

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 13th October, 1992

---

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

**Mr Speaker** offered the Prayer.

### ASSENT TO BILLS

Royal assent to the following bills reported:

Conveyancers Licensing Bill  
Police Service (Volunteer Police) Amendment Bill  
Real Property (Compensation) Amendment Bill  
Sentencing (Amendment) Bill  
Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No. 2)  
Supply Bill

### MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

**Mr Speaker** advised the House that he had received from the honourable member for Northern Tablelands notice of a matter of public importance, which would be set down for debate at the conclusion of formal business.

### QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

---

#### POLICE ADMINISTRATION

**Mr CARR:** My question without notice is directed to the Premier, and Treasurer. Were crucial documents in the Angus Rigg affair not only hand delivered to the office of the former Minister for Police but also faxed to both his residences on the morning following the incident?

**Mr FAHEY:** As I have said on numerous occasions, in this House and elsewhere, the matters relating to the Rigg affair have been the subject of a full and frank statement by the former Minister for Police in another place, and a great deal of detail was given. There is much speculation as to what was given and what was not given, what consisted of a detailed report or otherwise, or what might be regarded as simply a copy of a press report in the initial stages afterwards. That matter has been taken over by the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is now conducting an inquiry into the Rigg affair.

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

**Mr FAHEY:** At the conclusion of question time today I will be tabling the terms of reference that underpin the inquiry being conducted by the Ombudsman, as that is entirely appropriate. The Ombudsman is an independent authority who has considerable powers. Within the inquiry I expect that the Ombudsman will determine,

after due examination, what was and what was not given to the former Minister for Police and what was and what was not done in the inquiries conducted by the police officers involved. Until such time as the report is available to the Parliament and the

Page 6647

people of New South Wales, to speculate further will not allow the Ombudsman to do the job in a proper fashion. I believe it is in the interests of the Rigg family and all concerned that the independent authority - the Ombudsman - be allowed to conduct the inquiry and in due course for this Parliament, as it has the right to do, to consider that inquiry along with any recommendations.

### **PROPOSED MEDICARE AGREEMENT**

**Ms MACHIN:** Has the Premier, and Treasurer been advised of the financial implications for New South Wales of the Keating Government's proposed new Medicare agreement?

**Mr FAHEY:** I am delighted to get from the honourable member for Port Macquarie a question of considerable significance to the people of this State and a matter that is foremost in their minds. The provision of health care is one of the most sensitive and emotional matters of all. It is clear that the latest Medicare proposals are further evidence that the Federal Labor Government is walking away from its responsibilities to provide health services through Medicare. The Keating Government has set upon a deliberate course to chronically underfund Medicare and make the States pay - not just New South Wales but other States as well, particularly Victoria.

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

**Mr FAHEY:** That Labor Government in Canberra has promised universal health insurance in public hospitals but it refuses to meet the cost. Paul Keating increased the Medicare levy received from the taxpayers of this State by \$96 million in this year's Budget. None of that \$96 million will return to the people of New South Wales. Instead, under the proposed Medicare agreement New South Wales will get less; regrettably that is par for Keating's course. Since 1985 the Keating Labor Government has reneged on funding for public hospitals through Medicare by \$1.3 billion. The Federal Government was underfunding New South Wales when the Labor Government was in power and it has continued to do so.

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

**Mr FAHEY:** Before 1983 the Federal Government met 50 per cent of the cost of running the public hospital system in this State. It now pays only 32 per cent, with the State having to make up the shortfall. The alternative is that the public hospital system would collapse. The only reason that the public now has health services better than when this Government came to power is because of the Government's commitment to the public hospital system. But now the Federal Government is forcing the States to accept a new five-year Medicare agreement which further discriminates against the people of New South Wales. The proposed Medicare agreement is another attempt by the Federal Government to balance its own books by reducing its payments and funding to the States. It is also a blatant admission that the public hospital component of Medicare, as it is currently set up and funded, is not sustainable and is simply a joke.

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

**Mr FAHEY:** The New South Wales Government embraces the principles of equity of access to health care.

Page 6648

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

**Mr FAHEY:** It embraces the principles of universal health insurance, of equity in clinical standards, freedom of choice in health insurance and treatment based on clinical priority.

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

**Mr FAHEY:** Those principles are under threat by the proposed Medicare agreement. The Keating Government is not interested in matters of vital importance to the people of this State; it is interested only in the little side games that have a political connotation attached to see if it can gain some political advantage. It is not interested in what is happening to the people of this State. The Keating Government cannot continue to promise universal health care in public hospitals and then tell the States to pay for it. It cannot promise universal health care in public hospitals and continue to force more and more people out of private medical insurance and on to public waiting lists. The Keating Government cannot expect New South Wales taxpayers to continue paying more and more while getting less and less from the Federal Government. All honourable members should take careful note that this Government will meet its obligations; it will build the hospitals it has promised - let no one suggest otherwise. But, if the Keating Government does not pay the cost of Medicare in New South Wales, the money will have to be found elsewhere and as this Government has demonstrated during the past four years, health is a priority.

Last year Medicare was underfunded by \$250 million. The proposed new Medicare agreement already foreshadows a cut of \$21 million in penalties over and above that underfunding, which is repeated this year. To make up for the Keating Government's public hospital cuts the State will have to find an additional \$1.3 billion for the five years of the proposed Medicare agreement. But what does the Opposition suggest? Last year New South Wales taxpayers had to pay \$250 million to offset the Keating Government's funding cuts to public hospitals. As I have said, New South Wales is expected to do the same again but all the Leader of the Opposition says is that this Government should find an additional \$21 million next year to offset a new round of Medicare cuts suggested by the Opposition's Labor mates in Canberra. Where is this Government supposed to get the money from? Perhaps it could reduce the number of police officers by 520; perhaps the number of teachers could be reduced by 450; maybe nursing numbers could be reduced by 600. Those numbers represent the amount of money the Opposition is suggesting this Government should find next year.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! There is far too much interjection. Order! I call the honourable member for Canterbury to order.

**Mr FAHEY:** Alternatively, the Government could close down the Department of Corrective Services, because that is the sort of money it will have to find if the Medicare program goes ahead as proposed. Perhaps the Opposition believes - the Deputy Leader of the Opposition particularly - that this Government should abandon its hospital building program and deprive the people of western Sydney of the hospitals the Opposition refused to build for them when it was in Government.

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

**Mr FAHEY:** Honourable members opposite had a chance to do this when they were in Government. They did not do it. We are doing it and we will continue to do it. It is time that the Federal Labor colleagues of honourable members opposite stopped

Page 6649

misleading the public with promises of a Medicare system that they refuse to fund, which consequently undermines the State's commitment to build the public hospital system that everyone in this State wants. We will certainly continue to maintain this matter as a priority. But it is about time that the Federal Government put into practice equity and fairness - words which it is continuing to ignore and actions which are depriving the people of this State of a fair slice of money for health services.

#### **POLICE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES ADMINISTRATION**

**Mr ANDERSON:** My question without notice is directed to the Premier, and Treasurer. Did an officer from the Department of Community Services, acting on behalf of the then Minister for Community Services, make three inquiries at Shoalhaven Hospital about the condition of Angus Rigg on the day after the incident at Milton Police Station? What communications did the former Minister for Community Services and the former Minister for Police have about this matter?

**Mr FAHEY:** I have no knowledge of any inquiries allegedly being made by an officer of the Department of Community Services.

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

**Mr FAHEY:** I have no knowledge of the matters that have been suggested by the honourable member for Liverpool. I shall make inquiries and report back.

#### **PROPOSED MEDICARE AGREEMENT**

**Mr O'DOHERTY:** I address my question without notice to the Minister for Health. Following talks with other health Ministers last week, can the Minister say how the proposed Medicare agreement will affect health services and particularly waiting lists in New South Wales?

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

**Mr PHILLIPS:** Though the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai is a new member he is showing an intense interest in health care issues in this State, which is more than can be said for the majority of honourable members opposite. As the Premier clearly stated, we stand for a number of principles which are under threat.

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

**Mr PHILLIPS:** The principles which we stand for are supported by Liberal Ministers in three other States. Four States, including Victoria and New South Wales, are totally committed to these principles. This Government wants to make it clear to everyone what it is on about in these serious negotiations on Medicare, which will set the trend for health over the next five years. The first principle is equity of access, regardless of income or geographic location. This Government has demonstrated its

policy by moving resources to the growth areas of western Sydney, southwestern Sydney, the North Coast and the Central Coast - involving a significant number of Labor electorates.

Page 6650

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I call the honourable member for Hurstville to order. There are far too many interjections and they erode the time available for questions. I ask all honourable members to remain silent and allow the Minister to complete his answer. Order! I call the honourable member for Burrinjuck to order.

**Mr PHILLIPS:** The second important principle is universal health insurance coverage. Everyone in Australia is entitled to access to health care, regardless of status in the community. That is an important principle for which we should all stand.

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

**Mr PHILLIPS:** However, I am not certain whether the Federal Government stands for a patient's freedom of choice as to how he or she wants to be insured.

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

**Mr PHILLIPS:** The right of every person in Australia to decide how he or she wants to be insured is a fundamental principle of choice.

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

**Mr PHILLIPS:** That important principle, which this Government stands for, is being put at risk by actions of the Federal Government. Another important principle is to achieve the highest clinical standards. The final principle is that treatment should be decided on the basis of clinical priority, not on the basis of insurance status or whether a patient is public or private. I doubt that any member of this House would refute those principles, which the proposed agreement offered by the Federal Government is putting at risk. The Federal Government used to pick up close to 50 per cent of all States' hospital funding, especially funding for this State. By 1985 that assistance decreased to about 40 per cent; today it is down to 32 per cent, which equates to a decrease in funding of \$1.3 billion. How would our health care system operate if this State Government did not at least top up the shortfall? The Government has put more than \$1.4 billion into the health care system.

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

**Mr PHILLIPS:** As the Premier said, the States are finding it more and more difficult to keep funding the shortfall from the Federal Government. The funding continues to decrease while the demand for health care continues to increase. The Federal Government is pursuing a deliberate policy of forcing people to abandon private health insurance. People who can afford to take out private health insurance are becoming public patients. Because they have no incentive to stay with private health insurance, they are bailing out. The proposed agreement will force even more to bail out and this will put further pressure on the State health system. The situation is akin to that of a pincer movement. On the one hand funding has been cut, while on the other hand the

number of public patients is increasing dramatically each year. That is an example of the pressure that is being put on the public health system. The taxpayers of New South Wales will be hit with a triple blow this year. Not only will they be charged \$96 million as a result of the increase in the Medicare levy - that is, \$96 million extra will come from New South Wales taxpayers - but because of the so-called bonus scheme, which is really  
Page 6651

a penalty scheme, New South Wales will get none of that money and it will be penalised an additional \$21 million out of our Medicare budget. Why? What sin has been committed by this State? Its sin is that it has too many people who want to be privately insured.

The standard being set is that if more than 43 per cent of private patients are treated, they will be penalised for being private patients. How will New South Wales cope with that? Either we will have to accept a cut of \$21 million or we start to take such ridiculous action as getting public patients to stay in hospital longer to increase our bed-day percentage rate. That is completely against international health care trends. Of course all that would do is increase the waiting list. We could stop private patients coming into our public hospitals. We could discriminate and tell them to "get lost, this is a public hospital". But such discrimination will not be tolerated in New South Wales. We could ask privately insured patients to become public patients so that we can increase the percentage rate - which would mean that we do not get money from insurance companies and the Government would have to pick up the medical costs. Implementation of any of those three scenarios would increase the waiting lists in New South Wales by at least 8,000 elective patients next year and each subsequent year. That is a serious matter.

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

**Mr PHILLIPS:** That would result in a doubling of the waiting list, which is inexcusable. This State and the other Liberal States will not accept such a situation, and we will be negotiating intensely on those particular principles. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the so-called shadow minister, is on the record as saying, "Sign up, sign up, sign up the Medicare agreement". Why? He is using it as a bit of political bait because we are in a Federal election year. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition says that a maximum of \$16.5 million is available as bait apparently to treat problems associated with the waiting lists today.

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

**Mr PHILLIPS:** That is the bait that has been put in submissions and States have to take their chances. It is a one-off grant. A consequence of signing the Medicare agreement today will be longer waiting lists for the people of New South Wales, and neither this Government nor the governments of other Liberal States will tolerate that.

#### **PADDY'S MARKETS AT REDFERN**

**Mr WINDSOR:** My question without notice is directed to the Premier, and Treasurer. Given the former Premier's commitment to consider that if the permanent Paddy's Markets stallholders supported a co-operative arrangement they could take over management of the markets from the Sydney Market Authority, will the Premier consider negotiating directly with the Stallholders Traders Co-operative to lease the Redfern Eveleigh Railway Workshops for the operation of Paddy's Markets?

**Mr FAHEY:** When the redevelopment of the Paddy's Markets area was

undertaken a few years ago the Government made a commitment to the stallholders of Paddy's Markets in the interim period to assist them to relocate at Redfern. The intention always was for them to return to Haymarket when the newly constructed Paddy's Markets was completed. That, of course, was a commitment by the Government to those stallholders to ensure that they had the opportunity to return to Haymarket at the

Page 6652

appropriate time. While there has been some conjecture in recent days as to just when that might be, because of the construction phase of the facility at the Haymarket, that commitment still remains. I am not aware of stallholders themselves seeking to remain at Redfern, as is implied in the question of the honourable member for Tamworth, and to operate the Redfern facility under any form of co-operative.

Paddy's Markets, particularly in its location at Haymarket, has been very much part of Sydney for a long time; it is a major tourist attraction. It was always the wish of stallholders and of the Government that the facility remain at Haymarket. If it is the wish of the stallholders to seek to form a co-operative, I am sure the Sydney Market Authority and the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs, who has portfolio responsibility for the authority, would be more than interested to consider the substance of the proposal. I believe there is a firm commitment for Paddy's Markets to be located at the new Haymarket site, which is an important cog in the Darling Harbour scheme. It will provide many facilities for tourists and visitors. Therefore, I would be concerned if there is no activity of a Paddy's Markets type, with stalls and so on, at the new site. If that is being suggested by the existing stallholders at Redfern, I would be concerned. I am sure the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs and the Sydney Market Authority will examine thoroughly any proposals in the light of what has been suggested by the honourable member for Tamworth.

### **OPPOSITION POLICY ON PRIVATISATION**

**Mr PHOTIOS:** My question without notice is directed to the Premier, and Treasurer. Is he aware of media reports about the Opposition leader, otherwise known as Mr One Per Cent -

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Ermington will rephrase the question without the interpolation.

**Mr PHOTIOS:** I ask the Premier, and Treasurer whether he is aware of media reports about the U-turn by the Leader of the Opposition on privatisation. Is his position an overwhelming endorsement of the Government's policy?

**Mr Langton:** On a point of order. The question clearly asks the Premier, and Treasurer to express an opinion and does not seek factual information. I ask that you rule it out of order.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The point of order raised by the honourable member for Kogarah has substance. The second part of the question seeks an opinion from the Premier, and Treasurer and was poorly phrased. I disallow the second part of the question, but will allow the first part of it.

**Mr Whelan:** On a point of order. I draw your attention to a ruling by Speaker Ellis at page 68 of *Decisions from the Chair*, that a member seeking verification of newspaper reports is out of order. The true position of this matter has been public knowledge for some time. An article appeared subsequently and was almost an apology by the *Sydney Morning Herald*. In view of that learned ruling by Speaker Ellis, I ask

that you rule the question out of order.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! There is no substance in the point of order taken by the member for Ashfield. On page 68 of *Decisions from the Chair* are numerous rulings as to members being able to refer briefly to the general text of an article without reading Page 6653

verbatim from it - by Speaker Maher; and when a question is based on a press article, reference may be made to the title of the article and brief reference to its contents but sentences or phrases may not be quoted verbatim - also by Speaker Maher. The first part of the question asked by the honourable member for Ermington asked whether the Premier was aware of certain statements that had been made and was in an acceptable form. However, the second part was poorly phrased and is disallowed.

**Mr FAHEY:** I am at a loss to understand why Opposition members would not want me to talk about a recent speech made by the Leader of the Opposition. I should have thought that they would have been delighted for me to make reference to a speech made by him.

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

**Mr FAHEY:** The honourable member for Kogarah should know that even when I express an opinion it is always factual. Recently the Leader of the Opposition made a speech to the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Since that time the speech has received mixed reviews. Members of the Government regarded it as being at long last a clarification of his thought processes - that he had an understanding of what was going on in New South Wales and what this Government has been doing for several years. No sooner had he concluded delivering that speech than he received a please explain from the Acting Secretary of the Labor Council, Peter Sams, and the ruling council of the Australian Labor Party, its administrative committee. They demanded that the Leader of the Opposition front up and account for his new-found support for privatisation.

**Mr Davoren:** On a point of order. Is the Premier, and Treasurer speaking about the speech made by the Leader of the Opposition or is he avowing to the veracity of the press release?

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

**Mr Nagle:** On a point of order.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! On many occasions I have advised members that it is extremely difficult for the Chair to hear and deliberate upon a point of order when there is so much interjection. The honourable member for Auburn will be heard in silence.

[*Interruption*]

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

**Mr Nagle:** The question asked of the Premier by the honourable member for Ermington commenced with the words "Is he aware". That would narrow the ambit of the answer because the second part of the question was not allowed.

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



**Mr FAHEY:** It is not surprising that the rank-and-file of the Labor Party found the speech by the Leader of the Opposition so unnerving. It is evident today that the whole matter has unnerved Labor Party members to the point where they are unwilling to listen to the policy that has been enunciated by the Leader of the Opposition.

Page 6654

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

**Mr FAHEY:** Opposition members have only ever seen one side of the man, and that was as the Australian Labor Party faithful knew him: the Leader of the Opposition revering the Australian Labor Party, revering the socialists, promising the world - as he tends to do every second day, if not every day. He knows he will never have to pay for those promises; he knows he will never get the chance to do so. In this instance, in the speech delivered to the Institute of Company Directors, the Leader of the Opposition has had a significant conversion almost akin to someone like Johnny Raper or Jack Gibson moving over and coaching our Olympic gymnasts.

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

**Mr FAHEY:** The Leader of the Opposition is famous for making different speeches to different audiences. On this occasion I must agree with what has been said often by the Minister for Finance: the Leader of the Opposition was well and truly sprung. What the Leader of the Opposition said to the Institute of Company Directors was that he wants "to keep the pace of microeconomic reform in New South Wales cracking throughout the New South Wales public sector, in water, in rail, in electricity and all the other areas relevant to the State's economic performance". Is this the same man who has consistently opposed the reform of government trading enterprises, such as Pacific Power and State Rail? In the past he opposed that reform because he was concerned that it would offend the Labor Council. Pacific Power has made massive improvements in productivity and last year made a \$600 million profit, and the State Rail Authority has reduced running costs by more than \$1 million a day. The Leader of the Opposition has been hogging the megaphone out in Macquarie Street, making empty promises about reform but never exposing the slightest hint of any backbone in regard to ending the work practices or overmanning such as was found in those organisations back in 1988.

In the past the Leader of the Opposition has talked about efficiency and productivity in the public sector, but he wants no reduction in its size. Now he has told company directors that he will lead the charge to make the public sector work force understand that "one person's rort is costing someone else a job". Where has the Leader of the Opposition been for the past four and a half years? No wonder the Deputy Premier was moved to say, after hearing the statements made to the company directors, that the Leader of the Opposition was a mixed up little kid. It is no wonder the media reported that the left and right factions of the Labor Party were angry with the Leader of the Opposition. That has been demonstrated in the House today. This is the same man who bitterly opposed our attempts to get equity into water pricing.

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

**Mr FAHEY:** Honourable members will recall his performance back in August

this year in regard to the Water Board charges, which gave relief to more than 90 per cent of businesses, especially small businesses. On that occasion the Leader of the Opposition, along with the honourable member for Blacktown, said it was a terrible thing that some larger companies were paying more for this scarce resource. Has the Leader of the Opposition explained to the honourable member for Blacktown why he now wants some private sector involvement in the provision of water services? That is what he said.

Page 6655

The Leader of the Opposition said that he is opposed to the sale of Pacific Power and its coalmines to the private sector, but it is okay to sell them to the United Mineworkers Federation if they are bidding in tandem with the private sector. That is the same federation that took the Government to the Land and Environment Court to block the sale of the mines. How has the Leader of the Opposition squared that away with his spokesman on energy? The honourable member for East Hills does not like the sale - to the unions or anyone else. Yet that is exactly what the Leader of the Opposition said recently he would do. The Leader of the Opposition told the company directors that he now likes private prisons. Now that our privately constructed Junee correction centre is bolting ahead - ahead of budget and ahead of time - he likes the idea. He has changed again. How does he explain that attitude to the member for Peats, who not long ago had a great litany of criticisms about the proposed prison at Junee?

Of course, the hypocrisy of the Leader of the Opposition is legendary. It is all right for his mate Paul Keating to sell off the Commonwealth Bank but this Government is not allowed to do the same with the State Bank of New South Wales. Before the last election the Leader of the Opposition said he would walk on broken glass before he would support the sale of the GIO. Of course, now he is right on board and right behind hedging everything on the GIO sale. Also, he wants the private sector to build cross-regional rail links in western Sydney. The Leader of the Opposition does not tell us what the costs of his proposals will be. He never reveals the costs of promises he makes every day. Nor does he supply details on these relevant matters. He thinks private involvement in rail in western Sydney is all right, but private involvement in western Sydney roads is a no no. We cannot have tollways in western Sydney but it is all right to have them on the Pacific Highway to the north. The only thing the Leader of the Opposition is consistent with is somersaulting - and who can keep up with it?

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

**Mr FAHEY:** I know honourable members opposite do not like this, but the thought processes of the Leader of the Opposition are interesting.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! There is far too much interjection and conversation in the Chamber. I note the Premier has been speaking for quite some time. I ask that he draw his comments to a conclusion reasonably quickly.

**Mr FAHEY:** In the course of his speech to company directors the Leader of the Opposition completely ignored that under the Better Cities funding the Federal and State governments are spending \$155 million on Transit West. This will mean significant improvements to rail in the west of Sydney. The Leader of the Opposition wants Walsh Bay developed now but we all know that his interfering some time ago by putting the matter before the Independent Commission Against Corruption stopped the development of Walsh Bay, a development which has never since been back on track. Despite all this the Leader of the Opposition has endorsed or is edging closer and closer to the Government's policies. The Leader of the Opposition is embarrassing to

honourable members opposite. In conclusion I simply say that the Leader of the Opposition has finally caught up with Government policies. Because he has seen the light of day I hope it does not give ammunition to the honourable member for Liverpool, who is currently beaver away in his challenge to take over as Leader of the Opposition because the recent statements of the current Leader of the Opposition to the Institute of Company Directors were an overwhelming endorsement of this Government's proposals for the past four and a half years.

Page 6656

## **OPPOSITION POLICY ON PRIVATISATION**

**Mr PHOTIOS:** I ask a supplementary question directed to the Premier, and Treasurer. Does the Government welcome the bipartisan offer of support for privatisation by the Leader of the Opposition?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! As I have said previously, there is little precedent on which the Chair can draw when considering whether a question is supplementary. However, the Chair must be guided by whether the question is genuinely based on material drawn from the answer to the previous question. I do not consider this question comes into that category, and therefore I rule it out of order.

## **STUDENT TRAVEL CRITERION**

**Mr LANGTON:** My question without notice is directed to the Premier, and Treasurer. Does a Treasury submission to the Public Accounts Committee inquiry into school student travel recommend increasing the eligibility distance criterion from 1.6 kilometres to 4.2 kilometres? Does it also recommend a \$100 a year fee or a daily fare? Will the Premier rule out these changes to the scheme?

**Mr FAHEY:** The honourable member for Kogarah in particular should realise that currently an inquiry is being held by the Public Accounts Committee, a bipartisan committee of this Parliament, into the cost of school transport. I hope that all honourable members, not merely Government members, would have examined the recent report by the Auditor-General. This report shows significant real increases over a period of time in the cost of providing subsidies for school student transportation. That inquiry will follow the normal course, and I would anticipate many submissions will be made, including submissions from Treasury. It is appropriate that costings and figures be provided by Treasury to the Public Accounts Committee to ensure that it has all relevant information for its deliberations. I am sure many people will provide submissions - perhaps even the honourable member for Kogarah will make constructive suggestions - to the Public Accounts Committee. This ultimately will ensure that the cost of school student transportation is brought within parameters affordable to the people of this State, keeping in mind equity and responsibilities which this Government will always maintain. In due course a report and recommendations will be tabled.

The Government looks forward to reading that report as this matter has been of concern to not only this Government but previous governments because of escalation in costs. It is ultimately a matter for the Government to decide what to do, and this matter will be considered fully by Cabinet, bearing in mind the extensive inquiry and its recommendations. I have no intention of ruling out anything that may be relevant to the present inquiry. To do so would lock up an independent and bipartisan committee of this Parliament. It is important the committee receive input from all sides, including statistical information from Treasury. This will ensure that recommendations will be

made based on all available knowledge.

### **STUDENT TRAVEL CRITERION**

**Mr LANGTON:** I ask a supplementary question of the Premier, and Treasurer. Did he see and or approve the Treasury submission?

**Mr FAHEY:** No.

Page 6657

### **OPPOSITION POLICY ON ROADS PRIVATISATION**

**Mr BECK:** I address my question without notice to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works, and Minister for Roads. What are the ramifications of the privatisation policy of the Leader of the Opposition on the State's roads? How would his plan to scrap western Sydney tollways affect that region's future road development?

**Mr W. T. J. MURRAY:** I commend the honourable member for Murwillumbah for his interest in Labor's irrational road policy, a policy that would destroy the State's road system. The privatisation policy for roads of the Leader of the Opposition is a classic example of the left hand not knowing what the right hand is doing. Hardly was the ink dry on his recent speech to the Australian Institute of Company Directors when members of his own party were disowning his commitment to some of the toll roads. In an amazing philosophical somersault the Leader of the Opposition said the Labor Party would scrap the M4 and M5 tollways but would encourage tolls on the Pacific Highway. This selective type of privatisation has left his own party totally bewildered and the community totally bemused.

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

**Mr W. T. J. MURRAY:** The Labor Party was quite happy for people to pay a toll for another 30 years to cross Sydney Harbour when it sold the tunnel contract.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I call the honourable member for Mount Druitt to order. He will resume his seat quickly if he wishes to remain in the Chamber. I have asked members on numerous occasions to reduce the level of audible conversation and to refrain from interjecting. I did so for two reasons: first, so that anyone who wishes to hear an answer can do so; and, second, to uphold the common courtesy that members remain reasonably quiet while other members are speaking. Some members have been called to order a number of times. Each of those members will now be deemed to be on three calls to order. However, I warn members who indulge in even relatively inoffensive conversation between now and the end of question time that they are likely to incur a call to order, because the level of conversation has been intolerable.

**Mr W. T. J. MURRAY:** The Labor Party was happy to commit motorists to paying, for 30 years, a toll to cross the Sydney Harbour when the former Labor Government signed the Sydney Harbour Tunnel contract. It was happy to support legislation enabling toll roads to be built in country New South Wales. It is refreshing that the Leader of the Opposition acknowledges that toll roads are the best way to provide much needed infrastructure to make up for the 12 years of neglect of the former Labor Government - but only when it suits. The irony is that scrapping the tollways on the M4, M5 and M6 would actually harm the people who the Labor Party is trying to secure votes

from. The end result is that the people of western Sydney would be the main casualty of Labor's policy to abolish toll roads. Scrapping the tolls on the M4, M5 and M6 would cost a Labor government \$614 million -

**Mr Langton:** Rubbish! That is a foolish thing to say.

**Mr W. T. J. MURRAY:** - excluding operations, maintenance and contract termination payments. It is fascinating that the Leader of the Opposition has an adviser who cannot even add up, as is obvious by his interjection. That means the total revenue from the 3 x 3 program from 1992 to 1995 would be required to fund this payout,

Page 6658

wreaking havoc with the State's roads budgets. Denying the rest of the State funds collected by the 3 x 3 program would cost approximately 8,500 jobs over the three-year period and leave New South Wales without an adequate roads program. Most significantly, it is anticipated that the \$120 million from 3 x 3 funds will be allocated to western Sydney during the current program of 1992 to 1995. If Labor had its way, millions of dollars in construction for western Sydney would be put on the back burner, with little chance of any new State funded works commencing in western Sydney for at least five years. Projects planned or under way because of the present Government's initiatives include the overpass at James Ruse Drive and Victoria Road, the Silverwater Road extension, the railway bridge at Minto, the Polding Street overpass at Smithfield, and many more projects the like of which would have to be abandoned under Labor's roads policy.

Labor does not have a serious roads policy. It has a dirt track policy, a horse and buggy policy, and a return to the Wran and Unsworth years which would see more of our roads neglected and broken down. Let us not be fooled by Labor's hollow cries of injustice, as the toll roads in western Sydney were firmly on the agenda when it was in government. Its hypocrisy is absolutely amazing. On 22nd June, 1987, as a document prepared following a strategy meeting with Department of Main Roads officials and the then Minister for Roads, Laurie Brereton, proves beyond doubt, the Labor Government at that time was planning toll roads for western Sydney - and for a profit! The conclusion of the meeting and the action directed by that meeting was very clear: to pursue analysis of other major prospects for their viability as private ventures; call for expressions of interest for developing freeways F4, F5 and F2 individually or in combination as private ventures, the timing of such a call to await the result of the McNair Anderson survey at the time. The other factor involved in that particular meeting was that "firm proposals for these projects and further proposals for other projects are to be deferred until after the 1988 State election". So when I hear about people in the western suburbs of Sydney and about the honourable member for Penrith and others in that area complaining about tollways in New South Wales, I am minded to suggest that the honourable member go and have a yarn to some of her compatriots, because if she does she will learn the policy of her own Labor government of the day. That would have been Labor's policy had it been re-elected to office in 1988.

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

**Mr W. T. J. MURRAY:** The Department of Main Roads had established a task force to identify potential projects for private funding. Those policies would have been put in place had Labor won in 1988. Though I am fully aware of the totally unabashed hypocrisy of the Leader of the Opposition through statements he has made since then, it is absolutely astonishing that he now does the greatest U-turn of all time. The statement I made a few weeks ago is very true: we have nothing but a poor, mixed up little kid leading the Opposition.

## **MALDON-DOMBARTON RAIL LINK PRIVATE INVESTMENT AND COAL EXPORT MARKET**

**Mr GLACHAN:** My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Transport, and Minister for Tourism. Now that the Leader of the Opposition is advocating private investment in the Maldon-Dombarton rail link, has the Minister been advised what effect this would have on our coal export market?

Page 6659

**Mr BAIRD:** I thank the honourable member for Albury for his question and commend the outstanding job he is doing as the chairman of the ministerial transport committee. We have in the Leader of the Opposition a man for all seasons, as was outlined earlier by the Premier.

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

**Mr BAIRD:** He has one line for the boardrooms round Sydney about how he is very much in favour of the private sector; when he gets out with his mates in the socialist set, it is a whole different matter. Whichever way he goes he swings around. It is all right to have private tollways in some areas but not on the F4 and F5. His proposal for the Maldon to Dombarton line shows his ignorance on the one hand and the total stupidity of what he is about on the other. In the first place, we have checked with the coal industry, and it has no interest at all in building the Maldon to Dombarton line. It can be quickly established why. The Leader of the Opposition said, "As part of our program of privatisation we will involve the private sector, and they are terribly interested in doing it". From our inquiries, there is no interest. The reason is that to complete the line would cost \$160 million. The interest would amount to \$20 million annually and would create an additional charge of \$5 a tonne on all coal going to the export markets. That would mean our coal exports simply would not be competitive. If the Leader of the Opposition ever got his way this State would sacrifice a vital export market. He just simply does not understand that to be competitive in the export market product cannot be loaded with additional costs.

When it was originally proposed it was envisaged that 31 million tonnes of coal would come from the southern coalfields by 1990. The situation now is that 17 million tonnes come from the southern coalfields. The existing rail network is more than capable of handling that volume of coal traffic. So the Leader of the Opposition would have \$160 million invested for what? The total number of trains travelling the Maldon to Dombarton line each day would be four. Four trains a day travelling this line, no one is interested in building it, and of course spending \$160 million to do it. So, although the Leader of the Opposition has a wonderful proposal for which he thinks privatisation is all right, it can be clearly seen he does not understand it. Nobody wants to be involved in the Maldon to Dombarton line, and the Leader of the Opposition gets his figures totally wrong. There have been examples of the Leader of the Opposition, depending on where he is, simply choosing which privatisation example he should use. I suggest the honourable member for Kogarah, who normally gets it wrong, wrong, wrong, advise the Leader of the Opposition to do more research before he produces this type of paper to find out -

**Mr Langton:** I wrote it for him.

**Mr BAIRD:** What desperate times when one must rely on the honourable

member for Kogarah to write one's papers. It is no wonder they got it 100 per cent wrong.

---

## INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

### Report

**Mr Speaker**, pursuant to section 78(1) of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act, announced receipt of the report of the Independent Commission Against Corruption on an investigation into the State Rail Authority, Trackfast Division, dated September 1992, made public pursuant to section 78(2) of the Act on 28th September.

Page 6660

## AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

**The Deputy Clerk**, pursuant to section 51(2) of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, announced receipt of Volume 2 of the Auditor-General's Report for 1992.

## PETITIONS

### Serious Traffic Offence Penalties

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

### Health and Transport Services Privatisation

Petition praying that the House oppose the privatisation of health and public transport services, and amend the Transport Administration Act to ensure that the Parliament, and not the Minister for Transport, decide matters relating to privatisation, received from **Dr Refshauge**.

### 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**.

### Conveyancer Licensing

Petition praying that the House take action to ensure that conveyancers conducting a conveyancing business at the commencement of the Act, and particularly those in country areas, be eligible to be licensed and permitted to convey rural property, received from **Mr Amery**.

### Brothels

Petition praying that the Government will not take steps to legalise brothels but will close all existing brothels by enforcing the Disorderly Houses Act, received from **Mr D. L. Page**.

### **Court House for Toronto**

Petition praying that the Government provide for the construction of a court house complex for Toronto, received from **Mr Hunter**.

### **Hunter Sewer Service Access Charge**

Petition praying that the parameters of the sewer service access charge of the Hunter Water Corporation be modified, received from **Mr Hunter**.

### **Aged Health Care**

Petitions 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 **Dr Refshauge and Mr Whelan**.

Page 6661

### **Hospital Closures**

Petition praying that the House ensure that Canterbury, Bankstown, Lidcombe, Western Suburbs, Balmain, Royal Prince Alfred and Prince Henry hospitals remain open to the public to satisfy the present and future health needs of the local communities, received from **Dr Refshauge**.

### **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**.

### **Castlereagh Liquid Waste Depot**

Petition praying that the Government close the Castlereagh liquid waste depot immediately and carry out a health survey and tests for toxic contamination, received from **Mr Gibson**.

## **BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

### **Unanswered Questions Upon Notice**

**Mr SPEAKER:** In accordance with the sessional order I draw the attention of the House to unanswered question upon notice No. 689 standing in the name of the Minister for Consumer Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education.

**Mrs CHIKAROVSKI:** I inform the House that the answer to question No. 689 has been provided to the Clerk-Assistant (Procedure) of the Legislative Assembly.

## **RESTRUCTURING OF THE FORESTRY COMMISSION**

### **Matter of Public Importance**



**Mr CHAPPELL** (Northern Tablelands) [3.21]: I move:

That this House notes as a matter of public importance the restructuring of the New South Wales Forestry Commission and its new corporate objective of ecologically sustainable management.

I have moved this matter of public importance on the restructuring of the Forestry Commission because it provides such a good example of public sector reform - the very sort of reform for which this State has achieved national and international acclaim. It also provides an opportunity to commend and encourage the Forestry Commission and to recognise achievements that benefit everyone, regardless of their political persuasion or their stance on the divisive issue of forest management. The restructuring of the Forestry Commission began almost six months ago and is nearly complete. It involved more than just a reorganisation; it was a complete and fundamental reappraisal of the commission, its role in the community, and its future. However, the restructuring must also reflect the community's and the Government's expectations that the public sector be leaner, more efficient and commercially responsible in its focus, while at the same time providing a responsive quality service to the community.

Page 6662

In a controversial area such as forestry the balance between conservation and commercial objectives is a real high wire act. On the other hand, environmental studies must be conducted and areas set aside for preservation. The New South Wales Forestry Commission is currently involved in the most far-reaching and detailed program of environmental impact statements ever undertaken in Australia by anyone involved in the forestry industry or other State forestry commissions - perhaps more detailed than any ever undertaken anywhere in the world. In the past the Forestry Commission has been a favourite whipping boy for radical green groups, some politicians, and even some sectors of the industry. It is usually accused of logging either too much or too little, of logging where it should not, or of being too restrictive on industry. Two years ago in this Parliament the commission was roundly criticised by the Public Accounts Committee. Those criticisms in part led to the restructuring we are discussing today. It is difficult to believe that today's Forestry Commission is the same body which attracted so much censure only two years ago. A transformation is under way.

Perhaps the best single measure of the commitment and professionalism of the staff of the Forestry Commission at all levels is the fact that the radical restructuring of the commission, the new corporate plan - the new corporate commitment of the Forestry Commission - is directed from within. For example, head office in Pennant Hills, which was often criticised for its size, its cost of operation and its unwieldy structure, has virtually committed hara-kari. Not only has it been downsized by about one-third but also much of its authority has been transferred to the country. The power to make decisions has been taken away from people in city offices and given to those who manage the forests, grow the trees and sell the timber. Senior executive service positions in head office have been reduced from 11 to six, and in country areas they have increased from zero to four. The net result is an overall decrease in the size of the senior executive service and transfer of responsibility and authority from the city to the country.

Forestry in this State should not be about people sitting in offices merely moving files around; it should be about people working in the forests, growing more trees, better trees and managing the whole forest, the natural environment, in an appropriate and sustainable way. The commission has therefore reduced its organisational regions from nine to five and given them a great deal more autonomy. It has also reduced its districts

from 48 to 30 without decreasing its forestry operations or commitment to quality management of its areas of the Crown estate. Regions based in Albury, Eden, Taree, Coffs Harbour and Dubbo are now able to carry on with the business of managing forests, liberated from the bureaucratic straitjacket of head office based decision-making. They are also free from the high levels of head office overheads that were relentlessly imposed at unpredictable levels and which made planning difficult for everyone involved in forestry-based industries.

Another example of the Forestry Commission's commitment to reform is its new state-of-the-art accounting system. The Forestry Commission changed from cash accounting to accrual accounting in a matter of months. Previously the commission was heading down the gurgler financially. Its debt had increased by \$50 million in the previous four years and was likely to get worse. Drastic action was needed. The commission's old cash accounting system was slow and inaccurate and it was difficult to ascertain exactly when and where money was earned or spent. Imagine trying to run a business if a bank manager could not tell a person on a daily basis how much money he or she had in the bank. The commission's systems also made it very hard to work out how much profit it was making. It could take up to eight weeks to convert cash accounts to accrual accounting statements at the end of the financial year. On that basis it was not possible to do this essential calculation more than once a year. The Forestry Commission

Page 6663

decided to implement a state-of-the-art accrual accounting system which would daily indicate a cash balance and indicate monthly how much profit it was making. This major and far-reaching change was completed in four months, an astonishing achievement in revolutionising accounting methods for such a complex organisation. A very important part of its system is that all revenues, costs and assets are now accounted for in the individual responsibility centres; that is, each and every regional manager is responsible for his and only his revenue and costs. Each manager's performance is evaluated monthly, thus providing real incentive for managers to run their operations efficiently. That is the way it would operate if the commission was an efficient private sector company; that is the way it should be and will be for the Forestry Commission.

The accrual accounting system should have enormous future benefits and should lead to dramatic improvements in the commission's profitability - hence the dividend it can pay the Government. Head office still exists but it is unrecognisable. It is a much leaner, flatter and more focused head office providing strategic direction, advice and support to the regions. However, it does not run their businesses for them. On the contrary, the general managers in the regions decide on the funding for head office. No longer is the tail wagging the dog. Part of the problem faced by the commission was that many of its staff had been there for a number of years. It was one of those comfortable places where people stayed for a long, long time. As a result 100 per cent of its senior management positions were occupied by foresters who had come up through the ranks. Most were thoroughly committed, hard-working professionals, but corporately the commission was totally out of date.

Today, under this new policy, half of those senior management jobs have been filled by people who have been with the organisation for less than 18 months. The new blood and experience in the organisation is getting the balance right, infusing a whole new ethos into the commission and achieving results daily. Each new member of the professional staff brings to the commission new skills and expertise and an outstanding track record. The nexus between long service and seniority has been broken. Part of the determination of the Forestry Commission to identify clearly its costs has been the setting up of certain services as discrete business units. These services include amenity

nurseries, workshops, and aircraft, fleet and civil engineering. These businesses are being given the opportunity to stand on their own feet. Some may run successfully and others may fall over, which is what happens in the private sector. Either way it will be clear which services are commercially viable and which are not. This will allow decisions to be made about their future based on a real understanding of the costs, benefits and opportunities involved.

Significantly, the commission's main corporate objective is the ecologically sustainable management of this State's forests - not the actual selling of timber. While the latter must be done in the most efficient and effective manner, ecologically sustainable management of the forests makes this possible not just for the present but over the long haul. The Forestry Commission has also initiated a timber marketing strategy as the first phase of hardwood log sale deregulation. That matter will be discussed in more detail by other speakers. This will mean an end to hidden subsidies or unrealistically high prices. Prices will be determined by market forces. The commission has published a new corporate plan - which is well worth reading - which has been sent to every member of Parliament. Those honourable members who have not yet read it ought to do so if they seek to have any understanding of the present or future role of the Forestry Commission. The commission's corporate plan describes an up-to-date, state-of-the-art organisation - an organisation of which this Government can be intensely proud.

Page 6664

The most interesting thing about the new corporate plan is that the Forestry Commission's performance and the performance of each of its managers will be judged continuously against the specific targets identified in the plan. As I said earlier, the performance, responsibility and accountability of individual regional managers will be assessed against specific performance targets. The whole organisation and every officer in that organisation will be judged against rigid and rigorous performance standards. This corporate plan demonstrates the completely new direction the Forestry Commission is taking. There are new structures, new marketing strategies, new management philosophies, new skills and an entirely new focus. All these things - the actions, the manner and the timing - can be judged against the corporate plan. It is set out so simply that everyone would be able to judge the performance of the Forestry Commission. The strategies are outlined along with the objectives.

In summary, the Forestry Commission has made enormous progress during past months in changing its structure, its philosophy and its way of doing business. Instead of using the commission as a scapegoat and engaging in a political forestry bashing exercise, all honourable members should recognise what the commission has achieved in such a short period. They should encourage it and give it every support as it goes about its restructuring program, both at head office level and out in the field. It is showing the way for many public sector bodies that have yet to go down that path. The new corporate plan is spelt out in a substantive document and in publicity support material entitled "Restructure, Reform, Review". It should be stated in this House that that report reveals an entirely new vision statement and mission. The vision of the New South Wales Forestry Commission is to be recognised as the nation's leading forestry agency through excellence in progressive and responsive forest management - a vision on which it has clearly embarked and which it is determined to achieve. Its mission is to conserve and manage the State's forests of New South Wales and supply forest products and services to the community on a commercial basis.

Today, I recognise - as I am sure other speakers in the debate will - the

enormous turnaround in the philosophy, determination and commitment of the New South Wales Forestry Commission. As I said at the outset, the commission represents one of those flagships for which this State has become renowned and for which it has received international acclaim. The New South Wales Forestry Commission, no less than any part of the public sector of New South Wales, leads the way. It is an organisation of which we can all be intensely proud. It deserves our full support and approbation on a remarkable turnaround achieved through its new corporate plan.

**Mr MARTIN** (Port Stephens) [3.36]: The matter of public importance for debate today is:

That this House notes as a matter of public importance the restructuring of the New South Wales Forestry Commission and its new corporate objective of ecologically sustainable management.

Earlier today the Government indicated that this riveting matter of great importance would be debated after question time. It is being debated to take up the time of the Parliament. The two important components in this matter of public importance - restructuring and ecologically sustainable management - concern all honourable members. We must maintain a clear focus on those two issues. The Forestry Commission, which was established in 1916, has been kicked from pillar to post. In recent times staff at the commission have suffered major morale problems. Recently, while visiting the North Coast, I met people from the Forestry Commission who had heard on an Australian

Page 6665

Broadcasting Corporation radio station that their jobs had been made redundant. Honourable members opposite claim to be great reformers and people managers, but this is an endeavour to cover up the way they have gone about altering the New South Wales Forestry Commission. A number of Forestry Commission offices have been closed. Is it appropriate to close offices in the Hunter Valley or has this been done purely because of National Party politics? A number of honourable members on this side of the House represent electorates in the Hunter Valley - on both the Broken Back and Watagan range side and the Mount Royal side - in which offices have been closed and jobs taken away.

The honourable member for Northern Tablelands said how wonderful the Forestry Commission was. For 22 years I was a public servant - I was a professional division counsellor in the Public Service Association and a close associate of many people in the Forestry Commission. I assure the honourable member for Northern Tablelands that morale among forestry workers is not high. Therefore, it is important that we take note of this issue. Where are we headed? The honourable member for Northern Tablelands made no mention of corporatisation. What happened as a result of those great announcements about Pinecorp? What happened to the moves that were made in that direction not long ago? Does an inventory of State forests, national parks and private lands show what timber reserves exist? The former Premier, who was chased out of this Parliament, allowed five years for the preparation of such an inventory. That one does not exist is a scandal in 1992. The efforts of the Forestry Commission and the National Parks and Wildlife Service must be combined to ensure the production of that inventory. The honourable member for Northern Tablelands was eager that dividends go to the Government instead of reforestation programs being implemented. No mention was made of research or plantation development. Little was said by the honourable member about forest relocation. He did not say whether that was fair for the people on the Northern Tablelands. It is far from satisfactory.

The report of the Public Accounts Committee contains 76 recommendations -

many have been refuted but many were agreed to. The honourable member for Northern Tablelands spoke at length about how wonderful the Forestry Commission is but did not comment on the pluses and minuses of that committee's report. It is very important that we address those issues also. What drives change and why does change take place? Change is taking place because of pricing policies, because marketing has been very poor, because reafforestation and plantation programs are not being planned, and because research and development are being neglected. According to the honourable member for Northern Tablelands the five regional offices are telling head office what to do. Research and development must be co-ordinated statewide. In 1992 New South Wales - a State that had great potential with regard to eucalypt forests - is probably the most backward of any region in the world when it comes to planting and cropping Australian eucalypt hardwood forests.

It is important to analyse what is happening overseas and in other States of Australia, especially in Western Australia with regard to Tasmanian blue gums. The Opposition does not swallow what was said by the honourable member for Northern Tablelands. Where is forestry going? Is it headed in the right direction? For one to accept blindly what was said by the honourable member, one would have to believe that there are no problems. But problems do exist with sustainability, about which little has been said. We have been overcutting our hardwood forests since post-war reconstruction and we are still doing so. That is unforgivable. I remind honourable members opposite of what is being burnt, wasted and buried in our forests. And they have the hide to say everything is wonderful now that we have an accounting system! It is nothing short of a disgrace. With regard to ecologically sustainable management we must ask ourselves

Page 6666

what is being done about old growth forests, and do we have the answers? About 20 years ago when working on a project in Eden I saw Nadgee clear-felled. That was a scandal. Forestry people were telling me then they had the answer; that it would be logged again in 40 years. It now looks like being well over 100 years before logs can be cut out of there again. We do not have all the answers. It is more important to find the correct answers to sustainability than to implement modern accounting systems that these Greiner and Fahey governments have been so proud of. With regard to accounting and management, the State has gone backwards in four years, not forwards. There are many important forestry management issues to be addressed.

It is vital to insist on education. The Canberra School of Forestry is very much like a secret society of people who are either environmentally oriented or have a take-at-costs attitude. Both groups hang on the words of their peers. They are not receiving informed education, which will enable informed decisions to be made by many, rather than only a handful in our society, with fair knowledge of what issues are all about. Members on the Government side of the Chamber who come from the land and from many walks of life have little knowledge of what happens in forests; they do not know how forests work. They know only about chainsaws, how to fell a tree and how to drag it out. Few members of Parliament or members of the public, either in rural or city areas, have much idea of forests. Even people with high natural science education qualifications have little knowledge in that regard.

Instead of concentrating on restructuring for the purpose of ecological sustainable management all we hear about is better accounting. That is an unforgivable state of affairs for many reasons. What is the future of woodchipping in this State? What will happen if we produce a million tonnes in the southeast? Will we be able to develop and maintain those levels of production? I thought the Government would address these sorts of matters today, but instead reference was made to the fact that nine regions have been cut to five regions. Those who work in forestry are most capable. They have done

an extremely good job over the years and have been loyal servants. The honourable member for Northern Tablelands who introduced this matter today was proud of the fact that half the employees have 18 months or less service. Such a staff turnover makes one realise why things are not happy in the Forestry Commission today. The Government should look at its management capabilities; its record of managing people has not been good. Members on this side of the House will support a motherhood statement, but mark my words: we will not lie down and take the sort of nonsense that has been dished up to us by Government members who have tried unconvincingly to paint a rosy picture of an industry and a State Government organisation that are not well. That is a true reflection of this Government.

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

**Mr FRASER** (Coffs Harbour) [3.50]: A major new emphasis for the Forestry Commission is ecologically sustainable management. Responsible members of the community nowadays expect protection of native forests, and the Forestry Commission organises its activities to be environmentally responsible while still maintaining commercial viability. That requires planning, managing and logging forests in such a way that the environment is protected, communities of plants and animals are still able to flourish, endangered species are preserved, and the need for wood and wood products in New South Wales will still be met. Sustainable yield is one of the few measuring sticks used to judge the effectiveness of management. That means simply that a healthy forest continues to grow trees productively enough to meet long-term demand for timber. To guarantee that production one must take from the forest only what it can grow each

Page 6667

year. Getting this right involves solid research before harvesting plans are drawn up and constant and vigilant audits once logging has started. In 44 of 56 forestry management areas current logging rates are at long-term sustainable levels. In the remainder the excess is small and plans have been put in place to eliminate that excess systematically before the end of 1988. Of course, that is not enough for the many critics of the commission or for the commission itself.

A forest is a lot more than a patch of growing wood, as any forester will confirm. Other plants grow there; animals make their homes in the forest; and the overall health of the forest demands that the balance of living things is preserved. The Forestry Commission has achieved that aim, in most cases spectacularly. In recent times State forests have been the discovery sites for colonies of endangered and rare species. These are animals and plants whose habitats have been destroyed in the constant quest for living space, wealth from below the ground and agricultural land. But those animals and plants have survived in our State forests. Indeed, some have flourished under the very Forestry Commission management that is so often accused of being environmentally unfriendly. Other practical indicators for ecologically sustainable management are still being developed, with the active participation of the Forestry Commission. Every new yardstick is incorporated into its forestry management planning. Logging rates in native forests have been reduced and massive programs of environmental research and community consultation are being implemented. In the present financial year the commission will spend almost \$3 million on the preparation of environmental impact statements; 17 statements will be prepared by 1994. Specialist consultants are used and community consultation plays a major role in every phase of the research programs. Before any environmental impact study is commenced the public is consulted to define any local issues that must be taken into account. The community has a continued involvement in the studies through advisory panels, workshops or committees. The studies are wideranging and examine all possible impacts of proposed logging in any forestry area.

To some extent that could be gilding the lily, because no reputable scientific source has ever claimed that a single species has become extinct as a result of Australian forestry operations. Nevertheless, flora and fauna surveys are carried out. The aim is to find out what is living in the forest and then to assess how the forest and its inhabitants will be affected over the next 10 to 20 years as the forest is logged. Aboriginal and European heritage studies are done; any areas of interest are included in conservation plans; soil and water are studied; and the scientific and recreational values of the forest also are considered. Logging plans must ensure that forests are still pleasant places to drive through and to visit. All of these issues are important when considering the impact of logging on any area. But the list is incomplete without one final variable - a variable that all too often is missing from the equations of those who want logging in native forests stopped.

Every environmental impact statement involves extensive social and economic studies. In fact an environmental impact statement for a given area can contain precise figures; it can tell how much timber will be lost and how many jobs will be impacted when specific areas of the forest are set aside for the preservation and protection of the flora and fauna communities. Only when this is done, and not before, is a conservation strategy drawn up that provides the best workable mix of logging and conservation. The strategy of the Forestry Commission of New South Wales is aimed at maintaining diversity. Biodiversity is the central focus of Forestry Commission management and research. The commission has in place a range of codes, standards, management plans and policies for its operations in State forests. But there is an acknowledged lack of

Page 6668

externally set standards governing forest practices across all land tenures, especially private land. As part of its new direction the commission is co-operating with the Environment Protection Authority, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Department of Conservation and Land Management - [*Time expired.*]

**Ms ALLAN** (Blacktown) [3.55]: I have news for the honourable member for Northern Tablelands and the honourable member for Coffs Harbour: the public knows already that it is a matter of public importance that the Forestry Commission of New South Wales is being restructured. I am sure the public will be pleasantly surprised when it hears that the commission has adopted a new corporate objective of ecologically sustainable management. The honourable member for Port Macquarie suggested that I say something nice about the Forestry Commission. I am afraid that is almost impossible. At present three legislative committees of the lower House of the New South Wales Parliament are examining issues that directly impact on the Forestry Commission of New South Wales. I refer to the South East Forests Protection Bill legislative committee, the Natural Resources Management Bill, and cognate bills, legislative committee and the Forestry (Amendment) Bill legislative committee, which is considering a bill introduced by the honourable member for Manly. Though that committee has been set up, it has not had its first meeting. Those three lower House committees are occupying the time and energy of a number of members of this House - the honourable member for Coffs Harbour, the honourable member for Monaro, the honourable member for Blue Mountains and others, including Opposition members. The three committees are examining issues related to the apparent transformation of the Forestry Commission about which we heard this afternoon from the honourable member for Northern Tablelands. If three committees of this Parliament are taking up the time of honourable members of this House, why are we spending a further one and a quarter hours discussing the apparent restructuring of the Forestry Commission of New South Wales?

**Mr Armstrong:** On a point of order. It is difficult for members to follow the debate when the honourable member for Port Stephens has complained about a lack of time being devoted to discussing this matter in the House and the honourable member for Blacktown complains that the issue is being given too much time. I ask the honourable member to explain.

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

**Ms ALLAN:** I take this opportunity to congratulate the senior management of the Forestry Commission. I note that Dr Drielsma is sitting in the back of the Chamber. I congratulate him and other senior managers on being able to find members of this House who were willing to come here today and move and speak to this motion. I am afraid that not even this type of - dare I say - motherhood resolution will save the Forestry Commission when it comes to final judgment by the Parliament when the reports of the legislative committees are brought down or by the New South Wales public. I should refer to a specific dispute that the commission is engaged in with a group of people on the North Coast of New South Wales. Unfortunately that group and the community in various parts of the North Coast are not impressed by the so-called transformation that is occurring in the Forestry Commission. I refer in particular to the dispute occurring in the Wild Cattle Creek State Forest, where the Forestry Commission is in breach of its own harvest plan for compartment 546 in Wild Cattle Creek State Forest. Because of demonstrations within the forest, the actions of the Bellingen Environment Centre and negative publicity the Forestry Commission has received on this issue, the Forestry Commission has closed Wild Cattle Creek State Forest to avoid further public criticism. Recently, the Minister for Conservation and Land Management, and Minister for Energy

Page 6669

received a large volume of material forwarded by the Bellingen Environment Centre and the Wild Cattle Creek action group. That documentation includes affidavits pointing to suspect actions by Forestry Commission employees such as Simon Cottier, a senior forester - *[Time expired.]*

**Ms MACHIN (Port Macquarie) [4.0]:** I speak with pleasure on this important motion. This is not a waste of time, as was suggested by the honourable member for Port Stephens; it is an issue of great significance to the whole State. The comments made by the honourable member for Blacktown were a disgrace. She seeks only to make personal attacks on employees of the commission. Her implication that the forestry commissioner, Dr Drielsma, was somehow seeking members of Parliament to push this motion is a disgrace. The honourable member for Blacktown typically does not have the manners or guts to remain in the Chamber following her contribution. It will be a great day when she has something pleasant to say about any person.

I wish to speak briefly about the new marketing strategy to be put in place by the Forestry Commission. For some time criticism has been levelled at the marketing strategy and price of logs. Sawmillers are of the view the prices are too high; conservationists believe they are too low. Somewhere in between must be the right price. The Forestry Commission suggests that because of the disagreement the prices are right. As well as its conservation and recreational responsibilities the Forestry Commission has a fundamental commercial responsibility to the people of New South Wales. It is important that the Forestry Commission obtain the highest possible return on the sale of logs and other wood products produced by forests. Much of the strident criticism has been based on little evidence in regard to pricing. Though there is disagreement, the fact remains that Forestry Commission prices in New South Wales for logs are among the highest in Australia. However, a common chord exists about many pricing assertions. In the 1990s there is no room for marketing procedures that are



overregulated, susceptible to subsidisation of uneconomic industries or that might be seen to be conducive to cosy, monopolistic arrangements. This new marketing system has been one of reform and will mean the application of a new deregulation system of marketing sawlogs and other wood supplies. This month a trial commenced in the commission's Murwillumbah, Casino and Urbenville management areas. Pending the outcome, the trial will continue with the aim of implementation by June next year.

Under the old marketing policies logs were sold by way of providing a quota to certain sawmills. Not all sawmills had Crown quotas, which were difficult to obtain and could not be traded. People such as major buyers in the industry were not exposed to real market competition. The thrust of the new market strategy is to progressively phase out annual quotas and introduce tendered or negotiated long-term supply agreements of five or 10 years. However, the strategy involves more than that. Supply areas subject to long-term agreements will be enlarged to give customers enhanced flexibility. Wherever possible, such as in the case of Crown customers cutting less than agreed allocations of timber, short-term parcels of all qualities of logs will be offered on the open market. Commission obligations under the old market policy to automatically renew annual quotas will cease after three years and any allocations other than those by term agreements will be by application under competitive processes.

It is intended ultimately to remove the present distinction between Crown and non-Crown sawmill customers as phasing out of the annual quota allocation system progresses, though log sales will be made only to approved log purchasers. Initially this category will be restricted to log processing companies but as deregulation proceeds the category will be expanded. The commission will introduce more classifications of logs

Page 6670

at point of sale to provide a more accurate and responsive pricing system. This hopefully will set values for our timber, again something that has been criticised in the past. The suggestion has been made that New South Wales undervalues and undersells some of its excellent timbers. The commission and the Government believe several benefits will flow from the introduction of the new marketing strategy. The use of market forces will provide decision-makers with greater confidence that the commercial use of our native forests is in the best interests of the community. At the same time the strategy opens doors for a more competitive industry. It will provide greater opportunities for companies to expand, contract, specialise, increase their scale of operations and generally undertake strategic, long-term development without fear of the regulating influence of government. Though deregulation will bring the commission's revenue sources more under the influence of market forces and business cycles, this must surely be the only alternative if our forests are to be managed in a commercially realistic manner. [*Time expired.*]

**Mr J. H. MURRAY** (Drummoyne) [4.5]: It was interesting to listen to the contribution made by the honourable member for Northern Tablelands. I am disappointed that he does not know the difference between corporatisation, corporate plan and privatisation. What has happened is quite contrary to recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee for corporatisation. All we have at the moment is a corporatised plan. It is about time that the Government realised it has been sold a pup. I was a member of the Public Accounts Committee when the committee produced one of the most expert reports this Parliament has ever received. Though the committee was bipartisan, I say in all sincerity that the two Labor members on that committee were the driving force behind those recommendations. The Public Accounts Committee made 78 recommendations, and I commend the former Minister and existing head of the commission for implementing a number of those recommendations. However, some of the central issues of the Public Accounts Committee's recommendations have been

completely ignored. Let us look at those matters. The head office in the northern suburbs is a Taj Mahal. Millions of dollars were spent on that and the honourable member for Northern Tablelands asserts that the Government has taken people from head office and put them into the regions. He did not mention that it sold the Taj Mahal or that the space and building were not being utilised economically. The Government should sell the building and relocate the head office to a more effective non-urban area.

The honourable member for Northern Tablelands then spoke about the air wing. He said that even though the Public Accounts Committee had scintillating evidence about the air wing, which has five fixed wing aircraft, one helicopter, one turbo jet that was hived, with 477 hours for outside charter, 702 hours for transportation of commission staff, 119 hours for pilot training and out of that total of 2,000-odd hours, only 722 hours were for essential commission work. The honourable member for Northern Tablelands sought a pat on the back from this Parliament for keeping that air wing. He asks that it be given another chance because it is doing a wonderful job. He should have taken up the recommendation made by the Public Accounts Committee to get rid of the air wing. Why did not the Government do as it did with the Public Works Department if it is not a core or essential activity - sell it off or sack its employees? The Government should not have double standards. The Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs is the new Minister. He should get rid of the air wing and have a more efficient and financial operation by having it run by private charter.

We have now, as well, a mapping branch. The Central Mapping Authority in Bathurst is doing the same work. Multimillion dollar facilities being purchased by the Forestry Commission are being duplicated by another government department which is

Page 6671

performing this function at least equally efficiently; in fact, I would suggest that the Central Mapping Authority in Bathurst would probably do a better job. The central issue is: what has been done in terms of hardwood plantations? We are dragging our feet. I recently travelled overseas and took the opportunity to visit Portugal. That country is covered with Tasmanian blue gums because many years ago it realised that the future of the forestry industry lay in plantations of Tasmanian blue gums, which can be harvested in 12 to 14 years. Instead, this Government is still running around trying to cut down old growth forests, creating problems up and down the coast, when it should be centralising activities on the future, as other countries have done. Nothing has been learned from the New Zealand experience. The New Zealand Forestry Commission has done what I have just said and it is successful. [*Time expired.*]

**Mr CHAPPELL** (Northern Tablelands) [4.10], in reply: I am amazed that the member in this House who aspires to be the alternative minister for forestry could be so misleading and misguided in relation to forestry matters and to the new Forestry Commission. He said it is a waste of the time of this House to debate a dramatic achievement in efficiency and in new corporate mission by one of the organisations of this Government of which we should all be intensely proud. In other words, the honourable member was saying that what has happened to the Forestry Commission is not a matter of public importance. What an absurd and shortsighted point of view to take! The turnaround has been of fundamental importance, something about which every person in this State needs to be informed. The honourable member for Port Stephens is literally living in the past. He threatened to raise all the issues that came from the former Public Accounts Committee report into the Forestry Commission. In fact, what we are dealing with and what I clearly said was that the new corporate plan was driven, to some extent, by some of the recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee review. He is jumbling up the whole matter and living in the past. Many of the problems he referred to no longer exist, because the new corporate plan and the new

drive and enthusiasm in the Forestry Commission has led to the commission taking on board the very matters the honourable member for Port Stephens would still criticise. He did not address the corporate plan at all. I ask, could this really be the shadow minister for forestry? Could it really be that this person does not understand the new corporate plan? Perhaps it could be that the honourable member for Port Stephens - the alternative minister, we are led to believe - has not read the new corporate plan. Those questions have to be asked because he did not deal with the substantial changes and achievements.

The honourable member for Blacktown castigated the Forestry Commission. She put on her usual performance today of castigating everyone - the Forestry Commission, the Government, me and everyone else - but as usual was not right in what she was saying. She said that matters were out of hand at Wild Cattle Creek. The Forestry Commission made absolutely sure there was an agreement with all parties prior to logging the Wild Cattle Creek area for the umpteenth time. She said there had been inadequate consultation. There was consultation and agreement reached with the environmentalists in relation to the logging to be carried out. The logging was licensed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service. It was only after the logging was to commence that some of the greenies decided they did not like it and were going to protest in their usual way. Apart from doing the usual little soft shoe shuffle criticising and castigating everyone in sight, the honourable member for Blacktown did not contribute to the debate at all.

The honourable member for Drummoyne made a lot of noise about the Public Accounts Committee, of which he said he was proud to be a member and of which I am now proud to be a member. He seemed to imply that anything that came from the Public Accounts Committee is Holy Writ. He did not read the rebuttal by the Forestry

Page 6672

Commission of some elements of the report. Those rebuttals are matters of public record. Valid arguments were raised by the Forestry Commission in its own defence, quite rightly, against some points made by the Public Accounts Committee. No organisation, including the Public Accounts Committee, is absolutely right about everything it deals with in a report. Not all of the 78 recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee ought necessarily be implemented. A number quite clearly have been adopted because they advance the standing and operational efficiency of the Forestry Commission. One reason for raising this issue as a matter of public importance is to say well done to the Forestry Commission for responding to the recommendations made by the Public Accounts Committee, for taking on board responsibilities to be a better, more responsive, more responsible and accountable organisation.

The honourable member for Drummoyne clearly has not kept up to date with most of the argument that has proceeded since the Public Accounts Committee report was published. The report was not entirely defensible in every sense. It had a number of deficient aspects and the Forestry Commission certainly ably answered those deficiencies at the time. The honourable member for Drummoyne raised the question of the mapping unit, and asked why the Government was not disbanding it and having its work done at Bathurst. If he had listened to what was said, he would acknowledge that the mapping unit, in common with several other areas in the Forestry Commission, is to be placed on a commercial basis, so that it will have to do the job efficiently or be closed down. The work would then be carried out by someone else, perhaps even at the Central Mapping Authority at Bathurst. What the honourable member is calling for is exactly what has already been put in place. For the time being the mapping specifically for forestry will continue to be done by the Forestry Commission and if it is not able to deliver the goods someone else will do it.

The Public Accounts Committee did not recommend corporatisation; it focused on commercial reform and taking initiatives to put the Forestry Commission on a proper commercial footing. That is different from corporatisation, which the honourable member for Drummoyne said was the recommendation. He does not even remember in full detail the recommendations made at the time. As I said in my address, ably supported by the honourable member for Port Macquarie and the honourable member for Coffs Harbour, the Forestry Commission has come a very long way. It is able today to hold its head high for the substantial achievements it has made and delivered to the Parliament and people of New South Wales through its 1992-95 corporate plan. The structural changes implemented and achievements that have been made, as well as the measures that continue to the present time to be brought on line, are substantial and reflect much of the change that has had to proceed. Though change is always disabling to staff and in the short term has an effect on staff morale, in the long term it delivers the goods. The Forestry Commission and the Government will ensure that at the end of the day the goods are delivered in the most efficient, effective and accountable way. That is the achievement observed in the corporate plan before the House. The structural changes are there for all to see. They will work now and they will work over time.

Another matter of fundamental importance to the people of New South Wales is that forestry operations are conducted on the basis of ecologically sustainable management. That applies not only to the getting of timber but to the sustainable management of the environment, the primary commitment of the Forestry Commission. That is of public importance and should be acknowledged. The achievements of the Forestry Commission are to be commended. Environmental impact studies costing many millions of dollars are being conducted and will continue to be conducted for some years. They will provide flagship models to be followed by forestry commissions and other

Page 6673

agencies throughout the world. Marketing strategies have resulted in real value for our timber in the market-place. In time we will see the real value of our native hardwoods. We have some outstanding hardwoods in this country but I believe in the past they were sold off or given away at prices that were unable to be justified. I hope and expect confidently that the market will respond appropriately. Today we acknowledge the achievements of the Forestry Commission. Those achievements are of fundamental importance to the people of New South Wales and it is right that this Parliament should record them. In doing so we recognise the achievements of the Forestry Commission and say to all staff, including the professionals who have come into the Forestry Commission: well done for your achievements. The people of New South Wales, as represented in this Parliament, support the Forestry Commission in the management of forests in New South Wales.

**Motion agreed to.**

## **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 24th September.**

**Mr COCHRAN** (Monaro) [4.21]: I am proud to support the 1992-93 Budget. There is no question in the minds of the people of New South Wales that this Government has a proud record of economic management. It is one that can be placed on the record in *Hansard*, in newspapers and across Australia. In 1988 the Greiner Government inherited an economic disaster. When the slate was shown and the balances were known it was apparent to members on both sides of the House that we were facing an economic disaster. It was a catastrophe echoed by Labor governments across Australia. In Victoria there was total disaster. Thank goodness that Government has been thrown out and the State has an opportunity to recover. Western Australia faced the same catastrophe as confronted New South Wales, and the story was the same in Tasmania and South Australia. New South Wales was in dire straits. I place on record my prediction: give Goss enough time in Queensland, the same thing will occur; he will undo the good work that the National Party did during 20 years of office in that State.

New South Wales Labor governments, during 12 years in office, allowed government instrumentalities to rampage through the corridors of the Treasury like a wild bull, plundering the State's coffers and leaving them empty for the incoming government. Labor did that deliberately because it knew it was going out of office. It tried to buy its way into government, but the coalition Government prevented that from happening. The coalition took office with pride. This year the Government has presented a budget that will allow New South Wales to forge ahead towards prosperity and to lead Australia out of recession. When the coalition parties came to office the cupboards were bare. Work practices in the State Rail Authority, the Roads and Traffic Authority and the Department of Education resembled the socialist left-wing unions' paradise. A theme in the

Page 6674

workplace for all those departments was: all work and no play makes Barrie a dull boy. And dull he was! There was no question about that. The finances of New South Wales were dull also. A new work ethic of economic management has been introduced in New South Wales. A management revolution has taken place and this State leads Australia in economic recovery. The Government has created a will to induce prosperity, incited by economically responsible management.

The Government has established priorities to the benefit of the people, not the bureaucracy or the Australian Labor Party, or the ALP white shoe brigade - and I am pleased to see that Benny is in the Chamber. The struggling rural communities of New South Wales now have a government that cares about country people. I should like to present to the House some examples of the care shown by this Government towards country people, providing them with opportunities they did not have during the 12 years in office of Labor. The examples to which I will refer relate to small country towns such as Jindabyne, Dalgety, Adaminaby, Eden, Cooma, Bungendore and Captains Flat, that old mining town that used to be the stalwart of the Australian Labor Party but which has deserted that party in recent times in favour of more responsible representation. The example I give in Jindabyne and Dalgety is of the water supply. The State Government has provided an allocation of \$120,000 to assist the Snowy River Shire Council to complete outstanding works associated with the new augmentation of the water supply for Berridale, East Jindabyne and Dalgety. This is a great step forward for those towns and an achievement they could not possibly have expected under the previous Labor Government. The cost of the outstanding work will be \$240,000, which will be shared equally between the council and the State Government. The estimated total cost of the completed project is \$6 million. I take a great deal of pride in having been associated with the development of those projects. They represent a great step forward for all small country communities.

In cities such as Sydney it is often taken for granted by city folk that if the tap is turned on, crystal clear water flows freely. However, in country areas many people still rely on tank water, bore water and unfluoridated water that does not provide the same protection for their children's teeth as is provided by water in urban areas. I commend the Deputy Premier for displaying his commitment to country people and maintaining the National Party's philosophy that we put the family and country people first. We have done that in the Monaro electorate and I am proud to be associated with the National Party and with this Government, which has stood by its word to provide infrastructure for country people who so richly deserve some compensation for the harsh and sometimes difficult climate in which they work. In Adaminaby, my home town, \$300,000 has been made available through the Budget to assist the Snowy River Shire Council in the provision of an augmentation system to replace the existing water supply, which was installed by the Snowy Mountains Authority when Adaminaby was relocated because the old town was inundated when Lake Eucumbene filled. It was one of those water supplies, introduced by the Snowy Mountains Authority, which was not altogether successful. It tapped into The Morass - a creek which was well named. Its source was in the base of The Morass and the quality and quantity of the water was unreliable and presented in a discoloured fashion that was not palatable to the people of Adaminaby. It is a matter I took on board as soon as I was elected.

In conjunction with the former member for that area, who now represents the electorate of Bega, Mr Smith, I have lobbied to have a water supply put in place for the people of Adaminaby. As I said, \$300,000 is being made available and the cost of this year's work alone will be \$600,000 - which is to be shared equally by the council and the State Government. I take a great deal of pride in being involved in the orchestration of

Page 6675

that project to provide water for Adaminaby. Eventually the project will cost \$3.5 million. Nimmitabel is a small town 20 miles south of Cooma. An amount of \$420,000 has been made available to the Cooma-Monaro Shire Council to supplement a project that will eventually cost \$1.3 million. That cost will be shared between local government and the State Government. Nimmitabel was a timber town but, because of the manipulation of the green movement, the Australian Labor Party and the former Unsworth Government, the timber mill closed down. Notwithstanding that, the township struggles on proudly. I am pleased that recently the Deputy Premier visited Nimmitabel. He made an allocation of funds to assist in the town construction of a recreational reservoir on the outskirts of the town in an effort to attract passing tourists to stop in the area and hopefully to spend a dollar and help save the community and the economy of Nimmitabel.

During the past few years the township of Captains Flat has had a problem with an old dam which was constructed during the operations of the mine. The residents of the town were concerned that the dam wall was unsafe and therefore posed a threat to the community directly downstream. With the shire president of the day I spoke at some length with the community and listened to people's concerns. The management of the pre-school and other residents of the area expressed their fears that a catastrophe would occur should the dam wall burst. I spoke to the Minister for Public Works and officers of the department about having the dam rebuilt to a safe standard. Such work would require the top of the dam to be removed, holes drilled down through the dam wall and the dam wall post-tensioned to provide a secure basis into the rock below. Those works are part of a \$1.3 million project which will inject a considerable amount of money into the local community. On a recent inspection I was pleased to see that the top of the dam wall has been removed and that work is well in progress.

As a result of the continual growth in Canberra the population of Bungendore will explode within the next ten years. Therefore it was with a great deal of pleasure that I noted included in the Budget for this year an allocation of \$400,000 to assist the Yarrowlumla Shire Council with augmentation work to the Bungendore sewerage system. It is part of a \$1.74 million augmentation plant for Bungendore which should provide adequate services for the next 15 to 20 years and has taken into account the massive development likely to occur in the next 10 years. Recently I had the good fortune to have the Hon. Rick Bull visit my electorate in his capacity as Secretary to the Minister for Education in another place. During that visit I drew to his attention the likely expansion of Bungendore. He told me that he had taken account of the development of the Bungendore primary school as well as the concerns of the local public and parents that the schoolchildren were travelling a considerable distance from Bungendore into Queanbeyan and Canberra to attend school. He told me that with the anticipated major expansion of Bungendore funds would be made available in the future for the erection of demountable classrooms at the Bungendore primary school to cater for the additional schoolchildren. He also stated that plans were being drafted for major reconstruction works at that school. I should like to place on record my thanks, and that of the parents and citizens of Bungendore, to the Hon. Rick Bull for his care and understanding in regard to this issue and for taking the matter on board.

I should also mention the allocation of \$700,000 through the Snowy River Shire Council to assist with the augmentation of the East Jindabyne sewerage system. This major work has been desperately needed by the community of East Jindabyne. East Jindabyne is poised on the eastern side of the Lake Jindabyne catchment; and the residents of East Jindabyne - and in fact the whole area - have been concerned that the area would become polluted and some degradation of the water quality would occur. Water quality is not only a concern of the people in the Jindabyne area but it is also a  
Page 6676

statewide issue. Recently I have taken considerable interest in the quality of water in the Snowy River downstream of Lake Jindabyne and have met with the residents of Dalgety and East Jindabyne in that regard. I am pleased to say that the announcement by the Deputy Premier of an allocation of \$700,000 will be part of the total cost of \$3.8 million of the completed project - a massive injection of funds into a community which experiences a wide range of population, depending on the seasons. In the ski season large numbers of people move into the Jindabyne area placing an excessive demand on its infrastructure. The Snowy Mountains scheme, of which Lake Jindabyne is a part, is suffering from what has been described as a lack of water. The people of Lake Jindabyne are concerned that the water coming down the Gungahlin River on the western side of Lake Jindabyne is being pumped out on the same western side, denying the lake its normal turbidity which would occur from a flow through of water from other water storage areas.

Eden, which is recognised as a place of great beauty, will receive an allocation of funds for the enhancement of the wharf development in that area. On a recent visit to Eden the Deputy Premier announced the allocation of \$560,000 for maintenance works at the Eden fishing port. It will provide access roads, car parking areas, some net drying areas - desperately needed by the fishermen - landscaping and other extensive maintenance works on the mooring jetty, all of which assist with efficiency and improve the pleasant surroundings of the Eden harbour. It will further enhance the port area and will be of great benefit not only to the local community but also to the tourists. That particular project is part of ongoing plans for the beautification of Eden. For some time Eden has suffered because of a great deal of controversy about the southeast forest issue. It is now placed in a similar position with regard to the local tuna cannery. It is with a great deal of regret that I report to the House that recent negotiations with the Federal

Labor member, Jim Snow, and the responsible Minister for Trade, Senator Button, have failed to protect the interests of the cannery. The reduction of tariff protection on imported tuna has meant that the cannery is under threat. Recently the Prime Minister aired his views on the Fightback package and how he considered that Fightback would damage the future of the car industry as a result of the reduction of tariffs. Lo and behold, the greatest hypocrite of all times has done exactly the same thing to the tuna fishing industry in Eden. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

There is no question in the minds of the people of Eden that the Prime Minister, Paul Keating, will go on record as the greatest hypocrite of all time. He is openly critical of the reduction of tariffs in the car industry claiming it will totally destroy the car industry yet he has done precisely the same thing to one of the major employers in Eden. I take this opportunity to call on the Federal member for Eden-Monaro, Jim Snow, to get off the fence and start doing something, otherwise 300 people in Eden will be out of work in a very short space of time. In addition to this Government's public works commitment for the Monaro electorate an announcement was made in the Budget Papers that a further allocation of \$1 million would be made to assist in the upgrading of the railway line between Goulburn and Queanbeyan. This announcement goes hand-in-hand with a previous announcement in regard to the allocation of funds for the purchase of the Xplorer diesel train. A few days ago I was pleased to hear the Minister for Transport, and Minister for Tourism suggesting that a tilt train would be considered for the Canberra line. This would greatly advantage people in the Canberra and Queanbeyan areas and further endorse statements I have been making for the past 4½ years that I stand by the train users of this State, in particular those in my electorate, to ensure the availability of a modern train service.

Page 6677

I noted in the Budget Papers that CountryLink will be spending \$55,000 of a proposed \$250,000 to upgrade Canberra railway station. This is desperately needed to attract customers to the rail service. It will pave the way for a modern facility for those people who will use the Xplorer train, which should be available for test runs to Canberra in March or April next year. In addition to the \$55,000 to be spent by CountryLink, Freight Rail will be spending \$430,000 this year as part of a \$670,000 bridge renewal program near Bungendore. Another \$300,000 will be spent on the train radio service on the Goulburn to Canberra line. At my request an additional \$250,000 will be made available for embankment works on the Goulburn-Canberra line. Those honourable members who have travelled that route would be aware that the train is required to slow down to about 15 to 20 kilometres when passing through Molonglo Gorge, severely restricting the train's progress and extending the length of the journey between Canberra and Goulburn.

The Monaro electorate benefited greatly in budget allocations for health. I was pleased to note that funds have been made available, through the Minister for Health, to Braidwood hospital to assist with the continuation of a pilot project for a multipurpose service. Braidwood hospital was selected from a number of country hospitals to take part in this project. The executive officer of the hospital was able to tell me in a recent letter that the project, which is going well, will greatly benefit not only people in Braidwood but also people passing by on the Kings Highway - a highway which has gained a reputation as being one of those unfortunate roads that has had a record number of fatalities and accidents. I take this opportunity to commend the executive officer, the hospital board, and those volunteers associated with the implementation of this policy at Braidwood hospital. They have all taken a responsible attitude towards this pilot project. I hope the project continues to be as successful as it has been in the past.



I take this opportunity also to commend the chairperson of the Queanbeyan hospital board, Hope Marland, for her continuing hard work on behalf of the community. She is one of the most dedicated community workers in New South Wales. Through her hard work she was able, in conjunction with me, to obtain an additional \$50,000 for enhancement works at Queanbeyan hospital which will allow for the expansion of medical services. This is another success story of this Government's management of health services in New South Wales. I am proud of the fact that, since my election, Queanbeyan hospital has had significant funding boosts. This has provided Queanbeyan residents with modern, up-to-date hospital services, managed by Hope Marland and her capable hospital board.

The Monaro electorate was successful not only in obtaining funding for public works but also in obtaining funding for roads and education. A considerable amount of money has been made available, particularly for education. I am sure that was as a direct result of the work of the Hon. R. T. M. Bull after visiting my electorate prior to the Budget. An amount of \$213,000 has been made available to Queanbeyan East Public School to upgrade its administration area. The Hon. R. T. M. Bull, while visiting my electorate, inspected the administration area of that school. We both agreed that it was in need of substantial upgrading. This Budget has provided the necessary funds to enable that project to go ahead. The water service at Cooma Public School has been of great concern. Cooma Public School, an old school which was established over 100 years ago, recently celebrated its centenary. Its water service was at the point of collapse. In co-operation with the local cluster director, Ern Cottlash, and the principal, Graeme Keast, we were able to attract \$454,000 for those maintenance and upgrading works to provide Cooma Public School with a much-needed water service.

Page 6678

Cooma North Public School has received a budget allocation of \$75,000 to replace its water service. This is probably the ideal time to commend the parents and citizens association of Cooma North Public School for the enormous amount of work put into upgrading and improving the landscaping of the school. Every member of that association provided service on a voluntary basis. They not only built new shelters but also provided funds to buy material to build those shelters for the children. This is one of the most advanced and co-operative parents and citizens associations in my electorate. I take this opportunity to place on the record my thanks and the thanks of the Government for the generosity of this parents and citizens association. It worked hard for the Monaro electorate and for Cooma North Public School.

The greatest success story of the Fahey-Murray Government is the 3 x 3 road enhancement funding. Major upgradings, improvements and restructuring works have been carried out on the Monaro Highway and black spots have been eliminated. All those promises made prior to the 1988 election have borne fruit. I say with a great deal of pride that Monaro electorate has been the beneficiary of the good economic management of this Government. The Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works, and Minister for Roads has an understanding of the needs of country people. This has resulted in the Monaro electorate attracting substantial amounts of money for roadworks. The Monaro Highway received a budget allocation of \$1.174 million. Some of the worst black spots have been eliminated. The railway crossings at Colinton and Michelago, which both had a disastrous record, have been straightened out. Those people who travel to the snowfields each year will appreciate that the New South Wales Government, through its good management and its understanding of the needs of the travelling public, has provided a much safer road on which to travel.

Another great provision in the Budget is funds to complete roadworks that are urgently needed in the south of the State - the area between Bombala and the Victorian border. This roadwork will complete the bitumen link between Bombala and the Victorian border and provide access from Melbourne right through to Sydney via the Monaro Highway. I pay tribute to the former member of that area, Russell Smith, for his efforts in obtaining funds to improve that access road. It will assist the community of Bombala and people living in the far south of the State in difficult economic times. That road will go ahead, with the allocation of funds, and we look forward to increased tourist activity as a result. This will enhance development of the south of the State, particularly the Cooma and Bombala areas. In addition to the funds that I have just referred to, grants were made to the councils by the Roads and Traffic Authority. This will enable councils to upgrade local roads and have an opportunity through the good management of this Government, to provide much needed works for country roads. We promised, prior to the 1988 and 1991 elections, that roads were a priority. We have stuck by our word. It will go down on record at the next State elections that both the Greiner Government and the Fahey-Murray Government have maintained their promises; the promises given to country people have been adhered to. We are as good as our word. It is with a great deal of pleasure that I commend the Budget to the House.

**Mr J. H. MURRAY** (Drummoyne) [4.50]: This Government's repeated attacks on the working people and families of New South Wales continues with the first Fahey Budget. Not content with axing 50,000 public sector jobs since 1988, over 5,000 more will be axed in the coming year. Job cuts for the period 1992-93 include: 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; Roads and Traffic Authority 1,572; housing 355. These are all detailed in the Budget Page 6679

documents. These figures total 7,404 jobs that will go as a consequence of the first Fahey Budget. In the polls and research undertaken of this Government's performance the first item to arise time and time again is jobs, yet this Government through its Budget is going to axe 7,404 jobs. This Budget continues the Greiner tradition of leaving a trail of broken promises. The first major promise of Premier Fahey was that there would be no job cuts during the recession and yet 7,400 jobs will be axed in his first Budget.

The Premier has done a double shuffle and said 5,000 or so extra jobs are promised from capital works. These will be offset by a greater number of job losses. The Government, however, deceitfully uses the figures of 18,000 jobs to be created from the extra capital works spending. This is an absolute farce. Anybody who has ever had one 40-minute period in an economics class will know something about the multiplier effect. The Government's figure is based on a multiplier of three, that is two private sector jobs to be created for every one Government job. The actual figures in the Budget show that there will be a decrease, not an increase, in the number of jobs. If one deducts the sackings, adds the increases in the numbers in the public service, one finishes up with a deficit; yet the Government has the audacity to use a multiplier of three in one government job created by two jobs in the private sector. Nowhere in the western world has this ever occurred and it never will. The honourable member for Monaro did not mention in his speech that this Government has failed to recognise that most of the job cuts are in rural New South Wales. Most of the job cuts that I have just read out, particularly for the RTA and SRA, are in rural New South Wales.

There is very little opportunity to transfer a job in the country. In the city an engineer or a road marker in Bankstown or Hornsby would have a chance of getting a

job, but in the bush there is no alternative if a person loses a job but to move to the city, which becomes a very expensive option. The New South Wales Treasury's latest interstate comparisons of economic indicators show that of the 24 measures New South Wales drags behind the other States in 17. Over a period the previous Premier convinced the press and the people of New South Wales that he was an economic magician but the figures show the complete reverse. Residential building approvals for the rest of the States total \$16 million, New South Wales \$5 million; we are 300 per cent behind. The number of people employed in New South Wales during August dropped by 4,000, whereas the average number of people employed throughout the rest of Australia rose by 4,000.

Extensive debates have taken place in this House about the new industrial laws. Under the new industrial charter the number of days lost through disputes in New South Wales in May averaged 45.9 per thousand employees. The figures for the rest of Australia, where they do not have these magic new industrial relations, was minus 10.6. That is how good all these economic, microeconomic and macroeconomic reforms are. Bank deposits are not a bad indication of the New South Wales economy. The average bank deposits in billions of dollars is -

*[Interruption]*

The honourable member for Monaro thinks the amount of money in bank deposits does not give an indication of how the economy is going. No wonder he left his block of land and sold his Subaru.

**Madam DEPUTY-SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Monaro and the honourable member for Drummoyne will cease conversing across the table.

Page 6680

**Mr J. H. MURRAY:** In June bank deposits in New South Wales increased by \$0.9 billion. The average in the other States was \$6.5 billion, nearly 700 per cent more. The quarterly indicators show residential building approvals. New South Wales rose by \$9.8 million; the rest of Australia, on average, by \$21.8 million - a big difference. If we do not win the bid in September next year for the Olympic Games, we will become a banana republic. The average engineering construction commenced in Australia increased by \$6.3 million in the quarter. In this State it decreased by \$52.6 million. What a dramatic difference between the construction industry in New South Wales and other States. In New South Wales private new capital expenditure dropped by \$32 million; in the rest of Australia the average was \$15 million. The figures continue with regard to job vacancies, disputes and days lost on a quarterly basis.

Those figures do not lie. At four o'clock on an afternoon recently the Premier performed magnificently for an hour in this House. No matter how well he spoke, he could not overcome those economic figures that tell exactly how the State is going with regard to jobs and investment. Unemployment is the major specific problem facing the State. New South Wales is 0.08 per cent behind Victoria in that regard. However, that is a false figure. What really counts is the participation rate; in other words, more people should be included in the figure of unemployed in New South Wales but are not there because they have opted out of looking for jobs. So they are not participating. As a consequence the percentage of the population in New South Wales participating in the quest for employment is lower than in the other States. If our participation rate were equal to that of Victoria or to the Australian average, the true unemployment rate in New South Wales would be 12 per cent. New South Wales has the highest rate of

unemployment of any State. If members opposite think they can gloat because the people of Victoria said that they were dissatisfied with the performance of the former Victorian Government and one of the major reasons for that dissatisfaction was unemployment, they should remember that more people are dissatisfied with the performance of the Government of this State.

**Mr Cochran:** That is a nonsense.

**Mr J. H. MURRAY:** It is not a nonsense. The honourable member does not want to hear the facts or to listen to the Treasury figures, but I will present them to the Parliament. Government members will find out when they face an election that more people in New South Wales than in Victoria are dissatisfied with the fact that they cannot get jobs. The Budget entrenches all the essential elements of Greinerism. First, there is a worsening of the inequalities in public education. The first thing the staff and students of TAFE colleges want to talk about is the morale in those colleges. When the coalition parties came to government in 1988 there were 480,000 people attending TAFE colleges. Now only 430,000 people are enrolled in TAFE. The only reason for that level of enrolment is that the Federal Government funded technical and further education. It is no kudos for this Government. That funding has not come from the New South Wales Budget, which reduced funding for TAFE, according to the figures from the State Treasury. There is more money for TAFE, but only because of Federal funding. If the figures for technical and further education as a percentage of the Budget in 1988 were taken into account and Federal funding added to them, another 100,000 people would be able to join the TAFE system. That is why teachers and students in technical and further education are upset with this Government. There is massive discontent.

I should refer now to the crisis in public hospitals. For the past three Saturdays I have been going to shopping centres. I set up a little table with two signs on it; one says "Sign here" and the other says "Save your public hospitals". I hand out a little

Page 6681

dodger which tells people what the Government is doing about the privatisation of public hospitals. The honourable member for Vacluse is interested in this matter because he has his finger on the pulse. The former Minister for Health - the Minister for State Development - has his ear to the ground and knows what is occurring. Recently the honourable member for Port Macquarie got knocked over in a local referendum when 65 per cent of the people in that area said that they did not want to follow the Government's public hospital policies. When I am at shopping centres I do not say a thing; I hand out the dodgers. On the first Saturday, at Five Dock shopping centre, when one is flat out getting to talk to anybody - the last thing they want to do is take something to read or sign a petition - 500 people raced up and signed that petition. I did not put my hand up and ask them to sign the petition, but time again six or seven people were lined up at the table to sign a petition opposing the Government's policy in regard to public hospitals. They do not believe in the privatisation of the public health system.

Even Mr Speaker will know that people are opposed to that policy. Those members who have had to run the gauntlet of the privatisation policy will know that it will be a major issue at the next elections. If I were in a marginal seat and pushing the privatisation policy that is evident in this Budget, I would be looking for another job. I am in a marginal seat and have been through a few elections. I know when an issue is around, and privatisation of the health system is the biggest issue at present. People do not line up to sign petitions on Saturday mornings when they are in a hurry and doing their shopping unless they are incensed. In my area the Government wants to close the Western Suburbs Hospital and Balmain Hospital. The Government has been offered \$850 million to take over the most productive hospital, the one performing the most

prestigious quality work in New South Wales, the second largest hospital in the State - Concord Repatriation Hospital. That hospital would be a quality provider of health care in this State. The price of \$850 million was decided by the State Minister, not by the Federal Government. The Federal Government asked how much the New South Wales Government wanted and was told \$850 million. The Federal Government accepted that, but the new Minister for Health has said that he wants an additional \$50 million. I guarantee that if he got that additional \$50 million he would want a further \$50 million. He really does not want a quality public hospital system in New South Wales. All he is interested in is privatising the public hospital system and diminishing the size and numbers of public hospitals in New South Wales.

**Mr Cochran:** If the honourable member keeps on saying it, he will start to believe it.

**Mr J. H. MURRAY:** Of course I believe it. I am speaking about hospitals in my electorate. The highly qualified medical staff in those hospitals will tell the honourable member what it is all about. The Government has made relentless cuts to vital community services. What member has not had people lining up in his office to complain about funding cuts to Home Care services? Home Care is a wonderful organisation. It has assisted to keep elderly people in their homes. Nevertheless, the Government cannot provide enough money to give elderly people home help, washing facilities and lawn mowing. Time and again people of 70 or 80 years of age have been unable to get basic health care.

**Mr Shedden:** Stroke victims.

**Mr J. H. MURRAY:** Yes, stroke victims who cannot get health care. If they had turned up wearing motor bike racing caps and said they wanted money for Eastern Creek, they would have been handed it. But because they are asking for what should be

Page 6682

their rights, having enabled us to enjoy our quality of life, their funding is being reduced, when as a community we should be helping them and providing for them in their old age. That is why the Budget is at fault. This State has had the highest increases in taxes and charges in Australia. That is evident when one looks at the increases in water rates. At page 3-3 of Budget Paper No. 2 one sees that tobacco licence fees have increased from 50 per cent to 75 per cent. I remember the Premier saying that there would be no increases in taxation, other than in accordance with the consumer price index; yet there has been a 25 per cent increase in tobacco licence fees. The liquor licence fee has increased by 100 per cent. The revenue from that source will increase from \$26.5 million to \$53 million - a 100 per cent increase in that form of taxation. The debits tax will double. In the past there was a minimum fee for electricity. Many pensioners paid that minimum fee, which was about \$12. That fee is now \$25. A lady in my electorate, Mrs Stafford, has medical problems and left her home over the last rating period to go to live with her daughter. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

This woman received a bill for \$25. Prior to that she was living in the home for three days only, with the refrigerator, heater and hot water running and the bill was \$57 for that period. Time and again pensioners visit me who cannot afford to pay their electricity, water, power, housing and community safety bills. Because of its privatisation bumbles the Government cannot provide such services at a reasonable price for the average person in New South Wales. The sale of the GIO has been a shambles. If those who bought shares in GIO wished to sell their shares on today's market, they would do so at a loss. Legislation has not been able to provide investors with the income they expected. Two years ago the former Minister for Housing said on television that the

Government would receive \$200 million from the sale of the State Office Block. Six months later the figure dropped to \$143 million, and later to less than \$100 million. The Public Works Department has moved out of that building. Approximately \$20 million was spent on refurbishing 17 storeys to enable the building to be rented to the private sector. Office space within the central business district is being offered rent free for six months, so the Government is living in fairyland if it believes it can rent out the refurbished State Office Block. Meanwhile this major asset is not being utilised and is a burden on the public purse.

After four years of Liberal Party rule this State has liabilities exceeding \$54 billion. The honourable member for Monaro would recall that when the Curran report was presented the former Premier said to this Parliament, "This is the end of the earth. This guru Curran has told us that this State has a massive debt". Now the debt is \$8 billion more than it was in 1988 - when Curran said that under Labor the State was a disaster. If that is so, it is a catastrophe now under the Liberal Party-National Party Government. Last year the gross debt rose by \$1.9 billion to exceed \$29.5 billion. That is \$5 billion more than it was in 1988. The proportion of the gross State product has increased dramatically. As a percentage of the debt it is higher now than it was in 1988. Therefore, honourable members opposite should not speak about economic management and running this State using financial wizardry from Harvard; they should look at the figures because they are a disaster.

The State has user-pays but it has fewer services. This year the true Budget deficit exceeds \$1.2 billion. This is the killer. Next year it is predicted to be more than \$1 billion. The Government has no hope in the world of selling the State Bank for \$1 billion. The Government will have to pay people to get rid of it. It is in almost the same position as the South Australian Bank found itself in. Skase did not only visit South Australia and Victoria. The debtors' ledger of the State Bank makes reference to the Bonds and Skases. There is no way that next year this Government will raise \$1 billion

Page 6683

to cover its deficit. It was able to do so this year because of the sale of the GIO; that is the only reason the Government does not have a \$1.7 billion deficit. Next year the Government will be in big trouble. And that is the problem facing smiling Johnny. He thinks he will only be here for 12 months, but it will catch up with him. Recently I read articles in the *Sydney Morning Herald* written by Mark Coultan. He is one journalist who has not been hoodwinked. He keeps reminding us by saying, "Yes, it sounds good now but there is nothing there for the future". The Premier's problem will be how to overcome a deficit next year of \$1 billion. Unlike the Federal Government, the State Government cannot go to the Reserve Bank and say, "Print out some more money".

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

## **PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

---

### **CASTLEREAGH LIQUID WASTE DEPOT AUDIT**

**Mr GIBSON** (Londonderry) [5.15]: I wish to speak about a Government audit published in the past two or three weeks entitled the "ACG Woodward Clyde Independent Environmental Audit Report on the Castlereagh Liquid Waste Depot". That report shows clearly that waste management leaves a lot to be desired. It shows a trail of incompetency and, for some time, a cover-up by the Waste Management Authority. The

report states that there was never a proper docket system to detail what went into the depot nor evidence to show levels of toxic waste in material taken to the depot but which for various reasons - perhaps for being too toxic - may have been turned away. Records were not kept of the final destination of those loads. The Waste Management Authority did not put in place emergency procedures at the site in the event of anything untoward occurring. Toxins sampled over the years at the site were the ones least likely to travel through water. The report states that many of the potentially environmentally most serious and mobile organic contaminants from such a site have not been assessed. That matter is covered in the report. The report states that for quite some time leaching has been occurring, either from the first year of operation or during the first 11½ years.

I have asked the Waste Management Authority for specific files but have been told that files do not exist. About six months ago I spoke to the Minister for the Environment at that time, Mr Tim Moore, and informed him of advice that I had received of Waste Management Authority employees actually destroying files. At that time the Minister told me he would look into the matter and come back to me; but he never did. Tomorrow I shall pass on further information to the present Minister for the Environment. The file shows beyond doubt that cells at the Castlereagh liquid waste depot have been leaching. The file notes the cells, which are numbered, and shows that in April 1991 a cell has leached four metres through the cell floor. Today, the Waste Management Authority does not have any records of this. Also, in the period from 1985 to 1987 a further cell not tested between 1982 and 1983 showed a significant rise and fall, demonstrating that liquid was coming into and going out of the cell. By the end of 1989 the cell seemed to have dried up completely: the toxic waste in the cell must have gone somewhere. The Waste Management Authority has no record of this file.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the member for Londonderry to identify for the record the source of the document he is quoting at length.

Page 6684

**Mr GIBSON:** I am quoting from a Castlereagh regional waste depot file, one that cannot be traced now. It is a fairly strong accusation I make. There has been a tremendous cover-up at Castlereagh - whether through incompetency or for some other reason, I do not know - and an inquiry should be undertaken immediately. It would be quite easy to establish the validity of this report. I will give this report to the Minister tomorrow. If the Waste Management Authority can produce the document, that will be the end of the story. The audit report on Castlereagh was drawn up over the past few months. The file was never made available to ACG Woodward Clyde, which means that either the Waste Management Authority does not have the document or there has been a great cover-up. I ask the Government and the Minister for the Environment to look seriously at this matter because, as I have said on many occasions since 1988, we could be sitting on probably one of the greatest environmental disasters we will ever see in this country.

### **CURLWAA IRRIGATION LEASES**

**Mr SMALL (Murray) [5.20]:** I wish to raise an issue relating to the Curlwaa Irrigation Area in the Sunraysia district of New South Wales in the far western area of my electorate. Irrigation leases of that area have been a longstanding problem especially with regard to the issue of freeholding. Some years ago the Curlwaa irrigation pipeline was replaced and a drip system microjet upgrading undertaken. From that point of view both the previous Government and this Government have done an excellent job to help with upgrading irrigation facilities. The previously 30-year leases meant that

adjustments to the leases were made only after that period had elapsed. At that time - as happened in the last few years - there were huge increases in rentals as a result of revaluations. The parcels of land are only small but the actual lease fees have increased markedly. Of most concern is the valuation of the land and the opportunity for leaseholders to convert to freehold. It seems that there is a problem with administration control, which has been returned to Buronga from the Hay Lands Office, which was not able to manage in that regard. Papers have been sent on to Dubbo, because the Western Lands Commission now has an office in that city. Such problems have existed for many years.

High prices based on recent revaluations have put the purchase of the land out of reach of those wanting to convert to freehold. Irrigators believe that with new lease arrangements they are paying for that revaluation through high rental charges. Most of the irrigation farmers are upset because they cannot get answers to their questions about freeholding and want the valuations carried out in a fair and proper manner. A number of Ministers have been involved in this matter throughout this period. Certainly the problem existed during the times in office of Janice Crosio, John Aquilina and Ian Causley as it exists now for Gary West. It was not possible for the Minister for Conservation and Land Management, and Minister for Energy to be present to respond to this statement. It would seem that this matter has been put into the too-hard basket. It may be that the problem lies with the Department of Lands because originally all the land the subject of irrigation leases used to be held in the name of the Water Resources Commission - formerly the Water Commission - and then it was transferred to the Department of Lands. This matter must be addressed with some urgency. The problem existed for more than nine years in one instance in which someone wished to sell their land and to subdivide. However, there have been some encouraging signs recently. I would urge the Minister to look thoroughly into this matter and try to provide answers for the Curlwaa irrigation farmers so they can manage their resource and have the opportunity to purchase the land at a reasonable price to make it attractive at the time they want to sell.

Page 6685

#### **MIRANDA SHOPPING TOWN LESSEES Mr AND Mrs THEOKLIS**

**Mr THOMPSON** (Rockdale) [5.25]: My constituents Sam and Mary Theoklis operate a small business known as Mr Chook at Westfield Shopping Town Miranda. They are in dispute with Westfield over their lease. The circumstances of the dispute lead me to believe my constituents are being treated unjustly, even cruelly, by this shopping centre monolith. Mr and Mrs Theoklis signed their lease with Westfield in 1988 for a four-year term to expire on 31st March, 1992. Six months before the expiry and promised renewal date they were told that Westfield would not renew their lease. Since then these people have been fighting for their business, their livelihood. In fact, their family home is involved and they have been devastated. Sam and Mary did not execute the lease blindly. They knew Westfield intended to expand the Miranda complex in the near future so they sought guarantees for their own future before signing. I have a copy of their sworn affidavit which details the assurances they were given. In essence they received Westfield's agreement to a four-year lease and an assurance it would be renewed for a further maximum term. In response to his request for this to be put in writing Sam Theoklis was told by Westfield's leasing representative, as stated in the affidavit:

Westfield does not do things that way. But I assure you that you can stay there. You will not be affected by the extensions.



To his further query about possible problems arising from the extensions he was told, again according to the affidavit:

Your lease is automatically renewed on the anniversary day anyway, thereby covering you completely. You will have two seasons.

In November 1990 the lessees of the food court area were informed a new eatery area was to be constructed in the extended Miranda Shopping Town and that some of the tenants in the current eatery would have to move to the new location. At this time Mr and Mrs Theoklis were told they had to move to the new area at their own expense but with only a third of their current product line. Up to this time their business sold fresh and barbecue chicken and fish and chips, but in the new area they were informed that they would not be allowed to sell any chicken products. This was devastating news for them. They faced huge relocation costs but would only be able to sell a third of their present product line. After extensive protests and discussions it was agreed they would remain in the old area which was also to be renovated with the new theme. Further assurances were given allowing them to stay on in those current premises. Six months prior to the expiry date of the lease - renewal of which had been guaranteed - the crunch came. A Westfield representative told Mr Theoklis that any agreements he had with the centre management and or Westfield were null and void. He was told he could stay on for another 12 months but would be prevented from selling any chicken products because the new shops would carry those lines.

The situation has deteriorated to the extent that their shop is now totally isolated. Westfield has boarded up surrounding shops; the tables and chairs from Sam and Mary's shop have been removed. Their business is down by 75 per cent and is virtually dead. Throughout this whole sorry saga the Theoklis' have tried to negotiate a reasonable arrangement with Westfield, to no avail. Attempts at compromise have been treated with contempt. The screws have been turned unmercifully on my constituents. Sam and Mary Theoklis have worked extremely hard to develop and promote their business and service to customers which in turn has enhanced and promoted the centre. They always paid

Page 6686

their rent on time and fully complied with their lease conditions. They never complained about interruptions to their business or loss of income caused by building alterations at Miranda Fair. Surely it is only reasonable for them to expect that Westfield should in turn honour its commitments, which were made prior to the commencement of the lease, during its term and at its expiry. These fine people stand to lose everything they have ever worked for, not because of a poor business decision but because of unfulfilled commitments, broken assurances and undertakings, and business practices that I believe are grossly repugnant and certainly unbecoming of an organisation of the prominence of Westfield.

Sam Theoklis understands what hard work is. From the age of 12 he accompanied his father to the fish markets each day at 5 a.m. and then scaled, cleaned and filleted the fish ready for cooking before going to school. Because of his father's illness Sam eventually had to leave school to work full time to support his parents. Some years later he undertook a five-year course of evening study, culminating in a management degree. The thoughtfulness and consideration shown by Sam to his parents and to customers is evident in all Sam's business dealings. He has always been understanding and truthful and, above all, fair and reasonable in any business undertakings. This man and his family now face financial ruin. Time factors prevent me from acquainting the Minister for State Development, and Minister for Arts with the

full details of this case, but I will do so at the earliest opportunity. However, I have seen enough evidence to fully support my constituents in their quest for justice.

### **MOUNT YORK ROAD AND Mr MULCAHY**

**Mr MORRIS** (Blue Mountains) [5.30]: I wish to bring to the attention of the House the Mulcahy family land problems and the infamous roadblock at Mount York which is one of our historic monuments in the Blue Mountains. Mr Mulcahy, who plans to run in the next State elections as an independent candidate, is fighting the Blue Mountains City Council over Mount York Road, which he claims crosses his land. He has placed barricades across the road to stop traffic using the section of the road that he claims is on his property. His daughter, who owns the land, claims that she wishes to exercise horses across the land on which the road is situated. Mr Mulcahy wants council to subdivide the blocks and to buy the land on which the road is located from his daughter, or to build a new road around what he says is his daughter's property. This has caused embarrassment to local tourism operators and those who live near Mount York as a national monument has been cut off by Mr Mulcahy's questionable actions. His recent ravings in the *Blue Mountains Gazette* prompt me to tell the real story.

Mr Mulcahy's daughter was involved in an appeal in the Land and Environment Court against the council over a subdivision application for four lots. Mr Mulcahy met me in my office at Wentworth Falls and outlined the problems his daughter was having in trying to obtain a four-lot subdivision in Mount York Road, Mount Victoria. I contacted Mr Williams, who was then the mayor. He had not met Mr Mulcahy prior to that time. I asked the mayor whether he could assist Mr Mulcahy with the problem his daughter was having with the council. The parties agreed that the matter could have been withdrawn from the Land and Environment Court and dealt with in the usual manner. It took a great deal of time and effort for me, the mayor and aldermen to achieve consensus. The matter was generally supported by the aldermen and I advised Mr Mulcahy accordingly. The following morning he rang me and said his barrister had advised him that he could not lose the appeal and Mr Mulcahy rejected council's offer. It is now history that the appeal was thrown out by the judge and the land has subsequently been zoned not for subdivision.

Page 6687

Mr Mulcahy not only shot himself in the foot, he also shot his daughter in the foot. He has acted like a schoolboy. Mr Mulcahy should wake up. He looked a gift horse in the mouth and he blew it. The other side of the story is that the gutless council has not ripped out the illegal fence and forced the issue back to court for resolution. A practical solution was available 12 months ago, when I first brought this issue to the attention of the House, but has obviously been ignored by council for fear of causing trouble. Failure to act has made the council look a fool so far as tourists are concerned. Mount York Road was the first crossing to the west that opened up the land when Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth took that route in 1813. It is time that decisive action was taken by council to restore access to a public road to a famous tourist lookout, regardless of the claims of Mr Mulcahy, who does not own the land but acts merely as a mouthpiece for his daughter.

Mr Mulcahy had his chance to stand for council but he did not. He was too gutless to face the ballot-box. He was a candidate in the last State election and spent about \$20,000 on his campaign but received only about 300 votes. He is a big bag of wind and a bully. When he does not get his own way, he attacks anybody in the community. I have had calls from all sorts of people, including hikers and tourist

operators and other visitors to this beautiful lookout. The road has been blocked since last Christmas. I appeal to the council, to the Minister for Local Government, and Minister for Cooperatives as well as to the Minister for Transport, and Minister for Tourism to help get this historic lookout opened as quickly as possible, and not to yield to the bully-boy tactics of this terrorist, Bill Mulcahy.

### CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LOANS

**Mr DAVOREN** (Lakemba) [5.35]: I wish to speak about the problems faced by one of my constituents in his dealings with the Kogarah and District Co-operative Housing Society. On 20th February, 1979, he took out a loan with the society for a residence. The offer states that the initial interest rate is 6 per cent and the term is 31 years. Underlined in the offer is the following:

The interest rate charged is equivalent to one per cent below the long term bond rate and that thereafter the interest rate will fluctuate with variations in the long term bond rate.

My constituent called to see me because he was concerned about the amount of interest he was paying. I wrote on his behalf to the society to inquire exactly how it defined the long-term bond rate. It was a ridiculous proposition to put forward in the first place because who can define the long-term bond rate? Is the long term five years, seven years, 20 years or 25 years? It is a ridiculous condition to set and, not surprisingly, the co-operative could not define it. I wrote to the society in the following terms:

I would be pleased to receive advice as to how the long term bond is calculated since [my constituent] appears to be confused as to the method of determination.

I received a letter from the Kogarah and District Co-operative Housing Society which stated that the society had informed my constituent of the position and would advise him further when the Department of Housing reached a decision on the matter. I rejected that because, after all, it is not a matter for the Department of Housing. The co-operative set the interest rate originally at this ridiculous figure and, therefore, it should be able to define it. I wrote again to the society asking that it define the rate and in its reply the

Page 6688

society stated that it assumed the Department of Housing would determine the long-term bond rate, thereby attempting to put the onus on the department. Once again I wrote to the society. It danced around the issue and in its reply stated:

The Department of Housing has advised the upper limit for Interest Rates in your Society is to be reduced to 9.5% P.A. (excluding management fee which is 0.70%) with effect from June 30th, 1992.

It went on with all the usual verbiage but did not answer the question. I wrote to Mr Lister, who is chairman of the society, and to the Minister for Housing in another place. I did not receive a real answer to the question, despite the department's consideration of the issue. Once again the issue was danced around. It was stated that it is an escalating interest rate funded from the former Home Purchase Assistance Account, and so on. There was no real indication of how the long-term bond rate is defined. I wrote to the Minister thanking him for his letter, which I indicated was received favourably by my constituent because the interest rate had been reduced and that pleased my constituent. In my letter to the Minister I stated:

Whilst this terminology may not appear on the mortgage per se it is clearly stated on the offer of loan from the co-operative society. In fact, it was underlined to give it emphasis.

The point I am making is that if these loans are prepared by societies, due consideration should be given to the fact that people generally do not understand such things and the issues should be set out clearly. The matter is now more clearly defined and is based on a 90-day bank rate which is clear to understand and can be ascertained readily from the newspapers. I suggest that the department speak to the co-operatives and make sure that the offer of loan and the mortgage documents are written in plain English so that people can understand their commitment. Generally people are very keen to meet that commitment provided they know exactly what it is. This problem can be faced and easily overcome.

## **GARIGAL NATIONAL PARK DEVELOPMENT**

**Mr HUMPHERSON** (Davidson) [5.40]: I wish to raise a matter of a development in my electorate which has been of specific community concern both to myself as the local member and also to the Minister for State Development, and Minister for Arts, whose electorate adjoins this particular development. On the long weekend in June a development commenced under Roseville bridge on the banks of upper middle harbour - a development of which no one was aware. On the Tuesday following the long weekend I received many calls from concerned constituents about the potential of this development to impact not only aesthetically on the environment but also adversely on their lifestyles. As some honourable members may be well aware, upper middle harbour is a tranquil location with extremely scenic qualities. This development was considered to be quite out of keeping with the natural area. The development is approximately four residential dwellings in size. It contains a boatshed, a dwelling, a large tea room - which could also be used for receptions - public toilets and other facilities. The main concern is that there appeared to be little or no public consultation in its development.

It transpired that the Davidson Park Trust, which until earlier this year had responsibility for this area before it became part of Garigal National Park, had responsibility for not only approving the development but also entering into a lease with the proponents. In 1989 some nominal advertising appeared in the local newspapers

Page 6689

which, in an innocuous fashion, described the development as a kiosk and boatshed. What is there now does not fit that description. The foreshores in that area are listed by the National Trust as having substantial scenic quality and the potential for the use of the development could impact adversely on the amenity of the local residents who overlook the area. The proponents have indicated that it looked at the potential for holding jazz concerts and, in the evenings, wedding receptions. Two of the local councils, through a process of appeal to the Land and Environment Court, managed to win a case which placed a 12 months' stay of demolition on the development and nothing further has occurred. My concern is that the proponents have invested \$500,000 in this project in good faith. They are the meat in the sandwich and are being disadvantaged to the tune of \$5,000 a month by the delay in completing the development and the inability to operate it and recover their capital.

I am concerned that there is now a substantial development which, if demolished, would cost somebody \$500,000. On the one hand the cost could be borne by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, which is effectively the community; on the other hand it could be borne by the former Davidson Park Trust members. In either case it would be a most difficult decision for anybody to make. Regrettably I have come to the conclusion that the most sensible thing would be for demolition not to occur but rather to have some quick resolution and consultation with the affected residents to ensure that an environmental impact study is undertaken by the department involved; to

involve the Minister to ensure expedition of that process; and to ensure that there is substantial community involvement not only in the screening of this particular development but also in its operation so that there are no significant adverse impacts on the residents who, up until this project began, were unaware of it. It will not help to place blame - the investment has been made and the development is there - but for the sake of all concerned the matter should be expedited. I seek the assistance of the Minister for Finance, Assistant Treasurer, and Minister for Ethnic Affairs in bringing this issue to the attention of the Minister for the Environment to ensure that the environmental impact study and ultimately this development are brought to a speedy conclusion.

### **MACQUARIE FIELDS POLICE STAFFING**

**Mr KNOWLES** (Moorebank) [5.45]: I bring to the attention of the House a concern I have in relation to policing and police matters in my electorate, particularly the Macquarie Fields patrol, and staffing level changes at Macquarie Fields police station. There are clearly different views held by the former Minister for Police, the Patrol Commander at Macquarie Fields police station and his subordinate staff. In late July the Minister for Police toured my electorate and other electorates in the southwest of Sydney and advised both local press and police association representatives that the level of policing at Macquarie Fields was adequate and up to the total allocation of 56 officers. Following further correspondence from me to the Minister questioning that issue, as well as primarily to deal with a petition that I lodged in this place requesting further police services in Macquarie Fields and Ingleburn, he advised me formally that the number of police at Macquarie Fields police station totalled 56 and it was at full complement. That is different from what the Patrol Commander was reported as saying by the local media. He said that there is a reduction of four staff at Macquarie Fields police station and for some time at that station there has been an overall reduction of about 7 per cent in staff and police officers.

I am more concerned about correspondence I have received from an officer of the Macquarie Fields patrol which outlines allegations associated with a reduction of 18 staff at the Macquarie Fields station. He said that staff lost from general duties involve

Page 6690

two senior constables, one transferred to Liverpool and one to Auburn; two constables transferred to Liverpool; one transferred to Liverpool investigation unit; a senior constable on loan to Liverpool licensing section; two constables on loan to Campbelltown special operation group; two constables on loan to Macquarie Fields detectives; one sergeant transferred to Liverpool for disciplinary reasons; two senior constables on the general duty roster on rehabilitation permanently; and two constables on loan to Macquarie Fields traffic services - a total of 15. A further three have been lost from traffic services - a sergeant who had gone to Camden and two constables who were transferred to Bass Hill and Liverpool. They have been replaced by five officers, four of whom do not appear, either for reasons of disciplinary action or 26 weeks annual leave. Of the 18 officers alleged to have been removed from Macquarie Fields only one has been brought back into the station.

The officer writing this letter is concerned because that sort of reduction places a much greater workload on the remaining police. I place on record my appreciation of and support for those existing police; they do a fine job. The service to the public and safety of the public are affected, the crime rate will accelerate and the detection rate will decline. The officer in question has asked not to be identified at this stage. He expressed a view that he too may find himself transferred but he is simply asking for a proper investigation of this matter. The effect of the reduction in police numbers can be demonstrated by one example: the Ingleburn Chamber of Commerce proposes to

purchase its own builders site shed, to be located in the Ingleburn town centre, to operate as a home for police when they can get to Ingleburn. The levels of crime in the southwest of Sydney, particularly in the Macquarie Fields patrol area, are extremely high, some of the highest levels in the State. Local residents have known for some time that something was wrong with staffing levels at Macquarie Fields police station and now there are three contradictory positions - one from the Minister, one from the patrol commander and one from the officer alleging a much greater reduction. I simply ask that the Minister for Police take the opportunity, under his new portfolio, to investigate the opportunities for staff increases and also to ascertain the veracity of the various claims.

As a local member I have to respond to complaints I receive regularly from constituents about being unable to get police to come to their homes when they are called. At the time they are told that there are not enough police on duty. One patrol car operates the evening shift at Macquarie Fields, so if there is a problem at one end of my electorate that car is unavailable to attend other parts of the electorate. That causes distress to my constituents. That problem should not be allowed to continue. I again request the Minister to conduct a full and open investigation into the issues I have raised. I hope he will make the results of that investigation public for the benefit of all concerned. [*Time expired.*]

### **VIOLENT VIDEOS AND MAGAZINES**

**Ms MACHIN** (Port Macquarie) [5.50]: Tonight I wish to raise the issue of the displaying of adult videos and magazines. By that I do not mean pornographic material - a matter that has been raised before in this House - but videos and magazines that would be more suitable for adults as opposed to children; fairly violent videos or magazines that display violent news and the like. I raise this issue because it has been brought to my attention several times over the past few months by a number of different people. Included are the Presbyterian or Uniting Church minister in Wingham, Reverend McDonald, and his wife; other representatives from churches in the Port Macquarie area; an alderman from Tamworth City Council who is concerned about it and is writing to a number of honourable members; and the Soroptimists International Society. This matter has been raised by my colleague the Hon. Dr Marlene Goldsmith in another place.

Page 6691

When Reverend McDonald came to see me some time ago I undertook to make some inquiries on his behalf. Most people who know me would not call me a wowsler. I am not trying to suggest that we should have severe restrictions on the video industry or on those small businesses that sell or display this material. Reverend McDonald made a valid point. In video stores, local shops or service stations in the suburbs and in country towns a variety of videos and magazines are on display, often mixed in with the general groceries or goods in those kinds of stores and easily seen by young children or toddlers - not that it would affect toddlers. Teenagers and pre-teenage children would be able to leaf through the magazines or look at the covers of some of the videos, which are not always that savoury, and even rent them if they go into the shop alone. A while ago a schoolteacher said to me that on Monday morning, when children have a news section in the school, they relate what they did over the weekend. I was surprised to discover that it was not uncommon for children to stand up and say that they watched seven videos at the weekend. I would not be surprised if some of those children were watching videos that could be described as a little overviolent.

Some consideration should be given to the displaying of these materials. They

could be placed out of the reach of young children or students in junior high school or primary school. They would not be able to wander into the stores without mum or dad and spend a couple of dollars on a video that we would not like them to see. I undertook to make some inquiries through the video industry. So far I have not had a lot of luck in finding out whether there are any regulations that govern the display and location of this material. I took up the issue of magazines - which I see as a related issue - with the Newsagents Council, the Service Station Association and other bodies that I could contact and received a mixed response. Some people felt that a point had been made and that they would like to see these magazines placed out of the reach of youngsters. Others believed there was no need to change, that things were quite all right, and that the material was not falling into the wrong hands. I think all honourable members would agree that some of the material that young children are exposed to is not the sort of material we would like them to see. Our society is becoming increasingly violent. Some of the abductions in Sydney we have heard about recently are a sad tribute to that. It is hard to pinpoint any of the causes but we have to start looking a little longer and harder at these types of issues. We have to question how necessary it is for children, say, under the age of 10 or 12, to be watching videos in which violence is part of the entertainment, condoned by those making and distributing it.

I am not a wowsler. I do not want to restrict people's pleasure. But my constituents and some other people are making a valid point. We need to look at how this material is displayed and distributed - quite a separate issue from the issue concerning what material should be available. Matters such as X-rated videos have been raised in this House before. If we are interested in trying to become a less violent society we should start to come down a little harder on the display of these sorts of materials. This would be one small step towards solving a huge problem. I would like the Attorney General, if he is the right Minister in this Parliament, to undertake some further inquiries on my behalf to determine who regulates the industry, to establish what laws we have that govern these things, or to establish whether any laws are appropriate. Rather than taking that course of action I would like to see some code of conduct that could be considered by these industries.

#### **NORTH AUBURN PRIMARY SCHOOL AIR AND NOISE POLLUTION**

**Mr NAGLE** (Auburn) [5.55]: I wish to raise a matter concerning the North Auburn Parents and Citizens Association. This morning I had a meeting with members of that association to discuss the problem of traffic noise and air quality in the vicinity

Page 6692

of North Auburn Primary School. That school is situated between Parramatta Road and the M4 Motorway. The association received a letter from the Roads and Traffic Authority Tollways Manager, E. K. Sancbergs, which states in part:

You would be pleased to know that the noise monitoring conducted by the Authority's acoustics consultant adjacent to the M4 Motorway toll plaza has shown that a reduction of 6 dB (A) in traffic noise . . .

There has been a reduction in traffic noise because of the laying of an asphalt surface, but monitoring did not occur in the area adjacent to the M4 Motorway toll plaza; it occurred 200 metres east of the toll plaza, which is opposite the school. The major concern of the parents and citizens association is the noise emanating from Parramatta Road. Because of the construction of tollgates many of the vehicles are leaving the road at Silverwater, bypassing the tollgates and returning to the motorway at Woodville Road, Parramatta. This has caused enormous noise and air pollution problems. The Tollways Manager, E. K. Sancbergs, said:

Field work has been carried out for the first air sampling study after the tollroad opening.

From my observations, the greatest pollution is occurring not at the M4 Motorway tollgates but along Parramatta Road. That is where a solution is needed. A private inquiry was conducted by members of the parents and citizens association. They were told that monitoring of air pollution along Parramatta Road would cost \$250,000. I find it hard to believe that monitoring equipment could not be installed for a short period for a lesser cost than \$250,000. According to the letter written by Mr Sanabergs, each day 50,000 vehicles travel along Parramatta Road. I do not know whether those vehicles are travelling only west or whether they are travelling east and west, but that is an enormous number of vehicles travelling in the confined area between the school and the shopping plaza. The letter refers to the fact that in May 1992, 74,000 vehicles travelled along the Great Western Highway at Wentworthville - a very wide and open area. The air monitoring that was carried out established high carbon monoxide and nitrogen dioxide levels. If air monitoring were carried out in the area to which I have referred - the confined area between the school and Parramatta Road - it would establish that there is a major problem.

Because of the noise the school has to close windows and the rooms are very hot. This morning parents at the meeting were complaining about their children becoming ill. The traffic problem all around that residential area - to the north of the industrial area and to the south between the M4 Motorway and Parramatta Road - has created a great deal of concern. I would like the Minister to inform the House what traffic flows - both east and west - were like from 1988 until 1992. In my view more than 50,000 vehicles travel east and west along Parramatta Road. Members of the parents and citizens association were concerned also about the right-hand turning lanes west of Station Road, Auburn, and east of Yillowra Road.

It is said that if these were reduced to two and right-hand lanes were created the traffic would slow a great deal more causing enormous traffic jams. That would be one way of forcing people on to the tollway but it would cause devastation to the area. It would really slow down the traffic and create greater noise and air pollution. Parents are also concerned about lead levels. A discussion today with a doctor from the local area health service revealed that 9 per cent of one-quarter of students at the school suffered from mild to severe asthma. That is a bit below the normal for that area, which is 10 to 12 per cent; but people were concerned that only one-quarter of the children had been brought in to be tested and therefore the levels could be much higher. A questionnaire

Page 6693

is being distributed by the school in this regard. Funding is available from the western Sydney public health unit and from Dr Kaypon to take blood samples from children. This would be one way of finding out what the lead levels really are. If we could take pollution levels, we would then know how bad the noise pollution is. [*Time expired.*]

#### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT DISPOSAL OF ABANDONED MOTOR VEHICLES**

**Mr SMILES** (North Shore) [6.0]: I draw the attention of the House to an ever-increasing problem facing the two major councils in my electorate. I refer to the issue of motor vehicles apparently abandoned. I say it affects two of the three councils in my electorate, but I know it also impacts on municipalities across Sydney and in Wollongong and Newcastle. In the electorate of the North Shore, this year alone North Sydney Municipal Council has dealt with some 345 abandoned motor vehicles following 600 investigations. Mosman Municipal Council, on the other hand, has on average been



dealing every three to four weeks with 15 to 23 motor vehicles reported by local residents as appearing to have been abandoned. The issue of motor vehicles being abandoned in our suburban streets impacts on two pieces of State legislation: first the Local Government Act, which empowers councils to impound and get rid of these vehicles; and, second, the Motor Traffic Act. The Motor Traffic Act makes it an offence to park an unregistered vehicle in a public street. Offence or not, it is all too frequently occurring.

The Local Government Act provides an opportunity for local councils to go through a fairly complex rigmarole in their attempts to rid their streets of these apparently and actually abandoned vehicles. Once a resident, a ranger or an ordinance inspector has noted a potentially abandoned vehicle, the council has to go through the process of checking with the police as to the last registered owner of the vehicle. It has to take photographs and place appropriate stickers on the vehicle alerting the owner that the vehicle has come to its attention. It has to wait a minimum of 14 days after placing a sticker on a vehicle. If no contact occurs during that time it has to advertise, in local or metropolitan papers, the existence of the vehicle. By the nature of their generous attempts to locate the owner without cost, councils generally wait at least several weeks before moving to the next process, which is to again inspect the vehicle, place a sticker on it and finally remove it either by impounding it or - as is the case particularly with North Sydney council, which does not have a pound - alerting a subcontractor associated with Simsmetal Limited to take the vehicle to scrap.

Mosman council, on the other hand, advertises the sale of vehicles by tender. The problem with all these processes is, first, the time involved; second, if at any time - despite the fact that vehicles are generally unregistered - the owner appears, that is the end of the council's involvement per se and it becomes a police matter. Because of their many other duties, the police rarely take any further action. The whole rigmarole can be undertaken by councils and when an owner appears, not only is he not charged any fee for the inconvenience and trouble caused to the council but, because he has notified the council that he owns the vehicle, he can walk away again leaving the unregistered vehicle still on the street. We also have the problem of councils having to observe a \$250 value limit. In other words, they can speed the process up slightly if the vehicle is considered to be worth \$250 or less. That limitation has been in existence for many years. It is my considered view that the value should be increased to at least \$1,000 so that any vehicles seen to be worth up to \$1,000 can be removed for scrap. Councils run into a legal problem if, in the course of their duties, they thoroughly obey the Local Government Act and an owner appears and is unhappy with the way the matter has been

Page 6694

treated; councils are then threatened with potential legal action. I believe this matter deserves very serious attention by the Minister for Local Government. [*Time expired.*]

#### **Private members' statements noted.**

[*Mr Acting-Speaker (Mr Hazzard) left the chair at 6.6 p.m. The House resumed at 7.30 p.m.*]

### **JOINT ESTIMATES COMMITTEES**

#### **Suspension of certain standing and sessional orders, by leave, agreed to.**

#### **Motion**

**Mr WEST** (Orange - Minister for Conservation and Land Management, and

Minister for Energy) [7.31]: I move:

(1) That the Sessional Order relating to Estimate Committees adopted on 20th February, 1992, now read -

#### ESTIMATES COMMITTEES

That during the present session, unless otherwise ordered -

(1) During the second reading debate on the Appropriation Bill on motion of the Minister, the House shall appoint twenty five Estimates Committees to be known as:

1. The Legislature Estimates Committee;
2. Premier and Treasurer Estimates Committee;
3. Aboriginal Affairs Estimates Committee;
4. Agriculture and Rural Affairs Estimates Committee;
5. Arts Estimates Committee;
6. Attorney General Estimates Committee;
7. Conservation and Land Management and Energy Estimates Committee;
8. Chief Secretary and Administrative Services Estimates Committee;
9. Community Services Estimates Committee;
10. Consumer Affairs Estimates Committee;
11. Education and Youth Affairs Estimates Committee;
12. Environment Estimates Committee;
13. Ethnic Affairs Estimates Committee;
14. Health Estimates Committee;
15. Industrial Relations and Employment and Training Estimates Committee;

Page 6695

16. Justice and Emergency Services Estimates Committee;
17. Local Government and Cooperatives Estimates Committee;
18. Natural Resources Estimates Committee;
19. Planning and Housing Estimates Committee;
20. Police Estimates Committee;

21. Public Works and Roads Estimates Committee;
22. Sport, Recreation and Racing Estimates Committee;
23. State Development Estimates Committee;
24. Tourism Estimates Committee;
25. Transport Estimates Committee;

for the purpose of examining and reporting upon proposed expenditures from the Consolidated Fund for each organisational unit for each Minister listed in the tabled Estimates, and the corresponding clauses and schedules of the Appropriation Bill. Such proposed expenditure shall stand referred to the appropriate Committee.

- (2) The resolution shall set out, in respect of each Committee -
    - (a) the mechanism for the appointment of five Government members, three Opposition members and one Independent member who shall be nominated by the Government Whip;
    - (b) the name of the member to be Chairman;
    - (c) the organisational units, and the corresponding clauses and schedules of the Appropriation Bill to be considered;
    - (d) the maximum period of time allocated for consideration of each Estimate; and
    - (e) the days, hours and place during which they shall meet.
  - (3) The Committees shall have power to send for and examine persons, papers, records and things and to report from time to time.
  - (4) The quorum of an Estimates Committee shall be eight members provided that the Committees meet as Joint Committees at all times.
  - (5) The Chairman of an Estimates Committee shall exercise a deliberative vote and, in the event of an equality of votes, a casting vote.
  - (6) A Chairman may from time to time appoint another member to act as Deputy Chairman and the member so appointed shall act as Chairman when the Chairman is not present at a meeting of the Committee.
- In the event of absence of both the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman, a member of the Committee shall be elected by the members present to act as Chairman for that meeting.
- (7) The proceedings of the Committees shall be open to the public unless otherwise ordered by the Committees.
  - (8) In an Estimates Committee -

- (a) the responsible Minister shall be present at all times;
  - (b) the Chairman shall call over each program area of each organisational unit for each Minister and declare the proposed expenditure open for examination;
  - (c) the question shall be proposed for each organisational unit "That the Vote be recommended";
  - (d) the proceedings of a Committee shall be recorded by Hansard;
  - (e) the Clerk shall prepare minutes of meetings which shall be signed by the Clerk and the Chairman.
- (9) Advisers who are present at an Estimates Committee to assist Ministers and the Presiding Officers (in the case of the Estimates of The Legislature) may address a Committee or answer questions if referred to them by a Minister or the Presiding Officers as the case may be.
- (10) The proceedings of a Committee shall be regarded as proceedings of the Parliament.
- (11) The Report of each Estimates Committee shall state whether the votes of each organisational unit in the Estimates and the corresponding clauses and schedules in the Appropriation Bill are recommended or otherwise.

The failure of an Estimates Committee to report on any part of the votes shall be deemed to be a report recommending the proposed expenditure.

- (12) Upon conclusion of its deliberations and after the question on the second reading of the Appropriation Bill has been agreed to, the Chairman of each Estimates Committee, or a member deputed by the Chairman, shall present the Committee's Report to the Speaker in the House.

The Reports shall be set down for consideration in Committee of the Whole House on the Appropriation Bill.

Consideration of a Report in the Committee of the Whole House shall be deemed to be consideration of those clauses and schedules of the Appropriation Bill referred to that Estimates Committee.

- (13) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in the Standing or Sessional Orders, Ministers may indicate to Estimates Committees that information supplementary to a response given to the Estimates Committee in reply to a question asked by a member of that Committee may be lodged with the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly. Such information shall be regarded as part of the proceedings of the Parliament (and published as an annexure to the Questions and Answers Paper of the Legislative Assembly). Answers to questions taken on notice are to be answered by 26 November, 1992.

#### Procedure in Committee of the Whole House

- (14) In a Committee of the Whole House -
- (a) the Chairman shall put the Question in respect of each Committee Report, "That the Report of the (name of the Committee) be adopted";

- (b) a member may speak for a maximum of five minutes on each such Question and the Minister in reply may speak for a maximum of fifteen minutes;
  - (c) those clauses and schedules of the Appropriation Bill not referred to an Estimates Committee shall be considered as one question, "That the remaining clauses and schedules of the Bill be agreed to".
- (15) At the conclusion of proceedings in Committee of the Whole, the Chairman shall report to the Speaker that the Committee has or has not adopted the Reports from the Estimates Committees.

Page 6697

- (16) A message informing the Legislative Council of the terms of the resolution and requesting its nomination of five of its members to participate on each Committee (of whom two shall be Government members, two shall be Opposition members and one shall be a non-Government member nominated by the Leader of the Government) and requesting arrangements for the publication in the Questions and Answers Paper of the Legislative Council of supplementary information to Estimates Committees shall forthwith be transmitted to the Legislative Council.

(2) That:

1. The following Estimates Committees be appointed -
  1. The Legislature
  2. Premier and Treasurer
  3. Aboriginal Affairs
  4. Agriculture and Rural Affairs
  5. Arts
  6. Attorney General
  7. Conservation and Land Management and Energy
  8. Chief Secretary and Administrative Services
  9. Community Services
  10. Consumer Affairs
  11. Education and Youth Affairs
  12. Environment
  13. Ethnic Affairs
  14. Health
  15. Industrial Relations and Employment and Training
  16. Justice and Emergency Services
  17. Local Government and Cooperatives
  18. Natural Resources
  19. Planning and Housing
  20. Police
  21. Public Works and Roads
  22. Sport, Recreation and Racing
  23. State Development
  24. Tourism
  25. Transport
2. The clauses and items of the Appropriation Bill set out in the first Schedule to this motion be referred to the Estimates Committees as set out in that Schedule.

3. The times and dates for consideration of the estimates by the Estimates Committees be as set out in the second Schedule to this motion with the Chairman of the Committee calling on the next listed area as set out in the Schedule when its listed time is reached.
4. During the conduct of the Estimates Committees questions be limited to a maximum of one minute and replies be limited to a maximum of five minutes.
5. When each area of estimates in the first Schedule is commenced, the Chairman of the Committee shall permit three questions from Government Members and then three questions from non-Government Members with such questions alternating in groups of three until time for consideration of the area of estimates is expired.
6. The Legislative Assembly membership of the Committees be notified to the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly by the Government and Opposition Whips.
7. The Clerk of the Legislative Assembly arrange the places for meetings of the Committees and to notify, formally, the Members of the Committees of the times and places for said meetings.
8. That the Chairmen of the Estimates Committees be -

The Legislature	Mr Downy
Premier and Treasurer	Mr Smiles
Aboriginal Affairs	The Hon J Samios
Agriculture and Rural Affairs	Mr Small
Arts	The Hon J Samios
Attorney General	Mr Kerr
Conservation and Land Management and Energy	Mr Chappell
Chief Secretary and Administrative Services	Mr Packard
Community Services	The Hon J Ryan
Consumer Affairs	Mr Smith
Education and Youth Affairs	Mr Downy
Environment	Mr Photios
Ethnic Affairs	The Hon J Samios
Health	The Hon Dr B Pezzutti
Industrial Relations and Employment and Training	Mr Morris
Justice and Emergency Services	Mr Schultz
Local Government and Cooperatives	Mr Turner
Natural Resources	Mr Jeffery
Planning and Housing	The Hon R Bull
Police	The Hon S Mutch
Public Works and Roads	Mr Beck
Sport, Recreation and Racing	Mr Petch
State Development	Mr Packard
Tourism	Mr Petch
Transport	Mr Glachan

Page 6698

9. The Committees have the power to sit during the sitting of any adjournment of the

House.

10. A Message be sent informing the Legislative Council of the terms of this motion and requesting its nomination of five Members to participate on each Committee.

#### FIRST SCHEDULE

#### ESTIMATES COMMITTEES - MINISTERIAL PORTFOLIO ALLOCATIONS

		Appropriation Bill	References*
		Recurrent Items	Capital Item
1	The Legislature Legislature	6(1)01	6(2)01
2	Premier and Treasurer		
	Premier	7(1)01-06	7(2)01-04
	Treasury	7(1)07-09	7(2)05,06
	Government Pricing Tribunal	7(1)10	-
3	Aboriginal Affairs		
	Aboriginal Affairs	**	**
4	Agriculture and Rural Affairs	8(1)01,02	8(2)01,02
	Agriculture and Rural Affairs		
5	Arts		
	Arts	26(2)02-08	26(1)02-09

6	Attorney General Attorney General	9(1)01-04	9(2)01-03
7	Conservation and Land Management and Energy Conservation and Land Management Energy	12(1)01 12(1)01	12(2)02 -
8	Chief Secretary and Administrative Services Chief Secretary Administrative Services Casino Control Authority	{10(1)01 {10(1)03 **** 10(1)02	{10(2)01 {10(2)03 **** 10(2)02
9	Community Services Community Services	11(1)01	11(2)01
10	Consumer Affairs Consumer Affairs	13(1)01	13(2)01
11	Education and Youth Affairs School Education and Youth Affairs	14(1)01,02	14(2)01,02
12	Environment Environment	15(1)01-05	15(2)01-05
13	Ethnic Affairs Ethnic Affairs	16(1)01	-
14	Health Health	17(1)01	17(2)01
15	Industrial Relations and Employment and Training Industrial Relations Technical and Further Education Training and Further Education	14(1)03 18(1)01 *** 18(1)01 ***	14(2)03 18(2)01 *** 18(2)01 ***
16	Justice and Emergency Services Justice Emergency Services	19(2)01-03 23(2)03	19(2)01-04 23(1)03-04
17	Local Government and Cooperatives Local Government and Cooperatives	20(1)01	20(2)01
18	Natural Resources Natural Resources	21(1)01-04	21(2)01-04
19	Planning and Housing Planning	22(1)01	22(2)01



	Housing	22(1)02	22(2)02
20	Police		
	Police	23(1)01-02	23(2)01-02

Page 6700

21	Public Works and Roads		
	Public Works and Roads	24(1)01,02	24(2)01,02
22	Sport, Recreation and Racing		
	Sport, Recreation and Racing	25(1)01	25(2)01
23	State Development		
	State Development	26(1)01	26(2)01
24	Tourism		
	Tourism	27(1)02	-
25	Transport		
	Transport	27(1)01	27(2)01

\* Reference is to Section, Subsection (1 = Recurrent; 2 = Capital) and Item

\*\* Not distinguishable within Appropriation Bill from Premier's Department (7(1)03 and 7(2)03)

\*\*\* Appropriation Bill does not distinguish "Industrial Relations and Employment" from "Further Education and Training". Joint appropriation to the Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Employment and Training for the Department of Industrial Relations, Employment, Training and Further Education

\*\*\*\* Appropriation Bill Combines "Office of the Chief Secretary and Minister for Administrative Services"

## SECOND SCHEDULE

### BUDGET ESTIMATES COMMITTEES

- Tuesday, 20 October 1992 -

#### COMMITTEE NO. 4

2.30 pm - 4.30 pm - Agriculture and Rural Affairs (Hon Ian Armstrong MP)

#### COMMITTEE NO. 10

2.30 pm - 4.30 pm - Consumer Affairs (Hon Kerry Chikarovski MP)

- Wednesday, 21 October 1992 -

#### COMMITTEE NO. 25

9.30 am - 1.00 pm - Transport (Hon Bruce Baird MP)

#### COMMITTEE NO. 12

9.30 am - 1.00 pm - Environment (Hon Chris Hartcher MP)

COMMITTEE NO. 7  
2.30 pm - 4.30 pm - Conservation and Land Management and Energy (Hon Garry West MP)

COMMITTEE NO. 24  
2.30 pm - 4.30 pm - Tourism (Hon Bruce Baird MP)  
  
- Thursday, 22 October 1992 -

COMMITTEE NO. 19  
9.30 am - 1.00 pm - Planning and Housing (Hon Robert Webster MP)

COMMITTEE NO. 1  
9.30 am - 1.00 pm - The Legislature (Presiding Officers)

Page 6701

COMMITTEE NO. 8  
2.30 pm - 4.30 pm - Chief Secretary and Administrative Services (Hon Anne Cohen MP)

COMMITTEE NO. 13  
2.30 pm - 3.30 pm - Ethnic Affairs (Hon George Souris MP)

COMMITTEE NO. 5  
3.30 pm - 4.30 pm - Arts (Hon Peter Collins MP)  
  
- Friday, 23 October 1992 -

COMMITTEE NO. 17  
9.30 am - 1.00 pm - Local Government and Cooperatives (Hon Gerry Peacocke MP)

COMMITTEE NO. 6  
9.30 am - 1.00 pm - Attorney General (Hon John Hannaford MLC)

COMMITTEE NO. 18  
2.30 pm - 4.30 pm - Natural Resources (Hon Ian Causley MP)

COMMITTEE NO. 23  
2.30 pm - 4.30 pm - State Development (Hon Peter Collins MP)  
  
- Tuesday, 10 November 1992 -

COMMITTEE NO. 16  
2.30 pm - 4.30 pm - Justice and Emergency Services (Hon Ted Pickering MLC)

COMMITTEE NO. 22  
2.30 pm - 4.30 pm - Sport, Recreation and Racing (Hon Joe Schipp MP)  
  
- Wednesday, 11 November 1992 -

COMMITTEE NO. 20  
9.30 am - 1.00 pm - Police (Hon Terry Griffiths MP)

COMMITTEE NO. 14

9.30 am - 1.00 pm - Health (Hon Ron Phillips MP)

COMMITTEE NO. 15

2.30 pm - 4.30 pm - Industrial Relations (Hon John Hannaford MLC - joint  
Committee)  
- Employment and Training (Hon Virginia Chadwick MLC - joint  
Committee)

COMMITTEE NO. 3

2.30 pm - 4.30 pm - Aboriginal Affairs (Hon John Fahey MP)

- Thursday, 12 November 1992 -

COMMITTEE NO. 21

9.30 am - 1.00 pm - Public Works and Roads (Hon Wal Murray MP)

COMMITTEE NO. 11

9.30 am - 1.00 pm - Education and Youth Affairs (Hon Virginia Chadwick MLC)

COMMITTEE NO. 9

2.30 pm - 4.30 pm - Community Services (Hon Jim Longley MP)

COMMITTEE NO. 2

2.30 pm - 4.30 pm - Premier and Treasurer (Hon John Fahey MP and Hon George  
Souris MP)

- Friday, 13 November 1992 -

Page 6702

9.00 am - 4.30 pm - Committee of the Whole House

Honourable members will be aware that this proposal has been circulated publicly for about 10 days. The motion relates to the establishment of the estimates committees and is a considerable change from what occurred last year when five committees were set up grouping various portfolios in different ways. This motion will set up 25 estimates committees, not on the basis of portfolios but on the basis that departmental committees will be established. This procedure is meant to be a little fluid as we are still experimenting with the process. Therefore I ask for the co-operation of all honourable members. As 25 committees will be established, 25 chairpersons will be appointed, some of whom have not chaired estimates committees previously. Again that will necessitate the co-operation and tolerance of committee members, the Clerks who will assist and guide the chairpersons of the committees, and of the chairpersons themselves. This is a genuine attempt to change the process regarding estimates committees. The whips will be able to notify the chairpersons and clerks of the committees of the membership of the various committees. Membership can thus be determined the day before the committees sit. The Opposition has circulated proposed amendments. I inform the House that the Government intends to accept those amendments.

**Mr WHELAN** (Ashfield) [7.32]: I have had the opportunity of having a brief conversation with the Minister who told me that the Government will agree to my amendments. I move:

That the motion be amended as follows:

- (1) Paragraph 4. Omit "five minutes", insert instead "three minutes".
- (2) Paragraph 5. Omit the paragraph, insert instead
  5. When each area of estimates in the first Schedule is commenced the period set aside shall be equally apportioned between Government and non-Government members. The Chairman of the Committee shall permit non-Government members to question the Minister for the first twenty minutes: Government Members for the next twenty minutes and so on in rotation until the expiration of the allocated time.
- (3) After Paragraph 6, insert
  7. In the event that Independent members are not nominated to the Clerk one day before the first meeting of an Estimates Committee, the Clerk shall inform the Opposition Whip who shall then nominate another member to serve on the Committee.

I thank the Minister for his concurrence. To obviate spending unnecessary time in the House I gave the Clerks a copy of the amendments, with which I shall deal seriatim, though I shall speak to them in globo. I have not informed the Minister of a matter about which the Parliament should be cognisant. The Government proposes that instead of having five estimates committees there be 25 committees reflecting the provisions of the Appropriation Bill. The Opposition has no problems with the Government's intentions, which we believe are covered in the amendments I have proposed. Where an area of estimates in the first schedule is commenced, the period set aside shall be apportioned equally between Government and non-government members. The purpose of the second amendment is that if a debate is to extend for three hours, it is appropriate that there be no filibustering so that debate on the accountability of the Government is shared equally among Government and Opposition members. If the debate is to proceed for three hours, there should be one and a half hours of questioning by Government members and one and a half hours by non-government members. This may be some testing procedure of this evolutionary procedure. The other amendment I moved will permit non-government

Page 6703

members to ask the first questions in the first 20 minutes. I have spoken to two of the Independent members, though I do not speak for them. I believe they will agree to the amendments. The Government should not be afraid of the amendments. I acknowledge that the Minister said the Government will agree to them.

The first amendment relates to replies to questions being limited to a maximum of three minutes. That will avoid any period of questioning being wasted by long replies. Questions will still be limited to one minute. In regard to the third amendment, as there are three - and some would argue four - Independent members, they cannot possibly allocate themselves to attend 25 estimates committees. Therefore the parliamentary representation will be divided into Government members and non-government members. That is the spirit of the amendments to which the Government has agreed. I have difficulty with schedule 1 in regard to the times for which members will be able to speak. Schedule 1 contains basic errors. Unless it has been corrected, the Appropriation Bill refers to Premier, and Treasurer 7(1)01-06, and I have no difficulty with that. But then it refers to Treasury 7(1)07-09, which is incorrect. It should read 7(1)07, 08 and 10. Item 10 refers to the advance to the Treasurer, which is a Treasury matter, but the Minister's motion refers to 9, which is the Government Pricing Tribunal, a

separate line item in the Budget. Undoubtedly the Minister will want to amend that. I have handed the Minister a document which says, "Treasury" and that should relate to Treasury matters. That must be read in conjunction with the Appropriation Bill. As I said, item 9 relates to the Government Pricing Tribunal.

It may be a typographical error but it certainly would be restrictive of debate if the matter were not addressed. I turn now to appropriation item 15, which refers to industrial relations and employment, and is under the heading "Minister for the Environment". It may be that through a transposition in the computer system it has been given the wrong title. "Industrial Relations and Employment and Training" appears under line item 14, as does "Recurrent Services, Minister for Education and Youth Affairs", and it is clearly in error. I suggest that the Minister's staff make a photocopy of the document I have worked through and collate it so that the matter can be addressed.

**Mr West:** The information came from Treasury.

**Mr WHELAN:** I do not know whether it came from Treasury but it is wrong and I do not want the Parliament to adopt something that is incorrect.

**Mr West:** How long has the honourable member known about this?

**Mr WHELAN:** I have just gone through it. I do not have the Minister's resources. I have the Opposition Whip and myself as my only resource. If the Minister were to take the document and have his staff photocopy it, I would be happy to accept his undertaking that the matters will be addressed. These errors are understandable but estimates committees will be an important and, I hope, a long-term functional facet of the Parliament. That is all I want to say in relation to this matter. The Opposition is grateful that the Government has accepted the three amendments that I formally moved. I hope that the Minister will give me an undertaking that the matters I have mentioned will be addressed. As this is my last opportunity, may I get from the Minister the undertaking that the errors will be addressed and resubmitted to the Parliament for consideration? It would be ridiculous if honourable members were given a first schedule that bore no relation to the line items contained in the Appropriation Bill. It is important that the Parliament adopts the correct resolutions. I must get an undertaking from the Minister. He may have nodded in agreement but I have been a member of this place

Page 6704

long enough to know that I cannot accept his guarantee unless I hear him give it. It is a small matter but I do want it resolved. All I need is some assurance from the Minister that -

**Mr West:** I give you that assurance. I will reply in a moment.

**Mr WHELAN:** No, once I resume my seat that is it. The Minister may reply but I cannot. He must give me an assurance that those matters will be resolved. The last matter I raise is in relation to planning and housing, which should be treated the same as public works and roads. That is why in the list I have given the Minister I have indicated that it should be treated in the same way as it is in the Appropriation Bill. It is important that we remove any existing anomalies and I accept the Minister's undertaking that he will amend the schedule in accordance with the document I have given to the Clerk.

**Mr HATTON (South Coast) [7.45]:** From the tone of the debate honourable members would agree that this is a non-partisan political matter. It is an evolutionary process and one from which the Government and the institution of Parliament can greatly

benefit. The estimates committees were introduced as part of the charter of reform. Because of time restraints last year the estimates committees did not work well. It was acknowledged that the Government had insufficient time to establish them properly, but I should not wish the estimates committees to be judged on the performance of last year's committees. The Government, to its credit, has expanded the estimates committees this year and has set aside full days to be devoted entirely to estimates. Portfolios have been broken up into subgroups of 25 committees. This very positive move will subject the bureaucracy - public servants - to greater scrutiny. It will give a number of honourable members the experience of chairing an estimates committee, and I join with the Minister in pleading with committee members whose chairman has not chaired a committee before to show some understanding and to work in a co-operative fashion.

More members of Parliament will be able to participate in the process of following their own particular interests in subsections of portfolios, to ask questions accordingly, to elicit information as to how government programs are actually working in the field, and to put their experience in the form of questions. This will obviously benefit the workings of government departments, and therefore the ministry and the Government as a whole. The idea of having substitute members serve on estimates committees is important. If a member cannot be available to serve on a committee on a particular day, the Opposition or the Government may substitute another member. The establishment of 25 committees creates a problem for Independent members. I appreciate the Government's giving us the opportunity to serve on any or all of the committees, but obviously we cannot attend all 25. Therefore I agree that the Opposition should be able to take up the vacancy for a non-Government member, which would still give the Government a majority on that committee. The question as to time is important, because I think the allocation of five minutes for an answer is too long. If it is not long enough a supplementary question may be asked. It may be that an answer can be given in one, two or three minutes and the remaining two minutes being used for excuses. It would be ideal to limit the answer to two or three minutes. That will allow only 15 questions per hour to be asked, which is not a great number of questions to be shared among the members present.

The 20-minute timeslot is an excellent suggestion and I am pleased the Government has agreed to it. This will enable members of Parliament from both sides

Page 6705

of the House to pursue a line of questioning and supplementary questions. If the full three minutes for answers and one minute for questions is used, this will allow only five questions in the timeslot. The concept of estimates committees should be expanded to examine performance as well as financial matters. The Independents have been discussing performance review with the Government under the charter of reform. The establishment of performance review committees as watchdogs on Government departments and statutory authorities could serve a useful purpose, and the establishment of portfolio committees in addition to estimates committees would be a valuable reform. Next year estimates committees should be held earlier in the year to allow the process to be expanded even further, to examine matters in the runup to the Budget and in its formulation. However, it must be understood that confidentiality must be respected. Therefore, towards the end of the process the committees could not meet on a bipartisan basis, because certain details in the Budget need to be kept secret for market and proper management reasons. I thank the Government for its consideration of the amendments and for the facilitation of a much better system this year. I look forward to its continuing development in an evolutionary process.

**Amendments agreed to.**

**Mr WEST** (Orange - Minister for Conservation and Land Management, and Minister for Energy) [7.51]: In the interests of having the first schedule checked and properly amended, I move:

That this debate be now adjourned until a later hour of the day.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Debate adjourned.**

## **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 KINROSS** (Gordon) [7.52]: Since I was sworn in in this House on 1st September I have attended many functions in my electorate. One such function was for the Men of St Johns, men who reached out to their community to raise funds for St Johns Anglican Church, situated on the Pacific Highway at Gordon, just south of my electoral office. At that function a former Premier of this State was the guest speaker, the Hon. Barrie Unsworth, who incidentally is one of my constituents. Also present was the member for Gordon from 1962 to 1973, Mr Harry Jago. It was a reunion of parishioners, a reunion that had not been held for a number of years, which symbolised the coming together of people with a purpose. One of their chairmen, Mr Roger Kerr, is in the Chamber tonight. I welcome him and Robyn Kerr, his wife, who has been an

Page 6706

active member of my party for many years. My immediate predecessor, the Hon. Tim Moore, opened his first speech - notice I did not use the word maiden - with the words:

I should like to describe . . . the social nature of the electorate of Gordon. It has 23 churches and 2 hotels . . .

Today Gordon has 23 churches and two hotels. Not much has changed, though many people are hurting from the "recession we had to have". However, tonight I rise on the occasion of my first speech in this Chamber, as a new boy on the block. Some would say the chopping block - only time will tell! The fact that two good men, men of honesty and integrity, could lose their office due to the chopping block of parliamentary process, without the opportunity for judicial review, also signifies the system's weaknesses - a system that was never really put to the test on the floor of this House; for, otherwise, it would have afforded those men the opportunity to be heard - something we call natural justice, which our legal system recognises but perhaps not our Parliament. Let me say though, here and now, had our Legislature allowed the judiciary to run its course, those men would still be in this House. All they were asking for was some time to explain their actions, time which was denied to them.

The Budget brought down by our Premier on 15th September, 1992, was a

pleasant result in these tough economic times. Our overall deficit has still preserved the New South Wales triple-A credit rating, and this is testimony to the leadership and the policies of this Government - something of which the people of New South Wales can stand proud, head and shoulders above our southern Labor States - some would say the rust bucket States. In my electorate we received over \$10 million in capital works, not to mention a substantial recurrent expenditure. Although times are still tough, the people of New South Wales and, indeed, my electorate, can be proud that we are the State with the lowest level of unemployment, the highest level of investment activity and also industrial harmony through enterprise bargaining - again a policy framed by our Premier. Why would not anyone, I ask, embrace enterprise bargaining? It makes sense, and why would it not when it simply restores wage bargaining to exactly what that word means - a bargain between employer and employee? The development of an agreement is an opportunity for the creation of good co-operative relationships between management and employees, minimising the them and us attitude through a direct involvement by those employees in creating new working arrangements. People who participate in achieving solutions to problems are much more likely to be committed to implementing and upholding them - and just watch and see how productivity improves! Our tourism industry will reap enormous benefits from such change, especially as we head towards the 2000 Olympics. These industrial laws and harmony in this State stand in contrast with the times when the Hon. Tim Moore delivered his first speech, on 25th August, 1976 - over 16 years ago.

Tonight I want to speak about three matters of interest to me for many years and I would have hoped of fundamental concern to all Australians: institutions, values or our goals, and the future - IVF, initials which, coincidentally, also reflect a technology, invitro fertilisation, which will well and truly be with us in the future, though many people will question its role through their value system and how that impacts upon our institutions. Tonight I want to briefly reflect upon a few institutions that have moulded my life, institutions that have had a profound effect upon the lives of many people. The School: Most schools have a school motto. At Lindfield Demonstration School, now Lindfield Public School, where I attended during the Vietnam War, that motto was Knowledge is Strength. At my secondary school, The King's School, it was Fortiter et Fideliter - with fortitude and fidelity, bravely and faithfully. In 1984 I wrote in an editorial in my old boys' magazine the following:

Institutions have been with us for many years. The difficulty which institutions face and, "a fortiori", the traditions which flow from them is that they are always at risk, generally, from those who are only too happy to see them eradicated.

Treasure them, nurture them, give them your all - for they outlive people and if properly maintained, provide the standard by which excellence can and will be measured. Standards encompass not just sporting achievements but also artistic merit and extend to a strong sense of discipline, which is visibly missing in a more liberal society - for quite consistent with your freedom to speak your mind, and to criticise, to discuss and to propose, your community is entitled to receive your service, your conformity and your obedience.

The Parliament: Our Constitution provides for a doctrine called the separation of powers. There is served little or no purpose in asking which power is supreme. In the last week or so, however, we have been confronted with much commentary upon the role of the judiciary and its intrusions into our legislative process. Consequent upon the recent High Court decision regarding the Federal Labor Government's attempt to ban political advertising, only last Friday *Sydney Morning Herald* writer Peter Hartcher wrote, "The High Court's new high-profile activism may threaten to turn our political system on its



head" - the suggestion being that we are being confronted by an activist judiciary, making laws of its own and thereby usurping the role of Parliament and the will of the people. The truth is, however, that the common law has always allowed for judicial activism. Another example is the recent decision of the court on Aboriginal land rights. Commentary now abounds as to whether our High Court will entrench a bill of rights for the welfare of the people, something which a number of my Federal colleagues would suggest is better left to the Legislature. However, let us not forget that the people overwhelmingly rejected such a concept at the 1987 Federal election. Though Sir Garfield Barwick - who is in the gallery tonight - may deny it, I have to say that gone are the days when judges merely declared the law. In 1972 Lord Reid wrote in *The Judge as Law-maker*:

There was a time when it was thought almost indecent to suggest that judges make law - they only declare it - those with a taste for fairy-tales seem to have thought that in some Aladdin's Cave there is hidden the common law in all its splendour and that on a judge's appointment there descends on him knowledge of the magic words open sesame . . . but we do not believe in fairy-tales any more.

Some of my Federal Labor parliamentary colleagues have not been doing their homework, let alone understanding the place our judiciary has in our system of democracy. The family: Even in last night's presidential debate in the United States of America President Bush acknowledged that the nuclear family was no longer with us. We can analyse whether this, in turn, is attributable to a breakdown of Christian values, of an increasingly technological society with greater demands upon our lifestyles or whatever. The debate rages on. Therefore, whilst it is with us we have to deal with it. Single parent families are a sign of the times and, as one would expect, in our parliamentary system, to be reflective of the wider community, there are members of this House who fit into this category. I am one of the lucky ones. In yesterday's *Sydney Morning Herald* there was published a series entitled "Two Nations", a series designed to show the kind of nation we have become and how far we have moved from "our self-image of an egalitarian society". In that article there was displayed a number of suburbs and towns across New South Wales and their relative change in income level from 10 years ago. My father came from a town that, judging from yesterday's list, is sixth from the bottom, Inverell in northern New South Wales. Today we reside in a suburb in twenty-fifth place. Suburbs such as Balmain and Drummoyne - and I see that the honourable members who represent those electorates are not in the Chamber tonight - rate

Page 6708

above the suburbs of Lindfield and Killara, suburbs situated in my electorate.

What that study was really focusing on, however, was our perceptions. I do not believe that we are all equal. Equality of opportunity is not equal to equality of outcome, which our opponents favour. Ask any biologist: people are not born equal. The perception that the North Shore is a wealthy environment masks the suffering that is now being experienced by a number of middle aged family people. In tough economic times older people in my electorate, who worked hard for their retirement, are also suffering. The leafy and green environment of the North Shore nevertheless masks an inner disquiet and concern about the "recession we had to have". Not one allocation of Commonwealth revenue for any unemployment program or training or funding came to any area on the North Shore. The headline on page 6 of yesterday's *Sydney Morning Herald* summed it up: "Once affluent, now out in the cold on the cosy North Shore". As a member of Parliament I have a duty to these people, especially in tough economic times. One of the ways is to show compassion and realise that the perception is so often out of touch with reality.

The church and religion: In these changing times, even the church is undergoing intense debate and attack. One of the myths which pervades society today, and perhaps has for some years, is that only politicians play politics. We all know that politics starts with the women's auxiliary, the local tuck shop, the parents and citizens association of our schools and the belief that one person will make a better representative than another. Our church is undergoing a political debate today: should women be ordained? The decision to support or oppose the ordination of women will, whilst analysing the scriptures to provide some of the answers, ultimately involve the lobbying politic. Only last night on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation television station it was reported that women in the Uniting Church were rewriting the scriptures and questioning the gender of God.

So far I have discussed four institutions which have had an important effect upon me. Let me briefly say that there are two other institutions that also affect and are affected by the political process - the media and an unelected bureaucracy. The media: Tonight I can take some pleasure in the fact that few of the big guns are in the press gallery tonight - indeed, just one. Nevertheless, let the record reflect that the media must always be conscious of the significant role they play in moulding public opinion, and the power which that entrusts is, at times, quite frightening. Accordingly, they must bear a responsibility for their power. The unelected bureaucracy: We have to accept, in tandem with government, that a bureaucracy needs to exist. I wish to ensure, and say to the people of Gordon, that I will seek to redress the faceless men and women that occupy this institution by always making them have to justify their actions and existence, as we do. Like the media, the frightening power which the bureaucracy - be it the police service, the tax department or some other quango, quasi autonomous non-government organisation - presents to all Australians may be another inroad to our individual freedoms. As a Liberal Party we have sought to change the manner in which the bureaucracy deals with those whom it serves; for example, having people upon an inquiry from the public being obliged to state their name. This is a relatively small but important part in the way in which the public can be better, and more personally, served by bureaucrats.

Finally, on this subject I wish to make some passing comments about the Independent Commission Against Corruption. As an institution set up by this Parliament it has a role to play. But let me say what my colleague and the chairman of the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption did not: ICAC should have to justify its existence. That, to me, simply makes common sense, especially as it

Page 6709

has an annual budget of some \$15 million. Just as it is healthy to debate in a free democratic society, so it is with some of our traditions, our institutions - they can withstand that attack for they have stood the test of time longer than any of us. So let us at least get involved and join in the debate - it is healthy. A healthy questioning of why straddles the middle ground between an uncritical chauvinism on the one hand and an equally uncritical cynicism on the other. Times of change also present opportunity. However, with change we must also recognise that change for the sake of change is not much good. In any case, who was it who once said, "Plus ça change, plus la meme chose" - a bit of my schoolboy French, with due respect to my forebears, and my French middle name, Prevost.

Values: Our values and culture, and our quality of life are lost if we keep thinking that we gain strength through sport. So too with knowledge, as my first school motto stated. Who does not like some sport? However, I consider that there are other aspects of life that mould a society and provide a more true reflection of its reason for being. Does anyone value that which comes easily to us? Take the right to vote - it is

to many a chore. In Gordon some 7,000 people out of 37,000 did not vote at all in the by-election, yet in Eastern Europe it is what many people died for. Politicians are not liked and times are tough, but the right to vote is a freedom which we should all cherish. During my campaign I sat down with an elder statesman of my party, Sir John Carrick, who unfortunately could not be with me tonight. I said to him, "Sir John, politics can be unwieldy", but he replied - and in a tone that many on this side of the House could hear now - "Ah yes my boy, but so too is democracy". The question is: what is the alternative? [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

The frustration with politicians is also a frustration with the bureaucracy and our institutions generally. The rising tide of Nazism in Germany in these changing times represents a frightening example of the effect which anything other than a proper democratic process provides. In changing times we also need stability and tolerance and, as I said earlier, compassion for those in need - principles upon which our party can stand proud. On modern politics Lord Randolph Churchill said:

The noise and confusion of election crowds, the cant of phrase and formula, the burrowings of rival caucuses, fill with weariness, and even terror, persons of exquisite sensibility. It is easy for those who take no part in the public duties of citizenship under a democratic dispensation to sniff disdainfully at the methods of modern politics and to console themselves for a lack of influence upon the course of events by the indulgence of a fastidious refinement and a meticulous consistency. But it is a poor part to play. Amid the dust and brawling, with rude weapons and often unworthy champions, a real battle for real and precious objects is swaying to and fro. Better far the clamour of popular disputation, with all its most blatant accessories, hammering out from month to month and year to year the laboured progress of the common people in a work-a-day world, than the poetic tragedies and violence of chivalric ages.

Let me tell you a story about what happened on the day of my by-election. It shows, I think, what a funny lot we are. A little old lady came up to me and said, "Mr Kinross, what religion are you?" I said, "Christian". She said, "No, I mean what religion: Anglican, Catholic?" I said, "Raised Presbyterian, educated in the Church of England, but a believer that we should be united". She said, "Oh good, at least you're not a Catholic". Tonight I ask: What is to become of a nation that stops for a horserace on the day the American people will be voting for their next president, 3rd November, 1992, and an Opposition that raises as a matter of public importance why we cannot have an extra day's holiday because Boxing Day 1992 falls on a Saturday? What a joke! The world is laughing at us. How else are tourists supposed to be served during this peak tourism period? "Oh sorry, Australia has closed shop".

Page 6710

The future: So what of our future? The public have, to date, shown, I believe, a cynicism for all that is political - a kind of love-hate relationship. Yes, people may be seething but they need to understand that there is room for that seething to be channelled through our institutions. Where to New South Wales? We are facing the world, a world vastly different from that of our parents. We have to be more competitive and more creative. The light is there on the hill, but it is flickering in the strong wind that is blowing at the moment - it is trying to provide light to those walking towards it. In the end it will be able to withstand the breezes and occasional gust because they have passed here all before. But to do so it may have to refocus. So how do we get ahead? As John F. Kennedy once said, "Don't ask what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country". Let me share with you a few sayings that I believe encapsulate my view on life and the role I believe I have to play in this Chamber: one, if it is worth doing, it is worth doing well; and, two, in the words of a song that Billy Joel wrote, "Get

it right the first time, that is the main thing". In an economic sense I believe in less regulation, but never forgetting that prudential supervision has to play its part for the protection of the wider community, especially those who have difficulty in helping themselves.

I believe the 1990s is the decade for rationalisation, for a removal of the glitz and razzamatazz of the 1980s. It is a decade for a down-to-earth and hands-on approach, amply provided by this Government and our Premier. His leadership has arisen from building bridges between disparate groups in our community. I again reiterate our Premier's role in enterprise bargaining. I believe that the words of our Olympics 2000 bid, and encapsulated in our logo, provide us with a vision for our future: share the spirit. I would recommend to all members of this House that they see and listen to that excellent video production produced by our Olympics 2000 committee. I do not apologise for my passion, that is what made this country in its early days - men and women who fought for this country and many who died for it. Today I ask: would my generation do the same? In these tough economic times we, as politicians, have to deliver. I hope tonight I have gone some way towards that. I will continue to work hard for the people of Gordon because that is the only thing I have known all my life, and eventually I think it will pay off.

In conclusion may I thank and pay tribute to a number of people without whom I would not be here today. First and foremost are my parents and my two sisters. The support they have shown me to date is without question. I would also like to thank a number of the members of the Gordon conference who showed and displayed their efforts for our party by working tirelessly during the by-election campaign and also on election day. A number of them are present in the gallery tonight. With Don Glover, my conference president, we ran a most effective campaign with a swing of a little over 5 per cent, when customarily by-elections can expect swings of the order of 8 to 10 per cent. This is attributable to his efforts and those who offered their support. On election day nearly 170 people worked, an indication that Liberalism is alive and well on the north shore. It continues to spread its wings throughout New South Wales. Finally, I thank the members of this House for making my transition and entry into this Parliament a happy one. I look forward to a long and ambitious career serving the Liberal Party throughout this Parliament.

**Mr HARRISON** (Kiama) [8.17]: Before I commence my comments on the Budget I would like to congratulate the honourable member for Gordon on his entry into this Parliament. Though he is from the other side of politics - I find myself very much

Page 6711

at odds with many of the things he has had to say - I do express the wish that his time spent here in this Parliament will be completely satisfactory and enjoyable. The 1992 Budget introduced by the Premier, the Hon. John Fahey, could almost be dismissed with a single word: deceit. The Premier was at pains to convince the New South Wales electorate that his Budget would create in the vicinity of 18,000 jobs. The Premier arrived at that conclusion by taking the supposed 5,000 direct jobs he claims the Budget would create and then applying a generous multiplier of around 2.5 jobs which would flow on to the private sector from every job created in the Budget. If the Premier uses that type of logic, he must acknowledge that the 2,500 schoolteachers dismissed by this Government in the last four years amounts to a flow on of some 6,000 jobs out in the community. He cannot have it both ways. If the jobs he is allegedly creating in this Budget are going to have this magnificent flow-on effect that he mentioned, then the jobs he has scuttled, particularly the 2,500 schoolteachers, must also flow out into the community. He must also accept that the 50,000 public servant jobs abolished in four years of the Greiner-Fahey-Murray Government has meant the loss of a further 125,000

jobs in the private sector or 175,000 jobs in total. The Government cannot have it both ways. It is either this amount of jobs created or this amount of jobs lost. That is the great fallacy of the Premier's jobs, jobs, jobs claim, so far as his Budget is concerned.

Under the Government the only jobs that could be considered reasonably safe are those held by members of the senior executive service. It is no wonder that in interstate comparisons of 24 economic indicators New South Wales is shown as lagging behind the rest of Australia in 17 of those indicators. It is worthy of mention that funds allocated in the Budget to upgrading the State Rail Authority bridge at Spring Creek in the Kiama electorate is given out to body hire contract. The Premier might like to explain in the course of his reply - I certainly hope he does - why the Government chooses not to use available SRA personnel. After all, skilled people are available within the employ of the SRA. At least there should be temporary employment workers to be supervised by SRA personnel. In that way it would be possible to ensure that all appropriate award conditions for pay and safety provisions were applied. We do not want a repeat of the muck up at Bombo, where picket lines are in place. The Government will be left with a lot of egg on its face when the matter is dealt with before the court. I will not speak on that any further because I do not want to risk being called to order for being in some way in contempt of court.

The Premier's Budget for 1992-93 must be recognised in any case as a second bite of the cherry, the first bite being inflicted upon the people of New South Wales by the discredited former Premier. The Government's tax increases, including the last impost, now amount to \$1.3 billion each year, and New South Wales is now by far Australia's highest taxed State. Given that the Budget in any case is balanced only by a one-off income from the sale of the GIO and the figure of \$386 million outlined in Budget Paper No. 2, which was unexpended on capital works from last year's Budget, we must now wonder what the Fahey-Murray Government intends to sell to offset its waste and mismanagement when it introduces its 1993 budget statement. It is no secret that the next facility owned by the people of New South Wales on the hit list is the State Bank of New South Wales. The Government is getting near the bottom of the barrel so far as its fire sale of public assets is concerned. The Premier cannot continue to place all the blame on the recession and the loss of revenue from sales tax when this is offset, at least to some extent, by the Government's reduced costs, for example, in wages and interest rates.

Despite press statements issued by the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs implying that construction of two new schools in my electorate, one at Albion Park and  
Page 6712

another in Gerrigong, are imminent, the fact is that the only allocations of funds in the 1992 Budget, shown in Budget Paper No. 4, are \$328,000 and \$308,000 respectively. Presumably, that would go towards the cost of architect fees. I now turn to the Government's failure to address the need to allocate funding for the north Kiama bypass. While it is true that the Government allocated \$892,000 to short-term safety and flow construction from Minnamurra Bridge to Meehan Drive, \$21,000 for Meehan Drive to North Kiama Drive, and a further \$72,000 for North Kiama Drive to Spring Creek, this will go nowhere towards addressing the upgrading of the Princes Highway, which is the lifeline of southeastern New South Wales. It will go nowhere towards meeting any part of the cost of bypassing the residential precincts of North Kiama, Minnamurra and Gainsborough. This year not one cent appears to have been allocated to commencing the long talked about northern section of the Kiama bypass. The Government ignores the fact that deaths are occurring and that massive disruption to the local community is taking place every weekend. It continues to avoid its obligations, even to nominate its final option in relation to road alignment of this much needed bypass.

The Government is trying to off-load the responsibility for deciding the alignment of the bypass on to local government, namely, the two councils which make up part of my electorate - Shellharbour and Kiama. They are involved in an argument with the Roads and Traffic Authority about whose responsibility it is to give approval. It is clear that should the council bite the bullet in this case it would be hauled into the Land and Environment Court and subjected to massive costs. It is equally clear that if the Government makes a decision, then at least a decision will have been made. Once again it is equally clear that the Government has no intention of making a decision because then it would be incumbent on it to make some sort of allocation of funding for the construction of the road. It is quite significant, and not altogether unexpected, that in the 1992-93 Budget not one cent has been allocated to this important road. The deaths and carnage will continue. Members of the local community will continue to argue about the location of the alignment.

The Premier's boast is that the 1992 New South Wales Budget is a job creating budget. Budget Paper No. 2 indicates that in the ensuing year electricity councils will be facing 849 job losses; the State Rail Authority, a further 1,651 job losses; the State Transit Authority, 923 job losses; and the Water Board a further 131 job losses. Also area health services around the State, including hospitals, face a further 1,738 job losses; community services, 215 job losses; conservation and land management, 133 job losses; ambulance services, 66 job losses; court administration, 72 job losses; and the Roads and Traffic Authority, 1,572 job losses. Leaked documents indicate that the Department of Housing will be shedding 350-odd jobs. So much for the Premier's boast about "jobs, job, jobs". The Premier's Budget could be dismissed with the words "less jobs, less jobs, less jobs".

Recently in the House I raised my concern about neglect of the Killilea State Recreation Area by the Department of Conservation and Land Management, which has left the highly sensitive Minnamurra sandspit totally unpatrolled and at the mercy of four-wheel drivers, illegal campers and assorted vandals. Yet the Department of Conservation and Land Management is to shed 133 staff positions around the State. Does that mean that all State recreation areas that have been created and handed over from the National Parks and Wildlife Service to the Department of Conservation and Land Management will now be neglected and at the mercy of vandals? It is interesting also that a further \$3 million has been allocated in the Budget to the Eastern Creek motor cycle track while at the same time there has been a reduction in funding for blind and incapacitated ex-servicemen of about \$4 million. This alone speaks volumes about the Fahey-Murray

Page 6713

Government's priorities. Let us cast our minds back to the costly advertising that accompanied the sale of the GIO. We were told that income from this privatisation would mean more money for police, schools and health care. This has been proved to be nothing but a pack of lies. Every cent raised from flogging off this profitable people's asset has been used to offset the deficit brought about by four years of Government mismanagement and waste. Not one cent of this income was used to provide more police, teachers, nurses or a better hospital system.

I turn now to the Premier's failure to address health care needs of the Illawarra region in his 1992-93 statement. At a meeting of a number of other Illawarra regional members with representatives of the Illawarra Area Health Service, I was advised that it was anticipated that about \$2.8 million less would be spent this year on Illawarra health care than was spent last year because of so-called efficiency gains. After hearing several references to efficiency gains I had to ask these people about the efficiency gains. I

asked, "Are you speaking about efficiency gains or productivity cuts?". They said, "They are one and the same, but we don't call them productivity cuts any more. The appropriate term is efficiency gains". All I can determine from that is that a cut by any other name hurts just as much. The Illawarra cannot withstand continual cutbacks, no matter what they are called.

I note that the Budget makes no provision for funding the construction of the clinical services block at Wollongong Hospital. At present it is a hole in the ground with a half finished tunnel connecting that block to the hospital proper. There has been much said about a promised phone-in that was referred to in a press release by Mr John McEwan of the area health service about the perceived needs of the Kiama community. The phone-in has not eventuated despite the fact that on 20th August Mr McEwan gave an assurance that it would be held before the end of August. It was then postponed to some time in September, but we are now half way through October and still there is no sign of it happening. At the time it was first suggested one could be forgiven for wanting to dismiss the offer as tokenism. Three massive public meetings have been held in Kiama about the closure of the public hospital. Petitions containing thousands upon thousands of signatures have been presented to the Parliament, yet the Government, the Minister and the area health service are not interested in the feelings of the people of Kiama. I suggest some notice should have been taken of those meetings that resulted in unanimous resolutions and notice should also have been taken of the petitions. Had that occurred we would not need a phone-in.

There is need for further consultation with the local people. Recently a committee looking at the health needs of Kiama recommended that part of the Kiama District Hospital site be subdivided and sold to pay for other building works on behalf of the New South Wales Department of Health. I can assure all honourable members that the people of Kiama are waiting for the phone-in because they will jam the lines to tell this Government exactly what they feel about the proposal to sell off part of the hospital site. I believe it is the nicest piece of real estate in the Kiama local government area and one of the nicest in this State. From the time of the first cutbacks that took place in Kiama, leading to the eventual closure of our hospital by this Government, greedy eyes have been looking at that real estate, waiting to get greedy hands on it in order to flog it off for a quid.

At the moment I am awaiting a response from the Minister for Health to a question I put to him about the many items of equipment in Kiama hospital that were donated by various local community groups. Have those items been taken out of the hospital and spirited away somewhere else? Is it the intention that they be returned to Kiama and, if not, will the people of Kiama be reimbursed either the money they donated

Page 6714

for the equipment or the equipment they bought and donated themselves for the benefit of the citizens of Kiama? They certainly did not make donations so that the equipment could be spirited away from the hospital and used in hospitals in electorates of Government members. Recently it was brought to my attention that the 13-month-old grandson of a constituent was suffering from diarrhoea but could not be accommodated in the isolation ward of Wollongong Hospital as another child was in that ward suffering from meningitis. The constituent's grandson has been diagnosed as epileptic and is prone to seizures and fits.

Wollongong Hospital is the only hospital in the Illawarra region with a children's ward, but as the child was stricken with diarrhoea it should have been isolated from other children. However, that was not possible and the child was accommodated in the children's ward in contact with other children in the ward at the time. That is an

indication of the type of health care that is being provided. I am sick of hearing Government members pat themselves on the back for the so-called improvements that are being made to health and hospital care in this State. So far as Illawarra is concerned, it is a disaster. I will make a more detailed report on this matter to Parliament by way of a private member's statement at the first opportunity. I also draw to the attention of the Parliament that to this time I have not received a satisfactory response to a complaint I made to the Minister for Health on behalf of Mr and Mrs Chetcuti concerning treatment given to their infant daughter prior to her death on 1st January. I am still waiting for a reply.

I am surprised at ambiguities in Budget Paper No. 4, which claims that \$5.1 million has been allocated for the extension of electrification of the South Coast rail line to Shellharbour. This appears to me to be the \$5.1 million that has already been allocated as the State Government's share of extending the electrification as far as Dapto and which is in the process of being spent. In the document provided to me outlining funding through various departments as it affects my electorate, no mention is made of an allocation of funds to extend electrification further than Dapto within the 1992-93 budget year and I find this to be disappointing. I call on the New South Wales Minister for Transport to join with me, with the honourable member for South Coast and with the Shoalhaven transport action group to make a meaningful approach to the Commonwealth Government for a joint funding arrangement of electrification of the South Coast rail line to Bomaderry, even if it is done only by way of a long-term commitment by the Government to the eventual electrification of the line between Kiama and Bomaderry.

I want to conclude my remarks by referring briefly to another matter that affects my electorate. If the Premier is genuinely interested in jobs, jobs, jobs, as he would have us believe, why does he not answer my correspondence on behalf of the Bomaderry paper mill, written on behalf of management and staff, requesting that he meet with a deputation of representatives of that organisation and with me? About 600 jobs are threatened by a court challenge, with a flow-on effect for about 2,500 jobs. Why is it that in seven weeks the Premier has not acknowledged my first item of correspondence or my follow-up letter asking for a reply? [*Time expired.*]

**Mr LONGLEY** (Pittwater - Minister for Community Services, and Assistant Minister for Health) [8.37]: It is with pride and a profound sense of the responsibility bestowed upon me that I give this, my first speech in a New South Wales budget debate, as a Minister. I am obviously proud to be a member of the Cabinet that produced such a responsible and caring budget in this time of economic hardship as Australian families continue to suffer under Paul Keating's prolonged recession. Premier Fahey's first Budget focuses on job creation and real and substantial initiatives to get the State moving

Page 6715  
again. The Budget is a great achievement for the new Premier and stands in stark contrast to the negative policies of the Leader of the Opposition whose attitude is typified by his budget reply which dwells in the past, whinges for the sake of whingeing and fails to put forward a credible alternative budget strategy as Opposition leaders should do. Bob Carr is still locked in the stagnant mindset of the Unsworth Government that was swept from office in 1988, while John Fahey is forging ahead and building on the tremendous progress made by Premier Greiner over the past four years.

I am very proud to have responsibility for the community services portfolio which is the portfolio directly responsible for providing assistance and relief for the underprivileged, the disadvantaged and those in need in our community. The 1992 community services budget focuses on families. It succeeds in delivering significant assistance to those in the community who have been genuinely affected by these harsh



economic times. As I will expand on later, the increased spending, the well targeted distribution of resources and the special \$10 million family support package all represent tremendous achievements at this time of considerable strain on the State's finances. I have spoken in the budget debate every year since I entered this House in 1986. This year, being my first budget speech as a Minister, I will obviously concentrate on my portfolio area of community services, although I may return to make some points about the Government's progress in the four key areas of general achievement which I have analysed in each of those previous years.

I am very proud to say that the community services budget allocation for 1992-93 represents an increase of nearly 11 per cent over the previous year; that is an additional \$81 million to help communities, individuals and families throughout New South Wales. The community services budget stands at an historical \$814 million and over the past three years the total budget of the Department of Community Services has increased by \$197 million, that is, 32 per cent. The Opposition can whinge and complain and criticise all it likes: these figures speak for themselves. The Government puts its money where its mouth is. In addition to having the best performing economy and the lowest unemployment in Australia, this Government through this Budget provides real resources for the disadvantaged. It is a caring budget. An amount of \$60 million is provided to support families who are experiencing difficulties, while \$71.9 million will be spent on assisting the homeless. The home and community care program, which assists the frail, aged and people with disabilities, will receive \$79.6 million and more than \$8.9 million of that will be injected into programs for children and their families in rural New South Wales.

The Government's commitment to quality child care has been stepped up, with nearly \$75 million being announced for the provision of child care services in the next financial year. This is an increase of more than \$4.29 million compared with the allocation for the previous year. The \$10 million family support package - an initiative this Government established in response to Paul Keating's cruel and prolonged recession - will provide much needed direct financial assistance to the community. Families and individuals who have been severely affected by the harsh economic times will benefit significantly from this family package. It demonstrates that the Government recognises these times are particularly tough. This allocation, a one-off grant for the 1992-93 year in recognition of the growing numbers of people affected by the recession, focuses on those who have not traditionally been assisted by community services. When I was appointed Minister for Community Services I stated that I was particularly concerned about those who are so badly affected by the high levels of unemployment and the recession. This package addresses that concern by providing additional assistance, support and guidance for families, individuals and disadvantaged communities under stress. It is an acknowledgment of the growing number of people who may require

Page 6716

assistance to support their families or to meet commitments that were made at a time when the economy was more favourable.

The \$10 million family support package has the following elements: first, a community support scheme with an allocation of \$3.1 million. This allocation will provide additional assistance to the major charities such as Care Force, the St Vincent de Paul Society, Wesley Mission, Sydney City Mission, the Salvation Army, the Smith Family, Centacare and other community service agencies. Second, it will provide \$2.06 million for the continuation of the supplement to community service funded organisations. This allocation will be provided to the Department of Community Services funded organisations to assist in dealing with clients affected by these difficult economic times. The third element is \$1.75 million for rental and mortgage relief. The

State will provide this funding to assist in these two critical areas of rental and mortgage relief. The fourth element is perhaps of paramount significance - \$1.5 million for family support services. This allocation will be provided to funded organisations to assist supplement families affected by the difficult economic conditions. This is a particularly important area, an area of great focus by the department and especially by me; it was one of the areas I identified most particularly when I was appointed Minister.

The fifth element is the child care assistance allowance of \$0.69 million. This special allocation for the 1992-93 financial year is a one-off contribution to child care services to provide an additional placement for families significantly affected by the difficult economic times. It will provide opportunities for these families to search for work, to undertake training for employment or to cater for respite need. Each child care service shall administer this assistance from the allocation by the Department of Community Services and may take the form of full fee relief, partial fee relief or the provision of an additional place within licensing arrangements. The sixth element is a particularly important one - a rural counselling service, which has been allocated \$0.3 million to assist rural groups who are required in the 1992-93 year to provide a 25 per cent supplement toward the cost of the counselling scheme in their area and to provide additional resources for the employment of more counsellors during 1992-93. The rural counselling scheme is administered by the Department of Agriculture and assists rural firms, farmers and individuals to obtain independent counselling from financial providers to assist strategies which will support them throughout the current recession and or to make alternative financial arrangements.

The seventh element is an allocation of \$0.3 million for financial counselling services. This allocation will assist those who require immediate advice or assistance in managing or reorganising their finances. This is an important issue in these difficult economic times because a lot of people do need that extra assistance in managing their finances, being able to budget and so on. The eighth and final element is an allocation of \$0.3 million for training. This allocation will assist in the provision of financial counselling services and the training of counsellors for financial counselling and counsellors in family work. These special training arrangements shall be provided to put on line more financial and family support counsellors. This Government is not only looking at providing more counsellors in both family counselling and financial counselling but it is also looking at providing more training so that more counsellors will be available. That training is a vital element. It is an issue raised with the Premier, me and the Government by a number of people in this sector and that is a particularly important issue that this allocation goes a long way to addressing. The Australian Labor Party has brought Australian families to their knees. This Government is helping to lift them back up and put them on their feet. This Budget has been well received in the community, particularly by those great Australians who lead our major charities and who have been

Page 6717

working so hard for so long helping people through this recession. I should like to quote the view of Colonel Ed Dawkins of the Salvation Army:

I believe this package is a very warm response by the Government to a great degree of need out there in the community.

Colonel Dawkins' description, "a very warm response", says it all. The major charities appreciate that this Government is working in partnership and co-operation with them to help people. It will continue to do so as long as there is a single family or a single individual hurting or in difficulty in New South Wales. As I have said, I am very proud of this Budget. It is one of the most responsible, positive and caring budgets in the

history of this State. Real growth and improvements have continued in the community services area and the Budget has been well received throughout the community.

In the time remaining to me I wish to address briefly four areas that I have analysed in each of the previous six speeches I have made in budget debates in this place. Those four areas are: disclosure, the economic scenario and State implications, administrative efficiency and debt. When I was first elected to this Parliament the question of disclosure was an open joke. Budget documents were framed in a way that was almost deliberately designed to obscure the real state of affairs in New South Wales. Since that time advances have been dramatic, to say the least. I believe it is useful for members of this Parliament to refer to chapter 8 of Budget Paper No. 2 and look at some of the reforms, innovations and improvements that have been made, that are being made and that are planned to be made. On page 8 - 3 we find the subheadings "Financial Integrity" and "Financial Accountability and Transparency". Page 8 - 4 has the subheadings "Financial Responsibility" and "Financial Equity". Page 8 - 5 has the subheading "Government Finance Statistics Presentation of the Budget" and it lists a number of significant areas. Page 8 - 6 has the subheading "Comprehensive Accounting and Budgeting".

In brief, this indicates that disclosure in this Budget is a significant improvement on previous budgets. Disclosure is continuing to be high on the agenda of this Government. We have seen proposed improvements to accounting and the introduction of comprehensive accounting and budgeting, which is commercial or accrual accounting. These programs, which have been partly introduced, will be completed in the near future. We will then have financial accounts that are truly understandable. The second area to which I wish to refer is the economic scenario and State implications. If honourable members refer to chapter 2 of Budget Paper No. 2 they will see that forecasts are made by New South Wales Treasury concerning the economic performance of Australia and New South Wales. It is interesting to compare the two. In 1990-91 the unemployment rate in Australia was 8.4 per cent. In 1991-92 the unemployment rate is estimated to be 10.4 per cent. Unemployment rate forecasts for the next three years for Australia as a whole show a decline. In 1992-93 the rate is forecast at 10.1 per cent; in 1993-94 the rate is forecast at 8.9 per cent; and in 1994-95 the rate is forecast at 7.8 per cent. Contrast that with the projected unemployment rate for New South Wales. We see that it is lower in each year. That has been the position the whole time this Government has been in office and that is projected for the future. The New South Wales unemployment rate in 1990-91 was 7.5 per cent; the rate in 1991-92 is estimated to be 9.7 per cent; the forecast rate in 1992-93 is 9.5 per cent; the forecast rate in 1993-94 is 8.3 per cent; and the forecast rate in 1994-95 is 7.4 per cent. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

In each year the New South Wales unemployment rate has been projected as  
Page 6718  
lower than the national level of unemployment. That demonstrates the superior economic performance of New South Wales. People in New South Wales will be able to be independent; they will not be reliant upon others. This Government is about improving the living standards of individuals. Clearly, the unemployment rate is a significant factor in that. I could make further comparisons in regard to the inflation rate. There is a significant and worrying trend that current account deficit forecasts for Australia are projected to increase dramatically over the years ahead. I believe that is significantly jeopardising Australia's future. This year's \$11.9 billion deficit will blow out in 1994-95 to a \$20 billion deficit. In percentage terms that is 3.1 per cent of gross domestic product, blowing out to 4.2 per cent of GDP. That poses a serious risk to the continued prosperity of Australia. We must do all in our power to ensure that our nation once again regains its economic strength in the world arena.

The third area I wish to refer to is administrative efficiency. Honourable members will find on page 8 - 13 of Budget Paper No. 2 a remarkable story concerning administrative efficiency. From 1987-88, the last year of the previous Government, until 1992, we have seen dramatic improvements in productivity. There has been an 85 per cent increase in productivity in Elcom; a 51 per cent increase in electricity councils; a 47 per cent increase in the Hunter Water Board; a 40 per cent increase in CityRail; a 54 per cent increase in freight; a 35 per cent increase in the State Transit Authority; and a 16 per cent increase in the Water Board. Overall that represents a 45 per cent increase in productivity. To the ordinary person that means that government is less of a load for the people and that taxes are being employed more usefully. These sorts of gains mean that those people in our community who are genuinely in need will be better provided for. Savings in areas like this enable increases in spending in areas such as community services so that those people in genuine need in our community are able to have some of their needs better met. That is of vital importance.

I refer now to the fourth area - the question of debt - which I said was of such great importance in my first speech delivered in a budget debate in this Parliament. It is pleasing to see that progress in this area has been very solid. In 1987 net debt in New South Wales was 22.6 per cent of gross State product. This year it will be 16 per cent of gross State product. That is a dramatic improvement - an improvement which demonstrates that this Government cares about the future of the people of this State. It is vital for the question of debt to be kept under control so that we can have confidence in the future - a matter of paramount importance. The issues which I have raised clearly demonstrate that this is a caring and responsible Budget. The budget for the Department of Community Services has had a dramatic increase - 11 per cent to an historic level of \$814 million; an increase of \$197 million during this Government's term in office. That represents a 32 per cent increase over that period. These are dramatic results. As I indicated earlier, clearly, this is a superb Budget - one that is a great credit to the Government and to Premier Fahey. I commend this Budget.

**Mr LANGTON** (Kogarah) [9.0]: I listened to the rhetoric from the Minister, who talked about what seems to be his forté, accounting and accounts. He spoke about the advances which this Government has allegedly made in accrual accounting. The people with whom I associate, particularly in the area of transport but also in my electorate of Kogarah, do not spell it the same way as he does. They spell it "cruel". It shows very clearly that we have a budget, particularly in the area of transport, which is like so much of what we hear from the Minister for Transport, that is, it is all words and no actions. I went to the library and looked for the press releases issued by the Minister for Transport subsequent to the Budget. I found 29 pages of press releases. I quickly scanned through them and in the course of the next half hour or so I will give a

Page 6719

critique on most of those. I watched a very clever television show on Sunday night, a satirical show about Columbus. The actor who played the part of Columbus said: "I believe anything I say three times is true. Often twice is enough." That is so much like the Minister for Transport, because he has convinced himself that he is actually doing something in the area of transport when in fact he has no vision, no plan, no commitment whatsoever to ensure a reasonable, reliable and efficient public transport system in this city or in this State.

We need only to go through the Budget to see through the claims made by the Minister for Transport about what is allegedly in this Budget. I will come to that in a moment. First I refer to the general area of the Department of Transport. Year after year since 1988 we have witnessed this Government allowing the private transport

industry in this State to self-regulate. In other words, the taxi industry and the private bus industry have been allowed to regulate themselves. There is nowhere a passenger can go to complain about a taxi with a bald tyre or a private bus with loose seats. In fact, the Budget figures show quite clearly that while additional staff were appointed this year to corporate services in the Department of Transport, for the second year in succession there has been a reduction in the number of inspectors. Last year 64 went, and a further 22 have been lost this year. A total of 86 inspectors from the Department of Transport have gone in two years, and as a consequence the Department of Transport has far less ability to adequately police the taxi services, private bus contracts, the wonderful service performance contracts that the Minister trumpets and, of course, to deal with individual passenger complaints.

People have informed me that when they have gone to the Department of Transport to complain about a private bus, with 86 children on board, having a broken headlight, a missing rear vision mirror and a bald tyre, they have been told the Department of Transport does not have anything to do with it, that it does not have adequate inspectors, and that these people should complain to the bus company. A basic function of any government should be the regulation of those sorts of vehicles when they are carrying members of the public. Instead, in the past two years alone the number of inspectors has decreased by 86. The Minister claimed that capital expenditure has been increased from \$28 million to \$50 million for items such as bus-rail interchanges and parking, but a close reading of the Budget reveals a grant this year from the Federal Government of \$47.8 million from the Australia Land Transport Development Fund and from the Better Cities program, not to mention the \$5.5 million which has come from the parking space levy.

As to the increase in capital expenditure to \$50 million, the Minister obviously said to himself: "I am pretty good. I have said it three times now so it must be true. I am spending \$50 million." However, the \$47.8 million grant from the Federal Government, plus the \$5.5 million from the parking space levy this year, total \$53.3 million. In other words, the Minister has ripped the people off for \$3.3 million. That is, some \$3.3 million allegedly dedicated for bus-rail interchanges and for commuter car parking has disappeared. He also said new bus-rail interchanges would be built in a whole range of places. He mentioned Penrith, Liverpool, Seven Hills, St Marys and Gosford. These were included in the 1990 Budget; they are not new projects at all. They were due for completion next year; they are still due for completion next year. But we have a re-announcement in the Budget of a new project. The Minister must have said it three times because he believes it and he expects everybody else to believe it as well.

Page 6720

I refer to the State Rail Authority budget this year. The Minister for Community Services spoke of the wonderful increase in productivity and reduced commitment by the taxpayers to funding the running costs of the State Rail Authority. It takes only a quick reading of the Budget to realise that there has been the most gigantic fiddle in presenting the Budget and the accounts of the State Rail Authority. For many years until 1988 we heard claims that the State Rail Authority was losing \$3 million a day, about a billion dollars a year. This Government claims that that cost has been massively reduced, but what is the fact? The Budget Papers show that this year the running cost is not \$1 billion of taxpayers' money in subsidy to the State Rail Authority; it is \$923 million - almost the same figure. However, the debt servicing charges have been removed from the State Rail Authority budget; they are lost in Treasury somewhere.

If those items are added to the \$923 million the annual cost to the taxpayers of

running the State Rail Authority is more than it was in 1988, and more than it was in 1987. Where is the saving to the taxpayer? Alternatively, if that much money is being allocated to the State Rail Authority, where are the improved services? Go anywhere in New South Wales and ask users of public transport whether they have a better or more reliable rail system, a better bus system, or a better ferry system than they had four years ago and those people will respond with a unanimous no, because there is no commitment by this Government to providing services. I have looked through the mission statements for the State Rail Authority and for the State Transit Authority. Not until page 3 is there mention of carrying passengers. There are commitments and targets for debt reduction and dividend payments to the Treasury and targets for job losses, but way down the bottom they actually talk about getting a passenger safely from A to B and on time. That should be the number one mission. The people of New South Wales pay taxes. They expect something in return. They expect a hospital, a school, a police station, public transport. They are happy to pay for it but they want a service. With this Government people are paying more but getting less. Whatever happened to this quaint system of democracy which has been built up for a couple of hundred years? If we pay the Government money in taxes, we should get a service in return. All of a sudden in New South Wales over the past four years that has failed to exist.

I should refer also to the capital works program which the Minister has trumpeted as being one of his great achievements for this year. He referred to the \$2.6 billion upgrading program. I recall the \$2.6 billion upgrading program being announced in late 1987 by the Minister for Transport at that time, the Hon. Terry Sheahan. I recall it being announced by the present Minister for Transport in 1988. I heard it announced again in 1989 and once more a couple of weeks ago. It is the same \$2.6 billion program. In 1987 and 1988 it was a five-year program that would be finished by 1993. In the 1989-90 Budget Papers one found that it was no longer a five-year program but was an 11-year program and that the completion date had gone from 1993 to 1999. The Minister for Transport now says that the capital works budget has been increased by \$120 million this year, which has come obviously from the sale of the GIO. The Government has increased the capital budget for the State Rail Authority by \$120 million. Why was that done? Because the completion date for that \$2.6 billion five-year program has gone back to 1998. So the people of New South Wales are still losing. That is now a 10-year program instead of an 11-year program, but initially it was a five-year program for the modernisation of the rail system, upgrading of the signalling system and restoring the basic infrastructure. No benefit has been gained. The five-year program has blown out to 10 years and we are told that somehow that is good for the State. One does not have to be a Rhodes scholar to work out that there is no benefit for the people of New South Wales.

Page 6721

The next matter to which I refer in regard to the State Rail Authority is the automatic train protection system, which is a new computer-based CityRail safety system designed to be completed in a couple of years at a cost of \$87 million. In 1991 not one cent was spent on that project. As it is a program costing \$87 million, one would think surely a decent allocation would be made for it in the Budget. However, only \$200,000 has been allocated for a project that the Minister for Transport said is vital for the safety of CityRail commuters, vital to the integrity of the system. Last year nothing was spent on that \$87 million project and this year only a lousy \$200,000 is to be spent. The Government cannot be serious. Also in regard to transport I should refer to the so-called Parramatta River service, which has been renamed in this year's Budget: the provision of infrastructure for a high speed ferry service. Each year the Government changes the name of the project hoping to confuse people so that they will think they are not

comparing the same thing each year. Each year the items on the capital works program get a change of name. One can assume that the provision of infrastructure for a high speed ferry service and the Parramatta River ferry service are one and the same thing.

Let me deal with the Parramatta and Meadowbank ferries and the dredging that is necessary to enable ferries to complete the journey to Parramatta. Back in May I issued a press release in which I said that the Parramatta River channel was too narrow and would require further dredging. The Minister responded and said that blind Freddie could navigate a RiverCat up the river. In the capital works expenditure program in the Budget Papers the State Transit Authority has admitted that "some areas already dredged required further deepening and this cost would be met by the Department of Transport". In other words \$2 million more will be spent on dredging a river that blind Freddie was supposed to be able to navigate. I am sure taxpayers, especially the people of Parramatta, will be interested in that matter. I should refer briefly to the Maritime Services Board and the item in the capital works budget titled "Fitout of Waterways Offices/Mobile Office Facility". Apart from the fact that the budget has blown out from \$690,000 to more than \$1 million, I wonder what the Maritime Services Board building is for. Why is the Maritime Services Board building these premises? It would seem that the board has every intention of further reducing staff numbers. This expensive accommodation might be empty. Recently the Maritime Services Board refused to give the Water and Maritime Industry Union information about staff numbers, after a freedom of information request. The reason the board gave was, "They are documents which could reasonably be expected to have a substantial adverse effect on the conduct of industrial relations by the Maritime Services Board".

One might well ask: is the Maritime Services Board planning further job cuts? My information indicates that at least another 300 jobs will go, 200 of them being forced redundancies. As a result of what one is told is a job creation budget, a budget that will bring about a job loss freeze, 300 positions will go from the Maritime Services Board - and they will go from the lower end of the scale, not from the highly paid staff of the Maritime Services Board. In the *Sydney Morning Herald* of Saturday, 26th September advertisements were placed for a Corporate Services Manager of the Maritime Services Board, \$64,000; Port Operations Manager, \$67,000; Business Development Manager, \$58,000. The Maritime Services Board can still afford those positions but cannot afford 300 jobs for workers who are doing a job. Why is the Maritime Services Board not reinvesting some of its lucrative profits in the Port Authority, helping to make the waterfront more efficient? Why does it not pass on some of the savings to users of the waterfront rather than pay them all to Treasury? I understand that a dividend must be paid to Treasury, but money is being taken from the shippers. The idea of waterfront reform was to get efficiency throughout the entire system, to make exports more competitive and to cut down the cost of transport for our exporters. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

Page 6722

Any benefits that have accrued from waterfront reform have not been returned to the industry, the shippers or the exporters. They have gone to the Treasury coffers, to pay fat executive salaries, or to provide opulently furnished offices. The Maritime Services Board could be and should be improving efficiency on the waterfront and allowing exporters to reap some of the benefits. I should refer briefly to the Roads and Traffic Authority budget and the claim by the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works, and Minister for Roads that there has been a marvellous increase in that budget this year. The increase in the roads budget has come from two places: first, \$109 million underspent last year; and, second, an increase of \$143 million from the Federal Government - a \$250 million increase from two sources alone for which this Government

claims the benefit. Let me quote from a source as authoritative as the National Roads and Motorists Association:

The State Government's 1992-93 road funding commitment has risen by 6.5 per cent, compared to the Federal Government's increase of almost 33 per cent. Mr Cox said the NRMA welcomed any initiative towards improving the State's many ailing roads, but the Federal Government deserved due credit for the substantial funding boost included in its One Nation program.

I repeat that I was quoting what had been said by a spokesperson for the NRMA. That explains where the money is coming from. I do not have sufficient time to go into detail now, but the specific programs included in the capital works budget for the Roads and Traffic Authority show clearly the truth of the allegations I have been making over the past couple of years about gross waste and mismanagement in the Roads and Traffic Authority and that the precious dollars coming from the motorists are being lost before they can be spent on the State's roads. I shall refer to a couple of those matters. Construction of ramps at Wallgrove Road, Eastern Creek Raceway involves a cost of \$10 million purely to service Eastern Creek Raceway. The Eastern Creek Horsley Drive deviation involves another \$10 million purely for the Eastern Creek Raceway. The Victoria Road, West Ryde five-lane rail underpass has been delayed until 1995. The honourable member for Ermington promised that work would be completed by the end of this year. However, this year only \$513,000 has been allocated, therefore the program has been stalled.

Of the \$33 million allocated for the southern freeway project from Gwinvilla to Ghost Creek near Wollongong only \$800,000 has been spent in three years. On the Central Coast major works cost \$12.8 million in 1991-92 yet this year the sum is only \$8.6 million. That is a 30 per cent decrease in major capital works funding on the Central Coast at a time when millions of dollars have been wasted by the Minister for Roads and the Roads and Traffic Authority on a computer which will not work. Millions of dollars are disappearing into the pockets of consultants. Over the past 18 months \$40 million has been spent on consultants for that computer project. This Government will be remembered for that single issue alone. The Roads and Traffic Authority's computer will be a millstone around the neck of the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works, and Minister for Roads and this Government because it epitomises the actions of the Minister. He has wasted money, mismanaged the project and fed consultants year after year - and in the end the project has failed.

All honourable members are aware of the problems with the Raleigh Bridge deviation on the Pacific Highway south of Coffs Harbour; capital works have been delayed until 1997. The costs have blown out from \$18 million to \$32 million. At the same time the chief executive of the Roads and Traffic Authority has said that the deviation will not be built at all because a tollway is to be constructed. Why has the capital works budget this year been allocated \$32 million when the deviation is not going

Page 6723  
to be built? An allocation has also been made for the Bulahdelah to Coolongolook section and Madam Deputy-Speaker would be aware of that section of road. \$101.934 million has been allowed in the Budget yet everyone knows that will be a tollway. Perhaps the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works, and Minister for Roads will tell us why that is in the capital works budget.

I wish to refer briefly to matters affecting my electorate of Kogarah. Several problems exist regarding capital expenditure. First, I inspected Kogarah police station and spoke with police about the appalling standard of their accommodation. Kogarah



police station is a disgrace. For years this Government has promised to allocate funds in the Budget. At no time has Kogarah police station appeared in the capital works program, and it certainly does not appear in this Budget. Approximately a fortnight ago nine prisoners were jammed into a couple of cells. The accommodation is grossly substandard. I implore this Government and the new Minister for Police to consider allocating funds to improve the amenities at Kogarah police station.

I am concerned about the way global budgeting is working in schools. Local parents and teachers are worried that teaching quality will suffer because schools will be unable to afford rising maintenance costs and pay for specialised teaching staff. What do the disadvantaged schools have to sacrifice? Do they sacrifice classes of English as a second language, libraries, sports equipment? What happens when a building is so run down that the need for urgent repairs cannot be ignored? Will this incur staff cuts because this is what is happening in each public school in my electorate and the electorates of honourable members opposite. Daily those decisions have to be taken. On 20th September the *Sun Herald* reported that Kogarah High School had suggested to staff that cheaper and less experienced casual teachers should be employed when the only requirement was "babysitting". Is that what our children go to school for - to be babysat by inexperienced teachers because the school cannot afford to pay experienced staff to take lessons when a permanent teacher is absent? A letter from the St George Teachers Association sent to the Director-General of Education stated:

There is no evidence that your stated dismantling has resulted in students' outcomes having improved. Indeed, if recent examples of students having to take to the streets to sell lottery tickets for school fundraising are heeded, your actions have resulted in students developing a beggar mentality: hardly the life in the twenty-first century a society would wish for its youth.

Schools in my electorate desperately need assistance with maintenance and major capital works. Carlton primary school desperately needs maintenance. On 18th August I wrote to the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, and Minister for Employment and Training for Carlton Public School to be put on the top of the list of priorities for maintenance. At the time I stated that the school had reached crisis point and that there was an urgent need for construction of a new administration and staff building, a communal hall incorporating a kitchen, an upgraded library and classrooms. Similarly, Carlton South primary school badly needs maintenance. Even people from the Department of School Education would admit that Blakehurst High School is grossly deficient in space and in regard to how the buildings have been erected. The school needs to be rebuilt urgently to adequately meet the needs of high school students in that area.

In housing there is a grave shortage of single bedroom ground floor units. Those units are in high demand by the ageing population and people with disabilities. I appreciate provision of the erection of 35 units at Blakehurst and eight at Sans Souci. However, I request the Minister for Housing to look urgently at the need for single bedroom ground floor units. Also, I appreciate the recent work undertaken to upgrade Kogarah railway station. However, when \$800,000 to \$900,000 has been spent on

Page 6724

upgrading the station why could not the work have been carried out properly with adequate covering to protect passengers from the weather on the two outside stairs of platforms 1 and 4? Passengers have to walk in the rain to get to the ticket boxes. When so many workmen were swarming over Kogarah station it would have been so easy to carry out this extra work. Also, why cannot the ground level ingress and egress to platforms 1 and 4 be opened to provide access for people with disabilities, mothers with prams and the elderly who cannot walk up and down the stairs? Our public transport

system, particularly our rail system, is almost designed to deter those people from catching public transport.

Probably nothing epitomises more the penny-pinching attitude and incorrect priorities of this Government than the community cottage at Carlton between Kogarah and Carlton railway stations. This was previously the station master's cottage and was leased a couple of years ago to Kogarah council for use by the local community aid information centre as a child care centre and before and after school care centre. The State Rail Authority leased that cottage to the council for a nominal rent of \$240. This was probably \$240 too much considering the enormous benefit gained from it and the fact that it is no drain on the State's coffers. However, this year the State Rail Authority, in its penny-pinching attitude, has bumped up the rent to more than \$1,000. We see throughout this Budget millions of dollars being wasted on consultants, on a computer which is not going to work, on fat cat salaries and on luxury offices, but we cannot afford \$1,000 for a child care centre - a before and after school care centre at Carlton. That is the attitude which epitomises this Government. It is why the people of New South Wales will decry this Budget. The Minister for Transport has no cause whatsoever to hold his head up because he has nothing to be proud of.

**Mr MORRIS** (Blue Mountains) [9.30]: It is with extreme pride and pleasure I speak in support of the 1992-93 Fahey Budget, a budget I regard as being completely fiscally responsible and compassionate. It is a budget that will bring about an air of added confidence in New South Wales that will create jobs. I am especially proud to say that once again the Blue Mountains electorate will benefit considerably from the first Budget of Premier Fahey. Before I outline the many positive aspects this Budget presents to the people of the Blue Mountains I feel it necessary to comment on the grim background the Budget was brought down against. Despite assurances from the Prime Minister that the recession is over, many families still continue to be hurt from the worst economic downturn in 60 years. For the unemployed the recession is far from over; for the people who have seen their businesses crushed by high interest rates, the recession is far from over; for those parents who have had to watch in despair as their children try to make a future in these hard economic times, the recession is far from over. The simple fact is that times are tough, and they will continue to be tough while the present Federal Government continues to subject Australians to its ill-designed policies. While it is true people in this State have suffered from the recession, because it has been impossible to completely shield New South Wales from the disastrous effect of this recession, the fact remains that this State has been a star performer and will continue to be so.

It is fair to say the citizens of New South Wales have been spared the worst effects of this recession due solely to the competent economic management of the Government under the former Premier, Mr Greiner, who realised that as a State we had to pay our own way, and the reliance on credit had to finish to ensure that the next generation of Australians had a future. This fact has not been lost on the new Premier and Treasurer, the Hon. John Fahey; his Budget shows that. The allocated amount in the 1992-93 Budget for capital works represents an increase from the level of the last

Page 6725

fiscal year. In total the capital works program for 1992-93 will be the sum of \$5.894 billion. This is an increase from \$5.242 billion, an increase of 10.1 per cent in real terms over the 1991-92 figure. Put simply, the capital works program will have the effect of adding \$1.7 billion to the New South Wales gross State product and will create 18,000 new and sustainable jobs.

It can be seen that in key areas such as roads and health an increase has been registered in the capital works program. The roads program has been increased to a

record high of some \$1.499 billion, which represents an increase of 20.9 per cent over the figure for last year. The capital works budget for health has also been increased. The allocation for 1992-93 of \$322 million for health services represents an increase of \$54 million or 17.5 per cent in real terms over last year's figure. Despite the federally-induced recession and the shattering effects it has had on our revenue base, despite the process of horizontal fiscal equalisation taking away \$1.4 billion, the capital works budget has been increased without blowing out the debt. In essence we are paying our way. It is also important to emphasise that the Government is not only about providing money for capital works, but also is about being there to provide funds for community services. Once again this Budget delivers.

It is now my pleasure to inform the House of the many positive things the Budget has to offer the people of the Blue Mountains. My electorate spans approximately 1,400 kilometres and hence covers a very diverse area. It is an electorate endowed with natural beauty and its many landmarks are known worldwide. I am not boasting when I say my electorate will be the area where employment growth will occur. It has been well documented that the tourism industry will be a major employer. For obvious reasons the Blue Mountains electorate will be best placed to provide those jobs. Suffice it to say that the Blue Mountains region must be looked after and I am very proud to be a member of a Government that has recognised this and acted accordingly. The mess that was left after 12 years of hard Labor has been addressed by this Government. Money has been spent improving the infrastructure of the Blue Mountains to ensure that this unique and important area remains pristine. I am very proud to say that my electorate will receive in excess of \$70 million from this Budget, which will be spent on capital works in basically all the key areas. The Blue Mountains people will benefit in roads, rail, education, housing, health and the environment. This Budget delivers the goods.

The 1992-93 Budget is very attractive in regard to road funding. An amount of \$2 million will be allocated to the Blue Mountains City Council to be used on local roads. I am pleased to advise that the Roads and Traffic Authority has recently commissioned consultants to undertake concept development studies for the upgrading of the Great Western Highway through Warrimoo, Faulconbridge, Lawson and Hazelbrook. Warrimoo has been awarded to Connell Wagner, Faulconbridge to PPK Consultants Pty Limited and both Lawson and Hazelbrook to Kinhill Engineers Pty Limited. The work for each project will involve the development of concept design options and selections of a preferred option. In keeping with the highway management plan, community consultation and participation will be a feature of these studies. The commissions for Warrimoo and Faulconbridge include the preparation of public exhibitions of environmental impact assessments that will provide final determinations as to whether the projects should proceed as proposed, be amended or not proceed.

The studies for Lawson and Hazelbrook are to identify the feasibility and preferred options only. Further studies will be commenced at a later date to undertake the environmental impact assessments. An amount of \$2.204 million will be spent on restoration, preservation and road user services. A total of \$1.1 million will be spent on

Page 6726

constructing traffic facilities. The massive project for the reconstruction of the Woodford Bends has received \$9 million. The sum of \$67,000 will be spent on minor enhancement of the Great Western Highway at Hazelbrook and \$205,000 will be spent on providing traffic lights at Wentworth Falls. This has been a black spot where there have been many accidents. After representations to the Minister I was pleased to see he had acted on this in the Budget. Work on the F4 Tollway is a great boost to the people of the Blue Mountains. Work on Lapstone Hill will result in the run to Springwood being

made in 43 minutes from the city on a good day.

**Mrs Lo Po':** That is Federal money, not State money.

**Mr MORRIS:** It is our money that we pay taxes for and they collect.

**Mrs Lo Po':** It is given by the Federal Government.

**Mr MORRIS:** And it gives it back and we spend it wisely.

**Mr Humpherson:** We do not get it all back.

**Mr MORRIS:** We do not get it all back. We get 4c in the dollar from every litre of petrol that is sold. We should get 32c. The very impressive sum of \$4 million will be spent on railway projects in my electorate with the intention of creating a world class railway system to the Blue Mountains. Such projects include the essential program of renewing the signalling system between Emu Plains and Katoomba at a cost of \$1.5 million. An amount of \$830,000 will be spent on upgrading the electrical system between Glenbrook and Linden, at Lawson and at Newnes Junction. A total of \$510,000 will be spent on embankment works at Mount Boyce, Mount Victoria, Katoomba and Lawson. Blaxland and Valley Heights will have their footbridges upgraded at a cost of \$370,000 and \$30,000 will be spent on improving the lighting at Woodford Station. Signal cables between Mount Victoria and Lithgow will be renewed at a cost of \$390,000.

The Mount Boyce culvert will be renewed at a cost of \$100,000, and \$318,000 will be spent on a microwave communication system. A new car park and footbridge is to be opened at Wentworth Falls this weekend at a cost of \$270,000. At Springwood a car park for 140 cars will be opened at a cost of \$1.3 million. On education \$41,500 has been allocated for Blackheath Public School and a similar amount allocated to the North Katoomba Public School to complete stage one of the construction of school halls, which will cost \$568,000. A total of \$100,000 will be spent on minor works at Katoomba High School.

I am very proud that two men who are no longer members of this House, the Hon. Tim Moore and the Hon. Nick Greiner, saw fit to bite the bullet with regard to sewer connections in the Blue Mountains. The former Labor Government published a pretty green book and had a plan to sewer the Blue Mountains by the year 2025. Our Government has seen fit to accelerate the program to bring it on line by 1996. Local waterways will improve significantly when the Blue Mountains sewerage transfer scheme is completed in 1996. The 9.5 kilometre Hazelbrook phase was completed in August at a cost of \$24 million, and about six weeks ahead of schedule. The Blue Mountains sewerage transfer scheme and associated infrastructure will provide residents with one of the most efficient sewage treatment systems in the world. When completed, the 39 kilometre tunnel - 15 times the length of Sydney Harbour Tunnel - will bypass six outdated sewage treatment plants and will allow the connection of more than 3,000

Page 6727

properties which are at present unsewered. Five sewage treatment plants will close as work on the tunnel draws to completion. They are located at Hazelbrook, Valley Heights, Wentworth Falls, South Katoomba and North Katoomba.

When those plants have been closed all sewage from the Blue Mountains will be transferred via the new tunnel to a high-tech plant at Winmalee. The next stage of the project is being negotiated. The tunnel scheme is expected to be completed by 1996 and

that work will take place from Lawson to North Katoomba, a distance of 18 kilometres. The Blue Mountains City Council has been allocated \$2,154,430 for work on regional roads. The Greater Lithgow City Council has received funding of \$447,000 and the Oberon shire, which borders my electorate, has been allocated \$689,000 for regional roadworks. An amount of \$11.3 million will be spent to sewer 1,100 properties this year. An allocation of \$6.8 million will be made for the Blue Mountains sewerage tunnel project and a total of \$2 million will be spent to divert the sewer at Valley Heights. The Winnalee treatment plant will be amplified at a cost of \$5 million. The Cascade treatment plant at North Katoomba will receive \$8 million for freshwater development, and \$3 million is to be spent on infrastructure renewals.

A total of \$1,924,000 will be spent on building 23 new accommodation units in Katoomba and Leura, and for that I commend the Minister for Housing. Health still remains a priority for this Government and once again health funding in this State has been increased. The trend towards day surgery has been well documented and this trend is occurring worldwide. A total of \$90,000 will be spent on day surgery facilities at Springwood Hospital. The Blue Mountains electorate will benefit greatly from the \$630,000 that has been allocated to upgrade intensive care monitoring equipment at Nepean Hospital.

As I said earlier, the Blue Mountains has great natural beauty and, therefore, spending on environmental projects is imperative. I am delighted to say that as a result of funding from this Budget the environment of the Blue Mountains region will be the winner. An allocation of \$576,000 will be made for improvements to visitor facilities and the national park. An amount of \$40,000 will be spent on fire abatement at the Mount Tomah Botanic Garden. The Department of Conservation and Land Management has given the Blue Mountains City Council a grant of \$110,510 for soil stabilisation and bush regeneration at Mount Boyce, as well as \$18,000 for the Fairy Dell restoration committee at Springwood. The Hon. E. P. Pickering, the Minister for Emergency Services in another place, has seen fit to give \$800,000 to build an emergency services centre in Katoomba to house the State Emergency Service and the headquarters of the Bush Fire Services. Honourable members will be aware that the Blue Mountains is one of the most fire prone areas in the world and the local community is proud of its 26 local brigades. The people in those brigades are all volunteers. About 1,300 members give up their weekends to fight fires on the ridges and in the valleys that abound throughout the Blue Mountains. On behalf of the Government I extend gratitude to those people for the invaluable service they give to the community. We are lucky that these volunteers look after our wonderful local heritage. Last week the Minister for Health visited my electorate and launched the 1992 Leura Gardens Festival. The festival has been held for the past 20 years and in that time more than \$1 million has been raised by the committee and a handful of garden lovers. All money received goes to the Blue Mountains District Anzac Memorial Hospital. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

I should like to place on public record my great thanks to Mr Bill Jensen who is President of the Leura Gardens Committee. When the Minister for Health was in the electorate last week he announced that \$600,000 would be made available to upgrade the paediatric ward at the hospital. Mr Jensen and his committee have seen fit to give the

Page 6728

receipts from this year's garden festival - perhaps more than \$100,000 - to refurbish this important project. Mr Jensen is a man of exceptional energy. He is in his seventies and he and his wife travel about 16,000 kilometres throughout New South Wales in the off season distributing pamphlets and brochures encouraging people to see the beautiful gardens in the Blue Mountains. I was at the festival last Saturday and was told that Mr Jensen had a record day. Most of his committee members are approaching 80 years of

age and they raised more than \$18,000 on Saturday and more than \$17,000 on Sunday. The festival brings many people to the mountains who stay in our hotels and guest houses. The spin-off for the area from the festival over nine days is estimated to be in the vicinity of \$10 million. The region has been packed with tourists. I should like to refer also to sport and recreation grants for my electorate as set out in the Budget. Grants in excess of \$50,000 will be made. Some of that money will be spent to upgrade Brownstown oval at Mount Victoria. The oval services between 8,000 and 10,000 families. The Katoomba pistol club will receive funding to go towards providing a new club-house at Leura for its 200 members.

Tennis court upgrading at Winmalee, work on the club-house and the oval at Hazelbrook are just a few of the projects that will be undertaken as a result of this allocation. The Minister for Community Services is responsible for more than 53 service offices throughout the Blue Mountains. The recurrent expenditure each year for those services is \$1.75 million. The Blue Mountains, which is strung out along a ridge, has 26 towns and villages whose climatic conditions are very harsh with cold and long winters. Community services officers are dedicated; they do a great job and I thank them deeply. Since I have been the honourable member for Blue Mountains this Government has delivered five budgets, which have put almost half a billion dollars into the area to bring it up to date. There is still much more to be done but the Government is working on it and the area is progressing very well. A new TAFE college at Wentworth Falls is under construction at a cost of \$31 million. The land has been purchased, the project has gone to design, and the first stage will cost \$11.9 million. It will take enrolments in 1995.

In conclusion, I am very proud to be a member of a government that is totally committed to the people of New South Wales. I am equally proud of the interest this Government has shown and continues to show in my electorate, which will ensure that the Blue Mountains region will have a world-class rail system and road network that compare favourably with any in Australia. In spite of the opportunistic whingeing and whining of the Opposition, which seems more interested in playing little political games, this Government has taken the tough decisions that the former Government was too frightened to take; decisions that were essential to the well being of New South Wales. Instead of just thinking about what had to be done the former Premier, Mr Greiner, and the current Premier, the Hon. John Fahey, being men of action and vision, rolled up their sleeves and did the job, and in doing so have made this State a better place. I support the Budget.

**Mr SHEDDEN** (Bankstown) [9.52]: I was interested to hear the honourable member for Blue Mountains say that since he has been the member for Blue Mountains of the order of half a billion dollars has been spent in his electorate. That is an indication of what this Government is prepared to do - so far as spending money is concerned - to hold a marginal seat. I only wish I could say that the same amount has been spent in the electorate of Bankstown. I am delighted to have the opportunity to reply to the Premier's Budget Speech and to indicate to the House the real difference between the Premier's rhetoric and the reality of the Budget as it affects the people of western and southwestern Sydney and in particular my electorate of Bankstown. I will deal with the impact that the

Page 6729

Budget will have on my electorate later in my contribution. As the Leader of the Opposition said in his reply to the Budget, "Greinerism is indeed alive and well. Very little has changed". Members on this side of the House year after year were continually told by the former Premier, Mr Greiner, that we would see a balanced Budget. Premier Fahey and his party is saying the same thing. They are members of a government that believes it was born to rule, that prides itself on being a sound economic manager, but

which has lowered this State's performance to a level not much better than that of Victoria. This is a government that has been responsible for finishing the 1991-92 financial year with a deficit of \$1,280 million, which gives every indication that Greinerism is indeed alive and well. The new Premier, and Treasurer has projected that the financial result in 1992-93 will be a deficit of \$1,225 million, taking into consideration the sale of the GIO. What a performance!

The Premier presented the Budget on the theme of creating jobs: 5,000 jobs with a flow-on of 18,000 jobs. This is a mere dream. It is reasonable to expect the creation of 5,000 jobs with extra capital works spending but the reference to as many as 18,000 flow-on jobs is certainly grossly overstated. It is amazing that no mention was made by the Premier in his speech of the loss of close to 8,000 public sector jobs as outlined in the Budget Papers. These are real figures because they are taken directly from the Budget Papers. It is worth while putting on the record the effects on the community of New South Wales of these particular jobs cutbacks. The Electricity Commission will lose 849 jobs; the State Rail Authority 1,651 jobs; the State Transit Authority 923 jobs; the Water Board 131 jobs; the area health services including hospitals 1,738 jobs; the Department of Community Services 215 jobs; the Department of Conservation and Land Management 133 jobs; the ambulance service 66 jobs; the Department of Courts Administration 72 jobs; the Roads and Traffic Authority 1,572 jobs; and the Department of Housing 355 jobs. What a performance for a government that has led the people of New South Wales to believe that it was creating an atmosphere of jobs when possibly more jobs will be lost than will be created by government spending.

I wish to refer to matters that affect my electorate of Bankstown. I am not able to speak in glowing terms similar to those expressed by the honourable member for Blue Mountains. All honourable members agree that housing is a critical issue in New South Wales. Most of the electorates in western and southwestern Sydney suffer greatly from the lack of public housing. It is interesting to compare the number of housing units built last year and this year in my electorate of Bankstown. Last year in the program 132 housing units were built but with housing programs deteriorating this year only 46 housing units will be built. Currently 5,000 people are waiting for public housing in the Bankstown Department of Housing area. The waiting list is five to seven years for three-bedroom accommodation, four years for two-bedroom accommodation and five years for one-bedroom accommodation. Currently 466 people are waiting for four-bedroom accommodation in the Bankstown area but only 15 houses have four bedrooms. On average only four four-bedroom properties become available each year. That means that people who apply tomorrow for four-bedroom accommodation housing in Bankstown will wait approximately 100 years for that accommodation.

There continues to be a lack of maintenance funding so far as this Government is concerned. The works program for the electorate of Bankstown has been allocated a very limited amount of finance for maintenance, and people in the electorate continue to be concerned about the poor level of maintenance service. They often wait days and sometimes weeks to have the most critical maintenance attended to. It is just not acceptable. In today's world where people are paying almost commercial rents for Department of Housing accommodation they should at least receive reasonable

Page 6730

maintenance service. It was interesting to hear the Premier say that \$778 million would be spent on public transport - an increase of about 35 per cent on last year's figure. The Premier also indicated that this budget allocation would be spent on improving safety and increasing reliability in CityRail. An article appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 22nd September entitled "Sydney commuters are going off the rails". That article states in part:

Sydney's CBD commuters have switched in droves from public transport to private cars.

Transport planners say this alarming trend is caused by a huge rise in off-street parking places in the CBD.

Only 72 per cent of commuters to central Sydney now go by public transport - a drop from 80 per cent five years ago, according to preliminary results of a Roads and Traffic Authority survey.

Constituents on the Bankstown and Chester Hill lines are craving for a better service and certainly a better timetable.

**Mr Baird:** They have never had it so good. It is certainly a lot better now than it was under the previous Labor Government.

**Mr SHEDDEN:** I would like to invite the Minister to wait at the stations and travel to work by train but I know he will not accept my offer. One has only to speak to regular commuters and to State Rail Authority staff to establish how bad the services are on those lines. Most honourable members would not have heard of transposition slips. The control officer at central control gives authority to late running trains to skip stations, leaving hundreds of commuters at stations and many people on board trains who are not aware of those station skips. Basically, that means that people waiting to go to work each morning have no idea that train drivers have been given authority to skip stations. Commuters are left standing on platforms. In addition, people on board trains who are supposed to get off at particular stations do not always know that those stations are to be skipped. Train drivers accumulate an average of 40 to 60 transposition slips each quarter. Divide that number by 700 train drivers in the metropolitan system and that gives a real indication of the quality of the timetables and the services. From time to time I hear SRA radio reports that all morning trains are running on time. I know that this is not the case. One SRA employee informed me that, on hearing the SRA report one morning that all trains were running on time, he knew of at least three that were running late - one 35 minutes late, a second 25 minutes late and a third 15 minutes late. It is also common knowledge that commuters and staff know that all trains that arrive at Central within 10 minutes of the time they are scheduled to arrive are classed as running on time.

**Mr Baird:** That is rubbish!

**Mr SHEDDEN:** It is true and the Minister knows it. The article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on Tuesday, 22nd December, 1991, which stated, "Sydney CBD train commuters have switched in droves from public transport to private cars" comes as no surprise to me. I wish now to deal with the effects of road funding on my electorate of Bankstown. Most honourable members would know of the new north-south road, a major connecting road linking the Princes Highway and the Pacific Highway. It actually commences at Engadine and runs through Menai, Bankstown, Lidcombe, Silverwater, Pennant Hills and Hornsby. This year's budget allocation for major works enhancement and 3 x 3 road funding in my electorate is a grand total of \$51,000 - nothing like the allocation for National Party members or the allocation for the honourable member for

Page 6731

Blue Mountains. What exciting figures! The north-south road, which has been under construction for a number of years, is a much-needed road to alleviate major feeder traffic from Princes Highway to the Pacific Highway on a daily basis. A major problem for my electorate is the main intersection at Stacey Street, the Hume Highway and Rookwood Road - a dogleg intersection. People refuse to use that intersection because it takes at



least 20 minutes to get through it. Of course, everyone has a fancy way of travelling through the Bankstown commercial district to the industrial area south of Bankstown and this causes major traffic chaos in that area in the morning and in the afternoon. I am led to believe that at this stage the construction program for that intersection is seven years away.

I shall deal with health care. People in my electorate and people in the Canterbury, Auburn, Lidcombe and Strathfield areas - approximately 500,000 people - find it almost impossible to comprehend that the Government intends to close Lidcombe Hospital. Lidcombe Hospital is a modern 430-bed acute care facility that provides a high standard of health care, particularly for the aged. That hospital will close when Concord Repatriation General Hospital is transferred from the control of the Federal Government to the New South Wales Department of Health. People in the southwest and western areas of Sydney have already witnessed the closure of many hospitals, including St Joseph's Hospital at Auburn, which was an acute care hospital. That hospital has been downgraded to a palliative care facility. People have also witnessed the closure of Parramatta and Marrickville hospitals. Once Concord Repatriation General Hospital is transferred to the Department of Health people will witness also the closure of the Western Suburbs Hospital at Ashfield, Balmain Hospital and Eversleigh hospital at Petersham. One can understand the concern of people in my electorate and people in the wider areas of western and southwestern Sydney with regard to the Government's intention relating to health care.

It is worth while putting on the record an exposé of the operations of Lidcombe Hospital. Lidcombe Hospital provides a range of medical and rehabilitation services with a special focus on care for the aged. These services are not available in other district hospitals. Lidcombe Hospital is also a teaching hospital for the University of Sydney. The hospital offers specialist services in ophthalmology, vascular disease and orthopaedics. If Lidcombe Hospital closes, patients in need of these services will be placed elsewhere, thereby increasing waiting lists for those requiring urgent admission to an already overcrowded system. A large number of services are offered to outpatients or day-only patients at Lidcombe Hospital. This has the effect of keeping the chronically ill - long-term debilitated individuals - out of hospital. Services include the diabetic clinic, which educates, treats and maintains aged diabetic patients living at home who would otherwise require hospitalisation or alternative clinics. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

The closure of such a service would place a great strain on services being provided elsewhere at hospitals such as the Royal Prince Alfred, Westmead or perhaps Concord, as there are not equivalent services in the southwestern area of Sydney. The cardiac rehabilitation unit not only offers programs for those who have experienced severe cardiac conditions but also offers preventive programs to assist people to attain healthier or normal lifestyles and prevent a recurrence of cardiac conditions. The closure of this unit would impact severely on the major teaching hospitals by increasing demands on them and causing local people to travel considerable distances. The gastroenterology and colonoscopy services offered by the hospital provide diagnostic assessment and treatment of people on a day-only basis for ulcers and cancer.

Lidcombe Hospital currently has a full five-day per week session to cope with  
Page 6732  
the demand, as well as evening and weekend calling services. Bankstown Hospital and other general hospitals could in no way cope with this increased demand from patients, who would have to go onto waiting lists at other teaching hospitals or go to public clinics. The hospital's inpatient rehabilitation units exist for neurological stroke patients and aged or long-term debilitated individuals and amputees. The demand on this service is high

and it is difficult to find alternative venues without looking for hospitals as far away as Prince Henry Hospital at Little Bay or at Concord's Lady Davidson unit, which is located not in the western Sydney area but on the North Shore - certainly a long way from Lidcombe and Bankstown. It is worth while mentioning what will transpire with the transfer of Concord hospital in real terms as far as the southwestern and western area is concerned. As I mentioned earlier, Lidcombe Hospital specialises in aged care. With the closure of that hospital, all those specialty services that I have already mentioned would be broken down and spread between the other hospitals in western Sydney. Those hospitals could in no way handle the particular services. I refer to Fairfield, Auburn, Bankstown and Liverpool. There are indications that with the possible closure of Lidcombe Hospital a new wing will be developed at Bankstown Hospital costing in the vicinity of \$80 million. But in budget allocations announced by the Minister six weeks ago, in hospital funding for rehabilitation and for new hospital construction until 1996, there is no indication of that taking place. It is possible that when Concord comes on line and Lidcombe Hospital closes, all those specialty services that currently service 500,000 people in southwestern and western Sydney will be thrust upon those public hospitals that can least afford -

**Mr Baird:** Talk to your Federal mates; do not bring it up here.

**Mr SHEDDEN:** Forget about the Federal party. You can do better and you know it. In the Bankstown area there is a population currently of 160,000 people. By 1996 there will be 60,000 people over the age of 65. That gives some indication as to the future of health care, particularly for the aged, in southwestern Sydney with the closure of Lidcombe Hospital. There is no way that those services can be broken up and provided in those other hospitals in the southwestern and western area. Going back over the Budget that was brought down by the Premier a few weeks ago, I see no joy for the electorate of Bankstown as far as programs and development are concerned. I look with envy to the money that is currently being spent in National Party areas throughout New South Wales. I have just heard the honourable member for Blue Mountains indicate that he has had half a billion dollars spent over the last few years -

**Mr Baird:** A good member, too.

**Mr SHEDDEN:** And that is a good haircut you have got, Mr Minister.

**Mr Baird:** Better than your tie.

**Mr SHEDDEN:** Is that a special one for the Olympics?

**Mr Baird:** It is.

**Mr ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Chappell):** Order! The honourable member for Bankstown and the Minister for Transport, and Minister for Tourism will refrain from discussing matters across the Chamber. The honourable member for Bankstown will address the Chair.

Page 6733

**Mr SHEDDEN:** I will finish by saying there is no joy for the people of western Sydney from the Fahey Budget.

**Mr KERR (Cronulla) [10.17]:** I support this Budget. I follow in the debate the honourable member for Bankstown, who made a speech without a substantial

contribution. In fact, his version of what has been going on in this State is quite misleading. It is no wonder the honourable member complained about the representations of the honourable member for Blue Mountains, whose electorate has managed to receive half a billion dollars in the short period he has been in this House. In the 12 hard years of Labor the western suburbs were taken for granted. Facilities were not provided and that is why, when the former Premier, Mr Wran, left office, the coalition Opposition won the seat of Bass Hill. That showed the degree of disillusionment that had occurred under a Labor government and that occurred before the recession we had to have was imposed by his colleagues. I have always considered the honourable member for Bankstown as a political equivalent of malted milk, quite inoffensive, but he really gave the game away when he said forget about the Federal Government, forget about Federal party. Why? Because members opposite do not want to be reminded of that. That is what happened in this State. The loss of jobs and loss of revenue resulted from the beating that Keating has given this State. Members opposite have been silent while the jobs of many of their constituents and their children have gone and education opportunities have been forgone. Hospitals have not been built for decades. That is as a result of what has been occurring in Canberra.

This Government has provided impetus and stability for the Australian economy because jobs have been created despite the difficulties and obstacles. They have been created because the Government has a concept and a philosophy which contain three elements: helping ordinary people, providing equality of opportunity, and eliminating unearned privilege. The honourable member for Kogarah was simply carping and gave incorrect statistics on public transport, though rail times have been improved. The Minister for Transport can take full credit for that. Honourable members have heard the usual rhetoric about being born to rule. The Premier is the son of a miner; the father of the Minister for Transport, and Minister for Tourism, the deputy leader of the Liberal Party, ran a shoe store in Cronulla - hardly born to rule. When one speaks in terms of being wealthy and born in the purple, one realises that members opposite fit into that category. Those with the proletariat pedigree are represented by members on this side of the House.

This is a responsible Budget for hard economic times. Nobody suggests that we are living in the best of times or in prosperous times, no matter whether one lives in the western suburbs or the southern suburbs of Sydney or on the other side of the harbour. Everyone is suffering from the artificially created economic climate - the recession we had to have, the recession that ended long ago without anybody noticing, according to the Prime Minister. If members opposite went into the streets and asked their constituents whether they were aware that the recession that we had to have has ended, they would soon find out what the people think. The honourable member for Penrith, who is seeking to interject, should speak to her constituents.

**Mrs Lo Po':** I asked which budget.

**Mr KERR:** I am pleased by the degree of representation on that side of the House. I am speaking about the 1992-93 Budget. That might assist the honourable member in understanding the remainder of the debate.

**Mrs Lo Po':** Is the honourable member speaking about the Keating Budget?

Page 6734

**Mr KERR:** This country has what is called a Federal system of government. The Federal Government is responsible for the national economy. I do not want to cause

the honourable member for Penrith any difficulty or shock at this stage of life, but I should inform her that most of the revenue collected by the Federal Government has to be returned to the States in some form to enable them to carry out their business. The revenue returned to the States has been falling considerably. If the honourable member examined the Federal Budget and the State Budget, she would know what was provided to the States for hospitals. Earlier today the Minister for Health told the House about the revenue provided to hospitals by the Federal Government. That funding has been reduced since her mob gained office in Canberra. When a reallocation of hospital resources was made the honourable member for Penrith got up at a council meeting but did not say that she was standing up for the people of western Sydney. She said that she was standing up for the people of the eastern suburbs in regard to the reallocation of hospital resources. That is an example of her commitment. She was silent when her Federal colleagues were reducing the living standards of Australians.

**Mrs Lo Po':** This is Keating bashing.

**Mr KERR:** This is not about Keating bashing or Canberra bashing. It is about telling the truth regarding what the States have had to cope with in the past. That explains why this Budget is effective. If the billions of dollars to which New South Wales was entitled -

**Mr McBride:** Not billions.

**Mr KERR:** The honourable member for The Entrance should be aware that since 1986 the shortfall in Federal funding amounts to billions of dollars. There has been a reduction in Federal funding and mistakes made by the colleagues of the honourable member for The Entrance in Western Australia, South Australia and Victoria.

**Mr McBride:** And in Queensland?

**Mr KERR:** Queensland was fortunate to inherit a very healthy economy.

**Mr McBride:** So was the Greiner Government.

**Mr KERR:** That is not so, but I shall return to that in a moment. When the Goss Government came into office in Queensland it inherited a budget that was in surplus.

**Mr McBride:** So did the New South Wales Government.

**Mr KERR:** The honourable member for The Entrance suggests that this Government inherited a surplus. He should look at the Curran report and study previous State budgets, which show the degree of financial mismanagement that occurred in this State. That was revealed the first time the Government books were opened and were tabled in this House. Since 1988 this State has had an accrual accounting system and Budget Papers that are regarded as the most informative in any State.

**Mr Baird:** The honourable member should speak about Victoria's deficit.

**Mr KERR:** I will come to the comparisons.

**Mr ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Chappell):** Order! The honourable member

for Penrith and the honourable member for The Entrance will have an opportunity to participate in the debate at a later time.

**Mr KERR:** Honourable members opposite should bear in mind the pressures under which this Budget was produced. The honourable member for The Entrance has a particular interest in this topic. The New South Wales share of Commonwealth general purpose funding has been reduced in real terms by more than \$800 million since 1987-88. The size of the pool of general funds provided by the Commonwealth has been reduced and in addition this State's share of the pool has been reduced. Did one hear any protest during the period when the Labor Party was in office or while it has been in Opposition? No, one did not. Members of the Labor Party put the interests of their Federal Party above the interests of their electorates and constituents. The transfer of funds from New South Wales is now of the order of \$1.4 billion a year. The people of New South Wales are being taxed an extra \$1.4 billion by the Federal Government and that money is being distributed to the smaller States to assist their budgets. That is why I have spoken about South Australia and Western Australia.

**Mr McBride:** And Queensland.

**Mr KERR:** Queensland is not a problem in that regard. How many ambulances and other services could that \$1.4 billion have provided on the Central Coast?

**Mr McBride:** We need them.

**Mr KERR:** That electorate did need those additional services, which would have been provided if funds had been allocated by the honourable member's Federal mates. New South Wales continues to be used as the milch cow for the smaller States because of the Federal Government's mismanagement. The results have been circulated in the community, which has an increasing awareness of what occurred. One sees the politics of desperation and division in Canberra because the Federal Government is reaping the reward of what it has sown over the years. I do not want to talk gloom and doom, because this Government is committed to a positive outlook. It should be congratulated. After a number of years of providing tough economic management it has been able to increase some of the facilities and services in successive budgets. This Government could have gone down the Victorian path or the Argentine road as happened in other States, a sort of crazy zig-zagging of financial ventures, whether through Tricontinental, the State Bank in Victoria, the Pyramid Building Society or Western Australia Incorporated or the State Bank of South Australia. It is interesting that members opposite speak about capitalism, investment and the heartlessness of big business, but have been willing to punt with taxpayers' money in relation to the most unacceptable face of capitalism that has been seen in Australian life. They lost that taxpayers' money.

Members opposite have spoken about battlers. Who in South Australia has gained from the management of that State? Who in Western Australia has benefited? Those funds would have been better spent on housing and health and the other things should have been left to the market forces, as this Government has done. The people of the Sutherland shire have been the beneficiaries of the commitment of the New South Wales Government. I note that \$230,000 has been spent on refurbishment of Cronulla railway station and \$130,000 on Woolaware station. Transport facilities in New South Wales are being revitalised. All honourable members should be proud of that at a time when public transport in Australia is in a lot of difficulty because of the lack of funds.

It goes further than that, because of the commitment of the Minister for Transport, and Minister for Tourism. Not only has \$230,000 been spent on refurbishment of Cronulla railway station but honourable members will be aware that the Sutherland shire is the best part of the world in which to live. I will not enter into a dispute about that. In recognition of that fact, the Minister has made available an office at Cronulla railway station that can provide information to visitors and residents in relation to the shire's attraction.

I call on the Labor-dominated Sutherland Shire Council to make clear what it seeks to do with the generous offer made by the Minister. Many attractions are available which are not properly promoted with local people. My electorate has the best bushwalks and beaches and some of the best gardens, including Camellia Gardens in Caringbah and the Joseph Banks Native Garden. Those magnificent endowments should be promoted not only for visitors but also for local residents. The Fahey Government will continue to develop and enhance policies that will further improve the efficiency and delivery of high quality services for the benefit of the people of Sutherland shire. The key to this Government's program is the word "choice". In the area of schools the Government is returning choice and power to parents. This Government dezoned schools and took away that unhealthy monopoly. If the Labor Party were in office would it again introduce rezoning of schools? That is likely because the Labor Party wishes to run people's lives and ensure that the Teachers Federation makes the decisions, not the parents.

**Mr Schultz:** Forget about democracy.

**Mr KERR:** Yes, forget about democracy. But this Government is about choice, whether it be in education or enterprise bargaining in employment. It is a dramatic step to provide workers with a choice as to work practices and for workers to receive above award wages for working diligently. Workers are no longer commanded by a monopoly union.

**Mr Schultz:** Free enterprise.

**Mr KERR:** It is free enterprise. For 20 years the honourable member for Burrinjuck worked in the meat industry. He was not born to wealth and privilege as were some honourable members opposite. An allocation of \$300,000 has been made to prevent beach erosion and improve waterway usage at Cronulla and over the next 12 months that money will be spent. When I was in Opposition the former Minister for Local Government, Janice Crosio, said that outfalls were the answer to Sydney's sewage problems. In 1976 Neville Wran was told by the Water Board that sewage would be a problem for Sydney's beaches and that at that time money was available to treat the problem. The then Premier said: "It might be a problem but it is not a priority. I can use that money in order not to increase State Government charges". It bought a few elections but at the expense of future generations. Now the Water Board has enlisted community support and community groups have been established. It may be a disappointment to the honourable member for The Entrance to know that it is not simply an engineering solution but that community support must be enlisted.

**Mr Schultz:** Grass roots communication.

**Mr KERR:** As the honourable member for Burrinjuck has said, it is grass roots communication. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

My electorate has the four best surf clubs in the world. For the third consecutive time the Cronulla Surf Club won the world championships and the Elouera Surf Club came third. Those clubs have been involved in the great struggle to maintain the cleanliness of our surf and waterways. I pay tribute to Michael Ainsley from Cronulla Development Watch and John Holt, a former Australian Iron Man, who have put time and effort into this project. Whatever side of politics one may be on, one must say governments are restricted. A government and community partnership is needed to achieve what is required with increasingly scarce resources. Water Board capital works in the Sutherland shire total \$5.2 million. This includes considerable sewerage work in Maianbar and Bundeena. Once again the Labor Party would have said: "We have so much money to sewer this area. This is the sewerage works you are going to get. You should be very grateful because that is the kind of Government we are". However, the people of Maianbar and Bundeena have been invited to participate in decisions as to what sewerage system they would like for their area because they have a right to be involved. Though this has been time-consuming - and I do not make apologies for that - it will enable people to become involved in finding a solution.

**Mr Schultz:** Pull the chain on the ALP.

**Mr KERR:** It will flush out the ALP once and for all. I refer to the \$194,000 allocation to the National Parks and Wildlife Service for development and restoration of facilities in the Royal National Park. The Sutherland shire is proud of its bushland settings. It is not easy to spend that type of money in a recession, which I continue to say is the recession we are told we had to have.

**Mr Schultz:** And that it is now over.

**Mr KERR:** I am reminded by the honourable member for Burrinjuck that we are also told it is over. Most Australians who are still finding life very tough and a considerable struggle are unaware of that. Additional funding has been made available in this Budget for health. A scare campaign was conducted before the Budget that hospitals would suffer and that a record amount had been spent on hospital construction. Yet in 1992-93 public hospitals and other health services will receive \$323 million for capital works projects, an increase of \$54 million or 7.5 per cent in real terms on the sum for last year. One should ask how much more could be spent if New South Wales received a fair go from the Federal Labor Government. There was the unedifying spectacle of the Leader of the Opposition on the one hand visiting Miranda and holding up signs about no privatisation and on the other hand he is supposed to be embracing Greinerism. Does he believe in public sector participation in terms of providing infrastructure so necessary for this State? Had Federal funding been made available private sector involvement may not have been required. If one takes with one hand, additional sources of funding need to be provided.

The people of New South Wales and the Sutherland shire want to know where Mr Carr and the Labor Party stand. Are they opposed to any form of public participation in our hospital system or do they not want car parks and so on provided by contract labour? It is about time the Labor Party came clean. This Government has maintained its commitment to roadworks in the shire, including restoration works on the Princes Highway, President Avenue and the Woronora Bridge. It includes also the deviation from Alford's Point to Menai Road, Woronora. I am pleased that the honourable member for Bulli is present because the Waterfall Bridge is also provided for in the Budget.

**Mr McManus:** I saw the honourable member's local press release.

**Mr KERR:** I am glad that the honourable member for Bulli saw that press release. Let us talk about the Labor Party and Waterfall Bridge. Money had been allocated by the Labor Party for Waterfall Bridge, but it went to Darling Harbour. Do those opposite remember Mr Brereton allocating that money to Darling Harbour? Of course they do; and the people at Waterfall, at Bundeena and at Maianbar still remember that. That bridge would now be in operation if the money had not been diverted to Darling Harbour. The Sutherland shire wants a five-year road program from the local Labor council.

**Mr McManus:** Why are you not a Minister?

**Mr KERR:** A question often asked, never answered. Roadworks in the Sutherland shire relate to public safety. Those opposite speak about jobs for the boys and their own crummy little political ambitions; in the Sutherland shire we speak about people. The local Labor council ought to be providing a five-year road program. It is getting millions of dollars from the State Government. The people there are entitled to a five-year road program, which should be put on public display and then implemented.

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

**Mr KERR:** When it comes to roads it is said by some councillors that we will never get public agreement because people always want their own street kerbed and guttered first. The people of the Sutherland shire work together; if we can show that there are more accidents on road X, they want funding to go there and will wait their turn for their street. That is the type of people they are. The year 10 students of Woollooware High School, Caringbah High School, Cronulla High School and De La Salle will soon be doing their higher school certificate and going out to a job market very different to that when we left school.

**Mr McManus:** There is nothing out there.

**Mr KERR:** The honourable member for Bulli says that there is nothing out there. That might be true if he were speaking of South Australia, Victoria, or Western Australia, where the Labor Party has caused unemployment. If the honourable member wants to talk about who caused unemployment, he should look at the unemployment figure of 1982-83 and that of 1992 and the projection for 1993. He should look at the number of jobs that have been created in New South Wales. We are often told that Australians do not work. The Budget figures on productivity show government enterprises doing more work, with productivity up.

**Mr Baird:** It is up 40 per cent.

**Mr KERR:** Yes, because people such as the Minister for Transport, and Minister for Tourism have been prepared to reward people who have worked hard. In this very building we have a presentation for railway workers. People have written in and said, "You have done a very good job". The Minister was there, as were the workers who were getting some recognition - which is more than they ever got from those opposite.



**Mr McManus:** People cannot get trains.

**Mr KERR:** They are now getting a better train service than they had in 1987-88.

**Mrs Lo Po':** All they want is a seat on a train.

**Mr KERR:** The honourable member for Penrith is very keen on helping the people of the eastern suburbs when it comes to hospitals. The eastern suburbs railway has been a great boon for the Illawarra line. Those opposite should compare our on-time running with the on-time running when they were in office. The honourable member for Penrith talked about hospitals for the eastern suburbs, but her side of politics was not quite as caring about the eastern suburbs when the Askin Government was building the eastern suburbs railway. They opposed it. We should look at the economic performance of Askin's era and the capital works undertaken then. The eastern suburbs railway was the best thing that ever happened to the people of Caringbah, Cronulla and Woolooware. It linked them with the Illawarra line. The honourable member for The Entrance looks puzzled. I invite him to get on a train and go from Cronulla to Bondi Junction.

**Mr McBride:** Why are you not a Minister?

**Mr KERR:** We do not hear the honourable member for The Entrance talking about the squeeze that Canberra has put on The Entrance; we only hear him talking about why I should get some particular job.

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

**Mr KERR:** The honourable member for The Entrance would be better off asking a question of his leader. He should ask the Leader of the Opposition why, when it comes to privatisation, he has made not a U-turn but a jackknife.

**Mr Baird:** A man for all seasons.

**Mr KERR:** Yes, he is. This Budget shows that with commitment and determination, even in the worst economic conditions that those opposite and their mates in Canberra can throw at us, we can start to improve the life of people in New South Wales. We will do that and continue to do so for decades to come. [*Time expired.*]

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

## **JOINT ESTIMATES COMMITTEES**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Mr WEST** (Orange - Minister for Conservation and Land Management, and Minister for Energy) [10.47]: In response to matters which were raised earlier by the honourable member for Ashfield, I seek leave of the House to amend my original motion, as amended by the honourable member for Ashfield.

**Leave granted.**

**Mr WEST:** I move:

That the first schedule be omitted and there be inserted in lieu thereof:

FIRST SCHEDULE

ESTIMATES COMMITTEES - MINISTERIAL PORTFOLIO ALLOCATIONS

		Appropriation Bill	References*
		Recurrent Items	Capital Item
1	The Legislature Legislature	6(1)01	6(2)01
2	Premier and Treasurer Premier Treasury Government Pricing Tribunal	7(1)01-06 7(1)07-08,10 7(1)09	7(2)01-04 7(2)05,06 -
3	Aboriginal Affairs Aboriginal Affairs	**	**
4	Agriculture and Rural Affairs Agriculture and Rural Affairs	8(1)01,02	8(2)01,02
5	Arts Arts	26(1)02-09	26(2)02-08
6	Attorney General Attorney General	9(1)01-04	9(2)01-03
7	Conservation and Land Management and Energy Conservation and Land Management Energy	12(1)01 12(1)02	12(2)01 -
8	Chief Secretary and Administrative Services Chief Secretary Administrative Services Casino Control Authority	{10(1)01 {10(1)03 **** 10(1)02	{10(2)01 {10(2)03 **** 10(2)02
9	Community Services Community Services	11(1)01	11(2)01
10	Consumer Affairs Consumer Affairs	13(1)01	13(2)01
11	Education and Youth Affairs School Education and Youth Affairs	14(1)01-03	14(2)01-03

12	Environment Environment	15(1)01-05	15(2)01-05
13	Ethnic Affairs Ethnic Affairs	16(1)01	-

Page 6741

14	Health Health	17(1)01	17(2)01
15	Industrial Relations and Employment and Training Industrial Relations Technical and Further Education Training and Further Education	18(1)01 14(1)01-03 *** 14(1)01-03 ***	18(2)01 14(2)01-03 *** 14(2)01-03 ***
16	Justice and Emergency Services Justice Emergency Services	19(1)01-04 23(1)03-05	19(2)01-03 23(2)03
17	Local Government and Cooperatives Local Government and Cooperatives	20(1)01	20(2)01
18	Natural Resources Natural Resources	21(1)01-04	21(2)01-04
19	Planning and Housing Planning and Housing	22(1)01-02	22(2)01-02
20	Police Police	23(1)01-02	23(2)01-02
21	Public Works and Roads Public Works and Roads	24(1)01,02	24(2)01,02
22	Sport, Recreation and Racing Sport, Recreation and Racing	25(1)01	25(2)01
23	State Development State Development	26(1)01	26(2)01
24	Tourism Tourism	27(1)02	-
25	Transport Transport	27(1)01	27(2)01

\* Reference is to Section, Subsection (1 = Recurrent; 2 = Capital) and Item

\*\* Not distinguishable within Appropriation Bill from Premier's Department (7(1)03 and 7(2)03)

\*\*\* Appropriation Bill does not distinguish "Industrial Relations and Employment" from "Further Education and Training". Joint appropriation to the Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Employment and Training for the Department of Industrial Relations, Employment, Training and Further Education

\*\*\*\* Appropriation Bill Combines "Office of the Chief Secretary and Minister for Administrative Services"

Page 6742

This amended schedule picks up some errors that had occurred in the printing of the schedule, to make sure that the portfolio allocation numbers coincide with the clauses that are relevant to the particular portfolio and committees that we are establishing. As I recall, there were occasions during the last estimates committee hearings where members took exception to particular clauses not being relevant to the numbers listed. It is important that we get these right; and there was no intention to do other than have them right on this occasion. I thank the honourable member for Ashfield for drawing that to my attention. Also, I take the opportunity to reply to some of the points raised, particularly by the honourable member for Ashfield in relation to his amendment; that is, the provision for questioning of Ministers in relation to their particular portfolio or department for 20 minutes by non-Government members and then 20 minutes by Government members. The schedule of the motion allows up to 3½ hours in some cases and there will be some departments that will take all that time, but others may not. Time may expire in other cases but members may not want to use that full opportunity. Honourable members should recognise that the times set are maximum times. I emphasise that some will have more time than others. As the honourable member for South Coast said in his contribution earlier, it is experimental. Some Ministers will not like the 20 minutes of straight questioning, but if these estimates committees are to work in the spirit in which they are proposed, then clearly both the proposal I have put forward and the amendments submitted by the Opposition, supported by the Independents, will be of value. I commend to the House the amendments to the motion as amended.

**Mr WHELAN (Ashfield) [10.50]:** I am grateful the Government has acceded to the three amendments. I understand the difficulty about the nuances of the various changes and I am pleased that what I have said has been accepted in the spirit of debate. I take this opportunity to congratulate the honourable member for Gordon who made his maiden speech immediately after the commencement of proceedings of the Parliament at 7.30. I did not realise at the time that he was making his maiden speech. In one sense that was regrettable, but I listened to his speech and it was a major contribution by him.

**Motion agreed to.**

#### **SELECT COMMITTEE UPON THE PORT MACQUARIE BASE HOSPITAL PROJECT**

**Motion, by leave, by Mr West agreed to:**

That the reporting time for the Select Committee upon the Port Macquarie Base Hospital Project be extended until 26th February, 1993.

#### **COMMITTEE UPON THE NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT COUNCIL BILLS**

**Motion, by leave, by Mr West agreed to:**

That:

(1) Michael Robert Yabsley be discharged from the Legislation Committee upon the Natural Resources Management Council Bills and that Andrew Humpherson be appointed to serve on such Committee.

(2) The reporting time for the Legislation Committee upon the Natural Resources Management Council Bills be extended until 17th November, 1992.

Page 6743

### **BILLS RETURNED**

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

Dairy Industry (Corporations) Amendment Bill  
Lotto (Amendment) Bill  
Totalizator Legislation (Amendment) Bill

**House adjourned at 10.53 p.m.**

---