for this Government have had to acknowledge that in the past three years they have had the incalculable advantage of having a moderate trade union movement in New South Wales. As in every other area of public policy, this Government has blown that advantage sky high.

Is there any surprise about the strike that New South Wales faces tomorrow given the nature of the industrial relations legislation? Had a government produced that legislation at any time in the past quarter century or 50 years and said to the trade union movement, "The Government of New South Wales is going to make you cop a 60-hour week, employers forcing

weak employees to cop an industrial agreement with monstrous features - there is no argument against that; that will get through - and the rights and prerogatives that the union movement have enjoyed for the most part under New South Wales industrial relations since the establishment of arbitration in the 1890s being chiselled away at", any objective observer would have known that the union movement would take action. Nothing was more predictable than that.

Mr West: Why did they not take it at the beginning? Why did they wait till now?

Mr CARR: The Minister for Conservation and Land Management is interjecting. I see that the honourable member for The Entrance has scuttled out. The other day he was observed between his court appearances ducking into St James church. He knows what threat he is under. He knows where he has to press for assistance. This Government has turned an essentially moderate trade union movement into a trade union movement planning a general strike to protest against legislation for which the Government had no mandate whatsoever.

Mr Greiner: That is absolute unadulterated rubbish and you know it.

Mr CARR: You have a mandate for nothing.

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[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the Premier to order.

Mr CARR: The Government was saved by ticks and crosses. It has no mandate for anything. One of the great unions of this State covers the nurses. They have never in memory executed a statewide strike. This is the first. The Deputy Premier finds this hilarious. He finds the crisis in health a laughing matter. This Government has produced the first industrial action of this type by nurses in memory. The Government has got it wrong on industrial relations as much as it has got it wrong on health, education, budgetary matters and the environment - any area of public policy. It was inevitable that the trade union movement would lodge the strongest possible protest at legislation that will take away rights that workers have enjoyed since the 1890s. There is an alternative that I urge the trade union movement to adopt - I did urge it to do so a week ago - and that is to ensure by electoral action the defeat of this Government at the first opportunity; to see that this disgraceful failed Government with a lame duck Premier who has the lowest approval ratings of any Premier in Australia is defeated. The Premier's approval rating is lower even than Michael Field's rating; he is more popular than the Premier. The three people whose performance the Premier criticised in the last State election, Joan Kirner, John Bannon and Carmel Lawrence, are all miles ahead of him in the popularity stakes. He is repudiated, the least popular and the least approved Premier in Australia. Every area of public policy he touches without exception is a failure, and industrial relations is no exception.

Mr Greiner: Do you support the strike or not?

Mr CARR: The Premier should not become so increasingly uncomfortable when I address his performance. All this is designed to divert attention from the most appalling collapse of leadership by a government in the history of this State. The Premier has been the striker since 25th May. He has not done a thing for the people. He has withdrawn his labour from 25th May; he would not know what leadership is all about. In the light of all the problems

this State faces all that the Premier can produce are his suicide hotlines, his battler's unit, giving a lift to a strike-bound public tomorrow in his Premier's car and a baked beans breakfast.

A moment ago I outlined the constructive and positive solution to the industrial problems of New South Wales - Labor-style moderate legislation that provides a framework for co-operation between all the partners in the industrial relationship. That is the path we ought to be pursuing - legislation that provides a focus for industrial enterprise bargaining, but which at the same time recognises those two elements that are under threat from this Government's law: first, the rights of the trade union movement to protect its members, the rights of union members to use their collective strength to protect the position of their weaker members in particular; and, second, the position of award minimums. They are the indispensable ingredients of fair legislation. Those items will be writ large in the Labor legislation

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which sooner rather than later will take the place of the extremist legislation that has provoked this proposed strike, that has forced a moderate trade union movement to do something it has not done since 1976 and before that since 1917. A co-operative industrial climate can be built in this State by using the resource that a moderate trade union movement represents. The Government has forgone that opportunity. Labor will rebuild it, and the people who will benefit are all the citizens of New South Wales, when strike is replaced by co-operation.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition has exhausted his time for speaking.

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Smithfield to order.

Mr W. T. J. MURRAY (Barwon), Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Roads [3.3]: The Leader of the Opposition spoke for 10 minutes but at no time did he have the intestinal fortitude to put his position before this House and before the people of this State. At no time did the Leader of the Opposition, this person with a total lack of courage, have the intestinal fortitude to tell the people of this State what he thought about the proposed strike. He came up with what could only be described as the greatest cop-out of all time when he said that the next Carr government will solve the industrial problems in New South Wales. He said that the trade union movement and the next Carr government will present an alternative. What a wimp. The Leader of the Opposition is a weakling, a man with a total lack of courage and totally lacking responsibility to the people of this State. Once again the big lie has been perpetrated by the Leader of the Opposition. The big lie that he has pushed for the past three and a half years once again comes through loud and clear.

The Leader of the Opposition said that the Government has no mandate for this industrial relations legislation. Either he cannot spell or he does not know the meaning of the word. The Government won the last two elections, which would be a clear and definite mandate in anyone's understanding except that of the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition has had 35 of the past 47 years of Labor government in this State to do something about the dreadful industrial relations club and system that has existed in New South Wales. He has been involved in the debating circles of the Labor Party for most of that time. He has had the ability and the capacity but not the will to come forward and put up an alternative. Where was the Leader of the Opposition during 12 years of Labor government? Yet he sanctimoniously comes forward now to say that he will do something in the future. He did nothing during those 12 years of Labor's administration. Neither he nor his colleagues on the Opposition benches tried to create a workable, fair and, above all else, responsible industrial relations system in this State. That is exactly what this proposed strike is about - trying to prevent those who want to work from working.

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Michael Easson and his cohorts have been running around in a typically Hitlerish fashion saying to the workers of this State that if they turn up for work they will each be fined \$200. Michael Easson has created a fear in the minds of many people. Upon discovering how unacceptable his threats were to the workers of this State and, indeed, the industrial movement as a whole, he said this morning, "Do not worry, fellows, you do not have to strike. We will not make you strike". He now knows of the total rejection of the proposed strike by the people of this State. The Leader of the Opposition claims that the workers have been forced to strike. The Industrial Relations Bill has been before this Parliament for three years. The unions have had three years in which to express their rejection of the legislation, yet they have not decided to do so until now. Perhaps the reality of the situation has at last dawned upon them. The performance of the Leader of the Opposition today clearly shows that the honourable member for Ashfield is breathing down his neck for the leadership of the Opposition. His running out of the Chamber at the moment is a clear indication of that.

Rural New South Wales will be severely affected by this whole grisly action. Today rural New South Wales is in the grip of the worst drought the State has experienced for at least 25 years. It is suffering from the worst commodity prices the nation has seen. A combination of those two factors has devastated rural New South Wales. It is no wonder that the people of rural New South Wales refuse to be bludgeoned by a general strike brought on by a group of people who are doing nothing other than protecting the positions that they have created during the years of Labor rule. The power lords of Labor and the Labor Council in an endeavour to maintain their positions are calling the strike. Mr Carr is doing what his Sussex Street bosses are telling him to do, and his silence stands out as a beacon for his spinelessness. A number of important activities are taking place in rural New South Wales at the moment that are vital to the economy of the State. Tomorrow 3,372 shearers, who are in demand to do shearing and crutching throughout the State, will not go to work. Those imbued with the Labor doctrine will not go to work: those who are reasonable and respected will. Under legislation supported by the Opposition those shearers will be fined if they seek to resign from their union. Many have been dragged before the courts by the union movement for having failed to pay their dues.

At this moment the cotton industry is planting its next crop. A group of people in this State who can contribute directly to the economy of New South Wales are being held to ransom by those who have called this general strike. The next 24 hours will be critical for the planting of the crop. Today is the start of the 1991 harvest. Members of the Opposition are in no way concerned about that; they have no responsibility so far as getting in a crop is concerned. As we sit in this Parliament headers are starting to roll on a pretty meagre crop. However, farmers depend on fuel and the supply of spare parts. They depend on people to drive their trucks and to receive their crop at the silos. The Leader of the Opposition supports the continuation of a strike that will put that situation in jeopardy.

The small business people of rural New South Wales are desperate to keep their doors open. They have suffered as much as primary producers have suffered,

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yet they may be forced to close their doors or to at least conduct little or no business during that 24-hour period. It is remarkable that the Government should be forced into a situation of having to ask people for assistance to get this State back on its feet again. It is incredible that the Leader of the Opposition should support action that will bring to a halt in rural towns throughout the State the provision of meals by the kitchen staff of Meals on Wheels and of services by the Home Care Services. They are desperately needed services that will be affected as a result of this disastrous strike. The situation in rural New South Wales is one of desperation already. The people of country New South Wales must be scratching their heads and wondering whether they belong to the same State and nation as do the members of the Opposition, whose actions are to be condemned.

Mr HATTON (South Coast) [3.13]: I indicate that I shall be moving an amendment to the motion moved by the Premier by seeking the addition of a paragraph 3. It is quite obvious that we are involved in a power play and that the truth lies somewhere between the matters being put by both sides. At a recent press conference after the Industrial Relations Bill was gagged I made it clear that I was against the strike. I made it clear also that I was not in favour of compulsory unionism. I said also that I agreed with the concept of industrial agreements and enterprise agreements. The sticking point for me was that the commission should be the arbiter; that judges should arbitrate. That was the key to the whole legislation, and that is the way I feel about it now. I said on that occasion that I did not support the strike and I make it clear now that I do not support it. However, because the legislation was gagged in this Parliament we are now faced with the first general strike in New South Wales since 1926. People have different views about the strike; that is my belief. My further belief is that important legislation such as the industrial relations legislation should go to a legislative committee. Submissions should be made to that committee and evidence called before it. In this regard the error was made before the last election.

It is true that the Government has argued, and quite logically, that there was a long process of consultation. However, that process of consultation is not a substitute for the establishment of a parliamentary committee that will, after investigation, report back to the House on landmark legislation that seeks to change the industrial face of New South Wales and which will effect industrial relations in Australia. The report, which would be made to the Parliament, could be prepared with authority and contain detailed recommendations to be considered by the Parliament. The consultative process entered into is light years away from the process of establishing a parliamentary select committee. This is a time for reason and tolerance. It is a time for compromise and statesmanship. We are not seeing statesmanship. Today we are seeing gamesmanship rather than statesmanship. Both sides have taken a set position. They know that whether they want it or not the strike cannot and will not be avoided. Consequently, the name of the game today on the floor of this House is to score as many points as possible for or against the proposition of a strike. We should get back to the main game, which is the functioning of this Parliament to pass landmark legislation. If I heard the Premier

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correctly, he said that there is room for reasoned debate. There was no room for reasoned debate when the industrial relations legislation was introduced after the election. There was no room for reasoned debate on dozens of amendments. The Government suggests that sufficient warning of the gag was given to members; however, more time should have been made available. In my view, having listened to the debate, there was no filibustering; there was reasoned debate during the Committee stages of the bill.

Mr Cochran: On a point of order. I understood from the motion of the Premier that there would be three speakers for the motion and three speakers against it. It seems that the honourable member for South Coast is speaking for the motion and, therefore, should be ruled out of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! No point of order is involved. I have ruled on that matter. The member for South Coast is perfectly in order.

Mr HATTON: In Committee on the Industrial Relations Bill debate proceeded quite orderly, amendment by amendment. I thought at the time, and I still believe, that my amendment was perfectly reasonable, namely, if an agreement is entered into between employees and the employer, the peak organisations, if they are in agreement and together, should be able to go to the Industrial Commission to reopen an agreement on the ground that it is not in the public interest. A situation could arise in which one employer in opposition to a second employer may seek to take advantage of his or her employees. That would be unfair

because the second employer might not, in all conscience, take advantage of an unconscionable agreement.

The proposed legislation dealt with unconscionable agreements but I sought to move amendments that would allow the peak employer and employee groups to ask the Industrial Commission to reopen an agreement in the public interest. Other members and I were not given an opportunity to move amendments. The Premier said that there is room for protest. I do not support the strike. However, the workers did protest. They came to Parliament House in their thousands to tell the Government, the Opposition and anyone else who would listen about their opposition to the bill. However, the Government would not allow the bill to be debated clause by clause in this House. The Premier has said that the Parliament must be allowed to express its opinion about the strike. The Parliament will do that today. As I say, I certainly will not support that strike. I do not accept the argument that what happened before the election, when the bill was brought to the Parliament and dealt with in bite size chunks, can be a substitute for what has happened since the election when the bill was brought before the Parliament in its whole form. Each parliament is constituted differently. A new parliament must have an opportunity to debate in depth a bill that is reintroduced. I propose the following amendment. I move:

That the motion be amended by inserting after the words "current recession" the following paragraph:

- (3) That this House expresses regret at the circumstances which led to tomorrow's general strike, and calls upon the Government to reintroduce the Industrial Relations Bill to allow full debate and reasoned decision on all amendments.

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I do not agree that the Labor Council, despite provocation, should defy the rules of the New South Wales Industrial Commission. I agree with paragraph 1 of the Premier's motion. I agree also with paragraph 2, which relates to the Labor Council seeking to cause massive disruption of the New South Wales economy at a time when workers in this State are suffering because of Federal Labor policies that have caused the current recession. The Premier's motion, without the amendment suggested, does not put any blame whatsoever on the State Government for the strike. The reintroduction of the bill, which was flagged by Mr Easson, with adequate and proper debate might be a way of avoiding the strike. The suggestion could not have been that serious because the bill was already before the upper House it therefore could not be reintroduced into the lower House. However, I agree with the final paragraph of the Premier's motion, which calls on the Labor Council to cancel tomorrow's strike.

Mr FAHEY (Southern Highlands), Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Further Education, Training and Employment [3.23]: What a pathetic attempt by the Leader of the Opposition, who is nothing more than gutless. The questions facing the people of this State tomorrow are: whether or not families in this State lose \$100; whether the Labor Council can dictate what occurs in this State; or whether the Parliament of this State - the people's representatives in this Chamber and in another place - or the faceless 146 affiliates forming the Labor Council - determine the fate of what happens in this State on any given day. Today the Leader of the Opposition told the House that he does not care that the families of this State will each lose \$100 tomorrow. Let him not ever again talk about the battlers, families, and cost imposts. The Leader of the Opposition has condemned every family in this State to lose \$100 tomorrow to ensure that his political bosses, the faceless people of Sussex Street, have their way.

The honourable member for South Coast said that he does not support compulsory unionism. The record shows that earlier this year he voted in this House to support compulsory unionism. He said, "I believe it is time for consultation". Consultation has taken place about resolving this problem. There are so-called simple and moderate amendments which the Labor

Council constantly talks about on radio, in advertisements and elsewhere. Let me tell the House about a particular meeting that the Premier and I had with the Labor Council. The council said it had four amendments that could resolve this matter. The first question I asked was: "What about the 50 to 60 amendments before this Chamber? Are they off? Are they down to four? Are the amendments restricted to the four that you are giving to us now?" They avoided that and would not answer my question at that time. Overnight they gave some consideration to these matters. At about 8.24 in the morning a FAX arrived in my office which stated: "We want the four amendments we gave you yesterday. We also want the 56 amendments before the House, and here are a dozen more that we would like to talk to you about". The Labor Council is not fair dinkum about resolving this dispute. The Labor Council is interested in one thing only - domination, a privileged position, nothing more and nothing less, and the ability to dictate what happens to every worker in this State despite the fact that 69 per cent of those workers are not union members.

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The Labor Party, with great hypocrisy, sits here in silence after fronting the honourable member for South Coast with an amendment at the very last moment as being a way to resolve the problem. The honourable member for South Coast should know that he was not the first cab off the rank for that amendment. The Labor Council drafted an amendment that was given to other Independents, but they refused to accept it. The honourable member for South Coast then came forward and said the problem could be resolved with his amendment. The honourable member for South Coast is a puppet of the Labor Council. He opposed the bill outright at the second reading stage. He should not come forward now. The honourable member for South Coast wanted the whole bill thrown out yet now he talks about being sensible, reasonable and tolerant. He said there was no filibustering.

The honourable member for Ashfield knows that no member, including the Independents, objected to the program I gave weeks before debate started. That program allocated more time for members to debate the bill than to debate any other bill that has come before this Parliament in living memory. No member objected that not enough time was allowed for debate. At the second reading stage 52 members spoke. Not too many members on either side of the House followed the debate in this Chamber. In Committee more than 70 members spoke. If that is not proper and reasonable debate, I do not know what is. The honourable member for Ashfield suggested that one member from each side of the House should speak to each aspect of the bill, which would have allowed the bill to be dealt with expeditiously. The Government granted requests for the second reading stage to be extended. Nevertheless, on each aspect of the bill five Opposition members delivered the same speech over and over again, each taking 15 minutes in Committee, to prevent orderly debate of the bill. That was repetitious stuff. The Opposition, at the suggestion of the Labor Council, has hypocritically circulated an amendment to the bill that is now being debated in the other place.

That amendment says that industrial action is unlawful if it is in contravention of an order or direction of the Industrial Commission. Yesterday the unions had orders made against them in clear and precise terms that the public sector in this State should not, cannot and must not go on strike. The Opposition's amendment to be brought before the Parliament is in direct contravention of the actions the unions are taking. The present intimidation process is absolute, unequivocal hypocrisy. For weeks advertisements that tell lies about the contents of the bill have appeared in the media. The unions are practising industrial anarchy in the sense that they do not accept what the Parliament will decide. The Government has to accept it, as it has accepted it in the past. All members of this Parliament, including the members on the crossbenches, should accept the decision of this Parliament. Surely the Parliament is supreme. It is not about anarchy or people in the streets saying: "We will decide what is right and what is wrong; we will decide whether we like what Parliament is doing, and we will dictate what the workers of this State will do".

The union movement is defying not only the Industrial Commission of this State but also the Federal Industrial Relations Commission, which has ordered all workers in the State under Federal awards to turn up tomorrow for work. The unions are practising intimidation by saying, "We will stop the trains, stop the

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buses". The Transport Workers Union has made it abundantly clear that if private bus companies operate tomorrow, that is the end of them; they can forget about it; their businesses will not operate. Couriers have complained that they have been told that if they deliver to building sites, they will be black banned and driven out of business. The union movement is flexing its muscles in a destructive, despicable way that defies the very word democracy. Members of the Opposition have been willing to sit back, silently cowering on the Opposition benches during the course of this debate, not seeking the call but seeking to hide behind the Independent member for South Coast, who has indicated that he will take the ball for them. They have condemned the ordinary people of this State to lose their money, condemned the State to a loss of \$573 million, condemned jobs, because jobs are fragile at present - a day off leading to a loss of productivity will ultimately translate to people out of work.

Members of the Opposition do not care about that, they have displayed their true colours and demonstrated once and for all what they say frequently in this Chamber - that they represent this union or that union. They never talk about representing their electorates or the people; they talk about representing unions. If the Opposition votes against this motion it will have demonstrated that is exactly what it believes in. The only difference between the Government and its legislation and the Labor movement in this State is that the Labor movement wants to dominate and control every industrial agreement and to decide how it will work on behalf of every worker. The Government in its legislation has said that rights should be for all workers and not just for the privileged few who belong to the Labor movement in this State, because the Government will give all the choice to belong or not to belong. Honourable members should have absolutely no doubt about what the motion means. It means that the Parliament is supreme, that it determines what happens to the laws of this State. Alternatively, it will be the Labor movement that is supreme - the domination by faceless men who can dictate to the rest of the people in this State what does and does not happen, which businesses and contracts survive and who works and who does not. That is what it is about.

Dr REFSHAUGE (Marrickville), Deputy Leader of the Opposition [3.33]: I move:

That the motion be amended by leaving out all words after "That" with a view to inserting instead the following:

That this House condemns the Government for

(1) deliberately and cynically provoking a general strike;

[*Interruption*]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Further Education, Training and Employment to order.

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Dr REFSHAUGE:

(2) seeking to change industrial relations laws to reduce the wages and conditions of workers;

(3) failing to adequately consult with employers and unions to create a balanced system of industrial relations; and

(4) using public monies for misleading advertising on the Government's industrial changes.

Honourable members have just heard from the Minister for industrial confrontation, the rat who was born in the working-class and left it.

[*Interruption*]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Myall Lakes to order.

Dr REFSHAUGE: The Government frontbench comprises the most divisive bashers of unions. They might continue to bash unions, but they will never smash the unions. The unions will outlast the coalition parties. The coalition parties will try this for short-term gain, but the union movement has shown its strength and the Labor movement will continue to show its strength in the few months ahead.

[*Interruption*]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for North Shore to order for the second time.

Dr REFSHAUGE: On 18th April, before the last election, the Premier spoke about union leaders. The *Hansard* reads:

The Labor Council of New South Wales has been relatively responsible and co-operative in the reforms that this Government has implemented.

The Premier called the Labor Council of New South Wales co-operative and responsible. He went on to say:

I say at the outset generally the Labor Council has been quite responsible in the way it has co-operated with the microeconomic reforms that this Government has instituted.

That is what the Premier said a few months ago before the rort of ticks and crosses, or tricks and double crosses. I notice that the Leader of the Australian Democrats is with us today about the change to the ticks and crosses legislation. The rort of ticks and crosses has led this temporary, transient, minority Government to try a last-ditch attempt to bring in some industrial legislation that will cause chaos in this State. I turn to the wasteful and partisan advertising campaign of this Government. Why is it that it cannot get its message across, that it has to spend taxpayers' money

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advertising its position? And why is it that the advertisements purport to be issued by the Department of Industrial Relations, Employment, Training and Further Education but nobody in that department knew about the advertisements until they saw them in the newspapers? The advertisements were not published by the Department of Industrial Relations, Employment, Training and Further Education. It is blatant political advertising by the Premier and the class traitor Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Further Education, Training and Employment who seems to have walked out of the Chamber.

I know a lot about class traitors. I know which way to go. I know that it is the workers and the battlers of this State that need support, not a few little mates of the Government. This Government has embarked on a deliberate policy of confrontation. It is a classic conservative Government designed to divide the community. Every one of its policies is divisive and confrontationist. It is no surprise that groups have to book space outside Parliament House to have rallies against the Government because so many groups wish to have rallies. One group had to have a rally outside Parliament House at night time because it could not get space during the daytime to protest against divisive and confrontationist action by the Government. Honourable members will see that this Government is on its own. The legislation is not

supported by the people who traditionally support conservative governments. It is no surprise that there has been no order made by the Industrial Commission about the private sector and that the private sector employers have not pressed for orders. The private sector has not looked to the commission to say, "Call off the strike in the private sector", because the Government's supposed mates -

[*Interruption*]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Lane Cove to order.

Dr REFSHAUGE: - know that confrontation is not the way to go. They know, as the Premier knew before he suffered concussion on 25th May, that co-operation by the Labor Council of New South Wales on real microeconomic reform was the way to go. He praised Michael Easson, he praised Peter Sams and he praised the Labor Council for the responsible attitude they had taken.

Mr Merton: They have changed, haven't they?

Dr REFSHAUGE: The honourable member for Baulkham Hills should go back and talk to his constituents, he might need a few of them to vote for him. Let us weigh some of the private sector employers who do not support what the Government is doing. Let us look at the words of Mr Doug Wright, the New South Wales Director of the Metal Trades Industry Association, who said that the bill could signal a reversion to the boom and bust industrial conduct of the 1960s where the side with the upper hand in the market-place exploited the other. That is what a

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major employer group, the Metal Trades Industry Association, is saying about this confrontational legislation introduced by the Premier and his Minister for industrial disputes. What about the New South Wales Employers Federation? The executive director, Garry Brack, said that the bill contains minuses and pluses. He was not happy about it either. Why not change the legislation? Why not do what the honourable member for South Coast was suggesting before he was gagged in the debate? Let the bill be returned to this House for full debate.

Mr Peacocke: Rubbish!

Dr REFSHAUGE: The Government gagged him. The Minister for Local Government and Minister for Cooperatives knows the Government gagged him and knows the Government has refused to allow the debate to proceed. Let us look at what the *Catholic Weekly* said about the industrial relations legislation. That publication regularly makes statements concerned with social justice. That publication pointed out -

[*Interruption*]

Dr REFSHAUGE: The honourable member for Lane Cove does not like the *Catholic Weekly*? Does she want that on the record?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will address the Chair.

Dr REFSHAUGE: The *Catholic Weekly* pointed out that similar legislation introduced in New Zealand led to the New Zealand Catholic Bishops, in the name of Catholic social teachings, strenuously condemning the bill. That is what the *Catholic Weekly* is saying about this legislation as well. The *Catholic Weekly* talked about the issue of public interest. It said that this bill needs to be scrutinised from the viewpoint of public interest. It points out that the public interest should not be taken into consideration by the Industrial Court except in very few minor circumstances. It said that is wrong. Why not have the public interest as part of the

parameters in which the Industrial Court looks at the decisions it should be making? Suddenly this minority Government decided that the public interest is of no interest. That is exactly what the Government is doing: it is saying the public interest is of no interest. The *Catholic Weekly* clearly pointed out that the public interest is of interest. It said that in Catholic social teachings considerations of human solidarity and concern for the poor are vital elements of the public interest. It went on to say:

Thus while industry has become more efficient, the bill should be amended to strengthen the powers of the commission and the court to prevent the weaker sections of the community carrying an undue share of the burden imposed.

There are many reasons why this bill is inappropriate, why it should be amended and why, in fact, it should be thrown out. One of the most important reasons is the intransigence and arrogance of the Government. The Government is not prepared

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to listen. Despite the fact that the Premier said there is time for reasoned debate and despite the fact that the Premier said he would consult, since this last piece of legislation, changed yet again, has been brought into this Chamber -

[*Interruption*]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Dr REFSHAUGE: - the Premier and the Minister for industrial disputations have refused to listen to reasoned debate and to look at constructive amendments. No wonder the strike is on tomorrow! It is a strike, if anything, against the arrogance of this Government.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has exhausted his time for speaking.

Mr GREINER (Ku-ring-gai), Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Ethnic Affairs [3.43], in reply: There have been no speeches against the motion today. No one in this House has been willing to say that the strike should go on - no one, not the Leader of the Opposition, not his deputy and not the honourable member for South Coast.

Mr Harrison: I support the strike.

Mr GREINER: The honourable member for Kiama supports the strike.

[*Interruption*]

Mr GREINER: And the honourable member for Canterbury and the honourable member for St Marys. That is good, we like to name them. Is there anyone else who would like to go on the record? They will not be voting for the strike because they know the strike is wrong. It is wrong at its heart, it is wrong in its roots, it is totally wrong and inimical to the well-being of the people of New South Wales. Nothing justifies the strike and that is why no one on either side of the House was prepared to disagree with any part of the motion. No one was prepared to justify ignoring the Industrial Commission.

[*Interruption*]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Kiama to order.

Mr GREINER: But you are no one. No one has sought to justify the massive disruption to the economy and the pain that will be caused to hundreds of thousands of people in this State if, or when, the strike goes on tomorrow. The record ought show that no one in the House has been prepared to justify what cannot

be justified, that is, in the midst of the worst recession in 60 years seeking to take the people out to achieve absolutely no purpose at all. Let me deal briefly with the three speakers from the other side of the House. The Leader of the Opposition, the former Labor Council education officer, showed that he is still back there with the Labor Council trying to educate, which means indoctrinate, people along the lines of the Labor Council propaganda. He had a few words to say about the Government. I merely say this, the Government has led and continues to lead Australia in almost every area of public policy, in microeconomic reform, in financial management and in public sector management. In health, in education and in transport - you name it - the Government continues to lead Australia and has in fact been followed by all the other State Labor governments day by day. They continue to follow the lead we are setting.

The Leader of the Opposition then talked some nonsense about the Government's mandate. I put it clearly to the House that the Government has 52.5 per cent of the two-party vote compared to 47.5 per cent. That is a very clear indication of where the wishes of the people lie in respect to what direction they want. In terms of the primary vote, the Government had 45 per cent. The Labor Party had 39 per cent, the second lowest vote the Labor Party has ever had in its entire history. The Leader of the Opposition has the temerity to talk about a mandate. Of course the Government has a mandate and of course it has a mandate for this particular legislation. There could be no piece of legislation in the history of politics in this State for which a government had a clearer and more unequivocal mandate than this legislation.

The legislation has been seven or eight years in the crafting. It has been discussed to death, both in opposition and in government. It is the most debated legislation in the memory of any member of this House. I will come to what the honourable member for South Coast said about the debate in a moment. The only other thing the Leader of the Opposition said which is worth commenting on is that he would introduce legislation to bring in minimum award standards. Minimum award standards are in the bill. The Labor Party has no alternative, no courage, no conviction and no direction on this matter. Labor members simply do not have the courage to stand up to Sussex Street for once in their lives and say that they know this strike is wrong. Regardless of what people think about the legislation, there should not be a strike.

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Wollongong to order.

Mr GREINER: The honourable member for South Coast has been a member of this House since 1973 or thereabouts. I will wager that in almost two decades not a single piece of legislation has had more debating time than the industrial relations legislation. Let us have no nonsense about this: in the honourable member's time in this House there has not been more debate on any piece of legislation than on this piece. There was a clear-cut and deliberate filibuster by the honourable member for Ashfield. If the honourable member for South Coast does not accept that, either he is not being fair dinkum or he was not listening. Anyone who observed the passage of the bill could have no doubt that there was an absolutely clear-cut,

100 per cent filibuster. The same speech was being handed around. Not only was the same thing being said; the actual same speech was being handed around. So let us not have any rubbish about adequate debate. Of course there was more than enough debate. We telegraphed, as we have been doing with everything, the time to be set down, so honourable members opposite knew full well what the situation was.

The Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Further Education, Training and Employment dealt very well with the amendment that the honourable member for South Coast wanted to move and which he mentioned today. It was a Labor Council amendment that had been flogged around to everybody. It had been flogged around to the Labor Party and to the honourable member for Tamworth. And the honourable member for South Coast got up and said, "I have got this great amendment". It was a Labor Council amendment that strikes at the heart of the whole legislation. The whole point is that a private agreement between employers and employees is exactly that. Peak councils, be they the Employers Federation or the Labor Council, simply have no place in such a voluntary agreement. Acceptance of the amendment would have struck at the heart, the centre of the legislation. If the honourable member for South Coast believes that this is a minor thing, on the side, not a problem and perfectly reasonable, he simply does not understand the thrust of the legislation or, indeed, what the people of New South Wales want. Time after time, in public opinion survey after public opinion survey they have indicated very clearly that they do not see a compulsory role for peak employer groups or peak employee groups in enterprise agreements. It would be the absolute antithesis of the legislation.

There is no merit whatever in the amendment suggested by the honourable member for South Coast. In his heart of hearts he should think back over the time he has spent here to see whether he can come up with a single piece of legislation that has had half as much consideration - leaving aside all the work that was done beforehand and all the previous debates and so on. There has never been a better debated piece of legislation in the history of this Parliament - not one. So there was absolutely no merit or weight in the amendment moved by the honourable member for South Coast. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition said that he is proud not to

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be a class traitor: he knows which way to go. We are not into that sort of nonsense; we are simply into the public interest. The legislation that the strike tomorrow is supposedly about goes to the right to work, the most fundamental right that any individual can have. It goes to the question of compulsion and institutionalising voluntary unionism in New South Wales. I seem to recall such an amendment being moved by the honourable member for Davidson.

The amendment moved by the Labor Party is simply a negation of the Government's motion. It is a joke in all its parts. Imagine saying that we have deliberately and cynically provoked a general strike. That really is a joke. Second, there is the absolute nonsense, the big lie, about seeking to reduce wages and conditions of workers. On the matter of failure to consult, if the Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Further Education, Training and Employment has not consulted on this, he has never woken up in any morning of his life. He has consulted more than any Minister on any piece of legislation ever. The real joke is the suggestion that the Government has been wasting taxpayers' money. The Labor Council is spending hundreds of thousands of dollars of its members' money telling the big lie about the legislation - absolute straight out 100 per cent lies. It is suggested that somehow the Government should not be able to put its point of view, to explain to the people of New South Wales that they are being lied to at the expense of the 900,000 - whatever the number of affiliates is - members of the Labor Council.

Mr Fahey: What about our advertisements on superannuation that we had to pay for?

Mr GREINER: Exactly. The Government rejects the amendments and strongly urges on the House the motion as originally moved. The honourable member for South Coast went through its terms. The two clear points are first, that no one can justify defiance of the Industrial Commission. No one has sought to justify it, and we ought to say so, even though the Labor Party does not have the guts to do it. Secondly, no one can justify the disruption that will be caused tomorrow to the ordinary people of the State. No one has tried to justify it, because it is not possible to do so. Every member of this House, including Labor members, should have the courage to say that the Labor Council of New South Wales should immediately cancel tomorrow's strike because that strike, more than any other action by the union movement in history, is totally wrong and totally against the interests of the people of New South Wales.

Question - That the amendment be agreed to Mr Hatton's amendment - put.

The House divided.

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Ayes, 48

Ms Allan
Mr Amery
Mr Anderson
Mr A. S. Aquilina
Mr J. J. Aquilina
Mr Bowman
Mr Carr
Mr Clough
Mr Crittenden
Mr Doyle
Mr Face
Mr Gaudry
Mr Gibson
Mrs Grusovin
Mr Harrison
Mr Hatton
Mr Hunter

Mr Iemma
Mr Irwin
Mr Knight
Mr Knowles
Mr Langton
Mrs Lo Po'
Dr Macdonald
Mr McManus
Mr Markham
Mr Mills
Ms Moore
Mr Moss

Mr J. H. Murray
Mr Nagle
Mr Neilly
Mr Newman
Ms Nori

Mr E. T. Page
Mr Price
Dr Refshauge
Mr Rogan
Mr Rumble
Mr Scully
Mr Shedden
Mr Sullivan
Mr Thompson
Mr Whelan
Mr Yeadon
Mr Ziolkowski

Tellers,
Mr Beckroge
Mr Davoren

Noes, 48

Mr Baird
Mr Blackmore
Mr Causley
Mr Chappell
Mrs Chikarovski
Mr Cochran
Mrs Cohen
Mr Collins
Mr Cruickshank
Mr Downy
Mr Fahey
Mr Fraser
Mr Glachan
Mr Graham
Mr Greiner
Mr Griffiths
Mr Hazzard

Mr Jeffery
Dr Kernohan
Mr Kerr
Mr Longley
Ms Machin
Mr Merton
Dr Methereil
Mr Moore
Mr Morris
Mr W. T. J. Murray
Mr Packard

Mr D. L. Page
Mr Peacocke
Mr Petch
Mr Phillips
Mr Photios
Mr Rixon

Mr Schipp
Mr Schultz
Mr Small
Mr Smiles
Mr Smith
Mr Souris
Mr Tink
Mr Turner
Mr West
Mr Windsor
Mr Yabsley
Mr Zammit

Tellers,
Mr Beck
Mr Hartcher

Pair

Mr Armstrong

Mr Martin

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Mr SPEAKER: Order! The vote being equal, in accordance with the principles established by previous Speakers in this House, I give my casting vote with the noes and declare the question to have passed in the negative.

Amendment negatived.

Question - That the words stand (Dr Refshauge's amendment) - put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 51

Mr Baird
Mr Blackmore
Mr Causley
Mr Chappell
Mrs Chikarovski
Mr Cochran
Mrs Cohen
Mr Collins
Mr Cruickshank
Mr Downy

Mr Fahey
Mr Fraser
Mr Glachan
Mr Graham
Mr Greiner
Mr Griffiths
Mr Hatton
Mr Hazzard

Mr Jeffery
Dr Kernohan
Mr Kerr
Mr Longley
Dr Macdonald
Ms Machin
Mr Merton
Dr Methereil
Mr Moore
Ms Moore
Mr Morris
Mr W. T. J. Murray
Mr Packard
Mr D. L. Page
Mr Peacocke
Mr Petch
Mr Phillips
Mr Photios

Mr Rixon
Mr Schipp
Mr Schultz
Mr Small
Mr Smiles
Mr Smith
Mr Souris
Mr Tink
Mr Turner
Mr West
Mr Windsor
Mr Yabsley
Mr Zammit

Tellers,
Mr Beck
Mr Hartcher

Noes, 45

Ms Allan
Mr Amery
Mr Anderson
Mr A. S. Aquilina
Mr J. J. Aquilina
Mr Bowman
Mr Carr

Mr Clough
Mr Crittenden
Mr Doyle
Mr Face
Mr Gaudry
Mr Gibson
Mrs Grusovin
Mr Harrison
Mr Hunter

Mr Iemma
Mr Irwin
Mr Knight
Mr Knowles
Mr Langton
Mrs Lo Po'
Mr McManus
Mr Markham
Mr Mills
Mr Moss
Mr J. H. Murray
Mr Nagle
Mr Neilly
Mr Newman
Ms Nori
Mr E. T. Page

Mr Price
Dr Refshauge
Mr Rogan
Mr Rumble
Mr Scully
Mr Shedden
Mr Sullivan
Mr Thompson
Mr Whelan
Mr Yeadon
Mr Ziolkowski

Tellers,
Mr Beckroge
Mr Davoren

Page 2982

Pair

Mr Armstrong
Mr Martin

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Amendment negatived.

Question - That the motion be agreed to - put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 51

Mr Baird
Mr Blackmore
Mr Causley
Mr Chappell
Mrs Chikarovski
Mr Cochran
Mrs Cohen
Mr Collins
Mr Cruickshank
Mr Downy
Mr Fahey
Mr Fraser
Mr Glachan
Mr Graham
Mr Greiner
Mr Griffiths
Mr Hatton
Mr Hazzard

Mr Jeffery
Dr Kernohan
Mr Kerr
Mr Longley
Dr Macdonald
Ms Machin
Mr Merton
Dr Metherell
Mr Moore
Ms Moore
Mr Morris
Mr W. T. J. Murray
Mr Packard
Mr D. L. Page
Mr Peacocke
Mr Petch
Mr Phillips
Mr Photios

Mr Rixon
Mr Schipp
Mr Schultz
Mr Small
Mr Smiles
Mr Smith
Mr Souris
Mr Tink
Mr Turner
Mr West
Mr Windsor
Mr Yabsley
Mr Zammit

Tellers,
Mr Beck
Mr Hartcher

Noes, 45

Ms Allan
Mr Amery
Mr Anderson
Mr A. S. Aquilina
Mr J. J. Aquilina
Mr Bowman
Mr Carr
Mr Clough
Mr Crittenden
Mr Doyle
Mr Face
Mr Gaudry
Mr Gibson
Mrs Grusovin
Mr Harrison
Mr Hunter

Mr Iemma
Mr Irwin
Mr Knight
Mr Knowles
Mr Langton
Mrs Lo Po'
Mr McManus
Mr Markham
Mr Mills
Mr Moss
Mr J. H. Murray
Mr Nagle
Mr Neilly
Mr Newman
Ms Nori
Mr E. T. Page

Mr Price
Dr Refshauge
Mr Rogan
Mr Rumble
Mr Scully
Mr Shedden
Mr Sullivan
Mr Thompson
Mr Whelan
Mr Yeadon
Mr Ziolkowski

Tellers,
Mr Beckroge

Mr Davoren

Page 2983

Pairs

Mr Armstrong
Mr Martin

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

STATE INCOME TAX

Mr CARR: My question without notice is directed to the Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Ethnic Affairs. Have State Treasury officers assisting the Special Premiers Conference produced a plan for a State income tax to be considered at the November Special Premiers Conference? Is it the intention of the Premier to vote in favour of the State income tax at that forum or will he join me in saying, as Neville Wran said in 1978, "I won't have a bar of double taxation"?

Mr GREINER: The answer to the first part of the question is no; and there will be no State income taxes.

BUSWAYS STRIKE EXEMPTION

Mr MORRIS: I ask the Minister for Transport whether most private bus operators will be forced to cancel services during tomorrow's general strike? Is the Minister aware of a request by the Busways company for an exemption from participating in the strike so it can provide a service for schoolchildren, pensioners, and the jobless? If so, what action will the Government take to assist?

Mr BAIRD: The honourable member for Blue Mountains, who takes a keen interest in transport matters, has witnessed a dramatic improvement in the provision of transport services in his electorate during the past three years compared with the 12 years that Labor was in government, when nothing happened in the Blue Mountains. Railway stations were neglected and transport was a complete disaster. The honourable member has presented me with an opportunity to show how ruthless and heartless is the attitude of the Labor Council to the provision of public transport in New South Wales. It is true that most private bus operators will not be able to provide services during tomorrow's strike because of pressure put on them by their mates to strike. They have been threatened with secondary boycotts and disruption to their fuel supplies if they do not take part in the strike or seek to provide assistance.

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However, one of the companies involved, the Busways company, which operates in Sydney's western suburbs, reluctantly accepted the situation. The company has cancelled all its services but was proposing to operate services for schoolchildren, pensioners and the

disadvantaged. Busways applied through the Employers Federation to the Labor Council for an exemption from the strike to enable it to carry children to and from school. It also asked for permission to provide services for the unemployed, pensioners and others who cannot afford motor vehicles. Undoubtedly cynics opposite are asking, "What is in it for the company?" The answer is that there is nothing in it for the company. It was proposing not to charge fares. The company was proposing to provide services to schoolchildren and pensioners free of charge for the day. What was the Labor Council's response to the application? It said, "No, you cannot" - never mind the fact that services were going to be provided free of charge to schoolchildren and pensioners who do not have motor vehicles.

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Bulli to order.

Mr BAIRD: The Labor Council proposes to approve the provision of Nightrider services for those who are delayed in the city, but it has totally ignored the workers, pensioners and children, whom the Labor Party claims to look after, by refusing permission to run services. Such outrageous action cannot be justified. The honourable member for Kogarah has been in this up to his ears. Yesterday morning he had a meeting with all the transport union leaders and undoubtedly encouraged them to take this type of action.

[Interruption]

Mr BAIRD: He thinks it is a joke.

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Kogarah to order for the second time. I remind all members that the calls to order tally continues up to the end of question time.

Mr BAIRD: The Opposition is not interested in providing transport services for schoolchildren, pensioners and the unemployed; it is interested only in whipping up a frenzy on behalf of its Labor Council mates. We look forward to a final ruling from the Labor Council and its Labor Party mates, and we hope this problem can be overcome. The Opposition is not interested in providing services and assistance to pensioners and schoolchildren; it is interested only in disadvantaging the people of New South Wales.

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GIO AUSTRALIA PUBLIC FLOAT

Mr FACE: I direct a question without notice to the Minister for Sport, Recreation and Racing and Minister Assisting the Premier. What discussion has the Minister had concerning the public float of GIO Australia with representatives of the stockbroking firm Potter Partners? Has the Minister given an undertaking to Potters that it will be engaged to conduct the float? What confidential information concerning the GIO has been divulged to Potters?

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Oxley to order.

Mr SOURIS: I welcome the increased financial expertise that the honourable member for Charlestown has brought to the Opposition benches. The firm Potter Partners is engaged at present, and has been for some years, by the GIO on an ordinary client-professional firm basis. I have had no discussion whatever with the firm of Potters at any stage. At this time it would be correct to say that the advisers to the Government in relation to the public float of the GIO will include an underwriter, and the underwriter will be chosen by a tender process, probably early next year. I have no doubt that Potters and several other stockbroking firms will tender for the underwriting of the public float of the GIO. At this stage advisers to the Government do not include a firm of stockbrokers. They include a firm of accountants, a firm of lawyers, a firm of actuaries, and an investment banker, BT Australia Limited. Any information that the firm in question has would simply be information that may or may not have been given to it by the GIO in its normal client-professional firm relationship. I, my advisers and my task force have had no relationship whatever, including an information relationship, with the firm of Potter Warburg Limited.

HILTON HOTEL BOMBING

Mr KERR: My question without notice is addressed to the Attorney General, Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Arts. Is the Minister aware of statements by former police officer Terry Griffiths involving the conduct of Federal agencies in relation to the 1978 Hilton hotel bombing? What action is the Minister taking in response to these statements?

Mr COLLINS: I thank the honourable member for Cronulla for raising this very important issue in the House today. In late July I met with Terry Griffiths, the former police officer injured in the Hilton bombing. He raised with me a number of matters that he regarded as requiring further investigation and explanation. I was deeply impressed with his obvious sincerity. He is, naturally, deeply concerned about the issues which he brought to me and which have remained unresolved for so long. Honourable members would be aware that earlier this year the New South

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Wales Court of Appeal acquitted Tim Anderson on charges relating to that bombing. I am concerned that after all these years so many questions remain unanswered. Therefore, on 22nd August I wrote to the Commonwealth Attorney-General asking that he agree to meet bomb victim Terry Griffiths and me. In a letter dated 8th October the Commonwealth Attorney-General advised me that he was aware of the allegations raised by Mr Griffiths, in particular those about the unlawful involvement of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, and he stated that to his knowledge Mr Griffiths had never presented any firm evidence to support his claims relating to Commonwealth agencies. Consequently, the Commonwealth Attorney-General regrettably declined the invitation to meet with Mr Griffiths and me. The Commonwealth Attorney-General has since answered questions in Federal Parliament concerning the Hilton bombing incident. In those answers my Federal counterpart has stated that as the bomb explosion outside the Hilton hotel involved offences against the laws of New South Wales it was for this State, not the Commonwealth, to decide whether an inquiry was warranted. I find this attitude totally unacceptable -

[Interruption]

Mr COLLINS: If the honourable member for Ashfield has patience he might learn something. The honourable member should understand better than any other Opposition member what I am about to say. It is clear that the Commonwealth had primary responsibility for security arrangements for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Regional Meeting in

Sydney in 1978. I am aware that command was jointly vested in senior officers of the New South Wales and Federal police but that the Commonwealth Protective Services Co-ordination Centre and other Commonwealth agencies such as ASIO played important roles in determining security arrangements. It is totally unacceptable for the Commonwealth to suggest that simply because New South Wales laws were breached in the bombing an inquiry should be a matter for this State alone. I have given consideration to holding an inquiry into the Hilton bombing incident and I have received advice on the various options open to the Government. Briefly, they are these: first, to have the inquest reopened. It is also possible that I could order an inquiry such as that into the shooting of Michael Drury. Such an inquiry, however, has no power to summons people or to compel them to answer questions.

Even if this State established a royal commission with the consent of the Premier there would be very considerable constitutional doubt about whether a New South Wales royal commissioner could issue a summons to the Commonwealth or to an officer of the Commonwealth. In summary, an inquiry by New South Wales alone would therefore be futile. I am strongly of the view that there must be a joint Commonwealth-State inquiry. Only such an inquiry could gain access to all material and hope finally to ascertain the identity of those responsible for the Hilton hotel bombing. The judicial powers of both governments are needed to ensure the co-operation of all relevant Commonwealth agencies, including ASIO, the Australia Federal Police, the Protective Service Co-ordination Centre and the defence forces.

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Even with a joint Commonwealth-State inquiry there may be some difficulty in gaining access to all relevant information, particularly in the case of ASIO. For a joint inquiry to be successful there must also be a clear commitment by the Commonwealth at the highest level to release relevant intelligence information. I am well aware of the cost implications of such an inquiry.

In an effort to contain the costs I have in mind that it would need clear but concise terms of reference, limited reporting time, a defined budget and a management team committed to living within that budget. The inquiry should receive as much evidence as possible in writing and otherwise take steps to eliminate as much examination and cross-examination as is reasonably possible. In other words, the inquiry could assume more of an inquisitorial role rather than be adversarial in nature. I am pleased to advise honourable members that I have, with the Premier's agreement, written to the Commonwealth Attorney-General requesting that the Federal Government give immediate consideration to a joint Commonwealth-State inquiry. It is obvious to every member of this House that the Commonwealth is equally responsible for the resolution of the Hilton Hotel bombing, and it should agree to participate in a joint inquiry. Nothing else will do. I shall advise the House when I have received the Commonwealth Attorney-General's response to my invitation. I thank the honourable member for Cronulla for this particularly important question.

OBERON FOOTROT OUTBREAK

Mr CLOUGH: My question is directed to the Minister for the Environment, representing in this House the Minister for Planning and Minister for Energy. Is the Minister aware of a serious outbreak of footrot in the Oberon district? Is he aware also that Electricity Commission employees working in that district are not complying with a Supreme Court order to wash all footwear and vehicles to prevent the disease spreading? Will the Minister urgently contact the Minister for Planning and Minister for Energy to ensure compliance with the court order?

Mr MOORE: I am unaware of the matter asserted by the honourable member for Bathurst, but I shall contact the Minister urgently and ask him to address the issues the honourable member has raised.

Later,

Mr MOORE: I wish to provide some supplementary information to the question the honourable member for Bathurst asked of me in my capacity representing the Minister for Planning and Minister for Energy. I am advised by the Minister that there would probably be some footrot in the Oberon area at present, though it is doubted there would be any major outbreak at present as the land is too dry and the spread of the disease is likely to have slowed. I understand that the issue was discussed at length some 12 to 18 months ago when it was used as a reason at

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that time to stop construction workers going from property to property while working on the Mount Piper to Marulan transmission line. It is possible that individual farmers may have had some incidence of footrot in the recent past and they are likely to be controlling it, but so far as I am advised there is no major outbreak of footrot on properties in the area at present, whether they be properties associated with the construction of the transmission line or properties outside of that construction path. I have referred the concern of the honourable member for Bathurst to the Minister for Planning and Minister for Energy. I am sure that he will arrange for officers of the Electricity Commission to take this matter up with local farmers and with the construction staff, if necessary, to ascertain whether the facts asserted by the honourable member for Bathurst are correct and ensure that appropriate remedial action is taken.

COUNCIL WASTE RECYCLING

Mr PHOTIOS: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for the Environment. What action has the Government taken to assist Sydney councils with recycling? Will the Government contain waste disposal costs in 1992, as recommended by the Government's environment committee, in view of the freeze on council rates?

Mr MOORE: I thank the honourable member for Ermington for his question. The council recycling rebates scheme has been operating from 1st January. Under the scheme the State Government underwrites council costs in the waste disposal area by paying them \$17.50 a tonne for every tonne of waste removed from the waste stream and transferred for recycling. I am pleased that since the beginning of this year, for the first two quarters of the year, the Government has rebated to local councils within the Sydney waste region almost \$750,000. I am particularly pleased also that over the first two quarters of the scheme an encouraging trend has been evident as to the amount of waste diverted for recycling being raised significantly. About \$330,000 has been rebated in the first quarter and \$410,000 in the second quarter. That is an increase of about 24 per cent in the amount of waste being diverted to recycling in the second quarter over the first quarter of this year. Translating that into tonnes, it is likely that in excess of 90,000 tonnes will be diverted from the waste stream into recycling by the end of the first year of operation of this scheme.

The other aspect of the question raised by the honourable member for Ermington arises from a discussion that he and I and other members of the Government's environment committee have had about the economic consequences for local councils of the freeze on rates that has been imposed by the Minister for Local Government and Minister for Cooperatives and the likelihood that there would be an increase in charges by the Waste Management Authority at the end of this year. Local councils would have had no option to recoup as a result of the freeze. I have carefully considered this and directed the Waste Management Authority that for the

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year 1992 the authority's charges to local councils will be frozen also to make sure that no unnecessary burden is imposed on local government as a result of the initiative taken by the Minister for Local Government and Minister for Cooperatives in this regard.

I do want to indicate one matter, relating to the levy that is charged for environmental purposes pursuant to two sections of the Waste Disposal Act. At present that charge of \$2

provides the funds that enable the council recycling rebate scheme to operate and provides for a range of other environmental initiatives in the waste disposal area. Because the level of that levy at \$2 a tonne is unreasonably low, I have indicated that from 1st January, 1992, the levy component of the charge imposed by the Waste Management Authority will be increased from \$2 to \$2.80 a tonne. That additional 80c a tonne will provide extra funds for research into waste reduction and waste minimisation and will increase the pool of funds available for the recycling rebate scheme. Because even that 80c a tonne increase would impose an unreasonable burden upon local councils spread across the entirety of their waste disposal charges, I have instructed the Waste Management Authority that it is to absorb those costs during the period of the freeze imposed by my colleague the Minister for Local Government and Minister for Cooperatives.

However, I wish to indicate, as councils are being informed in writing that the 80c increase will be applied, although it will be absorbed by the authority for the first year. It is also likely that there will be further increases in the quantum for the funding of the recycling research and waste minimisation levy because it is only if we supply funds for those purposes that we will be able to provide assistance to councils that do recycle and to those that are interested in waste minimisation and in recycling on a more general basis. The honourable member for Ermington, the honourable member for Gosford, the honourable member for Wakehurst and the honourable member for The Entrance have been of particular assistance to me in supporting the extension of the recycling rebate scheme to councils within the greater Sydney area. I wish to thank them for their assistance in that regard and look forward to working constructively with all four of them for many years to come.

WATER BOARD CONSULTANTS

Ms ALLAN: I direct my question without notice to the Minister for Housing. How many consultants were engaged by the Sydney Water Board during the financial year ended 30th June, 1991? How much were they paid?

Mr SCHIPP: The question could go on the Questions and Answers paper.

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Myall Lakes to order.

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[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Blacktown to order for the second time.

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Baulkham Hills to order.

COAL INDUSTRY EXPORTS

Mr TURNER: Has the Minister for Natural Resources yet received details of the New South Wales coal industry's export performance over the past 12 months? If so, in what way has the industry helped boost the State's economy?

Mr CAUSLEY: Exports of New South Wales coal reached an all time record in 1990-91 of 51.3 million tonnes. This was 7.5 million tonnes above the previous record set in 1987-88, and 8.6 million tonnes - or 20 per cent - above the 1989-90 figure. A particularly encouraging feature of the export figures was the 29 per cent increase in steaming coal exports from 24.7 million tonnes in 1989-90 to 31.9 million tonnes in 1990-91. Steaming coal is the main coal type exported from New South Wales and comprised 62 per cent of total coal exports. The 1990-91 coal exports had a value of 2.7 billion, which is a significant contribution to improving Australia's balance of payments figure. Newcastle and Port Kembla coal loaders handled record tonnages, and State Rail also hauled record levels of coal. These figures are an indication of the increased efficiency of the State's transport infrastructure. Two factors that contributed to the record export levels were the Government's policy of encouraging investment for the coal industry by overseas consumers to improve stability and security of markets and streamlining of government approval procedures to ensure that new or expanded mines were ready to capitalise on market opportunities. The New South Wales coal industry has reached this position by being one of the most productive and competitive industries. But from now on the industry will face competition not only from South Africa but also from new producers in Asia, such as Indonesia. However, based on our track record and a number of recent initiatives we have had in place, I am confident that we can meet these challenges.

As I have said, in the last financial year exports of New South Wales steaming coal increased by 29 per cent on the previous year's figure, from 24.7 million tonnes to 31 million tonnes. The Government introduced a number of initiatives including a policy of encouraging participation by end users in mining ventures to ensure access to markets in the face on international competition. The success of this policy is exemplified by the opening by the Premier of the Camberwell mine in which Toyota Tsucho Mining and DIA Coal Mining hold a 50

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per cent stake between them. This mine will produce about 1.3 million tonnes per annum. More recently, I opened the United mine in which an Italian company, Agipcoal, is a major participant. In addition, the Government is advancing projects by granting leases so that there is no impediment to the development of new mines as windows of opportunity occur. Last year the Bengalla coal development area near Muswellbrook was offered for expressions of interest to develop a major mine to meet the increased demand forecast for the mid-1990s. In addition, a further four mines are at present under construction, which will have a total design capacity of about 7.5 million tonnes per annum when completed. A further eight mines are committed to development or expected to be committed before 1995. This is an indication of the confidence felt by the coal industry that it can compete with its international rivals. Finally I point out that in the next 15 years 25 new coal-fired power stations are to be commissioned in Japan with a requirement for an additional 50 million tonnes per annum. That is one of the reasons for my confidence that the New South Wales coal industry will continue to grow. Countries such as the Republic of Korea will also be building many more coal-fired power stations and will therefore require increased quantities of steaming coal.

AGENT GENERAL LONDON OFFICE CLOSURE

Dr REFSHAUGE: My question without notice is directed to the Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Ethnic Affairs. Did he say in July that the Government would consider abolishing the Agent General post in London? Has he given Mr Pickard an assurance that the London office will not be closed?

Mr GREINER: No.

STATE RAIL AUTHORITY LEGAL BRANCH

Mr LANGTON: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Transport. Has the Chief Executive of the State Rail Authority called for an urgent investigation of a State Rail Authority accountant's report stating that the State Rail Authority in the four months since June 1991 the State Rail Authority has expended \$2 million for legal expenses for workers' compensation work alone? Were the total costs before privatisation of the State Rail Authority legal branch \$2 million per annum for all legal work? Will the Minister now admit that the privatisation of the legal branch has been a costly mistake?

Mr BAIRD: I will obtain the details and report back to the House.

Later,

Mr BAIRD: Earlier the honourable member for Kogarah asked a question in relation to State Rail's legal costs. The answer is as follows: In the first months of this financial year, State Rail paid about \$1.7 million in legal costs for workers' compensation litigation. Almost all of that money represents legal costs for cases

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heard last financial year and are accounts that would normally have been paid last financial year but were rolled over into the first few months of this financial year. That in no way reflects an increase in the rate of expenditure. It is worth noting that State Rail's workers compensation claims have now reduced by about \$15 million a year as a result of the more proactive stance taken by State Rail and its use of private sector law firms.

SPECIAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY HOUSING

Mr MERTON: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Housing. What action is the Government taking to provide housing for people with special needs, in particular the disabled?

Mr SCHIPP: I am pleased to tell the House that the Department of Housing and this Government have an active program to assist people with special needs, particularly those with physical disabilities, with their housing needs. To assist that policy the Government has adopted a number of programs designed to provide access to public housing to people with disabilities. Disabled people with urgent accommodation requirements may apply for priority or emergency housing. These applicants are assessed by the independent housing review committee, which examines each case on its merits. During 1990-91 a total of 617 applicants with disabilities were given priority housing. That is 38 per cent of the total priority housing approvals. So far as income criteria and assistance for applicants for public housing are concerned, a minimum of \$46 per week is added to the eligibility income level for all public housing applicants with disabilities. The income of full-time carers is not taken into consideration when assessing eligibility.

A number of benefits for people with disabilities, primarily those for children and veterans, are specifically excluded when assessing income. If an applicant with a disability reaches the top of the waiting list or is offered immediate accommodation and suitable accommodation is not available, a subsidy is granted to ensure that the applicant is not financially disadvantaged while waiting for the appropriate dwelling to become available, one that is modified for the applicant's use. In 1990-91 more than \$100,000 was spent on the disability rental subsidy. In its capital works program the department is committed to continuing the special purpose housing program, which allocates funds to purchase and construct housing for the disabled. During the past two years total capital expenditure on completed projects has amounted to \$4.4 million. The department will spot purchase dwellings for applicants with special needs. During 1989-90 a total of 504 dwellings were purchased for various programs. The department also has a policy of modifying public housing dwellings to make them suitable for people with disabilities. About \$2.8 million was allocated for this purpose in 1990-91.

The department's commitment to the home modification and maintenance program is demonstrated by the fact that funding has increased from \$4.935 million in 1989-90 to \$6.835 million in 1990-91. This 38 per cent increase is well above the increase needed to match inflation. A similar amount will be spent this year. Apart from a program of modifying existing public housing stock to make it suitable

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for people with disabilities, about 75 per cent of the ground floor pensioner housing units are designed specifically to provide barrier-free access for disabled people. The requirement under State environmental planning policy No. 5 is 50 per cent. Further, in new general public housing dwellings some internal fittings such as lights and power points are placed to ensure easy access. Bathrooms and kitchens are designed in such a way that they can easily be modified at a later stage if necessary.

The department currently employs 18 regionally based housing support officers. They perform a variety of tasks including interviewing applicants with disabilities; interviewing and referring people requesting modified dwellings; and identifying tenants requiring support services and linking them to those services. Following the signing of the Commonwealth-State disabilities agreement at the Special Premiers Conference in July, a five-year plan is being formulated for the State's disability services including housing. In the near future I will be meeting with the ministerial committee on disability to table to the prospectus of the five-year strategic plan of the Department of Housing. In conclusion I should like to say that the department adopts policies which maximise the availability of housing for people with disabilities and ensure that people are not unduly disadvantaged because of their disabilities. Demand for this accommodation is particularly high as modified dwellings are required also by frail aged people. The department is continually increasing the stock of suitable accommodation and taking steps to ensure that this accommodation remains accessible to those with the greatest need. That commitment will continue, and I am sure members of on both sides of the House will appreciate the Government's level of involvement.

FIRST STATE COMPUTING

Mr LONGLEY: I address my question without notice to the Chief Secretary and Minister for Administrative Services. What action has the Government taken regarding the sale of First State Computing? Will the sale allow it to compete equally with private services?

Mrs COHEN: I thank the honourable member for Pittwater for his question and for his work on the Government members committee examining computer services. On 10th October I announced the sale of First State Computing, which currently forms part of the Commercial Services Group. The sale is expected to be completed by the end of the 1991-92 financial year following a two-stage process where indicative bids are called for before formal tender offers. First State Computing was established in 1963 and since then has grown to become a commercially sound and successful provider of computer services to the New South Wales public sector. The unit competes with private enterprise to sell total computer solutions and services, including information processing on an IBM compatible mainframe computer. It provides also computer consultancy, applications, software development, office systems and data processing training. Privatisation of business units such as First State Computing is part of the Government's agenda for microeconomic reform. This move will free First State Computing from a number of operational constraints and allow it to compete on an equal level with private companies to provide an even better service to its valued clients.

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The provision of computing services is not the core business of any government. There is no reason why the Government should own a computing service business when the service

can be efficiently and economically provided by the private sector. The sale of First State Computing will contribute to the Government's debt repayment target for the current financial year and assist funding for important areas such as health and education. Investment bankers Barclays De Zoete Wedd Australia Limited have been appointed to advise the Commercial Services Group on the sale process. The primary objective for the sale of First State Computing is to maximise and realise the value for the Government of the privatisation. Three possible methods of sale have been assessed - a public share offer, private placement with institutional investors, and a trade sale. Public offers are most suitable for businesses capitalised at greater than \$50 million. Therefore, this is not an appropriate method of sale for First State Computing. A trade sale invariably returns a higher price than either a public offer or a private placement and would therefore enable the Commercial Services Group to control the entire sale process to ensure that all objectives for the sale are met. A trade sale would also conform with the Government's preferred open tender process.

First State Computing is a profitable business with a clearly defined market and will be an attractive purchase for interested buyers. The business has achieved strong growth to achieve sales revenue of \$28 million in 1990-91. The unit's customers have been advised of the intended sale and assured they will not be disadvantaged. The future of the 153 staff members employed by First State Computing is of vital concern to both me and the Commercial Services Group. I am aware of certain staff who may require special consideration. My department, in liaison with the Public Service Association, will ensure that their needs are met. The Government will consult with the Labor Council regarding the transfer of all First State Computing staff to the new owner at the time the business is sold. Staff will be regularly provided with information on progress and developments concerning the sale. The sale of First State Computing will result in improved services to clients, increased opportunities for staff and cost savings to the Government, which I know will be welcomed by the members on this side of the House.

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS AND DENISE WALTERS APPEAL

Mr ANDERSON: Will the Attorney General, Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Arts ascertain why no evidence was offered by the Director of Public Prosecutions on the appeals lodged by Denise Walters against a bond for supplying heroin and a gaol sentence for goods in custody? Why were the arresting police directed not to attend the appeal? Why, when the appeals had been pending for several years, were they suddenly listed on a Friday afternoon?

Mr COLLINS: As I think I have said before in this House in answer to similar questions in relation to decisions by the Director of Public Prosecutions, not since the inception of the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions has the Attorney General overturned a decision by the Director of Public Prosecutions. I would be quite happy to look at the claims made by the honourable member for

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Liverpool and to obtain an answer for him. However, I think it is worth remembering - all members from time to time have constituents asking why the Director of Public Prosecutions has decided one way or another - that not since the inception of the office has an Attorney overturned a decision by the DPP. Though there is a reserve power for the Attorney to do that, it should not be exercised lightly. The establishment of the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions was undertaken only after decades of allegations in this House about political interference in the prosecuting process. I note the matters raised by the honourable member for Liverpool and I will give him an answer as soon as possible.

MOORE PARK ENTRANCE BLOCKAGE

Mr HARTCHER: My question is to the Minister for the Environment. Have employees of the Centennial Park Trust dumped soil across the entrances to Moore Park to prevent its being used for parking tomorrow? What action has been taken to overcome this act designed to sabotage tomorrow's emergency parking arrangements for Moore Park?

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Smithfield to order for the second time.

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Cabramatta to order.

Mr MOORE: I have been informed that a number of members of the staff of the Centennial Park Trust met at lunchtime today and voted to change the locks on the gates at Moore Park and to tip soil across the entrances to the park so that the areas could not be used for emergency parking by those people who -

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Blacktown to order for the third time.

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Baulkham Hills to order for the third time.

Mr MOORE: If it would not disrupt the parking, I would let the honourable member for Blacktown use the soil as a play pen. I have directed the management of the Centennial Park Trust to remove the locks. I understand that the locks have been broken and that the police will be on stand-by this evening in case the staff -

[Interruption]

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Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr MOORE: I have also directed that the soil be removed by independent contractors and that the staff responsible be sacked for their actions.

HOSPITAL ELECTIVE SURGERY WAITING LISTS

Mr MILLS: My question is directed to the Minister for Health Services Management. How many patients are presently on hospital waiting lists for elective surgery? When will the Minister release waiting list figures? How frequently will he release waiting list figures?

Mr PHILLIPS: I thank the honourable member for Wallsend for his question.

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Cabramatta to order for the second time.

Mr PHILLIPS: The question has obviously been dug up and dusted off as the Opposition is running out of questions today. The question was often asked of the previous health Minister and has again been asked of me. The position is unchanged. The waiting lists are produced in around November each year. That is the appropriate time at which to provide a comparison from year to year as to waiting lists in the health system. I hope that the honourable member for Wallsend will work very closely with the new administrator in the Hunter area to ensure that the substantial budget overrun that has occurred in the past through gross mismanagement is brought under control. I was amazed at a point brought to my attention in the past 24 hours. The miners' movement is genuinely concerned about Wallsend Hospital and is trying to put together proposals for the future use of Wallsend Hospital.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Mr PHILLIPS: I am happy to entertain ideas. The administrator and the board were sacked for gross mismanagement, following a number of reports, and a \$20 million overrun which caused untold pain to the Newcastle community. I was amazed that the person appointed by the miners federation as its number one adviser on the issue was Owen James, the person who was sacked for absolute gross mismanagement of health services in the Hunter. The attitude of people towards getting good services in the Hunter staggers me. I encourage the honourable member for Wallsend, the honourable member for Waratah and others really to get behind the administrator and to work with him to ensure that the people of the Hunter get excellent health care.

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COUNTRY RACING CLUBS

Mr CHAPPELL: I address my question to the Minister for Sport, Recreation and Racing and Minister Assisting the Premier. What action is the Government taking to assist the viability of country racing clubs in New South Wales?

Mr SOURIS: I thank the honourable member for Northern Tablelands for his question and for the great work he is doing in the electorate of the Northern Tablelands for sport, recreation and racing. One of the many achievements of this Government has been the revitalisation of country racing in New South Wales. The viability of country racing clubs is essential. The record of this Government speaks for itself through initiatives such as major improvements to facilities at country and provincial racecourses, the establishment of eight regional country training centres, and the establishment of a management advisory committee, which has done a marvellous job in helping country clubs better manage their affairs. The Government is always mindful of the needs of country New South Wales in which the racing industry plays a major part.

Recently I commissioned a study of the value of the racing industry, in conjunction with racing Ministers of all other States and Territories who each partially contributed to this study, in respect of employment, the multiplier effect of that employment, supplier terms, contractor terms, raw employee numbers, and the value in dollar terms of the racing industry. Honourable members know that the racing industry is of value to the taxpayer, with tax receipts in New South Wales alone of \$350 million from a total turnover, both on-course and off-course, of the order of \$4.9 billion. The industry is also a highly decentralised industry and has considerable tourism and export ability, performance and potential. The New South Wales Office of Racing

and the racecourse development committee are constantly examining ways to help country racing. The new grandstands at Kembla Grange, Wagga Wagga and Wyong are examples of the Government's commitment to providing the right sort of facilities for racecourse patrons in country and provincial New South Wales.

Work is almost complete on the first regional training complex at Tamworth, of which there will be a total of eight in regional New South Wales. Construction on the other complexes is proceeding or is on the verge of commencing shortly. On the issue of viability the management advisory committee, which falls under my department's umbrella, has been busy for the past three years helping all country clubs, including those in the greyhound and harness racing codes. In a further move to help the viability of country racing clubs, I have approved a major change to the process of the Totalizator Agency Board's profit distribution to racing clubs in New South Wales. At present clubs receive their TAB allocation in three payments, on 1st February, 1st July and mid-September. I have approved a recommendation from the TAB board to distribute quarterly payments in December, March, June and September. The change will provide the opportunity for improved financial planning

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within race clubs, which will naturally be of benefit to all clubs, big or small. The new arrangements should also allow clubs to reduce their borrowings and individual interest bills. The racing industry in New South Wales is in good shape despite the recession. This Government will continue to lend its support to those clubs in the country that play an important part for local employment and local economies.

ELECTRICITY AND OTHER LEGISLATION (AMENDMENT) BILL (No. 2)

Second Reading

Mr MOORE (Gordon), Minister for the Environment [5.7]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This legislation was introduced in the last Parliament on Wednesday, 1st May, 1991. The second reading speech, which sets out the issues associated with the legislation, appears in the *Hansard* of that date at pages 2925 to 2927. There have been no changes to the substance of the legislation in its form at the time of the dissolution of the Parliament for the last election. This bill was introduced in the Legislative Council as the responsible Minister is now a member of that House. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Rogan.

CONSTITUTION (LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL) FURTHER AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Second Reading

Mr MOORE (Gordon), Minister for the Environment [5.8]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This bill amends the Constitution Act 1902 to introduce a number of procedural reforms into the Legislative Council. In particular it alters the procedure for the election of the President and the President's voting rights. As honourable members will be aware, the recent referendum reduced the number of members of the Legislative Council from 45 to 42 and the maximum term of office of members to eight years. This bill completes the Government's process of

reform of the Legislative Council, though it is likely that these and other amendments to the Constitution Act will be entrenched as part of the process being discussed with the honourable member for South Coast, the honourable member for Bligh, and the
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honourable member for Manly, during the major constitutional reforms that the Government anticipates in the autumn session of 1992. The President of the Legislative Council currently holds office until he or she ceases to be a member of the Legislative Council or is removed by that body. As honourable members will be aware, that is out of step with the practice followed elsewhere. The President of the Australia Senate and the Speaker of this House respectively are elected after each general election.

The position of the President of the Legislative Council is clearly now anachronistic. The bill provides for the President to be democratically elected in the same way as is the Speaker in this House and the President of the Australian Senate. Thus after each general election the members of the Legislative Council will have the opportunity to vote on the presidency. The amendment is logical and long overdue and will define clearly the commencement and, more importantly, the cessation of the President's term following a general election. The bill also applies the voting procedure for election of the President of the Australian Senate to the election of the President of the Legislative Council. The council will be able to make standing rules and orders that set out the procedure or, if it thinks fit, to vary it. At present the procedure for electing the President is contained in schedule 4 to the Constitution and Parliamentary Electorates and Elections (Amendment) Act 1978. That procedure requires a majority of members to vote in favour of a candidate for President. There is no provision for resolving a deadlock.

The Senate procedure adopted by the bill, however, allows such a deadlock to be determined by lot. If there is an equality of votes, after a fresh ballot has been conducted to try to resolve the deadlock the name of one of the candidates is withdrawn by lot if the fresh ballot has not produced a result. That is an efficient and effective procedure for resolving a deadlock. The final reform introduced by the bill will reduce the quorum for meetings of the Legislative Council from 12 to eight members. At present the President of the Legislative Council and the Chairman of Committees have a casting but not a deliberative vote on any question before that House. The bill as introduced in the Legislative Council gave the President of the Legislative Council and the Chairman of Committees the same voting rights as those of the President and the Chairman of Committees of the Senate. However, an amendment moved in Committee in the Legislative Council omitted that provision. The Government did not have any strong objection to the omission.

As part of the package of reforms being discussed with the honourable member for South Coast, the honourable member for Manly, and the honourable member for Bligh are a number of concerns relating to the powers of Presiding Officers and the desire of those honourable members - a desire shared by the Government - to entrench the independence of Presiding Officers in the Constitution Act and to prevent that independence from being altered or tampered with save by referendum of the people. It is desired also to assert in the Constitution Act, and again this is agreed to by the Government, the primacy of Presiding Officers as the spokespeople for members of this House and another place in their dealings not only

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with the Executive Government but with the world in general. The amendments proposed by the Legislative Council should be regarded as an interim measure pending the bringing back to the House in the autumn session in 1992 a range of such major constitutional issues as the entrenchment of the positions of Presiding Officers and the entrenchment of the independence of the judiciary as part of the doctrine of separation of powers. It is likely, depending on the progress that is able to be made with the Parliamentary Counsel in discussion with the honourable members I have referred to, that these matters may be able to be separated from

the issue of a fixed term for the Parliament, which may be dealt with earlier, prior to the rising of the Parliament for the Christmas recess this year. I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Whelan.

CRIMINAL PROCEDURE (POLICE CUSTODY OF PROPERTY) AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 2nd July.

Mr WHELAN (Ashfield) [5.13]: This bill could be described as an administrative bill. Its purpose is to transfer from the Crimes Act to the Criminal Procedure Act the present provisions relating to property and to streamline the sale of livestock before criminal proceedings have been determined. At present, section 358A of the Crimes Act provides that property of any description held in police custody in connection with an offence may not be delivered to the rightful owner of that property in the absence of a court order. Generally, such a court order is not made until proceedings have concluded, and in many instances that may be a matter of years. The bill will enable a court, on application, to deliver property to the person who is lawfully entitled to it at any time. It provides further that when an application is not made within one month of the determination of proceedings the property may be sold at public auction and any expenses incurred by police will be deducted. The bill provides that any person who is entitled to property may recover the proceeds of sale from Treasury. Clause 62 provides that a court may, upon the application of any person, make an order that the property to which that part of the bill applies be delivered to the person who appears to be lawfully entitled to the property.

Nowadays people are placing their name or a number on their video recorders, televisions and electrical appliances to make them more easily identifiable, and should such property be stolen and recovered by police it will be returned to them on application, and the court having made the decision that the applicant is the rightful owner. The bill implies that the court in arriving at such a decision will have analysed the proprietary rights of the property in question. The bill determines the jurisdiction to which application for property should be made. The

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jurisdiction of the Local Court will not exceed \$25,000. The District Court and the Supreme Court have identical financial jurisdictions for this purpose, that is, \$250,000. The bill will ensure that the time police are required to hold livestock pending the disposal of criminal proceedings will be reduced. In instances when trials are delayed, as happens these days, police will be able to permit the return or sale of livestock in relation to which there is no dispute of ownership. The procedure is set out with regard to instances when a dispute exists. The bill has that limited intention. The way in which livestock will be disposed of is set out in the bill also. Clause 68 sets out the procedure to be applied if there is no dispute with regard to ownership of the livestock and the owner is known. Subclauses (1) and (2) refer to expenses that are necessarily incurred when livestock is kept in police custody.

The procedure to be adopted when there is no dispute as to ownership of the livestock but the owner is unknown is also set out. In that instance the State will be the ultimate beneficiary. Clause 69(5) provides that the Commissioner of Police will arrange for the sale of livestock, and ultimately the Treasury or the Consolidated Fund will be the beneficiary. Clause 70 sets out the procedures that will apply when there is a dispute as to the ownership of the livestock. Clause 70 provides that a police officer may apply to a court before the determination of proceedings against a person for an offence concerning livestock for an order to sell livestock at public auction if there is a dispute as to ownership and no party undertakes to pay expenses involved in the maintenance of the livestock. That happens in many cases.

Ultimately the court will decide what will happen to the livestock and the proceeds of the sale of the livestock. The Opposition does not have any reasonable objection to the proposed legislation which in the long term will streamline police administration of the disposal of property and livestock. My only reservation about the bill is that police be provided with the resources to cope with the hellish administration and paper work involved in identifying stolen property. Perhaps those problems could be solved by the establishment of a computerised police station network.

Mr KERR (Cronulla) [5.21]: I am pleased that the honourable member for Ashfield has stated that the Opposition has no reasonable objection to the bill. Obviously the bill is supported by members on both sides of the House. That support is important because the bill has been designed to assist the police. The proposals in the bill have been developed in conjunction with the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and are designed to reduce the demands placed upon police resources as a result of the existing provisions of section 358A of the Crimes Act. I share the confidence of the Opposition that this measure will not impose a further burden on the police but will lighten their present load. No one wants to cast greater administrative tasks on police, who are extremely hard working. The proposed legislation is designed to enable police to return animals to the rightful owner, once relevant evidence has been compiled, where there is no dispute as to ownership. Where the owner of stolen stock cannot be located, police may sell stock with the

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permission of the court after 28 days. The proceeds will then be held on behalf of the rightful owner.

Separate provisions will apply where the ownership of livestock is in dispute. Where the ownership of valuable animals is in dispute, each party will be required to pay an equal proportion of the police maintenance costs until the outcome of criminal proceedings is known. At that stage the court will require the other party or parties to reimburse the legal owner's share of agistment costs previously paid to the police. In other cases of disputed ownership, stock may be sold by public auction with the court's permission after 28 days. The proceeds of sale will then be held on behalf of the rightful owner pending the determination of the court. In this situation it would always be open to one or both of the parties to pay for the maintenance of these animals in police custody. Provision will also be made for the parties to pay the agistment costs of non-valuable stock held by police where a court refuses to grant its permission for their sale at public auction. I have mentioned those matters because I think it is important to put on the record the intent of the proposed legislation. I hope that the bill will have a speedy passage through the House. The proposed legislation will greatly assist the police. I am sure no member would wish to prevent the Police Service from having the benefit of the provisions of the bill by delaying it in any way.

Mr SCULLY (Smithfield) [3.26]: The Opposition supports the Criminal Procedure (Police Custody of Property) Amendment Bill (No. 2). The bill seeks to transfer the present provisions of the Crimes Act relating to property to the Criminal Procedure Act to streamline the sale of livestock before criminal proceedings have been determined. I note that the Minister in his second reading speech said that the present provision requires police to maintain allegedly stolen livestock for evidentiary purposes until proceedings against the offender have been determined or until the court makes an order as to custody. I have received correspondence from the Law Society of New South Wales which indicates that it has no opposition to the proposed legislation. I draw to the attention of the Minister to section 62, police custody of property. Recently a constituent complained to me that a motor vehicle which had been stolen from him was held at Wetherill Park police station for an extensive period. My constituent would have enjoyed having available to him the provisions of the bill that will allow persons to apply to the court to have their cars handed over to them.

Being a city member of Parliament I am not too au fait with the problems associated with stolen livestock in country areas, but I take it that they are similar to the problems that arise with respect to stolen cars, videos, televisions and other goods. The amendment proposed by the bill is worth while. I wish to ask the Minister whether the jurisdictional limit of \$25,000 proposed for the Local Court is consistent with the jurisdictional limits with respect to property offences and indictable matters that can be dealt with summarily. It is some time since I practised in those jurisdictions and I assume those limits have been increased. I read clause
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63 of the bill and wondered what will happen when someone complains that property has been sold, but clause 64 covers that situation. All in all, the proposed legislation is not contentious, and I support it.

Mr COLLINS (Willoughby), Attorney General, Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Arts [5.28], in reply: I thank the honourable member for Cronulla, the honourable member for Ashfield and the honourable member for Smithfield for their contributions to this debate and their support for a relatively non-contentious piece of legislation. I am happy to advise the honourable member for Smithfield specifically on the question of jurisdictional limits. The assurance he seeks is forthcoming, and his fear should be allayed. The points made by the honourable member for Cronulla and the honourable member for Ashfield about avoiding placing additional burdens on police are noted. It is not anticipated that the proposed legislation will impose a crippling burden on the police force, but I am sure that the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, my colleague in the other place, will look carefully at its implementation. I commend the bill.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time and passed through remaining stages.

PARTNERSHIP (LIMITED PARTNERSHIP) AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 2nd July.

Mr WHELAN (Ashfield) [5.29]: The purpose of the bill is to amend the Partnership Act to allow the formation of limited partnerships. A partnership agreement consists of at least one limited partner and at least one general partner. A limited partner is one whose liability for the debts or obligations of a partnership is limited by the amount of capital contributed, whilst a general partner is one whose liability is not so limited. Limited partnerships offer a mechanism for attracting risk or venture capital from private investors who are prepared to contribute capital in return for a share of the profits so long as their liability is limited to the amount of their contribution. The Minister in his second reading speech said that the proposed legislation offers significant tax advantages and savings in legal and accounting costs. Commercial benefits for the State are also alleged to be derived from limited partnerships. Under the terms of the bill limited partnerships will be registered with the Registrar of Business Names. A weakness of the scheme is the apparent absence of protection for those who contribute risk or venture capital without being properly advised. The terms of the relationship between the general partner and the limited partner are normally set out in the partnership agreement and all management decisions are made the sole responsibility of the general partner. The general partner

could commit the limited partner to financial arrangements disadvantageous to the limited partner.

Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Whelan.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' FRANCHISES

SHELL SERVICE STATION RESUMPTIONS

Mr NAGLE (Auburn) [5.30]: I raise a matter that has concerned residents in the Auburn electorate for a number of years, particularly those in Regents Park. It concerns the Colan brothers, who were forced out of their Shell service station by the Shell Company of Australia Limited. I am pleased that the Attorney General is in the Chamber tonight to listen to what I have to say because I hope that in future legislation may be brought in that will protect people such as the Colan brothers in their business activities. For almost 10 years they leased a service station, the franchise for which they had purchased from another person. They increased the monthly turnover of petrol from 50,000 litres to 150,000 litres. At about the time the lease was to expire the Colan brothers asked the Shell Company to renew it, but the company refused to do so. In a letter 18th April, 1989, the company said:

The purpose of this letter is to confirm that The Shell Company of Australia Limited ("Shell") does not propose to offer you a fresh franchise in respect of the premises upon expiry of the current franchise period.

The Colan brothers worked six days a week from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. in their business. The Shell company, in trying to push them out, wrote a letter to one of their top customers on 14th September, 1989, in these terms:

We would like to advise you that this site will be closed down permanently from the 30th November 1989 and as we value your continued custom we would like to encourage you to use the Shellcard Services which are available at the following nearby Shell sites.

In response to a letter from Mr David Calcott of Sefton, the Shell company said:

Over the last five years insufficient members of the local community purchased fuel from the Service Station. All surveys showed a trend towards main road outlets with modern facilities.

In a letter to me dated 17th July, 1989, Shell said:

- b. We predict for a service station to be profitable in the 1990's it must occupy an above average location, with modern facilities and merchandise its produce and services more successfully than its competitors . . .

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- c. The timing of this decision is to some extent forced on us by the implications of the Petroleum Retail Marketing Franchise Act . . .

It is important to recognise that we have not taken action against the Colan Bros least of all taken away their rights. We simply do not wish to perpetuate this outlet for a further nine years . . .

- d. We intend to dispose of the property to a use other than a service station so that the volume may be distributed to those outlets remaining. In an industry which is chronically over pumped and therefore unprofitable to operators and wholesalers alike we are even prepared to suffer the volume loss in this case. Regrettably this means diminished Shell presentation in [the area].

Twelve months prior to the closure of the service station the proprietors had been offered \$115,000 for it but had declined the sale because they hoped to continue its operation. The service station at Regents Park has been reopened by a new franchisee under the name of

Astron Pty Limited, which is a subsidiary of the Shell Company. The Colan brothers lost their business. They received no compensation and had no rights, but after the service station had been closed for two years the company persuaded the council to allow it to reopen the service station, though it had lost its existing use rights. It is now operating in the name of a subsidiary of the Shell Company. That flies in the face of Shell's statement, "We intend to dispose of the property to a use other than a service station".

Laws are needed to protect franchisees and small business people who are willing to put in long hours and to put up the capital necessary to purchase petrol, their tools and all the equipment necessary to run a service station. At present the rights of such people can be ruthlessly disregarded and their liberties thrown away in the process of getting get them off the site to allow another person whom Shell had in mind to take over the site a couple of years later under a subsidiary's name. I ask the Attorney General to ask to his Cabinet colleagues to think about drafting laws that would protect these business people.

Mr COLLINS (Willoughby), Attorney General, Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Arts [5.35]: I thank the honourable member for Auburn for letting me know shortly prior to private members' statements being called on that he intended to raise this issue. Regrettably, that did not give me sufficient time to be fully briefed on the subject, but I shall make a couple of comments. First, I take the allegations that the honourable member has made in the Parliament today seriously. The situation that he has outlined for his constituents is one about which they - I think appropriately - feel strongly aggrieved. Obviously, the honourable member's constituents have spent considerable time and effort building up their business and its goodwill and developing market share in the Regents Park area. On the other hand, the oil company claims - I expect correctly overall, though whether it is correct in his constituent's instance I cannot say - that there are too many petrol outlets in Sydney, and obviously it has set out to reduce the number of petrol outlets.

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I feel most sympathetic towards those small business men and women who take on a franchise, such as the constituents of the honourable member for Auburn did in this instance, and who after years of effort, six-day working weeks and long hours suddenly find themselves deprived of the business they have built up by what seems to be a large and impersonal organisation remote from their own area of operation. I shall certainly investigate generally the issue that the honourable member for Auburn has raised. That will probably be of little comfort to his constituents, but at least it will give the House an opportunity at some stage to look more closely at these issues that occur all too regularly in our community. I thank the honourable member for Auburn for notifying me that he intended to raise the matter. I regret that I am unable to go into further detail this afternoon.

SUTHERLAND SHIRE COUNCIL LIFESAVER Mr RICHARD GARNSEY

Mr KERR (Cronulla) [5.38]: I speak on behalf of a constituent, Mr Richard Garnsey, who for a number of years has been a voluntary lifesaver. He is well known as a dedicated member of the surf lifesaving movement and is committed to the saving of lives on our beaches. My electorate has the four best beaches in the whole of Australia, if not the world.

Mr Downy: Excellent beaches.

Mr KERR: The honourable member for Sutherland agrees with that. In April Mr Garnsey commenced work casually with Sutherland shire council as a lifeguard. On 22nd April he was informed that he was no longer employed by the council. On 6th May he rang the council asking for information about why no letter had been sent to him and the reason for his termination. The reason given was that his skin was too fair to work on the beach or out of

doors. Mr Garnsey was then advised that if he wanted to proceed with his application, he should obtain a skin specialist's report. On 22nd July he visited Dr John Chapman, a well-known skin specialist. After a full examination he was completely cleared of any present or previous signs of skin cancer. He was advised that he would be suitable for the job for which he applied. In August the position of lifeguard was advertised again by the council and he applied. On 7th and 8th September the tests for proficiency in swimming and resuscitation were conducted by Sutherland shire council. Mr Garnsey passed those tests without any problem.

On 15th September surf tests were held. However, before he participated in those tests he was advised by the council that regardless of the results, he would not be granted an interview for the position. Despite that, he contested the surf tests and finished fourth. Two of the persons who finished in front of him were given full-time lifeguard positions and interviews were granted to placegetters who finished well behind Mr Garnsey. On 23rd September he managed to obtain an interview with the council which he attended with his father. At the meeting he was told by council officers that the only reason for his non-employment was the risk that he may

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contract skin cancer and claim compensation. At that time a formal request was made that the council produce any medical evidence it had. No medical evidence has been forthcoming. Mr Garnsey had visited a skin specialist and had been given a clearance. On the face of it he was entitled to the position for which he applied. If Sutherland shire council had relevant medical evidence, it should have produced it.

Mr J. H. Murray: It is a good council now.

Mr KERR: The honourable member for Drummoyne says it is a good council now. Perhaps he says that because it is now a Labor-controlled council. This is the way the council treats people who perform voluntary work. I hope the honourable member for Drummoyne is proud of that. He claims Sutherland shire council is a good council. It should not discriminate against people because of the colour of their skin. It is disgraceful to hear members of the Opposition defending that sort of discrimination. We should be proud of young men like Mr Garnsey who, in their own time and at risk to their lives, try to help people who so often put themselves at risk by failing to swim between the flags. I ask Sutherland shire council to give serious consideration to Mr Garnsey's application. As a community we should encourage people like Mr Garnsey. On every basic criteria, he is entitled to the job for which he has applied. He is entitled to some care and consideration from the community he has served for so long in a voluntary capacity.

Mr J. H. Murray: You are sacking them in the State. You are a hypocrite.

Mr KERR: The honourable member for Drummoyne should be more careful. No one has been sacked, but Australia now has an unemployment rate of more than 10 per cent because of the recession his mates had to have.

Mr PHILLIPS (Miranda), Minister for Health Services Management [5.43]: Unfortunately, this is the second time in the past two weeks that I have had to respond to an issue raised by a member of Parliament about an individual's rights having been crushed by Sutherland shire council. I well remember the matter raised by the honourable member for Sutherland last week about a carport when the council, after months of deliberation and many reports, again deferred a simple issue at a cost to the home owner of many dollars and much heartache. As I said on that occasion, the council has a responsibility to get on with the job, to make decisions and to protect the rights of individuals. The matter raised by the honourable member for Cronulla is a prime example of the council appearing to form its own opinion as to whether a person's skin is sufficiently suitable for him to be patrolling the beach. The person has been a volunteer lifesaver for 10 years, he has a clearance from a skin specialist and he is

obviously determined to obtain the position. He is a local citizen and has asked the council to explain and to produce any medical evidence it has. The council cannot do so. That is no way for a local government body to treat people. Sutherland shire council has a responsibility to make clear what health requirements are necessary for a lifeguard's position, and those requirements should

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be scientifically based. The council cannot discriminate against people merely because of its suspicions.

Mr Kerr: Against medical evidence.

Mr PHILLIPS: As the honourable member for Cronulla says, against other medical evidence. I am sure the honourable member for Cronulla will follow this issue carefully. If Sutherland shire council does not respond appropriately further action through the correct channels will be needed.

SOUTH COAST PASSENGER RAIL SERVICES

Mr HARRISON (Kiama) [5.46]: I wish to bring to the attention of the House concern felt by the Illawarra Commuters Association about the ongoing deterioration in passenger rail services to the South Coast. I shall refer briefly to one or two matters that have been brought to my attention. On Tuesday, 2nd October, the 7.20 a.m. service arrived in Sydney 12 minutes late. Passengers relying on connections at Sutherland and Hurstville were 15 minutes late. That evening both the 5.18 p.m. and 6.32 p.m. ex-Sutherland services were cancelled. This resulted in some commuters being forced to stand for an hour and a half on the 5.33 p.m. service. On Thursday, 18th October the 6.40 a.m. service failed at Thirroul and was divided. Four overcrowded cars arrived in Sydney 30 minutes late after skipping stops between Thirroul and Waterfall. The connection to Thirroul in front of the 7.20 a.m. service was cancelled with no passenger information provided at most stations. The 7.20 a.m. service did not stop at all stations to Thirroul to pick up the 170 people who were left stranded and, as a result, they crammed into the 7.40 a.m. service which had more than 200 people standing.

Incidentally, concerns have been raised with me about the actions of certain ticket inspectors. Passengers who are being forced to arrive late at work and at home day after day are fed up with the attitude of ticket inspectors who wake those commuters fortunate enough to obtain seats on early morning trips and demand that they produce their tickets. The final insult to commuters, which is the essence of my contribution, is contained in the State Rail Authority release to the Illawarra Commuters Association of a new timetable to be introduced as from 12th January, 1992. It includes a number of features which are particularly unacceptable to South Coast rail commuters, including the reduction of weekend services from Kiama to Wollongong and Sydney from an approximate hourly service to each alternate hour, a reduction of almost 50 per cent in the level of service.

Three super express trains are to run in off-peak times only. A recent survey of commuters showed that 70 per cent requested peak-time express intercity trains to and from Sydney. The new timetable concepts show increased numbers of peak and off-peak suburban trains will stop at Jannali, Mortdale, Hurstville, Kogarah and

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Sydenham. The Illawarra Commuters Association asks by how much the journey times of intercity trains will be increased because of preceding slower trains. I am advised that the new timetable still requires the use of suburban rolling-stock - which lack toilets, water and comfortable seating - to perform intercity commuter services in peak times. The new timetable

concepts do not show any local industrial services. It is interesting to reflect on a media release by the Minister for Transport on 5th September in which he said:

To ensure there were extra seats at the height of the morning peak period, fewer services would be scheduled before 7.30 a.m. when there were often empty seats.

The Illawarra Commuters Association now asks which early morning commuter trains will be withdrawn to achieve this objective. Until these problems have been resolved, the association will remain opposed to the new timetable concepts. I call on the Minister to give a clear and unequivocal assurance that meaningful consultation with the Illawarra Commuters Association and the travelling public will be held prior to introducing the changes scheduled to take effect from 12th January, 1992. Finally, I thank the Minister for being in the Chamber at short notice to respond to this private members' statement. Commuter passenger services to the South Coast are of vital concern to a large number of people, given the circumstances of a lack of adequate roads south of Wollongong in the Shoalhaven area. I am acting in response to a request from the commuters association to raise the matter in Parliament. I look forward to a substantive reply from the Minister.

Mr BAIRD (Northcott), Minister for Transport [5.51]: I thank the honourable member for Kiama for notifying me that he would raise this matter today. A lot has to be done to the South Coast line. As the honourable member knows, we will spend \$15 million on the electrification of the line at Dapto. Electrification will then go to Shellharbour and to Kiama in the third stage. The previous Government did nothing -

Mr Harrison: It brought it to Wollongong.

Mr BAIRD: But it did not take it any further. We are getting on with the job. The honourable member well knows that we have rushed the work through. Many of the instability problems were not fixed. As a result we have spent of the order of \$100 million over the past three years on that line - more than for any other line. The basic work was not carried out on that line. The problems inherent in the line are massive and very expensive. A lot of money has been spent and a lot more needs to be spent in the future. The electrification work is under way and will continue, which will undoubtedly improve the situation. The timetable changes have been the result of a lot of work by State Rail. The changes are to improve the number of seats available in the peak of the peak period. In the shoulders of the peak there will be fewer seats. The honourable member referred to 7.30. The arrival time at Central is 7.30 to 8.30. That is not the departure time. The changes

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will provide more express services and get rid of the red rattler trains to provide better service and more reliability. There will be memory timetables.

The Illawarra Commuters Association may raise its concerns with the line manager. Representatives from the honourable member's line on the commuters council have had discussions about the timetable and there is general agreement on the council about what steps should be taken having in mind the benefits we have outlined. No more intercity trains are available to be put on the track. The Tangaras are coming off the production line but the previous Government ordered them without toilet facilities. The final 50 will be super Tangaras which, at this Government's direction, will be upgraded with toilet facilities for longer distances. Because the amount involved is \$140 million from the capital works budget there is no possibility of ordering intercity carriages. I am sure we all wish that the trains could be provided now. The new timetable will provide real benefits. The line manager can discuss the new timetables. The new types of carriages will be available in the longer term.

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Tink): Order! The Minister's time for speaking has expired.

DROUGHT LIVESTOCK TRANSPORT

Mr COCHRAN (Monaro) [5.54]: I rise this evening on behalf of rural landholders in the Monaro electorate once again to draw to the attention of the House the serious implications of the impending drought. Already 60 per cent of the State is drought affected and drought declared. I am concerned that the ramifications and effects of this drought will be far more disastrous than in 1983 or other droughts back to 1890. Rural landholders and livestock owners face drought circumstances with inadequate funds to pay for fodder or agistment. With depressed wool and beef markets and an almost non-existent wheat industry rural landholders will have difficulties in raising money to pay for fodder or stock agistment, even with Rural Assistance Agency help with drought subsidies. Many livestock owners simply will not have the cash reserves necessary. If a landholder can afford to move drought-affected stock, this must be done by transport. I have received verbal reports that the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has taken action against livestock transport operators and owners of livestock, claiming that cruelty is occurring during the transportation of the livestock. It goes without saying that in such circumstances occasionally one needs to be cruel to be kind. In order to move stock from drought affected areas they have to be transported. They are often too weak to walk and inadequate fodder is available. This situation makes it difficult for the livestock transport operator and the livestock owner.

The Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs is unavoidably absent and I ask the Minister at the table, the Minister for Health Services Management, to draw to the attention of the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs the impending

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problem. In many areas of New South Wales which are already drought affected landowners and livestock owners are living in poverty. I have witnessed this across New South Wales. Many landholders are facing confiscation or repossession - call it what you may - of their properties. The banks are going to resume their properties. But that will not solve the problem of the livestock. I am gravely concerned that overzealous inspectors with the RSPCA or officers of the Department of Agriculture who are unaware of the circumstances of individual landholders will take action that will not solve the problem but that may result in heavy fines being imposed on landholders. These landholders have good intentions of providing for their livestock but are unable to do so because of the depressed conditions in the markets and areas of enterprise of rural industry in which they are involved. Departmental officers and RSPCA inspectors should have a great deal of understanding of landholders in this position. All landholders, property-owners and livestock owners in New South Wales would be more than willing to provide fodder and agistment for their livestock if funds were available. Once the problem is drawn to the attention of officers of the RSPCA, the Department of Agriculture and the rural lands protection boards I am sure they will be more sympathetic towards livestock owners.

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Tink): Order! The honourable member's time for speaking has expired.

Mr PHILLIPS (Miranda), Minister for Health Services Management [5.59]: The matter raised by the honourable member for Monaro obviously is of great concern not only to the honourable member and his constituents but to all people in New South Wales, especially those on the land. We can only hope that in the near future the drought breaks so that during these recessionary times country areas will have the opportunity to help the recovery. I undertake to bring the matters raised to the attention of the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs for his response after the matters have been investigated.

DRUMMOYNE BOYS HIGH SCHOOL SITE

Mr J. H. MURRAY (Drummoyne) [6.0]: I draw the attention of the House to a complete waste of taxpayers' money on a classic example of the failure of this Government's schools closure program, which has developed into a fiasco in the Drummoyne area. Honourable members will recall my protests in the past two and a half years against the Government's plans to close Drummoyne Boys High School. Unfortunately my pleas fell on deaf ears. Towards the end of 1989 it was announced that Drummoyne Boys High School would close at the end of 1990. At that time the proposed closure of the correspondence school and the decision to decentralise distance education was announced. As a former teacher I accepted those decisions. During that time a pamphlet entitled "Delivery Distance Education - New strategies to help children in New South Wales," which promoted the needs of country children and the benefits of distance education, was circulated. It was also announced that the

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Open High School and the Learning Materials Production Centre would be relocated to the Drummoyne site.

The LMPC produces the leaflets used for distance education teaching and the Open High School offers students at both State and private schools throughout New South Wales the opportunity to study by correspondence a subject not available to them at their own schools. Drummoyne Boys High School was an excellent site for the relocation of these two entities because of its close proximity to public transport. Towards the end of 1990 Telecom began to install telephone cables at the site. The Public Works Department commenced its internal alterations. Obviously a large sum of money would have been spent arranging to let tenders for the work involved in providing communications and the general requirements to conduct distance education. Plans were also prepared, obviously at a significant cost because builders sheds and compounds were erected in the playground area of the high school. Preliminary work was undertaken prior to commencing work on building alterations and refurbishment. However, plans for the LMPC and the OHS were put on hold in late 1991. This month an announcement was made that both the LMPC and the OHS would not be located at Drummoyne Boys High School but instead would be relocated to a site at Smalls Road, Ryde, which I understand is currently the Curriculum Resource Centre - formally Ryde High School. The Drummoyne site would be a more accessible and perfect site.

My purpose in raising this matter is to inform the House and the people of Drummoyne that vast sums of money have been wasted on a project which involved the closure of Drummoyne Boys High School and the proposed relocation of the correspondence school to this particular site. The Government has now applied to Drummoyne council to have the site rezoned medium and high density. The Government is seeking to rezone a 2A area, which has a high school located within it, to a high-rise medium-density area, which is environmentally and aesthetically inappropriate. To its credit, the Liberal-controlled council rejected this proposal outright. It was rejected by all factions of the council. The council is echoing the wishes of local residents. To that end I have been approached to contact the Teachers Federation which has indicated that it will, through the Labor Council, place a green ban on the site. I support that proposal because that public asset should be used for education.

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Tink): Order! The honourable member has exhausted his time for speaking.

Private members' statements noted.

[Mr Acting-Speaker (Mr Tink) left the chair at 6.5 p.m. The House resumed at 7.30 p.m.]

APPROPRIATION BILL

BUSINESS FRANCHISE LICENCES (PETROLEUM PRODUCTS) AMENDMENT BILL

MOTOR VEHICLES TAXATION (AMENDMENT) BILL

PUBLIC FINANCE AND AUDIT (NET APPROPRIATIONS) AMENDMENT BILL

ROAD IMPROVEMENT (SPECIAL FUNDING) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 15th October.

Mr NAGLE (Auburn) [7.30]: I am pleased that after his illness the Minister for Natural Resources has returned the Chamber. I welcome him back. The 1990-92 Budget, the third budget of this Government, has caused concern for the people of New South Wales. An examination of the Government's three budgets shows just what a destructive government the Greiner Government has been. For the past three years it has mismanaged the economy of New South Wales. It has destroyed hospitals, education, and the transport and road systems in New South Wales. Time and again, however, member after member from the Government side of the House claims that the Government has done a wonderful job. They claim: "We are the architects of a great design for the future". That sentiment is exemplified in the Premier's Budget Speech of 24th September. In delivering the Budget the Premier said:

As to the past, the Labor Governments which preceded us lived a charmed life.

The Premier was saying that all things went well for previous Labor governments but all things were not going well for the Greiner Government. He said further:

- * They had the advantage of a boom in State revenues largely from property and share stamp duties, propelled by the longest economic upturn in Australia's postwar period.
- * In the six years to 1988-89, there was a seven and a half-fold increase in tax revenue from contracts and conveyances.
- * Between 1982-83 and 1987-88, the period when there were Labor Governments in both Canberra and Sydney, Commonwealth general and specific purpose payments to NSW rose by 49 per cent, a real rise of 5 per cent.

This poor Premier said that when the coalition came to government the State economy collapsed because of matters that he had not foreseen. Let us get to the truth of this claim by the greatest pathological liar in the State of New South Wales. I remind members on the Government side of the House of what was said by a former Labor Government Treasurer, the honourable member for Wallsend at the time, in September 1986. I do so because of what Premier Greiner said in his Budget Speech about his not knowing that there was to be an economic downturn in New South Wales. In 1986 the Treasurer at that time said:

Unlike most other governments in Australia the New South Wales Government has cut back its administration over a number of years. For instance, over the past three years government employment in New South Wales has increased by 3.7 per cent whereas Federal Government employment rose by 6.3 per cent.

The Greiner Government has claimed that it has cut back on the public service and government spending. However, it claims also that the reason it has performed so badly in the past couple of years is as a result of the downturn in revenue from conveyancing, stamp duty and payroll

tax. The Premier said that had he foreseen this downturn he would not have made the decisions that he made. In 1986 Treasurer Booth said further:

On the revenue side the downturn in the economy means that our revenues, which have been buoyant for three years, face a slow downturn in growth. Payroll tax, which accounts for about 40 per cent of our State base income, will be affected by slower employment growth and wage discounting. Stamp duty, which makes up a quarter of the State's own revenue collection, is also easing. The slowdown in real estate conveyancing, motor vehicle sales, and stock exchange turnover, for example, will seriously dent tax revenue.

That is what was said in 1986.

Mr Longley: What about in 1988?

Mr NAGLE: Be patient. I shall get to 1988. Premier Greiner said in his Budget Speech that stamp duty would no longer be payable on stock exchange shares. The reason for that is that the stock exchange may collapse tomorrow if stamp duty were payable on share transfers. I shall return to that matter later. Treasurer Booth continued:

Income from racing tax, lotteries, business franchise licences and forestry is also expected to be subdued.

In 1986 the mob now on the Government side of the House were told by Treasurer Booth that New South Wales was heading for an economic downturn during the following couple of years. And what did they do? They did nothing. In 1987 Treasurer Booth said:

Accordingly the budget increases provision for health care, education, law enforcement and housing. We are proud that our record of sound economic management and fiscal responsibility enable us to share the responsibility to the full. This Budget continues our firm commitment to improving the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of Government programs.

He said further:

In New South Wales the increase is only 4.2 per cent, less than half of the increase in other States.

The Government at that time was monitoring fiscal policy based upon revenue collected. Then we had the miracle. Along came the greatest curator of lies since Paul was converted on the road to Damascus: Premier Nicholas Greiner. In his first Budget Speech he said that New South Wales was in a wonderful position. He said further:

The 1988-89 budget estimates a \$8 million surplus.

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I remind the House of what I said earlier. This Premier claims that the reason New South Wales is in the mess in which it finds itself is because of the economic downturn brought about by the policies of the Labor Party. Apparently, government was a disaster under Labor because it could not provide a surplus, yet in 1989 a surplus was realised. To be fair to the Premier, the pathological liar, he said further:

. . . both revenue and expenditure exceeded Budget estimates. The result is an overall budget surplus for the year 1989 of \$428 million.

What a wonderful Government! There was a half a billion dollar surplus in 1989. If that is so, what has happened to it? He continued:

In the case of revenue there was a \$630 million improvement over budget largely due to buoyant property market positions feeding into stamp duty and land tax revenue.

I remind honourable members that this same Premier said that the Labor governments that preceded his Government had had a charmed life and had the advantage of a boom in State revenues. In the 1991-92 Budget Speech Premier Greiner said:

- * The tax burden in New South Wales has declined relative to other States. We have shifted from being a State with relatively high tax rates to one with average or low tax rates in most cases.

On the face of it that sounds true. On 4th September the Queensland Treasurer said this about the New South Wales Premier in *Hansard* of the Queensland Parliament:

I am amused when the members of the Liberal Party stand up in this place and talk about us increasing taxes when there is only one State Government in Australia that does not increase taxes, the Labor Government of Queensland.

Mr Causley: Who left the economy in a good state up there?

Mr NAGLE: We know the Government is being cut to the bone when we hear interjections like that. The Queensland Treasurer, Mr De Lacy said:

At last year's Premiers Conference the Liberal Premier of New South Wales was running around trying to get all the State Premiers to harmonise their tax rates. What he really meant by "harmonising" tax rates was to lift them to the rates that apply in New South Wales. I wonder whether members of the Liberal Party have ever had a look at the relative taxes in New South Wales and Queensland. The Australian Bureau of Statistics releases details of relative tax charges. On a per capita basis each person in Queensland pays \$980 per annum whilst every person in New South Wales pays \$1,522.

Government members have made many speeches about budget surpluses but, sadly, New South Wales has been managed by an incompetent Government. The people are struggling to survive the onslaught of Government cuts. In the past 18 months in the Auburn electorate the hospital acute care and emergency sections of St Josephs Hospital have been closed. It is highly likely that Lidcombe hospital will be closed.

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Auburn District Hospital only survived closure by a hair's breadth though the Government said that its rationalisation would not allow these hospitals to be kept alive. The Premier said that the Government would be able to manage with the 1 per cent increase projected in the health budget. On 24th September, 1991 the Minister for Health and Community Services, affectionately referred to as the Minister for opening hospitals, said that the \$4.56 billion health allocation was an increase of 4.7 per cent over last year's budget allocation and reflected the no cuts to health approach by the Government.

The acute care and emergency sections of St Josephs Hospital survived 105 years, two world wars and a depression, and have assisted the people of Auburn, many of whom are not wealthy, but those sections could not survive the cuts imposed by the Greiner Government. Auburn District Hospital now has to cater for the increased demand on services. Last year 25,000 people attended the casualty section at Auburn District Hospital. At St Josephs Hospital 37,500 people attended the casualty section. Where will those people seek assistance? They are supposed to be sent to Auburn District Hospital to be looked after. The Minister for Health Services Management, more affectionately known to the Opposition as the Minister for closing hospitals, has said that Auburn District Hospital will have \$2 million and 20 beds to cater for that increased demand on services. That hospital has not got its \$2 million or 20 beds and I bet it will not get either. That is disgraceful. The ghost of Florence Nightingale will haunt this Government to its last dying gasp for what it has done to hospitals in the Auburn electorate and throughout New South Wales. Under the Greiner Government people should not get sick because they will not get well.

Mr Causley: I did.

Mr NAGLE: You did because you went to a good hospital in the Clarence electorate. In southern Sydney the hospital allocation of finances has increased by 14.8 per cent. The balance of power in this Parliament is tight. One can readily believe that the southern Sydney health area has three swinging Government seats. Surely that 14.8 per cent increase was not allocated to save those Government members. The western Sydney health area, which covers the Auburn electorate, received a miraculous increase of 6.4 per cent because, I suggest, most of the surrounding electorates, except Strathfield, are held by Labor. I would never hint to this House that there is a conspiracy but it does look bad. The Wentworth health area, which encompasses three swinging seats, received a 20.7 per cent increase. The area represented by the honourable member for Gosford, who knows the difference between quorums and divisions but as Government Whip apparently does not know he should be present in the Chamber, received an increase of 16.7 per cent. Surely that was not because the two seats on the Central Coast, The Entrance and Gosford electorates - Bob Graham is affectionately termed the member for The Exit - are held by the Government with such fine margins that, if lost, the Government would be put into Opposition for the next decade. I have received a letter from M. Gazzard of Tumby Umbi on the Central Coast, in which he writes about Bob Graham making comments about the Federal Government causing hardship. Mr Gazzard, in a letter that appeared in the *Wyong Shire Advocate*, said:

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Closing down and downgrading these hospitals will cause far more hardship than Medicare will ever do.

[*Extension of time agreed to.*]

I display to honourable members these petitions of protest about St Josephs Hospital which contain 37,980 signatures, not including petitions that have been presented already to this Parliament. The Auburn electorate faces serious difficulties and my constituents cannot get the type of hospital services they require. In 1989 a massive hail storm hit the Auburn electorate. I have spoken many times in this Parliament about that great hail storm and the damage it caused. Nearly two and a half years later people living in the Auburn electorate are still suffering from the effects of that storm. No Government financial assistance was made available to those people except by standard means through the then Department of Family and Community Services. Even the local council could not persuade the Government to give any money to clean up the mess caused by that hail storm. Yet the Bankstown city council, through the representations of an ex-Liberal member of this Parliament, received from the Department of Public Works \$324,062, which was downgraded to \$299,000 after complaints were made about that grant.

The Auburn municipal council received nothing. The taxpayers and ratepayers of the Auburn area had to pay for the repairs the council undertook to try to repair the damage. The damage in the Auburn electorate was far greater than the damage in the affected part of the Bankstown electorate. When a storm of similar velocity hit the North Shore all the stops were pulled out. The Government spent hundreds of thousands of dollars compensating wealthy people on the North Shore who were battling to try to pay their rates and to pay off their houses. They received \$750,000, yet the widows, starving people and those who are badly affected in the Auburn electorate received nothing because they do not reside in a Liberal Party or National Party seat. Honourable members may smile and laugh about that, but they have not had to write thousands of letters to try to justify what this Government is doing. It is a sorrowful state of affairs. I have said before and will say again today that I would never do to the constituents of Government members what the Government did to my constituents.

Mr Longley: Why not?

Mr NAGLE: Because I am a human being, and I would not do it. That will always be the difference between you and me.

Mr Longley: You did it for 12 years.

Mr NAGLE: I did not do it for 12 years. I have not been here for 12 years. If I had been here for 12 years, I would never have done that. That is not my style. I do not like to see poor people whose houses are severely damaged, people who cannot get their act together and do not even know their rights, being exploited by the Greiner Government. Those people were discriminated against because they were Labor voters. The Liberal Party has lost the president of the

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Auburn branch of the Liberal Party. She said she would never vote for the Liberal Party again because of what the Government did to the people in that area, and more so because of what it did to St Joseph's Hospital. Another thing that has concerned me for some time is the rail system in New South Wales. As a former signalman on the railways, I am concerned about the way in which the rail system is being run down. Recently I was speaking to a train driver who had come on stream. He showed me an instruction that said, "It is your responsibility to ensure that the speed of your train is that at which the brakes on your train are able to stop the train in an emergency". I asked him, "What is meant by that?" In response he said: "What they mean is that the brake systems are not being maintained as frequently as they should be because the Government has not got the money to maintain them. They said, 'You have got to run your train according to the condition of your brakes, so you have to test your brakes first'."

Honourable members would probably understand the stress and strain it would put on a train driver who knows that his braking system may not be 100 per cent. That is stupidity and incompetence of astronomical proportions. On many occasions the Minister for Transport has told this House that things were going well in the rail system. I hope the Minister is right and I pray there will be no rail disaster. But honourable members should remember what I had to say tonight about the braking systems on the trains. If there is a disaster, I assure honourable members that this House will not have heard the last of it from me. The Government should put more money into the transport and railway systems to ensure the safety of the people who use the trains. I do not ask the Government to do that for political purposes; I simply ask it to do it, please. If trains are not able to stop, not only will there be a catastrophe of astronomical proportions but also the rail system in New South Wales will be destroyed for a decade.

The Premier told honourable members in his Budget Speech how well things were going in the area of law and order and about the miraculous way in which delays in the court system had been reduced. The Premier went to great pains to point out that WorkCover was working effectively and the Motor Accidents Authority was doing well. Recently I had lunch with a number of solicitors from a firm that does a lot of work for one of the top insurance companies that deals with WorkCover. Those solicitors told me that in 1990-91 the firm had geared up for 8,000 claims - either to fight them or to settle them. They ended up with 800 claims. It has been a bonanza. Yet on page 20 of the Budget Speech the Premier said:

The WorkCover Scheme continues to show strong financial results, with a large surplus compared to a deficit for Victoria's scheme.

People cannot get compensation for their miseries under WorkCover and common law proceedings, because no one can reach the standards and percentages necessary. The Government had a windfall on 7,200 claims. The Motor Accidents Authority had an unfunded liability of \$1.4 billion. People whose claims fail to reach the threshold of \$16,240 or those whose claims fall between that amount and \$40,000 get very little. Mrs E Cardwell, who is 68 years of age, was injured in a motor vehicle accident at an intersection on Park Road. She fractured her shoulder, her

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ribs and her leg, but because she is so old her general damages were low. When one removes the \$16,240 it means she receives little for the pain and suffering and the arthritis from which she will suffer in the future. The Government says that things in the court system are rosy and hunky-dory and that it is doing a lot. The Minister for Justice tells people what a wonderful job he is doing fixing the backlog in the criminal system. There are plenty of trials proceeding in the criminal judicial system but little occurring in the civil jurisdiction. Recently two men were involved in a building case that was estimated to go for five days. Five intrastate witnesses were involved, but the case did not come on for hearing. In the end the participants decided to call it a day and discontinue the action; and the lawyers smiled profusely. If court cases cannot get a hearing, alternative means of resolving disputes must be found. The judicial system cannot cope with the number of cases, and neither can the taxpayer pay.

The Government paid a small fortune for a computerised telephone system to connect the Sydney courts with the Goodsell Building. Magistrates' extension numbers were listed as clerks' numbers. Magistrates have been receiving telephone calls, such as, "My husband did not pay his maintenance last week. Can I sue him?" The man who answered the phone says, "I am a magistrate". The caller says, "You are the very man I want to talk to". The whole system was mixed up and everyone had the wrong telephone numbers. Today I decided to test the system, so I rang Parramatta District Court. I made four telephone calls. Eventually I was diverted on the fourth call, after hanging up on three occasions. I had no idea to whom I was speaking, but the person I was speaking to said, "The person you want to speak to is not available". I said, "I will hang on". The person to whom I was speaking said, "You can't hang on on this phone. This is the only line we have coming into the court and if you hang on you will stop everyone else from ringing in. You will have to ring back later". I said, "What do you mean, ring back later?" I was told, "Ring back in a couple of hours. You should be able to get through". I asked, "What is all this about?" I was told, "The phone system has had it".

I spoke to someone who knew something about it. A small fortune was paid for the switchboard in the Goodsell Building but it has been so incompetently installed that they cannot get their act together. In the old days as a lawyer one could ring the court direct. I spoke to someone who said, "We spend all our time apologising to magistrates, solicitors and the Director of Public Prosecutions people for putting phone calls through". I should like to refer finally to the disgraceful situation of TAFE. The Scott report has resulted in the loss of \$30 million to the TAFE system. Next year 40,000 students will attempt to undertake TAFE courses to improve themselves but they will be unable to do so because of the Government's incompetent management. New South Wales needs to train people so they can enter the work force. When they are unable to attend universities or other colleges of advanced education, we need to provide the necessary funds to enable them to attend TAFE colleges to acquire new skills so that they can enter the work force when New South Wales emerges from the present economic recession. This Budget is a disaster for New South Wales, for the taxpayers and for everyone else.

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Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member has exhausted his time for speaking.

Mr HAZZARD (Wakehurst) [8.0]: These first years of the last decade of the twentieth century will be judged by historians in the twenty-first century. They will judge not only the progress of our community but also the state of this most historic of parliaments, the Fiftieth Parliament of New South Wales. I believe they may well say:

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way - in short, the period was so far like the present period . . .

Yesterday's *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that at present it is the worst of times. A leaked Federal Treasury note makes it clear that it is the season of darkness; it is the winter of despair. There is no more apt description of Australia as we move, probably irreversibly, towards 11 per cent unemployment. These are not prophesies of an Opposition. These are the statements of the Treasurer, John Kerin. Only last week from a relatively safe distance, I must say, of 6,000 kilometres Mr Kerin was prepared to tell us the truth, if only fleetingly, before he was canned by his colleagues. The Treasurer admitted that Australia is now in its worst economic position for 60 years, its worst state since the Great Depression. He told us what the rest of us already knew. He told us what the man in the street already knew. I recollect a few weeks ago a taxi driver taking me home said that he was having great trouble. He came here 15 years ago from Poland. The first few years were great. In the last few weeks, the last few months, he has been lucky if he has made \$25 a night.

The signs were all there. Bankruptcies have skyrocketed to an unbelievable level. They are up a massive 64 per cent. What clearer indication could there be that the world's greatest former Treasurer has presided over the attainment of having almost one million people out of work, one million fellow Australians? This from a Labor government that allegedly cares for the workers, a Labor government one might say that is out of control, a government that is so interested in the workers of the nation that its principal players have spent months playing Russian roulette, while the players themselves play games of one-upmanship, the eventual victor to take the leadership of a party which has masterminded the decline of living standards in Australia. It is in the context of these worst of times that this Government in New South Wales, the Liberal Party-National Party Government, has found its Federal funding slashed and its fair share of the taxes paid by the people of this the premier State of Australia being siphoned off to bolster the Labor States of Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia - to support governments that cannot support themselves and to provide lifelines for State economies that are the products of Labor Party policy.

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The clones of State Labor who usually sit on the other side of the House - perhaps tonight they are all out at dinner - have quietly stood by and watched Australia disappear into the black hole of unemployment. They supported the policies of their Federal Labor colleagues. They cannot escape that fact. They have aided and abetted Paul Keating's assault on the Australian work force. Labor epitomises the age of foolishness. Labor cannot provide any answers for tough times. It cannot cope with changing times. Labor policy is restrictive, archaic and conservative. As socialism and the significance of the State have diminished throughout eastern Europe and throughout the world, the Australian Labor Party has grimly grasped the decaying values jettisoned everywhere else. Labor is unbelievable. The man in the street - the fruit shop attendant, the bus driver, the petrol station proprietor - and professional people have a right to be incredulous at what they hear. The chameleon of Federal politics, the world's greatest former Treasurer, has now emerged as the purveyor of good care for the people of Australia. So far as he is concerned, he is now going to be the saviour of the one million people he made sure were unemployed in the first place. That could only be described as pure political opportunism.

The Opposition in this State is on the same path. The Leader of the Opposition has suddenly decided in the past few months that Federal Labor is wrong. When he appears in the television news he tries to distance his Labor Party State colleagues from fundamental Labor Party policy. I ask: what could he do for New South Wales? I would answer that with a simple word: nothing. He has offered no credible alternative policies. He simply has no credible alternative policies. The efforts of the Leader of the Opposition to distance State Labor from the Federal Labor Party are transparent - absolutely transparent. Members of the Labor Party at all levels are the servants and puppets of the trade union movement - the trade union movement that is prepared tomorrow to put businesses to the wall by instigating a general strike. Why? Why does State Labor want its workers to lose \$100? Why is this happening?

Because the Labor Council has an identity problem; it wants to be the government of New South Wales. It does not want industrial relations, employer-employee relations brought into the twenty-first century. It would rather have the workers of this State wallow in the winter of despair. It either cannot see or will not see that its activities will ensure the continuance of the worst of times.

Tonight I was speaking to workers around the Parliament who advised me that tomorrow half of them will be working, half of them will not be working. The half who will not be working all belong to the union. A number of those told me that quite a few of them want to work but they have been warned that they must go on strike tomorrow; they must lose their money tomorrow, if they do not want to be blackballed and termed scabs and other terms the Labor Party thrives on. Have honourable members heard even one solitary Federal or State Labor politician with the courage to suggest that tomorrow's strike is sheer stupidity, sheer bloody-mindedness, sheer ignorance? They had the chance today to do so but not one member of the Opposition uttered one word to suggest that such a strike is inappropriate at a time when one million workers are already unemployed. There is only one spring of hope, the New South Wales Liberal Party-National Party

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Government - I am certainly not going to refer to the Independents. It has clear policy direction and will provide again the best of times for New South Wales - for all the residents of New South Wales.

This Government is not and will not be shackled by the politics of the Labor Council. It is not a puppet of the unions. This Government is making tough decisions for tough times. No one would expect less, except those who think that governments and the community can run at a loss for ever. Recently I took a trip to the mountains. When going past Windsor I saw one of those chalk boards on which we often see the fundamental philosophies set out. One said: "If your business is going broke, sell it. Buy into the Government because government is the only business that can go broke and everybody still gets paid". The situation has to be that government is not at the expense of the people. Government should be accountable and responsible to the people. The 1991-92 Budget does not ignore the fact that employers are struggling to provide jobs for their employees. It reflects the massive difficulties the State has had to cope with following the enormous reduction in real funding from the Federal Labor Government.

This Government remains committed to retaining New South Wales as a triple - A State for the long-term benefit of the children of this State. It has not accepted Labor's soft option of simply going further into debt and leaving the worry for tomorrow. The Government has stayed on track with all of its basic expenditure. As an example, in this year the Government will spend \$1.3 billion on the capital works allocation for roads. This reflects a 20 per cent increase in real terms on capital works projects for the roads of New South Wales despite the reduction in Federal funding. New South Wales has continued to apply the whole of its income from the 3 x 3 program to improve State roads; but at the same time the Federal Government returns only a small percentage to the roads and the making of those roads.

I turn to hospitals. The key to this year's health budget will be the promotion of efficiencies in health services. It is the sort of time that we live in that we must look at efficiencies. This of course will present major difficulties as we try to bring the hospitals into line with an understanding of the recessionary pressures that exist throughout our community. It will be a difficult path but it will be a necessary path. There can be no justification for maintaining the same levels of staff and, therefore, community funding when there has been a marked reduction in the number of days that each individual patient spends in hospital. This reduction, as you would know, Mr Speaker, is largely as a result of advances in medical science. A simple example is laparoscopy surgery. Gall bladder operations required 14 days' hospitalisation. The period has now come down to four to six days. What is the justification for

the community bearing the expense of maintaining whole hospital structures that were designed around yesterday's technology?

I turn to the parliamentary framework and the parliamentary process. In that context it may also be the best of times, the age of wisdom, the spring of hope - or it may in fact be the worst of times. It is appropriate to look at the parliamentary process in this my first speech in this House as the way that it will operate is

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changing by choice and by circumstance. It will be judged as the best of times if the parliamentary institution, as a fundamental cornerstone of our community, is nurtured and treated with respect. The Parliament is, after all, the parent of our society; but it is also the child of it. As the parent it has the capacity to provide a sense of security and direction for all of its family in New South Wales - young people, working people, senior citizens, trade unionists, everyone. But to ensure that those ideals are attained the Parliament is dependent wholly and solely upon the integrity, the decency, the understanding, and the hard work of its members. They must ensure that the Parliament remains the living expression of man's dedication to furthering the well-being of his fellow man.

Historians, however, may in the future judge this Parliament as the worst of times if in the day-to-day workings of the Parliament any individuals - any small group in this place - seek to hijack the will of the people. There should be one clear recognition: is that there is only one Premier and there is only one government. The stability of government is the most fundamental offering that individual members of this place can make to the State of New South Wales. It was never envisaged that a parliament of the people would be captive to the views of individual members of this place - members who represent less than 3 per cent of the entire electorate of New South Wales, the so-called non-aligned Independents. It is of course appropriate and indeed essential that the individual members of the non-aligned group express their views and that their views be heard. But once such views are given consideration it is then incumbent upon the Government to ensure that the Government governs as it sees to be best for the families and people of New South Wales. It is the Government.

That brings me to a consideration of individual responsibility. This Government's beliefs are founded in a belief that in the end each able-bodied individual is responsible for his own well-being. I hold that view. It was the worst of times in 1942 when Sir Robert Menzies' words rang out in a series of radio broadcasts. He said: "The greatest element in a strong people is a fierce independence of spirit. This is the only real freedom - a brave acceptance of unclouded individual responsibility". Individual responsibility, which is what our community needs to recognise, is the catalyst for the resurgence of our nation. Individual enterprise - not government interference and government handouts - is what made this nation great and will make it great again. I have a firm belief in the value of individual responsibility, individual enterprise. Without these characteristics an individual is nothing more than an empty shell. This is what attracted me to Liberalism. Liberalism recognises that the rights and obligations of the individual must be the focus of the community. It recognises that the State is not the focus. It emphasises the striving for individual excellence. It is the way of life that most Australians are most comfortable with.

Last Friday I attended Manly High School in the magnificent electorate of Wakehurst. This school gave me my education. There I shared in the end of year awards ceremony. I was struck by the fact that there was a new emphasis in our schools, a new emphasis on individual contributions to the community. This was recognised in the form of citizenship awards. They are earned in the same way that

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academic and sporting awards are earned. I believe this reflects the growing emphasis in our schools that schools are part of the broader community and each student must come to grips with his or her responsibilities as an individual in that community. Manly-Warringah and Wakehurst in particular are leading the way in recognising the significance of the individual's

involvement and responsibility in the community. We have only to look at the thousands of voluntary workers assisting in many capacities throughout the area: the Manly-Warringah neighbourhood centre at Dee Why, many Rotary clubs and Lions clubs, bushfire brigades, Meals on Wheels, sporting clubs, surf life saving clubs, St Vincent de Paul, the Salvation Army, many denominational and non denominational welfare agencies, and groups providing services to the disabled, to name but a few.

[Extension of time agreed to.]

In Wakehurst the realisation that every individual has a responsibility to every other individual in our community is alive and well. I hope to continue to emphasise the significance of the individual, to emphasise the movement away from the belief that the State must provide for us as individuals, a move away from the "them and us" philosophy. That view fails to recognise that the Government is simply an aggregation of all the individuals; in other words, the collective "them" and "us". I have visited many schools in Wakehurst in the last few months. Individual parents, citizens and teachers are providing better resources for the real future of our community - our children. I attended Beacon Hill primary school, North Curl Curl primary school and Narrabeen primary school and I saw the massive amount of work that had been done to improve the grounds and the environment for the children of the schools. I attended Wheeler Heights primary school, Collaroy Plateau primary school and Narrabeen primary school and saw how parts of the schools had been painted, repaired and generally improved and library and computer facilities had been increased - all with the minimum assistance of the "them", primarily with the efforts of the "us".

I have seen the same excellent attitudes at Cromer and Beacon Hill Technology high schools, that is the individual parents, the teachers and the citizens of Wakehurst. I now look forward to the challenge in this place with a real sense of my vision - an unclouded individual responsibility. In the context of the application of that responsibility I should like to thank those people who, by their efforts and support, have allowed me to find myself in this place. My wife Beth has given me the strength and the courage to pursue my ambitions to be involved in the community. She helped me in the very difficult preselection period and then the far more enjoyable election campaign. Beth and I have two sons of whom I am immensely proud Andrew, who turns four years old in two weeks time, and David, who is just eight months. It is obviously a difficult time as I have young children and responsibilities to a young family. I hope in applying my energies to the community and to the betterment of the individuals in that community I will not detract substantially from my family life.

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I also wish to thank my parents, Ron and Dorothy Hazzard, for their assistance over many years and most recently their help in my election campaign. I will never forget my mother sitting outside the pre-polling station in the freezing cold week after week. I want to thank Beth's parents, Charles and Lola Hartley, for their boundless energy and friendship with our two sons. They provide the absolutely necessary loving babysitting for the boys when Beth and I are at the many functions we now attend. I would also like to thank my wife's great-uncle, Charles Cobb, who, after a lifetime on the railways and not necessarily sharing all of my political views, at 87 years of age letterboxed almost half of the electorate of Wakehurst during my election campaign - and I think he actually did it twice. I would like to thank my brothers, Jeff and Tony, and my many friends who, though not all being members of the Liberal Party - and I am working on that - came out and supported me during the election campaign, particularly on election day. I would like to thank them for all the hard work they have done. I thank my consultant partner, Ray Griffiths, my present partner, Mary Bova, my long-suffering bookkeeper, Marj Crowley, and each of the secretaries, particularly Sam, Anna and Eleanor,

who supported me so well during the campaign and since. Often they have wondered whether they were a legal office in the early days as I made the transition and found myself an office.

My first speech in this place would not be complete without thanking those of the Wakehurst conference, those of the Manly conference and those of the Davidson conference, many of whom are present tonight - those dedicated Liberals who worked so hard for me and the Liberal Party during the election campaign. In particular I should like to thank Robyn Young, the Wakehurst conference president, and Bob Goymour and Fiona Gow, who were such capable organisers of my campaign. I thank my secretary, Noeline Barrell, for her dedication in the first months of my position as a member of Parliament. I also wish to thank particularly the voters of Wakehurst for giving me their confidence in such a resounding way, to the extent that the Liberal Party received almost a 5 per cent swing in Wakehurst. I should like to think that some part of this vote of confidence arises from my long association with the area. I thank also each of the Liberal Party members of Parliament and their spouses in Manly-Warringah who helped me so capably and energetically during the course of my campaign. To that extent I am for ever in their debt. Finally I should like to thank the former member for Wakehurst, Mr John Booth, for his long contribution to the Liberal Party and I wish him well in his future. I look forward to being a most active individual member of this Government team - a Government which emphasises and recognises the real worth of the individual.

Mr Blackmore: So long as he turns up on time.

Mr HAZZARD: I promise you I will get here on time always. Having in mind the introduction of this my maiden speech, I believe it would probably be appropriate to conclude by saying, "It is a far far better thing that I do than I have ever done before". However, I found that the speaker of those words, shortly after

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he said them, lost his head. So I will end on the words, which perhaps are more practical politics than philosophical politics and although they may not have been said by a member on my side they are nevertheless still applicable. They are, "Do unto others as they would do unto you but do it earlier, do it more often and do it better". I look forward to that challenge and I thank you, Mr Speaker, and the House for your indulgence.

Mr HUNTER (Lake Macquarie) [8.25]: I rise to speak in the budget debate and in doing so make what has traditionally been called a maiden speech, but what I prefer to have recorded as my first speech in this honourable House.

[*Interruption*]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask honourable members to contain their exuberance in congratulating the honourable member for Wakehurst and remind them that it is the maiden speech of the member for Lake Macquarie also and he deserves the courtesy of this House.

Mr HUNTER: May I take this opportunity to congratulate the honourable member for Wakehurst on his first speech to the House - well done! As the newly-elected member for Lake Macquarie I feel that one of my first duties should be to thank publicly the electors of Lake Macquarie who have honoured me by giving me a handsome majority in my first attempt at parliamentary life. I thank them for their demonstration of confidence. My second duty is to pay tribute to the parliamentary representative I now succeed, and I speak, of course, of my father, Merv Hunter. Merv Hunter not only served the people of Lake Macquarie for 22 years in this Parliament, but also from 1962 until 1970 worked for the local community as a councillor, vice-president and finally president of the then Lake Macquarie shire. His history of public office spans 29 years, from 1962 until May 1991 when he retired from State Parliament.

At that time Merv Hunter was the father of this House and president of the parliamentary Labor Party and was held in high regard by his colleagues - and, might I say held in high regard

by colleagues from both sides of this House. In my father's first speech in this House he praised his predecessor, the late James Simpson, who had held for the Australian Labor Party the seat of Lake Macquarie since its inception. James Simpson was a hard-working member and for a time was a Minister of the Crown. He was a former Minister for Mines. I am sure that as Merv Hunter is James Simpson would be disgusted if he knew that this conservative Government is attempting to sell-off the people's coalmines, four of which are located within the Lake Macquarie electorate, which I represent. They are: Newstan Colliery at Fassifern, Awaba State Mine, Myuna Colliery at Wangi, and Cooranbong Colliery. It is of grave concern to me and to the people of Lake Macquarie that these profitable public assets are to be sold off on the cheap, in a desperate attempt by the Greiner Government to balance the Budget - a budget that is in the red to the tune of more than \$1 billion.

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The sale of these mines and the possible job losses will have an effect on Lake Macquarie business and in particular the Westlakes' economy. It will cause heartache and anguish for mineworkers and it will devastate their families. I give the Government warning that I will oppose the mines sell-off and will do all in my power to see that the coalmines remain in public ownership. At present I am exploring ways and means of using this Parliament to halt the mines sales and I do not rule out the possibility of introducing a private member's bill which would prohibit that sell-off. While speaking about coalmining there is a problem with mining in the Lake Macquarie electorate, that is, the extraction of coal by the longwall method. Longwall mining results in subsidence - stresses and strains on the earth - and causes damage, including damage to peoples homes. I wish to state at the outset that I am not against longwall mining. I am not against longwall mining in residential areas but damage must be kept to a minimum. People must be properly compensated for the damage that is caused and compensation payments must be swift; and there is where the problem lies.

The Mine Subsidence Board is not doing a good enough job; it should be taken to the cleaners and cleaned out. The Act must be amended and the standards of the Mine Subsidence Board brought up to those that are expected in the 1990s. The benefit of doubt must be given freely, and people's lives saved from the inquisitorial appeals system presided over by the board. I ask the Minister for Natural Resources to listen to the concerns of people and move to improve the system. Unfortunately, had the delegation been able to see the Minister today, the Minister could have had explained to him the problems people are experiencing. I am sure the Minister would have been enlightened and been moved to improve the system. Coal is one of Lake Macquarie's natural resources. The other, of course, is the lake and its environs. My father in his first speech to this House said:

One does not have to yield to egotism to expound the natural beauty of Lake Macquarie. This is an acquisition surely that can be viewed completely impartially in the political sense, and may I venture that a member of any political party would be both happy and proud to represent such an area.

As was my father, I am both happy and proud to represent Lake Macquarie. Unfortunately, there seems to be no impartiality in the political sense when it comes to the preservation of the lake's environs. The Budget will do nothing to protect and preserve Lake Macquarie and its surrounding bushland. It seems that the political parties that form the coalition Government do not have the same commitment to the protection of the environment as does the Labor Opposition to which I belong. Unlike the Government, the Opposition is committed to purchasing and preserving the Green Point estate. The Government has offered a token sum for its purchase, but with the proviso that part of the natural bushland be developed. Although the Green Point estate lies within the electorate of my colleague the honourable member for Swansea, any forced development of this natural area will result in the degradation in my electorate the surrounding water of Lake Macquarie. The commitment of the Labor Opposition to the protection of the environment is

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exemplified further by its commitment to establish a Lake Macquarie foreshore park. Unlike the Government, the Labor Party has endorsed a proposal put forward by the local environment group URGE. If implemented, the proposal would result in a system of parks ringing Lake Macquarie. I urge the Government to listen to the overwhelming majority of Lake Macquarie residents and to save Green Point and include it in the lake foreshore park system, which will help preserve Lake Macquarie's natural environment for future generations.

While on the environment I wish to inform honourable members that a major problem has arisen in the Lake Macquarie electorate, that is, the contamination of the lake bed by heavy metals and the contamination of homes and soil by lead, which is being emitted from a lead-zinc smelter located at Boolaroo. The smelter has been operating for many years. Only recently were steps taken to reduce its lead emissions. Unfortunately this could be too late for the many hundreds of people living in the surrounding area. The local people are extremely concerned for their own health and that of their children. The Department of Health has undertaken blood testing of children in areas adjacent to the smelter, and that has revealed some alarmingly high blood lead levels. The lead smelter company has come forward and donated \$30,000 towards the cleaning up of homes in the area adjacent to it. The Government must examine its responsibilities closely, it having allowed high lead emissions to continue for many years. The Government has a responsibility also to keep the public informed about the level of lead emissions from the smelter. The Government has a responsibility to participate in the cleaning up of contaminated sites and to make safe the local community.

I turn from health problems associated with lead emissions to the basic health needs of the people of Lake Macquarie. This Budget does not address the provision of an adequate public hospital facility for the western side of Lake Macquarie. An accident and emergency centre or polyclinic must be provided for the people of Westlakes. The 60,000-plus people who live in the Lake Macquarie electorate have no public hospital facility. They must travel to Wyong in the south or to the John Hunter Hospital in the north for emergency casualty treatment. The western side of Lake Macquarie is one of the fastest growing areas in the Hunter region - second only to Port Stephens. Its people must have adequate health care and easy access to a casualty facility. The Westlakes Community Health Service operates from a cramped and completely inadequate building in Toronto. Community health services must be expanded and new premises provided. The establishment of a Westlakes polyclinic would solve the problems.

Ambulance services in the Westlakes region leave a lot to be desired. Recently I highlighted, both in Parliament and in the media, the problems associated with single-crew ambulances. On a number of occasions patients' lives have been placed at risk because of inadequate staffing. I inform the House of an incident in August when a young man had to drive an ambulance at speeds of up to 120 kilometres an hour from Cooranbong to Wyong hospital while the single ambulance officer attended to the young man's friend in the back of the ambulance. In an

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earlier incident a Cooranbong ambulance officer had to rely on a mother to attend to a child who had a severed artery. The woman had to hold her child's arm upright and adjust the oxygen supply while the single officer drove them to hospital. More recently a Cooranbong ambulance officer - one of only two on duty in the Westlakes district - was called out to attend a sick child. When he arrived at the premises to which he was called the solitary officer found that because he had to attend to the child, who was seriously ill, he could not drive the ambulance. The only solution was to call the Toronto ambulance service, whose single officer drove the child and the Cooranbong officer to the John Hunter Hospital. When the patient was delivered at the hospital they were called to Hamilton for clerical duties. Consequently the Westlakes district was left without an ambulance service for more than three hours. That is just not good enough. The Government must do something about it, but this Budget will do nothing to address the problem of understaffing of ambulance services.

Isolation is the principal problem when it comes to addressing the problems associated with the lack of health services in the area. The electorate consists of a number of peninsulas that jut out into the lake. The time needed in an emergency to travel from the end of say, the Morisset peninsula, to the nearest hospital is approximately 45 minutes. In the case of an emergency, when medical assistance is required, that is too long a time. The Government must recognise the necessity for a casualty unit and improved ambulance services on the western side of Lake Macquarie. The isolated communities that make up the electorate of Lake Macquarie need an adequate transport system. Unfortunately the Government has failed to provide that. The electorate of Lake Macquarie is blessed by having the great northern rail line run from one end of it to the other. The electorate has eight railway stations, however, unfortunately the Government has seen fit to de-man or reduce staff at most of them. In fact, within the first 12 months of the Government's coming to office it closed the Toronto spur line, which catered for many local residents. The Government claimed that the line was losing more than \$1 million a year. Despite repeated requests from me and the previous member for Lake Macquarie the Government has to this day refused to produce documentary evidence to back up its claim. The Government replaced the train service with a bus but failed to provide adequate bus stop facilities such as shelters and pull-over bays on the route. To this day elderly people and children stand in the rain or in the hot sun waiting to catch a bus, whereas in the past they waited at comfortable railway stations.

The Government's attack on Lake Macquarie commuters does not stop there. It has been revealed that the Government plans to introduce changes to timetables in January of next year that will axe the local suburban service from Fassifern to Newcastle. The Labor Opposition recognises the need for this suburban service, and at the time of the last State election made a commitment to upgrade the service by the introduction of Tangara trains. Tangaras are constructed in Newcastle only to be shipped to Sydney for use on the metropolitan service. It is about time the Government acknowledged that the people of Newcastle and Lake Macquarie deserve

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a better service than that being offered to them now. I urge the Government to maintain the suburban service from Newcastle to Fassifern and to introduce Tangara trains on the run. The Government plans also to install ticket selling machines at local railway stations. I can only assume that the purpose of that is to further reduce staff. The installation of ticket selling machines will place the safety of commuters at risk and will leave local railways stations open to attack from vandals and louts.

Another example of the Government's uncaring attitude to Lake Macquarie commuters has occurred at Booragul railway station. Not long after the Newcastle earthquake, CityRail moved in and demolished the old ticket office and waiting room, claiming that the earthquake had rendered it unsafe. At the time soothing promises were made that a new waiting room would be built on the station. Now, approximately 18 months later the station is empty, the toilets there are closed and locked. What makes matters worse is that this station is adjacent to two senior citizen homes. The senior citizens have ramps to gain access to the station but they have no toilet facilities and must stand out in the rain or hot sun to wait for a train. It is not good enough and I ask the Government to look at the problem and try to rectify it. This Government's budget has again failed to allocate funding for the construction of the Toronto court house. The proposed court house at Toronto has a long history. In the early 1980s a site was dedicated for the construction of the court house. The previous Labor government proposed to build the court house in the 1988-89 financial year but lost office in March 1988.

Since then the Greiner Government has done nothing to have a court house built at Toronto, except to admit that it has a high priority. In 1989 the then Attorney General, John Dowd visited the court house site and proclaimed that a new court house would soon be built but perhaps not on that site. It is now almost two years later, another budget has been announced and there is no listing for a court house. The former Attorney General retired from State Parliament in May. Unfortunately, I think his commitment may have retired with him. The

budget gives no hope for improved police facilities in the Lake Macquarie electorate. At Toronto the police station conditions are very cramped and there is certainly need for expansion. Morisset police officers are working under extremely cramped conditions in a demountable building. It is time the Government gave our hard-working police service the facility it justly deserves. The upgrading of Toronto and Morisset police stations should be high on the Government's priority list.

[Extension of time agreed to.]

I turn to education and the educational needs of students in Lake Macquarie. I acknowledge the Government's allocation of funds this year in the budget for the construction of a new primary school at Bonnells Bay, something that the local community has campaigned for over many years and which is definitely needed. But unfortunately, while it has acknowledged the needs at Bonnells Bay for a new school, the Government has failed to acknowledge a similar need at Barnsley. Barnsley primary school is made up mostly of demountable school buildings. These buildings

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continually leak in time of rain. The school is built on a clay pan and in a heavy downpour the playground floods. A month or so ago, classes had to be evacuated from demountable buildings and were held in the library while the demountables were repaired. There are no covered play areas for the children. At times students are forced to take off their shoes and socks to cross the playground. The honourable member for Wallsend pointed out to me that about 12 months ago a pet duck was living under one of the demountable buildings.

Mr Mills: Is it still there?

Mr HUNTER: Not when I visited. I ask the Government to take note of the plight of Barnsley primary school and to examine closely the need for allocation in the next Budget of funding for the construction of a new school. Many of the schools in my electorate have problems that unfortunately this Budget does not address. Two of these concern vehicular access that is putting children's lives at risk. These are at Speers Point East school and Toronto Primary School. There have been repeated requests for action by parents and citizens associations that have gone unheeded by the Government. I ask the Government to examine the problems at these two schools. I mentioned earlier that the western side of Lake Macquarie was one of the fastest growing areas in the Hunter region. It is for this reason that there is an urgent need for a technical and further education college in Westlakes. At present many Lake Macquarie people travel to colleges at Cessnock, Belmont, Wyong and Newcastle because nothing is available to them on the western side of the lake. Planning should start immediately for a TAFE college in the Lake Macquarie electorate.

With the reduction in the number of New South Wales electorates from 109 to 99, the electorate I represent has expanded. It now includes seven or eight extra sporting groups. Yet information from the Department of Sport and Recreation tells me that the total amount of capital assistance sports grants that will be allocated to my electorate remain unchanged from last year. I think that is grossly unfair. The State looks to host the 2000 Olympics yet the Government goes on short-changing these local grassroots sporting groups. It is in these sporting groups that we will find our Olympians of the future and I am very disappointed this Budget does not acknowledge that. While mentioning the 2000 Olympics, I take this opportunity to invite all honourable members of the House to a presentation by the Lake Macquarie city council on a proposed whitewater canoeing course at Eraring. It is proposed to build that canoe course adjacent to the cooling water outfall canal of the Eraring power station and, by diverting the warm water discharge through the man-made course, provide an all year round white water canoeing venue. That would certainly put Australia on the international sporting map. The fact is that whitewater canoeing competition is to be an event at the Barcelona Olympics next year. It is also envisaged that it will be an event at the Atlanta games in 1996. I believe our major rival for the 2000 games, Berlin, will be including whitewater

canoeing in its submission as Germany has a man-made canoe course. If New South Wales wishes to gain the 2000 Olympics, we must show that we can put up a facility that is better
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than that offered by any other country. The whitewater canoeing course at Eraring would be such a venue. I invite all honourable members to listen to the presentation which will be held in the theatre next Thursday, 31st October at 12.45 p.m.

Mr Speaker, I wish to thank you and the House for its indulgence in this my first speech. I would like to conclude now by thanking those people, those hard-working campaigners who made my success. First of all, I must thank all the members of the Australian Labor Party in the Lake Macquarie electorate. I also wish to thank my campaign director, Mr Jack Marshall, and his wife Mavis. Jack went to great lengths to see my election to this House, almost giving an arm and a leg in the process. Just one week before election day Jack was savaged by a dog while letterboxing my campaign material. He spent two weeks in hospital after undergoing a skin graft - truly a campaign director any candidate would be proud to have. I must also thank my parents Merv and Bette for the tireless effort they put into my election. I thank my brother Les and my brother Alan, his wife Annette, sons Paul and Brad, and daughter Samantha and her husband David McLeay. To my good friends Barbara and Eric Butt and their family, to Lorre Manning and Bill Manning, I say thank you very much. Also I thank Jan Crawford, Pat Bramley, and Loida Reynolds. To Wangi Branch President Neville McLachlan and his wife Colleen I say, thank you.

To my good friends and neighbours Marj and Dimitri Ternovy, Tom Ramage, Michael Buckley and family, also Bob Irvine and his family, Bernie Griffin and Dot and Stan Major, thank you very much for your assistance and friendship. To Morisset Branch President Elaine Cox, thank you for your hard work, and to Bruce and Robyn Gibson, thank you for your generous support. To Gordon Triplett, Col Burns, Leigh Martin, Doug Pitt and Barry Alley, thank you very much for your efforts in my election. To my good friends Anne Milner, David Harcus, Helen Cameron, Terry Salter and Bradley Perrett, many thanks. I must now pay tribute to a friend who is no longer with us, Mr John Boyd. John Boyd was treasurer of my State electorate council. He managed my campaign funds well and as a friend worked tirelessly to see my election to State Parliament. This was even though he was suffering and in his last days battling cancer. Just three days before John passed away he came to the first sitting of this 50th Parliament to witness my swearing in. He was a long-time supporter and I take this opportunity to pay tribute to my good friend John Boyd. To Carol Abela and her late husband Doctor Jos Abela, who were the first people to approach me with the suggestion that I seek election to State Parliament, thank you for your confidence. It gave me the courage to forge ahead.

[Interruption]

Mr HUNTER: He was not going to retire. I thank my aunts Mel Darcy and Marie Beahan for their help on election day. I thank also Max Fiddler and Jan Watson for the production of my campaign literature. I would like to thank my colleagues the honourable member for Wallsend and the Hon. P. F. O'Grady, M.L.C., for their help leading up to the election and for the support of my Federal

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colleagues the Minister for Land Transport and the member for Charlton, the Hon. Bob Brown, and the member for Dobell, the Hon. Michael Lee. Without the support of all those people I would not be here today. For my closing remarks in this my first speech I again quote from my predecessor, my father, Merv Hunter. This is how he concluded his first speech:

I am equally certain that the electors will not easily forget this financial morass in which the State now finds itself. In time of crisis the Askin Government, unable to withstand economic pressures, has been found wanting, wanting in the exercise of sound statesmanship to serve the people.

Might I say how ironic it is that some 22 years later we find the conservative Greiner Government in crisis, unable to withstand economic pressures and found wanting in the exercise of sound statesmanship to serve the people of New South Wales.

Mr SMALL (Murray) [8.51]: I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak tonight in the budget debate. I pass on my congratulations to the honourable member for Lake Macquarie and the honourable member for Wakehurst, who were elected at the last election. I wish both of them well and hope they have a great future serving their constituents in their electorates. New South Wales faces hard times with the Federal Government cutting back the money it gives to the States. It has less money to allocate because of the fall in revenue. The New South Wales Government has less money to work with. Though the decrease in revenue for 1991-92 will be \$1.4 billion, Consolidated Fund receipts from ordinary annual services will be \$15.58 billion. That is still a sizeable amount. However, we must take into account the overall budgetary framework. The events that have happened today and what is expected to happen tomorrow with the general strike over the Industrial Relations Bill show what industrial relations is all about. When the legislation has passed through the upper House people will have freedom of choice as to whether they join a union. I look upon enterprise bargaining, which is an important concept for the work force, as a method of providing rights for the people, helping the economy, and providing better work practices, better production, a better State and a healthier State financially. I look forward to the passage of the Industrial Relations Bill. I have no doubt that the whole State will be wiser and stronger financially.

I wish to touch on many subjects tonight, but I turn first to health. It is interesting that Bernie Curtin, the chairman of the Berrigan hospital board and of an aged care hostel unit to be developed in Berrigan, is in the gallery tonight, with his wife Mary and friend. This State is fortunate to have people like Bernie Curtin. They are willing to work hard in a voluntary capacity to ensure that small communities receive the service and care that are essential to them. In recent times I have heard cries about cutbacks in health and about the terrible things that the Government is doing - providing less money and cutting back hospital services. The health budget this year of \$4.57 billion is about 30 per cent of the State's Budget. Because of increasing costs it is difficult to maintain the health services that people require. The Ministers responsible for the health and hospital portfolios must ensure

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that the dollars are spent wisely. This year, in real terms, after inflation is allowed for, we are 1.3 per cent ahead. There is a 6.3 per cent increase in the health budget for the southwestern region, which takes in Albury through to the South Australian border.

In the past seven years the 12 hospitals situated in the Murray electorate - Corowa, Lockhart, Urana, Jerilderie, Finley, Berrigan, Tocumwal, Deniliquin, Hay, Barham, Balranald and Wentworth - have received major upgrades, if not to beds and wards, to health and community services. Facilities have been provided where the elderly on a day care basis can share hospital facilities. Specialist visitors attend the hospital and the local community and the nurses work together with the aged people in need. Accident and emergency services in many hospitals are undergoing change. Many people are upset that there appear to be bed cutbacks. I do not like to see fewer beds in hospitals, but it is a matter of budgeting with the finances available. The treatment time in hospital has been reduced dramatically. Scientific progress and the health benefits available in Australia and the world over have led to people living longer. The demands on health and aged care services are enormous. It is good that people can enjoy longer, fuller and healthier lives, but that causes severe strain on the health system in these hard economic times when fewer taxpayers are providing the money yet more services are required.

The Government looks forward to the Federal Government providing funds for long stay beds for aged care. In many small country towns long stay beds are being converted to nursing home beds. I like that strategy because aged residents are able to stay in country towns with their families. They should not be expected to travel hundreds of kilometres to the

larger centres of Albury, Narrandera, Griffith, Bendigo, Melbourne or Shepparton for nursing home care. It is far better for them to stay in their home towns with their friends and loved ones. That is a wonderful move. It does not mean that a hospital will have fewer beds. The hospitals will maintain the same number of beds, but the long stay beds are being converted to nursing home-type beds. In addition to that, a hostel has been built in Wentworth at a cost of about \$800,000. I give credit to the Federal Government for that. Earlier I mentioned Berrigan. I understand that at present the townspeople of Berrigan are in the throes of collecting money. Approximately \$200,000 has been raised and I understand that, provided the townspeople raise sufficient money, the Federal Government will contribute about \$600,000. Hostel-type accommodation has become important because it is cheaper to maintain the residents in a facility where they receive care from day nurses and visiting practitioners. I want to stop this nonsense that honourable members heard a couple of weeks ago about country hospitals closing down. The Minister has clearly said that no country hospitals will be closed. I am pleased to say that in view of the careless and irresponsible scaremongering that has been indulged in by members of the Opposition.

I turn to the budget for the public works program. Even in these hard times approximately \$5.5 billion will be spent on the public works program. The decline in State revenue will naturally affect the construction of new buildings and facilities

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in the State. What does it matter if it takes another one, two or three years to provide a particular facility if there are less dollars available? It is irresponsible of any government to spend money that is not available. To do that it must borrow beyond its means and that is unreasonable. I commend the Greiner-Murray Government for recognising that money cannot be handed out to build every facility that is needed. As with any family unit, New South Wales' means are limited. The Budget must take that into account and adopt a responsible attitude. Funding for roads has been cut back slightly this year, although approximately \$1.7 billion will be spent on roadworks. The hard economic times are stopping many people from buying the amount of petrol they purchased previously. This means that the Government is receiving less revenue from the 3 x 3 levy and from the 3.5c bowser tax. That tax has been in operation since 1981-82, but the previous Labor Government did not direct the revenue back to roadworks funding. Most of it was directed to Darling Harbour. I am the first to admit that Darling Harbour is a magnificent area, but the Government of the day allowed country roads in New South Wales to deteriorate and this Government is trying desperately to make up for that.

[Interruption]

Mr SMALL: The Minister for Natural Resources agrees with me. A total of \$1.1 billion was directed away from country roads and the Government is having a devil of a job getting them back into shape after three wet years and some very difficult times. The sunset clause on the 3 x 3 levy expires in August next year, but many people regard that levy as a good revenue-raising measure. Most people do not like taxes but they totally support that levy because the funds it yields are being returned to constructing roads and bridges in country areas. Apart from CountryLink buses and private bus services, country areas do not have public transport; country residents have to find their own transport. Country areas are not like the metropolitan areas where one can catch a bus or a train in Sydney, or a tram in Melbourne. It is important that the dollars raised from the 3 x 3 levy be spent in country areas. In excess of \$20 million has been allocated for roadworks in the Murray electorate. I commend the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Roads, Wal Murray, for that.

I turn to education. The past few years have been a traumatic period for the Government in regard to education. However, the changes to the education system had to be made. The education system has improved greatly. There has been a settling down period but the principals and the majority of teachers now agree that the changes that were made were necessary. If they had not been made, the education system would now be a disaster. Parents are anxious to see the three Rs being taught and children are learning from them. I

admire the children of today for the way in which they handle new technology, computers and so forth. It is remarkable. They are keeping up with the times and the Government is obliged to see that they have access to this technology. In excess of \$4 billion has been allocated to education for the 1991-92 period, similar to the amount that has been

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allocated to health. In total of between \$8 billion and \$9 billion from a total of almost \$16 billion has been allocated to health and education. Those figures make one realise the importance the Greiner-Murray Government places on those areas. The Government must not only spend the money but ensure it is directed to the right area. The children of today are the adults of tomorrow who will help run this State, and the Government is obliged to give them every possible assistance.

About 52 per cent or 53 per cent of the Murray electorate is situated in the Western Division of the State. Although children in the area around Broken Hill have the advantage of the School of the Air, children in the more isolated areas are educated by correspondence. Nothing is more difficult than learning by correspondence. It is difficult for the parents, particularly the mothers, who have to teach their children in isolation. In the last year, primary distance education has been introduced in Hay and secondary distance education has been introduced at Balranald. Children in those areas now have the benefit of face to face teaching from teachers who drive out to spend a day with them every now and then. Alternatively, the children can travel either to the Hay school or the Balranald central school and receive the benefit of face to face teaching. They can do that three days a week. The parents are responsible for getting the children to the schools. The Government has made great strides in education, particularly in distance education. I am pleased about the action taken by the Government and the Department of School Education, and I compliment the dedicated teachers for their achievements. I point out that Berriquin Primary School celebrated its centenary about a fortnight ago. Recently Tooleybuc school celebrated its seventy-fifth anniversary. Such celebrations are days of joy. About 1,400 or 1,500 people return to these schools to join in the fun when old and young students get together. One could not imagine a more pleasant experience than seeing old friends that one may not have seen for 30 or 40 years. I turn to agriculture. Only last week I spoke on this subject. People on the land and people in small business are hurting.

[Extension of time agreed to.]

Agriculture has not gone through a more difficult time since the Great Depression. The price of wool and wheat are now at crisis level. In real terms they have never been lower. I pay tribute to the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs, Ian Armstrong. I pay tribute also to the Chief Executive Officer of the Rural Assistance Authority, Graham Maslen, and his staff. The number of applications from the southern area of the State, as well as the northern and northwestern areas which are suffering severe drought, is putting enormous strain on the authority. Those applications for assistance are putting a strain also on the resources of the State, which depends on the Commonwealth Government to match the funds 50-50. The level of those funds must be maintained by the State and Federal Governments. Today a large number of people require interest subsidies and carry-on funds. An extra payment of \$10,000 has been made available to meet the severe suffering of woolgrowers. I am grateful for the assistance provided. In 1985,

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when I was first elected, interest rates were very high and I would receive at least two representations a week in relation to this type of assistance.

In the past few months up to two constituents a day have come to my electorate office desperate for funds to keep going. Some farmers who have come in have not had even enough money to buy food or a meal. It really hurts to see people who have worked so hard and given so much to the State in such a desperate financial position. I give credit to the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs, the department and the Government for what they are

doing, although I know that it will never be enough for those who are hurting. Small business and residents of country towns rely on the income of farmers. If the dollars are spent, everyone can survive. But in the present circumstances that is not happening. Many small businesses are going to the wall just as the farmers are. We have a responsibility as a State and as a nation to maintain the viability of country people to the best of our financial resources. I am afraid that it will be a long time before the Australian economy bounces back and we thrust forward again.

On the subject of transport, many railway lines in country areas have not been viable. My constituents hate to see lines closed but three and a half years ago when this Government came to office there was a loss of \$3 million a day on the rail system - an enormous loss of \$1 billion a year. The department had consultants investigate the system. It was found that if no changes were made by the turn of the century the annual loss would be \$4 billion. Our present annual budget is \$16 billion. Even if that increased to \$20 billion by the turn of the century, a loss of \$4 billion would be significant. So changes had to occur. Through redundancies, retirements and attrition 12,000 fewer people are employed in the State rail system. Today I was able to travel around Sydney on the freight lines. Many people now use road transport because of the efficiencies in being able to deliver between point A and point B by one system. There is a changing mood: the railways are selling themselves. They will pick up and transport in containers. The Minister for Transport, who is present in the Chamber, has had the fortitude and strength to make the changes. His executive staff are in support of him. That is very pleasing. A lot of good land in railway corridors which is not being utilised will be able to provide the State with revenue. It is obvious that while the market is depressed it is not the time to sell. At the back of Darling Harbour and where the wheat silo storage areas are the land could be used for future residential and industrial development.

The new XPTs will come on stream in 1992-93 for services between Melbourne and Sydney. In my electorate Countrylink bus services run from Balranald through Hay to Cootamundra. Services link up with Moama and Deniliquin going through to Wagga Wagga.

Services starting in the Shepparton-Tocumwal area go through Corowa and up to Wagga Wagga. People may have to rise early to catch the services at inconvenient times but at least they have bus services. They can link up with an

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XPT at Wagga and be in Sydney by three o'clock. Then they can travel north by rail, even on the Brisbane express. Most of the rail links in my electorate come from Victoria, from the border area and mainly for freight services. The Very Fast Train project has been put aside. Economically, I could not see it being viable at present but perhaps it would be in the future. However, the New South Wales Government, working with the Victorian Government and the Federal Government, will improve railway services and facilities and reduce travelling times. There will be a big improvement in the freight system. It has been suggested that in future there could be a system whereby freight could be transported direct from Melbourne to Sydney in eight to 10 hours. That would make a huge difference. Rail would then become competitive with road transport. We need both modes of transport. The more that freight is carried by rail the more efficient the rail system will be, and the safer our roads will be.

I spoke earlier about capital works. The Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Roads is very much involved in this area. In the past three to five years in my electorate capital works involving sewerage, filtration and augmentation have been undertaken. I am pleased that so many country towns now have filtered water, which I know is expensive. Sewerage is also extremely expensive. Because of the deterioration of inland waterways this work was necessary for health reasons. The works at Barooga have just been completed at a total cost of \$4.4 million. The State Government provided half the funds and the ratepayers, through the shire, paid the other half. A water supply filtration project at Barham has been approved. The estimated cost is \$2.4 million. At Buronga and Gol Gol to the west water supply filtration work to cost \$4.5 million has been approved. A little further out the Wentworth water

supply project involving \$3.3 million has been approved. Things are happening. People are not being neglected or ignored. While there is a coalition of the Liberal Party and the National Party inland New South Wales will be looked after as well as the metropolitan area and other areas of the State. We have members throughout the State and today everybody is getting a fairer deal. The Government is acting responsibly to place this great State in a safe position for the present generation and the children of tomorrow. Even in difficult times we can do it, we must do it; in fact we will do it.

Mr CLOUGH (Bathurst) [9.20]: Before I comment on the Budget may I echo the sentiments expressed earlier tonight by the honourable member for Auburn with regard to the Minister for Natural Resources. It is good to see him back in the Chamber and I wish him well. I have just listened to the contribution of the honourable member for Murray and though I have a fair bit of time for him I must say that his conception of an efficient transport system in New South Wales differs greatly from mine. I am pleased that the Minister for Transport is present in the Chamber. There is not another person more personally responsible for the destruction of the New South Wales rail network. The New South Wales rail service has almost ceased to exist. The Government has woken up to the fact that it has backed a loser. The bus services that were to operate to Lithgow and beyond are being reviewed. The Government is in grave trouble. Its system of operation is

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such that it has done a deal with the petrol companies, the motor car and bus manufacturers and the various contractors who specialise in roads.

The Government is spending more money on roads between Lithgow and Bathurst - not a cent of its own, but Federal money - than it would take to maintain the whole of the rail network throughout New South Wales. This Budget is famous not for what it does but what it does not do. It demonstrates to me the total hypocrisy of this Government and in particular the Premier and Treasurer, who introduced the Budget. Shortly before the election on 25th May the person who occupied the seat of Bathurst for a short period of three years walked round the electorate like a man with many arms promising all manner of things. He was promising to hand out money in all directions for various projects. I have searched vainly through the Budget Papers supplied to me to find some reference to the various projects that were promised. Before the election the Government promised everything but since then it has kicked the guts out of Lithgow. The Roads and Traffic Authority office at Lithgow has been closed as a political pay back.

Mr Baird: What about the Lithgow railway station?

Mr CLOUGH: The Minister for Transport mentioned Lithgow railway station. The Government spent \$6 million in providing an interchange at Lithgow. The original quote for the job was about \$400,000. That interchange was put smack in the centre of the city, in the middle of the traffic area. The logical alternative was to put it at Bowenfels railway station, which is not in the way of incoming traffic and not in the way of the people who operate in the city of Lithgow. The cost for that interchange was \$6.5 million. State Rail could not run a country outhouse so far as I am concerned. I will go through the promises one by one that the Government made because I think they make very interesting reading. The former member for Bathurst promised that the Government would spend \$32 million on a new hospital at Lithgow. This promise was given prior to the election. How was the Government going to fund that hospital? The State Government was to contribute \$20 million and the Western Districts Miners' Health Fund was to contribute \$12 million. There is only one thing wrong with that promise. Neither the State Government nor the health fund had the money. But that did not stop them from promising.

An examination of the Budget will reveal that not one cent has been allocated for that hospital. I can tell honourable members why. The people of Lithgow had the temerity to call a public meeting at which 1,300 people soundly criticised the former member for Bathurst, who

did not expect to lose his seat but lost it by a street. He will never regain it because of the poor image the Liberal Party has in my electorate. I am too modest to claim that the Liberal Party could not beat me anyhow. The fact remains that the Lithgow District Hospital is so run down and is in such a mess that 1,300 people attended that public meeting. The former member for Bathurst attended that meeting, as did the regional director of health, who I suggest has a limited career in front of her when a Labor government is elected to office.

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Mr Baird: Is the honourable member threatening?

Mr CLOUGH: It is not a threat; it is a promise. After that meeting the then Minister for Health decided that the hospital board was not doing the right thing and because the residents expressed their dissatisfaction with the Government he sacked the board. That was a great start. Subsequently there was the disgraceful Wayne Harlem episode. For those honourable members who do not know Wayne Harlem, I inform them that he was the chief executive officer of the Lithgow District Hospital. His only crime was to make some light-hearted comments about the department for which he worked. The Government got its knickers in a knot; it could not take the criticism, so Wayne Harlem was sacked. If Wayne Harlem were the only person in the western district to be sacked, it would have been disgraceful enough; but the chief executive officer of Cowra District Hospital had pressure put on him to resign. He resigned because he did not agree with the State Government. The chief executive officer at Forbes hospital is in more trouble than Ned Kelly because he has the same independent approach to matters affecting his hospital. I sincerely hope that my reference to him tonight does not mean that from tomorrow morning he will be unemployed.

The \$32 million promised for the new hospital at Lithgow has not been forthcoming. There is a Florence Nightingale situation there. The outgoing Labor Government had indicated that it was prepared to spend \$8 million to upgrade the hospital, but the financial wizards in Macquarie Street who took over - despite the assurance given by their Minister for Health that he would honour that promise - said not one word about it, and nothing was done. However, prior to the election the former member for Bathurst, who kept the seat warm for three years, came up with this magnificent promise that the Government would allocate \$20 million straight away and the Western District Miners Health Fund would put in \$12 million. That did not eventuate and it never will. A few weeks before the election the constituents of Bathurst were told of a proposal by the Government to spend \$13.5 million to build a new Macquarie care centre attached to St Vincents Catholic Hospital in Bathurst. The State Government was to put in \$10 million and the Catholic diocese of Bathurst was to put in \$3.5 million. That project had the same beginning - a figment of the imagination of the former member for Bathurst - and it had the same ending: a blatantly dishonoured promise by this Government, which has set a track record in New South Wales for the number of promises it has broken, more than 200, and they are still climbing.

There are times when I am quite certain that the number of broken promises will eclipse Bradman's record. Let me say a little more about the saga of the new Macquarie care centre. About 10 days ago I had an interview with the board of St Vincents hospital, and may I say that there was a fairly frank and free exchange of views. We did not agree on many things but I think they understand how I interpreted, and I think quite correctly, their meddling in the political affairs of the electorate of Bathurst prior to the last election. The Government was going to spend \$10 million from State coffers and the diocese of Bathurst was to spend \$3.5 million.

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Where and why did it all go wrong? It went wrong for the simple reason that the \$10 million is not, never was and never will be, in the State's coffers. The Government was not going to put up \$10 million; it was going to put up \$5 million. Where was the other \$5 million to come from? It was to come from the Federal Government. No one bothered to ask the Federal Government

for an opinion. It was not asked whether it would contribute. Therefore we did not have any response from the Federal Government, and quite rightly so.

The Macquarie Care Centre is a State government nursing home and, therefore, the responsibility of the State Government. Why does the Government all of a sudden want to get rid of the facility? The answer is that it will get rid of the facility to the Catholic hospital, St Vincents, and then will be able to say that it no longer has the responsibility for funding the Macquarie Care Centre. The Government will say, "The Church can look after it and we will flog off the old Macquarie home site". If things are not nailed down or even battened down in New South Wales the Greiner Government will sell them. There is not the slightest doubt about that. Another broken promise was the Government's commitment to spend \$6 million to upgrade Lithgow High School. It was obvious to me that by the time it made that commitment the Government was desperately trying to keep its candidate in the Parliament. I thought at least the Government would honour that promise. However, a search of the Budget Papers shows that the funds allocated to that project will be sufficient only to have a set of plans drawn up. The Government also promised to build a new primary school at Wallerawang. The people of that region were excited about that, but that excitement was not reflected in the ballot-box; 70 per cent of people in that area voted for me. People living in that region traditionally vote Labor and they saw through the empty promise of the provision of a new primary school at Wallerawang. I sincerely hope that at some future time the Government will see fit to honour that promise. I assure the electorate that after the few weeks that are left to this Government and as soon as the Labor Party is returned to office, that project will go on our list.

Mr Longley: It will not actually be done; it will go on your list.

Mr CLOUGH: Not only will it be put on this list, but it will be done. The honourable member for Pittwater laughs and scoffs, but I assure him that the people of New South Wales have had a gutful of this Government. Not only has it broken most of its promises but also it would have to be the worst monetary manager this State has ever had. Ken Booth, a former Labor government Treasurer, left New South Wales with a healthy surplus in 1988. It was variously quoted as being \$300 million to \$600 million. Right up to the time of the last election in 1991 the Premier was waltzing around New South Wales saying: "We are going to have a small surplus of \$40 million or \$50 million. We are certainly not going to have a deficit". A reading of the Budget Papers shows that the truth has hit the fan. There will be a budget deficit of \$1,500 million, give or take a few hundred million dollars, with the possibility that the deficit will be even higher. If the Government is able to flog off the Government Insurance Office, the deficit might be only \$1,000 million.

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I return to the promises made by the Government. The Government said that it would build a new motor workshop on Mount Panorama at Bathurst. The motor racing circuit on Mount Panorama is used for motor racing on eight days of the year. For the remaining 358 days of the year the residents of Bathurst live in fear and trepidation that the local council will approve some form of development on Mount Panorama. Mount Panorama cannot be developed, because everything has to fit in with motor racing activities that are conducted on eight days of the year, and that includes practice days. The Government said it would build a new motor workshop at a cost of \$2 million. However, there is no mention of any such allocation in the Budget Papers; it has not even been considered. I give credit to the Minister for Sport, Recreation and Racing and Minister Assisting the Premier. At least he has honoured his promise to commence some form of thoroughbred training at the Bathurst racecourse. I am pleased that one member of the Cabinet is willing to honour his promises.

Why is New South Wales in the mess it finds itself in today? Recently a senior public servant was critical of members of Parliament. I expect that after the forthcoming change of government that senior public servant's tenure will be shortlived. The salaries of the senior

executive service have been inflated; they are being paid double to ensure that they do the same job they did in the public service. The Government has spent hundreds of millions of dollars employing consultants to arrive at the same conclusions arrived at by highly paid public servants. Many millions of dollars have been wasted in advertising, not to mention the money wasted on the great fiasco at Eastern Creek. New South Wales needed a second motorcycle racing track like it needed a hole in the head. Mount Panorama has facilities to cater for motorcycle racing, and the residents of Bathurst hope that racing will resume at that venue. But no, the Government had to build the venue at Eastern Creek, for which it was said the taxpayers would not have to pay a cent; it would fund itself. About \$70 million has been wasted on that project. The honourable member for Murray in his contribution said that the previous Labor Government wasted money on Darling Harbour. When the coalition came to government the first people to go to Darling Harbour and put their snouts in the trough were members of the National Party. They were the first to take advantage of facilities at that site, claiming what a wonderful facility it was. Only a few weeks previously they said that it was a waste of public money. What hypocrisy!

[Extension of time agreed to.]

I shall now refer to roadworks. The honourable member for Murray made many comments to suggest that rural roads have improved under this Government.

Mr Jeffery: Hear, hear!

Mr CLOUGH: I am willing to debate that matter with members on the Government side of the House, but not on this occasion. All the major roadworks that have commenced in the Bathurst electorate in the past three and a half years,
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with the exception of a kilometre of road in the city of Lithgow, have been funded by the Federal Government. The Budget Papers state that clearly. Recently I received an answer from the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Roads to a question I had asked him about the overrun of costs on two specific projects, namely, the Evans Bridge across the Macquarie River at Bathurst and the road between Tunnel Hill and Mount Lambie west of Lithgow.

Mr Mills: That is an important road.

Mr CLOUGH: It is, because it serves the electorate of Bathurst and its residents are deserving of it. That road would not exist but for the efforts of the Federal member for Killcare, who pressured his Government to provide \$1 million in funding.

Mr Mills: Another Labor member.

Mr CLOUGH: Yes, and a good Labor member. The Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Roads said that the Evans Bridge did not cost a cent more than it was said it would cost initially. On my return to Bathurst I had a close look at the sign that was erected by the Roads and Traffic Authority at the site. I thought that perhaps I had made a mistake - unlikely, but perhaps I had made a mistake. The sign stated that the bridge was a New South Wales State Government project that would cost \$10.5 million.

[Interruption]

Mr CLOUGH: The honourable member for Oxley should not get too excited. If he is willing to sit and wait, I shall spell it out for him.

The ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Chappell): Order! Debate will be directed through the Chair.

Mr CLOUGH: I could not resist the temptation. According to the sign the Evans Bridge project cost \$10.5 million. According to the Budget Papers it cost more than \$20 million. The Budget Papers state that this year more money will be spent on it. There is no doubt there was a cost overrun. I do not accuse the Deputy Premier of misleading the Parliament. I accuse the Roads and Traffic Authority of providing him with false figures. The budget allocation this year for that project is \$19.185 million. Already \$10.7 million has been spent, which is \$270,000 above the cost advertised on the sign just out of Bathurst. This year the Government will spend \$8.415 million on that work. The Government's own figures show a serious cost overrun. The Tunnel Hill to Mount Lambie project is to cost \$41.3 million, of which \$24.2 million has already been spent, and this year a further \$9.245 million is to be expended. Those figures show how the Federal Government is prepared to prop up the State Government. The initial estimated cost of the project was \$18 million but it has blown out to \$41.3 million. The Government promised to spend

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\$6 million doing up Lithgow High School. Somehow the budget allocation for the project has been reduced to \$2.73 million, but this year only \$307,000 will be spent, probably enough to draw up a set of plans and do some minor works. The Government promised a second high school in Lithgow but that will not happen. I mention again that the Government made no reference in its Budget to the promised Wallerawang primary school.

I am pleased, however, to see some positive moves in the Budget. The Government will build 15 housing units in Lithgow and 7 at Bathurst, which will be of great assistance now that the Government has dumped a big prison into Lithgow. Many relatives and families of the prisoners at that gaol have decided to come to live at Lithgow and will be assisted in their accommodation needs by the proposed housing units. People in country areas do not seem to realise that a prison may only seem to be an asset. A few people in Lithgow - I think only 18 - have obtained jobs in the prison and a number of prison officers were transferred to Lithgow. Very few of the services that are being provided in the Lithgow prison are coming from the community. Before the prison was established Lithgow lacked most of the infrastructure needed to assist prisoners' families. The setting up at Lithgow of special facilities and organisations to assist prisoners' friends and relatives, similar to those in place at Bathurst, will take many years. I note with interest a small item of \$3.25 million to be spent on expanding prisoner accommodation at the low security prison at Kirkconnell between Lithgow and Bathurst. For years the people who live near the Kirkconnell prison have seen prisoners walking out and stealing cars. Those who escape the prison are not dangerous but people living near that prison farm will have lingering doubts about security, especially if accommodation at the prison is to be doubled. The sport and recreation camp at Newnes is to receive more prisoners. The people of Lithgow presented a petition to the previous member representing that area which he deliberately, not merely by oversight, failed to present to Parliament. In that petition 5,000 people living in Lithgow said they opposed a new prison in the district.

The Budget overall does not present a happy story for the people who live in my electorate. But I must give the Government credit for something. The Government allows a question on notice to be published repeatedly. On 2nd July I asked nine questions but only one of them has been answered. One question remaining unanswered was about a new Lithgow police station - another broken Government promise. The Government bought the old town hall, knocked it down and is left with a perfectly good vacant block of land. That was broken promise No. 233 - the Government broke promise No. 200 before 25th May. The Lithgow police station that the Government promised to build is now not going to be built. My questions on notice about the Wallerawang primary school, the Lithgow second high school, Lithgow High School accommodation, Mount Panorama motor trades workshop, Bathurst Macquarie Homes and Lithgow hospital remain unanswered. The Government cannot answer those questions because in doing so it would have to admit that all the promises it made prior to the last general

election were false and that it has no intention of honouring those promises. The Government cannot do

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other than admit to the people living in my electorate that it is willing to run this State in such a way that generations will pass before there is recovery.

I regret that the Minister for Transport has left the Chamber because I wish to address transport needs in my electorate. Some sneaky work is being carried out by the State Rail Authority in gradually changing usage of the platforms between Penrith and Springwood to enable introduction of changed timetables. The bus services that used to travel through to Orange are going to be terminated at Bathurst. The SRA will cut out the bus because its operation is less attractive to the authority than appeared at first glance. The bus proprietors are taking the profits and the SRA has to pick up the bill. The once proud railway towns of Bathurst and Lithgow have been greatly affected. Bathurst has been completely eliminated from the service and 50 drivers living there have been offered so-called voluntary redundancy, and if they do not accept that they get the sack. They have an option - voluntary redundancy or the sack. Most people in that position who are concerned about their families, their homes and standard of living opt to accept redundancy. Eighteen months down the track many of those former railway employees who accepted redundancy have no money and a number of them are receiving Commonwealth social security payments because they have no other form of income. Their life's work has been taken from them under the guise of voluntary redundancy. All that traffic has gone on to the Mitchell and Great Western Highways. Day after day I see trucks carrying wool to Sydney. Farmers are sending their wool by truck to Sydney.

Mr Yeadon: What about the houses that have been demolished?

Mr CLOUGH: That has not been a factor in my area. I am more concerned that the number of heavily loaded trucks including those carrying primary produce has increased threefold or fourfold and that the number of goods trains has been reduced. If the Federal Government were not going to take over freight services for most of New South Wales, the future of freight by rail would be dim indeed. Farmers are experiencing many difficulties and should be encouraged to send their produce by rail to capital cities to be processed and thereby reduce the road freights they presently pay. Farmers are facing great difficulties in the present drought conditions but this Government has not offered to subsidise rail freight to reduce the amount of road transport. The deals that have been done between the Government, the petrol companies and car and bus manufacturers will take New South Wales down the path taken in the United States years ago. The Americans are now trying to move from reliance on motor cars by introducing light rail facilities.

Mr LONGLEY (Pittwater) [9.50]: I commend the Budget brought down by the Government. Under this Government New South Wales will become the leading State of Australia, which it ought always to have been. In past years I have used four basic criteria by which to assess budgets. As a useful analysis tool I shall continue to use those four criteria so that there can be comparability with previous years; and it is a useful mechanism in its own right. The four criteria are disclosure, the economic scenario, administrative efficiency and debt. I have always perceived

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the first of the four criteria, disclosure, as being of paramount importance, because it is the role of this Parliament to ensure that the public sector is as accountable as possible. That can be achieved only where there is disclosure at the maximum possible level. The budget process and budget documents are the central mechanism for that disclosure process, and therefore for accountability. It is most important that this year's budget documents continue the process of improving the disclosure of the budget process because the State Government is responsible to the taxpayers of New South Wales for how well, how efficiently and how responsibly those tax dollars are spent. In this year's Budget one of the central issues that has been of great

concern to a large number of people is the budget deficit. Budget Paper No. 2 at page 5 gives an understandable description of the budget deficit. It reads:

For 1990-91 the Budget result was a deficit of \$1,001 million, consisting of a recurrence surplus of \$1.027 million and a capital deficit of \$2,028 million.

The Consolidated Fund result was a deficit of \$158 million, compared to a budgeted surplus of \$34 million. The substantial difference between the Consolidated Fund result and the Budget sector result reflects, in the main, the exclusion from the Consolidated Fund result of substantial capital outlays funded by off budget borrowings.

The 1991-92 Budget result is projected as a surplus of \$661 million. After excluding extraordinary item, namely the sale of business assets, the result is expected to be a deficit of \$1,089 million.

The Opposition has been exploiting those figures mercilessly in a concerted campaign to deliberately misinform the public. A number of critical factors must be taken into account in understanding what the budget deficit is. The first thing to note is that this year the budget deficit is being stated as a whole budget sector result. For last year that was \$1,001 million; the deficit is projected to be \$1,089 million. That figure incorporates a recurrent surplus of \$1,027 million. In other words, the result for the past year is being brought into deficit because the Government has said it is vital to continue investing in the capital infrastructure of this State and that, to the tune of \$2,028 million, brings the overall result into deficit. But that is because there has been investment in the capital infrastructure of this State. Therefore, the first point is that we have a recurrent surplus. The second element that must be clearly understood is that like must be compared with like. The Opposition talks repeatedly about one year's surplus and another year's deficit. It is comparing apples with oranges; it is comparing the base throughout the history of New South Wales - the Consolidated Fund result - with a total budget sector result. The two are not comparable. Like compared with like will give a Consolidated Fund result in previous years of small deficits and small surpluses. That has continued so that in the past year there was a Consolidated Fund deficit of \$158 million, which is comparable with that of previous years. It is not tenable to say that one year there is a deficit of \$158 million and the next year there is a deficit of \$1,000 million, because the first is a Consolidated Fund result and the second is a total budget sector result. Therefore, the second point that must be clearly understood is that like must be compared with like.

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The third point, which I must state clearly, is that this year's total budget sector deficit of approximately \$1,000 million is not the largest deficit in the history of New South Wales, despite New South Wales being in the worst recession for 60 years. The largest deficit in the history of New South Wales occurred at the height of the boom in this State in 1986-87. It occurred under a Labor administration during a boom year, when it ran a deficit of \$1.4 billion. That clearly demonstrates that all that the Labor Party is talking about is nothing but the most shallow rhetoric with no substance whatsoever. At the height of the boom the Labor Party produced a budget deficit of \$1.4 billion, yet this Government in the depths of a recession that is the worst in 60 years is yielding a deficit hundreds of millions of dollars less. The fourth point is the interstate comparison. Such a comparison puts New South Wales light years ahead of every other State with the exception of Queensland. The good Queensland result has been achieved by the good years of frugal management under the former National Party administration in that State. Because of that, Queensland is in its present financial state. With that one exception, New South Wales is so far ahead of every other State that any interstate comparison will be eminently favourable to New South Wales.

The last and perhaps most critical point is the credit rating. At the end of the day, one can quote whatever figures one likes but only an expert knows what the figures may or may not

refer to. A credit rating is dependent upon the people whose job it is to make proper assessments of such matters. They do that because they will be lending the money. They cut through all the waffle and put their own money on the line. Page 485 of Budget Paper No. 2 tells a salutary story. Only two States in Australia, New South Wales and Queensland, have a triple A rating under the Standard and Poor's credit rating. When a comparison is made between New South Wales and Victoria, it is significant that Victoria's credit rating has now been downgraded twice. It was downgraded from triple A to double A plus and from double A plus down to double A. One must cut through all the rhetoric, verbiage, waffle and ignorance that has come from the Labor Party and get down to tintacks. New South Wales has a triple A rating and is far and away ahead of every other State in Australia with the exception of Queensland which has reached that position as a result of its former administration.

The second part of the analysis of the Budget is the economic scenario. The Budget has been framed within what is basically a devastating economic scenario caused by the Federal Labor Government inspired recession. The Federal Government is now finally admitting that it has given Australia the worst recession in 60 years. It has not yet realised that it needs to take much more action than it has taken to date. In that context this Budget is the only responsible budget that could have been brought down. The Opposition has provided no credible alternatives whatsoever. Why? Because there were no other alternatives. The Government has taken the hard decisions necessary in difficult times forced on New South Wales by the Federal Labor Government. The third part of the analysis is administrative efficiency.

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[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Wallsend to order. If he wishes to remain in the Chamber, he will cease interjecting.

Mr LONGLEY: Administrative efficiency is dear to the hearts of all taxpayers in New South Wales because they repeatedly hear about waste of government funds and they ask, "Why is efficiency not improving? Where is it improving?" They want better value for their dollar. That is why this Government has been the first government to set productivity targets and to state what efficiency improvements it wants from public servants. The Government is achieving its goals. Page 431 of Budget Paper No. 2 gives a salutary lesson to all members of the House. A summary of public enterprise performance in New South Wales reveals some significant figures. For example, the summary lists the Electricity Commission, the electricity councils, Graincorp, the Hunter Water Board, the State Rail Authority, the State Transit Authority and the Water Board. It then lists the productivity achievements of those various bodies. For example, in 1987-88 in the Electricity Commission the productivity was 4.1 gigawatt hours per employee. By 1989-90 it had increased to 6.4, and it is estimated that for 1990-91 the figure will be more than 7 gigawatt hours per employee. That is a dramatic improvement in a short period. The Government has targeted and achieved productivity and efficiency.

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Wallsend to order for the second time.

Mr LONGLEY: For the first time the taxpayers of New South Wales are getting value for their dollars. Page 10 of Budget Paper No. 2 reveals that overall public sector employment in New South Wales has declined. The Government is the only government in Australia, Federal or State, to have achieved a net reduction in the number of public servants. That is a significant achievement which means that the Government is delivering more for less, and that

is absolutely vital. The Opposition then claims that the Government is causing unemployment. What is happening at exactly the same time? During the time that the Government has been reducing public sector employment, New South Wales has had the lowest unemployment rate. The claims of the Opposition underline that it has no understanding of the fundamental economic organisation of our society. The Opposition takes the naive stance that a reduction in the number of public servants automatically increases unemployment. New South Wales has demonstrated that that is not the case and, indeed, that the opposite is the case.

[Extension of time agreed to.]

The Opposition does not understand economics and does not understand that by government getting out of the way, the private sector is then stimulated to provide

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more employment. In economic terms that is referred to as the crowding out effect. As government becomes bigger, more bloated and more inefficient, it crowds out the private sector. The private sector then has no incentive to employ more people and to be productive. If government can get out of the way of the private sector, the private sector will not only fill the gap but will produce new real wealth for society in toto. The fourth area of the Budget I wish to discuss is debt. Debt is of great importance to Australia. It will be salutary for honourable members to refer to page 497 of Budget Paper No. 2. That section lists the State debt in both the budget and non-budget sectors from 1986 to the present year. Over the years this table in the Budget Papers has been a great source of information about debt in New South Wales. It shows two significant facts. The first is that net State debt in New South Wales today is lower in dollar terms than it was when the coalition parties attained office.

Mr Mills: The Auditor-General does not agree with that.

Mr LONGLEY: The Auditor-General does agree with that. It is in these documents. You ought to check your facts.

Mr Mills: Get volume 2.

Mr LONGLEY: I have volume 2. The honourable member ought to read it again. The net State debt in New South Wales is lower today than it was when we took office. In dollar terms that is an phenomenal achievement, particularly given the pressures on government today. The proportion of debt to the State's overall income shows an even more remarkable achievement. When we took office the figure was 23 per cent, nearly one-quarter. Today it is 15 per cent. The Government can be proud of that achievement. Foreign debt has been the bane of Australia. The previous Labor administration of this State paid no heed to it and was totally irresponsible. Every year when I have spoken on the Budget, from the time of the Wran and Unsworth administrations until now, I have referred to foreign debt. I am ecstatic to be able to read this sentence from page 501 of Budget Paper No. 2. The sentence refers to an achievement which is unparalleled. It reads:

Foreign currency exposure, which had peaked at over \$4,000 million in 1986-87, had been eliminated by June 1991.

The irresponsible people opposite left this State \$4,000 million of foreign debt. This Government has eliminated our foreign debt. This Government should be praised and the former Labor Government should be condemned. In each of the four critical areas that I have mentioned - disclosure, the economic scenario, administrative efficiency, and debt - this

Government's achievements have been of the highest order, in contrast to the performance of other State governments and the Federal Government. I commend the Budget most strongly to the House and to the people of New South Wales.

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Mr PRICE (Waratah) [10.14]: I wish to speak against many aspects of the Budget. What a dismal document this year's Appropriation Bill is.

Mr Longley: Economics is a dismal science.

Mr PRICE: That is so. It shows the accountants to be what they really are. All the glitz of the 1988 rise to power and fame of the Greiner Government has gone. Greinerism is now exposed for what it is. I am bitterly disappointed at the approach the Government has taken. Where is our social contract? Where is the feeling for the people who really are not in a position to assist themselves? Why has funding been reduced in the areas of social need and not maintained at the level it should have been? Why have capital works been cut back in the short term? Why did we have to buy a racetrack? In pursuit of some sort of excellence in the international racing game New South Wales bought an absolute dud. Do we need it? It has been asked whether we need a Government Insurance Office. There is debate about whether it should be disposed of. While we debate whether a revenue generator is of value to the State we buy a racetrack from a commercial operator, assuming that the Government puts great store in the ownership of commercial raceways. That is a very interesting way to approach what has been heralded as one of the most dismal budget years this State has seen. I see absolutely no point in the action the Government has taken. I certainly have had no indication from my constituents that the Government's action was soundly supported or encouraged in these times.

I shall refer to a number of aspects of the Budget. I am in a peculiar situation: in my electorate I have three public hospitals and two major denominational hospitals on contract to the State, giving a total of five State hospitals and a teaching university. Therefore, I cannot escape the topic of health and health management. As has been said many times in this place, the Wallsend Hospital has been closed by this Government. The most cost-effective hospital in this State, certainly in the Hunter region, has been closed by this Government. Wallsend's crime is being part of an area network which, we are told, has hopelessly overspent - within a few months. Therefore punishment must be meted out to the half million people who live between Wyong and the Queensland border. It is a strange sort of punishment. The hospital site borders an area of the Newcastle city council which is currently being prepared for ribbon development, which will give the western sector of the city of Newcastle some 50,000 additional residential blocks within the next 10 years, with a consequent population increase. Some of the outpatient functions have been retained. The melanoma clinic has been retained. The detoxification unit at Wallsend hospital has also been retained. It is interesting in that it was removed from the mental hospital area and placed on the campus so quickly so close to the election that the health Minister could not open it and he had to send the Minister for School Education. The plaque is almost as big as the door, but the Minister's name has been spelt correctly. I am not sure that it gained the Government one extra vote, but there it is.

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We have to try to get health back on course. Today during question time the Minister for Health Services Management modified the shortfall figure from \$25 million to \$20 million. We have to find out what is happening to that money. The Hunter Area Health board's budget allocation for this year has been reduced to \$324.8 million. With the close of the inpatient section of Wallsend Hospital there was an immediate transfer of 180 beds, or not quite. There

was a net loss of nine beds from the transfer. Some 400 employees were relocated. Some of those employees were offered and accepted voluntary retrenchment arrangements. They were made redundant. I guess they will be receiving their money between now and whenever to make sure that they go. However, the services provided by that hospital were relocated to other hospitals within the area. The urology unit of the Wallsend District Hospital was relocated to the Royal Newcastle Hospital, which is a specialist orthopaedic hospital. It was badly damaged in the 1989 earthquake. However, the Nickson wing was maintained and has been repaired. Before the urology unit can commence its operations, repairs to the tune of about \$2 million will have to be made to bring it to full efficiency.

The staff who were relocated to that hospital have now been asked to consider a further relocation to the Mater Misericordiae Hospital, one of the denominational hospitals on lease to the State. A significant amount of damage was caused to the Mater hospital by the earthquake and repairs are required so that the staff can nestle in comfortably. General service surgery and geriatric care have been transferred to the John Hunter complex, the new high-tech hospital in the region, where a total of 500 beds are about to be opened. The geriatric services in reduced form have been transferred to that same campus but to the old Rankin Park infectious diseases hospital. Those services, in effect, cater for all geriatric assessment between Wyong and the Queensland border. In the near future the Government, through its administrator, will have to consider moving that geriatric assessment centre to another larger and more appropriate location. At present that service is sharing the facility with a rehabilitation for stroke victims program, which was transferred from the William Lyne hospital. It is hardly appropriate to assess geriatrics alongside stroke victims who are in need of rehabilitation. Nevertheless, that is the confusion that currently reigns.

Many of the nursing staff have been transferred to the John Hunter payroll but are not working at that hospital. They have been dispersed to other hospitals in my electorate. Nurses transferred to the Mater hospital have no guarantee of employment beyond December this year. Many questions need to be answered in relation to the health budget allocation for the Hunter area health program. Originally the Minister said that the Wallsend hospital was old and redundant. The 100-bed Pettinger wing was built about 13 years ago and opened about 11 years ago. All the equipment was donated by the people of Wallsend through public subscription. That hospital was originally provided through miners' subscriptions. About 30 per cent of the total cost of the building was contributed by subscriptions and the land was given free and unencumbered by mining companies in 1895. It has not been too bad an operation for the State's administrators since that time. That

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hospital, with all its donated equipment, has been locked up with minimum security. We still have the remnants of the original trades hall picket line helping to maintain security on that site - largely being undertaken now by the mining unions. I shall read an extract from today's *Newcastle Herald* in relation to that hospital because it is important for people to understand what is being proposed. In part that extract states:

The proposal to reopen Wallsend District Hospital as the Hunter Miners Hospital had been strengthened with the possibility of Federal Government funding for 80 hostel beds for the elderly, a union official said yesterday.

The Northern District secretary of the United Mineworkers Federation of Australia, Mr Ron Land, said he had met last week with representatives of the Department of Community Services and Health, who had invited the miners to apply for capital and recurrent funding for the hostel beds.

Negotiations would begin this week with other Hunter organisations to form a joint venture to push for the funding, he said.

'We started this hospital in 1985. We have supported it throughout the decades and our need for its continued operation remains as important in 1991 as it did in 1895,' Mr Land said.

Mr Land said he was convinced that the bid to reopen the hospital as a commercially driven, fee-for-service operation would succeed with the financial backing of a friendly society, Manchester Unity.

The miners intend introducing another element of specialist service at the hospital if they are able to proceed with the project, that is, the rehabilitation of badly injured mineworkers, which will be of great value to the mining industry and to the community generally. Health funding must be addressed in a far more responsible way than it appears to have been addressed in the Budget. The reduced budget this year to the area health board or the administrator is effectively a budget reduction of one-eighth to the hospital at Kurri Kurri. Facilities at that hospital service an area that runs from Weston to Heddon Greta and from Mount Vincent to Buchanan - with a population of 9,000 to 10,000. That reduction in funding has put a severe strain on the existing services, which comprise obstetrics, general surgery, ophthalmic surgery, ear nose and throat surgery and a range of nursing home services, including day care. Wallsend District Hospital has not been the only hospital affected as a result of the Government's action, which was wrong and completely out of kilter with the real needs of the region. The Minister should address the funding problem, not by listening to the public servants but by making his own observations. He may find out considerably more than he is being told at present.

The general strain on the provision of services within the Hunter area has created other problems. As I said earlier, the 500-bed John Hunter Hospital is coming on stream but with an effectively reduced gross staffing. Many complaints are made about casualty units. The administrator has said that not only will the present levels of casualty staff at John Hunter Hospital be maintained but also by December this year the casualty unit at the Royal Newcastle Hospital will be

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removed because, on average, services have reduced to 30 a day. That hospital is the only hospital in the city of Newcastle. It is the only hospital to service the beach resorts at that end of Newcastle and the hotel industry and the harbour. People who would normally walk or be transported by private car to the hospital will now have to travel by ambulance some 15 kilometres to the Mater hospital or 22 kilometres to the John Hunter casualty section. At the John Hunter Hospital, only one medical officer is on duty. The medical officer would certainly be highly skilled, but, as I say, she is the only one on duty.

If the entire region's casualty resources are being directed in the first instance through that centre, it would not take a great deal of imagination to realise the problem that will be created. The problem is starting to appear with monotonous frequency, and is upsetting to patients and frustrating to staff. It is difficult to understand why the administrator believes this higgledy piggledy level of operation could be tolerated in what should be the most modern high-tech hospital in the country. The shortage of anaesthetists is delaying the available operating days of staff specialists. The budget for that hospital was estimated to be \$106 million. This year it has been reduced to \$89 million; yet we are told no service will be affected. It has to be affected; that cannot be avoided. If there are frustrated staff and distressed patients, we will have a demoralised approach to health care in the region and the system will fail. The Hunter region deserves better than that. The Government should think again about the punishment it is meting out to people in the Hunter by its approach to health services. The Budget Papers refer to downsizing State Rail Authority employees from 37,000 to 27,000. Economy in personnel budgeting is now being transferred to health services. I am concerned that nurses newly graduating from the University of Newcastle have no guarantee of employment. I am concerned further that staff at major hospitals are, in some instances, working unpaid overtime and that services being provided to patients are substandard.

[Extension of time agreed to.]

The future of the medical school at the University of Newcastle will depend, to some degree, on the attitude that the Government takes towards John Hunter Hospital. An accreditation program will be conducted in 1992, and the performance of the hospital and its acceptability to teachers and doctors is of particular concern to the local population and of

immediate concern to the university. I hope that further funds will be allocated to assist the John Hunter Hospital to maintain its original purpose and programs. I hope also that further consideration will be given to reopen parts of Wallsend Hospital. I now wish to speak about roads and to trace the progress of State highway 23, which is being constructed between the Newcastle suburbs of Jesmond and Sandgate. The section of highway under construction at the moment is scheduled for completion by March 1993. I am advised that the road will extend from Newcastle Road, Jesmond, through to Sandgate Road, Shortland. The road will terminate at a roundabout or a separated interchange and continue on across

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the Hexham wetlands to the Pacific Highway, or Maitland Road as it is also known, at the St Joseph's hospital near Ironbark Creek.

Some preliminary work has begun on that section of the project. Though the Budget Papers contain no reference to it I assume that funding has been allocated to ensure work on the project will continue. I recall the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Roads saying some time ago that \$1.7 billion will be provided for roads, that no new project would commence and although existing programs would be restricted to some degree, they would continue. I hold the Deputy Premier to that statement. If State highway 23 were to terminate at its intersection with Sandgate Road, a four-lane highway would be reduced to two lanes yet again. Traffic travelling along a Newcastle intercity bypass will cross the overhead bridge at Sandgate railway station and proceed to the Pacific Highway at the intersection of Sandgate Road adjacent to Sandgate cemetery. Should that eventuate, within a short period we will once again witness queues of holidaymakers, the likes of which we have not seen since the days when there was a single bridge over the Hunter River at Hexham. It seems crazy indeed that having sorted out the problems at the Hexham intersection we are now creating additional difficulties at the Sandgate intersection, which has the potential for delaying and frustrating traffic and, because of the design of the bridge across the rail line at Sandgate, being responsible for serious injury or even death.

I urge the Government to consider earnestly its program for the construction of State highway 23 with regard to its extension across the Hexham wetlands. I would rather that more money be spent on that project than more lives be lost. The community should not have to be faced with the prospect of fatalities on what should be a new and safe highway. I realise that funding for that roadway is provided by the Federal Government and the State Government through the 3 x 3 program. However, I am sure that a discreet rearrangement of funds could be made to address that unsafe situation. I refer also to the Tarro intersection on the New England highway. Again discretionary funding is provided in the Budget. The Federal Government has allocated funds for this project. A significant grade separated intersection needs to be constructed at the site and the existing intersection closed. In the past 30 years there have been, by my calculations, 32 fatalities at the intersection. That is an unacceptable state of affairs. If there is a credit side, the Newcastle council, the former Department of Main Roads and the present Roads and Traffic Authority have altered the intersection on three occasions in the past 26 years. That has been to no avail. Therefore, it is imperative that a grade separated intersection be constructed. I am advised that almost all the land required is in public ownership and in the hands of the Roads and Traffic Authority. It is convenient also that the spoil from the adjacent intersection with John Renshaw Drive - the major through road to Cessnock, which is at present subject to a flyover construction - be dumped at the Tarro intersection to enable that project to proceed. The Government must examine its budget closely to ascertain whether that project can be funded now and not within the original six-year time frame suggested by the department.

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John Renshaw Drive, for which the Government recently accepted responsibility from Cessnock council, had a slow upgrading. I hope that some of the \$8 million that has been allocated to Cessnock council from the 3 x 3 program will be used to upgrade that roadway. I

hope also that the Government will give serious consideration to the restoration of George Booth Drive, which is in an atrocious state. It will become a significant bypass, particularly when the route for freeway 1 is finally decided. I am advised that the proposed route is from Minmi through to Kurri Kurri and on to Branxton. In the time I have left to me I wish to refer to the activities of the Hunter Water Board. The *Newcastle Herald* reported recently that the Hunter Water Board is to be corporatised and that legislation for that purpose will be introduced soon. In addition it reported that a binding three-year contract will be drawn up by the board for the Government to enter into, which will allow continuing payments to be made for the Hunter fringe area sewage scheme. That scheme provides sewerage services to unsewered areas. It was introduced by the Government under a no levy proposal. The Government did not impose a sewerage levy but it imposed an environmental levy at about the same time as a similar levy was imposed in Sydney, namely \$80 a year for three years, with no cost to pensioners.

The Government introduced in the Hunter a \$35 levy scheme to run for 20 years, fully indexed. Local members complained that no consideration had been given to pensioner contributors. The Government yielded on that point but decided promptly to increase the pay back period from 20 to 25 years to compensate. Again the Hunter suffers at the hand of the Government. In the first year indexation was \$2.90, the levy went from \$35 to \$37.90. During this year the board seems to have made a unilateral decision to increase that scheme by \$44 million for new works other than the fringe area sewage scheme. In so doing the board added a levy payment of \$31.10, which increased the total levy payment in one year to \$69 fully indexed, to run for another 23 years. The people in the Hunter region have every right not to expect that sort of exploitation, and find it difficult to bear. I ask the Government to consider that seriously in budget deliberations about the corporatisation of the Hunter Water Board. People are hard pressed to pay normal bills of account. Within a few years the levy probably will be doubled due to indexation.

I can envisage that in my time as a member of this House the people of Newcastle will be paying a higher levy than the water usage fee presently imposed on the Hunter Water Board - the only water supply area in New South Wales to be so encumbered. The Government is being derogatory in pushing through these schemes without public debate. On 29th January this year the public opinion article in the *Newcastle Herald* stated that the scheme was brought forward on a Friday night. On a Friday night a story gets no publicity and by Monday it is old news. It is an appalling approach to a program to increase a levy literally overnight by 80 per cent and maintain that for another 22 years at fully indexed rates. The Government should do something about that immediately. The people of Newcastle have demonstrated clearly what they think of the approach of the Government to

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administration, budget re-allocation and care of and attention to the entire Hunter region regardless of the political persuasion of any electorate. Many disadvantaged families are unable to pay levies. In the short term the Water Board problem will accelerate and must be addressed.

I congratulate the Government on its school construction program and in particular for continuing construction of the Maryland Public School, a much needed facility in my electorate. I am told that within one year of operation that school will have 425 students drawn from Plattsburgh. That is a plus for the Government. I am pleased that the Government responded to my requests and those of the local community and advanced that most necessary program. It was a problem. However, we have the school now and that is important. Another successful local community action will see amalgamation by the Government of an infants school site and a primary school site into one school at Beresfield. The Government will make money from that amalgamation because 19 home sites will become available. I hope the Government takes that into account and adds the income from those sites to the Newcastle region local budget to facilitate relocation of the schools and full expenditure on that program.

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Merton): Order! The honourable member has exhausted his time for speaking.

Debate adjourned on motion by Ms Machin.

The House adjourned at 10.44 p.m.