

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 23rd September, 1992

---

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

**Mr Speaker** offered the Prayer.

### MINISTRY

**Mr FAHEY:** I desire to inform the House that on 23rd September, 1992, His Excellency the Governor accepted the resignations of the Hon. Edward Phillip Pickering, M.L.C., as Minister for Police and Emergency Services, and the Hon. Terence Allan Griffiths, M.P., as Minister for Justice. On the same date His Excellency appointed the Hon. Edward Phillip Pickering, M.L.C., as Minister for Justice and Minister for Emergency Services and the Hon. Terence Allan Griffiths, M.P., as Minister for Police. The Minister for Justice and Minister for Emergency Services will be represented in this House by the Minister for Police.

### QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

---

#### POLICE ADMINISTRATION

**Mr CARR:** My question without notice is directed to the Premier, and Treasurer. On the Angus Rigg affair, is it the Premier's conclusion that the Commissioner of Police misled the former Minister for Police and Emergency Services?

**Mr FAHEY:** I indicated at some length yesterday my views on the Angus Rigg issue. I await with interest the report -

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

**Mr FAHEY:** - of the Office of the Ombudsman on that issue. I believe that ample explanation has been given of the matters that related to that issue, both in this House and in another place. I reiterate that I have full confidence in the Commissioner of Police.

#### POLICE ADMINISTRATION

**Mr CARR:** I ask a supplementary question. In view of the answer just given, if the Commissioner of Police did not mislead his Minister, how can the Premier argue that the Minister did not mislead the Parliament? Will he now agree that a quick inquiry by Judge Thorley, Chairman of the Police Board, is the only way to determine whether the Minister or the commissioner has lied?

**Mr FAHEY:** I indicate again that the matters relating to the Rigg issue have been canvassed at great length in this House and in another place.

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

Page 6300

**Mr FAHEY:** It is clear, and ought to be clear to all honourable members, that there was a breakdown of communication between the commissioner and the former Minister for Police. It is not in the interests of the people of the State for there to be a breakdown in that communication.

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

**Mr FAHEY:** It is important that there be a communication process that will ensure that the public and the Parliament are informed. In that regard, structures have been put in place to ensure that that will occur in the future. I have no doubt that a full information process will be available to ensure there is no lack of confidence in the Minister for Police and Commissioner of Police in the operations and administration of the Police Service. If the Opposition has something that it can add to this whole process, I suggest that it bring that forward because at this point in time I believe it has been amply covered.

#### **SYDNEY CASINO PROPOSAL**

**Mr HUMPHERSON:** My question without notice is directed to the Chief Secretary and Minister for Administrative Services. Can the Minister advise on what progress has been made on the establishment of a legal casino in Sydney?

**Mrs COHEN:** The honourable member for Davidson has displayed an interest in a venture which will provide important additional revenue for our State's health system. Honourable members would be aware that in April this year Parliament passed the Casino Control Act to provide for the establishment of one casino in this State and for the control of its operations. The Act constitutes a Casino Control Authority as the controlling body for the casino. Among other things, the authority will have responsibility for the selection of a casino operator and for approving the rules of games and gaming equipment. As soon as the Act was proclaimed, the Government placed advertisements in local and national newspapers for potential members of the authority. The 93 applicants were then assessed by an independent selection panel comprising Sir Laurence Street, Sir Maurice Byers and Ms Ita Buttrose. The panel recommended four appointments.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! There is too much audible conversation on the Opposition benches.

**Mrs COHEN:** I am happy to advise the House that today the Governor appointed three part-time members of the authority, including a chairman. The fourth preferred candidate for the position had previously withdrawn due to personal reasons and the Government will be re-advertising this position on Friday. This morning the Governor appointed also a full-time chief executive of the authority. The chief executive had been chosen, and approved by the Government, from a field of 60 applicants on the advice of a separate selection panel. This appointment was also approved by the Governor. The newly appointed Chairman of the Authority is Mr Christopher Cullen, a man with extensive experience in business and financial management, economic development and tourism. The two other part-time members are Ms Megan Alexander

and Mr Richard Dixon Hughes. The authority's chief executive will be Mr Lindsay Le Compte. The Crown Solicitor has advised the Government that the Casino Control Authority can commence operations with fewer than four members, and consequently the authority held its first meeting today. During that meeting I directed the authority to report back to me by 30th November on the location, size and style of the casino and any  
Page 6301

development which might be established as part of that complex. Also, I took the opportunity to advise the authority of the Government's preferences for the establishment of the casino. These include such things as: that the casino be positioned to take advantage of the views of Sydney Harbour and the city; that it have excellent access to the appropriate services; that adequate land be available; and that it be Crown-owned land.

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

**Mrs COHEN:** The establishment of a casino will add to Sydney's reputation as Australia's pre-eminent city. It will act as a drawcard for tourists and further enhance Sydney's bid for the year 2000 Olympics. Importantly, the casino and associated services will also provide up to 7,000 jobs and add considerable revenue to the State's health system for each of the first five years of its operation. That extra revenue - estimated at up to \$100 million a year - will provide an important boost to the State's health spending ability.

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

**Mrs COHEN:** However, I would hasten to add that it will not be the bottomless source of health funding which the Opposition would like to have people think, whenever it is asked to substantiate its health spending promises. I am fascinated by the number of projects and hospitals that \$100 million a year is supposed to fund.

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

**Mrs COHEN:** The process of establishing Sydney's casino must also be above reproach. The Government will not hurry this process. The Government has no intention of circumventing the legislation in order to hurry the process. The casino development in Sydney will be above reproach, as will its operator.

#### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTING PRACTICES**

**Mr BLACKMORE:** I address my question to the Minister for Local Government, and Minister for Cooperatives. What changes are being introduced to streamline accounting practices in local council? How will ratepayers benefit from this reform to council accountability?

**Mr PEACOCKE:** I thank the honourable member for Maitland for his continuing interest in honest and open local government. Since the establishment of the first local council in New South Wales in 1841, more than 150 years ago, councils in this State have collected funds from their ratepayers, and more recently from the Government as well, to provide services to their community. In the 1990s many councils are handling millions of dollars: they are major business organisations. In all that time there has never been a uniform accounting practice for councils. In some cases the accounting methods have not changed in more than 70 years, with rather quaint and idiosyncratic

systems being handed down like the Holy Grail from town clerk to town clerk. In the vast majority of cases councils opted for a system that is so complicated and crammed with irrelevant detail that the average ratepayer had no hope of making any sense of the documents that might be made available to the community. Indeed, one would have to be almost a Philadelphia accountant or lawyer to make sense of them.

Page 6302

The Department of Local Government itself had a tremendously difficult job in monitoring local government accounting procedures. Preparing the comparative performance indicators, for instance, which were presented for the first time last year was a huge job and a real eye opener for the officers involved. The accounting practices of some councils were so convoluted one needed to leave a trail of breadcrumbs so that one could find one's way out. I am pleased to report to all honourable members that all of that is now going to change: in January 1993 councils in New South Wales must start operating under the local government code of accounting practice and financial reporting. This unique policy is the product of several years of hard work not only by the Department of Local Government but also by various other departments and organisations. It will include the introduction of Australian accounting standard 27 by all councils. Several of the States have introduced AAS 27 but only New South Wales has recognised the need for overall reform. We have taken the reform of accounting practices to be a vital part of the revitalisation of the local government sector.

This new system will mean that for the first time councils will have to disclose all their assets. This means there will be no more hidden hollow logs. Councils will have to come clean on the total value of the council and the success or otherwise of its finances in the preceding year. In the past ratepayers had very little chance of figuring out how their councils had performed. From now on councils will have to provide a one page summary of their budget and the financial outcome and provide explanations in plain English. In other words, instead of being able to move the figures around they will have to show clearly the results of their activities. The reforms will require long-term budgeting details and plans to be clearly shown. Financial reports will now show the total value of the council and the depreciation of its assets over the year - very important information for councillors as well as the public. Too often councils have spent the ratepayers' money on questionable schemes or projects, and that spending was effectively camouflaged under any number of different budget headings. From now on if a council such as that at Liverpool, for instance, chooses to use the ratepayers' money for a gratuitous promotional campaign to boost the mayor's public profile in an outrageous campaign directed at government roadworks, the council will have to disclose all the costs of such an exercise.

In addition, legal costs incurred by councils will have to be disclosed. That was not required previously, but should have been. That means ratepayers will be able to see just how much councils spend on frivolous court actions, something which I am sure many ratepayers would like to know. An increasing number of councils seem not to have the courage to make decisions on local issues and want the Land and Environment Court to make the decisions for them. These court adventures cost ratepayers hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of dollars annually. Councils using ratepayers' money on political point-scoring exercises will also have to come clean on matters such as advertising, promotional campaigns and consultants used to further council lobbying. In the generally simpler format of accounting documents and annual reports, ratepayers will undoubtedly also find it easier to identify increases in things such as mayoral allowances. This will be particularly interesting to the residents of Leichhardt, for example, whose mayor has just been awarded yet another increase in his mayoral

allowance, bringing it to more than \$41,000.

The code is not popular with all councils. For many the prospect of change is too hard and very frightening. The prospect of being accountable to ratepayers is obviously not one they relish. Many councils and interest groups are claiming that the introduction of the code and the new accounting standards will cost ratepayers money because it will be expensive to introduce. I totally reject that criticism. Whatever costs  
Page 6303

are incurred will be more than covered by the savings a more efficient accounting system will bring. The reform of the local government sector in this State is something to which this Government is completely committed. To ensure the effective introduction of this code, the department is doing everything in its power to assist councils, council staff and ratepayers. The code has been published in plain English in a loose-leaf folder that can be constantly updated. Councils and interested people can purchase this kit from the department and will be supplied with updates for the next 12 months.

The department will be holding courses and seminars throughout the State and has already circularised councils asking how many staff they wish to send to the various courses. At the end of November this year a special hotline will operate out of the department to supply councils with immediate information. The development of this code is a major step forward and I congratulate those councils which are already implementing its requirements in the interests of their ratepayers. I am convinced that this code represents freedom for taxpayers to see exactly how their councils operate and that it will ultimately result in more efficient and cost effective operation of councils.

#### **POLICE ADMINISTRATION**

**Mr ANDERSON:** I direct my question without notice to the Premier, and Treasurer. Has the Commissioner of Police offered to provide statutory declarations from several police that, with other evidence, completely contradict the statement of the former Minister for Police and Emergency Services to the Parliament last week? Will the Premier now sack him from the Cabinet for misleading Parliament?

**Mr FAHEY:** The Commissioner of Police has not offered to provide statutory declarations to me in relation to this particular issue at all. As I have indicated on a number of occasions, this matter has been canvassed at some length and I do not believe there is any purpose in continuing with it.

#### **POLICE ADMINISTRATION**

**Mr ANDERSON:** I wish to ask a supplementary question. In view of the answer just given by the Premier, and Treasurer, in which he did not concede that the former Minister for Police and Emergency Services misled the Parliament, why did he not seek to have Parliament remove the Commissioner of Police?

**Mr FAHEY:** No matter how many times one tells them, nothing is very clear to those on the Opposition benches. It simply never gets through, because Opposition members have so many blind spots that it is impossible for them to believe anything that has occurred that might make some common sense and which does make sense to the great majority of people in this State.

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

**Mr FAHEY:** What has occurred is a breakdown in communication between the former Minister for Police and Emergency Services and the Commissioner of Police. It was not in the interests of the people of this State for that breakdown in communication to continue any longer than was necessary. Steps were taken to overcome that problem. As a result of those steps, there has been a change of responsibility for the police portfolio, as the whole world knows. In regard to the second part of the question, the events of the past few days have been canvassed at considerable length, particularly in  
Page 6304

another place. I can add nothing further to that other than to say that I do not believe the former Minister for Police and Emergency Services misled the House. I do not believe that in the circumstances he did anything other than show his genuine concern for the family of a boy who was involved in an incident.

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

**Mr FAHEY:** The Minister's concern was for the family of a boy who, as a result of events 14 months ago in a police cell at Milton on the South Coast, ended up being brain damaged and committed to a hospital. Because of that genuine concern, he raised the issue and sought to get information to the family of that boy. That is the main issue. Those opposite should forget the Minister, and forget the commissioner. They should think about what occurred in the Milton police cell.

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

**Mr FAHEY:** It is vital that that information comes forward in a comprehensive fashion through the proper channel, which is the Office of the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman's report will come to the Parliament in due course.

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

**Mr FAHEY:** I will pay particular attention to that report, and I hope all members of this Chamber will pay particular attention to it. Let us then judge what the issue is and what the position is in regard to the administration of that particular matter. It does not matter whether the former Minister for Police and Emergency Services was in Melbourne or elsewhere at that time. What matters is that he properly brought to the surface and into the public arena a matter which should concern every member. To continue to play side games clearly indicates how bereft the Opposition is, as I have said on other occasions, when it comes to the real concerns of the people of this State. Their real concerns have much to do with the Opposition's colleagues in Canberra.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! There is far too much interjection from the Opposition benches. The Premier has the call. I call the honourable member for Port Stephens to order.

**Mr FAHEY:** As I have said, the matters that are of vital concern to the people of this State include what is happening in the administration of the nation by Federal Labor and the pain that government has caused so many Australians.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! There is far too much interjection from both sides of the House. Such conduct does little to enhance the dignity of Parliament. The Premier has the call. As members well know, interjections lengthen the answers given by Ministers and, in the long run, reduce the opportunities of members to ask questions.

**Mr FAHEY:** The Federal Government is causing pain to many Australians because of the way it is maladministering this nation.

**Mr Whelan:** On a point of order. The question was simple. It related to the straightforward issue of whether the Commissioner of Police or the former Minister for Police and Emergency Services has lied. The question did not relate to the financial viability of the Federal Government. The question has no relevance to any issue other than the truth of the statements made by two senior people.

Page 6305

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! In the past I have upheld points of order based on relevance. As the Premier is straying from the essence of the question that was put to him, I ask him to either answer the question or resume his seat.

**Mr FAHEY:** When it comes to integrity, I have absolutely no doubt about the integrity of the former Minister for Police, who is now the Minister for Justice.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I call the honourable member for Smithfield to order for the third time. I call the honourable member for Newcastle to order. I call the honourable member for Heffron to order.

**Mr FAHEY:** I suggest that honourable members opposite would have grave doubts about the integrity of the Federal Treasurer, for example, who, in the course of delivering a budget, was dragged into the open -

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Chair will not tolerate this continuing barrage of interjections. I have recorded a number of members as having been called to order. I now deem all members who have been called to order so far on one, two or three occasions to be on three calls. Any of those members who attracts my attention from now on will leave the Chamber forthwith. I ask all members to co-operate in allowing question time to proceed in an orderly fashion.

**Mr FAHEY:** As I have indicated, the Federal Treasurer was dragged into the open on the question of -

**Dr Refshauge:** On a point of order. The Premier is obviously disregarding your ruling to the effect that the Federal Treasurer has nothing to do with whether Commissioner Lauer lied or whether the former Minister for Police lied. I ask you to direct the Premier to answer the question or resume his seat.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Though the Premier is addressing matters which I believe he considers go to the question of integrity, the scope of the question does not permit him to discuss matters of integrity in a broad frame. The Premier will either answer the question that has been asked or resume his seat.

**Mr FAHEY:** The question was about integrity. I have indicated I have absolutely no doubt whatsoever about the integrity of the former Minister for Police. By way of comparison, all members of the House would have to question the integrity of the Federal Treasurer -

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I cannot allow the Premier to continue in that vein. I ask him to resume his seat.

## DEATH OF JOHN BECKER

**Dr MACDONALD:** My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Police. Will the Minister indicate what improvement in surveillance practices is planned in view of the death of John Becker after he was detained in police custody in Manly police station last week?

**Mr GRIFFITHS:** John Adam Becker died at 11.50 on the morning of 18th September, 1992, in hospital. At the time of his death he was an American citizen, aged 26 and living in Manly. On the information available to police, it has been  
Page 6306

established that Becker had gone to the New Brighton Hotel, Manly, between 7 p.m. and 7.30 p.m. on the night of Wednesday, 16th September, where it is believed he spent two to three hours drinking. His movements between 11.30 p.m. and 12.45 a.m., when he was escorted to the police station by the Manly police, are unknown. He was identified by a local police officer, and subsequent inquiries indicated that he had four outstanding commitment warrants totalling \$2,200. He was charged and placed in the observation cells adjacent to the charge room. He was monitored throughout the night both by police personally checking on his welfare and by television monitor. On all occasions he appeared to be sleeping peacefully.

At about 7.30 a.m. Mr Becker was again checked and found to be experiencing some breathing difficulty. An ambulance was called and he was conveyed to Manly hospital. Medical tests conducted at the hospital indicated that he was possibly suffering from brain damage, though there were no outwardly visible signs of any injury. He was then transferred to the Royal North Shore Hospital where he underwent cranial surgery to evacuate a frontal subdural haematoma. Subsequently he was diagnosed as brain dead and, after consultation with his next of kin, life support systems were withdrawn. Clinical observation at that time indicated that Becker had ingested vomitus, restricting the flow of oxygen to the brain, which eventually resulted in brain death. At 5.30 p.m. on the same day a post mortem examination was performed on the deceased. A detective inspector from the north region internal affairs branch is reviewing the circumstances surrounding the events of Mr Becker's death, and the police handling of the case following queries raised by the deceased's stepfather, Dr Mayo. Concerns expressed by Dr Mayo have formed the basis of a complaint within the meaning of the Police Regulation (Allegations of Misconduct) Act. The Office of the Ombudsman has been notified of the receipt of the complaint, which will be the subject of an investigation monitored by that office. At this stage I am unable to comment further on this matter as the death has been reported to the coroner and is likely to be the subject of an inquest. I will keep the House and the honourable member informed of the progress of the coronial inquiry.

## DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT: COMMERCIAL COMPANY

**Mr CRUICKSHANK:** I address my question without notice to the Minister for Conservation and Land Management, and Minister for Energy. Has the Minister's department moved to establish a commercial company? If so, what are the functions of the new company?

**Mr WEST:** I am pleased to be able to report to the House today that the Land Information Centre at Bathurst, which is part of the Department of Conservation and Land Management, is becoming a commercial entity. In fact, within a few days of gaining permission from the Government to form an operating company, the Land

Information Centre has pulled off a \$1 million deal with the Government of Hong Kong. As part of the deal, it will form part of a consortium which includes the Lands Department of Guangdong Province in China and a Canberra-based firm, Candata Pty Limited. That consortium is putting the deal together. Honourable members will be well aware that the Bathurst Land Information Centre is the largest and most technologically advanced spatial information organisation in the southern hemisphere. Its goal is to be the best in the world. There is no doubt it is achieving that goal. There is a huge market for its expertise, as land departments around the world move from paper maps to a computerised digital format. The Hong Kong contract is to convert paper information to computer information.

Page 6307

The consortium won the contract against some fairly strong competition. It is to the credit of the Land Information Centre that it was able to compete with international competitors from countries including the United States of America and Great Britain. India, Taiwan, Malaysia and Hong Kong also competed for the job. The fact that Bathurst won against that competition is a credit to the people working there. I also believe that the success of the bid is a direct outcome of the sister State relationship between New South Wales and the Guangdong Province. Over the time of that relationship, New South Wales has helped train its Chinese partners in data conversion and, in 1990, I led a delegation to China which resulted in the establishment of a data conversion facility in Guangzhou. Approximately a third of the work for the Hong Kong contract will be done in Guangzhou and the rest will be done in Australia.

The Land Information Centre has trained 15 officers from the Lands Department of Guangdong Province in various aspects of data conversion. Nine officers have been trained in the use of Genamap and Microstation software, and six have been trained in systems support. Six officers from New South Wales have travelled to China to take part in training programs. As a result, I believe that New South Wales has been able to further advance many of the aims of the sister-State relationship. As a continuing part of the deal, New South Wales has supplied software and hardware to its partners and shares a common goal to sell our systems to the world. In two weeks, on 7th October, the Deputy Premier will officially open the Guangzhou data conversion facility. I believe that that occasion will cement another bond between New South Wales and the Guangdong Province.

I hope that there will be many more joint ventures between New South Wales and Guangdong Province as a result of the formation of this commercial arm. Already a number of other irons are in the fire. In the near future I propose to introduce legislation to set up the department's commercial company in a formal sense. It will be called Austinfo Pty Limited and its directors will be the Director-General and Deputy Director-General of the Department of Conservation and Land Management, and Mr Don Grant, the New South Wales Surveyor-General. Many honourable members will be aware that a lot of the data exchange information has been the result of a very close relationship that Mr Grant, as Surveyor-General, has established with the people of the Guangdong Province. I commend him for it. New South Wales will be in a position to sell its skills. We want the world to know that New South Wales and Australia is and can continue to be the clever country.

#### **REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT BOARDS**

**Mr JEFFERY:** My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for State Development, and Minister for Arts. What is the role of regional development

boards in this State? What action has the Minister taken to enhance their role in the development of regional areas?

**Mr COLLINS:** I take this opportunity to express my support for the work of the 11 regional development boards in New South Wales. They have played an extremely important role and I appreciate the efforts that the members of those boards have made in the interests of their regions. However, recently concerns have been raised through a series of stories in regional media, written representations from individuals and industry groups, and comments attributed to the recent national regional development conference held in Wagga Wagga. These matters have created some confusion over the Government's intentions and future involvement in regional development. Without doubt,

Page 6308

the role of State development is strongly supported by country people throughout the State. The department provides to me, as Minister, a network of regional advisory bodies through regional development boards and economic development councils for major metropolitan centres, western Sydney, the Illawarra, and the Hunter. It also provides a network of regional offices which provide business development services, small-business services, project facilitation and co-ordination, and a number of financial assistance programs with the capacity to assist the development of regional economic growth.

The role of regional development boards is heightened during an economic slump such as that which the Keating Government has inflicted on this country. The sheer scale of the current unemployment problem, its effect on so-called problem regions, and continuing structural change in the workplace is adding pressure to the role of regional development boards. Board members need to work harder to encourage economic development and business investment, and they have indicated every willingness to do so. On assuming responsibility for this portfolio, I became aware of media coverage and public concern regarding these boards and their future. Shortly thereafter, on separate occasions, I met with regional development board chairmen and representatives of the Country Mayors Association to listen to and discuss their concerns. At those meetings I expressed broad support for maintaining regional development priority within the State development portfolio, and I confirmed that the work of the boards will continue following the restructure of the Department of State Development. Also I undertook to initiate a review, which will include an extensive consultative process with all stakeholders in regional development, with the aim of fine-tuning existing programs to position State development agendas.

Further, following the review I intend to develop and release a comprehensive regional development policy statement as a demonstration of this Government's commitment to competitive economic growth in regional development priorities. A development plan needs to be developed for each of the boards with a clear set of goals for attracting the maximum business investment opportunities for each region. This can be achieved in concert with the recently announced regional development strategy study being undertaken by the Country Mayors Association, and I have directed my department to actively co-operative with the association. In addition, at present I am examining a proposal to convene regional forums on an annual basis, inviting the participation of local, State and Federal politicians - regardless of party allegiance - with the aim of encouraging local commitment to regional priorities. In this way economic strategies being developed for each of the respective regions will be integrated and will form the basis of a country New South Wales strategy. Regional development board chairmen have made public their broad agreement with me on this initiative.

I am exploring ways to work more closely with private sector and community-based organisations, and I will work in partnership with them where appropriate to the benefit of the economic growth of the regions throughout the State. The Government is committed to continual economic growth and development in country New South Wales, and that commitment is supported by all members on the Government side of the House. I trust it is equally supported by Opposition members. It is crucial that wherever possible we should work together to improve the state of the New South Wales economy and to create jobs for the future. Therefore, I commend the work done by regional development boards and I trust that when the annual forums take place next year they will have the support of all honourable members.

Page 6309

### **SOCIAL POLICY DIRECTORATE**

**Mr O'DOHERTY:** My question is addressed to the Minister for Community Services, and Assistant Minister for Health. What action is the Government taking through the Social Policy Directorate to support those people most in need in our community?

**Mr LONGLEY:** I thank the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai for his first question in this House and also on his maiden speech, which he delivered in this Chamber last night. The Government is committed to maintaining and strengthening support for the underprivileged, the powerless and those in need in the community. This is a primary obligation to the people of New South Wales.

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

**Mr LONGLEY:** This commitment was reinforced in last week's Budget with the Government's special measures for families and those affected by the Federal Labor Government's prolonged recession. The Social Policy Directorate - including the Office on Ageing and the Office on Disability - established by this Government is working to ensure that government departments and programs reflect and pursue the advancement of people who are disadvantaged. The directorate is now working with the Government's statutory enterprises to ensure that their operations do not adversely affect those in need. It is focusing on government programs generally to ensure that those who are marginalised in the community receive support from the Government. In addition, the directorate is promoting understanding and discussion within the community about social issues.

The establishment of the Social Policy Directorate acknowledges that community expectations of government communication and consultation are rising. People want to be informed by government and they want to express their opinion and to participate in the planning and design of services. The directorate has a key role in co-ordinating human service programs across the government sector to ensure that outcomes to clients are provided in the most appropriate way. To meet these ends the director, Ms Jane Schwager, has recruited staff with highly specialised skills including a thorough and practical understanding of the dynamics of major social issues, such as health, housing, employment, ageing, disability and welfare, and well-developed communication and public consultation skills to provide advice to the Government on a wide range of social issues and the substance of intergovernment relations. To give two examples of the Social Policy Directorate's achievements so far, to date the directorate has taken a key role in influencing the direction of the metropolitan strategy review. As a result, equity has now been adopted as one of the major guiding principles for the

strategy. This has ensured that a fair distribution of health, education and community services is recognised as a major issue in urban planning and in evaluating future options for urban development. And the directorate is promoting consultation to encourage government agencies to consult effectively and to provide better customer service.

The approach of the Social Policy Directorate is based on a set of principles which will improve the way in which services are delivered in the State. These include local knowledge and participation, variety and experimentation, total quality management, and, most important, equity and access, which must underpin the delivery of all government services. The Social Policy Directorate is about making assistance a reality to those who need it. The Government's strong focus on equity is, of course, reflected in a number of major initiatives outlined in the Budget. The \$10 million family support

Page 6310

package to assist families and individuals who have been severely affected by the harsh economic times was a major equity initiative. An additional \$81 million was allocated to the Department of Community Services for 1992-93, an increase of almost 11 per cent. The Government will also spend \$71.9 million to assist the homeless. Unemployed people generally and those specifically disadvantaged in the labour market will be further assisted by the maintenance and enhancement of well-targeted employment and training programs. There is also a renewed commitment to substantial public housing capital works programs and a positive approach to community housing. A number of initiatives for older people and people with disabilities also reflect the Government's commitment to principles of equity. The Government realises that as the population increases and grows older there will be a greater number of people with disabilities. These people require assistance and support through services which are innovative, flexible and responsive.

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

**Mr LONGLEY:** The 1992-93 Budget has increased expenditure on disability services by 10 per cent, reflecting its commitment to people with disabilities. The Social Policy Directorate recognises that to maximise the benefits of this increased expenditure there has to be co-ordination and co-operation between government and non-government service providers and consumer groups. The Government's establishment of area disability and community support services committees is evidence of its commitment to play its role in a consultative and co-operative approach to service planning, development and delivery. For too long people with disabilities have been afforded little recognition of their fundamental rights to take power over their own lives. This is something which should be of paramount concern to honourable members in this House. This Government's commitment to equity and fairness underpins its commitment to so many resources for people with disabilities.

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

**Mr LONGLEY:** There can be few issues of more importance to honourable members in this House than those relating to the disadvantaged, people with disabilities and those who have been severely affected by the policies of the Federal Labor Government. This Government is ensuring that the commitment to equity and fairness is reinforced in reality and that government policies and practices are reviewed by an agency whose sole focus is to guarantee fairness and equity for all people of New South Wales.

### **Eastern Distributor**

Petition praying that the House, because of the impending opening of the Sydney Harbour Tunnel, implement stages 2 and 3 of the Eastern Distributor, received from **Ms Moore**.

### **Serious Traffic Offence Penalties**

Petitions praying that laws relating to road accident fatality or injury be re-evaluated, received from **Mr McManus, Mr Newman and Mr Price**.

Page 6311

### **Shellharbour and Kiama School Bus Services**

Petition praying that the House recognise the need to establish a school bus service servicing children of the Shellharbour and Kiama local government areas enrolled at the Illawarra Christian School and Wollongong Community Christian School, received from **Mr Harrison**.

### **Fassifern Railway Station**

Petition praying that the House support the restoration of train services on the Newcastle-Central Coast line and provide easy access to platform No. 3 at Fassifern railway station by installing ramps to the existing overhead walkway bridge, received from **Mr Hunter**.

### **Newcastle Rail Services**

Petition praying that the rail line between Civic railway station and Newcastle railway station not be closed, received from **Mr Gaudry**.

### **State Rail Authority Heritage Buildings**

Petition praying that heritage buildings in the Newcastle region be allowed to be used by arts and crafts people and that Newcastle Contemporary Artists Incorporated be given approval to occupy a building on the Honeysuckle land for use as a gallery of contemporary art and cultural workshop, received from **Mr Gaudry**.

### **Adamstown School Buildings**

Petition praying that the House support the continued public ownership of the Adamstown School buildings, received from **Mr Gaudry**.

### **Brothels**

Petition praying that the Government will take no steps to legalise brothels and will close all existing brothels by enforcing the Disorderly Houses Act, received from **Mr Harrison**.

### **Rachel Forster Hospital**

Petition praying that the House direct the Central Sydney Area Health Service to

maintain the services and facilities of the Rachel Forster Hospital in their present form and location, received from **Ms Moore**.

#### **Aged Health Care**

Petition praying that the House ensure that admission to public hospitals is based on medical need, that hospitals are located conveniently for elderly people, that community health services needed by elderly people living at home are expanded, that a moratorium is placed on the closure of hospitals, and that the privatisation of hospital and other health services is stopped, received from **Ms Moore**.

#### **Lidcombe Hospital and Auburn District Hospital**

Petition praying that the House reject any proposals to cut back services or staffing at Lidcombe Hospital and Auburn District Hospital but instead support an increase in services and staffing at the hospitals, received from **Mr Nagle**.

Page 6312

#### **Northern Illawarra Hospital Services**

Petition praying that the proposed redevelopment of Bulli District Hospital be commenced immediately and that there be no further cuts to services or staff at the Coledale District Hospital or the Garrawarra Hospital, received from **Mr McManus**.

#### **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**.

#### **Hospital Waiting Lists**

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

#### **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**.

#### **Lucas Heights Hazardous Waste Disposal**

Petition praying that the House cease the dumping of hazardous wastes, implement policies for waste avoidance, minimisation and recycling, and abolish plans to expand the existing Lucas Heights tip, received from **Mr McManus**.

### **JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE UPON THE CONSTITUTION (FIXED TERM PARLIAMENTS) BILLS**

#### **Final Report**

**Mr KERR** (Cronulla) [3.8]: I bring up and lay upon the table of the House the final report of the Joint Select Committee upon the Constitution (Fixed Term Parliaments) Bills. I also bring up and lay upon the table of the House the transcript of the evidence taken before the committee.

**Ordered to be printed.**

**APPROPRIATION BILL BUSINESS FRANCHISE LICENCES (PETROLEUM PRODUCTS)  
AMENDMENT BILL**

**MOTOR VEHICLES TAXATION (AMENDMENT) BILL**

**ROAD IMPROVEMENT (SPECIAL FUNDING) AMENDMENT BILL**

**Second Reading**

**Debate resumed from 22nd September.**

Page 6313

**Mr ARMSTRONG** (Lachlan - Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs) [3.9]: It is a pleasure to speak in this debate on the 1992-93 New South Wales Budget. At the outset, I congratulate the Premier, and Treasurer and the Minister for Finance for coming up with what has been hailed throughout the community as an appropriate budget for New South Wales during these very difficult times. The most disappointing aspect of the debate was the response yesterday of the Leader of the Opposition. It is traditional and paramount under the Westminster system - for it to work and function correctly in the best interests of the broader electorate - that there be an informed, intelligent and objective Opposition, particularly with regard to matters of policy and finance. It is a reasonable expectation. Yesterday the Leader of the Opposition in his reply to the Budget Speech repeated, with the exception of a few changed figures and names, the reply he delivered to the previous Budget of the Government. It is disappointing. I am sure the broader community is disappointed that the balance which is expected under the traditional Westminster system is not present.

From my perspective as one of the longest serving members in this House, and particularly as Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs, I am most disappointed that the response of the Leader of the Opposition paid scant regard to country areas of New South Wales in general and to the major income earning areas of primary industry in particular, notably mining and agriculture. It is universally acknowledged by those who have any semblance of intellect in financial management that when primary industry and agriculture in New South Wales return to profitability, this State and Australia will commence their recovery. I dare say that the Leader of the Opposition would virtually ignore these industries. If there were ever in the future a change of government in the State - a most unlikely event considering the standard of the present incumbents of Opposition benches - that recovery would not come about. The Opposition demonstrated yesterday not only that it ignores primary industries but also that it does not have alternative policies. All honourable members in this place are expected to contribute by their forward thinking. If the Leader of the Opposition cannot do that, there is not much chance for those who sit on the benches with him.

This Budget could be best described as a "people and services" Budget. It meets the collective goals of enhancing front line services to clientele; encouraging

primary industry as a basis of "multiplier effect"; recognising the seriousness of rural recession; and maintaining a strong, profitable, sustainable farm sector while projecting marketing as a key initiative. The Government has maintained its commitment to agriculture through the outlay of \$144.6 million. That contrasts quite starkly with Labor budgets. In the seven years to 1987-88, Labor government outlays to agriculture, forestry and fishing fell by an average of 1.37 per cent per annum. Over Labor's last two budgets to 1987-88, these outlays fell a staggering 14.5 per cent per annum. The graph of financial support for these terribly important industries was on a rapid decline as the budget contracted by 14.5 per cent in the last two years of the Labor Party's occupation of Treasury benches. In constant dollar terms, or real terms, outlays by Labor in 1987-88 were less than those in 1979-80 - a decade prior. To show the contrast over the same period, Labor's payments on interest on public debt increased by more than 10 per cent. So while its support of agricultural industries was declining at 14.5 per cent per annum, Labor's mismanagement saw the debt servicing cost increase by another 10 per cent. If those two factors are added together, with agriculture picking up its share of the debt, outlays were declining at a rate of 24.5 per cent.

The Budget of the Premier, and Treasurer and the Minister for Finance, Assistant Treasurer, and Minister for Ethnic Affairs includes the allocation of \$200,000 for the rural women's network program, to be used to cover the costs of a co-ordinator,

Page 6314

an assistant, the State advisory committee, seminars, workshops, conferences, pamphlets and newsletters. Again this total initiative of this Government has received universal acclaim throughout towns and farms across the State. Total outlays to the rural counsellors program for this year will be more than \$750,000. That includes a special one-off allocation of \$300,000 as part of a family support package. This enhancement means that the Government will fund the second year community portion of costs in view of the rural recession. The community normally pays one-quarter of the total costs of rural counsellors, usually between \$22,000 and \$25,000. The outlays totalling \$750,000 will certainly take some of the pressure off many communities in these extraordinarily difficult times in country New South Wales. The enhancement recognises the vital role of counsellors in giving financial advice and social and emotional support in the face of sometimes unprecedented pressure on rural households. This enhancement is especially important as 73 per cent of the New South Wales land mass is still drought declared. The combined impact of the counsellors program and the rural women's network is the provision of a comprehensive new service to farm and town families.

An amount of \$5 million has once again been provided for the destruction of noxious weeds on unoccupied Crown land. When this funding is undertaken on a dollar-for-dollar basis with local government, more than \$10 million will be spent this year on the control of weeds. An amount of \$100,000 has been provided for the maintenance and relocation of travelling stock routes; \$100,000 has been provided for grants to animal welfare organisations; \$855,000 has been allocated to cover staff costs associated with the department's relocation of employees to the new head office in Orange; \$351,000 is to accommodate New South Wales' contribution to the Australian Standing Committee on Agriculture programs; \$565,000 has been approved for the Dipsite Management Action Committee, or DIPMAC. This will cover the cost of the project team, community liaison and additional research. It will also enable an early commencement of remedial work to rectify some of the problems with over 1,600 dipsites on the North Coast of New South Wales.

On drought, \$5 million is being spent on transport subsidies for the movement of livestock, fodder and water. The total cost of the drought since early 1991 is some \$23 million, a staggering figure. The Government has been pleased to provide this, but is

sorry that it was necessary because it means that people have suffered since 1991, throughout the drought period. The Government will continue to stand by those affected by drought in New South Wales. Hopefully in the spring months, especially over the next six weeks or so, we will see some considerable relief. An additional \$7 million has come from the Federal Government for special drought relief through the Rural Assistance Authority. This became available in July, mainly as a result of representations made by New South Wales in outlining the extremely serious state of the far Western Division of New South Wales. Other special outlays by the Rural Assistance Authority to meet current rural downturn include: \$9 million for special conservation schemes; \$2 million for natural disaster relief; \$1.5 million for a special scheme for oyster growers; and matching funds of \$4.36 million for part B of the rural assistance scheme. All this is in addition to anticipated receipts from the Federal Government Rural Assistance Authority of \$45.6 million. Approximately 88 per cent of the entire New South Wales Agriculture budget is designated to front line services to provide advice and assistance to the rural sector. This has been achieved despite a declining global revenue base for the State Budget.

An amount of \$71 million has been allocated to plant industry programs concerned with pastures and all field and horticultural crops. This includes the regulation of plant imports and exports and research into crop disease, pests, nitrogen deprivation

Page 6315

in soils, and safety and quality standards for fertilisers and cereals. Research programs and achievements in animals and plants include the use of ultrasound to detect cattle marbling. This breakthrough in technology will enable a much better management program for producers, processors and the ultimate purchasers - optimum use of water supplies, and analysis of requirements for the sheep skin trade. That is particularly important for some investments currently under way. Hopefully it will result in an improved leather industry in New South Wales. It is necessary that we understand a lot more about the quality of skins, the geographic regions that the skins come from, and the requirements of the trade. Research has also been undertaken into the boosting of nitrogen and reduction of weed competition through crop rotation, studies into cereal rye options, and maximising returns to malting barley.

Animal industry programs have been allocated \$59.3 million. One such program is the modified cattle tick control program. For support and advisory services, including marketing and economic and export development services, \$20 million has been allocated. There has been a maintenance of agronomist presence at Rylestone, Kempsey and Lockhart. Mr Malcolm Gwilliam was appointed to Rylestone yesterday. He was a lecturer in agronomy at the Murrumbidgee College of Agriculture at Yanco. We must look to this Budget for further achievement. A Baillieu Knight Frank study indicates that the relocation to Orange will result in savings of \$17.1 million over 10 years, expanding to \$56.7 million over 20 years. That takes into account costs of remaining in expensive Sydney accommodation, the efficiency of the new head office layout, and likely rental savings at Orange.

I am delighted to note that the Federal coalition fightback package includes decentralisation of parts of the Federal Department of Primary Industries and Energy. Once again New South Wales has led the way not only for Victoria and Queensland but also for the Federal Opposition, which will follow our example when elected as the Commonwealth Government shortly. Rent at McKell House, the former headquarters of New South Wales Agriculture in Sydney, at the time of relocation was more than \$4 million per annum but the initial rent in Orange is \$2.15 million per year. Further, the small, efficient and highly respected Agsell unit is continuing its series of achievements,

including: \$157 million plus in a wool joint venture deal with China, announced some months ago; other wool orders to China valued at more than \$10 million, effected in recent days; the first wool export to Bulgaria directly from Australia in more than 40 years; 20 containers of biscuits to Japan valued at \$1.2 million; exports totalling more than \$5 million in fruit, vegetables, biscuits, seafood, jams, confectionery, assorted grocery items and wine; establishment of a grain legume processing plant valued at more than \$10 million, employing a minimum of 50 people; and more than \$1,300 million in viable investment planned for New South Wales now under investigation.

When Agsell was established in 1989 we considered that our most difficult task would be to identify buyers, especially those from Asia, for Australian food suppliers and manufacturers. Experience has shown that identifying buyers is relatively easy. The difficulty has been to find local suppliers willing and able to modify their products to suit Asian consumers, to be internationally competitive in giving assurances on continuity of supply, price and quality, and to ensure that the relationship regarding information exchange will be maintained. In the past many Australian processors, wholesalers and exporters have not been reliable. I must say significant improvements have occurred in the last couple of years and I look forward to those improvements continuing. It is absolutely essential that our reputation in dealing with Asia becomes impeccable. Asia is the future of Australian primary industry. It is beyond doubt that through our Agsell division in this State we have made significant steps in giving those assurances in

Page 6316

particular to Japan, Hong Kong, Southern China, Brunei and Malaysia. It is vital that we continue with these programs and that the public recognises that those essentials need to be satisfied.

Recently Agsell staff have concentrated on building better relationships with local suppliers and manufacturers in an attempt to overcome these supply problems. Over the past few months a remarkable change in attitude and response by a considerable number of major potential suppliers has occurred. In the new commitment to export, especially to Asia, we need to recognise that we have to become internationally competitive by tailoring products to customers' specific requirements and improving quality and reliability. Many local companies now recognise the value of having Agsell directly involved in their export activities. It is refreshing to see a marked rise in new products developed by local food industry. Again, that is good news for the economy, jobs and industry growth. For instance, in the dairy industry exciting new products and promotions have been launched. The product known as Farmers Best, a modified, low-fat, cholesterol-free milk product launched by Australian Co-operative Foods has an estimated potential from international licensing of a minimum of \$80 million within five years. That product is a great breakthrough in the industry and I recommend it to any honourable member who has not tried it. Another example is the Frûche range of products developed by Allowrie Foods, a type of product between a frozen yoghurt and custard, with a reputation of being ahead of any similar product worldwide.

I can reveal that Norco is about to launch new soft frozen yoghurt similar to soft ice cream in flavour and texture. That product has enormous potential in domestic markets and especially in Asian markets. These new attitudes suggest that our local food industry will lead the race to become the major supplier of value-added foods to countries on the Asian Pacific rim - the fastest growing markets in the world. One of Agsell's successes was with the giant international company Yaohan, now based in Hong Kong, formerly from Osaka. Agsell and Yaohan have formed a successful business relationship. We are currently organising a series of food fairs in Yaohan stores for New South Wales produce. Yaohan has stores on four continents. Agsell at Yaohan's International Merchandise Mart in Singapore will shortly play host to one of our senior

staff from New South Wales Agriculture who will be training and studying Asian selling methods. Mr Ado Zanella will take up his appointment later this month. Senior IMM managers have agreed to establish a permanent display area for food and beverages from New South Wales. That is a breakthrough. This State has the only non-Asian presence in that massive 25-acre international food mart.

On the other side of the equation - farm costs - the latest figures from the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics show that New South Wales is remaining better than the average across the nation. In fact, during the two years to 1992-93 farm costs in New South Wales have actually fallen. Across Australia costs have at best remained static. The Government is determined to boost farm profitability because that benefits the entire economy. We have endeavoured to keep Government costs and charges to an absolute minimum. In addition farmers in New South Wales have had costs of fuel and lubricants reduced by 0.8 per cent in the second quarter this year; the cost of seed, fodder and livestock were down 4.8 per cent in the second quarter and total costs of production excluding capital items have fallen 3.7 per cent. Over the past financial year, costs are down for all production inputs on average.

I turn to meat inspection. In 1983 the Government entered an agreement with the Federal Government whereby the Commonwealth agreed to accept 100 per cent responsibility for meat inspection. That move was supported at the time by the

Page 6317

conservative Liberal-National Opposition on the basis that genuine savings would occur. The Federal Government has since moved to full cost recovery for inspection services provided by the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service, but has failed to deliver full management savings as promised by the elimination of duplication of inspection services. On 1st August, at the same time as the Federal Government implemented full cost recovery, it also abolished small works subsidies, effectively giving small works a double slug of increased charges. In November 1991 Mr Griffiths promised a 25 per cent reduction in meat inspection costs. However, Murwillumbah abattoir has had its charges increased from \$14,000 to \$77,000 per annum, an increase of more than 300 per cent.

Before the Budget was delivered the Labor spokesman on agricultural affairs, the honourable member for Port Stephens - who I notice has left the Chamber - talked about loss of jobs in this State. He went scaremongering throughout the central west of the State but has been proved completely wrong. He said the Budget would bring a 10 per cent cut but he has been proved completely wrong. After the Budget he was interviewed but could only say that funding for agriculture was adequate. Radio interviewers could not find any significant comment by him on agriculture to quote him. The ABC "Country Hour" was forced to run a sentence or two by him on matters completely outside departmental outlays. It is about time the Leader of the Opposition replaced the honourable member for Port Stephens because he is not doing his job and does not have the confidence of the constituency. This Budget is built on a highly successful 1991-92 financial year. Agriculture under the Government has progressed. This State probably has the most successful agriculture-based economy in Australia today. The Government, represented in particular by the National Party, is determined that agriculture will continue to be the mainstay of the New South Wales economy and will have full support in research, development and marketing. Once again I congratulate the Premier, and Treasurer on the excellence of this Budget.

**Mr KNIGHT** (Campbelltown) [3.29]: This Budget is a metaphor for the Fahey Government itself: at first glance it seems nice enough, just as the Premier at first glance seems nice enough after four years of Greiner; but, like the Premier himself, it is very short on substance. Whether you liked or hated a Greiner budget, you always respected

a Greiner budget, because a Greiner budget always had some substance. We did not like the nature of the substance but we respected the fact that it was there. This first Fahey Budget - or rather this Souris Budget, because it is really the work of the Minister for Finance, Assistant Treasurer, and Minister for Ethnic Affairs - is a document that is long on rhetoric but short on substance. How the reality fails to live up to the rhetoric is easiest to see in the case of the GIO privatisation. The Government ran a series of advertisements at enormous public expense promoting its privatisation campaign as a way for the community to get more nurses, more teachers and more police. Amongst the print advertisements were the following: a big full page advertisement with the headline "Privatisation is for everyone. It means more money for hospitals". There was a lovely introductory paragraph:

We all want better hospitals and more medical staff. With the money raised by privatising certain government businesses we can reduce the burden of State debt and make more funds available for important community needs such as hospitals, roads, schools and the police.

There was another full-page advertisement headed: "Privatisation is for everyone. It means more money for the Police Service". What happened in the Budget? There are no more nurses; there are no more teachers; and there are no more police officers. What does the Government have to say about that? When Quentin Dempster asked the obvious question of the Premier on the "7.30 Report" on the night of the Budget we got a

Page 6318

stumbling, fumbling, bumbling performance in which he tried to claim that somehow or other at some indeterminate date in the future when needs had been fully assessed there really might just be more nurses, more teachers and more police. He just could not say when, how many or at what cost. At least the Secretary of the Treasury, Percy Allan, had the good grace to look embarrassed when he was asked the same question. When the "7.30 Report" asked Percy Allan where the extra teachers, nurses and police were he looked very embarrassed, turned back to his graphs on the wall and tried to answer a question other than the one that was asked - because while he is not paid to expose the Government, he is not paid to lie for it either. The pure, unadulterated truth - as Percy Allan certainly knows it, George Souris probably knows it and John Fahey perhaps knows it - is that the benefits promised to the New South Wales public from the GIO privatisation have not materialised, and under this Government will never materialise.

All the small investors - the mums, the dads, the pensioners, the working men and the working women, who were induced by the mega advertising campaign which the Government used the taxpayers' money to fund - were duded when they bought GIO shares. Moreover, they were duded twice. First, they have lost their money. The shares are trading considerably below what these people paid for them after being induced by the advertising campaign to believe that the shares would sell at a premium. People with no experience of buying shares put their savings into the GIO float, only to find they have lost money. Second, they cannot even take comfort in knowing that their loss has been the community's gain in terms of better health, better education and better law and justice. A third point that must infuriate those people is that the GIO float was marked by waste, mismanagement and extravagance. Indeed, as the paper issued last week by Michael Howard and Professor Bob Walker of the University of New South Wales clearly shows, the cost of the privatisation and the GIO float was virtually twice what it cost the Commonwealth Bank to raise an equivalent sum from a public float.

Professor Walker has exposed this. This matter has been raised in the Parliament at question time. Ministers - the Premier and other Ministers - have not been keen to answer. The Minister for Finance, George Souris, responded without any indication of the Government being at fault or any substantive criticism of Professor Bob

Walker. He responded instead with a bitter and personal savage attack. And of course he was wrong. As a document released to parliamentarians today by Professor Walker shows, the Minister for Finance not only was wrong but misled the House. The Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Finance said in the Parliament in question time on 17th September, "The correct figure of \$61 million is in the Budget Papers and has not been concealed". That is George Souris' position: that privatisation cost \$61 million all up and it is there for everyone to see in the Budget Papers. By that evening on the "7.30 Report he had to admit, "The \$71 million is not disputed. These figures are available in the Budget Papers". They were certainly disputed by the Minister for Finance some five hours earlier in the House, and they are certainly not easy to find in the Budget Papers. As Professor Walker points out in his document released today, there has been a range of activities in the construction of the Budget designed to hide the full cost of the GIO privatisation from public view. He said:

The only direct reference to costs of the GIO float is in the statement that \$40 million has been budgeted for 1992-93. The \$21 million spent in 1991-92 is not identified as being associated with the GIO float in any way, shape or form. Another \$10 million was only reported in the GIO prospectus.

That obviously raises the question: What other hidden costs are associated with the GIO privatisation that Professor Walker and others are yet to discover? At first the Government concealed the cost. Then it put a figure of \$40 million in the Budget. When the Minister for Finance was caught out he told the Parliament the cost was \$61 million.

Page 6319

When he was further caught out he admitted that the cost was \$71 million. What we really want to know is what else is hidden. What costs have yet to be itemised, included in the Budget or included in the GIO's own documentation? The Minister for Finance owes the House an apology for misleading it. He owes an apology to Professor Walker for his vicious and unsubstantiated personal attack. He should also get advice from the former Premier, who can tell him what happens to people who attack the credibility of Professor Walker. That is exactly what Nick Greiner did in the lead-up to the last State election. He was subsequently forced to apologise. The Opposition is happy to see people such as the Minister for Finance attacking Professor Walker, because a government attack on Professor Walker's economic literacy and financial credibility fills us with the same degree of joy that we would derive from Malcolm Mackerras predicting that the Fahey Government will be re-elected.

Earlier, in referring to the absence of teachers, nurses and police in the Budget, I said that Percy Allan definitely knows it, George Souris probably knows it, and John Fahey perhaps knows it. No one can be sure exactly who knows what when the Treasurer and the Assistant Treasurer are involved. In the post-Greiner Cabinet, control of Treasury has shifted from a clear and unambiguous chain of authority with Nick Greiner at its top into a mad jamboree of Ministers, aspiring Ministers and advisers. It is hard to tell who is steering the ship of State when the participants themselves have trouble deciding even where to look for the tiller. The Liberal Premier, and Treasurer cannot see Treasury documents without their first being approved by the National Party's finance Minister. Indeed, the whole process of preparing the Budget virtually ground to a halt when George Souris was junketing at the Barcelona Olympics. Nothing could be passed on to the Premier, and Treasurer because the assistant Minister, the National Party tail that is wagging the dog, was out of the country.

But the Finance Minister does not even have confidence in the Treasury. He does not really trust the secretary, Percy Allan, nor his deputy, Michael Lambert. So he

keeps resorting to a mad coterie of friends and personal advisers. He recently even tried to set up an alternative group within his own office to try to administer the Treasury. Fortunately, one person he approached to take that job, former Wran adviser Nigel Stokes, declined - not simply for philosophical reasons but also because he understands what a stupid idea that is. Given this background, I suppose we should be pleased that there was a budget to present at all. To paraphrase Dr Johnston's remarks about dogs standing, it is not so much a surprise that it is done poorly as a surprise that it is done at all. The fairly amateurish sleight of hand with the GIO commitment in this Budget is the most obvious example of the substance falling well short of the rhetoric, but it is not alone. One of the centrepieces of this Budget is supposed to be job creation. Indeed, the rather hopeful slogan for this budget is "Confidence creates jobs". The reality is that the Treasurer's own claim and guess is that the so-called one-off capital works boost can be claimed to add only 6,000 jobs.

Even if one accepts this wonderfully rounded guesstimate, one must have grave doubts about when, if ever, the figure will be reached. Capital works job estimates are notoriously wobbly, but the timing of the creation of any jobs is particularly contentious. Significantly, \$386 million of this so-called one-off boost to capital works is actually unspent capital works money from last year. In other words, the Government could not spend last year's capital works funds to create the jobs that were said to be created by the 1991-92 Budget. That obviously does not inspire any confidence that the Fahey Government can spend this year's capital works allocation with anything like the speed necessary to create the claimed jobs. Rather than confidence creating jobs, it is far more likely that ineptitude and fumbling will create delay. Even if one suspends logic and

Page 6320  
accepts that 6,000 jobs will be created in the 1992-93 financial year, that is still 1,350 less than the 7,350 real jobs that the Fahey Government is abolishing in the public sector. The Government claims that the 6,000 jobs it will create are real, long-term jobs. Yet it presents no evidence to show how or why people employed on construction projects will have jobs after those projects are completed. However, the 7,350 jobs that the Government is simultaneously abolishing are certainly positions occupied by real people, which would have continued had it not been for the intervention of the Fahey Government. So the Budget will result in a net reduction of jobs.

With regard to the fanciful claim that multiplier effects will create 18,000 jobs, it is strange that the Government believes in a positive multiplier effect for the jobs it claims it is creating, but does not seem to realise the jobs it is abolishing have a negative multiplier effect. The Labor Party is not absolutely and rigidly opposed to a restructuring of the public sector. Indeed, Bob Carr, the Leader of the Opposition, indicated his commitment to restructuring in his speech yesterday. But under Labor any public sector restructuring will be done openly and honestly. One cannot maintain credibility when one tries to claim that a net job reduction is a job-creation policy. While I am dealing with the capital works program let me again remind the House that, as the Hon. Michael Egan has pointed out, the substance of the capital works boost falls far short of the rhetoric. In 1992-93, \$5,894 million is allocated to capital works, but, as Mr Egan has pointed out, \$386 million of that is unspent funds from the previous financial year. If that unspent money from last year is deducted, this year's capital works program actually has \$9 million less. Yet an additional \$227 million of that has come from the Federal Government - the same government that the Premier seemed so keen to attack today when he was in trouble about the state of his administration in regard to the relationship between the former Minister for Police and Emergency Services and the Commissioner of Police.

Those of us like you, Mr Speaker, who were in this House in 1982, 10 years ago,

will recall that the Wran Government brought down a budget designed to combat the Fraser Federal Government recession with a capital works boost for jobs. The capital works document we saw at that time was a much more substantial, weighty and useful document than the one brought down by Premier Fahey a week ago. Generally this Budget lacks substance. The reality falls far short of the rhetoric. Although I have given some fundamental examples of that - the GIO privatisation, the capital works program and job creation - the whole document is riddled with fiddles. That is an endemic at the local level as it is in the big picture. I should like to turn briefly to my electorate of Campbelltown and a document sent to me by the Treasury called "State Capital Works Program for the Electorate of Campbelltown". The actual capital works referred to in that document are the smallest part of it. The explanation of the document and the lists of people to telephone for an explanation of how Treasury works far outweigh the scant number of capital items which have been allocated.

Campbelltown court house is claimed to be a capital work. In fact, the only capital work outstanding there is the last little bit of tidying up of a project that was initiated by the previous Labor Government. Capital works are claimed in housing. In reality, that relates to construction of housing for people who are homeless, primarily in areas other than Campbelltown, so that they can come and live in Campbelltown and use the services in Campbelltown which the Government, because of the paucity of its capital works funding, is not supplementing. The next item is the Kearns Public School, a school that has been built and is operating most effectively. The children and staff are attending the school, and again in some strange way the Government justifies a tiny bit of tidying up work as being listed as a major capital work. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

Page 6321

The only genuine benefit to my electorate relates to car parking at railway stations. However, the electorate is receiving that benefit because it is an allocation from the State Rail Authority line manager, in which the Government could not intervene. The Government claims a boost to TAFE services with the construction of new accommodation blocks. All of that money comes from the Federal Government; not a cent comes from the State Government. The Government claims that capital works in my electorate will benefit from the build, own, operate and transfer scheme for water plants, yet there is no State funding in that proposal. The elimination of the Minto level crossing will proceed after years of broken promises, lies and deception. It was not until Campbelltown council and the community embarrassed the Government by first putting up its share that the State Government provided any funding. The Government is belatedly finishing that project.

The project which really sums up the Government's attitude to capital works in the Campbelltown electorate is the proposal to construct an overbridge at Narellan Road near the boundary between the Campbelltown electorate and the Camden electorate. This significant proposal has been costed at \$9.35 million, a significant capital work. Even a member of the Opposition would have to pay tribute to a government that initiated such a project. However, in the 1992-93 financial allocation how much is the Government offering towards this \$9.35 million project? It is offering the remarkable sum of \$10,000. That will certainly not go very far towards constructing an overbridge. That sums up the Government's attitude to capital works in Campbelltown electorate and, to some extent, it sums up the whole nature of the Budget.

On social occasions Gary Sturgess likes to tell a little story. Whatever his sins, he has never been a member of the Liberal Party. I acknowledge that the story is sexist, but it is not my story; it is the story of the head of the Cabinet Office. He asks, "Do you

know what the difference is between the Liberal Party and the Labor Party?" He says, "The Labor Party is like a husband who occasionally misbehaves, occasionally comes home drunk, and may well on occasions even hit his wife. But there are redeeming features. The Labor Party has got balls, it has got a little bit of commitment, it has got some heart and can actually perform". According to Gary Sturgess the Liberal Party is like a little man who comes home in his tightly-buttoned suit with his hat. He puts his unopened pay packet on the kitchen table every Friday night, and is totally impotent. That is how the head of the Cabinet Office sees it.

In summary it is interesting to return to the Sturgess analogy and the Budget. Premier Fahey has been enjoying a honeymoon with the electorate. He would do well to remember that he only became involved with the electorate on the rebound after four years of persistent abuse from Nick Greiner. No matter what the motivation for the marriage, there is always some form of honeymoon. As Gary Sturgess says, no matter how romantic the promises, any honeymoon will sour if it is not backed by performance. With this Budget the Premier has shown his desire to whisper sweet nothings into the ears of the electorate, but he has also shown a complete lack of substance. That is the clearest indication yet that when the electorate's needs have to be met John Fahey will be unable to perform.

**Mr SMILES** (North Shore) [3.51]: Unlike the honourable member for Campbelltown, I support the Budget. Unlike the honourable member for Campbelltown, I can see more than sweet nothings; I can see more than empty rhetoric in the Budget. Unlike the honourable member for Campbelltown and unlike the most grossly unfair and indiscreet story he recounted to the House, I recognise the reality of this Budget. I recognise the difference between the impotence of representation by the honourable

Page 6322

member for Campbelltown and the strength of representation by Liberal Party-National Party colleagues in this House when it comes to seeking assistance for their electorates. Unlike the honourable member for Campbelltown, I have no problem about proudly extolling the virtues of the Budget and its impact on the electorate of North Shore. Unlike the honourable member for Campbelltown, I am prepared to work hard for my electorate, as is every member on this side of the House, to ensure that each year the Budget provides adequately for our electorates.

Reflecting on the Budget, and particularly its benefit to the electorate of North Shore, I am mindful that the Budget was preceded by 12 months of appropriate generosity and recognition by the former Greiner Government and now the Fahey Government. I believe it is important that I recognise that. Since the time I was elected as the member for North Shore in May of last year the needs of that electorate have been recognised in budgetary expenditure. North Shore railway stations, schools, police stations and transport have all received considerable advantages in the past 12 months. North Sydney and Wollstonecraft railway stations have been upgraded significantly with the expenditure of more than \$1 million. In the past 12 months Mosman High School has been remodelled and refitted at a cost of several million dollars; Neutral Bay School has benefited from significant improvement in playground and toilet facilities and canteen maintenance; Mosman Public School has benefited from an \$800,000 assembly hall; North Sydney Demonstration School has upgraded toilet facilities which are almost completed.

North Sydney police station was relocated during the election period, and received all the necessary equipment that was requested by the police officers. There have been both minor and major improvements in transport in the past 12 months within the electorate of North Shore. New school bus routes, including a most beneficial

service from Balmoral to the Beauty Point Public School, have been introduced. Currently on trial is a new evening ferry service from Circular Quay to McMahons Point, for which my constituents are extremely grateful. The past 12 months of appropriate largesse by the former Greiner and present Fahey governments has been extended in the current Budget. I acknowledge the generosity of the Government for having recognised the needs of my electorate and my constituents for services and facilities.

Several items important to my electorate have been included in the current works program and the program for the next 12 months. The upgrading of North Sydney Girls High School - which will be applauded by many thousands of former students, and certainly welcomed by the several hundred present students, staff and parents - will proceed on the site of the Crows Nest Boys High School. In 1992-93 \$334,000 will be spent on that upgrading, to be followed by a further \$7 million in the next couple of years. In 1992-93 \$4.9 million will be spent on railway lines and station upgrading, including \$2.3 million on resignalling at North Sydney, \$775,000 on the upgrading of St Leonards Station, \$600,000 on the footbridge at Waverton, and \$1.2 million to be spent restoring Waverton Railway Station to its historic 1890s perspective - providing modern amenities within the design.

Taronga Zoo lies within the electorate of North Shore, I am proud to say, and in the coming year the Government will spend \$7.3 million on that world class facility. That recognises not only the importance of overseas, interstate, and intrastate visitors, but also the importance of housing animals in a humane environment. The Budget will provide \$2.8 million for the construction of the orang-outang exhibit and \$2.6 million in asset maintenance, including planning for the future, current design, documentation and construction. Finally, \$1.8 million is allocated for upgraded animal exhibits. The roads

Page 6323

in my electorates have not been ignored in the Budget. Within the electorate and for a kilometre surrounding it \$7.755 million will be spent. That will include \$1,250,000 on minor roadwork improvements; \$4.6 million on road user services; \$580,000 to Mosman, North Sydney and Lane Cove councils by way of grants; and under the extended 3 x 3 program the same three councils will enjoy the benefit of \$173,000. Finally, \$410,000 will be spent on traffic restoration, school safety speed zoning measures and local area traffic management schemes.

That is the hardware. The Government has also recognised that although my electorate is known to many as a more affluent area there are people living within its boundaries who are perhaps not so affluent and who require assistance. New minor works on units of accommodation and mainstream housing at Waverton and Cammeray will be allocated \$730,000 in 1992-93. The work will provide for extra rooms to be built on existing accommodation, and for the demolition and rebuilding of at least one house. I draw the attention of honourable members to those items of expenditure, both past and future, because I believe it is important for my constituents to understand that this Budget has a very real meaning for them. It certainly has a very real meaning for me. In the past two decades the electorate of North Shore, as presently drawn, has not enjoyed the allocation of such funds under a State Budget. The electorate's needs have been recognised by this Government. It is an important area - almost 100,000 people reside there - one that may have suffered neglect in the 10 years that it was represented by members of this House who call themselves Independents. I am proud to bring to the attention of honourable members that considerable funds have been allocated to my electorate, because it is my considered view that that expenditure indicates a recognition of the citizens of the North Shore and the way they voted at the last election.

**Mr PRICE** (Waratah) [4.0]: I take this opportunity to express some grave

concerns about the Budget - what it is supposed to be as opposed to what it really is. There are significant differences between the matters referred to in the Premier's speech and how matters will be on the ground - what it means to an electorate like Waratah and the people working in the public sector in the Hunter region. Some aspects of the Premier's speech highlight my concern. The Government attempts to pride itself by saying that taxation increases will not exceed 1.2 per cent, a figure which, it claims, is close to the rate of inflation. However, the documentation provided shows clearly that that is not the case. One factor alone that concerns my constituents is the various methods of collecting revenue through police fines. A reading of the table set out in Budget Paper No. 2 reveals that this year it is estimated that total fines will be significantly higher in cash terms than was the position last year - 5.6 per cent - that is, an additional \$17,000 minimum on estimates with a further \$10,000 actual. That figure may well be exceeded, given the new devices available to law enforcement authorities, particularly to traffic law enforcement officers, including radar cameras and the positive response and rapid techniques instruments currently available. Any government that directs its finances to collection by way of fines ought to think again about what enforcement means, particularly road safety enforcement. Enforcement should be the last resort. Prevention is the principal object of the exercise. There are many other ways to improve road safety; for example, the visual presence of police. It would be novel to get police out from behind billboards and parked cars to actually police traffic rather than have them snooping around trying to increase the State's finances by way of imposing fines.

I turn now to the increase in licence fees on petroleum, tobacco, liquor and other associated commodities. The increase shown in the Budget Papers is 14.4 per cent - a massive increase on anyone's estimation. I wonder why the Government insists that its increases in taxes generally would amount to only 1.2 per cent. These fees affect all

Page 6324

citizens. They are not directed at specific groups. It is a general application of licence and fee increases, as is the increase, though it is relatively modest, in the weight tax for the registration of a motor vehicle. It is only \$5 or \$6; nevertheless it has to be paid. Given that in the present economic climate vast numbers of car owners are not in a position to reregister their vehicles and are driving them unregistered, the increase in weight tax will make the decision for some people not to renew their registration even easier. The more fees rise the less opportunity there is for people to do the right thing. The Government has erred in this regard. The average increase in taxes, fees and fines will be 5.3 per cent, which is considerably higher than the Government's stated 1.2 per cent.

I turn now to the income from the non-budget sector enterprises, and in particular from the Hunter Water Corporation. This revenue is broken up into two elements. The first is \$3.2 million as a straight dividend, and the second is the tax equivalent of \$4.8 million, giving a total of \$8 million to be received from the Hunter Water Corporation. The corporation suffers from the blight of levies similar to those of the metropolitan Water Board. The only difference being the levy for the Hunter Water Corporation will be imposed for a longer period. An impost of \$25 per annum over a 25-year period was instituted in the Hunter - quite different from the position in metropolitan Sydney. A further difference is that the levy for the Hunter is indexed. Therefore, in 10 years residents of the Hunter will be paying a fee in excess of the Sydney environmental levy, if that levy is maintained in the metropolitan region. Hunter residents will be paying the levy for another 22 years. An environmental levy should be used for environmental purposes, not in part payment of dividends and tax equivalents to the State Treasury. This Government was elected on a platform of no levies for the Hunter region but, once elected, it proceeded to impose levies. The previous Government applied the user-pays rates to the Hunter Water Corporation's area. The

system had a rugged start but it appears now to be well accepted. It has certainly modified expenditure on replacement and expanded water storage and sewage treatment facilities. However, part of the deal was to include a sewerage upgrade scheme for all suburbs and villages in the surrounding shires of the city of Newcastle. The program is ongoing. Originally it was to be funded in a tripartite manner through local government, State Government - through its Public Works Department - and the former Hunter District Water Board. As a compromise the Public Works Department now provides half the funding and the Hunter Water Corporation pays the other half. Consequently the rate per litre of water used has increased substantially.

Newcastle has an excellent outfall arrangement. Newcastle has almost completed the secondary treatment facilities associated with the Murdering Gully sewage treatment plant. Funds for that facility were raised from local revenues without any State input. It seems that self-help and initiative do not account for very much with this Government. If it is efficient, it is corporatised. If it is possible to tax it, the Government will tax its face off. That is just what is happening in our region. All our debts are being compounded by theoretical dividend payments to the Government for services that, in many cases, we are still waiting for, without any guarantee of any further State assistance other than the current sewerage upgrade program. That program was budgeted for in a different way and was commenced some years ago. I have my concerns about the Government's taxing objectives. Certainly the income from these enterprises has saved the Government a small fortune and probably prevented the current budget deficit of \$1.2 billion from being closer to \$2.4 billion. Nevertheless, there should be some better distribution with regard to the application of levies and taxes. If the Government does not investigate that with a view to making the repayments and taxing and licensing arrangements more modest, it will suffer the political consequences it rightly deserves. The Government has not shown that it has a heart in relation to this matter during its four and a half years in office.

Page 6325

I shall now refer to the road program proposed for the electorate of Waratah, which is rather intriguing. The documentation supplied by the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works, and Minister for Roads is wonderful. A comparison of the documentation supplied by the Treasury and the budget information documents reveals an additional column. In most instances all portions of the major road program - which amounts to more than \$38 million this year - are federally funded. That is interesting, given that this is supposed to be a State budget. What a wonderful idea to include Federal funds in the State Budget! What is being done to ensure that that funding is spent? The State and Federal Ministers seem to have a difference of opinion when it comes to who should talk to whom and how much each should contribute. In the meantime, a number of significant projects - particularly one black spot project - in my electorate are not addressed and every 12 months another person dies. There does not seem to be much compassion in either the State Treasury or the Federal Treasury. Federal funds are available; we need the State equivalent to get the projects moving.

I am particularly concerned about the intersection of Anderson Drive and the New England Highway in a little town called Tarro on the way to Maitland. At least 30 people have been killed at that intersection in 28 years as a result of being involved in a variety of accidents. The intersection has been reconstructed on at least three occasions by the Newcastle City Council and the Roads and Traffic Authority, but the situation has not improved. Constituents are being killed - young people, older people, children and breadwinners of families - while we haggle over what sort of interchange should be built, where it should be located, how much should be contributed, and who should contribute.

I pay my taxes and, like my constituents, I have the strange notion that once I have paid them the Government should be able to get the job done. If there is to be a demarcation between the State Government and the Federal Government on expenditure, we should all know about it and make sure that programs are properly determined. We should be able to clearly identify where the blame lies should there be lack of progress. At this moment the Budget documents tell me nothing about State funding, though they tell me about Federal funding. This year the State will contribute a wonderful \$21,000 to a \$5.5 million project! And this is supposed to be a State Budget. Where do we go from here?

The constituents in the electorate of Waratah and those from the electorates of Maitland, Cessnock, Newcastle and Port Stephens who travel through that electorate every day for work or school or to shop are wondering what the Government is all about. I raised this problem when I was in local government in 1978. In 1992 we are still unable to determine how to cater for the national highway bypass and the traffic which spills off through Beresfield and Tarro to the Hexham Bridge to rejoin the Pacific Highway. Something is drastically wrong. This Government should liaise with the Federal Government to make sure that money is placed in the right place at the right time. The time is now. I cannot cope with more deaths, more serious injuries and more destruction of property at an intersection which, in the past few years, has been clearly identified by police as the worst black spot in the Hunter Valley. I hope the Minister for Roads takes the time to read my speech and has an appropriate answer in the very near future.

There are a number of other projects towards the edge of my electorate to which I should like to refer. I refer in particular to John Renshaw Drive, the major route from the New England Highway to Cessnock. An overpass was to be constructed on that roadway in August of last year. However, because of differences of opinion between State and Federal ministries the overpass has not been commenced. There are other proposals for three kilometres of Weakleys Drive. An interchange or overpass should be constructed on that section of road. Six points have been identified between the

Page 6326

intersection of the New England Highway at Thornton and the railway overbridge at Tarro as requiring significant expenditure by the State and Federal governments. The Federal Government says that it has the money and is prepared to make it available, but there does not seem to be any State contribution. How long will we have to wait? These back roads, these short sections of the New England Highway, will ultimately become portions of the Pacific Highway; they will be used to connect traffic to the national freeway going through Minmi. Hopefully in the next few years it will turn northwest and go via Kurri to Branxton.

Traffic will increase, not decrease, and the problems will be accelerated. Residents will be inconvenienced, as will road users. It is just not good enough. In the midst of this we read that though the Government has a freeze on sackings, last year's sackings are still on. In fact, last June's sackings are still on. The Roads and Traffic Authority will lay off 1,572 people before we start this wonderful campaign of providing an additional 6,000 jobs in the public sector, because of the expenditure listed in this Budget, which will theoretically create a multiplier effect and thus another 12,000 jobs in the private sector. I do not expect miracles from this Budget, but I will be interested to hear the head count in January next year. If the outcome is anywhere near 10 per cent of that prediction, I will be absolutely stunned. From the budget documents alone, we see that the unemployment which is proposed by the previous cuts will neatly equate with the new employment this Budget is supposed to create. We are relying on a depleted, demoralised, and concerned private sector to create the multiplier situation which is supposed to give us an extra 12,000 jobs in New South Wales. I hope the Government is

right; this is one occasion on which I hope it is correct. However, I have not found a crystal ball big enough to see how it will happen and where the jobs will come from. I want the Government to prove me wrong. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

I shall now refer to health. Odd things are happening in health at the moment. I think the Minister for Health knows my name; I have been writing to him for a long time about a lot of matters to do with health. The Minister is a fine fellow; we were elected in the same year. My electorate has five public hospitals - I understand that it has more hospitals than any other electorate in this State. Whether we like it or not, we all finish up in a hospital for some brief period during our lifetime, even if it is on the way out. A 180-bed hospital has been closed in my electorate - closed so far as the State is concerned, but not so far as the community is concerned. The Wallsend District Hospital picket line continues. That picket will stay there until some form of public use is returned to that building instead of, as is currently proposed, a nursing home run by a private organisation. The John Hunter Hospital is a fine hospital. It is on the hill and is 10 or 12 minutes from the Wallsend hospital site. In preparation for that hospital to take over the major acute functions in the region, Wallsend hospital lost its casualty ward. That is fair enough. We had to see whether the John Hunter Hospital could cope with the staffing arrangements which prevailed at that time and whether the community could wait for an extra 10 or 12 minutes. It is a bit difficult for someone who has had a major heart attack, and has a paramedic on each side of him in the back of an ambulance to wait an extra 10 or 12 minutes before he can get access to a machine that will be of benefit to him.

Nevertheless, I recognise that new facilities require some compression of old facilities so that there can be expansion into areas of new technology. The general community also accepts that. To have a hospital closed for economic reasons - not medical - is appalling, and that is the case at Wallsend District Hospital. I notice that Department of Health expenditure will affect hospitals in my electorate. If the Government were sincere, it would recognise that short-term stays at the John Hunter

Page 6327

Hospital are not always enough. It would recognise that there is a lack of beds in the region created by the closure of the Wallsend hospital and would do something about reopening part of that hospital at least to allow long-stay, bed-care patients who have had acute surgery - usually people over the age of 60 years who instead of needing three days may need five to seven - to be transferred to that hospital to recuperate at a much cheaper rate but still in a hospital environment. These days acute care patients are sent home, in some cases 24 hours after surgery. They may be sent home in a taxi without a member of their family if there is no ambulance available. The first thing that is likely to happen, within 24 hours of their arriving home, is that they will call a friend or relative saying, "Get me back to hospital. Something is happening".

I would be interested to learn the readmission rate to the John Hunter Hospital as a result of acute care patients being released too soon. Other systems would be available if not for the want of some additional funds and the rearrangement of the existing hospital network. A similar problem, partly identified in the Budget - although I have not struck the fine detail yet - relates to the Mater Misericordiae Hospital at Waratah, which provides cancer care in Newcastle, except for the services provided at the melanoma unit. I ask honourable members to bear with me while I read an article which says it all. It appeared in the *Newcastle Herald* of 3rd September, and it reads:

The Mater Hospital has admitted that some of its facilities are sub-optimal, following a complaint from the family of a patient in the hospital's haematology department.

According to Mr Tom Bishop, of Jesmond, patients such as his wife, Phyllis, who suffers from cancer which affects her blood, must resort to bathing in a child's inflatable plastic wading pool because of the lack of appropriate bathroom facilities.

"It's totally primitive," Mr Bishop said this week.

"These patients can't use the communal bathing areas because their immune systems are so suppressed they'd be at risk from infection.

"But the alternative is absolutely terrible," he said.

It is a disgrace and an indictment of this Government that those facilities are allowed in a public hospital in the provincial city of Newcastle. The problem may be compounded further because of some crazy suggestion that a number of the area health boards should combine. To suggest that the Hunter and Central Coast area health boards should combine is as stupid as it is appalling. The service is stretched now from Murrurundi to Newcastle and Belmont in the south; it would be even worse if we had to extend to Gosford. The money that has been allocated certainly has increased, but it is not going to where it is needed. The Hunter region is growing; it has a population of almost half a million people. It caters for patients from the Central Coast through to the Queensland border. In my opinion, it is ill equipped to cater for present needs. I acknowledge that we have not lost services, but, once the hospital at Wallsend was closed, units such as the urology unit were moved to another hospital resulting in the loss of 12 beds - from 40 to 28. Services have been maintained, but the waiting lists have increased. That is the tragedy for the coalition. It complained for years about waiting lists and waiting for the answers, but now it ignores waiting lists. It is a sad indictment of the Government's money management policies.

Another matter of concern is the plight of the Kurri Kurri District Hospital. It has had its services reduced and has lost its obstetrician and paediatrician. It is of great concern to the women of the coalfields that the only place they can go for their prenatal and birthing care is Maitland Hospital. This does not reflect well on the Government's

Page 6328

delivery of health care to the people who need it. I know that money is tight, but I would rather see a government that was not able to spend over \$500 million of its capital expenditure budget last year put a little of that money into health care and education to try to smooth out many of the ripples that are sadly getting bigger.

Education in my electorate receives an honourable mention in the Budget. I thank the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, who is in the other place, for her rapid action in the construction of the first stage of the Marylands Public School. I also thank the Government for allocating some funds to the commencement of stage 2 this financial year. But my biggest thanks go to the local council, which is currently negotiating with the department to make sure that the multipurpose centre for the use of the community to be built on the school site will be of a larger size than that normally tied to such a school population. That is an excellent council initiative. I congratulate it on this move. I hope that it is successful and that the department can accommodate the request, to make sure that the community has the full benefit of the public dollar - something that we see so little of at this time.

The State Rail Authority, which has extensive holdings in my electorate, has decided after some 3½ years of embarrassing silence over a temporary platform at Tarro to replace the platform - I believe with Federal funding. It is a worry. Sometimes I wonder whether I should be writing not to State Ministers but to Federal Ministers to get

State facilities repaired. I understand that over \$100,000 will be spent to build the northbound platform, a platform which has been built on a grillage of rusty iron and malthoid covered timber for 3½ years and which has been responsible for a number of accidents. Thank goodness there have been no serious accidents and people have not taken action against the department. The way that the station has been treated is one of the appalling indictments of the State Rail Authority. This is sad because a lot of good work has been done at other stations. I would rather have a safe platform than a painted waiting shed. However, at least it is a move in the right direction. I look forward to when tenders are called for that work.

The proposed construction of the Warrabrook station adjacent to the university site and opposite the suburb of Warrabrook will also be federally funded. When is the Government going to take its public works initiatives outside the metropolitan cities? It must realise that other towns need assistance, and we do not need to go as far as some of the electorates of our National Party colleagues to find them. It is about time that the Government started to take provincial New South Wales seriously. The dollars have to be redistributed. A greater proportion needs to be available to the north. No doubt some in the south would say the same. Nevertheless, the Budget that has been presented is not only inadequate but also fraudulent. I hope the Government corrects those defects as soon as it can with some form of mini-budget and, for the sake of the Government, I hope that the budget deficit does not increase to proportions that make the Budget absolutely impossible to handle.

**Mr PACKARD** (The Hills) [4.28]: I support the 1992-93 Budget and its effect in New South Wales and particularly in The Hills electorate. In reviewing the 1991-92 period, I take this opportunity to thank my wife, Kim, my mother-in-law, Ted and Nancy, Col and Robin Townsend, and my four children for their unswerving support in the most difficult year of my career. They have had to stand back helpless and watch me absolutely vilified. To their lasting credit, they have continued to rush to my defence. I hope that when the new breed under Deirdre Grusovin replaces Bob Carr and some members of his team, the Opposition will begin to focus on being an alternative government.

Page 6329

**Mr Whelan:** On a point of order. This is a budget debate, not an opportunity for ministerial statements or private members' statements in response to personal attacks. The honourable member should confine his remarks to the Budget and to the Premier's Budget Speech.

**Mr Smiles:** On the point of order. Traditionally, the budget debate has presented a wide-ranging opportunity for members to consider issues of great relevance to them. Former Speakers, and you, Mr Speaker, have always generously recognised that members may range far and wide in debate but must ultimately comment on the Budget. I believe that the honourable member for The Hills has not departed from the traditions of this House.

**Mr Whelan:** Further to the point of order. The honourable member for The Hills has attacked the Leader of the Opposition, the honourable member for Maroubra, who is not present in the Chamber. I respectfully request him to withdraw his remark and continue his speech on the Budget.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Ashfield may have been unduly sensitive in raising the point of order. However, I must correct the statement

made by the honourable member for North Shore. The budget debate does not provide scope for wide-ranging debate, as he implied. Such scope is permitted in an Address-in-Reply debate. Although the budget debate may be wide-ranging remarks must always be based on financial issues contained in the Appropriation Bill and cognate bills. I regard the remarks by the honourable member for The Hills as introductory comments, provided he does not dwell on them.

**Mr PACKARD:** It is important that the Opposition offers itself as an alternative government - though I notice that the Leader of the Opposition did not do so in his speech on the Budget. Even the Independent candidate for election to the seat of The Hills has moved to distance himself from what is obviously a political attack on me and my family. On behalf of the people of The Hills electorate I support this Budget. Finally, after years of socialist neglect, money is literally starting to pour into the electorate. The socialists have had nothing nice to say about the Budget - a Budget that is working. It is extraordinary that the Opposition - in the only State ready and able to lead this nation out of recession - is carping, whingeing and moaning about what is wrong in New South Wales. Opposition members, including the honourable member for Campbelltown, will be judged at the ballot box on whether they have truly represented in this House the interests of constituents. The budget strategy of the Greiner-Murray Government, now the Fahey-Murray Government, is starting to deliver - and the socialists are filthy about that.

This State is in the best condition it has ever been in or is ever likely to be in. The honourable member for Auburn referred to the sale of the GIO. In the 10 years Labor was in government in this State it had an opportunity to privatise the GIO but, adhering to its socialist philosophy, held on to it. That philosophy is all for big government and full employment, with everyone on the payroll, and attacks on small, medium and big business - the great unwashed - at every possible opportunity. The socialists do not acknowledge anyone who is not a member of a trade union. In supporting the Budget I endorse its priority to create real jobs for the unemployed. Money is washing out from the Federal Government to State departments, including the Chief Secretary's Department, but that money is hooked to provisos that people should be given jobs by December or March, before the figures are publicly announced. Is the Federal Government running down to an election or not?

Page 6330

The socialists know that if the 5,000 kids who will join work seekers in February do not take the places on the waiting list of 5,000 who have obtained jobs, the Federal Government will be bundled out and at last the coalition parties will begin to turn this nation around. It is extraordinary that accusations are still made about featherbedding in private industry. The private sector is the only group able to get this country out of recession. We are kidding ourselves if we cannot sell our goods on an open market. To the Government's credit, some departments are successfully selling their technology overseas, thereby getting real dollars for New South Wales. The Minister for Conservation and Land Management, and Minister for Energy spoke about phenomenal work by the lands department in selling technology overseas and bringing revenue into this State. The Premier, and Treasurer said in this Budget Speech that wealth can only be created in the long run by a continued development of a strong and competitive State economy. He said:

If the Government starts padding the public service, and clinging on to jobs that are better done by the private sector, then we will throw away our chance to develop an economically secure future . . .

The temptation is to back off due to deep-seated resentment in some sections of the public sector about change. They scream so loud that they are heard over the private sector. Some business people know that if they were given the opportunity they could do the job more effectively and more efficiently. As an example, as soon as the proposal arose to sell the Department of Education's furniture factory, the socialists rushed to the defence of staff, claiming that jobs would be lost; or, if not necessarily lost, would be transferred into the private sector. The general manager of the furniture factory has said that if the factory is transferred into the private sector he could cut staff numbers from 110 to 55, if he is given a go at managing it.

**Mr Nagle:** What will happen to the other jobs?

**Mr PACKARD:** If he was given an opportunity to bring that factory into the real world he would nearly halve the staff. He would reduce the staff from 100 skilled workers - a mandatory requirement, for it is a closed shop - and employ unskilled workers to do the work. In that furniture factory only union members are able to call staff meetings. At no time is the management of that factory allowed to attend those meetings. Is that good business? In addition, the factory brings in a third of its stock from the private sector anyway, and pays no rent. The people of New South Wales are expected to sponsor those jobs to the tune of \$5,000 per head per year. The factory is losing a fortune in a captive market. The honourable member for Auburn asked what will happen to the other jobs. I ask the honourable member: what is to be done for the parents and citizens association at Kenthurst, which has to raise money for an early learning teacher because the money is not in the Department of Education, where it belongs? The \$5,000 per head spent each year subsidising staff at the furniture factory - half a million dollars a year - should be where it belongs, at the firing line educating children. Society would be better off. But the moment privatisation, competitiveness, public sector involvement and hands-off government are mentioned, the socialists rush around saying the Government is firing people and that if Labor were in office everyone would have a permanent job.

We were put into government by the people to reduce the size of government and revive the private sector. This Budget does it. The Budget Papers contain a commitment by the Premier to continue downsizing government wherever the private sector can do the job better. It is to the credit of the Chief Secretary, and Minister for

Page 6331

Administrative Services, who is at the table, that her department is properly run, but there are areas in which the government can do better. This good Minister has done a lot of work on government purchases. Government departments, because of their bulk buying power, often can beat the private sector. A marriage of the two can achieve benefits but there should not be an exclusion of one sector. They should not be protected or featherbedded.

Some measures in the Budget which I support relate specifically to The Hills. Money is rushing into the area. I thank the Ministers concerned for what is being done. I am sure that the honourable member for Parramatta will find something to whinge and carp about but \$2,200,000 is provided for the relocation of the Parramatta Blood Bank. Money is continuing to be poured into the relocation of the Royal Princess Alexandra Hospital for Children - \$75 million in this budget year; \$65 million in the last budget year; and a total of \$312 million by the time the relocation is completed. My Liberal colleague Bruce Baird, the Minister for Transport, and Minister for Tourism, has done an absolutely fantastic job for public transport. He will provide \$785 million in 1992-93, a

record sum. I thank the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, and Minister for Employment and Training for finishing the job at Cherrybrook Technical High School and giving us in The Hills electorate the best school in Australia. Mr Speaker, you would know that now there is a waiting list for entry to the school and consideration is being given to double manning, with a morning and afternoon session, so good is the quality of the school at Cherrybrook. House prices at Cherrybrook have risen during the recession because of the quality of the technology high school at Cherrybrook.

This is a major benefit of privatisation, a dirty word to the socialists. It is a joint venture between IBM and the Department of School Education. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. The school could go broke but people are queued up to go there. The people of Port Macquarie do not know how lucky they are that they have a Government that has the guts to build them a hospital. The Leader of the Opposition said that Labor will build the people a hospital. It would do the earthworks in 1997 and in the year 2050 there would still be only the earthworks. Opposition members cannot produce what they say they will produce. The only way to proceed is to do what the Fahey Government is doing. Glenhaven Public School is nearly complete and \$168,000 will be provided to complete a \$2.5 million upgrade of a great school. The Castle Hill TAFE College is having a residential and teaching space built at a cost this year of \$1.2 million. That TAFE college is one of the best in the State. The one at Ryde is terrific and the one at Baulkham Hills-Castle Hill is terrific too.

Mr Speaker, as you would know, the issue in The Hills electorate is roads first, roads second, and roads third. In the 10 years under the socialists little or no money was provided. In 1986-87 and 1987-88 a paltry \$3.4 million was put into the electorate of The Hills. In 1991-92 and 1992-93 the area will receive \$18 million - six times the amount four years later. How easily we forget! Labor bagged the 3 x 3 scheme when it was brought in as a terrible impost on drivers, et cetera. Suddenly in The Hills roads are being built everywhere. I give credit to Bob Morris and Chris Ford from the Roads and Traffic Authority. At each of the meetings we have had they have agreed to consider the proposals put to them. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

They have consulted the Minister and come back with the answer, yes or no. To the credit of this fantastic Minister, Wal Murray, Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works, and Minister for Roads, when he makes a commitment he sticks to it. The things he said would be in the Budget Papers are there. I took over an area in my electorate from the electorate of the Speaker, the corner of New Line Road and Kenthurst Road.

Page 6332

Two years ago a very unfortunate accident there took the lives of two lovely young ladies. Departmental officers inspected the area and said that roadworks to improve the intersection would be in the next budget. The design work has been done, the roadworks have commenced and the funding is in the Budget precisely as they said. There will be traffic lights at the corner of Old Northern Road and Kenthurst Road and a roundabout at the bottom where the tragic accident took place. These people deliver. This is possible because the funds are there. The rest of the nation is worrying about how to pay the wages of public servants. This Government is delivering exactly as it promised.

Gilbert Road has been on the roads agenda of The Hills since 1960. This Budget has finally provided funding. There is to be a link road between Showground Road and Old Northern Road. Showground Road has been completely rebuilt in the life of this Government. Since the Liberal Party came to office the road has been upgraded from the industrial area of Castle Hill out to Kellyville. The Budget provides funds for the preparatory work, the public investigation and the open interview process for the building of the F2 freeway. It is possible that within the next five to 10 years the Gilbert

Road bypass will be built and there will be a link road between New Line Road and Castle Hill Road. This Budget provides for works on New Line Road allowing a right hand turn on to Castle Hill Road. The flyover-flyunder where Castle Hill Road meets Pennant Hills Road is under way. People will be able to travel down to Mahers Road, where the golf club is, on to the F2, into the city, on to the new freeway and under the bridge. The people of The Hills will not know themselves. After four to eight years of this great Government suddenly they will not be landlocked any more. The northwest sector is under way and provided everybody approves of it there will be a tollway link road from the northwest sector down Old Windsor Road on to the F2 freeway and into the city. It will be possible to drive out of Cherrybrook on to Castle Hill Road and into the city. Suddenly, The Hills will be linked with the city for the first time in its history. People should not kid themselves: if it had been left to the socialists they would never have touched it.

This Government, to its credit, has included in the Budget things to help the little people. The corner of Old Castle Hill Road and Old Northern Road, where Oak Hill College is, is a very dangerous intersection. Bob Morris and Chris Ford inspected the area. There were children, buses and cars, and they just do not mix. Those officers said that provision for enhancement would be in the Budget. Here it is - the sum of \$246,000 is provided for roadworks and signals at Old Northern Road and Old Castle Hill Road, Rogans Hill. This is precisely what is approved and the work is under way. These people are not given credit by the Opposition but they deliver. In addition, money is available for maintenance and, within limits, most of the things required by the local people. I should give credit to the new Minister for Community Services for the family budget, which involves \$10 million worth of family support. Other governments in Australia cannot provide such a level of support because they do not have the money. They are broke. They cannot help the disadvantaged because they cannot run their own households.

The Federal Government will post a \$15 billion deficit. By the time the coalition comes to government in Victoria, Lord knows what the deficit will be. The present Government owes as much as \$6 billion or \$7 billion. Can honourable members imagine what its real debt is like when accruals and unfunded superannuation liabilities are taken into account? All the unpublished debts that the coalition found when it came to government in New South Wales will be there in Victoria. It will take three to five years to even fill up the hollow logs, let alone move forward. On the other hand, the New South Wales Government is so flexible and well funded that it can put \$10 million into

Page 6333

a family support package. That package includes mortgage and rental relief, financial counselling and training, rural counselling, and enhancement of the community services grants program to continue last year's initiative. The package is aimed at helping people through what everyone hopes is the last of this national disgrace: the recession that we had to have. What does the Prime Minister say? He says, "I will get you, Mr Hewson". It has now all come down to a personality clash between John Hewson and the Prime Minister.

**Mr Nagle:** The Prime Minister said he would do him slowly.

**Mr PACKARD:** I was not going to credit him with the actual line. Even now, approaching the election, he cannot tell the people of Australia how he will change the nation. That is because the Federal Government cannot take control of the public sector. Its answer is more jobs for the boys right across the nation. The biggest and most vibrant economy after Queensland, which was left in terrific shape by the previous

government, is, of course, that of Canberra. Money is pouring into the hands of public servants. That is all right, if they are productive. If they provide simply a checking mechanism, they had better get out of the game and let the private sector get on with rebuilding this nation. I am privileged to be the chairman of the ministerial committee on State development. The new Minister has quickly realised that the Government must consult with regional boards and business people in an effort to create additional jobs. Padding the public service does not help; it is not creating anything. The only way this State can be pulled out of recession is to ensure that every chemist, every local shopkeeper and everyone in the private sector who is productive engages more staff.

One of the excellent initiatives of the Government was the Industrial Relations Act. The moment similar changes are introduced federally, Australia will have reasonable workplace wages policies. Without the price of labour being tailored to the workplace in the same way as the prices of goods are tailored to cost and market, a decent result cannot be achieved. Labour is only part of the production. The price of labour does not have to be out of kilter. If labour helps to achieve a good profit, it should share in that profit. But it should not be protected at the expense of everyone else. The Budget will achieve two things: a boost to jobs by a temporary expansion of the capital works program and the containment of the deficit and debt by bearing down on current spending, particularly in non-essential areas. The Budget contains an ongoing commitment to financial integrity, public accountability and discipline, not short-sighted politically motivated spending sprees to create temporary jobs as an election approaches.

What could be worse than to be out of job, to be put back into work under a program that lasts six months and then be booted out again when all the election drama is over? Nothing could be less responsible than the trick the Labor Party is trying to play federally. Fortunately New South Wales has good strong government and will lead this nation out of recession. New South Wales is a third of Australia and represents a third of the market. Fortunately, the socialists in Canberra have not succeeded in wrecking New South Wales. They have tried. They have pulled out all the funding they could get their hands on and moved it elsewhere. To their credit, the former Premier and the present Premier, two highly intelligent people, know precisely where that mob is coming from. John Fahey will lead this State and this nation out of recession. I support the Budget.

**Mr CLOUGH** (Bathurst) [4.55]: I am indeed a fortunate man. Having listened to the honourable member for The Hills, any finer feelings I might have had towards the Government have effectively evaporated. The honourable member for The Hills seems

Page 6334

to find that there is something odd and out of kilter about being a socialist. I am guilty of having been a democratic socialist since the day I was born. I hope that when I die I will still be espousing the principles of socialism in the context that they give everyone a fair go. Democratic socialism gives everyone in our community the opportunity to live at a decent standard. It gives parents with children the opportunity to raise their children in a climate that will benefit Australia in the long run. I am a socialist and I am bloody well proud of it.

Reference has been made to the tremendous amount of road funding contained in this year's Budget. Day after day in this House snide members criticise the Federal Government for the recession we had to have. The only unfortunate thing about the recession we had to have was that the then Treasurer put it that way. After listening to Government members, one could be led to believe that only one country in the world is in recession. That is absolute nonsense. The American economy is as bad, if not worse, than ours. In the last few days and weeks the British economy has become a joke.

Despite that, we are led to believe Australia is the only country in the world that is going through a recession. Honourable members were fortunate because the honourable member for The Hills spoke for only 25 minutes. Thank God for that, because I do not think I could have put up with any more.

The Roads and Traffic Authority has issued a series of figures concerning road funding in New South Wales. They are contained in a document which sets out the State budget for the Roads and Traffic Authority. A table which is headed "Source of Funds" reveals that new funds allocated to New South Wales from the Commonwealth Government amount to \$582 million, an increase of \$128 million. Motor registrations, fuel tax, the 3 x 3 scheme, and other forms of income amount to \$1,204 million, which represents a reduction of \$23.9 million in funds available for State works. Honourable members should understand that the Federal Government's input into the New South Wales roads system is significant. I come now to my own electorate. The Great Western Highway, which is the major road servicing the electorate of Bathurst, commences at the bottom of Lapstone Hill and finishes where the roads to Orange and Blayney join it. The total cost of upgrading that road over the past seven or eight years has been borne by the Federal Government, except for one kilometre between Lee Street and Dunns Corner at Lithgow, which was financed from 3 x 3 funding. The Premier announced that \$14 million would be allocated to the Great Western Highway - and he had the decency to grin when I said, "About time." Of the \$40.9 million allocated for the highway, \$26.8 million has already been expended and \$14.1 million is required to complete it.

Today, in a question upon notice, I asked the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works, and Minister for Roads what he proposes to do with the \$14.1 million which has been allocated to an area called Tunnel Hill, west of Marangaroo, up to and including the Lidsdale State Forest to Rydal Road. Two roads were formed, had a light seal put on them and have remained in that condition for the past 18 months. The road from the Tunnel Hill area to Cox's River has been constructed but not completed, as has the road from the western side of Cox's River to the Lidsdale State Forest. What has prevented that road from being put into service? Nothing, except the construction of two bridges. The bridges are now under construction but no one in the district knows whether the allocation of \$14 million from the Federal Government will permit the work to be completed. Today, for the information of my constituents, I asked the Deputy Premier, whether the roads will be finished and the bridges built, and the expected completion date for the information of my constituents.

Page 6335

There was an unfortunate accident on that road four or five months ago. A young lady, a reporter for Prime Television in the area, was killed in that accident, and it brought home to the local people the bad state of the road between Rydal Road and Lawson's Creek, particularly in the Mount Lambie area. The Deputy Premier is on record as saying that \$23 million will be allocated for that road. I looked in vain for that amount in the Budget. I found a figure of \$4.681 million for the construction of a new road between Rydal Road and Lawson's Creek, in an area 9.5 to 54.6 kilometres west of Lithgow. That area is on the Mount Lambie Road, where the unfortunate accident occurred. Where is the funding to come from? The \$4.681 million will be provided entirely by the Federal Government. The Great Western Highway travels through the City of Bathurst, and work is now proceeding between William and Brilliant Streets in Bathurst to create a four-lane highway through the city. The Federal member for Calare and Federal Minister for Local Government, the Hon. David Simmons, insisted that Commonwealth funds be used for that particular section of upgrading. He was roundly

and comprehensively criticised by the Deputy Premier, who was extremely upset about the fact that the Commonwealth had placed conditions on the use of that money.

This necessary upgrading will cost \$3,320,000. Where is the money to come from? It will come from the Federal Government. The construction of the approach and bridges over the Macquarie River on the Great Western Highway is one of the most humorous pieces of construction that has occurred in that area in the past four or five years. The former Member for Bathurst staked his political career on what was to be done there, and he failed. The proposal was to build a bridge at a cost of \$9.5 million across the river, but the cost blew out to something in the order of \$20 million. I hope that project will be completed this year, and an amount of \$4,250,000 has been allocated for that work. The Federal Government will provide those funds. There is no question about it: the majority of funding for the Great Western Highway has been provided by the Federal Government. Yet that Government has been criticised day in and day out in this Chamber.

I turn to aspects of the Budget that I find difficult to comprehend, and I sincerely hope that the assurances given by the Premier with regard to some facets will be met. There will be a lot of very disappointed people in New South Wales if they are not. The Premier has indicated that he believes the Budget will generate 6,000 jobs, and he has included a multiplier provision of 3:1 to increase that figure to 18,000 jobs. Those jobs are badly needed in New South Wales because unemployment figures have blown out to only 0.1 per cent below the national average. I do not think this Government can still claim to be putting people first by managing better, because the results do not confirm that. Before I was defeated at the 1988 election I was a member of the Labor Government. I must admit that if honourable members had asked me in 1988, "How soon do you think you will win the seat back and the Greiner Government will be put on a knife edge in governing the State?" I would have said, "Not before the year 2000," because the indications were that the people of New South Wales had elected a government to replace what I freely admit was a tired government, a government that had ceased to listen to the people and to members of its caucus. That Government was defeated.

Only three years later the Liberal Government scraped in by the skin of its teeth, because the people of New South Wales had woken up to the rorts and dishonesty and bias shown towards working men and working women by a government intent on one thing only: introducing into New South Wales the American system of life. The former Premier obtained his degrees in America and he believed that the American system of life was great; it was the type of life he wanted for New South Wales. The people of New South Wales do not want that; they do not want to see the railway system emasculated,

Page 6336

as it has been in my electorate and in the Central West. People in the Central, southwest and Far West of New South Wales are crying out to have railway services reintroduced. They do not want to follow the American trend of having the motor car, motor bus and motor lorry manufacturers dictating the commercial life of the State. The Government has taken into account other Americanisation factors.

The Government wants to Americanise the health system, and I instance the hospital that has been a bone of contention in the Port Macquarie electorate. The American system of government does not provide for a national health system. The President of the United States of America is on record as saying that he will not be responsible for the provision of a national health scheme in America. If Americans who are not members of a health fund become sick, they are in big trouble. They have two options: either sell their house or car, or both; or die. Let us hear no more about the

American system of government for this State. Our time-honoured Australian ways should not be reduced to the apology for a system that I believe the American system is, and probably will continue to be. The honourable member for The Hills, in his contribution to the debate, spoke about labour costs and action that should be taken against trade unions. Even the present Federal Government is fiddling around with tariffs. Dr Hewson, the Federal Leader of the Opposition, intends to remove them entirely if and when the coalition is elected to office. He has said we must become competitive. I was raised during the depression years in this country, and I saw the hardship, troubles and tribulations of people struggling to keep a family and a home going. I do not want to see Australians reduced to the level of competing with Indian, Korean and Taiwanese workers, who are paid a fraction of the wages and stipends paid to workers in this country. Recently I was privileged to spend some time in India. While I was there, an Indian worker told me that he thought he was reasonably well paid. When I asked how much he received he said 16 rupees, which is equivalent to about \$80. I thought that was probably a reasonable weekly wage, until he informed me that he received \$80 a month. He said, "Sahib, how long would it take to earn that much money in Australia," and I replied, "One day". I am sure the Government would not want to reduce our standard of living to that of Indian, Taiwanese and Korean workers.

Recently the Premier said that no public service jobs would be lost in country areas for 12 months, but already that promise has been broken. Greinerism in New South Wales is alive and well and jobs will be lost. In New South Wales today so-called voluntary redundancy is being encouraged. There is nothing voluntary about redundancies for workers in areas such as the New South Wales rail system, the cleaning services or the health services. People are worried about the prospect of losing their jobs or obtaining some money to pay off their homes and to ensure that their families are fed and cared for, so they accept voluntary redundancy as a form of insurance. The Government is aware of the worries of those people, and it plays on their fears. The Government has said to those people, "Unless you are prepared to accept voluntary redundancy, there is a real possibility you will lose your jobs". In New South Wales jobs will be lost. People working for electricity councils, the State Rail Authority, area health services, including hospitals, and the Roads and Traffic Authority will lose jobs. Constituents of mine have lost their jobs and they will go on losing them through this so-called voluntary redundancy.

I had intended during this debate to quote from the booklet *Distribution of Wealth in Australia*, prepared by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, an article entitled "Common Wealth for the Common Good", but time will not permit me to do so. However, I recommend to honourable members that they read the recommendations of this august body of people. They could not be called socialistic; there would not be a  
Page 6337  
more conservative body in this country than the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. Honourable members should read its recommendations on employment, housing, social security, taxation, and health. It has stated that Medicare must be retained in an even better form to provide health care for people on the lower income scale. I recommend this booklet to members of the National Party and the Liberal Party. They should take note of it, because when we stop caring we are lost. [*Time expired.*]

**Madam DEPUTY-SPEAKER:** Order! It being 5.15 p.m., pursuant to sessional orders the debate is interrupted.

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

---

**Madam DEPUTY-SPEAKER:** Order! I remind honourable members that they should seek the call audibly.

### **KOOMAROO HAWKESBURY DISTRICT DISABLED PERSONS SUPPORT GROUP**

**Mr GIBSON** (Londonderry) [5.16]: The Koomaroo Hawkesbury District Disabled Persons' Support Group looks after people over the age of 18 who are so severely disabled that they cannot care for themselves and find it difficult to get support from any source in the community. Disabled people 18 years of age and over living in the Hawkesbury area have no support facilities. Considerable money and time is invested in educating these people how to care for themselves, but after they turn 18 years of age we tend to forget them. Years ago these people would probably have died or have been placed in a home and regarded as vegetables. I am pleased to say that that no longer happens. Society appears now to have a more humane attitude towards these people. On the surface it appears that society has a different attitude, but in reality nothing much has changed. In many ways society has failed these people, in particular those living in the Hawkesbury area. After they reach the age of 18 society forgets them. The Government should be condemned for sentencing these people to a lifetime of sitting in a house looking at four walls. Up until the age of 18 severely handicapped people have the opportunity to attend workshops, occupational therapy and speech therapy. They are taught work skills and can attend day centres and so on. Outings are organised for them, but once they turn the magic age of 18, especially in the Hawkesbury, they are given absolutely no assistance. They have no future.

These people badly need an office to work in. I appealed to the Minister for Planning, and Minister for Housing in this regard and received a letter from him telling me that my comments had been noted and that he would get back to me as soon as he could. I know that things do not happen overnight, but this is not good enough, particularly for this group of severely handicapped people in the Hawkesbury area. They have absolutely nowhere to go after they turn 18. Their families have had to bear a terrible burden, looking after them for 18 years. When these severely handicapped children finish their schooling their families have them 24 hours a day. I have appealed to the Government to look at departmental stock to see whether there is a house in the Richmond area which could be used as an office for the Koomaroo group.

The disabled people badly need a centre out there, not a centre of excellence but a centre in which they can develop a workshop. They would feel like part of the community, like they were going to work each day and benefiting society. They do not want to be a burden on society but because there are no facilities to cater for them, we

Page 6338

are making them a burden. The Koomaroo group is looking for money to build a centre. I warn the Government that the group has prepared a submission requesting \$500,000, and that that submission is coming. In the short term, the Government should endeavour to find a departmental house in the Richmond area so that the disabled can use it as a meeting place, and the Koomaroo group can use it as an administration place, and a place where they can gather on a daily basis and organise what they can do with the large number of severely disabled people in this area. I plead with the Government to consider this request, and to do so with some urgency.

### **IMPORTATION OF EGG PRODUCTS FROM NEW ZEALAND**

**Mr WINDSOR** (Tamworth) [5.21]: I refer to an issue which concerns egg producers not only in my electorate but throughout New South Wales and Australia

generally. In the past 24 hours the Federal Minister for Resources, Alan Griffiths, in conjunction with the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service, better known as AQIS, has decided to allow the importation of egg products from New Zealand. This is a body blow to egg producers across this State, particularly small producers. In my view this decision has been hastily made, and without any recognition of the economic impact it will have. The service believes that the decision, which was made in accordance with guidelines to be established, will prevent diseased egg products being imported. In my view, that cannot be guaranteed at all. The Federal Minister has taken no account of the economic ramifications of the importation of egg products from New Zealand.

Tamworth is one of the key rural egg producing areas in New South Wales. A headline in the local paper this morning stated, "Imports decision shatters egg men". In that article the general manager of the Tamworth Egg Co-operative described the decision to allow importation of pasteurised egg yolk and whole egg powder as one which saddened him. He was very disappointed that the Federal Minister had made that decision. He believed that the Minister had capitulated to commercial pressure rather than take a broad view of the current problems. One of the nation's biggest egg producers, Bartter Eggs, was reported prior to the formal announcement as saying that the decision to allow imports would be disastrous to the egg industry. I condemn the Federal Minister for putting another nail in the coffin of the egg industry. It has suffered from quite severe economic problems over the last few years, and has been adjusting to some marketing changes lately. Many egg producers in my electorate are receiving rural assistance. This decision will do nothing to help their confidence in an industry which requires quite a significant investment in the future.

**Mr Jeffery:** It is shell shocked.

**Mr WINDSOR:** Yes, it is. Is this the reward to these producers for hanging on, in a financial sense, through the past 18 months when changes to marketing structures resulted in extremely low prices? To put it in the clearest possible terms so that everyone understands, this is nothing but dumping. The New Zealand product will have to be subsidised; the New Zealand egg producers do not have a technological advantage over the Australian producers; their wheat prices are higher and, therefore, their feed costs must be higher. Added to that will be the cost of freighting across the Tasman and packaging. The Federal Government is not being fair to the producers of a valued product within Australia. The decision is absurd and hypocritical when considered in the light of the car industry tariff debate, which has been an issue of late in the Federal sphere. Though the egg producers are being compromised to an extent that they could be put out of business in the long term, there is a consistent argument about the removal of tariffs. Would the Federal Labor Government descend to such levels if the producers

Page 6339

of this nation sought to import labour? I think not. The egg shortfall which has induced the manufacturers to put pressure on the Federal Government to make this ridiculous decision will apply for only some months; it will be overcome. We should recognise that the egg producers in New South Wales have - [*Time expired.*]

**Mr ARMSTRONG** (Lachlan - Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs) [5.26]: It gives me great pleasure to respond to the honourable member for Tamworth, and I thank him for raising this very important issue. The bottom line is that, increasingly, the Federal Government is allowing Australia to become the dumping ground for imported food, be it Italian whole peeled canned tomatoes, Canadian pork or New Zealand eggs. Australia seems to have opened up its doors to anyone who has a surplus. Australia is saying, "Come in, we will use your products and forget about Australian products and agriculture." This is another prime example of the Federal

Government being totally out of tune and accord with industry and consumers in this country. The bottom line is that the New South Wales submission on the question of the importation of eggs from New Zealand to New South Wales pointed out that regardless of current New Zealand disease status, New Zealand has less stringent conditions than Australia for the imports of poultry and biologicals from other nations. There is a very clear and discernible case to say to the public of New South Wales and Australia that if they want to eat eggs from New Zealand they will not necessarily have the guarantee of cleanliness and hygiene that they get from the domestic product. I appeal to the consumers of New South Wales and Australia to think locally and to buy and eat the local product. Everyone has had a gutful of seeing the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service and Minister Griffiths break down the orderly distribution of food. The Federal Minister for Resources met on Thursday of last week with the Australian Council of Egg Producers. According to the council, it was quite clear that the Minister had made up his mind before the meeting. He said that "it was not his responsibility". [*Time expired.*]

### **SITA CARTER DAY CENTRE**

**Mr WHELAN** (Ashfield) [5.28]: One of the terrible uncertainties facing the elderly within the inner west is the result of the Government's deliberate prevarication on the closure of hospitals, namely, the proposed closure of Eversleigh hospital in the central health area of the inner west public hospital system. A sad fact outlined to me by the President of the Save the Sita Carter Day Centre Committee, Jack Macklin, is that the prevarication of the Government will cause untold harm to as many as 120 senior citizens aged between 58 and 96 years who use the Sita Carter Day Centre, which is located within the hospital and operates very successfully on Monday to Friday from 7.30 a.m. to 4 p.m. It is for the benefit of the frail, aged and socially isolated people living within the Marrickville municipality and environs. These people live at home rather than in a nursing home. They are transported from their residences to the day centre by bus once a week in the care of a driver and an escort. About 20 to 25 people utilise this service every day, making a total of about 120 visits per week.

The centre is run by a co-ordinator and a diversional therapist. They provide a range of activities including bingo, golf putting, the usual sing-a-long and an outing every six weeks for the 120 people utilising the day centre. These activities provide for the social needs of the elderly as well as provide exercise and the hand-eye co-ordination exercises essential to the health and well-being of the elderly. Attendance at the centre is linked with out-patient services, including chiropody, physiotherapy, respite care and community nursing. The centre provides an opportunity to assess the client's needs and facilitates referrals to professional services. Without the day centre, many of those who  
Page 6340

attend could rapidly deteriorate and end up in nursing homes at a significantly greater cost to the community. The proposed closure would be an on-cost to the community. For that important reason alone the centre should be maintained.

I ask the Minister for Health, when considering the well-being of the people of the inner west - he has been doing so in relation to Concord Repatriation General Hospital - to also consider the frail and elderly who take great comfort in the fact that they can socialise at the Sita Carter Day Centre and get necessary referrals to professional therapists and doctors. Most importantly, when the Minister is weighing up cost savings, he should consider the cost savings resulting from these people attending a day centre. These people are not dependent on social welfare benefits. They want to make sure that their continued good health is manifested in savings to the Government. When the Government equivocates on the closure of "Eversleigh" Home of Peace Hospital, it should realise that the closure would mean the end of a great institution, the Sita Carter

Day Centre. The cost of such a closure would not be simply in monetary terms; it would be a human cost, a cost incurred by the people in the electorates of Ashfield and Marrickville who utilise this well-organised centre. I praise Jack Macklin and those organisers who are trying to convince the Government that this decision should not be based purely on monetary terms but also in human terms. The Government should ensure that the elderly and frail in our community, particularly in the inner west, are not treated in the neglectful way that one has come to expect of this Government, given its handling of the health portfolio of late.

### **NAMBUCCA HEADS SENIOR CITIZENS HOME**

**Mr JEFFERY** (Oxley) [5.33]: For some time now the senior citizens of Nambucca Heads have been endeavouring to establish a permanent home. The Minister is no doubt aware of the rapidly increasing aged population on the mid North Coast, particularly in the Nambucca Shire. With the growth has come a lack of relevant amenities and community infrastructure. The Nambucca area in my electorate of Oxley is the fastest growing area on the North Coast. It is actually the second fastest growth area in New South Wales. Its population increase in 1991-92 expressed as a percentage - 4.4 per cent - was more than twice the State average growth. When I met recently with the President of the Nambucca Heads Senior Citizens Association, Mr Larry Woods, I was advised that at present the association has approximately 200 members. With such an ageing population in the community, there is obviously a potential for many more members. If the area had its own home, that number would greatly increase. There is therefore a need for a permanent home for the group so that it can establish fixtures and activities on a regular basis and foster and develop harmonious community relationships.

Recently, the first stage of the Osprey Village opened in Nambucca Heads. It accommodates Department of Housing tenants over the age of 55 who have relocated to the area from Sydney to Nambucca Heads. As a result Department of Housing stock in Sydney is being freed up for families. Elderly people are being moved from three- and four-bedroom homes to wonderful one- and two-bedroom units at Osprey Village. The idea is great, but additional amenities are needed. Unfortunately, capital funds for senior citizens' centres as such no longer exist. The senior citizens' centre program was incorporated into the home and community care, or HACC, program in 1985. The HACC capital facility program is used primarily to provide offices for HACC services and centre-based facilities for the frail, aged and disabled in the community. The program is funded on a cost-share basis, with local government and the community raising \$1 for every \$3 provided through other government funds. The priority for the location and funding of such facilities is assigned on a needs basis. The program is administered through the Department of Local Government, which also recommends the priorities around the State according to its planning data.

Page 6341

As the Nambucca shire has been previously successful in attracting funds for a centre in a neighbouring town, namely, Macksville, it is probable that only limited funds would be available to the shire for another facility in the near future. However, I ask the Minister for Community Services, and Assistant Minister for Health to support fully capital funding to provide the club with a base whereby it can develop wide-ranging programs for the elderly and others in the community. I understand that the provision of funds to establish a centre for the sole purpose of providing a recreational and social meeting place does not fall within existing guidelines of the program. However, I believe that all honourable members in the House would recognise that senior citizens' centres are much more than a social meeting place. They provide friendship and support

for older people who are often living away from their families. As I said, many have been relocated from Sydney to that area. The centres provide comfort for the sick and bereaved and often prevent loneliness and unhappiness, improving the health and well-being of members.

I am advised that the Nambucca Senior Citizens Association envisages a multipurpose centre whereby groups such as the Wednesday Club and the day care centre could meet. Within the existing HACC program, there is a major capital facility component which covers essential service accommodation, therapy rooms, meeting spaces, kitchens and day care requirements for the frail, aged or people with disabilities. Surely there is an argument that senior citizens' centres provide all these things. Groups such as senior citizens' clubs could share the use of these facilities, particularly where those groups encourage the ongoing participation of members who are becoming increasingly frail.

Reserve No. 140003 was created on 18th July, 1986, for the site of a community centre facility for general community use at Nambucca Heads. To date, the Nambucca Heads Senior Citizens Association has been denied the centre it so desperately needs. The president, Mr Larry Woods, has advised me that the club has its own furniture, so the cost of setting up would be minimal. At present the cost of renting a hall is \$20 a time. The members have to put everything away after each meeting. Remember: the members are senior citizens not young people. It is very difficult for them. I ask the Minister to undertake to support these people in their endeavours to establish a permanent home. Perhaps the Minister could liaise with his federal counterpart, the Hon. Peter Staples, in an endeavour to find the necessary funds through the HACC program. [*Time expired.*]

**Mr LONGLEY** (Pittwater - Minister for Community Services, and Assistant Minister for Health) [5.38]: I thank the honourable member for Oxley for bringing the needs of senior citizens in the Nambucca area to my attention. The number of adults aged 65 years and more in New South Wales is expected to increase by 23 per cent over the next decade. In this group there will be a significant increase in the number of older people from non-English speaking backgrounds and increases in the population groups of older people in the mid, central and far North Coast areas. As the population in this State increases, and with a community that is rapidly ageing, it is expected that there will be a greater number of people with functional disabilities. This is the target population of the joint Commonwealth-State funded home and community care program. This year the HACC program will grow by 6.49 per cent to a total expenditure of \$204.8 million to provide improved community support services for frail aged senior citizens and younger people with disabilities.

Page 6342

It is the case that senior citizens centres are not eligible for funding under the HACC program. Capital facilities' funding under the program is co-ordinated and recommended by the Department of Local Government and Co-operatives in consultation with local government authorities and the Department of Community Services. Such funding is targeted at our frail aged senior citizens and other people with disabilities, and is used to design and construct facilities such as day care centres, dementia centres, paramedical and assessment centres, and to provide for the efficient and effective co-location of local HACC services. I am very sympathetic to the needs of the senior citizens of Nambucca Heads for a base for their activities. Unfortunately, it is not possible for such a facility to be funded under the HACC program. It is, however, possible for a joint venture to be undertaken which can meet the needs of both frail aged persons and other senior citizens. For example, in the Waverley municipality a capital

facility for HACC services has recently been funded which will also provide a venue for activities for senior citizens. Though the portion of the facility dedicated to non-HACC services cannot be funded under HACC, the honourable member may wish to encourage the Nambucca Shire Council to liaise with the Department of Local Government concerning a similar joint venture. The honourable member for Oxley is to be congratulated for his stand on this important issue on which over a sustained period of time he has shown a high level of dedication and commitment. The people of the Oxley electorate are indeed well served by such a hard-working and dedicated member.

### **BUILDING DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

**Mr PRICE** (Waratah) [5.40]: Though I have not been able to contact the Minister, on short notice I wish to speak about a problem that affects the Department of Housing and in particular the Building Services Corporation. That problem concerns a house being built for the Flanagan family in Eleebana, a suburb of the city of Lake Macquarie. The home was commenced in June 1988. Each of the three builders engaged on the building site have been dismissed and have been directed by the Building Services Corporation to undertake a number of defect repairs. The principal builder is currently appearing in a corporation show cause hearing to justify his licence. I have no brief for the owners or the builders other than to say that it is extraordinary that this matter has been in train since June 1988. The number of alleged defects attributed to Mr Tilse, the original builder, has grown from 18 to 64, though Mr Tilse was dismissed from that job in December 1988. I am in possession of a number of documents that have been transmitted to the Builders Licensing Board justifying Mr Tilse's stand on the matter.

I am equally concerned that a show cause demand has been issued to the second builder, Mr Keevers, as advertised in the *Newcastle Herald* of 29th August and 18th September. Mr David Stibbard, the third builder on the site, has also been asked to correct a series of defects. He was only on the job for about two months but has been directed to repair 17 defects. The builder has also taken action against the architect, and the engineer is to be subjected to similar treatment. This extraordinary and expensive case involves an owner, three builders, an engineer, an architect and, in addition, Beresfield Aluminium, the supplier of the aluminium windows. Mr Gronow, spokesman for Beresfield Aluminium, has expressed his concern that the quality of the windows was challenged. No one has been paid for any work. Three years later Mr Tilse is out of pocket by about \$80,000. I understand that the matter may be resolved on Friday of this week unless arrangements can be made to defer the case. Given the activities of the Building Services Corporation in this matter and costs incurred, the Act should be reviewed. How could any construction dispute before any adjudicator or tribunal have got so out of hand? I understand that Mr Tilse has undertaken many of the repairs

Page 6343

originally indicated in the 18 stated defects. He has supplied all sorts of information to demonstrate that the corporation in his opinion has not even inspected some of the work subsequent to the original complaints.

I am alarmed that this matter has become a judicial issue in relation to which both sides have expensive legal representation. The next step, it seems, is to undertake proceedings in the Supreme Court of New South Wales, and that would be outrageously expensive for all parties. The functions of the Building Services Corporation should be strengthened or modified to prevent building disputes from getting out of hand. Great difficulty has been caused to Mr Tilse. The problem has been even more disconcerting for the owners of the house, yet no resolution has been reached or payment made and people have been disadvantaged all round. The services and expenses of the corporation in this matter are costing the State a fortune. I hope that the Minister is able to intervene to

ensure that this matter - an embarrassment for the corporation, which is becoming a laughingstock in the building community - is brought to a conclusion rapidly, so that the image of the corporation is not diminished further in its dealings with the public.

### **GLADESVILLE POLICE PATROL**

**Mr PETCH** (Gladesville) [5.45]: Last Monday I attended the opening of \$360,000 extensions to Ryde police station. On that occasion I paid credit to the quality of policing in the Gladesville and Ryde areas, and in particular to the standards of policing achieved by Inspector McDowell, officer-in-charge of Ryde, and Inspector Barry Beavis, officer-in-charge of Gladesville. I wish to draw attention to some of the problems in Gladesville. Former police Minister Ted Pickering did an outstanding job in this portfolio. During that time he turned Gladesville police station from a part-time to a full-time station, operating 24 hours a day. As was rightly said at that time, crime does not operate from 9 to 5, it operates around the clock, and so do the police. Gladesville police station consists of five rooms plus a small meal room, a common toilet, a shower block, station reception and charge room, and one cell. This patrol is in urgent need of detectives but the reason given for not allocating personnel is insufficient accommodation. It is also anticipated that a highway patrol will be provided from a district resource and officers will be placed at Gladesville station. However, accommodation will not be available and as such this patrol will be deprived of vital police units. Gladesville police station was originally the cottage of the first sergeant of police stationed there when Gladesville was a satellite of Ryde. Over the years that station has not changed much; it is still really a residence but now accommodates 34 personnel. These extra police have been allocated to Gladesville and have done much to combat the crime rate that was rife prior to 1988.

It is no secret that Gladesville shopping centre had many shop windows smashed and tobacconists have iron bars over the windows because they have had so many break-ins and suffered so much damage that they have become uninsurable. The scene in Gladesville has changed primarily because of the correct level of policing. Unfortunately, the police have substandard accommodation. At the request of previous Ministers for health and police I investigated what problems would be associated with locating and building a new police station in the grounds of the Gladesville hospital. I am pleased to tell the House that the proposal had the support of the unions, the administration, and the Minister at the time. The 1986 census figures show that the police have a responsibility for a population of 34,500. They have to take care of not only Gladesville; they cover Woolwich, East Ryde, North Ryde and parts of Ryde, as well as Putney. So the patrol area has significantly increased and has been defined as such. A new police station, as opposed to any remedies or rectifications of the old police station, would be most

Page 6344

desirable. The location of the existing police station is such that the police have to use a siren before doing a right hand turn in the middle of Victoria Road in cases of emergency if they want to travel west. Relocation of the police station would enable them to use a safer, controlled intersection. I ask the Minister to consider this matter in view of its effect on the quality of policing to be achieved in the Gladesville electorate.

**Mr GRIFFITHS** (Georges River - Minister for Police) [5.50]: I thank the honourable member for Gladesville for his continued interest in and support of the Government's law and order program. I am aware that this issue is close to the honourable member's heart. The honourable member will go down in history as being the only member to confront the Minister within 7½ minutes of being sworn in. I assure his constituents that within 7½ minutes of being sworn in I was fully aware of the

honourable member's needs. Though I am new to the portfolio, I can confirm that I have already sought a full briefing from the Police Service. I undertake to make full details available at the first opportunity. Once again, I congratulate the honourable member. I aggressively represent my constituents, as he does, because we are here to represent people and people are what it is all about.

### **EAGLE FARM RESERVE**

**Mr KNIGHT** (Campbelltown) [5.52]: Tonight I raise the plight of many of my constituents and some intending constituents who own land in part of the Eaglevale suburb near Eagle Farm Reserve. Members of the Eagle Farm Reserve Preservation Association and other affected landowners purchased land from Landcom. At the time they purchased their land they were shown sale plans by Landcom representatives which clearly indicated that the large tract of land adjoining their home sites was a reserve - in fact Eagle Farm Reserve. In reality the land was not zoned as a reserve. Campbelltown council had made a terrible error. It had provided information to the Geographical Names Board suggesting that a large tract of virgin land be gazetted as having the name "Eagle Farm Reserve". One would think that if the local council suggested to the Geographical Names Board that a location be called Eagle Farm Reserve that the area in question was a reserve. That is certainly what the Geographical Names Board appeared to think, and certainly what Campbelltown residents who looked at their street directories - with data provided by Campbelltown council - thought.

In fact, as council's planning records - as distinct from what could loosely be called its naming records - show, only part of the area called Eagle Farm Reserve is zoned as open space. The rest allows the owner of the land, in this case the Department of Housing - to build a residential development on it. However, there is no evidence that the instrumentality of the Department of Housing, Landcom, ever told prospective purchasers that large parts of the so-called reserve adjoining their land would become residential rather than open space. Indeed, quite the reverse: there is a considerable amount of evidence to suggest that prospective purchasers were given plans that suggested that the area was all reserve. On the basis of this misrepresentation many people bought land. Now they find that the reserve adjoining their homes is about to be turned into house sites. The response from the Government has been appalling. In essence, it relies upon the zoning, claiming it allows the further development. It tries to blame the victims by saying that it is the fault of the purchasers for not checking the zoning with the council. Yet these purchasers relied on misleading information provided by the Department of Housing instrumentality, Landcom. Approaches by affected residents to the then Minister for Housing, Joe Schipp, his temporary successor, John Fahey, and the Minister for Planning, and Minister for Housing, Robert Webster, have all been to no avail. Indeed, this Government's attitude is summed up in the following quote from a letter dated 4th September to the Eagle Farm Reserve Preservation Association from Minister Webster:

Page 6345

Finally, may I reiterate that I do not intend to inquire further into the alleged misrepresentation. The Eaglevale development is one which is addressing the Government's requirements for efficient use of land and infrastructure.

So there it is: the Government does not want to know about anything which might affect its building program. Its response is, "Get nicked, bulldozers following". Contrast this with a previous occasion when in the nearby suburb of Ambarvale Landcom attempted to turn land shown as a reserve into housing. Following my representations to the then

housing Minister, Frank Walker, there was an intervention. Mr Walker made it clear that no matter what the zoning allowed, if Landcom represented a patch of land to purchasers as open space, then open space it would be. The affected residents seek an independent inquiry into this matter. At present the guilty party is even refusing to hold an investigation - although one would doubt the credibility of an investigation clearing itself - and it will not agree to an independent and public inquiry to see that justice is done. Holding an impartial inquiry is the only fair way to resolve this matter. Any fair inquiry will find in favour of the residents, who have been misled by Landcom and who are now suffering as a result.

#### **PORT MACQUARIE HOSPITAL AND Mr JOHN MURPHY**

**Ms MACHIN** (Port Macquarie) [5.57]: I wish tonight to speak on the tactics and behaviour of one Mr John Murphy of Port Macquarie and - surprise, surprise - it is in connection with the Port Macquarie hospital. I charge Mr Murphy with being a blatant liar in the best tradition of the Australian Labor Party. He continues to run the big lie. In Port Macquarie over the past year he has run a campaign of fear, smear and innuendo and outright lies. He has singlehandedly politicised the local council since he was elected to it last year - to the point where the needs and interests of the ratepayers are totally subsumed by council's involvement in State issues over which it has absolutely no control. Mr Murphy hijacks meetings, plays to the gallery, waves his arms about, waves reports about and tells absolute bare-faced lies in order to advance his own cause, which is something that I think has become a *raison d'être* for him and his band of followers. He is becoming worse, not better. Mr Murphy appears increasingly unbalanced, irrational and aggressive in his crazy campaign to pursue his own political agenda - I emphasise those words - and I will say a little more on this in a minute. Mr Murphy's lies hit an all-time low last Monday.

**Mr Rogan:** I will bet you will not say this outside the Parliament.

**Ms MACHIN:** The honourable member for East Hills would not say the things that Murphy says at Port Macquarie.

**Mr Rogan:** I said that I bet that you would not say this outside the Parliament.

**Mr ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Hazzard):** Order! Honourable members should desist from conversing across the Chamber.

**Ms MACHIN:** Last Monday Murphy's lies hit an all-time low. He went on Australian Broadcasting Corporation radio and said that the Government had a secret contract that it was going to sign in a few weeks time in regard to the hospital, a contract that was absolutely nothing like the one that is currently being discussed in the local community. That is a total lie. Murphy knows it is not true because he has raised this stupid notion in the last few weeks and had a personal briefing by the deputy director of the Department of Health in the area, who pointed out that there is absolutely no truth in the rumour. But Murphy continues to run the big lie. He also claimed that the

Page 6346

Government had spent more than \$100,000 on the yes campaign in Port Macquarie. This is another bare-faced lie that he could not justify. I have an item here from the minutes of the Labor Council asking members to send contributions to the action group in Port Macquarie for its campaign. So much for it being all local money.

Mr Murphy went on to allege that the Minister for Health, Ron Phillips, had spent two days of every week for the past couple of months in Port Macquarie. A check

of anyone's diary will show that that is another lie. Mr Murphy has defamed the chairman of the former hospital board, the director of nursing and at least one fellow alderman by suggesting they are on the take from the companies involved. I do not know how the companies could think they could get away with paying off so many people. Mr Murphy has stated that the Government will close Wauchope hospital if the new private-public project proceeds. Probably the biggest lie that he and his little gang continue to run is that private insurance is necessary and New South Wales is going down the path of the American system. On Saturday a referendum was held. The result was somewhat distorted because people like Mr Murphy rushed up to people in the street, particularly the elderly, and said, "If you have not got private insurance, you had better vote no because you will not get into the hospital". He knows that is a lie because he has been briefed more than anyone else in the Port Macquarie community. Yet he seeks to exploit the fears of the elderly. That is an outright disgrace; it is no wonder the elderly are frightened and nervous.

What is the Murphy agenda? I believe his objective is to get elected. When he allowed the people to choose and stood against other candidates, he failed at least three times. He is now trying a backdoor way. I should point out that this man was formerly a Liberal and is now in the Labor Party. God knows where he will go next. He has changed parties more times than the honourable member for Campbelltown has changed factions. Mr Murphy was elected to council. I believe that he is now seeking a seat in the upper House, which has been promised to him by his Labor mates if he does a good job of sabotaging the hospital at Port Macquarie. They will get him in the backdoor by a Sussex Street preselection. His closet co-candidate, Mrs Edith Hall, ran for election to the council in the by-election last weekend. Significantly, she was not elected when running on a no hospital platform. She was meant to be elected and deliver him the necessary vote to become the mayoral candidate, thereby putting him in an even better position to rant, rave and generally destroy the community feeling that has developed so well in Port Macquarie over so many years. This man is a liar, a slanderer and a disgrace to the town. His tactics in relation to the Port Macquarie hospital are absolutely appalling.

#### **METAL TRADES INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION AND Mr GLEN SPEIRS**

**Mr ROGAN** (East Hills) [6.2]: I wish to raise the case of a young family man, Mr Glen Speirs of Lot 9, Sunny Corner Road, Portland. He is a constituent of my colleague the honourable member for Bathurst, who has also been working to try to assist him. This young man is suffering terrible injustice as a result of being virtually blackballed by an employer organisation, the Metal Trades Industry Association. Mr Speirs is married with two children. In 1990 he obtained employment on the construction of the Mount Piper power station. He was employed by Mr Ron Biner of Allied, the company building the stack. At 10.15 on the Sunday night before he was due to start, he was advised that there were too many men. He was then able to get a job for five months with Thiess as a concrete finisher on the Bathurst bridge. He was to be employed at Mount Piper when the manager transferred over, but got the runaround each time he followed up the job.

Page 6347

In late January 1991 he was to be employed at Mount Piper as a crane driver with Barclay Mowlon. The Friday before he was due to start his wife received a telephone call saying he could not start. No reason was given. In April 1991 this young man obtained a job with Statewide. Before he was due to start he again received a telephone call cancelling the job. In May 1991 another company, Ralph Lee, employed him as a steel fixer. Again after a telephone call the job was taken away from him and

he was virtually cancelled out. He then found out from one of the companies that his problem stemmed from the MTIA. The person from whom he received the information agreed to help him. With this evidence he then went to his union, the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemens Association of Australasia, which took the matter to arbitration. Following a conference with three members of the MTIA, the matter was resolved out of court.

Mr Speirs was then employed by Thiess at Mount Piper as a labourer for 7½ months and was promoted to a leading hand concrete finisher. After that job finished, he started with a firm called Bisafe. He attended for work on 24th April, 1992, at 7 a.m. At 8.30 a.m. he was told to leave the site. He then received what could only be described as the runaround for another three days until finally he was told he was not required. The firm Statewide then employed him for the second time. On the second day he was again told his services were no longer required. He then obtained a job at Wallerawang power station with a firm called Valley Electrical as a concrete finisher. That firm's supervisor tried to have Mr Speirs cleared through the MTIA office but was told that he was not available, which was untrue as Mr Speirs was still looking for work.

Mr Speirs has had no difficulty when he has been able to obtain employment. Indeed, his work record shows that he has been able to advance to leading hand status. Mr Randall Davies seems to be the person behind the vendetta against this young man. Apparently the problem goes back 10 years when this young man, together with 20 others, went on strike because of an industrial dispute. Mr Davies, who was then head of the MTIA, took the side of the employer in that dispute. When the matter was finally arbitrated the judge was highly critical of the company and Mr Davies. It was even suggested by the judge that wages lost should be reimbursed as the employer was in the wrong. If a trade union indulged in this sort of behaviour, there would be indignation in the community. However, this action is being taken by an employer organisation. It is clearly unacceptable. Through the Chief Secretary, and Minister for Administrative Services, I ask the Minister for Conservation and Land Management, and Minister for Energy at least to inform Pacific Power that this young man can be employed. I ask the Attorney General, and Minister for Industrial Relations to ascertain whether the MTIA is in breach of the Industrial Relations Act.

### **VENTURE INDUSTRIES PTY LIMITED**

**Mr PACKARD** (The Hills) [6.7]: I wish to refer to Venture Industries. I understand that the honourable member for Auburn has raised this matter previously. However, the problem has still not been fully resolved. The only solution to the problems with the house of one family, who live at Dural in my electorate, is to have the house demolished and rebuilt. The difficulty is that the contract was signed when the compensation limit in the legislation was set at \$60,000. Although that limit has now been increased to \$100,000, that sum will not be nearly sufficient to cover the costs of rebuilding the house. A group of people have been disadvantaged by this company,  
Page 6348

Venture Industries. I understand the matter is in the hands of the Building Services Corporation. I understand also that the Minister for Planning, and Minister for Housing is aware of it. I spoke to the Premier in relation to the problem when he was acting Minister for Housing. Under the Trade Practices Act the people who own these defective homes now have to go through the court system to receive compensation to complete their houses. I ask the Acting-Speaker, the honourable member for Wakehurst, to request the Minister for Planning, and Minister for Housing to have a look at the system at the Building Services Corporation. Some matters need to be examined.

Homeworld has on display a house which is owned by Collings Constructions. Present legislation does not impose responsibility on the major display builder. A display home builder can subcontract to a licensed builder but the legislation does not rope in the sales people. If the motor industry were involved, the Department of Consumer Affairs would be using this consumer legislation to belt the living harry out of the operators. In my naivety I referred the people concerned to the Department of Consumer Affairs. The department said: "We do not have any money in our budget to help. If you can get the housing department to fund an investigation by the Department of Consumer Affairs, we will happily have a look at it". This is in 1992. All I ask is that this House be given the opportunity to consider legislation that can rope in the main builders under display contracts. Builders are not building any more; they are simply franchising the building of the house to someone else. The legislation needs to be amended.

Secondly, just as there is a requirement to take out compulsory third party insurance cover on a motor vehicle, it should be mandatory that an insurance policy funded by the purchaser be taken out before building commences; the purchaser could take out an indemnity policy against the house not being built properly. At the moment, the \$60,000 or \$100,000 will come out of the pocket of the taxpayer because the Building Services Corporation does not seek reimbursement from the builder; the corporation is not prepared to take on such a case. It draws from an indemnity compensation fund. Third, I ask the Chief Secretary, and Minister for Administrative Services to ask the Minister for Consumer Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Health to consider the present case. The Collings constructions company must have known it was employing a dud builder. It is essential that the Government sponsor regulations that will assist my constituents to get their houses rebuilt. It is an absolute disgrace that Mr Kioussis, who had his building licence withdrawn for false pretences, has not been charged. There are many people whose houses need to be rebuilt. One of my former employees has a room missing from his house and has no garage but, as the Act stands, there is nothing anybody can do to help him. The Act must be amended as a matter of urgency, because many people must have exactly the same problem.

**Mrs COHEN** (Badgerys Creek - Chief Secretary, and Minister for Administrative Services) [6.12]: I will gladly pass on to the Minister the concerns of the honourable member for The Hills in relation to, first, the problems related to apparent franchising by display builders; second, the need for indemnity insurance against improperly constructed housing; and, third, responsibility of contracting builders for sub-contracting standards.

**Private members' statements noted.**

*[Mr Acting-Speaker (Mr Chappell) left the chair at 6.13 p.m. The House resumed at 7.30 p.m.]*

Page 6349

**APPROPRIATION BILL**

**BUSINESS FRANCHISE LICENCES (PETROLEUM PRODUCTS)  
AMENDMENT BILL**

**MOTOR VEHICLES TAXATION (AMENDMENT) BILL**

**ROAD IMPROVEMENT (SPECIAL FUNDING) AMENDMENT BILL**

## Second Reading

### Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

**Mr SMALL** (Murray) [7.34]: I take this opportunity to congratulate the Premier, and Treasurer on bringing down the 1992-93 Budget. Because the whole of the southern part of my electorate borders Victoria, I appreciate how fortunate New South Wales is in comparison with Victoria, which has a debt of \$45 billion and a total of \$20 billion in overseas borrowings. That is not to say that New South Wales is debt free, but the people of this State should be thankful that we have not gone down the same track as Victoria. I pay tribute to the former Premier, the Hon. Nick Greiner. Having acknowledged the State's indebtedness, in difficult recessionary times he did his very best to keep this State on a sound economic footing while endeavouring to reduce the State debt. Nick Greiner put his heart into addressing the problems of the economy. The results show his ability in financial matters. I congratulate him on the good work he did for the State and the welfare of the people. I take this opportunity also to congratulate the newly appointed Premier, the Hon. John Fahey. In a short time he has surpassed the expectations of his colleagues and the people of New South Wales. The Premier and his wife, Colleen, are well received and accepted no matter where their travels take them round the State. I commend my leader, the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works, and Minister for Roads, for the incredible job he has done in providing support to both the former Premier and the present Premier. He has been instrumental in maintaining unity within the coalition parties and has shown commendable statesmanship. Government Ministers, including the Minister in the chair, the Hon. Ian Causley, Minister for Natural Resources, have worked extremely well together.

At present, Australia, and in particular New South Wales, is experiencing difficult times with drought and a decline in the nation's actual cash flow. Within my electorate 60 per cent to 70 per cent of residents have suffered and are continuing to suffer from severe drought conditions, though the eastern part of my electorate is enjoying a good season. The Budget has been structured to assist growth in employment. Though New South Wales has on average the lowest unemployment figure of all States, many people are unemployed - about 300,000. I acknowledge that not all of them would be employable but, by the same token, many conscientious people are striving to obtain work. I have heard it said recently that those who are in business and in a position to offer employment have never before been presented with people of such high quality applying for work. It is encouraging to know that those seeking work, particularly the young people, are people of such high quality. It is very sad to think of the state of unemployment in New South Wales.

I wish to make reference to particular areas within my electorate of Murray. I am very pleased with the level of funding being provided in most areas of the Budget, particularly in view of the difficult economic times. Though the increase in the health budget is only 1.5 per cent, this is perhaps the first time in the last four years that the

Page 6350

increase is slightly less than the inflation rate. At least the allocation has been increased. The total health budget this year is \$4.63 billion. There are 12 hospitals located in the electorate of Murray. I am pleased that the provision of an accident and emergency facility at Deniliquin Hospital is to proceed. At Urana the State Government has approved the construction of a multipurpose health centre. It will be one of the first in the State, but its establishment will depend on the Federal Government providing its share of the funding. There is a great advantage in small towns such as Urana having a multipurpose health facility. The long-stay beds become nursing home type beds.

There are acute beds, accident day care beds and an ambulance service. Small country towns have not been able to enjoy the benefit of all those services. The long-stay beds are not described as nursing home beds and, consequently, the elderly are usually required to travel quite some distance to be accommodated in another town, away from their loved ones. The Urana shire, the Urana Hospital Board and the general community expect a multipurpose health centre to be built. Its construction has been approved by the Government but that is dependent on the Commonwealth Government providing funding not only for its construction but also the establishment of long-stay beds, which would be nursing home beds in that area.

Berrigan township, through the hospital board management, has undertaken to raise funds, which will also be matched by the Federal Government, for the establishment of an aged hostel. I am very pleased to see the activity that is occurring in that town. The community works together in an effort to take care of the elderly. Karinya House in Corowa is also seeking to increase the number of beds available for the elderly. Corowa has achieved huge improvements to its hospital and aged care facilities in recent years. Balranald and Barham have recently updated their hospitals in a major way, particularly their aged care accommodation. The new building which has just been completed at Barham - it is called Eliza House - has 15 beds for long-stay accommodation, which are really in the form of nursing home beds. Funds have all been provided from money raised by the communities of Barham and Balranald, though they have been assisted by the New South Wales Department of Health. That facility has provided a wonderful boost to those two towns.

Consideration is also being given to establishing a multipurpose health facility at Wentworth. Though that proposed facility does not have the total acceptance of the community, the hospital board is anxious that it be established. This matter will have to be fully addressed and discussed by the community at large. The hospital at Tocumwal is still being improved and upgraded, as have the hospitals at Hay, Finley, Jerilderie and Lockhart in previous years. I believe the provision of accommodation and the delivery of health and community services within the Murray electorate have improved greatly. Having sufficient beds has always been a problem, particularly at Deniliquin. We have yet to come to grips with that shortage which has resulted from the demand on bed accommodation and the average length of bed stays for the hospital, which seems to be quite high for our State. That situation is difficult to understand, given that Deniliquin is not located in a mining area which could be the cause of illness. However, it is a problem that must be overcome.

I turn now to education. The budget for education, employment and training is \$4.6 billion. Many difficulties were experienced in the education area some three or four years ago. I congratulate the educators, the department, the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, the employees, and the parents and citizens because things are going extremely well in the education field at present. I am pleased to observe as I visit all 64 schools in my electorate that the schools are operating more happily at present than they have before. I give credit for this situation to most of the principals, the cluster directors

Page 6351

and the deputy-regional directors for the way in which they are carrying out their duties on behalf of education in this State. I am pleased to note that a new multipurpose assembly hall has been built at Deniliquin, which was an election promise. It is functioning extremely well, as is the hall at Finley. Similar multipurpose assembly halls are needed at Lockhart Central School, at Barham High School and at the Hay War Memorial High School, as well as at a public school at North Deniliquin. I know none of these facilities can be built immediately, nor can all of them be built in a short space of time. However, some of the local parents and citizens groups and communities are trying

to raise money in an effort to acquire those facilities.

If there is one thing of which the Government should be very proud it is the development of distance education. A primary distance education centre is operating at Hay and at Balranald, some 120 kilometres away, a secondary distance education centre is operating. Both of these centres have flourished well beyond the dreams of even the Department of School Education. Many students are utilising these facilities, particularly at Balranald where the number of buildings provided for teacher education and the number of teachers employed is incredible. The concept of distance education is easing the burden on parents who live in isolation with their children. The result has been a greater learning curve for those children in isolated areas. These children previously had to learn by correspondence, which was very difficult for them. Teaching by radio communication still exists, but with face to face teaching they come together in different homes on a weekly basis in those rural areas.

I turn now to public works. The Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works, and Minister for Roads has recognised the need for sewerage services and the augmentation of water supplies throughout country areas. Many of these areas have been extremely neglected, and the standard of water quality in some of the inland rivers, particularly the Murray, has deteriorated. The filtration of water has become a matter of vital concern to the towns along that river. The Deniliquin sewerage update is estimated to cost \$3.6 million, and the cost of current work is \$1.2 million, to be shared between the local municipality of Deniliquin and the State Government. An amount of \$600,000 has been provided in the Budget for that. The nearby town of Mathoura, in the Murray shire, will receive \$800,000 in this year's Budget for a full sewerage scheme, estimated to cost \$3 million.

Corowa shire is improving its sewage disposal with the help of the Government. Corowa and Moama are two of the fastest growth centres west of the divide, even in these difficult times. It is pleasing that this funding is being made available. The Wentworth shire has within it the towns of Buronga-Gol Gol and Dareton. There is provision of \$500,000 in this Budget for a water update and for the purification or filtration of the water supply, estimated to cost \$10 million and to be shared between the council and the State Government. The Wentworth township now has a fully filtered water supply system, which I officially opened last year. Within the next few years the whole of the Wentworth shire will have filtered water to all of its town centres. The Wakool shire at Barham is to receive \$700,000 for a portable water supply system, estimated to cost \$3.3 million. That will be shared equally between the three levels of government - local, State and Federal. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

It is a pleasure to see that the Budget recognises country towns and isolated communities. The Budget allocation will help shires with the upgrading of water and sewerage augmentation. The Maritime Services Board plays a major role along the Murray River. Within the Murray electorate I have 1,431 kilometres of river, with the Murray River of course forming the border between Victoria and New South Wales. I

Page 6352

am very pleased that \$177,000 has been allocated for improvements to recreational boating and sewerage offtake for areas along the river where there are many houseboats and paddle steamers. It is a popular area for water activities. Those improvements will be effected in the Murray shire at Moama and in the Sunraysia area at Mildura. Although Mildura is on the Victorian side of the border, the Murray River is considered to be New South Wales waters and, therefore, we have to provide services for the Victorian side of the river.

The Murray electorate is to receive \$17.756 million for road construction, road maintenance, traffic management and road safety this financial year. In addition, it is anticipated that the Federal Government will provide \$8.361 million for road improvements to the Newell Highway, which will be most welcome. We should all compliment the Government on its 3 x 3 program. It is a form of tax which the majority of people have accepted extremely well. None of us likes taxes but when we see money being spent on road improvements we at least see something for our money. People travelling from the metropolitan areas to the country areas, and vice versa, see improvements everywhere. As well as improvements to Sydney, improvements are being made in the far southwestern area of the State, where I live. Funds from the 3 x 3 program will be spent on the Cobb Highway and on the Silver City Highway. The Cobb Highway runs from Moama through to Ivanhoe; it goes through Deniliquin, Hay, Booligal and Mossgiel. A former member of this House, Matt Singleton, undertook a program of providing funds in the area north of Booligal where the roads were dirt tracks. It is pleasing to see the road improvements and road sealing which have taken place in that area.

This year \$1.6 million will be spent on improving and sealing another seven kilometres. About \$124,000 will be spent on improving and maintaining roads which have already been sealed north of Booligal. We should look at the 3 x 3 program and appreciate that all 13 councils within my electorate will receive in the order of \$3.43 million for various projects. Under this scheme another \$3 million will be allocated for the shires to do the work. This year about \$3.04 million is being spent from the 3 x 3 program on high priority projects. We would not have received any of that money had it not been for the 3c per litre tax on fuel. The program is well utilised. A watchdog committee has been set up to make sure the money is spent on roads.

Agriculture is the largest resource sector within the Murray electorate; the other area of growth potential being tourism, particularly along the Murray River. I mentioned that seasonal conditions are harsh at the present time. In the east, areas which would normally receive 24 inches of rain are doing well; however, as we go further west and further north, the environment deteriorates. The far western area, on the South Australian border - something like 740 kilometres from east to west - receives an average of 9 inches of rainfall each year. Some of that area has not even received 1.5 inches this year. Rain did not fall in the last two or three months of last year either. Those people are in a desperate plight. I feel for those farmers. Unless they have substantial rains before we get into the warm seasonal conditions I do not know how they will continue to survive. In addition to the lack of rain, commodity prices are low, despite the hard work, long hours, cost factors and other problems with which the farm community has to cope. The Rural Assistance Authority has been helpful. However, the Federal Government does not understand or appreciate the devastation it is creating at the present time.

Page 6353

While Australia maintains its freetrade policy it will continue to be a dumping ground. Countries in the European Economic Community, northern Europe and America subsidise their farmers. The governments of those countries are determined that farmers will remain viable. The same cannot be said for the Australian Federal Government. It seems to think that farmers will be able to live on their own resources. Though most farmers want to be able to live within their means and get a fair return for their commodities, they must compete with major firms which import foodstuffs and package them under local brand names. Many consumers do not realise that the products they purchase have been imported. Unscrupulous importers are trying to make big dollars without giving consideration to the economy of the nation. I hope that the

Federal Government will get its act together and realise that it must be serious in its efforts to help those engaged in the agricultural and mining industries, the two rich commodities that will bring the country out of its present recession. When that happens employment will benefit. It is no good having the Government train people in the short term and giving handouts. Businesses must be allowed to become successful and financially sound. The private sector will then be able to offer long-term employment opportunities.

I spoke earlier about natural resources. I am pleased that the Minister for Natural Resources is in the Chamber. He has done his best consistently to give assistance to the farming community, especially in regard to water resources. After a lot of toing and froing about the structure of management boards the Coomealla Irrigation Board will be able to rehabilitate the irrigation system in that region. Approximately \$6.288 million will be injected into the scheme by the State Government. The irrigators are pleased, as I am, that the Government has agreed to replace the pumping station at Coomealla, which is in a bad state of repair. A joint venture program will be undertaken to provide the necessary piping for the development of the scheme, which will virtually prevent loss of water from the channel through seepage or evaporation. The irrigators are willing to undertake the project, at great cost to them, in order to remain competitive. Drainage and salinity control are important to irrigation areas. In the southern irrigation districts \$2.055 million will be provided for salinity control. That is a decrease in the level of funding made available in the past, but I know that the Government is seeking funds from the Federal Government to assist with the provision of surface drainage which is essential in the Berriquin irrigation district and the whole of the southern irrigation area. Farmers in that region are desperate to keep the water-tables down, to remain viable and employ the most efficient farming methods, by the use of land forming, reticulation, surface water usage and recycling.

The closed pipe system and microjets being used in the horticultural industry have enabled farmers to contain water usage to a level of about 40 per cent of the volume used under the flood irrigation system. Farmers are good economists but are concerned about their welfare and the environment. They require assistance from governments to enable them to develop surface drainage and become more efficient. I congratulate the Minister for Natural Resources on his efforts in the past and request that he continues to do all that he can to assist the State's farmers. I congratulate the Premier, the Government, Cabinet Ministers and all backbenchers on recognising the needs of the people of New South Wales. I look forward to the Opposition giving support to the Government's efforts on behalf of the people of the State.

**Mr NAGLE** (Auburn) [8.4]: I acknowledge the sentiments of the honourable member for Murray. When the Government deserves support, the Opposition gives that support. However, the time comes when one must call a spade a spade. Today the honourable member for The Hills attacked members of the Opposition for being socialists. I am proud that I am a democratic socialist. My father and his father were

Page 6354

democratic socialists. They were caring and helpful men who had great charity. They spent a lot of time and effort helping people. They did not hate; and I do not hate. The remarks made by the honourable member for The Hills confirm his association with the soup of the day on the menu in the Parliamentary Dining Room: cucumber and dill. I do not intend to convey that the honourable member for The Hills is a cucumber. As the Leader of the Opposition said, Greinerism is alive and well, as is evidenced by the Budget. This is truly the fifth Greiner Budget. In one respect I disagree with the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition when he said in effect that only the names and faces have changed. Only the names have changed; the faces and policies remain the same. This

Budget has not changed anything that the Greiner Government inflicted upon the people of New South Wales. The Fahey Government is continuing that process. The inequalities in public education are becoming worse; the public hospitals are in crisis; there have been relentless cuts in vital community services and the highest increases in taxes and charges in Australia.

One example of the increases in taxes and charges is that in April this year a parking fine was \$45; in July that parking fine had increased to \$50 - a 12.8 per cent increase. The level of fines was supposed to increase only in line with the consumer price index. The privatisation bungles by the Government, waste and mismanagement, and destruction of jobs all demonstrate that Greinerism is in evidence under Premier Fahey. Nothing in the ideological thrust of the Budget changes the Government's policy of privatisation at any cost. The Budget is designed to sell. What remains at stake is the State's \$2,000 million deficit. By the time this Government ends its term of office in 1995 the deficit will be \$21,000 million. Every man, woman and child in the State will have to pay an extra \$3,600 a year to meet that debt. That is mismanagement at its highest. We are told that the State has a triple-A rating. Moody's and other organisations have come to the State and carried out an investigation. The Government was assisted by the Leader of the Opposition in keeping the triple-A rating. In the 12 years of Labor administration under Premiers Wran and Unsworth not once did Moody's nor anyone else come to New South Wales to check the State's rating. That is the difference between the Labor Party and the coalition.

The Labor Party is committed to imposing a tight budgetary framework within which it can work. It is aimed at restraining spending at no more than 2 per cent of the total capital gain, capping expenditure when it needs to be. We intend to redirect spending towards the priority areas of health, education, transport and the disadvantaged. I shall tell honourable members how we will do it - and I am being constructive in this debate. We intend to start abolishing and reviewing all the consultants that this Government hired. The amount of money spent will be the subject of debate another day. We will consider the cost of advertising and assess the number of people now in the senior executive service and their remuneration. They are now all on five-year contracts, making twice as much today as they did in 1988.

The Premier in his speech said that he would bring to the attention of the people of New South Wales the fact that the Federal Government has not given New South Wales money to fund projects. That advertising campaign will be conducted over the next six months. We do not have to be dills eating cucumber and dill soup to understand why this advertising campaign will be taken on. It is an attempt to destroy the Keating Government. Who will pay for this campaign? It will be the taxpayers - the same taxpayers who are losing out on hospitals, education and transport. The thrust of the campaign will be to destroy the Keating Government, but taxpayers' money will be wasted in the process. This Government should remember that, if it is successful in destroying the Keating Government, it will have no one else to blame for its

Page 6355

mismanagement. It spends all its time blaming everyone except those who have truly caused the problem. Mismanagement in its clearest form can be seen in the Eastern Creek development. We were told it would cost us \$20 million, and to date it has cost us \$90 million. The first thing Labor would do when in government is sell Eastern Creek and try to get out of debt. We will sell off the adjacent international golf courses too so that we can get some more money.

**Mr Causley:** Why not sell Darling Harbour as well?

**Mr NAGLE:** That may be the way to go. By the time the Government ruins New South Wales, we may have to sell Darling Harbour to stop the State from going bankrupt. We will save the Minister Luna Park, because all this is being done just for fun - the Government is destroying New South Wales just for fun. In 1987 we had a very competent government that delivered a \$500 million surplus. But where have we ended up? A newspaper article appearing in the *Daily Telegraph Mirror* on Wednesday, 16th September, shows a photograph of three people and a child carrying some paintings across a road in Campbelltown. Honourable members might ask what that has to do with the Budget. Over the years prior to this Government coming to office, Blacktown City Council was able to get funding to buy art work. Some of it was good, some not so good; some were prints, but worth a fair bit. Now, Blacktown council, at the request of the city library, has to sell the paintings. I quote the article:

City librarian Andrea Ward said the proceeds would be used to replace classical music tapes and records with compact discs.

Miss Ward said the 15-year-old art collection had been kept in storage since 1988 when the art loan-out service was withdrawn following funding cuts.

But she admits the decision to sell came reluctantly.

"We knew it was a good collection but none of us really wanted to bite the bullet and say okay let's do it," she said.

This had to be done to keep the library at Blacktown going. That is just one small example of the mismanagement of the then Greiner Government and now the Fahey Government, as shown in the 1988-89, 1989-90, 1991-92 and 1992-93 budgets. I listened some time ago when former Premier Greiner told us how bad things were and how good they would be in four years' time. Now we have a similar budgetary situation. What was referred to in the Budget Speech? It was nothing like a budget speech; it was more like a speech that takes place when the Governor General opens the Parliament. At page 8 of his speech the Premier said:

At the same time, the core agencies of government, will pursue the provision of high quality service to the community in a competitive manner.

Then he told us about the wonderful service we will get from public servants. The *Sydney Morning Herald* carried a small cartoon that characterised Mr Fahey saying, "My gorgeous staff . . .". The Attorney General, and Minister for Industrial Relations, who is from another place, then does away with accumulated sick leave. For years accumulated sick leave has been available for the purpose of encouraging people to come to work so that services can be kept up to scratch. A representative of Auburn Municipal Council, which covers my electorate, has informed me that it is able to retain a lot of its staff because people can accumulate sick leave for emergencies or until they retire. Though some may see a problem with that, that was the basis of the contract under which employees worked for many years. This Government is seeking to take away the sick

Page 6356

leave entitlements of those same employees who will serve the people of New South Wales at counters in registries, local councils, and environment and roads offices. People who go to such offices will communicate with public servants.

I wonder whether workers will be eager to keep up a high standard when they realise what this Government is doing to their entitlements. The Government wants to improve efficiency in the community for the purposes of saving money, but it is not

improving efficiency at all. By its continual attacks upon people in this State, it achieves nothing. The Government is in favour of long hours, hard work and disharmony. The workers are saying, however, "Enough is enough". That is the reality. The Government is doing what has been done by others, in political situations, many times before: when one is doing bad, one changes the attack to another topic or group of people causing problems. Hitler used this strategy effectively in the second world war against the gypsies, Jews and Catholics.

All the ills of New South Wales are being blamed on the Federal Government. Some of the ills might be the result of budgetary cuts, but most have been caused by the mismanagement of the New South Wales Government. It is not true to say that all things are bad. The Premier said in his speech that his Government would not allow the Federal Government to continue to use New South Wales as a financial milking cow for the smaller and mismanaged States. He is willing to put a lot of money into a propaganda campaign, hundreds of thousands of dollars, to make sure that everyone knows New South Wales is suffering because the smaller States are getting a bit more than New South Wales. In particular, property-based revenue has declined by \$840 million compared with the figure in 1988-89 when Labor was in government. Some property in my electorate was sold off. The famous Homebush Bay Maritime Services Board property comprising 43.6 hectares of fully developed land was sold in 1989-90 for \$36 million. The then Minister for Transport said in this House that that was a good price because the sale related to low rental properties with extended leases for 20, 30 and 40 years. That sounded all right at the time, but within 12 months of my asking that question in the House the Valuer-General quadrupled the valuation of the property - to about \$140 million. In addition, the rents skyrocketed by 350 per cent more than was paid in 1988. One does not have to be too bright to smell a rat in that development situation. The detail of the sale of the property will one day be the subject of a royal commission hearing or inquiry by the Independent Commission Against Corruption.

The biggest scandal is the Chullora Technical Training College, which was set up to train 500 apprentices. According to State Rail Authority figures this year 215 new apprentices were supposed to be enrolled for training as electricians, carpenters, panelbeaters, motor engineers and so on. But how many apprentices were taken in by the SRA this year? Only 66 were. The Federal Government has allocated money to sponsor at least another 100 apprentices. People in private industry who cannot enrol their apprentices in technical and further education colleges are seeking to have them enrolled at this facility. The Chullora Technical Training College is worth tens of millions of dollars, it has valuable equipment, yet its operations are slowly being wound down. The Government wants to sell off this 500-metre long and 100-metre wide complex, and its surrounding buildings, to the public sector. The Government is ruining New South Wales. I now refer to the sale of the Berala railway station car parking area. The land was sold by the SRA based on the assumption that the sale would return \$2.2 million. The developer, Mr Malouf, who is a friend of the Government, was able to gain approval from the Auburn Municipal Council to build a 12-storey development comprising shops and units. Thus the land is worth more than \$2.2 million. This development has been made possible by SRA. On page 21 of the Budget Speech the Premier said:

Page 6357

The projected Budget result for 1992-93 is a deficit of \$1,225 million, responsibly lower in a recession, than the deficit in 1991-92.

This consists of a current surplus of \$1,067 million and a capital deficit of \$2,292

million.

I do not know how the Premier arrived at those figures. This year the Government has been saved by the sale of the GIO. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

I refer to an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of Wednesday, 16th September, entitled "Fahey's First Budget". The heading by Brad Norington states "Coffers boosted by \$960m but still the State cries poor". It is important that his analysis be put on the record. The article states:

The State Government will receive a \$940 million increase in revenue this year - up 5.6 per cent - despite protesting about the "crushing pressures" of a shrinking revenue base during the recession . . .

Pacific Power, formerly known as Elcom, has proved a huge contributor to the Government's coffers - paying \$476 million . . .

This financial year, the Government will raise an extra \$22 million from increased alcohol tax; an extra \$95.5 million from increased tobacco tax; \$16.2 million more from increased racing tax; \$49 million more from vehicle tax and \$55 million more from double debits tax.

The article refers to parking fines. In April the amount of a parking fine was \$45, in July it was \$50 - a 12.8 per cent increase. Government trading analysis demonstrates the falsity of the Fahey Government Budget. The Premier asserted that the Government will improve health. He stated:

It is important that we achieve high and improving quality of services but in more efficient and effective ways.

St Joseph's Hospital is 100 years old. It has survived two depressions, two wars, a number of recessions but could not survive the Greiner Government, which closed its acute care unit. The Government has provided \$2 million to the Auburn District Hospital, which now cannot cope with its emergency care requirements. Recently a former member of this Chamber was involved in a motor vehicle accident. He was taken to Auburn District Hospital with a broken collar bone and a number of broken ribs. He was badly injured. The nursing sister informed him that he must wait at the end of the queue. He had to wait for two and a half hours in pain before he received treatment. He was then told that because there were insufficient doctors he should return the next day for further x-rays. The next day he returned and spent five hours at that hospital. This man who made an important contribution to this Parliament and to this State was treated shabbily because the hospital did not have the necessary funds to provide the services required. North shore hospitals and eastern suburbs hospitals may have sufficient funds but hospitals in the western suburbs do not. The issue is not just about providing hospital beds, it is also about providing hospital services. In the year 1992-93, \$20 million in additional funding will be provided to New South Wales hospitals.

As the result of a survey I conducted of clubs in my electorate, I ascertained that the Government receives \$557 million by way of poker machine taxes each year from clubs to be used to provide hospital services. However, that fact does not appear to be picked up anywhere in the Budget Papers. The greatest fraud ever perpetrated on the people of New South Wales involves employment and training. I refer again to the Chullora Technical Training Centre. That complex with its enormous supply of equipment has the capacity to train 500 apprentices. These apprentices will be needed

if New South Wales is to go ahead with its \$1.6 billion Olympic Games bid. By the turn of the century when the old plumbers and carpenters have gone, there will not be sufficient carpenters and plumbers, because apprentices have not been trained. Alternative TAFE facilities are available but not adequate to train 500 apprentices.

I heard a gentleman on the Alan Jones radio program say that he would pay money out of his own pocket for his son to do a four-year apprenticeship at the Chullora Technical Training Centre. Obviously we would not want that to happen, but that clearly shows a need for this facility. The Chullora Technical Training Centre has not died; it will haunt this Government. Since the Greiner Government came to office 1,738 people in the hospital system have lost their jobs, and I do not include in that number the 21,000 jobs that have been lost in the public sector. In 1992-93, 849 staff will be lost from electricity councils; 1,651 from the State Rail Authority; 923 from the State Transit Authority; 131 from the Water Board; and 66 from the ambulance service. A total of 7,705 people will lose their jobs in the next financial year. If that number is subtracted from the 18,000 jobs it is claimed will be created, the number becomes 10,295. Therefore, the Premier's policy on employment and training is a fraud. If the Premier and the Government were fair dinkum, tomorrow they would provide funds to enable the Chullora Technical Training Centre to employ 500 apprentices. The Federal Government has provided money for that purpose. The navy is considering employing 200 apprentices and the SRA is in a position to employ apprentices - as are many other organisations. The community service family support package of \$10 million highlights the hypocrisy of this Government. In March 1990 a massive hailstorm hit my electorate and that of Bass Hill. Heavy hail, like bullets, lashed those areas.

That storm smashed 40,000 windows, damaged 5,000 roofs and caused injury to many people. I am sure the Minister for the Environment remembers my speeches in Parliament about that hail storm. However, notwithstanding my representations, the Government has paid not one penny. At the time the Premier sneaked into the Auburn electorate to inspect the damage but spent nothing. Bankstown council was paid only \$293,000 to clean up its area. When a similar storm, of less ferocity, damaged parts of the North Shore, residents received from the Government and its agencies about \$9.6 million. That difference in treatment of constituents in the Auburn electorate and on the North Shore shows the narrow-mindedness of the Government. The sooner it leaves office, the better. The expenditure of \$10 million on 70,000 people in the Auburn electorate would not pay for detergent to wipe away the Government's sins for not helping people who are suffering. Some of that \$10 million was spent on counselling, including financial counselling by trained counsellors, which was no doubt used by middle class people such as the honourable member for The Hills to obtain advice on running a motor company. That money will not go to the people but will be lost on salaries and infrastructure. The honourable member for The Hills spoke about money to be spent on already good roads in The Hills electorate. After two years of waiting, St Hilliers Road in the Auburn electorate has not been completed. We cannot obtain any information from the Roads and Traffic Authority to explain why St Hilliers Road, an extension of the ring road through Auburn, has not been completed.

**Mr Hazzard:** Auburn is represented by a fourth-rate member.

**Mr NAGLE:** The honourable member for Wakehurst has made an interesting point about needing a good member, and that is the crux of this issue. If a Liberal member of Parliament needs money for electorate projects, funds will be withdrawn from use in other electorates to keep Government members such as the honourable member for The Hills living in the manner to which they are accustomed. Traffic congestion caused

by the F4 tollway is destroying roads in the Auburn electorate, yet the capital works program makes no mention of St Hilliers Road. The Government is prejudiced. Adequate assistance seems only to be given to electorates represented by politically motivated Government members. When the hail storm hit the Auburn electorate I said to the former Premier, who would not help, that I would not do to his constituents what he did to mine. If I am appointed as a Minister in a future government I will act justly in distributing road funds. I will not be like members opposite - prejudiced, narrow-minded, hateful, vindictive, incompetent and stupid.

**Mr Causley:** On a point of order. The honourable member said earlier that he did not have any hate in him. Could he expand on that comment?

**Mr ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Tink):** Order! No point of order is involved.

**Mr NAGLE:** I am amazed that the Minister, who has been a member of this Chamber much longer than I have been, does not comprehend the standing orders. I turn to the Homebush Bay redevelopment, on which \$85 million is to be spent. I support that project provided that the money is not diverted from health care expenditure on, for instance, Lidcombe Hospital, St Joseph's Hospital and Auburn Hospital, or from transport and employment projects in the western suburbs. The Government's incompetence was evident in the Eastern Creek fiasco. The Government is hoping to win its Olympic Games bid by spending \$85 million at Homebush Bay, though ultimately, with additional Federal moneys, \$300 million will be spent there. The Government cannot even get its Computerised Operational Policing System to work, and Mr Temby criticised the department for not getting it right. The department spent \$20 million on its computerised system and then another \$5 million, but cannot provide adequate accommodation for police in the Auburn electorate so that they will not be overcrowded in demountable classrooms. Detectives and beat police in Auburn are jammed into temporary accommodation, but the honourable member for The Hills and other Government members are generously assisted in their electorates. [*Time expired.*]

**Ms MACHIN (Port Macquarie) [8.34]:** I congratulate the Premier, the Cabinet and other Government members for another responsible and visionary Budget that shows compassion and responsibility for people living in the Auburn electorate and those in seats represented by members of the Liberal and National parties. The Premier has taken on a most difficult job. He inherited his mantle in rather difficult circumstances and has proved that he is up to that job. I congratulate the honourable member for Davidson and the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai on their outstanding maiden speeches last night. I understand both of them have offered to assist the honourable member for Auburn in future with construction of his speeches. Yesterday the Leader of the Opposition replied on the Budget. I will be interested to read if Mr Carr's speech attracts better comment than he managed to muster last year, which was embarrassing for him. Mr Carr said he will spend less but spend more; he will stop private investment in infrastructure but will build more; he will employ more teachers and other public servants - an area in which the Government has made productivity savings - yet he will tighten up on public servants; he will create more jobs yet run a leaner government; he will stop logging in places such as the southeast forests and the North Coast; and he will stop legitimate sand mining on the North Coast that has been through lengthy approval processes.

I am mystified about how the Leader of the Opposition plans to deliver without spending more money while allegedly increasing State services. The Leader of the Opposition is known for his considerable ego, but does he seriously think he can provide both loaves and fishes with his promises. Much of the recent comment about health and hospital spending in the Port Macquarie electorate has been hysterical and deliberately

misleading about the Government's approach to construction of a hospital there. Comments have been made about the Government's treatment of the Port Macquarie electorate. I wish to point out to honourable members and to the community how the electorate has benefited through representation by a member of the State Government. Since the last election I have had the pleasure of continuing to represent that seat, which was previously ably represented by the honourable member for Oxley, who is presently in the Chamber. Later I shall discuss health issues in Port Macquarie because much needs to be said on that issue.

Roads are a major issue for all residents of rural New South Wales and for the constituents of many members representing city electorates. One of the big successes of the Government has been road funding. The 3 x 3 fuel levy is almost the only tax that is acceptable to the community. This year moneys raised by that tax will benefit constituents and travellers who pass through the Port Macquarie electorate. The Government will spend a total of \$12.4 million on roads in the electorate this year - a fantastic achievement in the current economic climate, given the way this State has been treated by Canberra. If the honourable member for Auburn is really concerned about discrimination, he should look at the way New South Wales is treated by his Federal colleagues in Canberra. He might devote some of his boundless energy to persuading his Federal colleagues to give New South Wales the same treatment they give to smaller States and Labor States.

Road funding in my electorate in the past two years makes an interesting comparison with that in the last two years of Labor Government. In the period 1986 to 1988 a total of \$11.5 million was spent on roads in my electorate. From 1991 to 1993 the spending under this Government will be \$23.2 million - a 100.7 per cent increase. Travellers on the Pacific Highway have noted the improvements. In my previous electorate of Manning there have been improvements in places such as Possum Brush south of Taree, and Taree. The Taree bypass is imminent and will go ahead in the next two years. Bypasses are imminent at Coopernook and Moorland. Upgrading and re-surfacing is under way in the Coopernook and Moorland areas.

**Mr Causley:** Good member.

**Ms MACHIN:** Thank you. There are pretty good local members around that neck of the woods. The Herons Creek bypass is another major project under way. It will provide yet another strip of dual carriageway on the highway. We hope that will be added to by dint of a privately funded tollway or by construction by the Roads and Traffic Authority to enhance our existing road system and eventually to build a dual carriageway from Newcastle to the border. This is very much needed. The 3 x 3 funding has also provided local councils with a great deal of extra money, some of it for specific projects and some to spend as they would wish. This has been of great use. It has funded a number of smaller projects around the towns of Port Macquarie and Wingham in my current electorate for things such as the overtaking lanes between Wingham and Taree, which were completed a year or so ago. There have been improvements to the road between Kew and Laurieton, which is a very heavily trafficked road in the Hastings shire.

**Mr Humpherson:** A great place.

**Ms MACHIN:** It is a great place, and very well represented. The Government

can be very proud of its record on roads and I am proud to have played my part. I pay

tribute, as I have in the past, to our retired colleague, the former member for Coffs Harbour, Matt Singleton, who was the instigator of a very practical scheme. Sewerage and water schemes in my electorate are also benefiting this year. The Port Macquarie sewerage augmentation scheme will receive \$500,000. The total project cost is \$7.4 million. The much needed Hastings district water supply will receive \$1.75 million. It will benefit my electorate and that of the honourable member for Oxley. The total cost of that project is estimated at \$2.5 million. The site has been identified and this very important infrastructure project is set to go ahead. The area experiences a growth rate of 3 per cent to 4 per cent per annum, much higher than the norm. Funding for the final stage of the local sewerage scheme at Wingham will be \$2.85 million. The Public Works Department has also come to the aid of the community with the repair of the breakwall at the mouth of the Hastings Rivers, north and south, and a grant for the flood mitigation study at Settlement Point.

In the small but growing community of Kendall the council has been granted further financial assistance for a sewerage study. The \$40,000 cost will be shared equally by the council and the State Government. So we are certainly doing our bit to help councils in the very difficult job of providing infrastructure in fast growing areas such as the North Coast. A couple of months ago representatives from the local bush fire brigade saw me because they were concerned that they would not receive the necessary allocation from the Budget to meet their needs. I took up their cause because I think they are a really decent bunch of blokes and do a fantastic job on behalf of the community at a great price and we owe it to them -

**Mr Causley:** There are some gals amongst them too.

**Ms MACHIN:** There are. I should not be sexist. I thank the Minister for pulling me into line. They deserve all the support we can give them. I took the matter up with the Minister and senior officers of the department responsible. Happily, the Budget confirmed an allocation of \$488,000 for bush fire fighting equipment in the Hastings area, which I believe those people are very happy about. The money will go towards two new water tankers, a diesel mop-up pump, a transceiver, a cellular phone and other gear. As I said, those people deserve all the help they can get. At present they are very concerned about the dry conditions on the coast. We have already had a number of fires but, happily, they have been fairly well contained.

The Government continues its support for public housing in my electorate and other North Coast electorates. Because of the rate of population growth - it is not necessarily from affluent people - there is a lot of pressure on housing. I and my colleagues in the area regularly receive representations from constituents in genuine need and in very sad circumstances who seek public housing. I am reminded of the remarks last night of the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai. He talked of the need to have compassion and to help other people, and the need to be conscious of the welfare of others. This raises the point that if we do not manage the budget well we cannot look after the welfare of those who are less well off than those of us in the Chamber tonight. At the end of the day the bills have to be paid. Most members will be okay when the day of reckoning comes but the less fortunate suffer in difficult circumstances. I again point to the handbag economics of Maggie Thatcher: you do not spend what you cannot afford or what you cannot pay back.

Page 6362

I am happy to see that the Department of Housing has done its bit for the welfare of my community. About a quarter of a million dollars of new funding has been

allocated this year. This is combined with three quarters of a million dollars of carry on works. A further 57 units of housing will be provided to people who need housing in Port Macquarie. I am pleased to be able to tell the House that another lot of aged persons units has recently been completed. The honourable member for Oxley would probably be aware of this. Tenants are now moving in, including one of my favourite tenants, little Mrs Mollie Jamieson. She is a real favourite of mine, a real honey. She needed that accommodation. The Westport Technology High School was an initiative of this Government, as was decentralisation of the old correspondence school to Port Macquarie and other country centres. Completion of additional facilities at Westport will involve \$2.4 million this year. The total cost of the project is just over \$3 million. It is an outstanding school with outstanding facilities. The staff and students are very enthusiastic, a credit to their community.

I point to previous assistance by this Government in my old electorate of Manning to the schools at Chatham and Wingham, which were provided with massive capital works funding. They now boast two wonderful multipurpose centres. They are of the old style; they are not built in that way any more. They are better than the more modern models. A couple of weeks ago I had the privilege of attending in the new building at Wingham High School a play called "Faust and Furious". It was just fantastic. The people are delighted with it and appreciate that at long last the North Coast is getting the funding it deserves. A number of other matters in my electorate deserve the attention of the House. They result from my representations to Ministers and their responses. For a long time the historic court house in Port Macquarie has been an issue. It has been unused since the new court house was built. It was offered to the council, which did not take up the offer. Then it was put out to tender to be used possibly by the private sector, which was not a course of action preferred by the community. I am happy to say that the Minister for Conservation and Land Management, and Minister for Energy has acceded to the request of the community to keep the building in public hands. It is now under the trusteeship of the council, which is considering the best uses for that delightful old building in the interests of the community. Three charming little cottages on the headland at Port Macquarie are currently the property of the Maritime Services Board. One is occupied by the Maritime Services Museum. The staff do a terrific job. For ages they have been trying to get the other two cottages. I am confident that the Government will help to attain the cottages and to maintain the integrity of the maritime precinct on the headland. This also is a result of a lot of leg work put in by my colleague in years gone by.

The Roads and Traffic Authority regional office has been relocated from Newcastle to Port Macquarie, where it will provide better service to the North Coast. Port Macquarie is in the process of obtaining a second airline carrier, which will provide additional services and a more competitive fair structure. To summarise, the electorate of Port Macquarie has been well served by this Government in difficult times, and it is set to go ahead. To a degree it has been insulated from the recession, and the community is grateful for that. However, Port Macquarie has its cross to bear in that its unemployment rate always runs much higher, generally about double, than the average rate across the State. The community has to try to deal with that problem. In the future I would like a dredging policy to be put in place to help resolve some of the siltation problems experienced in the coastal estuaries and waterways in my electorate. I would like a home for Kendall pre-school. Perhaps the Minister responsible for forests will allow the pre-school to move into the vacant forestry building in Kendall. That would probably be a perfect compromise. I would like a new school to be established at North

Page 6363

Haven, a growing area, and a new public school to relieve the pressure on Hastings Public School. My constituents have not given up hope of obtaining a night stop by the

train at Kendall railway station. As the traffic builds up, no doubt that will occur once again.

At the outset I said I wanted to say a few words about the proposed hospital in Port Macquarie, and it important that I do. So far I have restrained myself in the House and have held my tongue. No doubt this matter will continue to be debated after tonight. First, I should like to tell the House exactly what the issue is and why there is a problem. Essentially it is about the delivery of a public health service, and I emphasise the word public. The issue is not about different services for private and public patients but about who will provide the money to build and manage the hospital. The Government will retain control at all times. For the benefit of those who do not know, the proposal is that an experienced company which has constructed many hospitals will build the hospital. A second company will lease the hospital from the builder and manage it. It will pay the nurses and, on a contract basis, will run the hospital to the Government's specifications. At present many services in the health system are contracted out. The proposal for Port Macquarie is simply a much larger extension of that concept. Why is there a problem, why all the fuss? I invite members to look at this U-shaped graph that I have, which represents expenditure on the building of hospitals. Members opposite may recognise that the bottom of the graph represents Labor's spending on hospital construction.

**Mr Gaudry:** What did the people say in the referendum?

**Ms MACHIN:** I will tell the honourable member for Newcastle about the referendum in a moment. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

No wonder those opposite are sensitive. The graph is fairly embarrassing because the bottom of the trough represents 1981-82. As one of the doctors in Port Macquarie said, that is the year the Labor Party took a holiday from building hospitals. Another part of the graph depicts when the coalition came to office. From that time spending has increased and has stayed at record high levels. Despite that, the Government does not have sufficient money to build new hospitals or repair all of the hospitals that need attention. There is a backlog of more than \$2 billion in health capital works and the Government just does not have the money to catch up on that backlog. In Port Macquarie people say to me, "Why are we the guinea pigs? Why doesn't the Government just borrow more money and build the hospital?" As I have said before, if the Government borrows more money, ultimately it has to be paid back, and others will suffer more than the members of this Chamber.

If the people of Port Macquarie did not have to wait for a new publicly funded hospital, others would. The Government just cannot manufacture money. If a way is not found to get more money into the health system to build hospitals, all the people of New South Wales will suffer. The Government is merely trying to build hospitals quickly. On our side of the Parliament there is no question of ideology or political hangups. Government members are not the ones running around talking about people's rights to this, that and the other, about a sellout, about dogma, and things such as that. The Government's opponents are the ones spouting the ideology. Who evaluated this proposal and why did they decide in favour of it? The people who evaluated it are those who work in the hospital now - the doctors, the nurses and the senior staff. They all examined this proposal. At first they all hated it; everyone was disappointed. The people of Port Everyone had been led to believe they would have a new publicly funded hospital, and that is what they wanted. I was as disappointed as anyone else, but there

Page 6364

is no point in beating one's head against a brick wall. That does not help one's head and it does not help build a hospital. Sensible people then sat down and asked, "Can this

alternative proposal deliver what we want?" When they looked at the facts, without exception they came up with the answer, "Yes, we can get what we want from this, namely, a significant increase in the number of public patients treated". That is all that the Government set out to do. What happened after that? Before the adjournment, I spoke about a Mr John Murphy. Perhaps I should apologise for misleading the House.

**Mr Jeffery:** Mr 29 per cent.

**Ms MACHIN:** Yes, Mr 29 per cent. He does not rate much of a vote. I was probably a little kind to Mr Murphy. I went a bit easy on him, so I might concentrate on some of the others. I meant to say that I do not think he is a terribly honest man and I might have used a word that begins with the letter "I" and has four letters. As I said, Mr Murphy is a failed Labor candidate. He has been running what is basically a political campaign. As I suggested earlier, that campaign is all about getting him elected to a seat in a House of Parliament one way or another. He has not been elected by the people because, as my colleague the honourable member for Oxley said, he can only rate about 29 per cent of the vote. He is now trying to work through the local council and create enough fuss, hate and division in the community that, typically, the Labor Party will reward him for that and somehow find a seat for him in the upper House.

Mr Murphy has established the Hospital Action Group. The honourable member for Newcastle mentioned a referendum that took place on the weekend. I should point out that a candidate in the by-election, Mrs Edith Hall, ran prominently on a "No" vote in the referendum about the hospital. She had friends in Kombi vans with "No" painted all over them. Mrs Hall was resoundingly defeated in the by-election. If people were so concerned about the issue, why did they not vote her onto the council as well? I suggest to the honourable member for Newcastle that he might tell his leader to keep visiting Port Macquarie. When Mr Carr first started visiting, 78 per cent of the community were opposed to the proposed hospital. He made one or two more visits and that figure decreased to 70 per cent. He kept returning and now only 60 per cent are opposed to the proposal. I say to him, "Bob, keep on coming up, because the more you come up, the more the community supports the Government". The figure is moving in the right direction.

**Mr Gaudry:** The vote has been taken.

**Ms MACHIN:** The honourable member for Newcastle says, "The vote has been taken". He obviously endorses the bullyboy tactics employed on the day of the referendum. I shall tell the House about some of the tactics that were used. Last Saturday many older people who are involved with the hospital handed out brochures for the "Yes" vote in the referendum. They were harassed and abused. People from the action group harangued them when they tried to hand out pamphlets. Some of them went home because they became nervous about the activities of the group. Our friend Mr Murphy, the liar, said to people as they came up to vote, "Have you got private insurance? If you don't, you had better vote "No" because if you don't have private insurance you will not get into the hospital". It is not as if he does not know the truth. He knows that is a lie and he is deliberately frightening people, many of whom are elderly, into thinking they will not be admitted to this hospital.

On Monday, a couple of days after the referendum, he went on Australian Broadcasting Corporation radio and said that a handful of patients might get in. The handful will actually be 37 per cent more public patients than are treated at the present hospital. It treats private and public patients, but the new hospital will treat a higher

proportion of public patients. Some of the other tactics employed on the day of the referendum were interesting. The Minister again visited Port Macquarie on Friday to bring a charter of public patients' rights to the hospital. Members of the action group not only picketed and blockaded the hospital, they also forced their way into the hospital and carried on their demonstration, shouting and protesting inside the hospital. They refused to leave when asked by the chief executive officer to do so. Some members of the Minister's party then went out the front of the hospital and entered a hire care belonging to a small business in the town. One of the protesters was in a wheelchair and parked his wheelchair in front of the car so that it could not move away. The protesters then proceeded to thump the car. One fellow threw himself over the bonnet and claimed he had been run over. They then scratched the side of the car. These were the actions of supposedly mature people. That is the way they behaved.

Last Monday the same sort of thing continued. The vote had been taken and the referendum was over. A known supporter of the hospital was in my office. The protesters were picketing outside my office. I think they knew I was in Sydney to attend Parliament but they still picketed my office anyway. He went out and was subjected to verbal abuse. He got into his car, which was thumped and shoved around. That is the sort of thing that is happening. A little old lady was working in the support group's shop in the main street. The shop contained an information centre. She was harangued and abused by some lunatic with a ponytail who probably would not work in an iron lung. She could not really defend herself. Someone rang up to apologise for what had happened and she said, "Look, I don't mind, that sort of thing happens; it's okay." I thought: good on her for being so forgiving.

Another person had to bring brochures around to my office because this gentleman - and I use the word loosely - intended to deface all of the literature. People sneaked into the foyer of my office without contacting my staff or ringing the bell, put some of their propaganda on the counter, and sneaked out again. They defaced my business card, drew a Hitler-style moustache on it and wrote messages such as, "We can't wait for your political extermination". Honourable members will be aware that earlier in the year I was pregnant. At that time the action group held a protest march and performed skits about me on the town green. There was a person there with blond hair with a pillow stuffed up her jumper - intended to represent me - and she was asked, "So why are you going to Sydney to have your baby, Miss Machin?" The questions were personal and extremely upsetting at that time for me and my husband, and totally unnecessary. Local doctors received anonymous abusive telephone calls and there were anonymous calls to my office. They were typical brown shirt tactics; a real disgrace. Those people should be exposed for what they are. Union heavies and Building Workers Industrial Union officials came to town last Saturday to work on the booths. They told Wauchope residents that if they voted for the new hospital, Wauchope hospital would be closed - another lie. No wonder people were frightened.

It would seem to people such as the honourable member for Newcastle that the end justifies the means. It does not matter how many lies are told or how many people are frightened, so long as the result is achieved. That is a disgrace and a personal reflection on that member. The group is coming here tomorrow to scream and shout out the front of this building. They placed notices in the hospital which said, "If you can't go, sponsor a pensioner" - suggesting they sponsor a pensioner to come to Sydney and do the dirty political work for them. They are using the elderly people of Port Macquarie to do their work. What an absolute disgrace, and Labor Party members are proud of that tactic. They love it. Newspaper reports last week were still criticising me and my family because my husband and I chose to have our baby in Sydney. The union movement, the Labor Council, last week in its minutes asked the union to send money to

the action group in Port Macquarie to enable it to continue its campaign of abuse.

Page 6366

Finally, I want to comment about Mrs Edith Hall, the defeated candidate last Saturday. Mrs Hall is attempting to suggest this is an attack on all womanhood; that the hospital in Port Macquarie, because it will not be owned by the Government, will be dreadful for all women. If Mrs Hall is any type of feminist, why is she associating with people who have made disgraceful attacks on me, as a woman, about things most women should be proud of? How can she endorse the personal and sexist attacks that have been made on me, as well as on others in the Port Macquarie community who are merely doing the best they can to get a hospital? I have had my say but there is much more to be said about this matter. I am confident that the hospital will be built in Port Macquarie; it will be an outstanding hospital and will treat public patients in the finest style. It will reduce hospital waiting lists, which are currently running at a year and a half. The Labor Party wants to confine patients to waiting lists of two, five and 10 years, because it has stated publicly that it would not build a hospital until the end of the decade. What should the people of Port Macquarie do for the next eight years? Where should they go for their operations? The Government has a solution now, and that solution has been checked out by those who know more about health than I, and it has found to be workable. It will deliver all the services that are needed. The only things stopping it at the moment are the brown shirt, bully boy tactics and ideology.

**Mr FACE** (Charlestown) [9.4]: Honourable members have heard the contribution made by the honourable member for Port Macquarie about the advantages in the Budget for her electorate. I cannot help but cast my mind back to my early years in this Parliament when the coalition parties were in office and there was a reasonable degree of fairness in the distribution of capital works and other funding. However, the situation now is that those who are not members of the Government are discriminated against. Honourable members should consider the type of pork-barrelling that has taken place in recent years and the discrimination that continues against those who, for their own reasons, support an ideology different from that of the Government. Honourable members need only look at the capital works program for the Hunter region, and compare it with the capital works allocations to coalition electorates. I refer in particular to the construction of multipurpose halls, which the honourable member for Port Macquarie said were a great asset to a school. Kotara High School in my electorate was built 25 or 26 years ago. According to the Government, the Hunter region has no priority whatever with regard to the provision of multipurpose halls in the foreseeable future.

**Mr Causley:** Why did you not provide one when you were in government?

**Mr FACE:** The Minister, as always, cannot contain himself from interjecting. The fact is that the Labor Party, unlike the Government of which the Minister is a member, built multipurpose halls on the basis of so many in each budget. At least it was making up for the backlog - something this Government has never done. When I came into the Parliament in 1972 the Askin Government promised to build school assembly halls in the Hunter region at the rate of one each year. In the 11½ years that Government was in office only one multipurpose or assembly hall was built in the Hunter region - miraculously in the electorate of Raymond Terrace. After 1976, in each of the regions, such as the Hunter, the backlog was made up. It was not always in Labor seats. In fact, halls were built in Liberal Party and National Party electorates, such as Scone. They were built in order of seniority, based for example on the age of the school and on the premise that eventually every school would have a hall. I referred to the Kotarah High School. The whole of the Kotarah subdivision constituency is supportive of the

Government. The Government is to some extent discriminating against people who have traditionally supported it. I have been a member of this House for almost 20 years and I have seen two and a half decades of young people pass through that school, and it is  
Page 6367

still unlikely to get that facility. I am not talking only about Labor electorates in the Hunter region. In the period when Labor was in government the schools in my electorate gradually received a multipurpose hall. The Government does not propose to build even one such hall in the Hunter region in the foreseeable future; and is thereby discriminating against the children in the schools of that region.

This action is not merely related to high schools. In 1988 the Liberal candidate said that whether or not she was elected, she would make certain the item appeared in the next budget. Similarly the Government has said that the road system in and around Charlestown would be addressed in the next budget, yet in the Questions and Answers paper in relation to a question about Warners Bay Road, which will eventually become the Western Charlestown bypass, it was stated that there are no firm proposals at this time to widen either section of Warners Bay Road. Another question referred to the intersection of Lake Road and the Pacific Highway, Windale, a very dangerous intersection. In the Budget Papers the Government has admitted that the road has a construction completion time of 1999. That was another road that in 1988 the Liberal candidate said was going to be constructed immediately. She criticised the Labor Government at that time for appropriating the money in its last budget and continuing it through the next two budgets, which would have resulted in the completion of the construction by 1995-96. The documents delivered to my office stated that \$2 million would be spent on this road, but nothing was said about the fact that the Charlestown to Sandgate highway construction will pass through at least three electorates and that the \$2 million would not be spent on the Charlestown bypass, but rather on the section of road from Shortland, near the university, back to Sandgate. In the meantime residents of those electorates have had to put up with a deplorable road.

I am on record as having scolded various Ministers of the former Labor Government for not doing something sooner. At that time the former Department of Main Roads predicted that by 1995-96 the road would have reached saturation point. In desperation, in the past few days I placed a question on the Question and Answers paper asking the Minister for Health to conduct surveys into the noise and emissions levels in the central business district of Charlestown in order to prove that there is an urgent need to bring the work forward. By any standard that road is one of the busiest roads in the area. More vehicles traverse that section of road daily than traverse other roadways that are given higher priority. Because the road is situated in a Labor electorate residents will not see any results until at least 1999. A number of deaths have occurred on that stretch of road and a significant number of people have sustained injuries as a result of accidents that have happened along its route. The Lake Macquarie council - and to some degree the Newcastle City Council - is burdened with having to maintain the road at considerable cost, which in turn must be met by the ratepayers. The answers in the Questions and Answers paper of 23rd September highlight the fact that the Government has given the section of road I am speaking about no priority, contrary to what it has said from time to time.

To date the Government has spent \$8,000 on planning costs for the intersection of Myall Road and Charlestown Road, Kotara Heights, yet the estimated figure for the construction of this bypass is \$28,102,500. In the Questions and Answers paper the Government has admitted to spending the princely sum of \$8,000 on planning costs. The volume of traffic that travels through that intersection would be in excess of that of any intersection outside the metropolitan area and would rival that of many metropolitan

intersections. It is an absolute disgrace that this issue has not been addressed in the Budget. The Government should show a little compassion and not discriminate against electorates that are not held by members of its political persuasion. As I said earlier, I  
Page 6368

have been a member of this House during the administrations of Labor governments and the former Liberal Party-Country Party Government, as it was then known, during which time I never felt that my electorate was discriminated against. If there was a need, it was addressed, but that is not the situation now. I do not say that all Ministers are the same in this regard, but certainly there is a degree of pork-barrelling beyond what could be described as reasonable.

Underfunding of hospitals is a matter about which I and my northern colleagues took the previous Labor Government to task. Every day the present Minister for Health tells us how wonderful the health system is, yet for the past two years the Government has closed Wallsend hospital and many other hospitals. Our health system is in a shambles. Members of the medical profession, most of whom are not Labor supporters, have continually said that underfunding of the Hunter region has brought crisis to the region. I turn now to the corporatisation of the Water Board, which was supposed to be a great thing for the people. Once again the Hunter was the guinea pig. It copped an environmental levy, though the Premier at the time, the Hon. Nick Greiner, said during a by-election campaign for the seat of Port Stephens that the environmental levy would be picked up by the Government. The fringe area scheme envisaged and implemented by the former Labor Government was to be continued without cost to the ratepayers. After the numbers went up on the board, that was not the case - it was a misunderstanding. As a consequence, the people in my electorate have a fringe area scheme that they must pay for.

It does not finish there. They have put another small residential component on various areas which are flooding. For example, those in Winding Creek in my electorate pay a small levy. The catchment area and the stormwater drains in that district date back to the days of the Great Depression. The Hunter Water Corporation will supposedly be of great advantage to that region. Despite having already copped one fringe area scheme, if someone is unfortunate enough to live in an area adjacent to a stormwater channel, a percentage will be levied on them by this Government through council rates. The Water Corporation has told the honourable member for Wallsend and me that it is thinking of levying another \$35 over 10 years or \$15 over 30 years to provide detention basins in and around Winding Creek. Those unfortunate enough to live in that catchment area, from the back of Charlestown through to Cardiff in my colleague's electorate, will have to pay a further levy. Those areas were obviously badly planned by successive councils. Someone allowed buildings to be constructed in these areas. During the time that I have been in this place I have implored the councils to stop the urban sprawl in those catchment areas. We were told that residents would experience floods, on average, once every 100 years. On that criterion, some of these areas have experienced 500 or 600 years worth of flooding in the past 10 years. The Water Corporation is now seeking to slug those people with either a \$35 or \$15 levy over a number of years. Through this corporatisation scheme the Government has had money returned to its coffers. The corporation was efficient under the supposed economic genius we had as Premier.

**Mr Causley:** I am glad you admit that.

**Mr FACE:** I said that he was supposed to be. Though the people of the Hunter have created cost savings, they will now be burdened with further taxes because of the scheme. It is disgraceful and deplorable. As I said earlier, I could go on a lot

longer about the discrimination which has been meted out to various electorates in the Hunter region. I have referred to a number of examples tonight. I hope someone has some compassion for these areas; there has not been much compassion lately. Railway workers from Cardiff and Broadmeadow have been given the shunt; bus services have been

Page 6369

depleted; and 50 people from the Roads and Traffic Authority design office are to go to the North Coast; they have been forced out of their homes - yet another political stunt to displace people who could quite ably have carried out their employment in Newcastle just as they have for many years. The Government should not be proud of itself. [*Time expired.*]

**Mr CHAPPELL** (Northern Tablelands) [9.24]: I support the 1992-93 State Budget, the first Budget of Premier John Fahey. First I wish to refer to some of the comments of the previous speaker, the honourable member for Charlestown, particularly with respect to discrimination. Discrimination has had to be sorted out over the last several years; it has been a major cost burden to my part of the world. A deplorable situation confronted this Government when it won office five years ago with respect to health services on the North Coast. The New England health region, of which my electorate is part and which enjoyed about average funding according to the State standard, had to adopt part of the coastal region health budget in order to bail it out. It had been grossly underfunded for many years. The situation was beyond a joke. Its neglect was almost criminal. The State Government could only right that wrong which had been imposed upon the people of the North Coast by dragging resources from the other health regions.

To that extent, the New England and northwest areas lost many millions of dollars. That money was transferred to the lower North Coast but it has been absorbed in an artificial way to prop up the health service and to get some resources to make up for the years of neglect. Those opposite should not speak to us about neglect of some regions; if we have had to give special treatment to some areas - and the Government has been forcing a lot of extra growth money into health, roads and other infrastructure on the North Coast - it is because we had to fix the deplorable conditions which prevailed there. Inland local members have difficulty trying to justify to their constituents why that had to be. In all fairness and equity, it had to be done. There are dozens of other cases of discrimination which the Government inherited and to which I could refer tonight.

When the Greiner-Murray Government first came to office it had to confront years of inefficient and antiquated financial and economic management. It was no easy task. The Government had to do that while maintaining confidence and improving, or at least holding, the living standards of people in the State. In order to do that, we had to retain our triple-A credit rating so that when we played in the field of big dollars and commercial reality we were on the best terms we could be. We had to provide better, more efficient and more responsive services to the people of the State. That is what they were entitled to - and no less. We had to maintain financial flexibility and achieve financial accountability in every respect. That is what the Government set out to do five years ago. It has embarked on a series of budgets which have set out in a deliberate way to achieve those goals. This Budget - the first Fahey Budget - carries on that sterling work and consolidates the position, despite the deplorable economic circumstances confronting this State.

Recently I read an economic paper which was directed at the bureaucracy. A number of headings in that paper indicated the continuing commitment of this Government to do it right. The headings included such references as "Constrain Debt",

"Improve Efficiency", "Renew Infrastructure" and "Reform Taxation". Those goals are achieved under the mantle of ever-better accountability, and higher accounting and reporting standards, in relation to which New South Wales leads not only the other States of Australia but also the Federal Government. We have introduced global budgeting; we have introduced full cost accounting. Those initiatives have put New South Wales at the

Page 6370  
forefront in terms of the quality of economic and financial accounting, reporting and accountability. In the process, we have had to confront that enormously difficult national economic situation brought about by Australia's newest Prime Minister, the financial whiz-kid who was Treasurer of the nation during its declining years. We have had to bite the bullet despite declining revenue sources coming to this State. New South Wales now subsidises the smaller States of Australia to the extent of about \$1,400 million a year, every year. That amounts to \$233 per man, woman and child every year. That support of Labor States around Australia comes straight out of our pocket. It is important to measure those figures not just in terms of every man, woman and child but in terms of the next generation, those in the age bracket of zero to 19 years, who will have to pick up the shortfall in the costs of running the State and carry it in future years. That works out at some \$800 for every one of those young people. That is not a legacy that any one of us can be proud of. We have to continue to confront the Federal Government in that regard and to see that we get a better and fairer share of the cake, of the total tax revenue that accrues to Canberra and that is very niggardly handed out to the States according to a formula over which we have very little control. That pathetic failure of a government in Canberra has very little control either. We have not only had the problem of falling revenues by way of our revenue sharing grants from the Federal Government; we have also had the loss of revenue arising from quite disastrous economic circumstances. The impact of mismanagement at the Federal level has been a long, drawn out recession. It seems to me that we have been hearing from the new Prime Minister for about two years that it is all over, is just about finished.

**Mr Causley:** It has been more than a couple of years.

**Mr CHAPPELL:** It is at least two years since he said: "We have turned the corner. It is all okay. The indicators have pointed up and from here on we are home and hosed". I think about three people believe him. I am not even sure that he is amongst them. The revenue sharing allocation from Canberra has plummeted. We are supporting the other smaller States round the nation to an enormous extent. Our own income from property taxes - in other words, stamp duties on property transactions - sales of motor vehicles and payroll tax have plummeted over the past few years to the extent of hundreds of million of dollars. Despite that, our costs are going up. We are just trying to make a fist of running the State. In all Opposition speeches made so far, we have heard that Opposition members could do it better. Heaven help us if we have to rely upon the track record of the Labor Party in its 12 years in government. That would be the sort of standard by which it would run this State. The State would be totally out of business, and we would probably all be locked up for inefficiency and incompetence if we had still been running the State according to the standards of Labor. That is why it is a matter of pride for members on this side of the House to be able to support the continuing rigour, discipline and fairness of the series of budgets this Government has brought down.

We have heard much bleating from the other side about the sale of the GIO. At various times Opposition members have told us that we have sold it for too little or that we have paid too much for advertisers to sell it for us. Opposition members cannot quite come to a united opinion on what we did, but what we in fact did was sell off a business which will be better off run under private ownership. It will continue to provide benefits

for the State but will, in a very tangible way because many hundreds of millions of dollars of debt will be retired, mean money in the pocket of every man, woman and child in this State. There will be some \$30 a year for every one of us simply because of the amount of debt that has been retired, not simply this year but year after year. The retirement of debt will continue to be the hallmark of the Government as economic  
Page 6371

circumstances turn around, if Mr Keating gets it right in his remaining few months and if his guesstimates are right, although there is very little sign of it. If that is the case, we will continue to retire debt and to ease the burden on future generations.

The benefit of restraint, of retirement of debt through the sale of the GIO and of acquiring additional capital assets in our program, paid by way of income generated from the sale of the GIO, eases our borrowing burden. We will continue to be better off. The program will continue with future further appropriate releases of capital assets from State ownership into private enterprise and it will enable us to go about a program of fiscal restraint and appropriate capital investment without imposing a continuing and ever growing burden on the next generation. There is no doubt that a superhuman effort has been made this year to boost capital works. There has been a 10.1 per cent increase in the capital works budget this year.

**Mr Nagle:** It is a one-off.

**Mr CHAPPELL:** Of course it is a one-off. Only Labor would kid itself that it could continue to do that year after year. This is a one-off special capital injection with the aim of generating jobs and kick-starting the job market so that we can get some people back to work, people who have been put out of work by the failures of the Federal Government. The 10.1 per cent, in the circumstances we face at present, is very much in excess of what any members on the other side could have possibly bent their imagination to. We will have this year a record level of \$5,894 million spent on capital works - a 10.1 per cent growth. That is quite amazing. We have a record expenditure on roads of \$1,500 million, which is up 21 per cent; record spending on public transport of \$785 million, which is up about \$215 million and is an increase of 35 per cent; a 17.5 per cent increase in health capital expenditure; a 14.4 per cent increase in housing and home site development capital expenditure; and investment in sporting facilities at Homebush Bay. All of those capital investments are in real assets that will benefit this State in years to come. That is the sort of responsible investment which will not only give us those capital assets but will also generate real jobs and hopefully, as long as the national economy works to our advantage, consolidate into real and continuing jobs in years to come.

The Budget also contains a \$10 million family support package for people who are in desperate need at present - and, heaven help us, there are plenty of them. We all know that the pressure on ordinary families, particularly those suffering the burden of unemployment, is intolerable in this day and age and yet it is felt by so many people. Of the work force, 10.8 per cent are out of work. What a disgrace that is. Community services are enjoying a funding increase in real terms of 4.7 per cent. That is substantially more than could reasonably be expected given the constraints of this year's Budget. This has been achieved by getting firm control of government trading enterprises. Government trading enterprises are now producing real profits on a real commercial basis. For many years they have been a black hole where good taxpayers' money has been sucked in and never seen again. Within a matter of two or three years those GTEs have produced a profit by cost savings in employment, using newer and better technology and having goals and challenges to strive for, such as producing and delivering goods and services in the most efficient way possible. They have grabbed the

challenge put in front of them by the Government and many of them have decided that they can do it better than they did it before and that they will do it better next year than this year. That is the sort of discipline we need in our economy and in the public sector. It is the sort of discipline and efficiency that can be achieved by applying the normal rigours of commercial reality in the public service. That is the extent of the commitment of the Government to achieving those sorts of outcomes over the past five years, admittedly under great strain and pressure.

Page 6372

Many times all of us, every member of the House, would have seen cutbacks in our own electorates, something which none of us relishes but which the responsible ones amongst us know are inevitable and have to be faced up to if we are to be efficient in the interests of all people in the State. Much of what has been invested by way of new capital expenditure in the State will be of direct benefit to regional New South Wales. The Budget highlights \$5.894 billion of capital works, and much of that will go into transport infrastructure. It will go out to country areas in so many different ways. There will be rural water supply and sewerage projects in more than a hundred communities throughout the State. There will be real facilities for people who have waited in many instances for generations for those sorts of facilities.

The Budget makes reference to expenditure on new XPT and Xplorer trains. Explorer trains, on leaving Werris Creek, will travel to Moree in the northwest and Armidale in the north. I am pleased that towards the end of this financial year the first Xplorer train will run through to Armidale on the Northern Tablelands. Country people have been waiting for that service for years, and it has only been achievable by the Government's discipline in cutting a service that was 80 years out of date. The Government was determined to do it right and do it better. The discipline being applied by the Government was not employed by our predecessors in their 12 years of slack and profligate mismanagement of this State. Special grants have been made to the rural counsellors program. The Premier has added \$300,000 to the \$751,000 allocation to give real help to people suffering the great burdens created by economic decline in the recession we had to have, by real cuts in commodity prices and by the effects of the drought. Many thousands of families in rural New South Wales are utterly and totally destitute. The Northern Tablelands electorate is fortunate that one extra counsellor has been appointed to the rural assistance program in that area to help those who are suffering in their greatest hour of need. A further \$200,000 will be allocated to the rural women's network program, which is of enormous assistance to so many women suffering deprivation, in particular those in isolated circumstances. That allocation will directly support them and their families to keep them going in these critical times. The Department of Planning has allocated additional funding in the mainstream program to help revitalise some of our country towns. The communities in Armidale and Glen Innes showed the way by taking on the task of examining the need for expansion and beautification of their own central business districts to generate greater pride and effectiveness in their local communities. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

I am pleased, after many years of making requests to the previous Labor Government and to the Greiner-Murray Government in its earlier years, that additional capital expenditure has been allocated for the Armidale TAFE College. This year work will start on that project by means of an additional \$1.8 million capital investment. Work on a couple of extra bridges is under way, one of them on the Guyra to Tingha road, which is notorious in the electorate. A new bridge is to be built at Wandsworth, and construction of a new bridge on the Armidale to Dorrigo Road is to be commenced. All of those projects are real and lasting investments that will be greatly appreciated by

the people of that area. I am pleased that the *Armidale Express*, which has not always been highly complimentary of the many cutbacks made in the electorate as a result of economic restraint forced on the Government, last week had the headline, "Budget a boon for the district". Yet the Northern Tablelands electorate did no better than any other areas of the State. We got our share though we would all like more.

**Mr E. T. Page:** It was your press release.

Page 6373

**Mr CHAPPELL:** No, it was not my press release; it was that newspaper's assessment of what it knows to be a responsible Budget which gets the balance right between the need for economic restraint and the use of capital investment to create employment. I am pleased that one local newspaper has acknowledged that the Government is doing it right by getting the Budget balance right. The Leader of the Opposition would try to kid us all that the Budget is all about selling off this State's hospitals and that the Government is driven by its wish for privatisation - one of his greatest nightmares. He referred to the Port Macquarie hospital privatisation project as a beginning of the sell-off of the public hospital system in New South Wales. That is a deliberate lie and the Leader of the Opposition knows it. No private operator in his right mind would buy one of this State's public hospitals in the condition in which most of them are to be found. They suffer from years of neglect and many of them are a hotchpotch of inefficient old buildings which could never be put to proper economic use by a private operator. To suggest that the Government is selling off our health system wholesale is another gross fabrication of the kind that we expect to hear daily from the Leader of the Opposition.

Public hospitals need hundreds of millions of dollars of continuing capital investment on a yearly basis. This year the Government is making an enormous capital investment in the hospitals. Our staff and hospital boards are working valiantly to make the best economic sense they can of worn-out, tired and inadequate infrastructure. It is a travesty that the Leader of the Opposition suggests that the Government will create wholesale slaughter of the public health system. In summary, all honourable members, at least those on the Government side, can be confident that the Budget does it better, gets it right, faces up to present realities and constraints, and makes a genuine effort to maintain the standards we have achieved, in particular, in maintaining the self-imposed discipline of economic and financial rigour. The Budget will also provide those real services and capital investments needed in Northern Tablelands electorate to help the State move ahead responsibly and optimistically into the future. The Budget demonstrates that the Government is responding on behalf of the people of New South Wales in the best possible way in current circumstances.

Reference was made in earlier debate to a report entitled "Commonwealth for the Common Good", which was published last week by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. Earlier debate in this House sought to establish that the Catholic Bishops would bag the performance of this Government and other governments which have the temerity to apply economic rationalist principles to government and to be involved in microeconomic reform. That is a gross misrepresentation of the report. Obviously, most criticism of rational economic management would have to be levied at first instance at the Federal Government. After all, Canberra raises the money and we try to spend it as efficiently as we can. It is patently absurd to intrude that suggestion into debate and is a shallow attempt to shift blame on to the Government by the use of objective assessment by the Catholic Bishops Conference. That report is worth reading. However, the challenge is before us all to continue to do it right and to continue to make valiant efforts

to be efficient, to spend money in the right areas, and to continue to give support to those who need it most. That is a hallmark of this Government as much as it is of any other government in living memory. It is a pleasure this year, as it has been for the past four or five years, to support this Government's Budget in this place. The Budget is responsible and forward looking. It will continue to advance the interests of all the people of this State and each of the electorates of this State, despite the bleatings of a previous speaker that his electorate has been singled out for cutbacks. We have a task in front of us. This Government now has five years of runs on the board to prove that it can do it right by managing better.

Page 6374

**Mr A. S. AQUILINA** (St Marys) [9.51]: I am saddened and bewildered by the comments of the honourable member for Northern Tablelands in regard to this Budget. I speak on behalf of the working people of western Sydney. The overwhelming majority of people in the electorate of St Marys are being very badly affected by this Government's policies. The honourable member for Northern Tablelands seems to be looking through rose-coloured glasses. This Budget has a deficit of \$1.2 billion, despite the sale of the Government Insurance Office. Public sector jobs have been cut by 50,000, with many more to go. At least 5,000 more jobs will go. The claim that this Budget is a job-creating budget is totally fallacious. It is not the truth, it cannot be the truth, and it will never be the truth under this Government. Key job cuts in 1992-93 are as follows: electricity councils, 849; State Rail Authority, 1,651; State Transit Authority, 923; Water Board, 131; area health services, including hospitals, 1,738; community services, 215; conservation and land management, 133; Ambulance Service, 66; Department of Courts Administration, 72; and Roads and Traffic Authority, 1,572. Information gained from a document available to the Opposition indicates that 355 jobs from the Department of Housing are to be lost in the coming 12 months. This is from a government that pretends that it cares for the people of New South Wales, that pretends to be a good manager, that pretends that it will be re-elected at the next election.

The people of New South Wales will not take this treatment any more. I look forward to the next election, when we can change the Government and implement Carr Labor government policies that are truly for the people. The rubbery figures of the Government indicate that it is running scared of the electorate. Rather than being created, jobs are at stake. Comparison of figures by the New South Wales Treasury shows that New South Wales compares poorly with other States. Car registrations, retail sales, job vacancies and building and construction are down. New South Wales figures are behind the averages for the other States. The latest unemployment figure is 10.8 per cent for this State. Government members continue to tell us that New South Wales is better off than Victoria and the other Labor States. The unemployment figure in Victoria is only 0.8 per cent higher. That is not good enough. People in New South Wales have done it hard; and at what cost? There have been asset sales, selling off the farm. The sale of the GIO was a good example. Taxes have been increased. Public sector jobs have been lost. There have been cuts in education and the provision of public health services. Sufficient public housing has not been provided. My electorate has been particularly hard hit in this regard. I will deal with that later. Yet State liabilities are now \$54 billion, \$8 billion more than in 1988.

**Mr Martin:** How much money did Curran get?

**Mr A. S. AQUILINA:** That is a good question. What is this Government doing with public funds? The true budget deficit exceeds \$1.2 billion this year and it will exceed \$1 billion next year. Government tax increases now raise more than \$1.3

billion extra a year. The people of New South Wales are now paying very dearly for this Government's cuts in very important services. The people of New South Wales need a change of government, and they will have it in due course. People might ask why we are being highly taxed. Is a decent education system being provided? Teacher numbers have been reduced. This has resulted in more composite classes in my electorate and throughout New South Wales. We are not providing jobs for people who need dignity in their life but the Government has established a 1,500 strong senior executive service. The fat cats are doing very well under this Government. They are doing very well under Mr Fahey and they certainly did very well under Mr Greiner. Other people do pretty well too. This Budget delivers another \$3 million to the Eastern Creek Raceway.

Page 6375

The people of outer western Sydney would appreciate that money being spent on more public housing, better health services, more police on the beat and better roads - the list could go on and on. While \$3 million is being provided to Eastern Creek, public housing tenants in my electorate are being evicted because they cannot keep up their rent payments. And they cannot pay their rents because they are paying such high State taxes. The costs of health care and transport have increased. The people lucky enough to have a job pay more to get to it, whether by public transport or by car on the F4. Health services in outer western Sydney and throughout New South Wales are dangerously poor. Building projects have contracted. Class sizes are increasing, and there are many more composite classes. This situation is unacceptable in this State and in this country.

Who could possibly believe that a government that supposedly cares about the populace, particularly young people whose future is at stake, would allow kindergarten classes, which should have about 20 pupils, to have 30 to 35 pupils? Five-year-olds are not being given the attention they should receive because their teachers do not have sufficient time to deal appropriately with each individual pupil. That is a direct result of this Government's policies. The Opposition has clearly promised the electorate that when Bob Carr is elected Premier of this State teacher numbers will be increased, there will be fewer composite classes, and smaller class sizes for those most in need. They are the people from the electorate of St Marys, which I represent.

**Mr Causley:** He must have a moneymaking machine.

**Mr A. S. AQUILINA:** It is not a matter of moneymaking machines. The Minister for Natural Resources might like to know the Opposition's priorities for the working people of New South Wales. It is they who need assistance. The fat cats do not need additional funds and assistance. The Department of Housing capital works program in my electorate involves the construction of 10 housing units at St Marys and 34 at Tregear, if they are built in time. That is all my electorate will receive. St Marys is one of the fastest growing areas in the State where people cannot afford to pay high rents in the private rental market and where people wait five or six years to find public housing. Pensioners and people who cannot afford to look after their families need assistance from the Government, but what happens? They have to remain on the public housing waiting list and accept the first thing that is offered by the department. If they do not like it, that is bad luck, because they will be taken off the list. By playing around with the list, the Department of Housing lessens the number of people on it. In the electorate of St Marys many thousands of people are still waiting to be provided with decent public housing. A fig to the people of St Marys, says the Government. It does not care what the people really need. The poor people who really need assistance are not receiving the necessary care from the Premier and his Liberal Party-National Party cohorts.

The figures I have mentioned only skim the surface of the problem. Funds are not being provided by the State Government but by the Keating Government. Much has been said by Government members today and on other days about the Federal Government. However, they seem to forget that New South Wales has received a 22 per cent boost in capital grants. The St Marys bus-rail interchange is a good example of the excellent funding provided by the Federal Government. Jobs and local council co-operation have resulted. I place on record my thanks to Penrith City Council for the St Marys bus-rail interchange. It is interesting to examine the source of the funds referred to in the budget documents. Funds provided by the Commonwealth Government for roads amount to \$582.3 million. The total revenue provided by the State Government is \$1,204.3 million. However, honourable members should look at the amount of money that is directly given to the State by ordinary working people who drive motor vehicles:

Page 6376

\$573 million in motor vehicle tax, \$261 million from the fuel franchise levy and \$210 million from the 3 x 3 levy. That amount comes directly from the pockets of New South Wales motorists. One could hardly say that the State Government is giving the people of New South Wales a fair shake.

In addition to high taxes, western Sydney residents also have to pay a \$1.50 toll if they want to use the new motorway. The workers of western Sydney have to travel long distances because they do not have the advantage of the effective public transport enjoyed by the residents of the North Shore, the inner city and the eastern suburbs. The people that I and my western Sydney colleagues represent are not doing well at all under this Government. The bottom line of this Budget is that the rich will get richer and the poor will get poorer. In New South Wales the ordinary workers will pay more taxes and will probably be in greater jeopardy of losing their jobs, particularly if they are in the public service. They will receive fewer services in education, health, transport and law and order.

The rhetoric echoing from every Government member today and on previous days is simply that - rhetoric. They are attempting to tell the people of New South Wales that the State is operating effectively and being managed efficiently. The truth is that New South Wales is sinking further and further into the quagmire of unemployment and lack of services. The people of St Marys look forward to the day when the Premier dares to call an election and gives the people the opportunity to express their opinion about what he, Mr Greiner and their cohorts have done to this State. The children in the 30- to 35-pupil classrooms and the public housing tenants who are being threatened with eviction or remain on the long public housing list wait patiently but with great anticipation for the day when they can decide that the time has come to turn New South Wales into a State that cares for its people with a government led by a caring Premier who knows what the people of the State need and want. They will vote with their feet, their hands, their minds and every other part of their bodies and souls. They cannot possibly vote again for a Liberal Party-National Party government. I look forward to that day and to speaking from the other side of the House, congratulating the Carr Labor government for providing a caring budget that provides for the needs of the people. I am pleased to say that I do not believe that day will be much further into the future.

**Mr CAUSLEY** (Clarence - Minister for Natural Resources) [10.10]: When I listen to the speeches of honourable members opposite, I sometimes wonder whether I am in fantasy land. Nevertheless, when I spoke from the Opposition side of the Chamber I probably made similar speeches. This Budget is caring and practical. I shall deal with it in two ways: first, from the point of view of my portfolio; and, second, by reference to

some of the funding that has been allocated for my electorate of Clarence in northern New South Wales. In his speech the Premier said that the Budget is about creating jobs with a real future in New South Wales. Within the natural resources sector it will continue the job of increasing community confidence and improving investment in State development, which has been a primary focus of the Government since 1988. In the search for and development of new mineral resources in New South Wales that focus is paying dividends.

Private exploration expenditure in this State now exceeds by more than half the combined spending in the States of South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania. Our share of national exploration spending has consistently improved since the Government came to office and is now 10.1 per cent, compared with 7.7 per cent in 1988. Increasingly, mining companies are finding this State an attractive place in which to invest - and, ultimately, that leads to more productive jobs. The Department of Mineral Resources has

Page 6377  
reported to me that, in the past 12 months, more than 900 mineral exploration licences have operated in New South Wales, an all-time record for this State. This year's State Budget provides \$400,000 to ensure that any backlog in granting exploration or mining titles is cleared so that industry is further encouraged to look to New South Wales. I might add that that is in addition to a new mining bill which will remove most of the red tape, encourage mining and improve mining exploration grants, and allow for reduction in the time between exploration and the granting of mining titles.

For the 12 months ended March this year, mineral exploration spending in New South Wales totalled \$63.4 million, almost 5 per cent more than in the previous year. The Government obviously has the industry incentives right, in a climate in which generally more strict environmental controls exist than exist in other States of Australia. The mining industry is the backbone of the New South Wales economy. The State's prosperity - or its decline - largely depends upon it. Coal is by far Australia's largest commodity export, the total value of which will approach \$6.7 billion in 1992-93. New South Wales contributes about half that product. There are 24,000 people directly employed in mining in New South Wales, which has more than 1,700 non-coalmines or quarries. There are almost 100 coalmines or coalmine development proposals involving 150 companies holding equity from Australia and overseas. There are 50 New South Wales companies involved in minerals processing, and about 250 consultancies providing specialised services to the mining industry. This year an increased emphasis has been placed on laying the groundwork for an audit of the State's mineral and other natural resources. I would like to commend the Government on committing itself to the natural resources package and audit of State resources. I believe it is high time that that information was collated, so that decisions in this House and in the public arena are taken having regard to all available knowledge and not as a result of emotive issues. For the long-term benefits and future of this State those decisions must have a rational base.

An increased focus on geological mapping has been given further impetus by State-Commonwealth co-operative programs initiated and continued under the National Geoscience Mapping Accord. The present concentration is on what is known as the Lachlan Fold Belt in the west and central west of the State, which produces in excess of 80 per cent of New South Wales gold and 40 per cent of its base metals. New companies are now seeking opportunities to explore in this area because of the new data generated by this program. Recently I opened the computer services that are available for the Department of Mineral Resources in North Sydney. Anyone who has the opportunity to do so should go there and see what is available. The Department of Mineral Resources has on computer a vast information base of exploration that has taken place in New South Wales in past years. No person interested in exploring any area of New South Wales

need look further than the information that is stored in those computers, which will add to the opportunities for finding resources in this State.

In the search for petroleum, a new policy of releasing exploration areas in New South Wales has been put in place. Already a number of major Australian and international companies have expressed interest at looking at the Gunnedah Basin, following the release of data packages by the Department of Mineral Resources. A number of other areas with both convention petroleum and coalbed methane potential will be advertised and released during the next 12 months. Both government and industry are working to foster an improved safety culture within our mining ventures. The number of mining accidents and their severity have fallen significantly since 1988. I pay tribute to the recently retired director of the Department of Mineral Resources, Mr Toby Rose, who took it upon himself to make it one of his objectives to reduce the rate of accidents in the industry. Australia's record, when compared with that of overseas countries, is  
Page 6378

still not acceptable. There is no doubt in my mind that a certain culture exists and that changes are probably required in the mining industry itself, so that individual companies can become responsible for their own workers' compensation premiums. When individual companies are obliged to pay the premiums, and are not covered by the industry overall, things will certainly come very quickly into line.

During a recent trip around Australia I visited many mining areas and I noticed signs had been erected which said, "Safety is no accident". There is no doubt about that. Time lost through injuries in the New South Wales mining sector has fallen by almost 60 per cent in the past four years. Within the administration of mining in New South Wales there is a commitment to a leaner and more effective bureaucracy. There is a heightened understanding that government exists to serve the community, not hinder it. I believe that has been proved many times. The Opposition refuses to accept the fact that many of the services outlined in the Budget can be provided without the State going further into debt. Many government agencies are now much leaner and meaner and are providing more services, while not costing the taxpayer as much as they did in the past. It is predictable, I suppose, that honourable members opposite will not agree with that proposition but I am often amused when, one after another, they say, "We will replace all the jobs that have disappeared in New South Wales". That would see a return of the bad old days when, because of the attitude of the previous Labor administration, a \$26 billion debt was run up in this State. Within my portfolio, innovative management arrangements have allowed the Department of Mineral Resources to provide corporate resources and services under contract to the Office of Energy, New South Wales Fisheries, the Mine Subsidence Board and the Coal Compensation Tribunal. The arrangements, which are continued in this Budget, will bring to the department about \$2 million in funding, and further significant savings will be realised by other agencies with regard to duplicated staffing policies and overheads.

The Coal Compensation Board was established by this Government following the confiscation by the former Wran administration of property rights that had been in the ownership of many people for years. This Government gave a commitment to compensate people for the loss of their rights. The sum of \$35 million is allocated in the Budget for that compensation. This is an increase of \$10 million on the \$25 million allocated last year, and it is anticipated that a further \$240 million will be required. If funding increases to \$45 million next year and \$50 million the year after, the scheme will be paid out in the financial year 1997-98 at a total cost of \$440 million. To date, compensation of approximately \$165 million has been paid. More than 13,000 claims have been received by the board, of which more than 10,000 have been finalised. Restitution of coal rights as an alternative to compensation is available to people whose

coal was outside colliery holdings in 1986. To date, more than 100 people have received title to restored coal rights. The difficult economic climate has meant that in this year's Budget the Government has been unable to honour former Premier Greiner's pledge in last year's Budget of annual funding of \$50 million. Recently I reassured claimants that their compensation will be paid - and interest will be added to the compensation in recognition of the delay in payment.

Predictably the Australian Taxation Office has approached several claimants with a view to ruling that a significant part of the compensation is taxable income. Though the Government's view is that tax is a personal matter between the individual taxpayer and the Australian Taxation Office, the Government is sympathetic to former coal owners. The view of the Government is that compensation is not taxable, but that

Page 6379

interest added after determination of compensation probably is taxable. Some assistance in clarifying the issues has been provided to claimants by the Coal Compensation Board. When the Wran Government established the Coal Compensation Board, inviting claims for compensation, only a short opportunity was provided for people to lodge claims. As a consequence, many former owners of coal did not lodge claims with the board before the closing date. After representations by the Minister for Finance, Assistant Treasurer, and Minister for Ethnic Affairs, I decided that in the interests of fairness the Government should reopen the coal compensation scheme so that the people who failed to claim for their coal before the cutoff date may now do so. This action will not disadvantage people who have lodged claims already, as the new claims will be processed after existing claims have been finalised.

In today's *Sydney Morning Herald* the Leader of the Opposition is reported as saying that to avoid privatising hospitals he would save \$100 million from the Budget by reviewing, among other things, coal compensation payments. The Budget does not stipulate that amount of money, and I daresay that is something else on his wish lists. Clearly he intends to confiscate people's property. People were disgusted with the move by the former Labor Government to confiscate property, but Opposition members have not learned their lesson. Malcolm Fraser once said, "Put your money under the bed", and his predictions proved right. My advice is that people should lock up their property if ever the Labor Party is elected to office in New South Wales. If they do not, their property will be confiscated. I turn now to the Department of Water Resources. I am pleased the department has been able to continue to fund many urgent works throughout New South Wales. I have spoken often about salinity, a very urgent matter so far as degradation is concerned in this State. The Government has continued the drainage programs set up at Berriquin in the Murray Valley, the Wakool-Tullakool irrigation area, where farmers are participating in a drainage program, and the Benerembah drainage system in the Murrumbidgee area, on which \$2.1 million will be spent.

I congratulate the irrigators on showing great responsibility in providing their share of the funds. I have managed to obtain some funds from the Murray-Darling Council, and that is also appreciated. In this year's Budget \$27 million has been allocated for the enlargement of Pindari Dam, for which the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works, and Minister for Roads fought so hard. I go so far as to say that the project would never have eventuated without his strong representations. Irrigators are contributing towards the upgrading of that particular facility. I heard tonight that the Resource Assistance Commission has said that all irrigation in Australia should be privatised and that there should be a true user-pays system. This Government realised long ago, after the pork-barrelling in irrigation areas of the previous Labor administration, that there had to be some privatisation, and we have gone a long way towards privatisation. However, I have stepped back from full privatisation. After reading some

of the reports from the Resource Assistance Commission, I often wonder whether the commission acknowledges the contribution that agriculture and industry make to the economy of this nation. Without these large irrigation areas and the industry that revolves around them, hundreds of millions of export dollars would be lost to this country. Tonight the media criticised the blue-green algal report that I launched yesterday. Predictably the environment movement has said that the Government is not cutting back on irrigators in areas affected by blue-green algae, and that is what should be done. I remind the environment movement that every dollar of lost export income is one dollar that is not available for social security - and that is what it is about. If we do not earn the income, we cannot provide the services that are so vitally necessary to many people in this State. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

Page 6380

I shall briefly mention my own electorate, because I do go home at times. My constituents are magnificent people: they have voted for me and wish this Government to remain in office. Obviously I am very proud that about \$34 million is to be spent on roads in the electorate of Clarence. The Government, when in opposition, identified roads as being a vital part of the infrastructure of New South Wales. I certainly identified the highway from Maclean to Grafton as a particular problem, and soon after the coalition was elected to Government that was borne out by the tragic bus accidents that occurred in that area. It is bizarre that one bus accident occurred on a good portion of the road. Nevertheless, the road has many blind spots and I am pleased that the Morora Bridge, just north of the Clarence River, is being duplicated. The present bridge is very dangerous and the construction of a new bridge should be completed within 12 months. I am pleased also that \$1.5 million has been allocated to the combined library for the Maclean Technical and Further Education High School. The total contribution to that project will be \$2.4 million. I fought very hard for that library and although the high school and the TAFE college had some reservations initially, they can now see the benefits of a combined facility. The South Grafton levee wall has been under construction for two or three years and will receive continued funding. A long-time proponent of the South Grafton levee wall, Mr Donald Freeman, who also proposed a regional water supply for the North Coast, unfortunately passed away about a week ago. I pay tribute to Don Freeman, who was the chairman of the South Grafton Ratepayers Association. He was a visionary man: he spent a lot of his own time and money to come up with some practical suggestions. He did a lot of the groundwork and drew up his own plans and approached people about funding. He was a remarkable person, and residents of that area will be saddened at his passing. He will be a great loss to the community.

I am pleased that the Department of Housing is building a seven-unit complex in the township of Maclean at a cost of \$816,000. This year \$46,000 was allocated. A new public school will be built at a total cost of \$3.12 million at Mullaway in the electorate, north of Woolgoolga. This Government recognises that as a fast-growing area. The honourable member for Strathfield has visited the township of Baryulgil in an endeavour to solve pressing problems caused by asbestos mining. Affected residents will receive \$1.17 million for rehabilitation. I pay tribute to the honourable member for his interest in this matter. The funding should go a long way towards alleviating health problems in that area. As Minister I am part of the team that sets the parameters of the Budget. This Government has taken a responsible attitude. It would have been easy to pay off more debt but this Government has always addressed the problem. If it had not, New South Wales would be in desperate straits similar to those of Victoria, which did not address the problem of debt. Unfortunately, the recession has caused enormous problems with State revenues. If it were not for the recession this Government would be able to provide more services for the people of New South Wales. Eventually those

services will be supplied because the base is set and as soon as the recession turns New South Wales will be of premier importance in Australia.

On a number of occasions honourable members opposite have made an untrue comment. If they can prove what they say is true, I am willing to listen. They continue to assert that New South Wales is highly taxed. Because of the actions of this Government New South Wales has gone from the highest taxed State in Australia to the second lowest. Labor has not caught up with the times; that is why it is in opposition. Queensland is the only State ahead of New South Wales and that State is still benefiting from the tremendous economy left to it by the poor old peanut farmer from Kingaroy who everyone likes to throw coins at. However, Queensland is still booming and its  
Page 6381

economy is strong. The future foundation of New South Wales is strong. The Minister for Finance, Assistant Treasurer, and Minister for Ethnic Affairs had influence in formulating this Budget. Instead of paying off the debt this Government has taken responsible action. It recognises that Australia is facing the worst crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s. This Government is encouraging long-term jobs, unlike the Federal Government, which only provides funds for short-term employment. Also, this Government has looked at long-term capital works, which will be assets to this State. I applaud that incentive. In the long term the people of New South Wales will appreciate that the right decisions have been taken to help improve the economy of this State. These responsible policies will provide for recovery. I hope for everyone's sake that it is soon. However, we cannot hope for too much because of Federal policies. I thank the House for the opportunity to comment on this matter.

**Mr AMERY** (Mount Druitt) [10.35]: It gives me pleasure to comment on the Budget. I was going to make reference to the contribution by the honourable member for Northern Tablelands, but I notice he now occupies the chair as Acting-Speaker so I shall temper my remarks. The honourable member for Northern Tablelands made a number of generalisations about the Federal Government and capital works program increases. I sum up his contribution by stating that this State Budget and the capital works program have benefited greatly from the dramatic increase in Federal Government capital assistance grants. The contribution of the Minister for Natural Resources was based mainly on his portfolio areas. I give credit to the Department of Water Resources, which is probably the only area where there has been retention of employment to a substantial level. Budget Paper No. 3 at page 399 states that under the Minister for Natural Resources employment figures in the Department of Water Resources for 1991-92 were 949. This year that figure increased to 995. When departmental records are outlined in relation to reduced employment, criticism cannot be levelled at that department.

I am pleased the Minister is concerned with privatisation of irrigation areas. It has been of concern to the Opposition and many rural people that the State Government has been moving towards privatisation of viable sections of irrigation areas, as well as not so viable areas which would have a shaky future. The Minister stated that having gone a certain way down the path of privatisation he has now decided to step back - and that is good advice to the Government. If irrigation areas that are not viable are privatised, and they subsequently fail, taxpayers will be responsible for picking up the tab for those privatised irrigation areas that have failed because of poor management. The Opposition welcomes the Minister's comments about stepping back from rushing with plans to privatise those irrigation areas.

In the area of flood mitigation blackspots exist in the administration of the Department of Water Resources. A flood problem which could not be resolved arose at

Toongabbie in western Sydney. Despite efforts by Parramatta council and the Upper Parramatta River Trust the State Government would not come to the party with dual funding of that project. However, in an unprecedented move, the Federal Government went outside the Federal water resources assistance program and provided funding along with the trust. This was despite stalling by the State Government. The Minister referred to bus accidents in his electorate. I do not wish to capitalise on those tragic events but I have raised in this House on earlier occasions the problem of the State Government continually cutting back on rail services and deregulating the coach industry. As a result of that action timetables were established in this State which were unachievable for coach

Page 6382

drivers and resulted in severe accidents. The Minister mentioned the extra funding for highways, but I point out that highway work on the North Coast of New South Wales is predominantly funded by the Federal Government.

I reiterate, and honourable members will hear many times over the next few weeks, that the State Budget 1992-93 will become known as the Government Insurance Office budget. The survival of this Government and its financial management have been underwritten by the sale of the Government Insurance Office. The Minister for Finance, Assistant Treasurer, and Minister for Ethnic Affairs, is shaking his head and frowning; he sold the GIO. What will the next Fahey Budget be called? Perhaps it will be the State Bank budget or, as a result of what is happening on the North Coast of New South Wales, the public hospital sell-off budget. Underpinning many of our budgets is the handing over of so-called freeways to private enterprise. The Premier sounds like a man -

**Mr Souris:** He sounds like a socialist.

**Mr AMERY:** That is not such a criticism. The Premier sounds like a man who has sold last year's Christmas presents to buy this year's Christmas presents or has sold his car to pay the council rates. That is what is happening in this State. The Premier has the gall to say that he is a good manager. Honourable members do not need to refer to press releases or media comment, which were referred to by previous speakers, to show how the figures have been fudged; the evidence is in the Budget Papers. Pages 1 to 3 of Budget Paper No. 2 reveal that the financial result for the budget sector for 1991-92 was \$1.280 billion, \$191 million higher than predicted. The prediction for the current financial year is a real deficit of \$1.225 billion, but no doubt that will be reassessed in the new year.

As I have said, this is the GIO budget. If it were not for the sale of that once great institution, this Government would be exposed as the great mismanager it is. Today members opposite spoke about the poor record of the former Labor Government. They can talk all they like about the \$46 billion liabilities of the State under the Labor Government but there is a \$54 billion liability under the coalition Government. The Minister for Finance, Assistant Treasurer, and Minister for Ethnic Affairs might be able to explain later the system the Government uses year to year to work out its deficits. The Government keeps changing the goal-posts. When the change of government occurred in 1988, the former Labor Government claimed that the surplus for New South Wales was \$619 million. When Mr Greiner became Premier in 1988 he set up the Curran commission, paid Mr Curran \$1 million and said: "Give us a real assessment. Was it really \$619 million?" He was told that the former Labor Government's calculations were wrong, that \$619 million was not the surplus at the time of election; it was really \$345 million. We had a new goal-post. The Premier is saying now that the real deficit in 1988 was \$1.2 billion. What will we have to put up with next year? What will we have to compare with this year's budget? I have read the speeches of the former Premier, Mr

Greiner, when he gave the budget surpluses and deficits. The Government has come up with a new formula every year. What will be the real deficit or the calculation for the deficit next year? Even though the Government might bring in a uniform system used throughout Australia, it still trots out the figures that favour it the most.

This Budget is being pushed by the Government as a great capital works budget. It is referred to as a great employment budget. If it is an employment generating budget, honourable members had better hang on to their hats if they ever come across a budget  
Page 6383

delivered in this House that is designed to cut public sector employment. It is a myth that this Budget will create 6,000 jobs. In the Mount Druitt electorate in Sydney's west where there is high unemployment it is more than a myth, it is a cruel hoax. Budget Paper No. 2, at pages 8 to 13, shows the true picture for 1992-93. For example, electricity councils throughout New South Wales will lose 849 jobs this financial year. The shadow minister for transport, the honourable member for Kogarah, who has continued to highlight job cuts in the State Rail Authority over the past four years, will be surprised to learn that the authority has found another 1,651 jobs it can cut this financial year. That explains why commuters in the Mount Druitt electorate are reporting that ticket collectors are rare in the suburbs and are disappearing from city stations at certain times of the day.

Staff of the State Transit Authority will be concerned to learn that 923 jobs will go this financial year. The Water Board, despite extra funding from environmental levies and the fact that pressure has been placed on it to service new suburbs throughout western and southwestern Sydney, will further reduce its work force by 131. The unions are quick to say that extra capital works are going out to the Government's mates in the contract area. Obviously, permanent employment in the Water Board will be further reduced this year. Employment forecasts in the health service show why there are fears that the public hospital system is set for an American-style privatisation push. That is obvious from the results of the referendum last weekend. Hospitals should now come under the Minister for the Environment, as staff in the health system are becoming an endangered species. Day after day in this Chamber the Minister for Health says that health is a growth area, but this financial year health services will lose 1,738 jobs. No wonder articles about accident and emergency patients continually fill the local newspapers and no wonder it takes three years in my electorate of Mount Druitt to get dental treatment at the Mount Druitt polyclinic. The same applies to speech therapy. Parents in my electorate are concerned that it is almost impossible to get even routine consultations with speech therapists.

Not to be outdone, employment in the Department of Community Services will decrease by 131, and in the Department of Conservation and Land Management it will decrease by 133. The other day the Minister for Health attacked the honourable member for Wyong about ambulance services. He shook his head in disbelief that the Opposition would criticise ambulance services. Budget Paper No. 2 shows that Ambulance Service employment will decrease by 66. There will be a reduction of 72 staff in the the Department of Courts Administration. The Roads and Traffic Authority is competing with the Department of Health in reducing jobs by 1,572. Finally, as the honourable member for St Marys pointed out - and this cannot be found in the Budget Papers - the Opposition was in possession of a leaked document that proved the Department of Housing proposes to reduce its staff by almost 400. This is the job-creating Budget! In my electorate these job cuts will mean longer waiting times for public housing and speech therapy; a waiting period of three years for public dental services - it could not be much longer than that - and longer waiting times for pensioner admissions to public hospitals. This is a major problem that requires people who have only the Medicare card to wait

extraordinarily long periods for routine orthopaedic and other surgery. It means that once again our local council will have to bypass the State in an effort to get funds to rectify black spots at dangerous intersections.

I refer to Budget Paper No. 3. Page 217 of that document deals with the estimates of the Minister for Consumer Affairs. In that department there is to be a marginal increase in employment from 491 to 505. This will result in an increase in staff  
Page 6384

from 43 to 55 in the area of fair trading investigations. In the trade measurement area staffing levels are down marginally from 34 to 31. I note when the Trade Measurement Bill was debated in this House an assurance was given by the Minister to the Opposition that a change in the system of checking trade measurements, as outlined in that bill, would not result in the loss of jobs. Although three jobs certainly is not a major drop in employment in that area, the Opposition will be monitoring the situation to ensure that that assurance is not dishonoured. The number of employees in product safety is to remain steady at 10, and the number of staff in the legal section is to increase from 9 to 10. Page 221 of Budget Paper No. 3 shows a further increase in employment from 253 to 283, and page 223 shows that staffing levels are to increase from 22 to 23. However, it should be noted that the number of staff engaged in developing codes and standards for industries and products is being reduced from four to two and that in the area of research and development of legislative and non-legislative proposals staff numbers are being reduced from 12 to eight. However, it is stated on the same page that the number of ministerial executive support and liaison staff is being increased from six to 13. Clearly those carrying out the watchdog role in the Department of Consumer Affairs are to suffer a staff reduction whereas ministerial executive support and liaison staff will increase. Obviously that means more staff in the publicity area and fewer staff carrying out a watchdog role.

I turn specifically to my electorate. Budget Paper No. 4 deals with State capital projects. I was disappointed to learn of the proposed lack of action to correct the number of dangerous intersections in my electorate. Though the Phillip Parkway is mentioned in the capital works papers, it does not receive a budget allocation. A substantial proportion of that freeway is being paid for by the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited. The M4 motorway gets a mention, although it must be stated that it is being paid for by the motorists by virtue of the tolls. The entire Budget Paper No. 4 is underwritten by the Federal Labor Government. There is to be a 21.7 per cent increase in Federal funds for capital works programs largely as a result of Prime Minister Keating's one nation package. Honourable members on the Government side can talk about the capital works program as much as they like, but they should look in the Budget Papers to see where the money is coming from. Despite an inflation rate of only 1 per cent or 2 per cent, there is to be a 21.7 per cent increase in Federal funds for this State Government's capital works program. The list of freeway projects on the North Coast and other areas in Budget Paper No. 4 is underwritten by the Federal Government.

I wish to make a few comments about senior citizens programs and related programs. The introduction in the last 12 months of the Seniors' Card has been met with some disappointment by seniors groups. It should be placed on record, and it will be at a later date, that this State Government has given nothing to senior citizens as a result of the introduction of the Seniors' Card. Though the Minister states in the Budget Papers that the discounts offered are primarily from the private sector, he clearly acknowledges the Seniors' Card in New South Wales is underwritten by the private sector and that the Government has given senior citizens very little. There is good and bad in every Budget. Unfortunately, so far as my electorate is concerned, the Budget offers very little. The whole budget strategy has been underpinned by some fudged figures and Federal

Government assistance.

**Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Merton.**

Page 6385

**BILLS RETURNED**

The following bills were returned from the Legislative Council without amendment:

Sentencing (Amendment) Bill  
Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No. 2)

The following bill was returned from the Legislative Council with amendments:

Conveyancers Licensing Bill

**House adjourned at 10.56 p.m.**

---