

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 25th March, 1992

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

Mr Speaker offered the Prayer.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

SUTHERLAND HOSPITAL

Mr CARR: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Health Services Management. Has the Minister withdrawn proposals for the privatisation of the maternity unit at Sutherland Hospital as a result of mounting public opposition? Why has the privatisation of this hospital located in the Minister's electorate been withdrawn, though he is going ahead with the privatisation of Port Macquarie, Nepean, Maitland and Albury hospitals? Will the Minister concede that the Government's health privatisation program is a failure? Will the Minister concede also that the Government's health privatisation program is now in tatters?

Mr PHILLIPS: Regardless of how many times this issue is debated, the Leader of the Opposition and all members on the other side of the House want to be on their own throughout the world in their attitude towards privatisation. Hardly any other country in the world and no other State in Australia suggests that the private sector should not be involved in developments with the Government and certainly not in health care. This Government has clearly defined the right way to go with health care. There is a place for a good mix of a variety of health care services in this State. Quality health care does not rest only with government; the best health care system is one that has a good mix of health care services. That is the way New South Wales is progressing and I will continue to ensure that this Government delivers improved health care rather than adopt the troglodyte view that only the Government can do it. The Opposition left this Government with \$2 billion worth of work to do in the health care system. The people of New South Wales do not want to wait 10 or 20 years for improvements to their hospital services. They want improvements now and this Government will find ways to make those improvements. The Leader of the Opposition asked a question but in his usual rude manner he is now turning away. He should listen to the answer. I had the privilege of the Leader of the Opposition visiting the Sutherland Hospital fete on the weekend -

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

Mr PHILLIPS: - and in his usual lying, despicable way, he spoke to the members of the auxiliaries who had supported that hospital for years and purposely misled them, purposely -

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The chorus of interjections that has just come from the Opposition benches, is totally unacceptable. I warn members of the Opposition that

they may be called to order as participants in such an exhibition if it continues.

Mr PHILLIPS: As I was saying, the Leader of the Opposition purposely misled them and purposely tried to create an element of fear. I am pleased to say that I attended the fête.

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

Mr PHILLIPS: Someone asked how many raffle tickets I bought. I bought more raffle tickets than the Leader of the Opposition did.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Granville to order. I call the honourable member for Broken Hill to order. I call the honourable member for Ashfield to order.

Mr PHILLIPS: The area health service board, in my view correctly and in a visionary manner, put together a master control plan for the future of Sutherland Hospital over the next five to 10 years.

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

Mr PHILLIPS: I thought that was an excellent way in which to approach the issue. The plan was produced in consultation with staff and in consultation with a range of people in the community. That plan, to be announced in the near future, will reveal clearly the important role that hospital will play in providing health care services in that part of Sydney. During that process the private hospitals in the area became aware of the long-term master plan. They approached the area health service board and told the board that they were aware of its difficulties concerning the quality of maternity services in the area as those services need updating. The private hospitals said they were willing to assist. The area health service board considered the offer and decided that it did not fit within its master control plan. When that plan is announced within the next 48 hours it will become obvious why the offer by the private hospitals does not fit within the plan. However, the area health service board does not close its mind to options. It considers all options in an effort to continue to improve health services in this State. I would encourage every board and every health administrator in this State to adopt that attitude.

CATHOLIC HEALTH CARE ASSOCIATION

Dr KERNOHAN: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Health Services Management. Have discussions been held with the Catholic Health Care Association of New South Wales about extending Catholic health care into the growth area of western Sydney? If so, what results have the talks produced to date?

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

Mr PHILLIPS: The House heard the question asked by the Leader of the Opposition and we know the position that the Opposition takes about private involvement within the health care system. It would be interesting to know whether it would support the type of project we are now talking about.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to order.

Mr PHILLIPS: Today I was pleased to announce that the Catholic Health Care Association, in conjunction with St Vincent's Hospital and with the Sisters of Charity, has made representations to the Government indicating its significant interest in expanding its health care services in the growth areas of Sydney. Obviously that includes the western and southwestern regions of Sydney. As the Minister responsible, I have latched on to that and said that the Government is more than willing to work with that organisation to find a way in which it can contribute towards the health care services for that very important part of Sydney.

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Mr Gibson: Where will you put them - at Hawkesbury Hospital?

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

Mr PHILLIPS: Does the honourable member not want them at Hawkesbury Hospital? Does the honourable member want to reject the offer? He is not willing to state his position on the issue. This is a tremendous opportunity for the traditions, experience and expertise associated with the excellent services provided by St Vincent's Hospital to be made available also to people in the western part of Sydney so that western Sydney has a proper mix of health care services. The Government will work closely with the organisation to find the most appropriate way in which to develop its services so that its excellent traditions in health care services can be used in western Sydney.

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

Mr PHILLIPS: The member for South Coast has expressed his concern that one cannot involve the private sector in health care and maintain the heart of the community - the care, the love, and all that is supposed to go with health care. I presume that in no way will he question the Sisters of Charity -

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

Mr PHILLIPS: - or St Vincent's Hospital or the Catholic Health Care Association about whether they could provide the care, the attention, the love and the extra dimension of health care that is very essential.

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

Mr PHILLIPS: I am looking forward to his support of this particular issue. This is an example of another way in which this Government will address the urgent need to improve health care services in this State. I look forward to working very closely with the Catholic Health Care Association, the Sisters of Charity and St Vincent's Hospital to find a way in which they can deliver their excellent services into that part of Sydney. I am sure the people of western Sydney will look forward to what we deliver, which will be quite different from the policies the Opposition had when it was in government and the policy stance which the Opposition is now taking.

PORT MACQUARIE HOSPITAL

Dr REFSHAUGE: I direct my question without notice to the Minister for Health Services Management. Will patients with basic private insurance at Port Macquarie have to pay an extra \$1,600 or more for obstetrics as a result of the Government's privatisation of the public hospital? Will the privatised Port Macquarie hospital charge private patients \$200 a day more than the basic private insurance cover as well as theatre fees of up to \$1,000 or more?

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

Mr PHILLIPS: The nub of this matter is that in 1985 the Federal Government picked up 40 per cent of the health care services of this State, today they pick up 34 per cent. The difference this year, at the same level as in 1985, would be that the

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Commonwealth would have to put \$250 million more into health care services of this State. I have said that a number of times in this place and the Opposition will not deny it. Members opposite know it is right. On top of that when the coalition came to Government in 1988 it was confronted with a \$2 billion backlog of development and maintenance -

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

Mr PHILLIPS: - in the health care system. The Government has been addressing that with a record building program for health care services, started under my predecessor the Hon. Peter Collins. That has been continued in spite of the recession and in spite of the lack of funding received from the Federal Government. This Government, year after year, has not cut the health budget - it keeps topping it up while the Federal Labor Government keeps walking away from its responsibility and not helping with the problem. That is one of the good reasons why the Government is looking at all sorts of options by which to improve the health care services of this State. The list is long and I have gone through it previously in this House. A lot of contractual discussion is going on about Port Macquarie and in the middle of April that contract will be signed. At that time everybody will know exactly the truth.

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

Mr PHILLIPS: - and everyone will know the conditions of the contract between them and the Government.

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

Mr PHILLIPS: This will ensure that the patients of Port Macquarie are being looked after, which is our responsibility.

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

Mr PHILLIPS: We have a responsibility to ensure that people have access to quality and caring health care services. We do not necessarily have a responsibility to build a government hospital.

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

Mr PHILLIPS: That is the difference between this Government and the Federal Government. We want to make sure that people have access to health services. As I have clearly indicated, when the contract is signed and the information is available we will know the facts, rather than the rumour that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has put out on this issue.

NATURAL DISASTER EMERGENCY ADVISORY SERVICE

Mr MORRIS: My question without notice is directed to the Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Ethnic Affairs. Has the Government investigated proposals for an emergency advisory service to be set up to assist families after natural disasters? If so, what action is being taken to establish the service?

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Mr GREINER: Over the past four or five years New South Wales has experienced a disproportionately large number of natural disasters. Towards the end of last year a resident of Bass Hill, Mrs Val Cummings, wrote to me and put forward the idea that there ought to be an on-the-spot emergency advisory service for those people such as those around Bankstown who, a couple of years ago, had a problem with a storm, people on the North Shore who had a storm in January last year, and people who have suffered from the Newcastle earthquake and a range of other natural disasters. It is a tribute to, and an indication of, this lady's community interest that she persisted to get the message through to me. Ultimately I discussed with the Minister for Housing whether there was a way of funding and providing a service along the lines suggested by Mrs Cummings. In the first few days after a natural disaster there is a traumatic situation. At that time people need objective advice about what contractors are available to do repairs and where they can get a dispassionate view of what is needed in their circumstances. I am pleased to be able to announce to the House that, with the help of the Minister, the Building Services Corporation has adopted the idea of establishing two separate sections within an expanded and improved Building Services Corporation consumer advisory service: a consumer gold line, and a proposed emergency gold line to be activated in disaster situations. Funding will be provided fully from within the existing cost structure of the Building Services Corporation - about \$300,000 preliminary costs annually for staff, purchase of a computer and exhibition vehicle and administrative expenses.

In the event of a natural disaster the unit will arrange the rapid despatch of qualified field officers to provide on-the-spot assistance to affected home owners on repair work and advice on obtaining contractors for that work. It will place pre-prepared advertisements in appropriate newspapers, provide reliable lists of contractors to undertake work, provide written information on building matters, and liaise with various insurance companies on repair activities. In other words, it is intended to come into force quickly and effectively. It is fair to say that the State Emergency Service, various local council organisations and the Department of Community Services are now well skilled in what happens after a natural disaster. But there has not been an available on-the-spot mechanism as has been clearly demonstrated in the recent four or five disasters. As a result there are occasional rorts, as was discovered in Newcastle. People are left in a great deal of doubt about the status of their house and what they ought to be doing about it, who is to pay for it, and so on. I think Mrs Cummings' initiative is commendable. Equally commendable is the initiative of the Building Services Corporation to provide advice as part of its enhanced program of consumer assistance. It certainly means that at any time in the future there are natural disasters the people affected will be better looked after than they were in the past, because they will have a

sense of certainty and a sense of confidence about what ought to be happening to fix up their houses.

PUBLIC SECTOR REDUNDANCIES AND RETRENCHMENTS

Ms MOORE: Will the Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Ethnic Affairs give the House an undertaking that there will be no forced redundancies and retrenchments in the New South Wales public service for the calendar years 1992 and 1993?

Mr GREINER: If the honourable member for Bligh had listened she would have heard me say, on any number of occasions, that the only exception to those circumstances would be if an entire commercial operation was closed down because it had no work. Clearly, it is the intention of the Government to follow the policy that it has been following - one of natural attrition and voluntary redundancies. If I might say so, that has worked remarkably well. It is not our intention to go beyond that, except in a number of exceptional circumstances, which may not arise.

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

Mr GREINER: If the honourable member cares to pour over the remarks I have made in the House and outside the Parliament she will find that I have made the same commitment on at least half a dozen occasions. One thing that ought to be made clear is that the voluntary redundancies that have taken place in New South Wales are part of the reason why we have the best employment record and the lowest unemployment in Australia.

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

Mr GREINER: All we have from honourable members opposite is abject hypocrisy. The Leader of the Opposition -

Dr Kernohan: On a point of order. I cannot hear the Premier's answer to the question.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Londonderry to order for the second time. The point of order taken by the honourable member for Camden is pertinent. Though the level of noise in the Chamber fluctuates, from time to time it is extremely difficult for members to hear. Some members seem to ignore a courtesy that is common in almost every civilised community, that is, it is polite to listen while someone else is speaking. Members in the Chamber as well as people in the public gallery and other places would appreciate being able to hear what is being said. I call on all honourable members to co-operate. They should note that I have a considerable list of members who have already been called to order. They know what may well follow if they continue to interject.

Mr GREINER: I thank you, Mr Speaker, and I thank the honourable member for Camden for taking the point of order.

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

Mr GREINER: No, as a matter of fact I discussed it with her earlier. All we have from honourable members opposite is abject hypocrisy. They know that every government in Australia has had to do something about the size and productivity of its public sector. Indeed, the Labor Party leader in the upper House, the Hon. Michael Egan, put out a discussion paper which caused much excitement yesterday at the Labor Party caucus. At least the Hon. Michael Egan had the courage to tell the truth.

Mr Causley: That is unusual.

Mr GREINER: It is unusual. The truth is that we have to have privatisation. The Hon. Michael Egan said as much in that document. We have to reduce the size of the public sector and we have to get rid of people who are doing phoney rather than real jobs, if we are to have any chance of maintaining the quality of services.

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

Mr GREINER: I will quote from what the Hon. Michael Egan had to say in his paper:

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Governments of all political complexions, communist, socialist, liberal, conservative, are committed to widely defined privatisation programs which include both the sale of selected public assets and the acceptance and encouragement of the private sector's role in the construction and operation of vital infrastructure projects.

He went on to say:

The debate on the size and productivity of the public sector has become much more critical of knee jerk responses to privatisation. This issue is crucial to Australia in the 1990s.

The issue is crucial. It is part of the same point in the question asked by the honourable member for Bligh. It is absolutely crucial to the future of this country that our government trading enterprises are made efficient. No one - not even the honourable member for Kogarah - is stupid enough to suggest that a single person will be re-employed in the State Rail Authority, because everyone in New South Wales knows that the only thing wrong with what the Government has done in that area is that it should have happened 10, 15 or 20 years ago. We would not now be in the mess we are in had that happened. The same applies with the Electricity Commission, the Water Board, the Government Printing Office, and all the other areas of administration of government that the Australian Labor Party built up while it was building up the fat in the bureaucracy and was squeezing down capital works, not spending money on hospitals, roads, school maintenance and water and sewerage systems. That is what the Australian Labor Party did for 12 years, especially in the latter part of its time in office. That is why there was such a mess to fix when the coalition parties came into office in 1988.

I simply say to the honourable member for Bligh and honourable members opposite that this issue of public sector employment is not an issue that ought to be seen any differently from employment in general. On this side of the House we are about real and sustainable jobs, about jobs that create more jobs and jobs that have a future; we are not about keeping jobs that have no future or jobs that are not real jobs. That chews up

scarce public savings, as they are being chewed up by Paul Keating's debt, which he has had so much to do with. The students from Our Lady of Peace school at Greystanes are looking for a society in which they can get jobs that mean something. They do not want to go into the railways at the age of 16 and remain there until they are 60, thinking it does not matter whether they have a productive job. Anyone should be able to understand that this is not about the public sector or the private sector; it is about the quality of the job, whether the job is a productive job. That is what people want. I am delighted to give the honourable member the assurance I gave her, subject to the small qualification I made previously. It is not the Government's intention to indulge in forced redundancies or sackings. It intends to keep on with the program of reform in the public sector. Not to do so would be to consign people like the young people in the gallery to the 50 per cent of youth unemployment that exists in parts of western Sydney because of the policies of the Australian Labor Party in Canberra.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! If members refrain from interjecting, question time will proceed more smoothly.

Mr GREINER: In the face of Paul Keating and his recession this Government has ensured that New South Wales has consistently had the lowest unemployment and the highest employment growth.

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

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Mr GREINER: The honourable member for Swansea fortunately disappeared for a few years and we had a decent member there.

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

Mr GREINER: The work force in New South Wales is growing much faster than it is in all the Labor States around Australia, where the people have given up because they know there are no jobs available.

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

Mr GREINER: I am tempted to continue, but I shall not.

WATERWAYS RANDOM BREATH TESTING

Mr DOWNY: My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. What action has been taken to apprehend drunken boat drivers and irresponsible jet ski operators? In particular, is any special action planned in the lead-up to the Easter holidays?

Mr BAIRD: The honourable member for Sutherland is interested in safety on the waterways and particularly on the Woronora River, which flows through his electorate. Honourable members would be aware of legislation introduced in this House towards the end of last year to bring in breath testing for boat drivers in an attempt to make the waterways safer. That legislation received the support of all honourable members. The law made it clear that tests could be conducted only where a boat

operator was involved in an accident or suspected of dangerous driving. There was not to be a random program.

Since the Act was proclaimed on 20th December, 166 breath tests have been conducted throughout the State. It is an indication of how responsible boat operators have become and how seriously they take the new law that only two drivers have so far returned an illegal reading. Fortunately, the courts are taking a dim view of these breaches. The first offender was stopped for a safety check by police on Lake Macquarie and found to have a blood alcohol reading of 0.155. He was fined \$400 and his boat driver's licence was cancelled for 12 months. The second offender was stopped on the Murray River by police for improper navigation and was found to have a blood alcohol reading of 0.12. She was fined \$25, and her licence also was suspended. The Waterways Authority has also been running a campaign targeting irresponsible riders of jet skis and other water craft. Undercover officers have worn wet suits and zinc cream so that they look like any other jet ski operator.

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

Mr BAIRD: The officers stopped 50 jet skiers, wave runners and other water craft and issued 13 breach notices and numerous warnings. They particularly targeted over-powered dinghies using the Georges River, Woronora River, Narrabeen Lakes, Pittwater and Sydney Harbour. Many of the craft were unregistered, exceeded speed limits or carried insufficient safety equipment. There was also widespread concern that operators were not wearing approved life jackets.

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

Mr BAIRD: I warn all users of pleasure craft, including small outboard-powered dinghies, that any craft capable of speeds in excess of 10 knots must be registered and under the control of a licensed driver. The Waterways Authority assures me that these patrols will continue indefinitely. A joint operation between the Maritime Services Board and the New South Wales police to apprehend boat drivers affected by alcohol will be launched this weekend. The blitz will cover all parts of the State with police out to catch anyone over the general 0.05 limit and the 0.02 limit for commercial operators and young licence holders. This weekend has been chosen so that the message will be released and be clear before the Easter long weekend. An advertising campaign using the slogan "alcohol and water don't mix - keep under 0.05" will be run this week to emphasise the dangers of mixing alcohol with boating. Law-abiding boaters have no cause for concern. This is not a random breath testing program; it is intended to provide greater safety on our waterways. I am sure the honourable member for Sutherland will greatly appreciate this increased effort to improve safety not only on the Woronora River but throughout the whole of the river and waterway system in New South Wales.

HUNTER WATER CORPORATION

Ms ALLAN: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Housing. Given the Premier's comments about the privatisation of the Hunter Water Corporation, will the Minister give the House an assurance that the \$70 million capital debt will be taken on by the new owners and not left with the taxpayers?

Mr SCHIPP: The taxpayers, through the shareholders, who are the Premier, myself and three other Ministers, are the representatives of the people of New South Wales. The body is corporatised. The Opposition is looking for a second prize. Yesterday it lost overwhelmingly.

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

Mr SCHIPP: There is no privatisation. The debt remains exactly where it is, as it was the day the Hunter Water Board was corporatised.

TAFE MANAGEMENT

Mr HAZZARD: Is the Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Further Education, Training and Employment aware of criticism of technical and further education management concerning the open college and the central policy unit? Has TAFE investigated these claims? If so, what is its advice?

Mr FAHEY: I noticed that while the question was being asked the honourable member for Drummoyne was sitting counting the words on his fingers just to assure himself that the question was not too long. Unfortunately, the question had been asked before he had a chance to take off his shoes and count on his toes. That is the intelligence and skill of the honourable member for Drummoyne. He holds himself up as a spokesperson on technical and further education. Yesterday he attempted to ask a question about allegations of waste and mismanagement in respect of a new policy unit in TAFE. Unfortunately he got it wrong and had to sit down. Having left the Chamber he later claimed that he raised these serious allegations in Parliament. He did not even

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get a guernsey to ask his question. But that is irrelevant to the honourable member. I am sorry that yesterday he did not have a chance to ask that question, because I have had to wait a day to provide the answer to it.

The creation of a policy unit in TAFE involving 11 people was advertised in the newspapers and gazette last week. Prior to these events the policy unit in TAFE consisted of 13 people. This downsizing of that policy unit resulted from restructuring. It is madness for the honourable member to suggest that TAFE should not have a policy unit - though he displays this madness regularly. Waste and mismanagement are not occurring and a new \$1 billion bureaucracy is not being created. In fact there is a reduction in the overall cost by virtue of this unit employing two less people. The executive services group in TAFE has been restructured, including its legal, auditing, policy, media, secretariat and secretarial services and ministerial liaison sections. The bottom line is that when this restructuring is concluded, there will be half the number of people in those units than when this Government came to office. None of those proposals involved mismanagement. The assertion by the honourable member for Drummoyne demonstrates that he is bereft of honesty. It is silly of the Opposition to make these sorts of allegations. Last Saturday the honourable member for Drummoyne, having failed to persuade a *Sydney Morning Herald* reporter to print his story, managed to get a *Sydney Morning Herald* reporter to run a story suggesting that \$500,000 had been spent on the creation of two videos for transmission through the open college through the satellite network. Again, the honourable member got it horribly wrong. What was spent was \$130,000 - not \$500,000 - to create 70 courses producing one-hour programs for transmission throughout the State to thousands of students.

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

Mr FAHEY: In this area TAFE is leading Australia. Honourable members opposite did not comment on the announcement made by the Federal Minister, Mr Baldwin, about the satellite university that was subscribed to again and again. At the beginning of the year an overwhelming response was received to that. TAFE is capable of transmitting into the workplace to eight students, or 15 students, but cumulatively to hundred and thousands of students. There has been no waste or mismanagement. I feel sorry for the reporter who did not check the facts behind the honourable member's story, when a week earlier a *Sun-Herald* reporter said that it was straight-out nonsense and did not run the story. The trifecta came when the honourable member for Riverstone put out a press release yesterday saying that the Bradfield College would only be operative from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. He stated: "Look where it is? It is in the North Shore. What about the west?" Sometimes I wonder whether the honourable member for Riverstone can read, because he displays his ignorance of government matters. If he had bothered to read he would have seen that this college became available at North Sydney because the community at North Sydney said that a college was vacant and they would like an innovative program.

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

Mr FAHEY: This innovative program will give hope to year 11 and year 12 students such as the students from Greystanes -

Ms Allan: That is tomorrow. Wrong school, wrong day.

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

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Mr FAHEY: Thank you - such as the students from Rockdale.

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

Mr FAHEY: Students from Rockdale who do not wish to go to university but wish to develop skills that will provide a meaningful, productive job will be able to acquire those by post secondary education in a way not at present possible. That college will not be operating from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. It will operate full time from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and part-time after 5 p.m. It is one of the most exciting programs of vocational education and training introduced in this country. I say to the honourable member for Riverstone that this year there is not an unmet demand of 90,000.

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

Mr FAHEY: We have 20,000 students less in our colleges than last year but 20,000 more students are doing employment-related courses. The hobby courses are dying.

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

Mr FAHEY: In these difficult times nothing is more important than undertaking a course that will lead to an employment outcome.

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

Mr FAHEY: Labor Ministers such as Mr Beasley say at conferences that they look to New South Wales to show the way. They look to what we have achieved and want to follow our lead.

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

Mr FAHEY: Honourable members should read the Carmichael report, because it says just that. Everything being done in New South Wales TAFE is to the forefront of the national agenda. The Labor States are falling in behind.

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

Mr FAHEY: As I have told the honourable member opposite many times before, one should not go against the tide and ignore the reality and the aspirations of young people.

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

Mr FAHEY: This Government is giving direction and is providing through TAFE opportunities that have never been offered before. That process will continue, despite the nonsense we hear from time to time from the honourable member for Riverstone and the honourable member for Drummoyne.

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VICTIMS COMPENSATION TRIBUNAL

Mr KNIGHT: I address my question without notice to the Attorney General, Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Arts.

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

Mr KNIGHT: Will the Attorney General reconsider his decision to withdraw legal aid for respondents, including residents of the Campbelltown electorate, seeking assistance from the Victims Compensation Tribunal?

Mr COLLINS: I came prepared to answer another question from the honourable member for Campbelltown. I am pleased to reaffirm the total independence of the Legal Aid Commission in reaching its decisions. I am sure it will take into account representations made by the honourable member for Campbelltown on behalf of his constituents. Legal aid is not distributed on an electorate basis. I am sure that the Legal Aid Commission will note his view.

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

GOVERNMENT PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

Mr TURNER: My question is addressed to the Minister for Local Government and Minister for Cooperatives. Is there a backlog of maintenance on government owned buildings? If so, has the Minister been advised of the reasons for this and what action is being has been taken to rectify the problem?

Mr PEACOCKE: The question asked by the honourable member for Myall Lakes raises a subject that is vital to the property assets of people of New South Wales. It is an elementary principle that to effectively manage and maintain property one has to know where the property is and how much of it there is.

Mr Bowman: That is brilliant.

Mr PEACOCKE: The honourable member thinks it is brilliant. When the Labor Party was in office it had no idea what property it had. No property register was kept and there was no ongoing maintenance register. It had myriad agencies trying to control properties but no one maintaining them properly. One of the first things the Greiner Government did when it came to office was to develop a property register so that it would know exactly what properties there were, what the Government owned and what maintenance had to be carried out to look after them. That seems to me to be a basic concept of property management for any organisation. The register is an extremely important tool for the efficient management of government property, giving us an overview of the State's property holdings, identifying surplus properties, monitoring the asset disposal program and making an effective maintenance program possible. Its development under this Government redresses a situation that existed under previous administrations whereby the management of the Government's property resources was carried out, if at all, in a piecemeal and certainly an unco-ordinated fashion. Hardly any relevant property information was available and it was impossible to provide an overview of the State's property resources, and therefore impossible to give effective management.

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It should be clear, even to idiots like some of those on the Opposition benches, that one cannot manage one's assets if one does not know what one owns. But that basic principle is lost on Mr Carr and his colleagues. Disturbingly, this approach flags their general approach to economic matters. For instance, during the refurbishment of one building the minor upgrading of the air-conditioning plant turned into a major replacement exercise when the cooling tower literally fell apart. That is just one example of many similar instances of poor maintenance that affect the value of the State's assets. The Property Services Group has commissioned a detailed maintenance audit of government-owned office buildings. That audit will be completed in April 1992 and the information provided will be used to develop a comprehensive preventive and catch-up maintenance program for the portfolio. If preliminary information is confirmed by the audit, it will be necessary to program the catch-up works over a number of years.

This action is a major step forward in the management of New South Wales property assets and will increase their value and utility. It further demonstrates the Government's commitment to sensible economic management for the benefit of the people of New South Wales. Most of these expensive maintenance programs would not have been necessary, or at least not as costly, if the Labor Government when it was in office had met its responsibilities to the people of New South Wales by maintaining public buildings properly. The only contribution Labor made to our valuable assets in 12

years was to neglect them to such a degree that we now have to conduct a massive maintenance program. The program will be carried through. The assets of the State will be put into proper and good order. That will happen for the first time in at least two decades in New South Wales.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING BOND INVESTMENTS

Mr SCHIPP: I wish to provide supplementary information in answer to the question asked by the honourable member for Heffron yesterday. She asked a two-part question about activities of FANMAC and HomeFund. The first part of the question asked: "Why did your department through the Home Purchase Assistance Fund invest more than \$8.5 million in non-interest bearing FANMAC bonds during the 1990 financial year then write them off for the next financial year?" The answer to that part of the question is that the requirement for the Home Purchase Assistance Fund to purchase bonds at a discount or receive bonds at a premium has been in existence since the inception of the program in 1986. I should add that it was when members opposite were in government that the program was developed. This requirement is a legal requirement of the Home Purchase Assistance Fund trust deed. The requirement is necessary because the financial markets may require bonds to be purchased at a discount, yet the mortgages will be at full value.

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

Mr SCHIPP: Furthermore, the reverse can often occur, that is, the bonds may be issued at a premium over the mortgage value. In that case the Home Purchase Assistance Fund receives the excesses. Over the whole term of the fund raising - and I should say that is in excess of \$4 billion - the Home Purchase Assistance Fund has purchased \$14.1 million of discounted bonds and received \$10.1 million in premiums, a net difference of \$4 million. The purchase of discount bonds is not a loss. The earnings on the mortgages provided for from the discount bonds go to reduce subsidies paid by the Home Purchase Assistance Fund to support affordable rent-buy and other subsidised mortgages. The \$10 units are non-interest bearing and would not be expected

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to have any future value at the winding up of the trust. Representations were made to the Auditor-General prior to the preparation of the annual accounts to vary the treatment of the units, as they overstated the investments of the trust. The Auditor-General preferred the option of writing off the value of the \$10 units totalling \$8.5 million.

The second part of the honourable members question asked: "Has your department also paid underwriting commission on bond issues of almost \$12 million?" The answer to that part of the question is, no. Underwriting fees are not paid by the department but by the trustee of the Home Purchase Assistance Fund, Permanent Custodians Limited. The payment is for two years: in 1989-90 it was \$5.772 million and in 1990-91 it was \$7.142 million, a total of \$12.914 million. The underwriting commission relates to the fees paid to the underwriter responsible for issuing the FANMAC bonds. Fees are based on a percentage commission relative to the value of the funds raised.

PETITIONS

Toll Charges

Petition praying that no tolls be imposed on a section of the F4 Freeway and on the F5 Expressway, received from **Mr Ziolkowski**.

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**.

Steel-jawed Leg Hold Traps

Petition praying that the House legislate to ban totally the manufacture, sale and use of steel-jawed leg hold traps in all areas of the State as they cause great suffering to all animals and birds, both target and non-target, caught in them, 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**.

Duck Hunting

Petition praying that the House legislate to ban the annual duck hunting season to protect native waterfowl and New South Wales wetlands, received from **Ms Moore**.

Royal Agricultural Society Showground

Petition praying that because the Royal Agricultural Society Showground, the E. S. Marks Athletics Field, Centennial Park, the Cricket Ground, Moore Park and Queen's Park form part of the original bequest by Lachlan Macquarie as commons land, future planning for this land be subject to open space study, received from **Ms Moore**.

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Ingleburn and Macquarie Fields Police Stations

Petition praying that the House provide, as a matter of urgency, a permanent police station at Ingleburn and upgrade the existing police station at Macquarie Fields, received from **Mr Knowles**.

Woolloomooloo Finger Wharf

Petition praying that public money not be wasted demolishing the structurally sound finger wharf and establishing a walkway on the western side of Woolloomooloo Bay but instead that basic renovations be carried out on the wharf and an integrated multimedia arts centre be established, received from **Ms Moore**.

Cockle Creek Railway Station

Petitions praying that the House urgently reconsider the proposal to demolish buildings at the Cockle Creek railway station and that it make no attempt to reduce the frequency of trains to that station, received from **Mr Hunter and Mr Mills**.

Newcastle to Central Coast Rail Services

Petition praying that rail services on the Newcastle to Central Coast line be restored and that easy access be provided to platform No. 1 at Fassifern railway station by the installation of ramps to the overhead walkway, received from **Mr Hunter**.

Walker Estates

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

Lidcombe Hospital

Petition praying that because of dissatisfaction with the rationalisation of health services the House prevent the downgrading and possible closure of services at Lidcombe Hospital, received from **Mr Shedden**.

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**.

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 **Dr Macdonald**.

Harbord Heathland

Petition praying that Portion 490, Gardere Avenue, Harbord, known as Harbord Heathland, be retained as open space for the enjoyment of all citizens of Warringah Shire, received from **Dr Macdonald**.

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North Head Sewage Treatment Plant

Petition praying that safe toxic trade waste and sludge management methods be implemented urgently at the North Head sewage treatment plant, Manly, received from **Dr Macdonald**.

Adoption Information Act

Petition praying that the Government take urgent action to prevent the damage that will be done by the Adoption Information Act becoming effective in its present form, received from **Dr Macdonald**.

Hunter Water Corporation Raymond Terrace Office

Petition praying that the Raymond Terrace office of the Hunter Water Corporation not close and that government owned service organisations not be corporatised, received from **Mr Martin**.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Printing of Reports

Order of the Day No. 1 discharged.

Printing of Papers

Motion by Mr Moore agreed to:

That the following papers be printed:

Memorandum and Articles of Association of Hunter Water Corporation Limited.
Statement of Corporate Intent of Hunter Water Corporation, dated January 1992.
Report of the Dental Board for the period 1 July, 1990 to 30 September, 1991.
Report of the Pharmacy Board for the period 1 July, 1990 to 30 September,
1991.
Report of the Department of Planning for the year ended 30 June, 1991.

HER MAJESTY'S SPEECH: ADDRESS IN REPLY

Sixth Day's Debate

Debate resumed from 24th March.

Mr BECK (Murwillumbah) [3.11]: It is my pleasure to speak on this Address in Reply. Yesterday was the eighth year since my election to this Parliament, and it has been eight very proud years. Twenty-six new members were elected on 24th March, 1984, 20 of whom are still members of this House. That is a very good record. It was a great honour to be a member of this House when Her Majesty on 20th February made the opening address to the Fiftieth Parliament. On that occasion I was accompanied by my wife and two daughters, Elizabeth and Allison, my future son-in-law Glenn and my senior secretary, Robyn. The opening of the second session of the Fiftieth Parliament by Her Majesty is one of the most memorable events in the history of this Parliament, certainly since 1954 when Her Majesty last opened this Parliament. I was very proud to be a member of this House in 1988 when members of the Royal Family visited Sydney for its bicentennial celebrations.

I would like to put to rest some of the Australian Labor Party's big lies that have been circulating in the electorate of Murwillumbah. These lies are becoming more frequent because the Labor Party believes an election may be looming because the numbers in the major parties are so close - 47:47:5. The coalition parties are sitting on the Government benches and we will remain there until March 1995. The electorate of Murwillumbah has been badly hit by the recession. It is the worst recession in 60 years and was brought about by the former Treasurer now the Prime Minister of Australia. Unemployment in the Murwillumbah electorate is more than 15 per cent; youth unemployment is in excess of 30 per cent. The high rate of unemployment in my electorate is due to the Keating induced recession. The sooner a Federal election is held and there is a change of government the better it will be not only for the people of New South Wales, but for the people of Australia.

A lot of noise has been made by the members of the Opposition about the loss of

the Murwillumbah motor rail and the *Brisbane Limited*. It is well known that this Government introduced the XPT train to replace those services. The XPT has served New South Wales very well and will continue to do so. Its patronage has increased by 25 per cent, and this Government will further improve the XPT service by introducing sleeper carriages within the next 12 months. As a forward-thinking Government we are conducting a joint study with the Queensland Government to extend the Murwillumbah rail link through to Queensland at Robina. It is well known that the Queensland Government is extending its rail link down to Robina, so I hope that the costing and analysis of linking of those two services will soon come to fruition. The North Coast of New South Wales, which adjoins the ever popular area of the Gold Coast, needs to secure a greater share of the tourist trade. I would like to reflect on the tactic of the Labor Party in spreading the lie in the electorate of Murwillumbah that there are no services, services will be reduced, and Beck is not representing the area.

I wish to emphasise to all honourable members and to the people of my electorate what a fine job has been done by the Greiner-Murray Government. The Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Roads has fulfilled a number of important election promises such as the improvement to the Tweed River and the Tweed River Bar. Three million dollars has been spent on the development of our southern boat harbour and improving the facilities of wharves in that entire area. The coalition Government has initiated and completed a study of the lower Tweed River. Currently a study is being carried out in conjunction with the Tweed Shire Council of the upper reaches of the Tweed River; that study will be beneficial to the electorate of Murwillumbah. However, the main concern in the electorate is to bring to fruition the sand bypass of the river at Tweed Heads; that is, the bypass of sand that is clogging up the Tweed River. A study has been completed on which this Government has expended in excess of \$1 million and we are now waiting on a final agreement between the Queensland Premier and the New South Wales Premier on a satisfactory funding arrangement. I know that my electorate and the Gold Coast City Council are keen to see that the sand from the Tweed River is placed on the Gold Coast beaches.

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The Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Roads has greatly supported the upgrading of roads in the Murwillumbah electorate. He has ensured the construction of the Tweed Heads bypass, which is nearing completion. All honourable members will recall that the former Premier, Mr Unsworth - now the oyster grower - completely stopped progress of the Tweed Heads bypass. The Government has invested \$45 million in the Tweed Heads bypass and it will be open prior to Christmas - prior to the school holidays at the end of this year. I look forward to continued growth on the North Coast. I should mention that the youth of the North Coast were forgotten completely by members opposite during the 12 years they were in office. Heaven help us if the Labor Party ever returns to this side of the House. This Government is here to stay and will ensure that growth continues.

The environmental impact statement for the Chinderah bypass has been completed. That bypass, worth \$40 million, will provide four lanes of road from the Queensland border through to Oak Avenue and into Murwillumbah. It will provide a major road connection along the Tweed coast. I have a particular concern about the condition of Kyogle Road. I will be calling on the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Roads to consider the allocation of a one-off payment for the sealing of Kyogle Road. Kyogle Road 142 and Kyogle Road 143 are main tourist connections from the west through to the electorate of Murwillumbah and on to the Gold Coast. The upgrading of that road will be of benefit to the Tweed Valley and will

provide financial gain to the businesses that have suffered so badly under former Labor governments and under the present Federal Government. I thank the State Government for providing during these times of tight monetary constraints a small amount of funds for upgrading that road. That funding has permitted the upgrading of Snake Creek Bridge and the Mount Burrell turn-off area. Of course we all know why we have insufficient road funding. It is because the Federal Government takes in excess of 30c a litre in fuel tax but gives back only a miserly 6c for road funding. The State Government allocates the 6c collected and moneys from the 3 x 3 fuel levy to roadworks. We all know the massive difference that makes to the improvement of our roads.

I take this opportunity to refer to the hospitals in the Murwillumbah electorate, which have had major improvements; and those improvements will continue. The Government must ensure that health services are available on demand. Improvements carried out at Murwillumbah hospital include the expenditure of more than \$1 million for x-ray facilities, for car parking facilities and other improvements. I know that tenders have closed for the \$4.8 million expansion of the Tweed Heads hospital and an announcement is expected on that project in the near future. Some people in the electorate have said that services are being reduced. It may be that some bed numbers in certain wards and areas have been reduced, but there has been no reduction of health services. No one has been denied a bed when a bed was required.

On numerous occasions in this House, when I have had the opportunity of addressing the House, I have referred to the importance of education. Unfortunately, the former Labor Government did not have the forethought to institute a program to purchase sufficient land for future expansion of education facilities in my electorate. Murwillumbah High School is now one of the largest high schools in New South Wales. I am grateful that the Minister has initiated the purchase of land at West Murwillumbah. I know the Minister is to visit the electorate on Thursday of next week to officially open the \$1.2 million library at the Murwillumbah High School. However, we must have soon an announcement about capital works funding for the building of a new high school at Murwillumbah. Equally important is the finalisation of the purchase of land at West Tweed for a new primary school and a new high school and for the building of that high

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school. With the expansion in population in the electorate, we must make sure that we have the necessary educational institutions. Land has been purchased for a new TAFE college at Kingscliff. Stage 1 will commence in a matter of months. The development application is yet to be placed before the Tweed Shire Council. The total project will cost in excess of \$80 million.

What I have mentioned so far in this address to the House refutes completely the Opposition's big lie that no improvements have taken place in the Murwillumbah electorate. I should like to refer to the importance of agricultural industries, and I am delighted to do so in the presence in the Chamber of the Deputy Leader of the National Party, the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs. Within my electorate there is a major sugar industry. One of the most successful co-operatives, Norco, operates in the area. We know that the number of dairyfarmers has fallen in recent times. However, those who have stayed in the industry are efficient and productive. They must be encouraged and assisted. I am concerned that fauna protection legislation, which was forced on us last year, is having an adverse effect on the banana industry. I hope that common sense will prevail and that amendments will be moved to that legislation so that the agricultural industries can continue to operate efficiently.

My electorate boasts an active club industry, with a large number of clubs, including the Twin Towns and Seagulls clubs. Major extensions are soon to be opened

at the Tweed Heads bowling club. All the clubs make a significant contribution by way of employment opportunities within the area. I congratulate the clubs for the efficient manner in which they operate and I am proud that this efficient club industry is located within my electorate. I wish to take the opportunity to mention a circular, published in my electorate, that seeks to denigrate the Government and the local member. It is produced by an organisation known as TEL and is called the "TEL Report". At one stage the report was printed at Tweed Heads District Hospital because the president of the organisation was the gardener at the hospital, and still is. The telephone number listed on the circular was the hospital number. I am disappointed that he was not dismissed from the hospital for producing the document on hospital premises. I am unaware how the circular is produced now. I take exception to some of the items printed in the monthly newsletter. The organisation accuses me of holding secret meetings behind closed doors. There are no secret meetings in my office in Murwillumbah. If TEL wishes to meet with me, I would be happy to speak with them. My door is always open and will continue to be open to all.

I turn now to the issue of police services in the border region that I represent. This is a growth area and I am concerned that the number of police in the area is insufficient to cope with that growth. Although Tweed Heads has a 24-hour police station, the fact of it being a border town increases the demand on available services. The floating population of the area increases that demand even further. Police at Murwillumbah do a magnificent job. I am not saying that the station should be open seven days a week, 24 hours a day, particularly as the services there have improved considerably over the years. However, I would like to see police numbers at Murwillumbah and Kingscliff increased to a level that would give a better service to the increasing permanent population and the holiday period population. It is a pleasure today to address some areas of concern. I would like to conclude by repeating my appreciation of Her Majesty's Speech at the opening of this Fiftieth Parliament. It was indeed an honour to be here for Her Majesty's address. I congratulate the Deputy Premier on his contribution to this debate. He voiced the sentiments of us all - we love our royal family and I sincerely hope that we will all have the opportunity to meet Her Majesty on some other occasion.

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Mr NEWMAN (Cabramatta) [3.33]: It is a pleasure to reply to Her Majesty's Speech on the opening of the second session of the Fiftieth Parliament and in doing so also to reflect on the contributions of the Premier and the Deputy Premier. It was most pleasing to me, and it gave me a new respect for royalty, to note that Her Majesty delivered a short speech to the Parliament and made no reference to the Government. It is absolutely no wonder that no reference was made to this Government. Who would want to endorse the policies and programs of a government on its last legs? The Premier's contribution was most interesting. As the Leader of the Opposition said, "It was a speech filled with rhetoric and lacking reality". Some parts of the Premier's speech amused me - in particular when he referred to co-operation between the Commonwealth and the States. One example of co-operation by this Government is that last year the Commonwealth Government initiated a program for drainage assistance to western Sydney councils. It offered \$900,000 to alleviate the difficulty that massive housing developments in the western suburbs have suffered as a result of drainage problems and nuisance flooding. The Commonwealth Government in co-operation with the State Government and western suburbs councils were intended to look at channelling this money into badly needed works. The Deputy Premier in a reply to me, frankly, just said that he was not interested in co-operation, not interested in helping us. I know that honourable members who represent the western suburbs of Sydney are aghast at the stand

that the Government has taken, and are concerned at its lack of initiative in taking up Commonwealth money and putting it into areas where it is so badly needed. The 90,000 school leavers unable to enter TAFE, the loss of \$100 million on Eastern Creek, and the fact that New South Wales is the highest taxed State in Australia all reflect on the record of this Government.

I am very concerned with some of the initiatives of the Government. I have seen no new initiatives that residents of my electorate of Cabramatta can be pleased with. There is a push for a casino and a suggestion that it will assist to provide money for hospitals. Though the concept of providing money for hospitals is noble, it is amazing there has been such a big turnaround on this issue overnight. Yesterday in this House, in answer to a question about taxation of parking spaces in the city, the Minister for Transport referred to the use of that revenue to assist with the provision of parking spaces for rail commuters. I was very concerned at his reply because, although I appreciated the concept of providing 7,000 extra car spaces to significant railway stations - Penrith, Springwood and Gosford were said to be central stations that need this type of assistance - he went on to say that \$5 million would be generated from this \$200 tax on each space and that stations such as Glenfield, Seven Hills, Sutherland, Hornsby and East Richmond would be next on the list, where up to 500 car spaces will be provided. I was aghast at that. Cabramatta station is one of the fastest growing commuter stations in the west, along with stations like Liverpool and others. Cabramatta was not given any consideration at all. I think that is pathetic. It is a sad indictment on the way this Government looks at channelling money back to areas where it is most needed. The Minister for Transport should immediately review the priority plan for those parking place allocations, if it ever comes about, because Cabramatta is about the fifth largest commuter station in the western suburb area, and is growing. That should be reflected upon and if this harebrained scheme comes off, the money should go out there where it is needed.

I turn to another area of extreme need and concern, not just to my electorate but to the west and southwest of Sydney, the provision of hospital services. I learned this morning, though the news came out yesterday, that nursing staff at Liverpool hospital aborted their strike. The issue concerned staffing numbers. I tell the House that for some 12 months my colleagues in that area, though appreciative of the hard work of

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hospital staff, were very concerned about the shortages there. My colleagues in the west have been receiving complaints from the public and referring them to the Minister for Transport. The two hospitals that service my area, namely Fairfield and Liverpool, have had increasing problems about service to the community. The average waiting time for non-urgent surgery in those public hospitals has increased to one month, but for some operations it is up to nine months. This is revealed not by some outside survey but by the figures of the Department of Health which were released by the Minister for Health Services Management - a shocking revelation of the shortage of staff in that area, and particularly at Liverpool and Fairfield hospitals.

A publication by the Department of Health entitled "Health Towards the Year 2001" reveals that there will be 6.6 million people in New South Wales - another three-quarters of a million - by the year 2001 and that the population in some areas is growing rapidly. It states also that the number of people aged 65 years and over will have increased by 23 per cent and their use of the health services will have increased at four times the rate of the total population. People in the west are aware that some hospital buildings are 100 years old and that 60 per cent of New South Wales hospitals are more than 30 years old. Many require substantial repair - about \$300 million each year to maintain a reasonable standard. The question of staff is a matter which this

Government can readily and easily address.

We talk in generalities about hospital services but I wish to acquaint honourable members with real issues, not rhetoric. Some weeks ago a St Johns Park couple spoke about the trauma they experienced trying to obtain treatment at Fairfield hospital for their 15-year-old daughter, Deborah, for appendicitis. They arrived at the hospital at about 9 p.m. and claimed that during their two-hour wait at the hospital casualty unit, staff did not examine young Deborah to assess her condition. What a shocking and emotional period for parents in that situation. In September 1991 the case of Mr Cassidy, a patient at Liverpool hospital, was referred to me. He arrived home and, after being examined by his daughter, found that he still had an intravenous needle in his arm. That is an example of how staff shortages can affect service to the public. Another lady, Mrs Margaret Elizabeth Brock, wrote to me in connection with Liverpool hospital. She said that her local general practitioner, after examining her husband, told her, "Get to the hospital at once with this letter". She stated in her letter:

We waited in Casualty 7 hours before he was admitted. He was begging me to take him home, he was so ill. I was very tempted to do so. This is not the way sick people should be treated.

With my help he used the bathroom, because of shortage of staff. I put in a 9 hour work day. I have spinal trouble and this was a great strain to me.

She stated in her letter that she visited her husband later and found him greatly distressed. Mrs Brock and a number of other people are of the view that the doctors and nurses at the hospital are wonderful people. It is not the fault of staff at the hospital; clearly, it is a matter of understaffing. Hospital staff are not happy with not being able to provide the services that the public deserve. This week's local newspaper raised another issue about Fairfield hospital. The newspaper stated:

Michael Smith, 28 and unemployed, also claimed staff had told him they could not perform an operation on his impacted wisdom tooth until July and advised him to have it done privately.

That is not fair for people in southwestern Sydney who need hospital services. The Government and the Minister ought to be made aware of these problems. Staff should not have to threaten strike action before moneys are allocated to increase their numbers.
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This would not have occurred in electorates on the other side of the Harbour Bridge. I turn now to deal with education facilities in Cabramatta and other electorates. This week the local newspaper quite clearly spoke about teacher shortages. The editorial stated:

In Fairfield City, more than 75 per cent of schools have at least one class with more than the recommended 30 students, says the Teachers Federation.

The Teachers Federation has threatened to hold a rally to address this problem. The newspaper editorial continued:

If this isn't bad enough, some teachers are struggling with class combinations of students from Years 3 and 6.

What a shocking situation! The people of southwestern Sydney deserve better than this. I commend the Fairfield Teachers Association on its proposed rally to deal with this question. Kim Cochrane was instrumental in making the Government aware of the

growing numbers of children in classes. The Teachers Association placed an advertisement in our local newspaper which stated:

A recent survey of schools in South West Sydney reveals:

73% of schools have classes over 30 students

73% of schools have composite classes over 25 students

39% of schools have composite classes including kindergarten

I mentioned this on one occasion to the Minister for School Education and Youth Affairs in the other place. She simply said she did not see anything wrong with composite classes. She thought they were okay. She did not seem concerned about them at all. The parents of southwest Sydney and in particular the parents of Cabramatta are very concerned about it. In the future, when the Opposition is in government, it will change all that. It will lift the standards of education and increase the number of teachers. Southwestern Sydney will have an additional 350 teachers as the Opposition, when in government, will replace teachers in that area. I understand that this will include 16 positions in the Cabramatta electorate, 14 in Fairfield and 18 in Smithfield. Labor will make some good, allround changes to the education program. Other education matters also concern me. A few weeks ago, when I was at a Lansvale parents and citizens association meeting, I was shocked to discover that, because of a lack of cleaners, mothers had organised a roster to clean classrooms. They are doing this because of their dedication to the children. In one school mothers were concerned about children suffering from asthma. Those mothers are not paid for cleaning those classrooms. It is shocking that this is happening but, luckily, there is a dedicated group of mothers at that school. Unemployment in my electorate is very disturbing. Cabramatta has a high unemployment rate - about 17 per cent. Teenage male unemployment in the Fairfield local government area has reached a staggering 71 per cent. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

A newspaper article stated:

New unadjusted Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) figures showed 42.4 per cent of people in the Fairfield-Liverpool region aged between 15 and 19 were jobless in January.

The local figure was almost double the State teenage average (28.4 per cent) and easily the highest in the State.

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Teenage males were hit hardest with unemployment of 71.4 per cent, more than double the 27.2 per cent recorded in January 1991. Teenage girls fared better with 28.3 per cent unemployment, an improvement on the figure of 32.5 per cent recorded at the same time the previous year. The Federal and State Governments must pay attention to that shocking situation. Communication in job searching is an obvious problem for the large proportion of people from non-English speaking backgrounds. More needs to be done in the Cabramatta electorate to create job opportunities for the huge number of unemployed. Much has been said and the Federal Government is blamed for the increase in unemployment, but recently none other than a former leader of the Liberal Party, John Howard visited Cabramatta. More than a year ago he referred to Cabramatta as having a ghetto mentality. On that visit he said that the record levels of unemployment were unlikely to fall in the short term no matter who was in office in Canberra during the next

few years. That statement surprised me. I should have thought he would have been bright enough to say something else, whether it was true or not, about his party and the mode of leadership of that party.

The Cabramatta electorate is a multicultural community of 109 nationalities. About 900,000 overseas-born people live in the Sydney area; 300,000 live in western Sydney, representing 27 per cent of the overseas-born population. Cabramatta has a huge harmonious multicultural population comprising 67 per cent of overseas-born people. Though Cabramatta has had poor publicity in the past, things are brightening up. It is now receiving better publicity. Crime has fallen to a controlled level through the good work of the police. Cabramatta is getting a better press. The pioneers of immigration, the Italians, Serbo-Croatians, Macedonians, Slovenians, South Americans and Turks, have enabled good will and racial harmony to exist. I express my sympathy and condolences to the Turkish community on the terrible loss of life in Ersankhan. Some Cabramatta residents have relatives living in that area, and I express my sympathy for what happened there. The Cabramatta community has been enriched by the concepts of tourism, tradition and what the Italian community is doing each year with the Our Lady Of Mount Carmel festival and the new festival of the Cross Of Terranova. I commend the chairmen of those committees, Mr Sam D'Ambrosio and Mr Philip Perri. They have enabled those wonderful Italian festivals to take place. The Chinese community has its New Year festival. The Vietnamese, Laotian, Cambodian and Thai people all have festivals, adding to the multicultural wonderland that Cabramatta is.

I am pleased that the Vietnamese community is achieving a better image. In the past its image was poor, but that is now picking up and I hope that in the future people will see them the way I do - a family-minded, peace-loving community that has worked hard during its beginnings in this country. The Vietnamese population has increased from the 1986 figure of 88,000 to 133,000 today. I wish to record in *Hansard* that Vietnamese youngsters in our school system have excellent academic results, which are a tribute to their parents. The Vietnamese are now co-operating with law officers and have a policy of condemning the criminal element. They went so far as to support me once when I suggested that overseas-born criminals who committed atrocious crimes in Australia should be sent back to their country of origin. The Vietnamese have made an enormous contribution to Australia's small business industry and Cabramatta's viability and economy. Many of them are involved in family businesses, restaurants and retail outlets. They have a high respect for the family unit, the elderly, and youth affairs, and they have a beautiful culture, traditions and customs. I am proud of them and I am sure that in years to come the blemishes of a small minority in the early years will disappear completely and Australians will put the Vietnamese on the highest pedestal for what they have contributed to Australia and particularly to Cabramatta.

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I should like also to pay tribute to Colonel Vo Dai Ton, whom I met recently. Early last year he was released after 10 years of imprisonment by the Vietnamese communists. He showed leadership and a vision for the freedom of his people in Vietnam. One day he hopes Vietnam will have freedom of rights and free elections. I hope the Colonel and others will be able to return to make Vietnam again the great country it once was, with the freedom of rights and religious freedom it had in the past. For many years police and security have been foremost in my representations for the Cabramatta area. I do not often pay tribute to the Government, but last year I was thankful that the Minister for Police and Emergency Services allocated funds for the extension of Cabramatta police station. After the community put up a substantial case, \$1 million was granted. This year I seek an increase in police numbers, and I have made

several statements on that subject. One of the most important things happening in this State is a survey being conducted into police-population ratios. I hope that survey will show the need for a change to the current pattern. Most honourable members and I do not believe that police-population ratios are allocated to the correct police districts in this State. Cabramatta clearly is one of those districts. The electorate has terrific tourism potential; it attracts more than 10,000 visitors every weekend, yet has a police authorised strength of only 67, with an actual rate of 72, when it should be well over 100. The workload of the Cabramatta police is huge. It is to the credit of the honourable member for Bankstown that the Bankstown police strength is 140. I say well done to him. I should love Cabramatta to have 140 police. Fairfield has 118 police, Liverpool 110 and Merrylands 92, yet Cabramatta has only 72, though it has been promised a couple more.

I should like to see any police contingent undergo a role reversal and with 72 officers carry out the work in Cabramatta. Even performing a five-minute job in any area of Cabramatta will demonstrate language and other barriers. I appeal to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to look at police-to-population ratios and give consideration to allocating police numbers in areas where they are required. The community at Cabramatta has not been slack. It has raised \$33,000 to buy a mobile police station. I doubt whether the electorate of the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs could achieve that. It is worth more than a truck full of carrots. Recently the police mobile station was handed over to police. What is now needed is police to man it. I hope police manning will be increased by at least another 12 units. I appeal to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Roads to construct a pedestrian bridge outside the Canley Heights Public School at the intersection of Cumberland Street and Canley Vale Road. Ever since a person was killed in 1990 I have consistently made representations. Yesterday a year 5 student was hit by a vehicle but fortunately was not badly injured. This is a six-lane highway without a pedestrian bridge. Lights are not enough to make this intersection safe and I fear a serious casualty will result. I appeal to the Minister to build the bridge as soon as possible.

Mr PETCH (Gladesville) [4.3]: It gives me great pleasure to speak today on what is almost the fourth anniversary of my election to this Parliament. Recently I witnessed the opening of the second session of the Fiftieth Parliament by Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen. For many years I travelled throughout the world managing celebrities and entertainers. One of my greatest joys was visiting London and witnessing the annual variety performance before Her Majesty the Queen. It was electrifying to be in the presence of Her Majesty; though she was a short distance from me her presence was illuminating. It was the highlight of my career to meet Her Majesty personally. My wife was also proud to meet her. She has been a devout royalist all her life and has collected manuscripts and photographs of the Royal Family. It was a special occasion for my family to be present at the opening of Parliament. It is marvellous to have the pomp and ceremony of royalty and royal processions. In these economic times, when spirits are low, an occasion such as this lifts morale.

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I shall shortly allude to the bicentenary of Ryde, which also had the same effect. On 27th January His Excellency the Governor, Peter Sinclair, visited Kissing Point and officiated at Ryde's 200th birthday celebrations. On that occasion thousands of people witnessed the pomp and ceremony, and the overwhelming reception received by His Excellency the Governor is well recorded. Our present system of government as a constitutional monarchy is by far the best system offered anywhere in the world. It separates the Queen and her representative from the political spectrum. Under this system no one person, be it Premier or Prime Minister, is the ultimate authority; the

power is vested completely with the people. I wonder what those people espousing the republican movement in Australia are endeavouring to achieve and what is on their agenda. Our present system is envied in many countries which, I am sure, would like to restore their monarchies. We are blessed with it and I hope we will always have the monarchy to be the Crown under which we serve.

Ryde was settled four years after the first arrival in New South Wales in 1788 of Governor Phillip. In 1792 the settlement was known as Eastern Farms. The first oranges and hops were grown in Ryde, and the first brewery was located in Ryde. Also, the famous Granny Smith apple was first grown in Ryde, as my colleague the honourable member for Eastwood would be well aware. Every year Eastwood holds the Granny Smith Festival which is synonymous with Ryde. Also, we have the annual fete and patrons of Granny Smith, who is buried in the graveyard of St Anne's Anglican Church. That church is historical. Its graveyard contains many tombstones of great explorers, such as Gregory Blaxland, as well as Granny Smith and many others. During this bicentennial year St Anne's church has received a grant of \$20,000 to carry out much needed restoration work in its cemetery. During the celebrations I was pleased to attend the thanksgiving service at Macquarie University where Monsignor Peter Ingham, the parish priest of St Charles church at Ryde, officiated with members of other religious groups who are great friends of mine. The choir was from various groups under the banner of Mrs Susan Maslen, who did a sterling job. The combined orchestra and the atmosphere were overwhelming and did great justice to such a joyous occasion.

During the past four years the electorate of Gladesville has prospered exceptionally well in education, transport, technical and further education, health and housing. I wish to allude to some of those issues. I place on record my thanks to the Minister for Housing for the tremendous support he has given to me personally and given to residents of the Gladesville electorate. In Higginbotham Road a Department of Housing development was rushed in prior to my election. That was done by my predecessor with the aim that a housing commission development would bring more Labor Party voters to the area. The project was in a gully and the site had been rejected for development on many occasions by Ryde council because of the watercourse that runs through the gully. Nevertheless, that project was constructed after being thrust upon the Department of Housing against its will. When the storms came in 1988 and 1989 extensive water damage occurred to the properties. People living in the lower area were flooded and had water pouring through their homes. I contacted the Minister for Housing at his home in Wagga Wagga and he directed rescue operations from there. He responded immediately to the needs of those people. Officers and managers of the department attended on site forthwith to render whatever assistance they could. As a result of the damage that occurred major alterations have been carried out to the drainage system to improve the overland flow and protect the buildings from water ingress. A revised footpath arrangement has been effected. On numerous occasions residents of Higginbotham Road have expressed to me their appreciation of the efforts and concern of the Minister.

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Ivanhoe Place has a massive development that we inherited from the former Government. The project could have been effectively built by Ryde council but the former Government usurped its powers and took the land from Ryde council. The massive development in Ivanhoe Place has led to severe problems. Many of the residents there came from diverse areas to this isolated place. That created all sorts of problems for social welfare officers, police and other organisations. Some of the problems were related to the child care centre in the region. I am pleased to say that the

Minister for Health and Community Services has sorted out those problems. Management of the centre has been handed over to the Eastwood Christian Community Aid Centre. That organisation is doing a sterling job. Work has commenced on restoring the flood plain adjacent to Shrimpton's Creek which is beside this huge development. That will minimise the risk of future flooding. Drainage is being provided to the rear yards of townhouses to prevent clogging in the winter. Alterations will be made to the existing stormwater drainage system at a cost of \$100,000.

Blandville Court in Gladesville was an absolute disgrace and an indictment of the former Government. It was a mess. Workmen carried out tiling on the units but the work was so shoddy that the tiles lifted and fell off. Parts of the balustrades were falling off and cyclone mesh wire and steel scaffolding had to be placed around the building to protect people walking near it. I visited the site with John Gordon, the regional supervisor of the Department of Housing. I told him that the people could not stand the conditions any longer and that action would have to be taken. Again with the help of the Minister \$1.5 million was allocated for immediate restoration work. That upgrading commenced in June 1991. The latest forecast is that it will be completed, with landscaping and all the frills, by the end of October this year at an anticipated total cost of \$1.8 million. The work includes removal of the asbestos cement roof and replacement with steel, removal of the deteriorated concrete balustrade panels and replacement with powder-coated aluminium, extensive repairs to spalled concrete, total replacement of the common area lighting system, external repainting, and rectification work to the tiled walkways.

If that were not enough, when the worst of the work had been done the Leader of the Opposition paid an unexpected visit and wanted to politicise the issue. I shall tell honourable members how good he was at politicising. Of a total of 141 tenants who lived in the complex the Leader of the Opposition managed to get 20 to attend his big rally. A lot of the people in the court were Labor Party supporters' but they were absolutely horrified at his attempts to politicise this matter. I wrote to all of those residents, with the Minister's concurrence, and told them that if they wanted to relocate because they could not stand the work that was going on, they could be relocated. Of the 141 people only four sought relocation. They did so not because they could not stand the work that was being carried out; one of them wanted to move for medical reasons and to be near her sister who lived in another suburb. The politicisation was a dead issue and has done the Labor Party more damage than good among the people from Blandville Court.

Mr Armstrong: The tenants rejected the Labor Party?

Mr PETCH: They rejected the Leader of the Opposition with his floppy ears. The capital works that have been carried out and are continuing in Gladesville are considerable. In Pittwater Road 39 units of pensioner housing have been completed at a cost of \$2.87 million. In Falconer Street, West Ryde, 18 pensioner housing units are being built at an estimated cost of \$1.7 million. I have already spoken about Blandville Court, which has been considerably upgraded. Some of the largest amounts of funding

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for education, especially in technical and further education, have been allocated to the Gladesville electorate. Stage six of the Meadowbank TAFE College has been let out for tender. Tenders have closed and it is expected that construction will commence in early May. The estimated total cost of the project is \$12.5 million. The college has 525 student places and the facility will offer courses in computing and business studies. It will include also a small business access centre and a major computing laboratory for courses at the associate diploma level. Included in the accommodation will be a new

library, college canteen, college shop and student counselling unit. A new children's services unit is under construction at the college and is due for completion in April. That unit will provide 40 places for children up to two years of age and 25 places for children aged between three years and five years. The cost of the child care centre will be \$403,000.

Work is under way on upgrading the electrical engineering facility at the college at a cost of \$150,000, of which \$50,000 will be spent in the 1991-92 financial year and \$100,000 in the 1992-93 financial year. Those funds are provided by the State. It is expected that the tender will be let for the project in the very near future. Stage four of the Ryde College of TAFE was handed over to the commission in July 1991. It includes facilities for food and hospitality, motel conferences, student counselling, canteen and a library. The total cost of the project was \$15.2 million. The commission has subsequently arranged for air-conditioning of the new library and a number of other areas of the building. The cost of the air-conditioning is \$480,000. We are establishing a retail garden centre within the college, at an estimated cost of \$350,000. The project is expected to commence in May this year. A cut flower igloo is to be constructed at the Ryde college at a cost of \$25,000. Unquestionably this Government and the Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Further Education, Training and Employment are addressing the much-needed requirements of technical and further education. I am proud that the Gladesville electorate is the forum for this upgrading. The Gladesville Hospital and Macquarie Hospital were due to be closed down and demolished by the former Labor Government. Gladesville Hospital has now been upgraded by this Government and a capital works program worth \$2.99 million is in progress. That includes major refurbishment of wards 22 and 29. Ward 29, which I attended recently with the Minister for Health Services Management, accommodates forensic patients and those with behavioural problems. Ward 22 is for elderly patients.

It has included the fire hydrant system, the ring main, PABX telephone system, external painting and roadworks, and renovations to the administration block and pharmacy. It has also included an energy upgrade in the boiler plant to a discrete gas fire plant. At Macquarie hospital a capital works program worth \$5.074 million has just been completed. It includes the construction of a 20-bed hostel for medium-term rehabilitation patients, the upgrade of the former 20-bed acute admission ward to a new 30-bed unit with the addition of a bed secure section within that unit, an upgrade of the cottages on hospital campus to provide for slow stream rehabilitation, as well as a fire hydrant system and a fire detection system. The Roads and Traffic Authority has carried out extensive works in the Gladesville electorate. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

Those works include the reconstruction of Pittwater Road to four lanes from Kittys Creek to Buffalo Creek, at a total cost of \$1.8 million; intersection improvements at Epping Road and Herring Road at Marsfield, with the capacity of right turn movement from Epping Road, westbound, into Herring Road, northbound, completed at a total cost of \$90,000; the reconstruction of the shoulder of Pittwater Road, Hunters Hill, between Aston Street and Everard Street has been completed at a cost of \$229,000; landscaping on the western side of the Gladesville bridge at a total cost of \$29,000; the installation

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of traffic control signals at the intersection of Morrison Road and Charles Street, Putney; the installation of traffic control signals at Huntleys Point Road and Victoria Road at Gladesville; and the installation of a pedestrian refuge on Pittwater Road, Boronia Park, adjacent to Buffalo Creek reserve. The refuge island was necessary because schoolteachers were having difficulty getting schoolchildren across the road on the arc of that bend. The Roads and Traffic Authority, through the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Roads and Mr Allen Kennedy, the engineer and manager

of the northern region, suggested the ideal solution, which was a pedestrian refuge; the construction of a roundabout at the intersection of Wattle Street and Anzac Parade at West Ryde; the construction of a roundabout at Pittwater Road, Boronia Park, at Rene Street; and the construction of a roundabout at the intersection of Buffalo Road and Cressy Road, Ryde, as well as a newly-installed roundabout at the intersection of Morrison and Tennyson roads, Gladesville.

The Roads and Traffic Authority has more than carried its weight. I thank the Deputy Premier for his continuing interest and support in the Gladesville electorate. I thank the Minister for Agriculture, who is at the table, for the warm welcome and friendship that he extended to me when I recently visited his electorate. The Ryde Education Resource Centre has been completed, and I was honoured to hand over the cheque for the establishment fund of \$45,000. It will be used for printing, binding and laminating equipment, audio-visual equipment, Macintosh LC and printer, conference room facilities, display facilities, curriculum materials and publication of support documents. The Ryde Education Resource Centre, which I officially opened in November 1991, is available to all schools within the Gladesville electorate, and is giving school principals access to additional resources. Gladesville school has benefited by its before and after-school care centre, at an establishment cost of \$100,000.

Kent Road Primary School has recently taken possession of its assembly hall, which was funded from the sale of the Marsfield Primary School, at a cost of \$630,000. At that time Kent Road was the only school in the Gladesville electorate without a school meeting hall. Today they have one of the most practical halls of any school. Putney school is currently receiving its cyclic maintenance and the OASIS library package is being introduced. The placement of the human resource development fund has been welcomed and as a result the popular Putney school - which is my old primary school - has one extra class this year to cater for new enrolments. Peter Board High School has implemented the OASIS library package program and I was pleased to escort some of the students from that school through this building today with their leading teacher, Mr John Malicki. The cyclic maintenance has been completed at Peter Board High School at a cost of \$70,000. Ryde Primary School has received funding for cyclic maintenance as well as funds from the Department of Sport and Recreation of \$3,800 towards the resurfacing of the school's tennis courts. The North Ryde Primary School was visited last year by the Minister for School Education, who agreed to support that school's endeavours to create an historic school museum in one of its old buildings. The refurbishment of the historic buildings has been completed and it is ready to operate as a living museum. Ryde East Primary School, through the previous grant from the Department of Sport, Recreation and Racing of \$30,000, a grant of \$15,000 from the Department of School Education and a contribution of \$17,000 from the parents and citizens in the Ryde East community, has completed two tennis-netball courts.

Schools in the Gladesville electorate have been fortunate, as have many local youth groups. The 1st East Ryde Scouts this year received \$5,000 towards the cost of replacing the scout-hall roof, and the Gladesville RSL Youth Club will receive a cheque for \$40,000 towards the construction of a community hall in Western Crescent,

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Gladesville. It is a great tribute to all those members of the Gladesville RSL Youth Club - Ron Thurston and his offsidars - for the wonderful job they do encouraging the youth of the Gladesville community to enjoy such an active and healthy lifestyle. The North Ryde Soccer Club has benefited with a grant of \$4,000 towards the floodlighting of North Ryde Park. Through the Minister for Sport, Recreation and Racing the Gladesville area has received its fair share of support. Its schools, sporting organisations and scouting organisations have all been beneficiaries of his generosity.

The Water Board has been active in the electorate. One problem has been constant flooding of some of the waterways during the wet season and the associated problems of illegal stormwater connections into the sewerage system. As a result the sewerage system can take no more and the surplus is released through the system's escape valves. The Water Board addressed this problem quickly and firmly. It has undertaken smoke testing of Water Board mains in houses in the northern region of Sydney, which includes the Gladesville electorate. About 30,000 properties have been inspected in that region and a large number of properties in the Gladesville electorate have been smoke tested. It is hoped that the smoke testing will detect illegal connections and obviate the necessity for millions of dollars to be used to upgrade mains to take the effluent away from the area. The special environment levy was a major initiative of the Water Board and was introduced in response to community demands.

In 1989 funds generated by the special environment levy were made available to develop a long-term total catchment management strategy for the Lane Cove River valley. As part of that program a water quality study was funded. A community-based catchment management committee was established and a five-year bushland rehabilitation program commenced in early March 1990. As the Lane Cove River forms the eastern boundary of the Gladesville electorate, the benefits from those works will accrue to those who live in the electorate. The capital works program for the Water Board has been directed to water pumping stations. This year it amounts to \$2 million. It is directed also to water system quality monitoring, reservoir chlorination facilities, sewer pumping station renewals and sewer renewals.

People living in Ryde and Gladesville have been the beneficiaries of caring Ministers and of a caring government. Very soon the most important aspect for the electorate of Gladesville, that is, transport, will be addressed. Already work is under way on the \$700,000 Gladesville-Huntleys Point bus and ferry interchange, which is due to be completed on 10th May. On completion regular services will commence with the two new RiverCats, which are presently on trial on the river. They are expected to come into service in April. In May the bus and ferry interchange will be operating. Ryde and Gladesville residents will be offered comfortable travel to the city. I understand that travelling time on a ferry travelling directly to the city will be 12½ minutes and I believe that with the combined bus and ferry ticket many people will opt to use this mode of transport rather than catch the bus to the city. This new service is the Government's contribution towards getting more vehicles off the road. Together with the parking levy that was announced this week by the Premier, I am sure this move will enhance the attraction of the ferry service to the local people. For four years I have been pleased to serve the people of my electorate and I am delighted to present this contribution to the Address-in-Reply debate.

Mr SHEDDEN (Bankstown) [4.33]: I am pleased to contribute to the Address-in-Reply debate to Her Majesty's Speech of 20th February on the occasion of the opening of the Fiftieth Parliament. No doubt Her Majesty's visit created considerable debate about the future of the Australian political system. The debate about Australia's future

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as a republic is healthy and should continue. In my view the contributions made by the honourable member for Monaro and the honourable member for Coffs Harbour were over the top. Our ties with the old country become less every day as Britain moves closer to Europe in a commercial sense. In the very near future Britain will become part of Europe when it adopts the same currency as the rest of Europe. That will leave fewer ties between Britain and Australia.

On 12th January a new CityRail timetable was introduced. It has caused chaos to rail commuters on the Bankstown line and the Chester Hill line. Fewer trains have resulted in chaos for bus connections and work start times, as well as causing severe overcrowding and an additional travelling time of about 15 minutes to the central business district. These are just some of the setbacks confronting local commuters. Though commuters are disadvantaged, it is clear that the Government is giving no consideration to their plight and is treating them with contempt. I challenge the Minister for Transport and the management of CityRail to use the Bankstown and Chester Hill lines so that they can learn of the frustrations experienced by commuters inconvenienced by the sudden move to alter timetables and, therefore, to alter people's lifestyles. Recent expensive CityRail commercials describe the daily journey to work by train as hassle free, but that does not apply on the Bankstown and Chester Hill lines.

I have bundles of complaints on my desk and it might be worth while commenting on the complaints I have received from constituents. For example, after the 5.37 p.m. service from Yagoona to Bankstown via Sydenham, the next available service is at 6.18 p.m. - a wait of almost an hour. Chester Hill to city trains now stop at all stations and the number of services has been reduced. On the Bankstown-Lidcombe-Parramatta service there is a wait of 30 minutes between trains. The number of those services between 3.30 p.m. and 6 p.m. has been cut from 20 to 13. Between Bankstown and Lidcombe no trains operate between 5.30 p.m. and 6.15 p.m. Express services no longer operate; there is serious overcrowding; red rattlers are in constant use; and the number of school trains has been cut from three to one. Train timetables do not connect with bus timetables or with services on connecting train lines. Some people have said they no longer catch a train to work but now drive their cars. Work rosters have been changed for some people who live at Gosford so as to enable them to catch certain trains. In many instances people have to leave home earlier than usual to get to work on time. Train travellers are upset because no survey was undertaken before the service was introduced. I should like to comment on an article that appeared in the 13th February edition of the *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader*. The article referred to the local member, the Minister for Justice, the Hon. Terry Griffiths, and read:

Terry Griffiths, the Minister for Justice and MP for Georges River, has demanded regional manager, Richard Middleton, find solutions to problems at Penshurst and Oatley stations by tomorrow.

Mr Griffiths said yesterday that proposed minor changes to the timetable in May were not good enough.

"Extra carriages won't solve the problems in my electorate - I want additional trains," he said.

"When you are talking about thousands of my constituents having a problem, then you have a major problem."

Mr Griffiths said he had a petition from 750 people, as well as many letters, which spelt out clearly the problems caused by the timetable.

been received about the new timetables. I believe it is clear that the timetables have had an adverse effect on Sydney commuters, and I have already referred to the petition from 750 people received by the Minister for Justice on the first day of operation of the new timetables. The article went on to say:

Mr Griffiths said Mr Middleton had offered to meet him on Tuesday night to discuss the problems.

I told him I wanted to talk solutions - not problems - and I wanted them by Friday.

You will find he will have new enthusiasm for solving the problems.

I arranged for him to meet with the principal of Penshurst Girls High School, Robyn McGinnis.

There are several hundred girls from that school waiting on Penshurst station for 30 minutes each afternoon.

That's just not on!

You can't leave young ladies waiting around rail stations like that, even if they are in large numbers.

I have a similar situation with students in my electorate who attend the Hurlstone Agricultural High School at Glenfield, where the actual commencement and finishing times of that school have had to be changed so that children were not waiting round the station for non-existent trains. A Georges Hall woman who travels from Chester Hill to the City stated that before the alteration of the timetables eight express trains travelled between 7 a.m. and 9 a.m. and the trip took 35 minutes. Now there are four trains which make numerous stops, thus causing longer travelling times - up to 45 minutes. It is common knowledge in my electorate of Bankstown that it is now faster to travel at weekends than to travel to work during the normal weekly period.

There is considerable concern in my electorate over the future of health care, particularly for the aged. Lidcombe hospital which provides a very high standard of health care, particularly for the aged, will almost certainly be closed when the Concord Repatriation Hospital is transferred from the control of the Federal Government to the New South Wales Department of Health. The only barrier affecting that change is the financial factor, the transfer and the cost associated with treating repatriation patients in the New South Wales system. We have already witnessed some of the effects of the 700 bed Concord hospital coming on line with the closure of St. Joseph's Hospital, Auburn, an acute care hospital, which has now been downgraded to a palliative care facility. We have also witnessed the closure of Parramatta Hospital and Marrickville hospital; and at this stage it is almost certain that we will see the closure of Western Suburbs Hospital at Ashfield. This has become quite clear over the past couple of weeks when we have heard complaints in this Parliament by the honourable member for Ashfield. There is also a distinct possibility that Canterbury Hospital will be closed. That has also been made quite clear by the concerns the honourable member for Canterbury has shown on numerous occasions in this Parliament. One has the concerns of the people, not just in my electorate of Bankstown but in southwestern Sydney and western Sydney as a whole.

Lidcombe Hospital provides a range of medical and rehabilitation services, with a special focus on care for the aged, which are unavailable in other district general hospitals. Lidcombe Hospital is also an independent and teaching hospital for the

University of Sydney. There are 304 acute hospital beds distributed between medical, surgical, psychogeriatric, geriatric and related rehabilitative units. Lidcombe Hospital patients come from the local government areas, principally Bankstown, 35 per cent; Auburn and other Western Sydney Area Health Services local government areas, 22 per cent; Fairfield, 15 per cent, Canterbury, 8 per cent. The population of Bankstown, Auburn, Strathfield and Canterbury is expected to reach 383,000 by the year 2010, an increase of 30,000 from 1986. In the same period the population aged 65 and over in the local government areas may reach 59,000 - an increase of 18,500. By the turn of the century, in those areas I have mentioned, 59,000 people over 65 years of age undoubtedly will be dramatically disadvantaged if Lidcombe Hospital is to close.

It is worth while putting on the record of this Parliament the actual operation of Lidcombe Hospital as it now is. If Lidcombe Hospital were to close quickly, a large number of sick, aged and or debilitated people would be pushed into the existing system. The average number of diagnosed conditions that people on admission to Lidcombe Hospital have is four, many of which restrict normal everyday movement or daily living activity. These people are dependent upon carers, often in their homes or in nursing home environments and are difficult to return to the situation from which they came. This created a problematic discharge process. Lidcombe Hospital is in high demand by old sick people. At this time the medical ward occupancy rate most days is in excess of 95 per cent. When the hospital actively tried to send patients home because of a recent industrial action by hospital workers, the medical ward's inpatients' clinical conditions allowed for only 2 per cent to be discharged or placed on leave. When in need of surgery the aged have increased demands. Lidcombe Hospital offers additional support services to patients with allied health follow-up and preadmission.

The hospital offers specialist services in ophthalmology, vascular and orthopaedics. Patients in need of these services would be placed elsewhere, thereby increasing waiting lists for those requiring urgent admission to an already overcrowded system. A large number of special services are offered to outpatients or day only patients at Lidcombe Hospital. This has the effect of keeping the chronically ill, as long-term debilitated, individuals out of the hospital. Services include the diabetes clinic, which educates, treats and maintains aged diabetic patients living at home who would otherwise require hospitalisation or alternative clinics. The closure of such a service would place great strain on services elsewhere, such as the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Westmead Hospital or Concord Hospital, as there are not equivalent services in the southwestern area of Sydney. The cardiac rehabilitation unit not only offers programs for those who have experienced severe cardiac conditions but also offers preventive programs to assist people to attain healthier or normal lifestyles and prevent the reoccurrence of cardiac conditions. The closure of this unit would impact on the major teaching hospitals severely by increasing demands on them and causing local people to travel considerable distances.

The gastroenterology colonoscopy services offered by the hospital provide diagnostic assessment and treatment of people on a day only basis for ulcers and cancer. Lidcombe Hospital currently has a full five-day per week session to cope with demand, as well as evening and weekend "call in" services. Bankstown Hospital could in no way cope with this increased demand from patients who would have to go on to waiting lists at other teaching hospitals or public clinics. The hospital inpatient rehabilitation units exist for neurological stroke patients and aged or long-term debilitated individuals and amputees. The demand on this service is high and it is difficult to find alternative venues without looking to hospitals as far away as Prince Henry at Little Bay or at Concord's Lady Davidson Unit, which is located on the North Shore.

It has been estimated that the South Western Area Sydney Health Service requires 40 acute assessment special purpose hospital beds for aged, psychiatric and dementia clients. At this time Lidcombe Hospital has the only service in the southwestern area with 20 acute care beds, 20 longer term beds, and an outpatients and community outreach service. If this service were closed there would be bedlam in acute care hospitals and many nursing homes in the area. The Minister for Health Services Management has stated publicly that, following the transfer of 700 beds from Concord Repatriation Hospital into the State hospital system, there had to be a shift in some hospital roles. The Minister indicated also that \$50 million will be allocated to upgrade Bankstown Hospital, but I am sure that will not take place before the turn of the century. That will not commence until at least 1996 - the second stage of the Government's upgrading plan - which will create at least a five-year gap between major decisions on Lidcombe Hospital and a possible commencement on Bankstown Hospital. This will mean not only a loss of hospital care, particularly for the aged, but also the loss of specialist services that go with that care.

Bankstown has an ageing community. I have had a continuous stream of letters and telephone calls from people opposing this Government's decision to restrict free train travel in country areas by pensioners and war widows. The original decision taken by the Minister for Transport two weeks ago banned the 19-day free travel concession during the Christmas and Easter periods. After a strong response by pensioner groups, the Government has backed down and has now restricted travel to 50 per cent of available seats during those periods. This is a heartless decision by a government trying to save a few measly dollars. It is denying pensioners the opportunity to be with their families and friends during Christmas and Easter, yet it splurges at least \$100 million on Eastern Creek and over the past four years it has spent hundreds of millions of dollars on consultants. There is no guarantee that the seats allocated by this Government will be available. We have only to ask anyone in this category how hard it is to book seats on country trains.

On Monday the Premier made a great speech about what are supposed to be the future directions of this Government - a so-called "light on the hill" speech. It is the general feeling of the New South Wales community that the light has dramatically dimmed since the Premier made that speech. The Premier is arrogant. Until such time as he changes he will be viewed in a bad light by the community. It will not be too long before we have an election in New South Wales - or, as has been indicated by some people, a change of baton. When we have a change of government some of the issues that I have outlined will become a reality not only for people in my electorate of Bankstown but also for all people in New South Wales.

Dr MACDONALD (Manly) [4.53]: I want to respond to remarks made earlier by the Premier. I will make fairly wide-ranging rather than specific remarks. A great many speakers used this debate as an opportunity to make a grievance or as a good news debate, and mentioned either the good things or the bad things that had happened in their electorates. I do not intend to do that. However, I acknowledge that it was a great moment when Her Majesty the Queen opened this Parliament. She is currently the Head of State and Queen of Australia. She is a charming and energetic lady. However, she is really the Queen of England and not the Queen of Australia. She does not represent Australia in any role. She rarely visits Australia. What we really need is an active Head of State. Whether we should have a monarchy or a republic is another debate, which I do not intend to enter into at this stage. Countries need active Heads of State. It is

unfortunate that Australia does not have one. That is very remiss. There is no doubt that the issue is still alive and well. Last night at a cricket dinner I discovered that certain

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members of visiting sporting teams still feel strongly about this. There is a lot of passion in this debate. I do not believe it inappropriate for the Prime Minister of this country to have entered the debate. As long as the debate does not degenerate into a personal attack or a slighting of people's characters, I see it as a healthy debate.

Australia will inevitably have to make a choice. It is interesting to note that last week I was called an ethnic member of Parliament. I am not sure what was meant by that, but I believe it was a disparaging remark. Referring to my ethnic origin, I note that Scotland is moving away from its ties with the old country. Perhaps there is a common theme among Scottish people and Australians. I would like to make some general remarks about the speech made by the Premier in the Address-in-Reply debate and in his vision statement. The honourable member for Bankstown called the speech of the Premier the light on the hill. The Premier's speech, which was entitled, "Facing the World", might have been better called "Facing the Music". I found the speech empty. It did not inspire me. Without going into detail, the Premier referred to the invocation of section 101 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. A legislative committee is looking at a local government bill which seeks to increase the autonomy and sovereignty of local government, yet this Government is telling us that it will use section 101 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act as a bludgeon. Those are examples of the discrepancies between rhetoric and reality.

The Premier, in the Address-in-Reply debate, covered a wide range of issues. I would like to respond to some of them. The Premier described this Fiftieth Parliament as a "reformist Parliament". There is no doubt that it will go down in history as a reformist Parliament. In the early stages of negotiations with the Independents, we signalled to the Premier that, one day, he might well look like a statesman as a result of changes that might take place. In many ways that might turn out to be true. In his speech the Premier mentioned a number of changes. We have to ensure that they become entrenched in legislation and become part of the culture of this place. Legislation for a fixed four-year term for this Parliament has already been passed. Freedom of information and whistleblower legislation has also been foreshadowed. There is no doubt that the memorandum of understanding that is in place has created a great deal of stability for this Parliament. It started out shakily but, since the agreement has been signed, there has been a great deal of stability, which has been reflected in Moody's good credit rating for New South Wales.

The Legislative Assembly is dealing progressively with legislation covering many matters. Recently a by-election was held, but there has been no talk of a general election; so by-elections can now occur without any fear of instability. Much reform work will be completed 12 months from October 1991. A matter I wish to refer to is relevant to some of the talk in the media over the past week or 10 days, but I do not intend to fuel any arguments about the destabilisation of this Government. If I happen to have an ideological difference of opinion over issues such as the privatisation of hospitals, I do not believe it is part of the charter of reform or the memorandum of understanding that that should lead to instability. It is important to make that point because I signed that agreement with the Premier on the basis of numbers and not any ideological sympathy. It does not underline any ideological sympathy. Equally, I emphasise that, if I have differences with the Premier and the Government on certain issues, it would be inappropriate to put at risk the memorandum of understanding.

The Premier made remarks also about the economy. He always looks most confident when he is talking about the economy. However, as a non-party politician it always distresses me to hear the degenerative remarks leaders make when they start to blame someone else for their mistakes. That happens often in this place. They say it is a Federal-led, Keating-led, recession we had to have. Unfortunately, that came through
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in a number of the Premier's remarks. I do not think it adds particularly to the debate. Maybe the Premier finds comfort in point-scoring, but we should try to elevate ourselves above that. The general population wants responsible politicians who look for long-term stability. In the Manly electorate I commonly hear that the people would like politicians to try to overcome booms and busts. One of the most painful things about an economy is the booms and busts. I would argue that a responsible Premier would seek to do something for the economy. It needs an even keel.

The Premier gave himself away in his remarks about the public service. He talked of his endorsement of real wealth-generating jobs. He reflected that in some of his comments today in answer to a question from the honourable member for Bligh. He talked also about make-work-pretend jobs. Recently he addressed a meeting I attended not far from here where he said that since 1988 the public service had been reduced by 50,000 "non" jobs. If one works in the public service, one is regarded as a bludger. That is unfortunate. It is not good for morale. It is not true, either. No doubt efficiencies can be made, and I would encourage that. Honourable members have been reminded that revenue is dropping, as it did during the recession. Surely that is not news. The Government must acknowledge that during a recession it has to accommodate a certain amount of debt, which can be balanced in the good times. The Government appears to be saying that we will get out of the recession by making enormous changes such as privatisation. Recessions have occurred before. Because Australia has a boom and bust type of economy, perhaps governments should acknowledge that to climb out of a recession they need to go into debt. This Government's preoccupation with not incurring debt may lead it in the long-term to increased cost. The Premier talked also about difficulties with the narrow taxation base. I argue that it may not be so much a narrow taxation base as the wrong taxation base.

At the meeting I attended recently questions were asked about land tax and payroll tax. They are two good illustrations of wrong taxes. During a recession both land tax and payroll tax are not recession-proof. Also, they have significant social consequences. Land tax is unpopular. It has been described by the Premier as a rotten tax. It has an effect on the rental market, just as payroll tax has social consequences on employment. A Premier with vision might look again at the taxation base. I ask the Premier to consider commenting at some stage on the possibility of bringing in a goods and services tax in this State, or at least starting to debate the issue. What about a State income tax? Perhaps those propositions are outside the range of today's debate, but the narrow taxation base that the Premier talks about may well be the wrong taxation base.

In the past week the issue on the agenda has been privatisation. I do not think privatisation is a dirty word. It represents a sensible alliance between the private and the public sectors, but we have to start from a certain position. We need to define within our own ideology the core functions of government. We all pay taxes to the Federal Government or the State Government. In return, we expect services. We should examine in our own minds what we mean by the core functions of government. I understand them as being health and welfare, education, and transport. When those three areas of government function are threatened by privatisation we must examine them carefully. We are sold on the idea that privatisation and asset sales are a basis for freeing up capital to spend on core services. That is worth remembering, because this

Parliament has resolved to allow a large asset sale to take place in the form of the privatisation of the GIO, yet at the same time it asks us to accept a decrease in the provision of core services by the public sector. I see a certain contradiction there. Privatisation does not necessarily mean efficiency; it relates only to ownership. We should look much more closely at corporatisation. Perhaps that is where the debate becomes confused; we are talking about privatisation, when we should be talking about corporatisation.

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Privatisation may be justified where State ownership is inappropriate, but I would add that it does not necessarily lead to more efficiency or a better service. Publicly owned bodies should aim to be efficient but can be run at a loss. I do not believe that the concept of corporatisation and a service running at a loss are necessarily contradictory. Earlier I said that the debate on privatisation had been based on the hospital issue. Public hospitals should be efficient but it is acceptable that they run at a loss, just as I would argue that the public transport system should run at a loss. The Greiner Government is openly advocating a dry economic model. If it regards the provision of core public functions as either revenue neutral or revenue positive, I believe we have lost our way. We can have corporatisation and we can have losses; they are consistent. I am gravely concerned about the impact of the ultra corporatisation or even privatisation model being applied to public transport in the Manly electorate. It is very dependent on bus transport, having no light rail or heavy rail. It has a traditional and well-loved ferry service, which may run at a loss. If the Greiner model is followed, both of those transport services may become targets for privatisation. I do not claim to have evidence of that, but I have noticed some of the signals. The so-called talk of minimum service levels in public transport, in accordance with some of the consequences of the Passenger Transport Act 1990, indicates that if the State Transit Authority cannot operate revenue-neutrally, various sectors of public transport may be handed over to the private sector. We must remain vigilant that we do not confuse privatisation and corporatisation.

Remarks by the Premier in the Address-in-Reply debate and in his vision, facing the music, speech refer to the question of environmental audit, which was in a sense about resource security legislation. I should like to comment generally on that as I feel strongly about environmental matters. In fact, my maiden speech dealt with environmental issues. I remain committed to the environment and believe it is one of the great challenges of our generation. I should like to reflect on a culture that has developed in Australia during the past few hundred years since the arrival of the white man. This culture has been dominated by one thought, that is, that we have to master nature. That thinking has dictated many of the directions in which this country has moved. It is a tradition that exploitative industries commenced with land clearances and moved on to the sheep industry and ground extractive industries, mining industries and deforestation. Today's problems appear to be related to Australia's great success in earlier years being based on exploitation, and the results are available for all to see. As a result, the Aboriginal population has been effectively wiped out and there has been land degradation, depletion of our resources, and our environment is under threat in all areas. This can be traced back to it being dominated by that exploitative ideology.

We must consider our declining resources and provide resource security legislation. However, this matter must be debated not in the context of making sure that we reserve enough resources for further exploitation but that a true balance be found between what is remaining and what we can afford to release. It must be measured against the need to assess the true value of what we are extracting. On a number of

occasions the forestry industry has dominated debates in this House. Evidence does not necessarily show that further extraction of timber products is in this State's best interests. When one considers State subsidies, royalties, decreasing commodity prices and third world competition, it is arguable that we could move away from the concept of exploitative industry. I should like to refer to a local issue concerning the Minister for State Development and Minister for Tourism. The Premier referred to tourism. My electorate is dominated by the tourism debate and faces enormous problems as an inner city suburb, in effect, with an ageing infrastructure. I ask that the Minister note the effect on a community of progressive tourism in the sense of cost and alienation. [*Time expired.*]

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Mr RUMBLE (Illawarra) [5.13]: I am pleased to participate in this Address-in-Reply debate. I place on record my appreciation of Her Highness the Queen opening the second session of the Fiftieth Parliament of New South Wales. She is a most gracious lady who has carried out her duties during the past 30 years with distinction, notwithstanding personal problems involving members of the royal family. I am sure that the Queen realises that links between Australia and the United Kingdom are not as strong as they were 50 years ago. It was inevitable with the United Kingdom joining the European Economic Community, and the emergence of independent countries in South-east Asia following the Second World War, that links between the United Kingdom and Australia would be loosened. I am sure the Queen realises she is welcome every time she visits Australia. However, she would have been embarrassed had she heard some of the snivelling comments about the monarchy by some honourable members opposite. Likewise, the Queen would have been embarrassed by the disgraceful behaviour of certain Federal politicians in 1975 when an elected government was dismissed. The grab for power by these conservatives certainly embroiled the monarchy.

This Government prides itself on being a great economic manager. Its slogan is, "We govern for all people, putting people first by managing better". That is one reason why it has broken in excess of 200 promises. Certain interest groups are favoured, as detailed in this Parliament previously. These include the wealthy egg producers, certain newspapers, the Eastern Creek Raceway \$100 million debacle and, of course, Government consultants and contractors. Prior to the 1988 election this Government made limitless promises. It was well known that if it were named, the Government would promise it. Prior to the 1991 elections we heard the big lie, which was to do with the balanced budget of this State. We were told that the Government would have a balanced budget that financial year and in the 1991-92 financial year. In the financial year ending 30th June, 1991, the budget deficit was in excess of \$1 billion. The sale of the GIO will probably not be finalised in 1992. The budget deficit, excluding the sale of the GIO, will run at between \$1.4 billion and \$1.5 billion. This deficit will recur over the next few years.

In the Budget Papers the estimated sale price of the GIO is \$1.75 billion. However, information I have received reveals that the actual sale price will be approximately \$1.2 billion, with other income coming from the Federal Government by way of taxation credit. It is little wonder that the Premier and Treasurer did not come clean prior to the May 1991 elections. Also, the ticks and crosses fiasco meant that this Government came limping back into office. Since then Ministers cannot answer correspondence. Matters raised in correspondence remain outstanding for 12 months and honourable members are required to put questions on the notice paper in an endeavour to drag an answer out of a Minister. It should be a requirement that guarantees given by this Government be reported annually. If that had been the case

previously we might not have had the Eastern Creek Raceway debacle. On the question of this Government being a great economic manager, State liability has increased between 1988 and 1991 by \$4.7 billion. The current rhetoric of the Government is jobs, jobs, jobs. It is ironic that it speaks in this fashion when since March 1988 it has been responsible for 50,000 public servants losing their jobs.

Despite Illawarra constituents being given specific written undertakings and promises, the Tallawarra Power Station and the Huntley Colliery were closed and work was abandoned on the Maldon-Dombarton rail link. Despite these written, not verbal, promises hundreds of people lost employment. This Government will not allow investments from people unless they invest \$5,000 into Treasury bonds. That is an effective slugging of investors and pensioners. If more money is sought to be re-

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invested, it must be re-invested in multiples of \$5,000. That should be contrasted with the policies of the Government of Queensland, where the minimum investment is \$500. That is a further example of how the New South Wales Government represents the big end of town.

I shall comment on some of the local issues that affect the Illawarra region. One of the vital interests I have in the district relates to the running of trains. Timetable No. 13 put out on 12th January should be compared with the previous timetable, because under the present timetable trains going to the region will never run late. A further 10 minutes to 15 minutes have been added to the time taken for train journeys. A typical example is that the train that takes commuters to Sydney before 9.0 a.m. used to take one hour and 16 minutes; under the new timetable it will take one hour and 27 minutes. As I said, no trains will run late. Complaints have been made to me about trains being held at Sutherland because they were running early on the journey to Sydney. Trains going to the Illawarra have been held at stations such as Austinmer because they were ahead of the timetable. I call upon the Minister for Transport to redraft the timetable so that it is similar to the one that operated previously. I know that trains coming from the Illawarra must merge with the suburban train system on the Cronulla line. However, I had a personal experience of a train being held up at Sutherland for several minutes and when it arrived at Central it was five minutes ahead of the timetable. Obviously the Minister for Transport will say that trains going to the Illawarra do not run late, but the reason is that between 10 minutes and 15 minutes have been added to train journeys.

I have received continual complaints because the single-deck, non air-conditioned carriages have been slipped on to the Illawarra line. One constituent told me that these carriages were used on another line, but people on that line caused such a stir that the SRA had to redirect them. So they came to the Illawarra. This week in the House the Minister for Transport said that the electrification of the rail link between Coniston and Dapto would proceed. That is welcome news. However, the Minister was patting himself and the Government on the back on the basis that this was his initiative. Until I interjected, he did not come clean and tell the House that the Federal Government had been involved in the funding of the project. The total cost of the electrification is \$10 million. The Minister stated that the State Government was putting in \$7 million and the Federal Government was supposed to be contributing \$7.5 million. Somehow the mathematics do not add up. The Minister challenged Opposition members and said they were not doing their jobs properly because they did not support his application to the Federal Government for funding for the project. The reason Opposition members did not support the Minister was that on 15th December, 1989, he issued a media release in which he stated categorically that the electrification of the rail link as far as Shellharbour would be completed by 1992; there was no equivocation on that. I emphasise that the date was December 1989, not prior to the March 1988 elections when those limitless

promises were made. This promise was made after the March 1988 elections. The Minister said that \$40 million would be spent on electrification of that line for a further 20 kilometres. There was no talk of Federal Government money. The Minister reneged on his undertaking. The electrification is proceeding only because of funding received from the Federal Government for the project.

I call on the State Government again to provide audio-visual equipment at the Wollongong court house so that victims of child sexual assault may give evidence by that means. Having a separate room in court for child victims would be much better than requiring children to enter a court, with all its intimidating features, and face the accused. I have presented petitions to the Parliament containing between 30,000 and 40,000 signatures calling for a tightening of laws related to child sexual assault. I have detailed Page 1934

to the Parliament previously what I and many people from the Illawarra community consider to be the grossly inadequate sentences handed down by the judiciary. One case that comes to mind involved a teacher who was convicted of child sexual assault being discharged under section 556A of the Crimes Act. It would be remiss of me not to congratulate the present Attorney General for the extradition of a particular individual from Queensland who is now facing the court. The Attorney General was more vigorous than was his predecessor in having that person, who had committed crimes in the Kiama area more than 20 years ago, extradited.

Another matter I raise is the construction of a roundabout that was planned for Unanderra at the intersection of Central Road and Nudjia Street. According to last year's Budget Papers, \$60,000 was allocated for the project. I was advised by departmental officers that the money would be spent and that another \$24,000 would be set aside next financial year. In the meantime I was being subjected to this bureaucratic runaround when I asked why the project had not commenced. The amount had been earmarked in the Budget, as notified to me by Treasury. After raising the subject in the local "5.30 Report" I found that the money had been diverted elsewhere, notwithstanding that it had been earmarked in the Budget Papers for a particular project. As the member for the region, I was not consulted. It is an outrage that money can be diverted to another project, regardless of how vital that project might be, without there being any consultation. I pay tribute to the police for their efforts in maintaining law and order. We have in our society middle-class do-gooders who criticise the police at every opportunity. Those middle-class armchair strategists do not have to deal personally with criminals and other anti-social types at all hours of the day and night. I pay particular tribute to Chief Superintendent Pat Cassidy of the Wollongong region, Inspector Bob Burrage of Dapto police station and Inspector Dick Brooks of Warilla police station. I have always had complete co-operation from those police officers when I have had to approach them.

The Illawarra region desperately needs more land service to attract light industry. That has been highlighted by information given to me by the Wollongong City Council. That council advised me that the lands program between 1991 and 1996 suggests that in the short term and possibly in the medium term sufficient land will be available. However, the council maintains that the position in regard to servicing of industrial land at West Dapto is critical to the economic future of the city. The cost of servicing may prove to be prohibitive. The State Government must seriously examine servicing costs. On that subject I draw the attention of the House to the fact that to provide water and sewerage services in the Liverpool council area, Prestons No. 2, costs \$67,200 per hectare; whereas for Wollongong-West Dapto the cost is \$121,100 per hectare. That highlights the big difference in costs. I call upon the Government to examine those figures so that land can be serviced to attract light industries to the

Illawarra. That would reduce the economic and unemployment problems of the Illawarra area.

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Chappell): Order! It being 5.30 p.m., pursuant to sessional orders the debate is interrupted.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ROADS AND TRAFFIC AUTHORITY COURT REPRESENTATION

Mr DOWNY (Sutherland) [5.30]: Last month Mrs Robin Binney of Bonnet Bay came to see me concerning her son Stuart. On Monday afternoon, 25th October, 1991, her son was booked for proceeding through a yellow light at The Kingsway, near Sutherland hospital. She told me that her son paid the fine but, having realised that he

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had lost a point from his driver's licence because he did not have a headlight lit on a motor bike, he decided to have the matter heard in court. The case came before a local magistrate on 17th February this year. Stuart Binney is 17 years old. He took with him to court a friend who had been in the car at the time of the offence. Stuart disputed that he had gone through a yellow light. Unfortunately his friend's evidence was dismissed because he had only been driving for six months. One can be sarcastic about that and say that because he had been driving for only six months he could not tell whether or not there had been a yellow light. What that has to do with the fact that he had only been driving for six months, I am not sure. However, Stuart's friend had signed a statutory declaration stating that he considered it would have been more dangerous to stop at the intersection than continue. Ultimately Stuart Binney lost the case and was required to pay the fine.

Mrs Binney was most concerned, as was I, to discover that although her son defended himself in the court hearing, a solicitor represented the Roads and Traffic Authority. It is incongruous that in a simple case where a 17-year-old or a 25-year-old or a 50-year-old person represents themselves in court, the Roads and Traffic Authority is represented by a solicitor. No one representing themselves would be successful if a solicitor was representing the Roads and Traffic Authority. Solicitors have knowledge of legal matters, but people representing themselves do not have the same knowledge and therefore are at a disadvantage. I was also informed that the policeman involved in Stuart Binney's case had not been requested to attend court. Mrs Binney believed that the two 17-year-olds - her son and his friend - were treated "like idiots". It was a simple traffic offence. She believes that they had a right to speak for themselves, and to put their case, yet both Stuart and his friend were intimidated by the court setting and the appearance of a solicitor for the Roads and Traffic Authority. Mrs Binney also discovered that the solicitor for the Roads and Traffic Authority was appearing in a number of cases that day. That is his job. Stuart Binney would not have been the first victim to appear in court that day and discover a solicitor appearing for the Roads and Traffic Authority. If we are to instil in young people confidence in the legal system, cases such as Stuart Binney's should not occur and a review of how these cases go before the courts should be undertaken. I am aware that the Minister for Justice has expressed his views on simplifying court procedures. I would also suggest that some government departments need to simplify their procedures so that instances such as Stuart Binney's do not happen again.

HOMEFUND LOANS

Mr SCULLY (Smithfield) [5.35]: I wish to raise a matter concerning three of my constituents, Mr and Mrs Dougherty of 117 Brennan Street, Smithfield, and Mrs Sharma of 34 Monaro Street, Greystanes. The matter relates to the rate of interest applied to HomeFund loans. Both sets of constituents are experiencing difficulty in maintaining repayments. Mr and Mrs Dougherty obtained a loan of \$104,500 to purchase a \$110,000 house with a fixed interest rate of 15.25 per cent. They both lost their jobs subsequent to buying the house and were given some mortgage relief, which has been consumed. They may be forced to sell their house at a net loss and still owe money under the HomeFund scheme. Mrs Sharma purchased a property for \$85,000 at a fixed interest rate of 14 per cent. The issue of the interest rate applied to HomeFund loans has been raging for several months. It concerns not only my constituents but me, because of potential indebtedness of New South Wales due to loan defaulters. The concept of the HomeFund loan was that low interest home loans would be given to low income earners to allow them to buy homes, but the scheme is turning into a financial disaster.

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This is a festering sore. I informed the office of the Minister for Housing that I would raise this matter this afternoon and I am disappointed that he is not here. I receive letters from the Minister for Housing saying that things are okay, that borrowers can refinance, but that is not the case. The HomeFund scheme is based on the concept that each year property values will increase by at least 10 per cent, real wages by 6 per cent per year, inflation will be around 9 to 10 per cent and the equity of HomeFund borrowers will continue to increase as property values rise. Mr and Mrs Dougherty borrowed \$104,500, to buy a property that was bought for \$110,000 but is now valued at \$85,000. Market rates have fallen and the low income loans are fixed at the Rock of Gibraltar rates - anywhere between 14 per cent and 15.5 per cent - whereas market rates have fallen to 10 per cent. Inflation rates have fallen substantially, as have property rates, but repayments under the HomeFund scheme increase by 6 per cent per annum.

I have examined some of the repayment schedules of other borrowers; after 10 years of paying off a \$100,000 loan they will owe \$131,000. If the concept behind the scheme fails - property values fall and real wages do not increase at the rate at which they were expected - borrowers will be left, as in the case of Mr and Mrs Dougherty, with an \$85,000 house and a mortgage of \$131,000. Mr and Mrs Dougherty cannot sell the property because they will owe the department thousands of dollars. They cannot possibly go back into the commercial market and will have to join the queue for public housing. Mortgage relief is not good enough. What the borrowers need and what the Opposition wants is interest rate relief. I have a letter from the Minister for Housing to the honourable member for Port Macquarie suggesting that more than \$20 million would be required to subsidise interest relief. I do not know whether that figure is accurate, but I would suggest to the Minister at the table that this festering sore needs to be addressed. I want to know how many people in New South Wales need that sort of interest relief? The whole program needs review.

Will the Minister for Housing review the FANMAC HomeFund scheme? Will that Minister seek ways to provide decent interim mortgage relief in the interim in addition to long-term mortgage relief? Will the Minister advise people of their right to seek a variation of the mortgage under the Credit (Home Finance) Contract Act? Will the Minister continue to fob off questions that are directed to this issue or will he bite the bullet and address the needs of thousands of people? My figures show that 44,600 people have mortgages under the HomeFund loan scheme and of that 44,600 thousands cannot afford their repayments; they are locked into fixed interest mortgages, and cannot

get out of trouble because property values have fallen and real wages have not been maintained. It is not a party political issue; it needs to be addressed. If the Government does not address this issue, the Labor Party will take whatever action is necessary when it is returned to government, by the end of the year.

ENDANGERED FAUNA PROTECTION LEGISLATION

Mr FRASER (Coffs Harbour) [5.40]: I wish to bring to the notice of the House the grave consequences in my electorate that are the result of legislation rushed into this Parliament on the last day of sitting prior to Christmas. The legislation was introduced by the Labor Party in the form of the Endangered Fauna (Interim Protection) Bill. I have been approached by the Rangers and Noxious Animal Inspectors Association in Kempsey which has raised several matters of concern to it about this legislation. One matter raised was set out in a letter of 19th March in which the association stated:

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Plague Locust control where insecticides are used in very large quantities could also be under threat from this Act. There could easily be a situation arise where this activity could be challenged by radical environmentalists who have no regard for the economic losses that would be suffered by individual farmers or the country as a whole in their misguided zeal to ensure that no native animals are endangered.

I have raised this issue in the House on other occasions. By introducing this legislation the Labor Party, via its green arm, Pam Allan, has identified amphibians as a protected species. Of course frogs are amphibians. On the North Coast we have a high rainfall and farming activities that attract a large number of frogs. Banana crops and other fodder crops are habitats for these species. My constituents are concerned that when they are slashing, or baling hay, they may be regarded as working in a habitat for the animals, and may be prevented from carrying out normal farming practices. I have referred on other occasions to noxious weed control. Parramatta grass causes great concern to dairyfarmers and to people engaged in the beef cattle industry. It is a weed that takes over and can ruin crops. Are we to get to the situation where poisoning of the weed might be seen as endangering the habitat of some animals? If so, will farmers have to stop their programs designed to eradicate the weed and undertake a fauna impact statement at a cost of \$200, plus unidentified oncosts? The Labor Party has launched a green argument to take to the rural communities, without understanding the problems of rural communities. The Opposition does not understand that farmers on the North Coast have been farming there for more than 100 years and they know how to protect the local environment.

The Labor Party believes the legislation will win Labor some support from the radical greens, which it already has, and will give Labor some credibility. However, the Opposition has flown in the face of primary industries worth \$6 billion to New South Wales. Are practices such as back-burning in preparation for bushfires, the application of chemical fire retardants such as Phoscheck, small-scale clearing, the preparation of previously unploughed fields for planting, the building of new farm roads and fences, drought-proofing a property by putting in new dams, spraying and removal of noxious weeds, soil conservation techniques, control of eucalyptus regrowth, and ploughing a trough to plant a windbreak to be regarded as dangerous to the habitat of a protected species? A farmer could be put to the expense of undertaking a fauna impact statement, the result of which might be that farm work would be stopped at a time when it must be done. In its letter to me the Rangers and Noxious Animal Inspectors Association stated:

It is imperative that politicians realise the cost and inconvenience they could be putting rural people to if the new Fauna Protection Act is put in place purely to win city votes and not as a workable piece of legislation that is to the benefit of the community.

I put it to the House that the legislation is unworkable for the rural community, and especially the farmers in my electorate. It is high time this House took note and did something about this matter.

AUBURN DISTRICT HOSPITAL

Mr NAGLE (Auburn) [5.44]: I wish to read to the House an extract from a letter I received from Mr N. Barkley dated 29th January, 1991, in which he said:

I wish to express my dissatisfaction with the treatment given by the staff to my late mother.

He was referring to Auburn District Hospital. He went on to say:

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My mother was admitted on 11.1.91. When I arrived at Casualty, I gave what information I could to the attending doctor and suggested strongly that he contact Lidcombe Hospital to obtain further information as Mum had been treated there successfully for the same condition a number of times.

He went on to explain what happened when she was taken to the third floor of the hospital. He said she took a bad turn and then he stated:

Five minutes later a doctor arrived, 15 minutes later she was taken to Intensive Care. I stayed overnight till 11 a.m. when her condition seemed stable. I had suggested again that information be obtained from Lidcombe Hospital on what drugs had been used or treatment given.

I came back at 4.00 p.m. Saturday and stayed till 9.00 p.m. Staff advised me to go home and that they would ring me if her condition worsened.

Mr Barkley said that he returned to the hospital at 4 p.m. on the Sunday and found his mother unconscious, sweating profusely and with her oxygen mask on her chest. He said he replaced the oxygen mask and informed the staff of her condition. Some time later she was attended to. He went on to explain a number of other matters that occurred and then said:

One hour later my sister arrived and saw that the bed was wet because the drip was not correctly secured into Mum's arm. Another drip was inserted into her left arm and I was told nothing further could be done and that we should prepare for the worst. She passed away within the hour.

Following that letter, on 6th February, 1991, I wrote to the then Minister for Health, who is now the Attorney General, and received no reply except an acknowledgment that the correspondence had been received and the acknowledgment was dated 19th February, 1991. After waiting some length of time I contacted the Hon. J. P. Hannaford on 2nd September, 1991 and was advised that the matter would be investigated. On 20th November, 1991, after a number of telephone calls, my electorate assistant was advised that reports and records from the hospital had been received. After that, nothing further was heard. Following numerous calls to Mr Hannaford's office I was advised, and so

were my staff, that the matter was really in the hands of the Minister for Health Services Management. Last night in this Chamber I advised the Minister and his staff that I would be raising this issue. I had hoped that he would be in the Chamber to hear me speak about this matter but perhaps he is busy and my comments can be referred to him.

On 28th January this year my electorate secretary spoke to a member of the Minister's staff, Ross Thornton, who advised he would get back to my office about the report. On 29th January Mr Thornton advised my electorate secretary that the report on the matter should be ready within the week. On 19th February my assistant electorate secretary telephoned Ross Thornton again who advised that he would chase up the matter. Again, on 13th March, my assistant electorate secretary telephoned Mr Thornton and was told by a member of staff that he was attending a meeting and would return the telephone call. To this date he has not returned that telephone call. This history can only be described as a disgusting state of affairs as Mr Barkley believes that he lost his mother under tragic circumstances. For the past 14 months he and my electorate staff have been trying to find out what happened. The poor man has grieved heavily over the loss of his mother and has sought help, but that help is not forthcoming. I raise the matter in the House so that someone will do something to assist him to come to terms with his grief by at least investigating his claims so that he will know what the circumstances were surrounding his mother's death. I ask that the matter be referred as quickly as possible to the Minister for Health Services Management so that a response can be given to Mr Barkley in order for him to work through the last of his grief so that this tragic
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episode in his life following the death of his mother can be brought to an end. I hope the matter will be given urgent attention.

Mr YABSLEY (Vaucluse - Minister for State Development and Minister for Tourism) [5.49]: The Minister for Health Services Management has apprised me of the concerns raised by the honourable member for Auburn. In the first place I put on record my deep sympathy to Mr Barkley on the death of his mother. I understand it would have been a difficult time for him and, naturally, he has a desire to explore the precise circumstances of his mother's death. The concerns raised by Mrs Barkley's son have been investigated by the complaints unit of the Department of Health. Mr Barkley attended the complaints unit and had the opportunity of discussing his concerns with the investigation officer and a medical consultant attached to the unit, as well as consulting the relevant hospital reports and medical records.

I am advised that Mr Barkley's concerns were investigated in full and that Mrs Barkley received appropriate and adequate care from the staff of Auburn District Hospital. We do not wish to treat in any sort of superficial way the concerns raised by Mr Barkley through the honourable member for Auburn. I am in a position to advise that the complaints unit has in fact completed its investigation, some of the details of which I have been given by the Minister for Health Services Management. There are some delicate personal and confidential matters that I am sure Mr Barkley would prefer not to have aired in this Chamber. I think it is probably more appropriate that those details, prepared by the complaints unit of the Department of Health, be given to the honourable member for Auburn. I understand from the Minister for Health Services Management that that will happen without delay.

WENTWORTH AMBULANCE STATION

Mr SMALL (Murray) [5.52]: I am anxious to secure an ambulance and ambulance station for the town of Wentworth in the Wentworth shire in the southwestern region of the Murray electorate. Beyond Balranald there is no ambulance service to

cover the far western section of New South Wales. Wentworth shire is the second largest shire in New South Wales, with Balranald being the third largest and central Darling the largest. Despite its size, Wentworth shire is reliant on Victorian authorities to provide ambulance services. I have spoken about this matter on many occasions and written numerous letters to Ministers, expressing my anxiety that the New South Wales Government should do the right thing and provide an ambulance service in the Wentworth shire to service the towns of Buronga, Dareton, Gol Gol, Pooncarie and Wentworth.

The town of Wentworth has a hospital and aged care services. The ambulance stationed at the Wentworth hospital is provided by the Mildura hospital. In normal working hours the Mildura hospital supplies an ambulance driver and an ambulance officer. Outside those hours the Wentworth hospital relies on volunteers to drive the ambulance and provide the necessary services. Therefore, at night time and on weekends and holidays the hospital provides something of an on-call ambulance service. We are fortunate that these volunteers from the Wentworth shire undertake these duties. An insurance scheme provides funds to pay the Victorian authority for the provision of an ambulance service in New South Wales. Kevin Carey, the regional ambulance director at Albury, would like an ambulance station and ambulance officer's house built at Wentworth. Brian Tutt, the regional health director at Albury, is also anxious that this should occur. They agree with me that this is an essential service. Wentworth shire officers and residents have for many years called for the provision of an ambulance. I have made a promise and commitment to secure that service. The New South Wales
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Government has a responsibility to provide that service for the people of Wentworth, although we are fortunate that Victorian authorities have been assisting in that respect. I had hoped that the Minister for Health Services Management would be present in the Chamber to respond to my request.

Another matter of concern is redevelopment of health services in the town of Wentworth. If that were to occur, the provision of an ambulance service could be included in a future building project. Last year a serious accident occurred on a Saturday afternoon involving a football player, but it took 30 minutes for an ambulance to attend to what was a serious case. Officers expressed concern about a possible loss of life. It was unfortunate that the accident occurred on a weekend, when the permanent ambulance officer was not available to provide the service; volunteers therefore are called on to perform those duties. Wentworth shire, with a population of 10,000, deserves no less than a good ambulance service. I ask the Minister and the Government to provide this essential service.

Private members' statements noted.

[Mr Acting-Speaker (Mr Chappell) left the chair at 5.57 p.m. The House resumed at 7.30 p.m.]

HER MAJESTY'S SPEECH: ADDRESS IN REPLY

Sixth Day's Debate

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr SCHULTZ (Burrinjuck) [7.30]: It gives me a great deal of pleasure in this Address-in-Reply debate to make some comments about the opening of the second session of the Fiftieth Parliament by Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth. I, like many

members in this House, was fortunate enough to be present with a number of members of my family at the opening of Parliament. I took a great deal of pride in meeting with the Queen and shaking her hand. As a young boy I always wanted to be close to the Queen of England. The fact that she shook my hand and talked with me was the highlight of my life. I commend her for the dignified way she conducted herself during her visit to New South Wales and, in particular, to the New South Wales Parliament. During the time of the Queen's visit, and after she had departed, certain comments were made by the Prime Minister of this country, Mr Keating, about the flag and Australia becoming a republic. I wish to make a few comments about the flag and about the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister's latest attack on the flag shows that he most certainly is not fit to be our Prime Minister. His hate list now includes the flag, the monarch, the British, the Yanks, the Japs, the Kiwis and the 51 members of his party who did not vote for him. Keating knows what he is against but he does not know what he is for. He could not say what flag he wants or how he proposes to get it. All he can do now is play a wrecking role. He is out to wreck our institutions, our culture and our symbols in the same way that he wrecked the economy of this country.

I view the Prime Minister's outburst - he views himself as a president or a dictator; probably more as a dictator than a president - as a slur on the intelligence of the people of this country. Comrade Keating, whom I view as the Saddam Hussein of the Australian Labor Party - the dictator elect of the banana republic - has to get his act together if he wants to convince the majority of sensible thinking people in this country of his proposals. He is conveniently forgetting that people in this country - young and

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old - will remember that he played a leading role in destroying the economy of this country. The unemployed in this country are Labor's dead fish washed ashore by Paul Keating's recession. Let us look at Mr Keating's record and at the recession he caused. In 260,000 families the chief breadwinner is unemployed - a figure that has risen 40 per cent in one year. In 236,000 Australian families no one has a job - again a figure that has risen 40 per cent in one year. There are 218,000 Australian children living in families where no one has a job - a figure that has also risen 40 per cent in one year. In addition, 248,000 Australians have been unemployed for more than one year - an 88 per cent increase in just 12 months. Mr Recession should spend less time listening to Max Gillies' speechwriter and spend more time talking to ordinary Australians. He ought to spend more time with his mouth closed and his ears open.

Unemployment is one subject Labor does not want to discuss. Everything members of the Labor Party do or say is designed to distract people's attention from the one thing that really matters - the job crisis. In 1983, when the Federal Australian Labor Party was elected to office, this country had an overseas debt of \$23 billion. In 1992 the figure is \$144.8 billion. It is projected that, by 1997, that debt will increase to \$217 billion, which means that every man, woman and child in this country can look forward to owing \$7,000. I remind members opposite who are espousing a republic that, while the Queen was in Australia, they were present at functions attended by her. A few well-known Australian Labor Party identities were also present at these functions. It is convenient for them to say in the public arena, "It is about time we gave away the monarchy", but they took advantage of the Queen's visit to gain some cheap publicity. In my view, that is despicable. Members of the Labor Party have spoken of Australia's independence and of moving away from the ties we have had with the United Kingdom for many years - ties which today are in name only because constitutionally we broke our ties with the United Kingdom in the 1970s. Most people are aware that there is a real national agenda and a phoney national agenda. The real national agenda is about making Australia strong and the phoney one is about attacking our past and denigrating our symbols.

Paul Keating's real contribution to Australia's independence has been to sell us out to foreigners. For nine years the Federal Labor Government has presided over an orgy of spending on bankcard, running up a bill that will have to be paid by generations yet unborn. Now Keating wants to finance his re-election bid by putting our children and grandchildren deeper into debt. The Prime Minister thinks he is too good to curtsy to the Queen but he is not good enough to prevent us from kowtowing to Japanese bankers. Underneath the adolescent posturing of Keating's nationalism lies the stark reality that we owe \$145 billion to the rest of the world, which on any measure is the world's highest foreign debt. It amounts to more than \$7,000 for every man, woman and child in Australia. This Government is relieved that, thanks to the recession, our current account deficit is only \$1 billion a month. This means that each year we are another \$12 billion in debt. The only bold thing about Keating's phoney nationalism is that he thinks he can get away with it. But, as I have said in the past, that is only a smokescreen, not a solution to the recession. He would do well to heed the words of Thomas Jefferson, who once said, "I know of no safe depository of the ultimate power of the society, but the people themselves". While Mr Keating may be espousing republicanism and the removal of the flag he will find that the only way he will be able to do that is by having a referendum. We all know what will happen if he has a referendum. So far as he is concerned, his hopes of a republic will be only a dream. The recession has had an impact throughout Australia. New South Wales has been affected by the recession, but the Government, in its wisdom, is leading the way and giving the people hope. The Premier, in a letter to members dated 23rd March, summed up the coalition's focus as:

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To work with the people of New South Wales in securing for us and our children a quality of life that is among the best in the world.

The Premier is well on the way to doing that. In the four years the coalition Government has led New South Wales its achievements have been significant. I am quite proud of the things the Government has done in the Burrinjuck electorate, which I represent. I am particularly proud of the way in which it has looked after education facilities. At the considerable cost of about \$10 million the Government built the first rural technology high school in Australia in the electorate. Recently I had the opportunity to inspect that school. I am amazed at the educational advantages the facility will give our children now and in the future. In another week's time the Minister for Transport will visit Cootamundra to open the brand new rail-coach interchange. Roads radiate from that town to many country areas that have never had a transport service. It is a significant contribution to the Burrinjuck electorate.

The Minister for Health and Community Services has played an important role in creating good services for the developmentally disabled. Last night I took a couple of developmentally disabled people to dinner in the Parliamentary dining-room. It was the highlight of their lives. That shows the care and concern that this Government has for those in the community less advantaged than others who take their lifestyles for granted. I compliment the Minister and the Government on the types of facilities they are supplying to those people to make their lives a little easier. In addition to the difficulties the recession has created for the government to raise revenue, it has created an enormous problem in rural New South Wales. Also the recession has had an impact on the Government's plans to provide road funding for the badly neglected road infrastructure it inherited in 1988. I am most concerned about that. In real terms the Federal Government has reduced by about \$290 million a year the amount of money it used to give New South Wales for roads. That has had an enormous impact on the

Government's ability to upgrade roads built 15 or 16 years ago. Those roads, which were not designed to take the volumes of traffic they are taking today, are in a terrible state and are at the end of their life span.

Many roads in the Burrinjuck electorate are not sealed. An enormous amount of money must be spent on them so that agricultural and horticultural products can be readily sent from the rural areas in which they are grown, often under extremely difficult conditions, to the major capital cities, such as Sydney. Money must be spent on Trunk Road 84, which runs from Yass to Temora. Main Road 56, which runs from Boorowa to Crookwell, is a gravel road over which I travel once or sometimes twice a month. The road needs grading and sealing and the removal of a number of bends because it is a short link road between the Riverina and Goulburn and Sydney. The local community is deeply concerned about that road. Many other roads are of concern also. There never will be enough money for roads in country New South Wales. They have been neglected for so long that massive amounts of funds will be needed to bring them up to the standard that people in the metropolitan area take for granted. One wonders why over the years governments have neglected to apportion money to rural roads so that people may travel them in safety.

The recession has made borrowing difficult because of high interest rates that have had an impact on private institutions to the point where some businesses have got into financial difficulties. In some instances this was because of bad management. In the Burrinjuck electorate 75 people were put out of work by the closure of an abattoir. That will have an enormous impact on the township of Cootamundra. I have been trying to tell the Government for a number of months that it should reconsider its decentralisation

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programs. Though I have talked about the good things, I must be honest with myself and say that bureaucrats and managers in government departments who want to live in large rural towns should not pluck out four or five individuals from a small rural town and transfer them to a major regional centre in order to build an empire round themselves. That has a devastating effect on a town of 5,000 people. In Yass the Elcom workers realise that under this Government, or under any future government - even an Australian Labor Party government - they could be made redundant. They accept that must occur with the transfer of the 132kV lines, but they want a fair deal.

We, as politicians, have to listen to ensure that we give everyone in the State a fair deal. It would be catastrophic to move people from a town of 5,000 people to a major regional centre which because of its population base of 50,000 or 60,000 has the ability to generate jobs more readily. Redundancies do not have such an impact on larger centres as they do on small rural towns. Though I am most grateful for the positive things this Government has done over the four years it has been in office, it must think of the impact decisions to transfer people from department to department have on the decentralising exercise, which is in reality a centralising exercise. Though people may choose to live in small communities for the better quality of life they offer, they should be encouraged to stay there; because if this country is to get out of the hole it is in at present there must be a population of young and middle-aged people upon whom to call to produce the agricultural and horticultural products that will drag this country out of the recession. In the past, time and again we have talked about Australia riding on the sheep's back. The reality is that Australia rides on the back of agriculture and horticulture, whether we like it or not.

The cities of this nation rely on products that are grown in rural areas, in many instances under trying circumstances through droughts, floods and other problems of

nature. These country people are trying to eke out a reasonable level of sustenance from a property that, in real terms, is not worth a great deal of money and which does not enable them to live as comfortably as those on wages - in particular, members of this House. This government believes there is a real problem. From my discussions with Ministers and the Premier in the past month I have no doubt that they will be addressing those concerns. They will do what is required of them, that is, to look after people living in rural New South Wales. I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to this debate.

Mr GAUDRY (Newcastle) [7.50]: It is a pleasure to speak in the Address-in-Reply debate to Her Majesty's opening of the second session of the Fiftieth Parliament, particularly as a representative of the people of Newcastle and the Hunter region. Recently nationwide attention has been given to the city of Newcastle, particularly when the *Australian Business Monthly* in November last year judged Newcastle to be the best Australian city out of 25 major cities for lifestyle and living. In March this year the National Engineering Conference will be held in Newcastle. An article in *Engineering Australia* points to the tremendous sense of optimism and spirit of renewal in the Hunter region, and in particular Newcastle. In 1989 Newcastle suffered a devastating earthquake, yet, despite that difficulty, the problems of renewal and being in the grip of a recession, the people of Newcastle have maintained a strong determination to fight through and develop Newcastle as a number one focus in New South Wales. Apart from the far North Coast, the Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and the Port Stephens area is second in New South Wales in regard to in-migration. This shows the positive approach being taken by local government, State members and Federal members of that area towards development of Newcastle and its infrastructure. That has been countered by the very repressive policies of the New South Wales Government on health, public transport and employment in the public sector generally.

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Newcastle needs the three arms of government to come together in an endeavour to maximise the human and physical resources of Newcastle and the Hunter region. We need to get beyond politics and work together. To date I am disappointed with the approach taken by the State Government. Newcastle and the Hunter region is a major coal producer and exporter. It is the principal port in New South Wales for the export of products from this State and its industries provide 8 per cent of the growth in New South Wales. It produces more than 80 per cent of our electricity and is the sole producer of aluminium. At the moment Tomago Aluminium Company Pty Limited is undergoing a \$600 million expansion. That company has been prepared to put its faith in the aluminium industry even though a tremendous downturn has been experienced in the off-shore sale price of aluminium. In fact, during the past 12 months a 40 per cent decline has been experienced in the sale price of aluminium products.

Newcastle has a rapidly growing tourist industry. During the past 12 months employment in tourism has increased by 50 per cent. I pay tribute to the Newcastle City Council and the Visitors and Convention Centre for their work in tapping the State's tourist market, particularly from Sydney and across the State of New South Wales. Tourism is becoming more important in the development of New South Wales. It is essential that all levels of government work together to take advantage of the opportunities the Hunter region provides. This area has a skilled work force, in particular in the metals industries and materials handling. It has excellent education and training facilities and an unequalled industrial relations climate in Australia. This area was the first in the field of restructuring. I pay tribute to the Workplace Resources Centre for the work it has carried out on amalgamation within the trade union movement, multi-skilling and melding together the skills areas within the trade union movement.

The trade union movement is quite prepared to enter negotiations for reskilling and a change of attitude in approaches to work provided due process is carried out. It is not prepared to be dictated to by the present industrial relations approach of this Government.

Newcastle has the most efficient port in Australia. The actions of the Hunter Ports Authority and the changes that have taken place at the port of Newcastle - once again with the active participation of trade unionists in the restructuring - have ensured that exports from Newcastle harbour lead those of other Australian ports. Nevertheless, when aluminium, coal or other raw products are being exported the international marketplace presents a problem. I quote from the New South Wales Coal Association newsletter of February 1992, which states:

Returns of the NSW coal industry have shown a disappointing slump in 1990-91 . . .

The net operating profit after tax has fallen to \$103 million . . . a 28% drop from the \$143 million recorded the previous year.

I believe that shows the difficulty we face in having, what I would call, a mining and exporting approach rather than having an approach that is more important in New South Wales and Australia: looking to value-add in all products being brought forward to our port side. We must value-add and improve not only the quality of the product being exported but also the return to Australia and the employment opportunities within a city such as Newcastle. Newcastle has one of the best national highway links to the largest market in Australia, that is, Sydney. I pay tribute to the Federal Government and its national highway project for the national highway linkage that is almost within touch of Newcastle. It is important that the State Government work with its Federal colleagues to ensure that Newcastle is linked port to market, which will enable us to get products that come from within and out of the port rapidly to the Australian market or to the international market. Lower commercial rents in Newcastle provide a great attraction for
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setting up a business. Newcastle has excellent communications with road, rail and air links. With the development of Williamstown airport - once again a Federal Government initiative - we hope in future to have a domestic national airport linkage and the possibility of an international freight linkage to the city of Newcastle. I congratulate the people of Newcastle on their resourcefulness and determination in fighting back after the earthquake. They do not seek handouts from the State or Federal governments. However, they seek their fair share in return for their percentage of State production. Workers in Newcastle have shown they are willing to back their city.

I turn my attention to the first major development in the city of Newcastle following the earthquake. I refer to investment in the rebuilding of the Newcastle Workers Club, which has put \$22 million into building premises in the centre of the city. The club has been willing to back its investment by obtaining finance from the financial sector. The workers of Newcastle and the management committee of the club believe in the rebuilding of Newcastle and its economy. I ask the State Government to make as strong a commitment by way of infrastructure for the rebuilding of our city. I contrast that investment of \$22 million with the \$2.6 million the Government has put into the Honeysuckle project. The Government should show a commitment to Newcastle and the Hunter similar to that which the Newcastle Workers Club has shown. Let us see the Government encourage infrastructure that will bring further private investment. Let us see it invest in better transport links, improve and maintain the education system and develop a good and effective system of advice to small and large business organisations. By doing that the Government will aid the transition of Newcastle's economy to one based on value adding; from heavy industry based on metals to much more sophisticated

industry, which is what Newcastle needs now.

I pay tribute to the excellent firms of Newcastle, in particular A. Goninon and Company Limited, Anderson Rea Pty Limited and Tubemakers of Australia - three of the 20 firms in Australia chosen in the Australian best practice demonstration program - industries that had clear-cut objectives to improve quality and present quality products at minimum cost within the existing industrial relations structure. Other excellent programs and projects are being carried on in New South Wales. There has been a lot of tub-thumping and grandstanding by Ministers of this Government. In particular I refer to the Minister for State Development and Minister for Tourism who trumpeted loudly last week about the Matrix development in the Newcastle area which will be located at Williamstown Airport. I draw the attention of honourable members to the excellent speech made by the honourable member for Charlestown, who rebutted completely the fallacious statements made by the Minister for State Development and Minister for Tourism and sheeted home the credit for that project to Mr Peter Morris, the Federal member for Shortland, who for more than 12 months has been working with State members from northern electorates to ensure that the project came to fruition. It did no credit to the Minister for State Development and Minister for Tourism that he trumpeted his success last week when in fact for more than three months he had the final approvals for that project stuck in his bottom drawer.

The Minister for Natural Resources last week trumpeted in the House about the excellent coal water project that hopefully will be undertaken by Coal and Allied Industries Limited and UBE Industries Limited. After his glowing report it was left to the general manager of Coal and Allied to give the true picture of what is happening. I hope that in the next few years with the steady and studied program being undertaken by Coal and Allied, the liquid coal water project will be established in Newcastle, the plant will be completed at Kooragang Island, and even more coal will be exported from Newcastle to Japan for that country's coal-fired power stations. They are examples of

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large business undertakings that are coming to the Hunter and showing faith in the region. Many small businesses in the Hunter have had great difficulty coping with the downturn caused by the recession and the structural changes that have occurred since the earthquake. In Newcastle we are aware that business needs to be more competitive and organised. It needs to have better managerial approaches and to lift its quality assurance standards. We all must target Australian standard 3902, the standard required by firms that want to value add and onsell their products. There are far too few firms in Newcastle, and in New South Wales for that matter, that have quality assurance of that standard. Of the 2,000 companies in New South Wales, 500 or fewer are qualified to that standard, and only 15 in the Hunter reach that standard - although about 40 are working towards it.

I ask the State Government to get in and help the firms of the Hunter. Let us see what the Department of State Development can do. What is the Minister for State Development and Minister for Tourism doing to assist groups such as the Chamber of Manufactures in networking and setting up programs to ensure that our firms are able to tender for the highest quality work in New South Wales? The second point I make is that the New South Wales Government must ensure that firms tendering for its work meet that Australian standard and it should not necessarily let contracts to the cheapest tenderer if that means that firms in Newcastle or elsewhere that have made the effort are put outside the tendering process. We need to make sure that our firms get ahead. Again I pay tribute to the Federal Government for putting \$3.6 million towards setting up an industry development centre, a one-stop shop advisory and referral centre for regional business and industry. That matter was dealt with in the Keating statement.

I should refer to two other matters that are of extreme importance to the Hunter. The first is the \$1 billion Honeysuckle development project, which will take 20 to 30 years to complete. It will revitalise our city, refocus the commercial hub of Newcastle and develop Newcastle as the commercial centre of the Hunter and the Central Coast. The second matter is the Basin development project. What is the commitment of the Government, this group of urban socialists who put in \$2.6 million and asked the Federal Government to supply \$93 million in infrastructure? Has the Government reconsidered its own Honeysuckle draft business plan? That plan says that the Government should make a major policy and resource commitment to Newcastle that is demonstrated by appropriate and cost-effective public sector office decentralisation, as well as infrastructure investment in complementary projects such as the Maritime Services Board, the Hunter Water Ports Authority Basin redevelopment, the Civic Theatre and the Williamstown Airport. They are areas to which the Federal Government has made a definite commitment. The State Government would be required to make the appropriate funds available from New South Wales Treasury to accord with the financial demands identified for the project. I should like to see the draft when it comes forward in its completed form. I want the State Government to make a commitment to Newcastle infrastructure, not just to determine that its members are total urban socialists and hope that the Federal Government will come to the rescue.

In the remaining time available to me I want to speak about the destruction of confidence in Newcastle caused by the Greiner Government's attack on the public sector work force. Newcastle has 10.5 per cent unemployment, and 23.8 per cent unemployment in the 15 to 19 years age group. The Government, by its actions to date and its plans to 1993-94, will take 2,200 workers from the Newcastle economy - from the State Rail Authority, State Transit, the Maritime Services Board, Health and Research Employees Association nursing, and State Rail Authority workshops. The multiplier effect on the economy of Newcastle can only be contemplated. It will will remove a
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great number of Newcastle workers from the economy and have a destructive effect on their confidence. It will affect business and have a negative social effect on families.

The Hunter members of this Parliament have been petitioning the Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Ethnic Affairs to accept a delegation to speak with him about the Newcastle City Council's request for natural disaster relief organisation funding to rebuild the grandstands in the Number 1 Sportsground. The Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Ethnic Affairs has refused to see those representatives of the Hunter; he has refused to talk with them; he has not given them the chance to argue with him the cogent reasons why the State and Federal governments should assist Newcastle City Council to rebuild what is an extremely valuable asset for the sporting, tourism and commercial sections of the Hunter region. [*Time expired.*]

Mr WINDSOR (Tamworth) [8.10]: It is with considerable pleasure that I speak in the Address in Reply to Her Majesty's Speech. On the occasion of Her Majesty's visit I was very pleased to have with me my youngest child, who was only six days old at that time. I am sure it will be a memory that not only I will remember but also my young son, Tom, will delight in being reminded of. I met Her Majesty once before. During my studies at Armidale University I was a member of the student representative council and was introduced to her by the Vice-Chancellor. As Her Majesty approached me the Vice-Chancellor said, "Ma'am, this is Mr Tony Windsor", and I said, "Ma'am, you are not the only Windsor here today". Unfortunately I did not have the opportunity to meet Her Majesty on her recent visit. However, I do have the utmost respect and regard for the royal family. I note that many people in this country are talking about republicanism. I

do not agree with republicanism, particularly in these times of great economic distress. Republicanism is being used as a smokescreen to hide from the real decisions that should be addressed within government, particularly the Federal Government. The real and hard decisions that have to be made relate to this country becoming competitive. Changing the flag, changing the national anthem or changing the system of government has nothing to do with correcting this country's major problems.

Australia needs incentives to encourage enterprise, to encourage people to want to work. I support the Federal coalition's fightback package, not because I am a great believer in a goods and services tax but because the real benefit of that fightback package would be a reduction in the marginal rate of income tax. The working people of this nation will bring Australia out of its recession, and reductions in the marginal rate of income tax would reward workers for extended effort. Successive governments, both coalition and Labor, have adopted a taxation system that penalises the productive, penalises the people who want to work, and has driven this country into the mire in which it is today. Therefore I encourage the coalition to be steadfast in that particular part of its policy. The only way that Australia will recover economically is by working its way out and by providing incentives for people to work - and the only way to provide those incentives is by the taxation system. Her Majesty said that many countries throughout the world were facing difficult circumstances, as is Australia and therefore New South Wales.

I was interested to hear the honourable member for Newcastle and the honourable member for Burrinjuck speak about decentralisation. Talk of decentralisation has been nothing but a rhetoric measure used by politicians, preferably before elections. I am endeavouring to produce a package that presents decentralisation as a working model rather than purely rhetoric. Existing and past schemes to prompt decentralisation have failed. Companies that relocated to country areas did so at an economic disadvantage. The current circumstances within the major metropolitan areas of Sydney are very much

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different to what they were. The city of Sydney has an environmental problem that is reaching massive proportions, but governments continue to develop the western suburbs of Sydney. That is wrong. The overdevelopment of the western suburbs of Sydney should be taken into account. Tomorrow one of the debates in this House will focus on violence and firearms. That debate will miss the essential issue, that is, social problems. Overdeveloping the western suburbs of Sydney will only increase its current level of social problems. The decentralisation proposal on which I am working will take account of not only an economic incentive for companies to relocate in country areas but also the environmental and social cost which must be translated into incentives.

When I became the honourable member for Tamworth a decision was made with the Premier to establish the position of economic planner for the Tamworth Development Corporation. That position could provide a model for other country towns and cities in rural New South Wales. I thank the Government for the provision of that economic planner. She is working very effectively, and the rewards that will accrue from her position will be invaluable. However, I do criticise the Government on its rationalisation, particularly in the public service area. I have no problem with rationalisation of bureaucrats where feather-bedding has occurred but I do have a problem when centralisation takes place under the smokescreen of rationalisation. Many rural areas are suffering a drain on resources that cannot be sustained. I will argue strongly against the Government not only to stop that drain of resources from country areas but also, where the functions of government can be carried out just as efficiently, to have some functions of government relocated from major metropolitan areas to country areas.

I believe that with modern communications systems there is no reason for all government services to be run from major metropolitan areas. I am sure that if management expresses a wish not to be located in rural New South Wales the Government will find plenty of people who will work in those areas.

During my 10 months in this Parliament the battle lines have been well defined between environmental and economic issues. A few weeks ago it was interesting to see the timber industry protest outside this Parliament. It was very much a demonstration by those involved in the industry - the workers, unions, management, staff and many others who rely on it for a living. I believe the demonstration was symbolic of what must happen in the political spectrum in this State. In the past we have adopted a view within the party structure of one major party representing the so-called workers in the State and the other representing the bosses. I believe this country will not get out of the mess it is in until the workers, irrespective of whether they own the business or merely work in it, are truly represented in the political system. I see the environmental debate versus the economic debate as an extension of that argument.

One matter that affects rural areas and directly affects my electorate is the possibility of a national rail link from Perth to Brisbane. I believe that the Prime Minister, for reasons only he can know - whether political or visionary - is on the right track when he refers to a national rail link. We must examine this country's transport industries, including rail and road transport, on a national rather than an ad hoc State basis. I support what the Federal Government is trying to do in establishing a national rail link. To that end I will be chairing a meeting to be held in Tamworth on 1st April and I invite all honourable members to attend that meeting if they are interested in a national rail link and in the possibility of traversing the inland areas. The meeting will examine the options available to the Federal Government and to the State Government for the development of an efficient, competitive rail system. In 1991 a consultancy firm by the name of Jacana Consultancy was employed by the State Rail Authority of New South Wales, the National Rail Corporation, and the international rail experts, Booz Allen
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Hamilton, to report on the options available to Australia in developing a national rail link. It has been referred to as the Keating vision, and some refer to it as the Richardson vision, but I believe Graham Richardson was responsible for it. That report considered a range of options. It seems that the most cost-effective option for New South Wales, providing the highest operating margin, shortest transit time and shortest pay back period, given a range of economic assumptions, is the inland route.

Mr Schultz: Through Cootamundra.

Mr WINDSOR: As the honourable member for Burrinjuck said, that route would go through Cootamundra. Based on the Federal Government's figures, that route would be \$300 million cheaper than taking the coastal route from Sydney to Brisbane. The purpose of the meeting I intend to chair is to find out whether people in New South Wales are interested in a national rail concept, and to provide some input into where that line will go. It is intended to be a non-political meeting and I have received acceptances from people associated with political parties, the trade union movement, and business. I hope that a rural lobby group will be formed to work towards a common goal, and that politics will be irrelevant. I intend to introduce to this House a private member's bill concerning the Soil Conservation Service. I argued strongly against the Soil Conservation Service being amalgamated with the Department of Conservation and Land Management. I argued that it was a mismatch, a marriage of a pro-active, hands on, lean and efficient organisation that has credibility among rural communities with a bureaucratic monster, the Department of Lands. I believe the marriage was

inappropriate from the word go.

I was willing to wait and see what form the management and operating structure of the department took. Appointments were made of a town planning administrator in the top position and a Department of Lands bureaucrat in the second position. They are both very able men and I bear no malice towards them. However, the Premier and the Minister for Conservation and Land Management advised me that the reason for the amalgamation was to transfer the ethos, the work ethic and the credibility of Soilcon to the Department of Lands, the Land Titles Office and the Valuer-General's Department. In order to achieve that I believe it would have been necessary to appoint to those key positions people who were involved in the Soil Conservation Service. That has not occurred and I cannot see how a transfer of that ethos can be achieved by the appointment of people who have never been involved with the Soil Conservation Service.

I take this opportunity to bring to the notice of honourable members that the Commissioner of the Soil Conservation Service, Mr Bob Junor, will be leaving the service soon. I place on record my admiration for him as a hard-working person who put his heart and soul into his work with the service. He has been a glowing light to others, particularly in his work in the conciliatory process that is often needed to direct landholders to pursue land care ethics. Bob Junor did that well and that is to his credit. It is with some sadness that he is leaving the service, particularly at a time when it was on a wave and the land care ethic was gaining impetus. I hope that honourable members will support my private member's bill which is designed essentially to remove the Soil Conservation Service from the Department of Conservation and Land Management and place it within the Department of Natural Resources.

I should like to take the opportunity to mention the privatisation of Port Macquarie Hospital and my attitude to that decision. I see no problem at all in privatising the hospital and its management. My advice to the Government is to ask the people of Port Macquarie whether they want the hospital. If they do not, I am sure the Government will find other areas that would be willing to have a hospital - and today I

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heard of two areas. In my view the privatisation of Port Macquarie Hospital would result in nothing like the American health system. It is an option which in a time of political and economic uncertainty the Government was honour-bound to consider. If the people of Port Macquarie do not want that hospital, they should not have it, but I am sure other areas would accept the option. Many honourable members would know of the establishment of an air training college in Tamworth. Recently the college received a commitment of 100 students from the army and the navy. That will be a longstanding contract and provides a market base for the college. I believe the college will be a great asset to the State and the nation. It will encourage people from overseas to an inland area and has enormous potential for the Tamworth electorate. I thank the House for the opportunity to speak in this debate. I had much more to mention, but I must leave that for another time.

Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Harrison.

GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICE (PRIVATISATION) AMENDMENT BILL

In Committee

Consideration resumed from 19th March.

Clause 3

Mr HATTON (South Coast) [8.30]: I move:

Page 3, clause 42A. After Clause 42A(3)(l) insert:

- (m) Liabilities of the society in respect of deposits with the society are guaranteed by the GIO parent company.

The importance of this amendment is that when the GIO is privatised it will carry with it two very important imprimatur. The first relates to the name GIO. For decades people have thought of the GIO as being government backed and cast in solid gold in terms of security, probity and propriety. These people will feel that same guarantee will apply even after the GIO is privatised. We do not want the confusion that followed the H. G. Palmer collapse. In another instance Burns Philp's name was used, and people invested with Estate Mortgage, thinking that Burns Philp was backing it. They ultimately found Burns Philp was not responsible, and thousands of investors lost a lot of money. The privatised GIO will carry into private enterprise the esteemed name GIO. Of course, the esteem of the name will raise the price we get for the GIO. The second thing is that the market-place name will be the GIO Building Society. In the New South Wales context, those with the guaranteed 10 per cent maximum shareholding - a guaranteed fiduciary standard of a building society - will have the additional advantage of the security that goes with the words "building society" in the New South Wales context as opposed to the Victorian context. Under the bill's provisions shareholders will not have that security, because the bill will allow the GIO to own 100 per cent of the shares. Therefore at some time in the future the GIO, when privatised, could sell that arm of its business. The name GIO Building Society will lead people to think that it is cast in gold. They will invest their money not realising the building society is not backed by the parent company. It is important through this legislation to ensure that it is backed by the parent company, and I move accordingly.

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Mr SOURIS (Upper Hunter - Minister for Sport, Recreation and Racing and Minister Assisting the Premier) [8.35]: I thank the honourable member for South Coast for moving this amendment and I express my appreciation for the points raised by him in so moving. The Government accepts this amendment.

Mr AMERY (Mount Druitt) [8.36]: Like the Government, the Opposition also supports the amendment. It should be pointed out that the amendment will, of course, add an extra paragraph to the 12 conditions that must apply as a condition of the GIO Building Society operating as a 100 per cent owned entity. It should be on the record that not one of the conditions in the clause referred to actually meant that the funds of the depositor were guaranteed. As the honourable member for South Coast said in his opening comments, those who invest in the GIO Building Society will do so because they are attracted to the building society as a safe and secure investment - mainly because the GIO has a long history in New South Wales as a government guaranteed instrumentality. As we all know, the GIO slogan is "Big, Safe and Friendly". The amendment before the House seeks, as far as possible, to ensure that depositors' funds will be as safe as the framework of this bill will allow.

I point out that, although it will be as safe as the bill will allow, what is missing from the clause is the diversification of ownership which has always been a safety net for depositors' funds under the terms of the New South Wales Permanent Building Society Act. The guarantee from the GIO is, at the very least, bearing in mind the constraints of

the bill, the best option we can demand. At the second reading stage we opposed the bill. That cannot happen here in Committee. I have to admit that there are failings even in this arrangement. We are aware what happened with collapses like that of Pyramid. Hypothetically, if the GIO life insurance company were to get into financial trouble and went to the wall, under this provision then the whole organisation collapses, including the building society. Therefore the guarantee by GIO Life is probably the best, but not ultimately the safest, option to be taken. From 1st July this year, or whenever the float takes effect, whenever it becomes a private company, the GIO loses the Government guarantee. It is with regret that this proposal does not have the safety net of the diversification of ownership. With those comments we are pleased to support the honourable member for South Coast.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr AMERY (Mount Druitt) [8.40]: I move:

Page 3, clause 42A. After clause 42A(5), insert:

(6) This section expires on 1st July 1995.

I indicate clearly at the outset that this amendment does not mean for one minute that we have weakened our opposition to 100 per cent owned building societies. This amendment does not mean for one minute that the 10 per cent rule in building societies should not apply. As the Government is hell-bent on breaking existing law - the Permanent Building Societies Act - and the Australian Financial Institution Commission agreement, the Opposition will seek to insert a sunset clause into the provisions of the bill. We are trying to put into the bill measures that will prevent any potential corporate collapse from affecting this building society. The Opposition requires the support of the Independents for this amendment to be adopted. If we obtain that support a number of things can happen. The GIO life insurance company will be able to establish a 100 per cent building society. The Minister will be able to push ahead with the speedy float of the GIO - something that he said in the second reading debate would be jeopardised if this bill is

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not passed. The Government will be able to solve the problem of existing deposits. I refer the Committee to the arguments of the Minister that thousands of depositors have many millions of dollars tied up in the GIO. The Minister says that this will be threatened if the bill does not pass through this Chamber and a building society is not established.

We do not accept that argument but, even if this amendment is accepted, it will address the Government's argument. In addition, it will ensure that the clause in this bill which will enable 100 per cent ownership will be only a temporary measure. It will give the GIO, the building society, or whatever it is to be called, three years within which to comply with the New South Wales Permanent Building Societies Act - in particular a section in that Act which restricts ownership to 10 per cent. It will also give the Government and the GIO or building society three years to come into line with the guidelines of the Australian Financial Institution Commission - the so-called AFIC agreement - signed by the Premier in November 1991. If the Government had been able to float the GIO for only a few months it is not unreasonable to expect that it could float a 90 per cent shareholding in a building society in the same period. However, we are not asking for that. We are saying that this exemption to that guideline will be in place for three years and, after that time, the exemption runs out. If this clause goes through the Committee unamended we will be condoning the actions of the Government - something

I do not intend to elaborate on as I discussed this matter at the second reading stage. It will enable the building society to operate outside State and national standards for ever.

Nothing in the clause before the Committee puts any obligation on the Government to comply with the two prudential standards - the New South Wales Permanent Building Societies Act or the AFIC agreement. This will mean that the financial agreements signed by the Premier in November - the agreement which all States agreed to and which went before the Queensland Parliament only last week - stand for nothing. It will go against national and international trends in promoting the diversification of ownership in financial institutions, particularly those financial institutions that are not banks. We believe the Committee should seriously consider inserting this sunset clause in the bill. As I have said, it is not an unreasonable expectation. This amendment will address the problems the Government has at present with the GIO float. It is obvious that the prospectus is already at the printer, or is in boxes ready for circulation. This amendment also addresses the problem already mentioned by the Government - that thousands of people have millions of dollars tied up in the GIO. The Government can go ahead with the float and a building society can be established. This will give all those in the financial world a clear understanding that, at some time in the future, this building society will comply with our strong prudential standards. As I said in the second reading debate, this is something that New South Wales has always been proud of. I commend the amendment.

Mr NEILLY (Cessnock) [8.46]: After a brief discussion with my colleagues I have established that there may be a small error in the proposed amendment. In general, the Opposition is proposing to insert a sunset clause in the legislation to give permanent building society status to the GIO and to ensure that certain matters are complied with within a three-year period. I am sure that, after that period, the GIO will maintain its permanent building society status, but certain things have to remain in place. I am not the smartest person in the world but I am concerned that the GIO, once privatised, is out of the control of the New South Wales State Government. If this organisation is privatised the Government will not be able to obtain a Federal banking licence. So we will have in operation not a permanent building society but a bank, and that would defeat a lot of the arguments advanced by the Government.

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I agree with what has been said by the honourable member for Mount Druitt. There is a time frame within which the GIO is to be privatised, but a lot of homework needs to be done prior to this privatisation. In my opinion, the establishment of a building society was only an afterthought, not a matter which was deliberately thought about. If it had been deliberately thought about the Government would have remembered its commitment in November last year to move towards uniform legislation to ensure that, after 1st July next year, individuals and individual organisations have no more than a 10 per cent share component in building societies. There is no prohibition for a parallel share issue which would have fitted in neatly with Commonwealth requirements and share equities of insurance companies. This would have provided similar equities in a privatised GIO or building society. That would have complied with the spirit of Commonwealth legislation relating to insurance companies and it would have complied with the spirit of the agreement to be put in place from 1st July next year.

The Government could have chosen not to privatise but made the building society that public organisation I spoke of before, in which the GIO would have 10 per cent equity and individual borrowers and depositors would have 90 per cent equity. The Minister cannot give me or any other member in this Chamber an assurance that once the

building society is formed it will not have a rails run towards a Federal banking licence. That is my concern. I hark back to what I said when the second reading of the bill was being debated. The St George Building Society and a number of other building societies in this State have taken that road. It provides an opportunity for organisations to make quick capital returns and would enhance the saleability of the GIO. I am thinking of the objective those who are likely to subscribe to the GIO will be seeking. Will it have an impact on the capital value of the share sale of the GIO, or is the intent to look after the GIO's depositors and borrowers or the proposed share float? I hark back to my question: what was wrong with the parallel float?

Mr HATTON (South Coast) [8.51]: I indicate once again my implacable opposition to subclause 42A(1), which will give GIO Life Limited the right to hold 100 per cent of fixed shares in a single permanent building society. I reinforce that, as did the Opposition. It is wrong in principle and in practice. However, gracious as I always am, I should like to thank the Minister for Sport, Recreation and Racing and Minister Assisting the Premier most sincerely for accepting the guarantee on behalf of the investors. It is an important matter that will enhance the float, despite my opposition. It will give people the security they deserve when the GIO is privatised. I am concerned about the amendment but I shall check with the Minister and his advisers while other honourable members are speaking. The spirit and intent of the amendment are excellent; it will bring this measure under the Australian Financial Institutions Commission - that is, gradually returning to the 10 per cent ownership rule and all the associated rules, to protect the investors and the name "building society" as it will apply to the Commonwealth of Australia. It is the intent that the proposed section will expire on 1st July, 1995. I should hate to think, however, that the amendment - which has been agreed to - that gives this security of the parent company to the investors in the building society will disappear on 1st July 1995.

I wish to clarify whether the amendment rather than reading "This section expires on 1st July, 1995" should read "subclause 42A(1) expires on 1st July, 1995". In other words, despite my opposition and that of the Opposition to the 100 per cent holding of fixed shares, there is an advantage that it can carry on for three years but after that time it will gradually return to a 10 per cent holding. I would not like to think that the other guarantees in the clause will disappear on 1st July, 1995, in particular, the guarantees of the parent company to the investors. I might also remind the Minister that during the second reading stage I raised some fundamental questions. I apologise if they were answered earlier in the debate, but they also need to be addressed.

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Mr AMERY (Mount Druitt) [8.54]: I take on board the concern of the honourable member for South Coast. The amendment accepted by the Government, which is that GIO Life Limited would guarantee the funds, and also the Opposition's amendment giving the bill a sunset clause, are not the Opposition's primary desired course of action. The Opposition believes that the building society should be established in accordance with existing rules. If it were established under the Permanent Building Societies Act and had to comply with the Australian Financial Institutions Commission agreement, there would be no need for the guarantees the Opposition is now trying to build into the bill in an attempt to salvage something from the Government's position. However, I take on board the concerns of the honourable member for South Coast, who said that on the adoption of the amendment, from 1st July, 1995, the guarantee of depositors' funds by GIO Life Limited would also expire. I have no intention of allowing the situation that would occur on 1st July, 1995, to come about where depositors' funds would not be guaranteed. But I can inform honourable members that

from that date, if the amendment were carried, depositors funds would be guaranteed, first, by the diversification of ownership of the building society, thereby giving it stronger protections and, second, by all the safety nets that are in the Australian Financial Institutions Commission's bills for which template legislation has now gone through the Queensland Parliament.

Mr J. H. MURRAY (Drummoynes) [8.56]: I support the honourable member for Mount Druitt on this amendment, which will attach a sunset provision to clause 42A. I did not intend to contribute to the debate, having spoken at the second reading stage, but I believe this clause gives the Parliament the best of both worlds, for it attempts to overcome the difficulties the Government faces, in that it must sell the GIO to balance its budget. The bill has to go through as soon as possible. Moreover, it will overcome the real concerns of the Opposition that New South Wales does not have the problem Victoria faced with building societies and, more importantly, it looks after the interests of taxpayers and people who are members of the GIO Building Society.

The amendment provides the best of both worlds. It will allow the Government to get off the hook in that it will be able to say that in three years' time it will conform with the rest of the States and with the Australian Financial Institutions Commission's guidelines. That is important. More importantly, it will allow for the sale of the GIO before 30th June. I have already whispered to the Minister and he knows I do not believe that will happen, but at least the Opposition is endeavouring to help the Government in this matter. The Opposition has provided a three-year bedding down period, a period when there is an ability to achieve a maximisation of the return on the sale of the GIO. However, in three years' time the GIO Building Society will have to conform with the rules set down throughout Australia. More important, New South Wales will have to follow rules provided to ultimately protect shareholders in New South Wales and the building society's depositors. Ipso facto we will not have a Pyramid or Farrow problem in New South Wales if those guidelines are followed. I commend the amendment to the Committee.

Mr DAVOREN (Lakemba) [9.0]: I support the amendment because the Opposition, curiously enough, is seeking to preserve the good name and reputation of the Premier and the sovereign State of New South Wales. Government members laugh but the Opposition is quite serious. It has a feeling for the State and for the office of the Premier of this great State. After all, the Premier signed a document which gave the support of New South Wales to the Australian Financial Institutions Commission agreement whereby we guaranteed that we would not make any legislative arrangements outside the AFIC agreement until such time as it was legislated uniformly by the States. The sunset clause is to try to regain some of this State's reputation for good citizenship and good dealing that, to a large extent, has been destroyed by this unwise legislation.

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The honourable member for Drummoynes stated that the arrangement is to prevent an incident similar to that which occurred in Victoria. Though it is a credit to the Government that it is agreeing to the amendment that all funds are guaranteed by the GIO, we must do more than that.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Merton): Order! The honourable member will be heard in silence and members who do not wish to participate in the debate should leave the Chamber.

Mr DAVOREN: We must give credence to the agreement signed by the Premier on behalf of the State that he will not do anything that is outside the AFIC agreement. That is the reason behind the amendment. It endeavours to salvage something from the

chaos that has been created by this foolish legislation. The Opposition is adamant about this amendment and hopes that it will receive the Government's support.

Mr SOURIS (Upper Hunter - Minister for Sport, Recreation and Racing and Minister Assisting the Premier) [9.3]: The Government rejects the amendment proposed by the Australian Labor Party. In essence, the amendment lacks logic and, if passed, would provide a contradictory situation. It would reverse the provisions of the bill. The Labor Party, through this amendment, is seeking to uphold its objection to the bill in its totality. It would be grossly unfair to depositors and borrowers, and would cause uncertainty about the future of the building society. There would be no certainty about a continuing business relationship between the public and the building society. A great element of doubt would exist which will clearly affect the value of the GIO. As it goes into the float uncertainty would exist as to what would be left in three years' time and the necessary action to be taken. The Australian Labor Party believes the shedding of 90 per cent of one of its business organisations would definitely reduce the value of the building society and therefore the value of the float in its totality. By how much I do not know; obviously not by the total amount, which is in the order of \$150 million or \$200 million, but it would bear a relationship to that figure.

What is most important is that this amendment contradicts everything said about compliance with the financial institutions agreement and, subsequently, financial institutions legislation. There are two reasons for that: first, the existence of the sunset clause is contrary to the intention of the agreement to pass responsibility for such regulation to the Australian Financial Institution Commission; and, second, the ongoing responsibility of the GIO Building Society licence will be handed to AFIC. The essence of the building society licence itself means that the prudential supervision of this building society would continue within New South Wales jurisdiction, even though the totality of the AFIC legislation by then would have come into force. Also, the building society would be regulated by two jurisdictions, both State and Federal, for that period of time and would undoubtedly be contradictory to the good running of the business. It would be governed by AFIC and the continuing prudential supervision applied by the New South Wales Government through its responsibility in supervising the building society licence.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Merton): Order! The Minister will be heard in silence.

Mr SOURIS: Of more serious concern is that during debate on the Government Insurance Office (Privatisation) Bill one of the most important considerations of this Parliament was to prevent the GIO from being subdivided, broken up, cannibalised and therefore sold off separately. The whole purpose of the debate at that time was the question of retention of the GIO -

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I call the honourable member for Moorebank to order.

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Mr SOURIS: - as one strong integral part to go into the float without being broken up. This is quite unlike existing legislation in Victoria and Western Australia.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I call the honourable member for Lane Cove to order.

Mr SOURIS: Their legislation provides for the cannibalisation and breaking up of their insurance offices. Indeed, their legislation goes even further and allows for the sale of those two organisations, not necessarily by public float, but by direct tender and sale.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I call the honourable member for Charlestown to order.

Mr SOURIS: Both those aspects, but in particular the ultimate breaking up of the building society and therefore an organ of the GIO in its totality, would be a clear break and contradiction of the wishes of the Parliament.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I call the honourable member for Parramatta to order. I call the honourable member for Parramatta to order for the second time.

Mr SOURIS: Those wishes were strongly asserted by both sides during the passage of the original bill.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I call the honourable member for Parramatta to order for the third time.

Mr SOURIS: If the Labor Party were in government, there is no way it would pursue this amendment in the way that is being suggested, namely, through the breaking up of the GIO and contradictory supervision - both Federal and State - causing great disadvantage to the float itself, financially and in essence.

Mr AMERY (Mount Druitt) [9.7]: I thought I had spoken for the last time on this clause. If there were ever any doubt about the way we are going, the Minister has just convinced me. He just told the Chamber that complying with the Permanent Building Societies Act - and with the Australian Financial Institutions Commission Bill - would be unfair to depositors. How can making a building society and deposits safer be unfair to depositors? That is beyond belief. The Minister says that this amendment, if passed, will affect the value of the GIO Building Society. How can it affect the value of the building society when it will be complying with State and national laws. It will be complying and competing with other building societies on the same grounds. This Government is making the GIO Building Society an exception. It is saying that everyone else must comply with the 10 per cent rule except the GIO Building Society. Perhaps the Minister will tell the House which is the next building society that will slip under the law? The Minister also said to the Committee that this amendment contradicts the financial institutions agreement. That is the greatest example of crocodile tears I have seen. The honourable member for South Coast and Opposition members must be the only ones who bothered to read the agreement before coming into the House. Section 9 on page 32 of the agreement states:

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A limit of 10 per cent on holdings of withdrawable shares in a financial institution.

Obviously what the Government is doing is contrary to the agreement, but the amendment is not. The amendment will do one thing: it will allow someone to break the law for three years; but in three years' time the amendment must be complied with. That is plain and simple. It is absurd to suggest to the Committee that by making a building society compete on the same footing as any other organisation that will affect the value of

the building society. That is a fictitious argument. Let me deal with the last comment of the Minister. He spoke about this causing a breaking up of the building society. Breaking up of a building society is what a co-operative is all about. That is called diversification of ownership. If diversification of ownership and sharing the ownership of a building society break up that building society, then the Opposition strongly supports it.

Mr NEILLY (Cessnock) [9.11]: In response to what was said by the Minister I shall reiterate my earlier remarks. Parallel ownership can be achieved. That will keep equity in accordance with the requirements placed on equity insurance companies by the Federal legislation. That will be in conformity with the spirit of intent regarding equity in building societies that will apply from 1st July next year. It may not be possible to get equity on a share-for-share basis, but it will still be possible to achieve equity by giving parity in shareholding equities. To some extent it is in the too-hard basket, but it will result in a parallel arrangement in conformity with the spirit of the present Federal legislation and the prospective uniform legislation governing building societies. From the outset concern was expressed that there will not be a Sydney-based building society. Can the Minister give a guarantee that five years hence we will continue to have a Sydney-based building society following the passage of this legislation?

Mr J. H. MURRAY (Drummoyne) [9.12]: I take the Minister to task for his desire to flog off the building society to the highest bidder. The Committee is considering a classic example of one State going to a ministerial council, putting forward its point of view that is accepted by the other States and the Australian Government and then seeking in this House to get the elusive dollar to the detriment of New South Wales taxpayers. At this very moment the Prime Minister is seeking to bring the States together at a Premiers' conference. The Premiers of New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia are seeking co-operative federalism. How can the Prime Minister in all sincerity face the New South Wales Premier, who signed a declaration, walked away from it and now comes to this Parliament and reneges on that declaration. That is what the amendment is about. The people of New South Wales will suffer. If this organisation goes to the wall, they will not have the protection that all other States are providing for their building societies, which will have only 10 per cent maximum ownership. In New South Wales one person will be able to have complete ownership. Honourable members should recall what happened in Victoria with the Pyramid building society when that ridiculous structure failed. Constituents were knocking on the doors of members wanting to know how they could be helped. We do not want that to happen in New South Wales. The amendment moved by the honourable member for Mount Druitt, who has spent many hours considering this problem on behalf of the people of New South Wales, is viable and sensible. I know the Minister for Sport, Recreation and Racing and Minister assisting the Premier is wavering. I hope that he will reconsider his attitude and accept the amendment.

Question - That the amendment be agreed to - put.

Page 1958

The Committee divided.

Ayes, 46

Ms Allan
Mr Amery
Mr A. S. Aquilina

Mr J. J. Aquilina
Mr Bowman
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'
Mr McBride
Mr Markham
Mr Martin
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, 46

Mr Armstrong
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 Griffiths
Mr Hazzard

Mr Jeffery
Dr Kernohan
Mr Kerr
Mr Longley
Dr Macdonald
Dr Metherell
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 Rozzoli
Mr Schipp
Mr Schultz
Mr Small
Mr Smiles
Mr Smith
Mr Souris
Mr Tink
Mr Turner
Mr West
Mr Windsor
Mr Yabsley

Tellers,
Mr Beck
Mr Hartcher

Pairs

Mr Anderson
Mr Carr
Mr McManus

Mr Greiner
Ms Machin

Mr Zammit

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Merton): Order! The numbers being equal, I give my casting vote with the noes and declare the question to have passed in the negative.

Amendment negatived.

Question - That the clause as amended be agreed to - put.

The Committee divided.

Page 1959

Ayes, 46

Mr Armstrong
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 Griffiths
Mr Hazzard

Mr Jeffery
Dr Kernohan
Mr Kerr
Mr Longley
Dr Macdonald
Dr Metherell
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 Rozzoli
Mr Schipp
Mr Schultz
Mr Small

Mr Smiles
Mr Smith
Mr Souris
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Mr Turner
Mr West
Mr Windsor
Mr Yabsley

Tellers,
Mr Beck
Mr Hartcher

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Mr J. J. Aquilina
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Mr Crittenden
Mr Doyle
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Mr Gibson
Mrs Grusovin
Mr Harrison
Mr Hatton
Mr Hunter
Mr Iemma

Mr Irwin
Mr Knight
Mr Knowles
Mr Langton
Mrs Lo Po'
Mr McBride
Mr Markham
Mr Martin
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

Pairs

Mr Greiner
Ms Machin
Mr Zammit

Mr Anderson
Mr Carr
Mr McManus

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Merton): Order! The numbers being equal, I give my casting vote with the ayes and declare the question to be resolved in the affirmative.

Clause as amended agreed to.

Bill reported from Committee with an amendment.

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

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Adoption of Report

Mr SOURIS (Upper Hunter - Minister for Sport, Recreation and Racing and Minister Assisting the Premier) [9.32]: I move:

That the report be now adopted.

Question put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 46

Mr Armstrong
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 Griffiths
Mr Hazzard

Mr Jeffery
Dr Kernohan
Mr Kerr
Mr Longley
Dr Macdonald
Mr Merton
Dr Metherell
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

Tellers,
Mr Beck
Mr Hartcher

Noes, 46

Ms Allan
Mr Amery
Mr A. S. Aquilina
Mr J. J. Aquilina
Mr Bowman
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'
Mr McBride
Mr Markham
Mr Martin
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

Pairs

Mr Greiner
Ms Machin
Mr Zammit

Mr Anderson
Mr Carr
Mr McManus

Mr SPEAKER: The numbers being equal, in accordance with the principle established by previous Speakers I cast my vote with the ayes and declare the question to be resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

Report adopted.

Third Reading

Mr SOURIS (Upper Hunter - Minister for Sport, Recreation and Racing and Minister Assisting the Premier) [9.38]: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 46

Mr Armstrong
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 Griffiths
Mr Hazzard

Mr Jeffery
Dr Kernohan
Mr Kerr
Mr Longley
Dr Macdonald
Mr Merton
Dr Metherell
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

Tellers,
Mr Beck
Mr Hartcher

Noes, 46

Ms Allan
Mr Amery
Mr A. S. Aquilina
Mr J. J. Aquilina
Mr Bowman
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'
Mr McBride
Mr Markham
Mr Martin
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

Page 1962

Pairs

Mr Greiner
Ms Machin
Mr Zammit

Mr Anderson
Mr Carr
Mr McManus

Mr SPEAKER: The vote being equal, according to the precedent established by former Speakers, I cast my vote with the ayes and declare the question resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

HER MAJESTY'S SPEECH: ADDRESS IN REPLY

Sixth Day's Debate

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr HARRISON (Kiama) [9.43]: I am proud to be able to respond to the Speech delivered by Her Majesty at the opening of the second session of the Fiftieth Parliament of New South Wales. I suppose, as there have been a lot of discussions about the republic and the flag and so on, it is necessary to place on record just where one stands on those issues. I accept the inevitability that Australia will eventually become a republic. England is drifting more and more into the European scene and, for better or worse, we seem to be drifting more and more into the Asian scene. Despite that I do place on record, and I am prepared to state in any company, how much I appreciate the fact that we have inherited from the British people their system of Parliament, their system of justice, and their general way of life. Having said that I must also state where I stand on the question of the Australian flag. I stand four square for the retention of the flag

exactly as it is. I grew up with this flag. It symbolises two things to me: first of all, the part of the world in which we live, symbolised by the Southern Cross; and second, our heritage, which in fact flows from England and from the United Kingdom.

In the Union Jack, in the corner of that flag, is the cross of St Andrew, the cross of St Patrick, and the cross of St George. My ancestry being English and Irish, I relate to that; I grew up with it. A generation of Australian people have grown up with it, fought under it and died under it for us. One only has to look back in history to know the ancient Spartans always, when they thought they were losing the battle, closed ranks around the standard bearer to make sure he was the last person that fell in the course of that battle. I am not one of those who say we should in any way advocate changing our flag. I hope there is never another war where people have to die to maintain that flag, but nonetheless it symbolises what we are as a nation. When I was in Hawaii, one of the States of America, I noticed that State's flag still has the Union Jack in the corner of it. I brought one back with me to show my friends. I would like to leave that subject, having placed on record simply and concisely where I stand on it. I wish now to talk about some happenings in New South Wales in general and in particular in my section of the State, the electorate of Kiama. We do not hear too much about New South Wales Inc. any more; we have seen a change of tack as far as that is concerned. New South Wales Inc. has been totally discredited. Despite the Premier's assurance before the State elections last year that his budget for the ensuing year would be in surplus, in fact we have a deficit of the order of \$2 billion. The debate we have just been through about Page 1963

selling the GIO was really all about the Government trying to get money from anywhere at all to shore up this Government's ineptitude and total mismanagement. We do not hear anything about New South Wales Inc.; we now hear references by the Premier to quality of life. The quality of life of the people of New South Wales has deteriorated markedly over the last four years and that has been due almost entirely to the ineptitude, mismanagement and waste of this Government. I am glad that the Minister for Health Services Management is in the House because much of what I say today has to do with the downgrading of health services in this State in general and in the region of Illawarra in particular. It is always handy to place on record the litany of actions affecting the Illawarra that the Government has taken since it came to office, because people's memories do dim after a time.

I have an extensive list of matters that show how badly we in the Illawarra have suffered at the hands of this Government as far as health care is concerned. I instance the downgrading of the stores area of Shoalhaven hospital, the axing of the South Coast rescue and medical retrieval helicopter, the closure of the dental therapists training school in Shellharbour, the closure of the natural birthing centre at Bulli hospital, the closure of the operating theatre and maternity ward at Kiama hospital, as well as some 50 beds closed at this point in time. Others include the unfinished and unfunded hole in the ground for Wollongong Hospital, what started out to be a necessary extension of that hospital. Now there is a proposal to close Kiama hospital, as well as the suggested closure of Karinya palliative care unit at David Berry hospital in the town of Berry in the electorate of Kiama. I would like to refer to the duplicity of the Government, nowhere better instanced than in a press statement put out by the person who is now Premier of this State, the Hon. Nick Greiner, which appeared in the *Kiama Independent* on Wednesday, 16th June, 1986. On that occasion Mr Greiner said about Kiama hospital:

Mr Unsworth should assure the survival of the hospital's existing services after the introduction of Area Health Boards in October.

He went on to say:

The current speculations are just part of the long-running saga of doubt over the hospital's future.

Each episode only decreases community confidence in the hospital's survival - it upsets the staff.

Mr Greiner then said:

It also deserves an autonomous hospital administration which can decide the best ways of meeting the health care needs of the community.

The ALP promised during the Kiama by-election this year that the hospital would remain - that promise must be kept if the ALP hopes to maintain any integrity at all.

It is a matter of record that that promise was kept by the former government in 1986 and until the time it went out of office. But since then we have not had the death of a thousand cuts, which is what Mr Greiner, as Leader of the Opposition at that time, was talking about. We have had three or four systematic cuts, despite promises that have been made in documents such as that put out by the Illawarra Area Health Service entitled "Looking Ahead 1989-1993" - a strategic priority statement. That document states:

The Kiama District Hospital will continue to perform a local role for Kiama and surrounding towns, with general practitioners being the key providers of medical services.

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Prior to the last State election rumours were circulating that Kiama hospital was to close after the election. As a result members of the Opposition were accused of scaremongering. On 15th May, 1991, a few days before the election, a paper was issued by the then Minister for Health. The last paragraph of that paper states:

"Alderman Harrison's claims about the future of Kiama Hospital are totally without foundation. The Hospital will not close after the State election," Mr Collins said.

Despite that we see the proposed total closure of the hospital. Over a period the Illawarra Area Health Service met with members of the community and decided to go along with the proposal for the establishment of a community co-operative which would run the hospital and enable the Illawarra Area Health Service to fund 13 beds. The deadline for the commencement of that arrangement was 1st November but that blew out to 1st December and then to 1st February. Nothing came of it. Month in and month out the people of Kiama were kept dangling. Before Christmas the Minister commissioned the Reid Harris report which was to be completed within a short period. All sorts of time constraints were put on it. It was established that nothing could really be resolved because a group of consultants was looking at the matter at that time. It took a lot of agitation on the part of the community to get that report released once it was completed. That report states in part:

The issues confronting the IAHS are complex. The extent to which some of these are addressed in this review has necessarily been limited. In fact the capacity to undertake the review within the timeframe was largely attributable to the excellent information base maintained by the IAHS and the strategic and corporate planning which has already occurred.

That report establishes that the decisions had already been made by the Illawarra Area Health Service, the people it was representing, this Government and this Minister.

Mr Phillips: That is nonsense; it does not represent us.

Mr HARRISON: The Minister will have a chance to speak later. The consultants sucked the brains of people in the Illawarra Area Health Service and wrote in a glossy report that cost thousands of dollars what they were expected to write. The report was a shemozzle from start to finish, but it recommended that Kiama hospital be closed and that the money to be saved should be spent in the electorate of my colleague the honourable member for South Coast. The report also recommended the closure of Karinya palliative care unit at David Berry Hospital and that the money to be saved should be spent in the electorate of the honourable member for Bega. Everyone was to gain - the honourable member for South Coast was to gain; the honourable member for Bega was to gain; but the Labor electorate that I represent was to be the big loser. We were going to lose virtually everything we have in the Kiama electorate. If this Government had not wasted \$100 million on the Eastern Creek motor cycle track, the Kiama hospital could have been funded for the next 50 years. We hear a lot of blather from honourable members opposite about how every country and every state in the world is going away from socialism, but we have socialised motor cycle racing in this State. The Eastern Creek Raceway is losing money hand over fist. At the last meeting of the Illawarra Area Health Service that I am aware of the chairman and deputy chairman made a belated decision to resign as a result of a decision to close Kiama hospital. Even though they have been tremendously compliant with the Government all the way through they could not cop this last betrayal of the people. They could not cop the odium of it any longer. They said, "enough is enough", and they got out.

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Mr Phillips: I thought you said they were the lackeys of the Government.

Mr HARRISON: They were and they still are. I call on the lackeys who are still there to get out. I also call on those people who have given advice to get out. I call on the Minister for Health Services Management, who is sitting in the Chamber interjecting, to have the guts to front the public meeting at Kiama on Friday night. I relish the idea of debating the subject with him. He should come to Kiama and face the people and tell them what he has been doing to them and what he intends to do to them. The Minister should get out of his ivory tower. The Minister is having a good laugh about it. He obviously thinks it is funny that the people of Kiama will be deprived of a hospital service. The laugh will be on the other side of his face after the next election. As I have said, a public meeting is being held in Kiama on Friday night. I have sent an invitation to the Minister and I have indicated to him that his failure to attend will be interpreted by the people I represent as a complete lack of intestinal fortitude. The Minister's other lackey, the Hon. S. B. Mutch, who poses as duty M.L.C. for the South Coast region, likes to come to Kiama to get his name on brass plates at every opportunity. He should also attend the meeting and indicate his position on the question of Kiama hospital.

The betrayal of the people of Kiama has been nothing less than disgraceful and almost criminal. Over the past four years we have been told a litany of lies. It is nothing less than disgraceful that this Government is made up of people we could not believe, even if they got down on their knees. I wish to refer once again to the statement of the former Minister for Health, Mr Peter Collins, that I was scaremongering and that the hospital was not going to close. On 17th and 18th February I wrote to the Minister

for Health Services Management, who is in the Chamber, and asked him to lead a deputation of people from Kiama council. Even though that was over a month ago I have not had any acknowledgment of that invitation.

Mr Phillips: I have met with them twice.

Mr HARRISON: I will come to that. The Minister has not acknowledged my letters.

Mr Phillips: No, because they have been too rude.

Mr HARRISON: They were not rude at all. They were quite reasonable letters. The Minister is the rude person. He finds it impossible to answer his correspondence, let alone do anything else. All the Minister is good for is hitching up his duds. Not only was I not told about the deputation the Minister mentioned a while ago, but I am led to understand that when Liberal Party developer Alderman Neville Fredericks, representing the community development group, the Mayor of Kiama, Alderman Ruth Devenney, and the town clerk of Kiama were granted an interview on the specific condition that it was confidential. They were really saying that they did not want me to know about it. That was a studied insult, not only to me but to the people of Kiama I represent. The mayor apparently agonised over the request but eventually agreed to it on the understanding that the Minister would give her some good news when she attended the interview. The good news was that the Minister was going to agree that the hospital be closed and that as the *Illawarra Mercury* stated on 21st March he was not willing to overturn the advice given to him by his bureaucrats.

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The Minister does not seem to have any concern that even loyal Liberal Party supporters like the former chairman of the board, John McKenna, and the deputy chairman, John Hinton, had said enough was enough. Even they could not cop any more. They decided to resign their positions because they saw the betrayal of the people of Kiama and of the Illawarra as total and absolute. No longer were they prepared to cop the odium of it. They said: "The ball is in your court. We have played the game with you for long enough." It is a great pity that I have had to make a statement of this kind in this House but the people I am elected to represent expect it of me. I reiterate my challenge to the Minister to come to the public meeting tomorrow night. I may not be the greatest debater in the world, but I relish the idea of a debate with him. I will outline lie after lie in relation to the treatment of the people of Kiama. I am not the sort of person to go behind anyone's back and say things. I like to be up-front. I do not think the Minister for Health Services Management likes to be up-front. He is more in favour of back stabbing.

I rest my remarks on that. I could speak on many other things in the Kiama electorate, such as the failure to construct the northern section of the Kiama bypass. Most Ministers show a little courtesy, agree to meet deputations and answer their correspondence. They are not all as bad as the Minister for Health Services Management. There are members on the treasury benches I can say hello to and have a cordial word with, but I am not interested in talking to back stabbers or doing anything other than luring them into a public debate. They may be all right in the Chamber where they can hide behind parliamentary privilege or parliamentary procedures and play games, but out on the grass where the bull gets its breakfast they would not get out of a paper bag.

Mr MARKHAM (Keira) [10.3]: I have some pleasure in participating in the Address-in-Reply debate this evening, but I am concerned about the attitude of members on the treasury benches towards the Queen's Speech. Each time I have heard or read what they have had to say, I have concluded that this Government is made up of a bunch of sycophants. That concerns me when this country and State should be standing on their own feet. I am more than happy to put on the record that I believe this country should become a republic. The sooner that happens the better. I intend to read part of the speech made by the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Roads to show how hypocritical he is and the views of the Government on waving a flag that has a foreign flag in one of its corners. The Minister said:

Her Majesty in her Speech to Parliament stated that events around the world in recent years had shown the strength of the people's desire for the freedom to shape their own futures. We have all been witnesses, she said, to remarkable change as the people of many nations, with immense courage and determination, have rejected authoritarian rule and embraced democracy. Because of our heritage we have that democracy. In fact, it would be fair to say that it is one of the most freewheeling democracies in the world. We have freedom of religion, we have freedom of speech and we have freedom of choice.

However, members of the Government are saying that honourable members should not speak out, express their views and call for the nation to stand on its own two feet but should stand beholden to a power that treats Australia as a colonial outpost and, more importantly, has destroyed the indigenous people of this country over 204 years. The sooner Australia stands on its own two feet, declares its independence and recognises that the country is for Australians and everyone who lives in it, the better. People who come from different areas of the world should not have to pledge allegiance to a foreign nation. The sooner the year 2000 arrives and Australia becomes a republic and gains a new Constitution, the better. Australia is one of the few non-republics in the British
Page 1967

Commonwealth. Twelve months ago when the Premier delivered his Address-in-Reply speech in this Chamber in response to the Governor's words of wisdom I was disappointed that he had completely forgotten the Aboriginal people and did not refer to any move by the Government within the parliamentary and legislative framework for those people. I was critical also of the Premier for not mentioning the mining industry in this State. In the *Hansard* proof of 5th March the Premier finally came to a realisation in his speech that there were Aboriginal people and a mining industry in this State. He devoted two lines of his speech to those subjects. He said:

Following a lengthy period of consultation we have introduced the bill to vest title to dedicate national parts to Aborigines in instances where the areas are of cultural significance to the Aboriginal people

He made three attempts. The bill was introduced in April last year. Finally it has gone before a legislative committee, but I can assure honourable members it is a long way from resolution. The Opposition wants to make sure that the bill is brought back to this Parliament so that the rights of Aboriginal people will be recognised and they will get what they justly deserve. The Premier went on to say in regard to the mining industry:

More than 22,000 people are directly employed in mining in New South Wales and there are expanding prospects for growth, particularly in the coal industry where exports are now valued at \$2.7 billion annually. Within this decade those exports are forecast to grow by at least a third.

That is correct and that is great. This Government must work harder to ensure that people remaining in this industry are guaranteed jobs into the future. The Minister for

Natural Resources on 5th March, in answer to a question on the Endangered Fauna (Interim Protection) Bill, a Dorothy Dixier from the honourable member for Oxley, stated that he was concerned with the mining industry and indicated that 30 jobs could be lost on the Central Coast. As a person who has worked a long time in the mining industry, I assure honourable members that I do not wish any jobs to be lost. However, over the past four years thousands of jobs have been lost in this State. One of the most historic areas of government involvement in loss of jobs was the closure of the Huntley coalmine and the shutting down of Tallawarra Power Station. Mr Pickard was the Minister responsible at that time. He now has a cushy position in London. On the day of the demonstration of timber workers - 10th March - some deadheads on the Government benches asked where everyone was. I remind the Government that for five days Mr Pickard could not be found to answer allegations levelled at him about a statement he made that in no way would he shut down Tallawarra power station or the Huntley coalmine. Yet, honourable members opposite have the audacity to criticise members on this side of the Chamber who in the past four years have been to more demonstrations outside Parliament than Government members have had breakfasts. More demonstrations will occur. The next time a major demonstration is held the Opposition will be calling on Government members to front, and we will see how many do so.

I should like to refer to a couple of issues relating to roads and transport in the Keira electorate. First, I refer to a famous road in this State, Mount Ousley. Over a long period that road has been the cause of numerous fatalities. The Roads and Traffic Authority recognises that road as dangerous and that it should be traversed with extreme care. Over the years measures have been taken to reduce the speed of trucks and, of late, buses travelling on that highway. Time and again I have received complaints from my constituents that the signs mean nothing to some drivers. Road signs are only effective if they are enforced by traffic police within the area. After much pressure a decision was made to erect a safety or arresting ramp halfway down Mount Ousley to provide runaway trucks with an opportunity to get off the road before they careered

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further down and crashed on a notorious bend that has claimed many lives.

Further down Mount Ousley to the road which runs between the bottom of the steep descent and the F8 there is a section of road which dissects Wollongong Technical and Further Education College and Wollongong University. For a number of years I have been pleading with the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Roads to provide funds to construct a pedestrian cycleway overbridge across that road. In his last public statement he said he understood the complexities of traffic problems within that area. He recognised that fatalities had occurred and he totally supported my demands for that overbridge to be built between Wollongong TAFE and Wollongong University. However, last year there was insufficient money in the pot to build that bridge. On 19th March, after a long campaign, an announcement was made that \$300,000 would be made available to have the off-load ramp of the F6 at Wollongong University extended to avoid a bank up of traffic entering Wollongong University. A spokesperson for the Roads and Traffic Authority, when interviewed about that particular matter, said:

Wollongong University students were endangering lives and damaging property by running across the F6 as a short cut, a Roads and Traffic Authority spokesman said yesterday.

The spokesman said students had continually damaged wire fences, put in place to deter them from crossing the busy freeway.

"We have a continuing problem with the protection fencing where students are cutting it

and using it as a short cut despite the best efforts of the university to educate them," he said.

"These are the leaders of tomorrow and they won't be told."

The spokesman said traffic in the university/Irvine St region was an ongoing issue, but it would be somewhat alleviated by a \$300,000 roadworks project.

The local RTA recognises the seriousness of the traffic problem and indicates it is having massive problems trying to maintain safety fences to prevent students crossing one of the busiest roads in the Illawarra. This problem can be resolved by the Government ensuring that funds are available in this year's Budget to construct the cycleway pedestrian overbridge. I know that designs already have been drawn up and plans are available. All that is needed is to tender for a contractor to build the bridge. I hope that further fatalities do not occur in the intervening period because that bridge should have been built 12 months ago. I call on the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Roads to make sure that funding is available. This is a dangerous area. Students will cross that busy freeway where coal trucks thunder along, day and night, in excess of the speed limit. Children cross that road, reach half-way and sit on the jersey barrier waiting for a break in the traffic to enable them to cross the next two lanes. If that project is not included in this year's Budget, there will be an outcry from the Illawarra area, in particular the university. The pedestrian traffic using the area will increase.

Three weeks ago, on a Sunday afternoon, a public meeting was held at Dallas Park. Honourable members should ask the Minister for Sport, Recreation and Racing and Minister Assisting the Premier about Dallas Street because his in-laws live there. I asked the Minister if he had spoken to his in-laws about this meeting. A vast number of people from that area complained bitterly about the noise emanating from Mount Ousley 24 hours a day, as it has for years. The residents are sick and tired of having asked this Government and other governments to install noise abatement infrastructure to alleviate the noise. The actual surface of the road has broken down to such an extent that the noise has increased in the past 12 to 18 months and is becoming unbearable. However,

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12 to 18 months ago I wrote to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Roads outlining residents' concerns and stating that they were subjected to a noise level of about 96 decibels. This is way above the accepted standard and is a definite health problem. The Deputy Premier wrote back to me and said that he would direct the Roads and Traffic Authority engineers in the Illawarra - Wollongong in particular - to keep an eye on the road surface to ensure that noise nuisance was kept to a minimum. The road has deteriorated to such an extent that large coal trucks change lanes to avoid the broken surface on that section of the road. Truckdrivers are abused by local residents because of the noise made by empty coal-trucks with tailgates banging and suspension rattling. Yet the Government will not give a firm commitment to resurface that road. Not only are residents complaining, but the Transport Workers Union, which represents truckdrivers who use that road, is fully aware of the problem. The union is critical of the complaints made about its members. The problem is not of their making. If the road were upgraded and resealed, there would be a reduction of 50 per cent to 60 per cent in the noise level.

I should mention also the Northern Distributor, another major road network in my electorate. Many of my constituents blame consecutive governments for the long drawn out construction program. Now that we are in striking distance of having the roadworks completed the Government has withdrawn funding and only two lanes of that road will be completed. From Bellambi Lane through to Towradgi Road where the

roadway has four lanes will be completed some time towards the end of this year. That is the only work that will be done on the highway. Laden coal-trucks will travel down that highway and empty trucks will return through the commercial centres of Fairy Meadow and Corrimal. Until that road is completed people will suffer. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

That road construction must be done. I have no doubt that if additional funding were made available and the Government made a real commitment, the Northern Distributor could be completed as a four-lane highway by the end of this year. That would alleviate many problems experienced by people in the Corrimal, Fairy Meadow and North Wollongong residential and commercial centres. As has been said on many occasions the Illawarra is one of the great coal producing regions of the State. It does an immense amount of good for the economy of the State. Coal from South Bulli will be carted along that road. Hundreds of trucks a week already travel through those commercial centres. Last week the Minister for Natural Resources spoke about saving jobs. Where was he last year when Coalcliff colliery was shut down and 149 jobs were lost? Only eight years earlier between 1,100 and 1,200 men were employed at the colliery. There has been a dramatic decline in employment there in the past few years, the first few years of this Government's term of office. Last year after an horrific accident in which three men lost their lives at South Bulli colliery, 120 men were sacked. Where was the Minister, who says he is fighting for jobs?

Mr SCULLY (Smithfield) [10.25]: In this Address-in-Reply debate I shall deal with the present budgetary situation in New South Wales. In particular I shall examine the level of indebtedness and the budget deficit. The Premier has defined his role as chairman of the board of New South Wales Inc. and defined his term of politics as being finance. According to his own criteria he is a failure. One need only look at the indicators for New South Wales - not the ones that the Premier selects as favourable but the indicators across the board - to realise that the figures do not stand up. Let me examine the history of this State from October 1987 when there was a share market crash. The Premier knows, for he has a Harvard degree, that following every share market crash there is a collapse of the property market. I do not need to tell the Premier

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or the Minister for Health Services Management that if there is a share market crash followed by a property market crash, there will be a decline in stamp duty receipts. The Premier, this great economic manager, told his party faithful that the Government would launch a campaign of public works expansion. As that was done, receipts fell. Any dill

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Mr Morris: What about Paul?

Mr SCULLY: This is the prize dill. The soon to become former member for Blue Mountains is talking about finance. The honourable member for The Hills used to talk about finance, and look what happened to him. The same thing will happen to the honourable member for Blue Mountains. He will be out after the next election. Any economic dill who frequents the Government benches will know that if income falls and expenditure increases, the budget deficit must increase. In New South Wales the budget deficit is approaching \$2 billion. I have figures for the seven months from 1st July, 1991, to 31st January, 1992. They compare the seven months reality with the Budget Estimates. It looks crook.

Mr Phillips: At least we publish them. You blokes never published them.

Mr SCULLY: The Government's guru from the North Shore points south and

talks about Victoria. He says, "Look at the economic indicators in that wicked State down south". There is a big difference between the respective States. The figures for Victoria were the result of bureaucratic banking sector gross incompetence. Well may the Minister laugh. He knows that the decisions made in New South Wales were not made by accident but by design. Does he suggest that the budget deficit was the act of some bureaucrat, or an incompetent decision within the public service? He knows that is not so.

Mr Beck: The honourable member was sick enough last week, but he is even sicker this week.

Mr SCULLY: The member knows the lies; he is good at telling them. He knows about the lies told before the last State election. He was in the Chamber when the Premier told the House that there would be a surplus this year and a surplus next year, when he knew that was a lie. He knew the figures. The estimate of deficit, not taking into account the sale of the GIO, was going to be \$1,000 million. The figures for the seven months to 31st January show that the deficit is already \$1.366 billion. Government members say that is okay, they have messed up the economy and wrecked the joint, so the prize jewel must be sold and once that is sold, all will be well. Early in the piece Opposition members almost believed that. When the legislation was introduced and the Opposition had to address some of the ideological baggage that the Labor Party has carried for many years - and I concede that, but members opposite now have to carry that baggage that they have to sell off -

Mr Phillips: Including hospitals?

Mr SCULLY: That demonstrates the Minister's mentality. He thinks everything is ripe to be sold. We do not say that. We say everything must be examined on a case-by-case approach. Some sectors of the economy are sacrosanct. On a case-by-case approach the Government will find that some things it is privatising we would not privatise, and the public would not want us to proceed with that privatisation. The Opposition almost copped the rubbish, the bull that the Government served up about the

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sale of the GIO and we said: "Alright the State is in ruins. We have to accept it. We have to cop it on the chin because we are about to assume government. We cannot go to the people of New South Wales and say, "Look at this incompetence; look at this oblivion into which we have almost pushed ourselves." We could not say we cannot sell it and then assume government when the baton is changed or when the election occurs at the end of the year. The Opposition has to support the sale of the GIO because the Government put us in the position where we had no choice. Look at the figures, \$1.75 million in the Budget Estimate. I say to the honourable member for Lane Cove - she is a lawyer, but has no economic nous - look at the Budget Papers; \$1.75 million is supposed to be the GIO sale price. Although the Minister did not tell us and the Budget Papers do not say it, that sum includes the so-called tax credit. Where is the evidence that this tax credit has been given by the Federal Government? The Minister said that the State Government will receive \$650 million because that is what happened in Victoria. So what? Where is the deal? Where is the money? Where is the proof? If this Government does not get \$650 million, all it will get is the sale price, which is estimated at \$1.1 million.

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Tink): Order! The honourable member for Smithfield will address the Chair.

Mr SCULLY: If the tax credit is not given by the Federal Government, the effect on the Budget will be disastrous. If the \$1.366 billion seven-month deficit is extrapolated to a 12-month period the budget deficit will be \$2.342 billion. If the GIO is sold for only \$1.1 million, the net deficit will be \$1.2 billion. Where is the surplus of \$600 million? It does not exist. The State Government has put New South Wales in the Thatcherite budgetary situation where year after year, a jewel has to be sold. The Government has already said that the sale of the GIO will produce a surplus. That is a lie. I have shown the Government the figures. There will still be a deficit. The Premier has said he wants to reduce debt, not increase it. It sounds good, but in reality, even with the sale of the GIO, net indebtedness will increase. The budget deficit will be added to the State's level of debt which is already \$51 billion. Next year the State will cop another billion and the Government will say, "let's sell the State Bank." The Government knows that now is the worst time to sell the State Bank. It will be sold for only \$300 million or \$400 million. If the bank is sold next year, the deficit will be \$1.6 billion instead of \$2 billion. In the third year what will the Government sell? This budget scenario effects a false sense of great performance. However, let us not forget the vision statement. What did the Premier do at his luncheon? When he was buttering his bread he dropped his glasses on it and he lost his vision. I read the Government's 20-page piece of flimflam and I thought: Where is the vision? Where is the mission? Where are we going? Absolutely no imagination; no novelty; no creativity; it was recycled from previous Government decisions or what the British Tory party had issued last July. It is very disappointing.

Mr Phillips: Like your speeches.

Mr SCULLY: Look at the fightback proposals. Has the Minister for Health Services Management read the fightback proposal? I bet he does not even know what is in it. Has the Minister read the one nation proposal? I concede that both of them were exciting, innovative projects which captured the attention of the nation. Whether the Minister agrees with them or not is another matter we can debate on another occasion. This vision statement is an absolute farce.

Mr Phillips: Will you repeat the same speech again?

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Mr SCULLY: I overheard the honourable member for Kiama speaking about the Minister for Health Services Management as the Minister for hoicking up his pants. A collection is being taken up to buy the Minister some braces. I do not know whether we will buy Mickey Mouse braces. My little boy has some which he loves, and I might get him to go to Pram City on the weekend and purchase a large pair. I hope the Minister will wear them. If the collection continues I might even put in a dollar. However, what did concern me in the vision statement was a reference to education. If there is one chasm that separates the Labor Party from the Liberal Party it is the Labor Party's commitment to social justice and equity. It is an absolute myth that this Government is concerned about removing inequities in the education system. One has only to look at a report by Professor Eltis in the weekend newspapers. There are some good things in the schools renewal statement there are some good things in devolving power to schools and devolving budgets to schools; I do not argue with that. The problem is that there is a downside. If a school is the sole source of budgeting and decision-making, then inequities in the system must result.

Last year one of my local schools raised \$6,000 from a fete. I said, "That's great, that's fantastic, well done." The school said: "Yes, but last year a school in

Strathfield raised \$24,000 in similar circumstances. How can we compete"? That particular school has a textbook allowance of \$20 per year and the pay-up rate is only 60 per cent. I said, "That's pretty crook". They said: "How can we compete when a public school at Epping has a \$130 annual fee with a 100 per cent success rate!" These problems have to be addressed by this Government. Inequities will occur. There is a disadvantaged schools program but there are not enough schools in it. If there is a total devolution of power, budgeting and influence on the school -

Mr Phillips: The inequities existed before.

Mr SCULLY: Of course they did, and they need to be addressed. They will get worse. I do not deny that inequities have not always existed. A number of teachers have expressed concern about the promotional system. Previously the listing system was used and no one wants to return to the inspectorial system, but a number of teachers have expressed concern that the interview panels have resulted in suspect appointments. I only have anecdotal evidence, I do not have any evidence of any particular school, but rumours are circulating that some of the interview panels have been stacked and that friends have been promoted.

Mr Phillips: They are rumours.

Mr SCULLY: They are rumours. I concede that. I have been told that teachers within schools have been promoted in numbers greater than the overall percentage.

Mr Phillips: Ask the parents and citizens what they think of it. They are on the panels too.

Mr SCULLY: I do not doubt it is a good idea. We had to move away from the anachronism and the dead weight where teachers were being pushed off the end of the conveyor belt. The promotion system had to be reformed. I am not sure what can be done. The promotional system needs to be reviewed and perhaps an appeal mechanism should be introduced if inequities arise and wrong decisions are made. However it is not necessarily a perfect system.

Mr Phillips: You are much better in the care and concern mode than you are in the insulting mode. I prefer this.

Mr SCULLY: Does the Minister think so? I believe it. I believe it when I am aggressive and not so aggressive. The Minister for Health Services Management has suggested I insulted him. I was in fact praising him. I bring to his attention the inequities in the promotional system so that he may take it up with the appropriate Minister. The vision statement mentioned air pollution. I am one of the members of the air pollution task force that the Leader of the Opposition has appointed from within the ranks of the parliamentary Labor Party. Next to jobs, air pollution is the most important issue facing the people of western Sydney. The report emanating from the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation and Macquarie University shows that pollution comes from Sydney, goes across to southwest Sydney and back up to northwestern Sydney. My electorate has an alarming number of people who suffer various health problems and I am glad the Minister for Health Services Management is in the House. If he wishes to dispute the figures I will argue those with him on another occasion, but I have seen figures which show an alarming increase of all types of diseases in western Sydney. It has been suggested that it could be the

socio-economic status of the people in western Sydney. Others have said it may well be the level of pollution that has occurred in my electorate for many many years. Monitors will be provided in 1994. I know the Minister for the Environment promised that we would have them earlier than that.

Mr Phillips: The truth is probably somewhere in the middle.

Mr SCULLY: The Opposition wants the facts. The honourable member for Londonderry said that we cannot wait. We need to know what is going on. The task force will get those facts and in due course the Opposition will make recommendations as to what should be done. I dare say that in the parry of debate some of those recommendations will be aired in this Chamber. The problem of pollution must be addressed and the biggest contributor to air pollution in this city is motor vehicles. I guess I should commend the Premier for raising the problem of emission controls, particularly with cars of more than 10 years old. If this issue is not solved we will face the consequences down the track. Earlier today, during private members' statements, I referred to FANMAC and the HomeFund scheme. I do not want to go on at length about this issue but if the Government does not deal with the problem of subsidising interest rates there will be defalcation in hundreds of loans and people will lose the life savings they put into their homes. The Government will have to bail out investments lodged by bondholders in mortgages, and properties will be worth less than the value of the mortgages. I invite the Minister for Housing to address this issue. If he does not, a future Labor government will have to do so further down the track. I should like to refer to the condition of roads in my electorate, in particular the proposed F4 tollway. It is well known that the Labor Party has undertaken to abolish the tollway. That will be an expensive budget item but it is writ in blood and I assure the House and the people of my electorate of my confidence that when the Labor Party is in office by the end of this year, that will be one of the first budgetary items implemented.

Mr Phillips: You will rue the day you said that.

Mr SCULLY: The Minister might say that with some amusement but when the Labor Party makes a promise, such as a promise to provide 2,500 extra teachers, or a promise to abolish the F4 tollway, it means it. When the Government makes promises, we laugh. Members opposite might well joke, but the Minister does not live in western Sydney; nor does the honourable member for Wakehurst, the member for upper

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bullamakanka or the member for the black stump. Honourable members opposite should come to western Sydney and talk to the local people.

Mr Hazzard: How further west can one go than the black stump?

Mr SCULLY: Does the honourable member know how to get to the western areas of Sydney? Has he ever travelled on the F4 Freeway? He should look at those roads and the associated infrastructure. He should tell the people of western Sydney that he thinks it is a big joke that the Labor Party has promised to abolish the tollway. Mr Acting-Speaker, you will appreciate that the Government parties are contemptible. You will appreciate that the budgetary situation in New South Wales is disastrous. The Premier having dropped his glasses in his sandwich, has lost the vision. He is not providing any hope for the future.

Mr Martin: He comes in here with a white cane.

Mr SCULLY: My colleague the honourable member for Port Stephens says that

the Premier comes in here with a white cane, and that is true. I am disappointed that the vision statement did not provide us with a vision. It was a piece of flimflam to shore up the backbench. If I were a Government member I would be a little worried - but not if I was the honourable member for Lane Cove because she will be here for a long time and so will the honourable member for Wakehurst. I am not so sure that the Minister for Health Services Management, the honourable member for Miranda, will be here for too long. If Government members were to wear mickey mouse braces, perhaps the Government would be in office for a little longer. The Labor Party will pick up the seats of Maitland and Blue Mountains. I am very disappointed with the Address in Reply and I wish the worst to the British sycophants opposite.

Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Hazzard.

House adjourned at 10.44 p.m.
