

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 9 March 1994

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

Mr Speaker offered the Prayer.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE CONTRACT PAYMENTS

Mr CARR: My question without notice is directed to the Premier. Can he tell this House the total cost of contract payments to former senior executive service and chief executive service officers in the past 2½ years?

Mr FAHEY: Obviously the Leader of the Opposition has been visiting his electorate and asking primary school children to think up a question that might assist him in this House.

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

Mr FAHEY: A question seeking exact figures about the senior executive service is puerile in the extreme. He should go to Canberra to look at the mess his mates there have made of their senior executive service and what they have done. Maybe he should leave that question alone because very soon he will be looking for a job. Frankly, it is not likely that he will get the nod to go to Canberra, as has been tossed around considerably for some time. All we heard during the summer was that the Hon. Kerry Sibraa was going to resign from the Senate and that the vacancy was there for Bob Carr. What happened? The Left moved on the honourable member for Ashfield on the basis that he was going to the vacancy in Maroubra. That was a smokescreen. The honourable member for Lakemba was there.

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

Mr FAHEY: The other problem that arose was that a former staff member of the Leader of the Opposition who could not get a guernsey in Liverpool a few years ago was sent down to Canberra for the vacancy in Macarthur. Paul Lynch, the runner-up, has moved on the honourable member for Liverpool.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is far too much interjection from all sides of the Chamber. The Premier will be heard in silence.

Mr FAHEY: I believe the Opposition wants some figures. I am just giving statistics on manipulation in the Labor Party.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai to order.

Mr FAHEY: The honourable member for Lakemba and the honourable member for Liverpool are both coveting the vacancy that is coming up in Maroubra. Is the Leader of the Opposition assisting them? Recently the Leader of the Opposition, when asked by the media whether he would assist his two trusted colleagues, said, "That is a tall order". At the same time, the very trusting honourable member for Ashfield, a loyal supporter of the Leader of the Opposition, said on Australian Broadcasting Corporation radio, "I am grateful for the support the Leader of the Opposition is giving me in my time of crisis". On the one hand, the Leader of the Opposition is running at a million miles per hour, and on the other hand, the honourable member for Ashfield is remaining loyal to the last. I compliment him on his loyalty.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs to order.

Mr FAHEY: Turning back to the question about the senior executive service, I again say to the Leader of the Opposition that he should go to Canberra to see the mess the SES is in down there. He should discover how his Canberra mates have recognised that we in New South Wales have increased the productivity and efficiency of government through the SES and the many competent people in that service. I can say quite honestly that one of the revelations that have come to me in my six years in government is that the belief that private is better than public is a fallacy. The good people are already in the senior executive service of Government. They were always there. They perform magnificently, do their best for the people of this State, and concentrate all their attention on the agencies they are working for.

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

Mr FAHEY: I will make no apology for the SES, for it is a success story.

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

Mr FAHEY: That fact is recognised by the Opposition's colleagues in Canberra, was recognised by its Labor colleagues in other States when that party held government in other States, and is still recognised by its colleagues in Queensland.

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

Mr FAHEY: As to staff numbers in the SES, annual reports will provide the Leader of the Opposition with all the information he has sought from me today.

Page 399

SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE CONTRACT PAYMENTS

Mr CARR: I wish to ask a supplementary question. In view of the Premier's answer, can he confirm the accuracy of a Government register which reveals that \$24 million was spent on SES payouts during the past 2½ years?

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

Mr FAHEY: At the present time, service in the SES is based on better performance. That performance is essential to give the best possible return to the taxpayers.

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

Mr FAHEY: In days gone by it was noticed that every time the Hon. Laurie Brereton moved into an agency - I note he is back in New South Wales plundering capital works programs, but that his sister is not present in the Chamber - he cut throats mercilessly with knives he had sharpened the night before. His cuts were based not on staff performance or their ability to do the job but on their willingness to do as he said. Those who were not prepared to put up signs carrying his name and photograph stating "This is another project, et cetera" were mercilessly thrown out. There was no compassion, no idea of what was right and what was in the interests of the taxpayers of this State. Again, I make no apology for the fact that we have the most efficient public service in this country, one that is a model for the rest of Australia - in fact one that has been followed by various other countries. When it comes to the ability of the Opposition to put such a scheme together, it had 12 years and it destroyed its opportunity in that time.

"SEVEN WONDERS OF NEW SOUTH WALES" TOURISM CAMPAIGN

Mr TINK: My question without notice is directed to the Premier and Minister for Economic Development. Has the Premier received advice on the benefits to the State's economy of the new joint campaign by the Government and the tourism industry to promote New South Wales?

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

Mr FAHEY: There are many pleasing figures to show a growth in confidence in the New South Wales economy. Since last September there has been a substantial turnaround in business and in consumer confidence as we move out of Keating's Labor-inspired recession. After the worst downturn in 60 years, New South Wales is beginning to witness a number of changes which will provide long-term benefits to the people of this State. We have experienced a major growth in tourism, due in part to the international recognition that Australia is a safe destination and because of our success in winning the Olympic Games bid.

People need only consider the way that this Government regards the importance of the tourism industry for the State's economy to realise that this success has not just happened. In the last State Budget the Tourism Commission's promotion budget was increased by a massive 46.4 per cent to \$27.9 million. The Commonwealth has forecast that 20 per cent of all new jobs created in the next decade will be in tourism. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development has found that the tourism industry worldwide is growing at a rate 23 times faster than the global economy. A report released by the OECD only yesterday indicated that the Pacific area, and most notably Australia and New Zealand, had posted the most dynamic growth in tourism compared with other regions during the same time.

The report stated that nights spent in tourist accommodation had increased by 7 per cent. It stated that the development of in-bound tourism was powered by strong growth in Australia, where night accommodation was up by 6 per cent, arrivals by 16 per cent and receipts by 10 per cent. Of the high number of tourists coming to Australia, New South Wales is regarded as a major destination. In 1992-93, 18.3 million domestic overnight visits occurred in New South Wales and 1.7 million international visitors came to this State, generating \$8.1 billion in gross expenditure. Of this total gross expenditure \$4.7 billion or 59 per cent is attributed to domestic tourism and \$3.3 billion or 41 per cent to international tourism.

Gross expenditure in New South Wales has increased by 145 per cent in the decade to 1991-92. Tourism in New South Wales generates about 150,000 jobs, or just over 5 per cent of the State's work force. Employment from tourism has increased by 30 per cent since the early 1980s. It provides important benefits to the economy of this State. Our No. 1 status in Australia as a tourist destination is, as I have said, not by coincidence. Last October the Minister for Tourism launched an aggressive and strategic new tourism advertising campaign. The \$13.1 million television and newspaper blitz is the

largest campaign ever for New South Wales tourism, and it has been quick to achieve success. It is based on the theme of the seven wonders of New South Wales - Sydney, the beaches, the country, rivers, mountains, forests, and the outback - and highlights the richness and the diversity of the State. In the past our diversity has been a weakness, but it is now a strength.

The advertisement was first aired in November last year and it immediately sparked a 25 per cent leap in sales revenue through the New South Wales Travel Centre, compared with figures for the previous November. Sales continued to increase through December, up 29 per cent on the previous year, through January and February, when sales were 17 per cent higher than at the same time in the previous

Page 400
year. On any criteria that is a magnificent success. The response has been extraordinary. It has not simply been a taxpayer funded campaign: the industry itself made contributions to the campaign in excess of \$8 million.

For every 18 extra international tourists, official figures show that one new job is created, and for every 177 domestic tourists, again one new job is created. The "Seven Wonders" campaign has cemented our position as Australia's No. 1 tourist destination. It is not just tourism that has brought about a marked improvement in the economy and much hope for the future. The confidence I referred to that started in about last September is continuing across the board. It is interesting to note the ANZ Growth in Employment advertising series shows a reassuring result for the months January-February this year and a quite dramatic increase for the past year. New South Wales monthly growth and positions vacant were 2.5 per cent compared with the national average of 2.3 per cent.

It is also interesting to note the Kelly national hiring intention survey, which was released only today. That shows that a net level of 18.4 per cent of employers forecast jobs growth - the highest that any State has recorded in the Kelly survey in the past three years. Figures for retail sales show that New South Wales sales have been consistently higher than the national average since September last year. Our retail sales figures are growing at twice the national average and twice the rate of those in Queensland, and Victoria has been in decline during the same period. Building approvals in January show a 14 per cent increase over December 1993, compared with a 14 per cent national decline. We are seeing an increase in consumer confidence in so many areas that are important for this State's future economic advancement. But what do we hear from the Leader of the Opposition over the same period? Quite clearly, the Leader of the Opposition has no regard for tourism, the arts, small business or job growth.

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

Mr FAHEY: A few months ago, when an announcement was made that "Miss Saigon" would be coming to Sydney, that was knocked by the Leader of the Opposition. He knocks the arts and he knocks growth in tourism. "Miss Saigon" represents a \$200 million benefit to this State, yet that was knocked by the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition knocked investment by the American company in the feedlot at Tabbita, which represented 400 additional jobs. Obviously, the Leader of the Opposition has become soured by his study of American history and knocked that proposal because it was put forward by an American company.

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

Mr FAHEY: Those jobs are important in the country. Only last week the Leader of the Opposition re-ran a release he put out during the by-election on the North Shore - the by-election where Labor was too gutless to run. That release stated that the Leader of the Opposition was going to scrap the Office of Youth Affairs. We know the response that that brought from Labor youth and youth generally. They recognise that that office has done an extraordinary job over the past few years, leading the way in Australia and co-ordinating opportunities for young people. The Leader of the Opposition is anti-youth. He proved that when he knocked the Olympics. He knocked the Olympics because he is anti-sport and anti-youth.

On that occasion he was told in no uncertain terms by several of the more sensible people on his backbench that he had better get off that question because he was going out the door backwards on it. We are seeing real growth in this State despite the fact that the handbrake is being applied by the Opposition whenever it manages to get hold of the handle, and despite the fact that the Opposition is trying to delay progress. Members of the Opposition do not want to have a bar of jobs on freeways. They are constantly subjecting new projects to all types of interference in the hope that they can stop them from going ahead. Projects are going ahead despite the tactics of the Opposition in this State. They are going ahead because the people of this State have confidence in the Liberal Party-National Party Government. They will continue to have confidence in this Government.

EASTERN CREEK RACEWAY STREET CAR RACE-MEETINGS

Mr RICHARDSON: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Sport, Recreation and Racing. Following recent incidents in Sydney, can the Minister inform the House what opportunities are available for modified car race-meetings off public streets? In particular, is Eastern Creek Raceway available for such activities?

Mr DOWNY: I am aware of the interest of the honourable member for The Hills in motor sport in New South Wales and, in particular, in Eastern Creek. We know that the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Twenty-four Per Cent, will not allow any of his members to visit Eastern Creek. They do not even know what Eastern Creek is about. I am sure all honourable members were disturbed by the incidents to which the honourable member for The Hills has referred. I am sure we all hope that there is no repeat of this confrontation between young people and police.

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

Mr DOWNY: The problem stems from street car owners and their friends gathering in large numbers in suburban areas such as Tempe and racing their cars illegally on public roads such as the Princes Highway. By doing so they disturb local residents, disrupt normal traffic flow and cause alarm in the community.

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

Page 401

Mr DOWNY: I know that the Minister for Police and Minister for Emergency Services and the Police Service are treating these incidents seriously and are hoping that there will not be a repeat of the events of last Sunday night. Police are not only concerned; they are seeking also to work with my department to provide an alternative to illegal street racing. Senior police officers called the Eastern Creek Raceway this week to try to find out whether there was a legal venue where street car enthusiasts could test out their cars. I am pleased to inform the House that the general manager of Eastern Creek Raceway, proactive as he always is, has been holding street car race-meetings at the Creek for the last two years.

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

Mr DOWNY: This action is not as a result of any sensational news stories; rather, in the words of the General Manager of Eastern Creek Raceway, John Stathers, it is "a commitment to the youth of the area" - the youth of western Sydney. Street car race-meetings are held at Eastern Creek about once a month and usually attract about 160 competing cars. The entry fee of \$30 for each vehicle gives entrants access to about five hours of racing on the best motor racing circuit in this country. The fee, which is set to cover costs only, is kept as low as possible. Events are not held to make a profit; they are

seen as a service to the local community and to this sector of motor sport. In fact, on Monday, a caller to Brian Bury's talkback radio program was singing the praises of Eastern Creek in general and of street car race-meetings in particular. The caller said:

Eastern Creek runs a good meeting - the cars go through, they get checked . . . and then we run a good meeting . . .

The caller went on to say:

Why get your car defected when for \$30 you get hours of good racing at Eastern Creek?

John Stathers has provided information to the police on upcoming street car races. He has had discussions with the State Commander, Bruce Gibson, who has publicly encouraged street machiners to try out the facilities at Eastern Creek. Mr Stathers has also had discussions with Inspector Hyde of Newtown police and, as a result of those discussions, local police will also be encouraging street machiners to give Eastern Creek a go. We are happy to work with the police on this matter. This is a good example of how two departments can get together to sort out a problem that the community is facing and come up with some positive solutions. We hope to see more young people taking up the opportunity to pursue this sport in a safe and legal fashion at Eastern Creek. I am sure that, when they do, they will not be disappointed.

As I said earlier, John Stathers started these street car race-meetings two years ago in response to the needs of young people in western Sydney. The anti-sport Leader of the Opposition is probably unaware of this because he never travels any further west than the Sydney Opera House. He would be unaware of the high proportion of young people in western Sydney who have a culture based around motor sport. That motor sport might be modified street machines, motor bikes or drag racing. Those honourable members who have been to Eastern Creek to see drag racing would know that thousands of people attend those events. Many young people in that area and elsewhere in Sydney participate in motor sports.

This is where Eastern Creek has truly come into its own. It is not only a professional motor sports facility of international standard, but also a community facility for the people of western Sydney. Unfortunately, the Leader of the Opposition has banned any of his colleagues from attending Eastern Creek and seeing how good that facility is. Happily, it appears as though the Leader of the Opposition's edict does not extend to his supporters in local government. Blacktown Council, in particular, is a great supporter of Eastern Creek. It realises the economic benefits it brings to western Sydney and is happy to support Eastern Creek.

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

Mr DOWNY: The Leader of the Opposition, the Opposition spokesman for sport, and the honourable members for Blacktown and Mount Druitt will receive invitations from me to attend the 1994 Foster's Motor Cycle Grand Prix. I look forward to seeing the honourable member for Charlestown there. I have extended four invitations; it remains to be seen whether the response to those invitations reflects the popularity of the Leader of the Opposition. Honourable members know that three of every four people in this State do not support him. It will be interesting to see whether Mr Twenty-four Per Cent turns up.

[Interruption]

The honourable member for Illawarra interjects. There is a useless candidate in that area; she will not get anywhere. The only difficulty that Mr Stathers has is that an increased demand from street machiners will mean that we may not be able to fit them all in. Eastern Creek is so popular, sufficient track time may need to be found to fit in the large number of people who could turn up. Eastern Creek

Raceway, that so-called albatross, that so-called white elephant, that so-called waste of taxpayers' money, as the Opposition continually states, is undoubtedly a huge success story. It is a credit to this Government that Eastern Creek is a success story. It is successful by any measure that can be chosen, whether it be on a local level, a State level or a national level.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is far too much interjection and audible conversation. Members should realise that question time is an opportunity for asking questions and obtaining answers. If members and Ministers are to hear and understand what is said, questions and answers must be heard in silence. I ask all members for much more co-operation than they have given to date.

Page 402

Mr DOWNEY: On an international level, there is no doubt that Eastern Creek is a huge success story. It fulfils its role as a key facility in the western Sydney recreation area. Eastern Creek pays its way for the New South Wales taxpayer. Quite frankly, we do not care if Eastern Creek never returns a huge profit because it is earning its keep. Not only is it earning its keep as one of the most important community facilities in the west, but it is earning its keep as an international sporting facility of which we should all be proud.

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

POLICE SERVICE INFRINGEMENT QUOTAS

Mr ANDERSON: I direct a question without notice to the Minister for Police and Minister for Emergency Services. Did the Minister state publicly last week that there are "no Government formal quotas" in the New South Wales Police Service? Why then does the 1993 enterprise agreement between the Police Service and the parking patrol police stipulate a quota of 10 parking tickets per officer per shift?

Mr GRIFFITHS: I thank the honourable member for one of his last questions in this House, as he is leaving us soon. I have made it clear that there are no formal quotas in the New South Wales Police Service.

Mr Carr: What about informal quotas?

Mr GRIFFITHS: Let us be very clear about the question that has just been asked: are there any informal quotas? The report made public last week clearly answers that question. There are no formal quotas in the New South Wales Police Service, there is no revenue raising effect by this Government, and there never will be. The Inspector General's report stated that there were some pressures brought to bear, performance pressures, that I would interpret as being informal quotas. So there are in fact informal quotas.

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

Mr GRIFFITHS: A direction has been issued from the commissioner to every State commander, every patrol commander, every highway patrol supervisor, every district commander, every regional commander; there will be no quotas, informal or formal.

POLICE SERVICE INFRINGEMENT QUOTAS

Mr ANDERSON: I ask a supplementary question arising from the Minister's answer. Why did the

Minister tell me in the 1992 Estimates Committee hearings that this enterprise agreement was "outstanding" and had his personal approval?

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

Mr GRIFFITHS: The parking officers enterprise agreement was formed and approved by the industrial relations system, and I still believe it is an excellent performance agreement.

SECOND OPINION CLINIC FOR ELECTIVE SURGERY

Mr GLACHAN: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Health. Is the Minister aware of an Opposition proposal to establish a compulsory second opinion clinic for all elective surgery in New South Wales? What implications would this have for patients and the health system?

Mr PHILLIPS: I thank the honourable member for Albury for his excellent question because I am sure all honourable members of this Parliament are interested in how members of Parliament spend their Christmas holidays. We all know that the Leader of the Opposition likes to spend his Christmas sabbatical in Europe, sitting in sidewalk cafes, jotting down notes on postcards, sipping countless cups of cappuccino, turning on the CNN news for an update on the bushfires back in New South Wales.

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

Mr PHILLIPS: It was at that time, at one of those sidewalk cafes, that Bob Carr had the amazing idea to formulate his own governor's speech. Anyone who has read that document realises that it is time Bob Carr switched to decaf; he has had one cappuccino too many. Let us look at page 3 of this document, where the Leader of the Opposition talks about the Opposition's solution to the health problem. We are talking about waiting lists, and the document says "We will slash them" by implementing "a second opinion clinic for elective surgery . . ."

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

Mr PHILLIPS: That is how the Leader of the Opposition will tackle the waiting lists in New South Wales. He is talking about compulsory second opinion clinics. Why?

Dr Refshauge: On a point of order -

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I remind honourable members that when the Speaker is on his feet all members must be seated and all members, whether seated or standing, must remain silent. I regard with disfavour the attitude of members who continue to interject and make noise when the Speaker is on his feet. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has sought to take a point of order. Honourable members have been told on many occasions that it is difficult for the Speaker to rule on points of order unless submissions on the point of order are able to be heard with clarity. I ask the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to state his point of order.

Dr Refshauge: I know the Minister for Health has difficulty with reading, but I suggest that the only second opinion required is a psychiatric opinion of him.

Page 403

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Not only is no point of order involved but the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is trifling with the House. I call him to order for taking up the time of the House with a spurious point of order.

Mr PHILLIPS: We have to be talking about compulsory second opinion clinics. Why? Because everyone has the opportunity to go off and get a second opinion now; any of us can do that. We all have that right of choice. The Opposition's grand idea is to have this compulsory second opinion clinic. It must be compulsory if the Labor Party is to be able to do what it wants to do, and that is to slash the waiting list, as the document says. Can honourable members imagine the impact of more than 300,000 people each year queuing for the compulsory second opinion at a government-run second opinion clinic.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Waratah to order. I call the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai to order for the second time.

Mr PHILLIPS: Imagine the consequences of such an ill-conceived, unresearched and unfunded policy! What will happen to patients under the Carr Labor policy? In the simplest case a patient will have to consult three doctors before becoming eligible to get into a hospital. He will have to go to the general practitioner, then to the specialist to have a whole range of tests, and then he will have to queue up to get into the government second opinion clinic to get an opinion as to whether he should have an operation.

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

Mr PHILLIPS: Under the simplest scenario, when everyone agrees that an operation is necessary, the patient will face a further delay of weeks, if not months, waiting to get into the second opinion clinic. What happens when the government surgeon at the compulsory second opinion clinic says that the patient does not need the operation? Honourable members should remember that the Opposition's policy is about slashing the waiting lists by stopping people going on to the waiting list. It is about stopping people getting into hospital. If there is a disagreement and the government surgeon says that the patient does not need the operation, the poor old patient will have to start all over again: back the patient goes to the general practitioner, and the general practitioner then has to wonder what he will do. Perhaps he will have to call for the third umpire to get another opinion. So the poor old patient will be shipped off to another specialist for another opinion. This person who is trying to get to hospital to have an operation will have to get one opinion, two opinions or three opinions.

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

Mr PHILLIPS: He is trying to get into hospital but is becoming confused and concerned about whether he should have the operation.

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

Mr PHILLIPS: This policy represents the introduction of big brother government surgeons, big brother clinics to determine whether a patient is entitled to go into a public hospital to have an operation. Let us examine the consequences of that policy. Compulsory second opinion clinics will cost, at the very least, \$20 million a year, completely unfunded, and will not provide for the treatment of one extra patient. Whether the cost is \$5 million, \$10 million or \$20 million - and my advice is that it will be \$20 million - they will not provide for the treatment of one additional patient.

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

Mr PHILLIPS: Patients will wait longer for treatment, even using the simplest method. They will wait longer before getting on to a list and getting into hospital. Who will staff these second opinion clinics? I can picture all types of specialists, from orthopaedic surgeons through to ear, nose and throat specialists and the whole range of specialists one can think of, knocking on the Government's door and saying that they want to work in the second opinion clinics. Where does the Opposition propose to get the doctors who will work in these second opinion clinics? The other question to be asked is where the clinics will be located. Will there be one huge clinic in the city, perhaps in Sussex Street?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the Chief Secretary and Minister for Administrative Services to order.

Mr PHILLIPS: What about people from the country? Where will their second opinion clinics be?

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

Mr PHILLIPS: Will they have to come to the city or to the major centres, or will they just miss out? Where is this policy direction coming from? What about private patients who need to get treatment in our public hospitals? Our public hospitals treat more private patients than all the private hospitals put together. What will happen to private patients in respect of the second opinion clinics? They have to go to a specialist and pay the gap. Under this policy they would have to go to a second opinion clinic, and probably to another specialist and pay another gap. Has the Opposition thought about how it will handle privately insured patients?

This is not just a silly policy; it is not just an unworkable policy - it is a dangerous policy! It is dangerous because it gets government surgeons between the patient and the doctor. When the Labor Party was in government it was very good at doctor bashing and trying to take over the role of doctors. These clinics will cost, as I said, more than \$20 million a year. They will not cure or treat one more patient. Patients will have to wait longer for their operations, and in many cases will have to pay more. I refer again to this important document, because I look forward to the next cappuccino inspired masterpiece from Bob Carr. Look at the members of the Opposition all sitting quietly. It reminds me -

Page 404

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am reluctant to call the Minister for Health to order for inciting honourable members to interject. The Chair was pleased that members were sitting quietly and it encourages them to do exactly that in future.

Mr PHILLIPS: They remind me very much of the poem "The Man from Ironbark" by Banjo Paterson:

There was a group of gilded youths that sat along the barber's wall
Their eyes were dull, their heads were flat
They had no brains at all.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the Minister for Health to order. The Chair has been extremely tolerant. As I said yesterday, the Chair's function is to try to ensure that proceedings continue in an orderly manner, and to that extent the Chair does not wish to be unduly harsh on any individual member. However, I will have to give considerable thought to the collective disruption that has been a feature of proceedings for the past two days. Such conduct diminishes the standing of this Chamber in the eyes of the community. I now have a long list of members who are on one to three calls to order. I warn all honourable members who have been called to order today that they are now deemed to be on three calls to order. I ask for the co-operation of all honourable members in ensuring that question time from now to its conclusion proceeds in a much more peaceful and dignified fashion.

PROPERTY RIGHTS FOR FISHING INDUSTRY

Mr TURNER: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Mines. Is the Minister aware of statements today by the Opposition concerning Government plans to introduce property rights into the fishing industry? Has he received advice on what occurred in New Zealand when property rights were introduced?

Mr CAUSLEY: I thank the honourable member for Myall Lakes for his question. It is obvious from

the questions asked by members on this side of the House that they are well informed about the fishing industry, unlike the honourable member for Port Stephens. Today he issued a press release on property rights and other matters within the fishing industry. It is relevant to inform the House just how far off the mark the honourable member for Port Stephens really is. Yesterday I revealed that he was reading the *Complete Illustrated Guide to Fish* at Coffs Harbour, and today I may be able to go a little further and explain some of the issues that he has raised in his press release.

The honourable member for Port Stephens spoke about the fact that expressions of interest have been called in relation to the Sydney Fish Market, a matter I raised in this House yesterday. He went on to talk about Mr Harasymiw and a letter that he sent to the fishing industry opposing the lease of the fish markets at Blackwattle Bay. It is interesting to note that the letter is unsigned. As I said yesterday, Mr Harasymiw made a bid for the markets and as late as yesterday morning confirmed that his consortium was still bidding for the markets, yet the honourable member for Port Stephens seems to think that Mr Harasymiw does not have an interest. A number of statements in this press release are quite fascinating, and I note one particular point made by the honourable member for Port Stephens:

When property rights were introduced in New Zealand the industry was quickly taken over by foreign multinationals.

I happen to know a little about the fishing industry in New Zealand. I should have thought that the honourable member for Port Stephens might have at least inquired about this issue. The fishing industry in New Zealand is a big industry, worth about \$1.2 billion a year, unlike our fishing industry, which is worth about \$50 million a year. There are two important companies in the fishing industry in New Zealand, the biggest being a company called Sealord. Is Sealord a multinational company? No, it is a wholly owned New Zealand company with a 20 per cent Maori holding. The second biggest company in New Zealand is a company called Sanford. Is it a multinational company? No, again it is 20 per cent owned by the Maoris. It is incredible that the honourable member for Port Stephens issues such obviously incorrect statements. But he gets better. He goes on to say that yesterday I stated that there was an enormous debt at the fish markets which had been accumulated by the previous Government. He said in his press release:

The only reason the Fish Marketing Authority has such a large debt is because the Government forced it to purchase John Fairfax's News Print Warehouse at Pyrmont.

That is absolutely right, but who was the Government and who was the Minister? The Minister for Agriculture was none other than the Hon. Jack Hallam and the Government was the Labor Party. The honourable member for Port Stephens has not checked his facts on these issues. He is out of his depth. I note that the Leader of the Opposition is absent from the Chamber. Obviously he is ashamed. He is a little like the honourable member for Liverpool and the honourable member for Ashfield. He will not associate with those members because he is embarrassed.

The Government has been discussing property rights with the fishing industry. It is important that we understand a little about it. I am sure all members of this House and everyone else agree that there is a crisis in the fishing industry and there is a necessity to protect the resource, and that is what the Government is about. We are discussing with the fishing industry how some permanent property rights can be adopted in the industry and so protect the resource for a long-term period. But what does the honourable member for Port Stephens do? He is out there stirring up trouble. I shall quote from a letter sent to managers of co-operatives along the coast. I note that the honourable member for Port Stephens is not interested, but he should listen. I will not bore the House with the whole letter but in part it reads:

Page 405

This letter is to inform your Co-op of the action that our Co-op has taken to fight the Government's proposed property rights . . .

We have been in touch with Mr Bob Martin, Shadow Minister for Agriculture, and he will fight the Government in the Parliament and he has also said that he could get the Independents behind him . . .

The feeling amongst our local fishermen was that we have only had three options to fight the Government. The first, putting our trust in CFAC which has failed, the next was to use Opposition Government to fight Government and the last was Legal Representation.

Mr Fraser: Who wrote the letter?

Mr CAUSLEY: The honourable member for Coffs Harbour asks who wrote the letter. The address is quite fascinating. The letter came from the Electorate Office, 2nd Floor, Suite 203, Federated Ironworkers Centre, 161 Maitland Road - the electorate office of the honourable member for Port Stephens. He is inciting the industry by writing letters. The incompetence of the honourable member for Port Stephens has no bounds. The Commercial Fishing Advisory Council, CFAC, wrote to the member for Port Stephens about Opposition policies. The reply reveals a great deal. It states:

I rely entirely on input from constituents and feedback on suggestions in the process of policy development. To date, the representatives of the fishing industry have made little attempt to contact me directly for such discussions.

Is it any wonder that they have made little attempt to contact him? It is interesting to note that the CFAC asked specific questions of the honourable member for Port Stephens about policies. He replied:

I am not prepared to make blanket statements.

That is his policy. He goes on to state:

It would be foolish to give a blanket response to this question.

The honourable member for Port Stephens is obsessed with blankets. In answer to another question on policy, the honourable member for Port Stephens stated:

. . . preferred options of managing fishing effort. My answer would be that this would depend upon the fishery.

There is no doubt that the honourable member for Port Stephens has been deliberately trying to stir up opposition within the fishing industry to a proposition to protect its long-term future. He has been asserting that he will stop this proposal in the Parliament because he has the support of the Independents. I would doubt that he has even spoken to the Independents because, quite frankly, they have the intelligence to appreciate the measures that have been taken to protect this valuable resource. The honourable member misquotes these issues. It was stated in a discussion paper that to protect the industry there would be a limit of 15 per cent on shareholding within the industry. The honourable member for Port Stephens automatically says, "Six companies can own the industry". If one uses simple mathematics that is possible, but that is so with many industries throughout the State. I belong to one company in the sugar industry so technically I could own the whole industry, but I do not. One company could own the whole industry, but it does not.

It is absolutely ludicrous to say that because there is a limit of 15 per cent on shareholdings, six people can own the industry. That certainly reflects the intelligence of the honourable member for Port Stephens. I note he is agitated and I am sorry that what I am saying is disturbing him. He is a fertile field: this nonsense keeps rolling off the fax and it is an opportunity that cannot be missed. There is no doubt that the industry is valuable, and it is important that we get the policy right. I have had a number of discussions with departmental officers up and down the coast. The honourable member for Londonderry

does not know what a fish is. Perhaps he should get the photograph and have an illustrated guide to fish. He is also having pre-selection problems. I note also that the honourable member for Ashfield is agitated because he does not know where he is at the present time. The honourable member for Lakemba is a good representative and I do not know why the honourable member for Ashfield should try to take his seat. I know he has lost control.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries will address his remarks through the Chair and return to the subject-matter of the question.

Mr CAUSLEY: There is no doubt that the property rights system is an important aspect of fisheries management and requires considerable discussion. The Commercial Fishing Advisory Council, following recent meetings, has agreed in principle to property rights. The honourable member for Port Stephens questioned why that body changed its mind. It did not change its mind. It wanted to talk about the detail of property rights, and who would not? That is being discussed in detail in the fishing industry and a proposal will be formulated. I wish to refer to a press release which states:

The fishing executives spent the whole weekend working out the Government's property rights.

I inform the honourable member for Port Stephens that they were not working on property rights but on the Fisheries Act, which the former Labor Government tried to put in place ten years ago, but failed. It is about time we had a reasonable, sensible Fisheries Act to manage the resources of the State for its future protection.

BUILDING SERVICES CORPORATION GENERAL MANAGER CONTRACT PAYOUT

Mr AMERY: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Consumer Affairs. Did the former General Manager of the Building Services Corporation receive a payout of \$86,000 last October, nine months into a 12-month contract? Is this \$1,400 a day compensation for the remaining three months of the contract? Was this position subsequently abolished, re-created and upgraded to the chief executive service?

Page 406

Ms MACHIN: The contract of the previous general manager was terminated by my colleague in another place, the Minister for Planning and Minister for Housing, Robert Webster. The terms were negotiated and, as I understand it, they are confidential.

BUILDING DISPUTES TRIBUNAL

Mr RIXON: My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Consumer Affairs. Will the Minister provide details of action the Government is taking to raise the level of damages available at hearings of the Building Disputes Tribunal? Will this give consumers easier access to justice against poor work by builders?

Ms MACHIN: I thank the honourable member for Lismore for his question, which is pertinent given the upturn in the housing market and the fact that he is undertaking renovations. He has quite an interest in this issue, as do many members of the House. Changes to the Building Disputes Tribunal are part of the Government's reforms in the building industry and the consumer affairs portfolio. The reforms follow the Gyles royal commission into the building industry a couple of years ago, which was most enlightening, the subsequent Dodd report into the Building Services Corporation, and current changes to the BSC. They are part of our general reforms of the building industry for the benefit of consumers in home ownership, which, after all, is a major consumer purchase.

The Building Disputes Tribunal was established as a readily accessible, easily understood means of resolving building disputes. It was set up in 1991 under regulations for the Consumer Claims Tribunal. It follows the basic model of supplying service that is fast, cheap and informal in a non-legalistic way and its function is to help parties settle problems arising from residential building work. A report last year of the Building Disputes Tribunal review panel examined a number of issues, including increasing the monetary jurisdiction of the tribunal. The report found that the current limit of \$10,000 was far too low and that it disadvantaged consumers. Consumers have to split their claim into two or more parts in order to lodge a claim below the \$10,000 jurisdiction. That is obviously an inconvenience. It costs more because of multiple application fees and does not provide consumers with a fair go.

The other side of the coin was that people had to reduce their claims below the \$10,000 limit. Over the years building costs have increased and, as a result, the charter of the tribunal could not be met. The \$10,000 limit does not cover the range of possible claims. Anyone who has done building work knows that \$10,000 does not buy much these days. For example, renovations for a new kitchen or bathroom may easily cost that much or more. People with claims up to \$10,000 can have their cases heard and finalised. Based on reports that came to me and, in the light of that evidence, I decided to increase the jurisdiction of the BDT to \$25,000. That change came into effect at the beginning of this week. It more accurately reflects the amount commonly at stake in many building disputes. The change will enable consumers to avoid the silliness of having to split their claims to have them heard by what is a fairly accessible tribunal.

Last year 989 claims were lodged with the Building Disputes Tribunal compared with 860 during 1992. The honourable member for Mount Druitt has not commented on that. I spoke about the impact of fees in another jurisdiction, though he may not want to know about that. Despite a fee increase, the number of people seeking dispute resolution has risen significantly. Such resolution is straightforward, understandable and fairly cheap for those with building problems. I hope and expect that with easier access to, and greater coverage by, the tribunal, the figures will rise once again. Not only consumers use the tribunal to resolve their complaints; builders and subcontractors also resort to it. Of a sample of 100 claims lodged, about 64 per cent were from home owners and 36 per cent from builders and subcontractors. It cuts both ways. The change will enhance the relevance of the BDT as an effective resolution medium.

The Government hopes to bring similar proposals before the Parliament during the current session to improve other dispute resolution mechanisms currently under the auspices of the Building Services Corporation. Recently a plain English building contract was launched. The contract is being broadly distributed, is used fairly widely, and is welcomed because it can be easily understood. The Government is moving to resolve longstanding disputes that go back about 20 years in the building industry. The Government has in mind a number of other measures that members will learn about. This improvement to the Building Disputes Tribunal will benefit consumers and increase access to what is a particularly useful forum.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Report No. 80: Infrastructure Management and Financing in New South Wales - Submissions and minutes of evidence

The Clerk, pursuant to section 57(4) of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, announced receipt of parts 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the submissions, together with parts 1 and 2 of the minutes of evidence on Report No. 80: Infrastructure Management and Financing in New South Wales.

PETITIONS

Capital Punishment

Petitions praying that the House will call for a referendum asking the people of New South Wales to vote on the provision of capital punishment for those people who are convicted of a violent crime, received from **Dr Kernohan and Mr Windsor**.

Page 407

F6 Freeway Emergency Telephones

Petition praying that the House will consider the installation of emergency telephones on the F6 Freeway from Yallah to the north of Wollongong, received from **Mr Rumble**.

Royal South Sydney Hospital

Petition praying that existing services at Royal South Sydney Hospital be retained, received from **Dr Refshauge**.

Central Coast Community Women's Health Centre

Petition praying for increased assistance for the Central Coast Community Women's Health Centre at Wyoming, received from **Dr Refshauge**.

Shellharbour Public Hospital Children's Ward

Petition praying that the children's ward of Shellharbour Public Hospital be re-opened, received from **Mr Rumble**.

Bulli, Coledale and Port Kembla District Hospitals

Petition praying that the present level of services be retained at Coledale, Bulli and Port Kembla district hospitals, received from **Mr Sullivan**.

Warilla Police Station

Petitions praying that more police be allocated to Warilla Police Station, received from **Mr Harrison and Mr Rumble**.

Home and Community Care Program

Petition praying that the Home and Community Care program be allocated growth funding in the 1993-94 period consistent with increasing community need, received from **Mr Shedden**.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Re-ordering of General Business

Mrs GRUSOVIN (Heffron) [3.19]: I move:

That General Business Order of the Day (for Bills) No.17 (HomeFund Legislation (Amendment))

Bill) be re-ordered to take precedence on Thursday, 10th March, 1994.

I have moved this motion because time is of the essence with regard to the plight of HomeFund borrowers. I would like to pose one simple question: how can HomeFund families decide whether to take up the restructure package if they do not know what remedy, if any, is available from the HomeFund Commissioner and if they are not provided with impartial financial counselling and legal assistance? The whole of the HomeFund problem is no longer merely a fiasco. It is worse: it is a circus. Last week the Minister for Consumer Affairs was openly critical of me for failing to provide her office with evidence of specific complaints from HomeFund borrowers. She assumed she has to be a clairvoyant so she can read my mind to find out about the operations of her department. Quite apart from the lack of resources at my disposal to provide the Minister with briefings on the performance of her department, anyone with half a brain would know that 15 staff in the HomeFund Advisory Service cannot provide financial counselling and legal advice to up to 26,000 HomeFund borrowers. I am most disturbed that on 3 March 1994 the Minister for Consumer Affairs advised this House:

In fact, the Financial Counsellors Association was involved in training some of the advisory staff now working in that service.

The Minister was referring to the HomeFund Advisory Service, which the Minister established to provide "impartial financial counselling and legal assistance" for HomeFund borrowers. I took this matter up with the Financial Counsellors Association of New South Wales and received a written response from the president on 9 March 1994.

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

Mrs GRUSOVIN: I received a written response from the President of the Financial Counsellors Association of New South Wales, Mr Kevin Howard, on 9 March 1994 which stated:

At no stage during the 2 days did we give the staff any training in the areas of Financial Counselling. Before agreeing to assist in the training, we emphasised to the course co-ordinator that while we could assist with communication skills and an outline of how a financial counsellor worked with clients we would not be able to give any training in financial counselling.

Not only was this not possible in two days, but we also explained that it was not possible to do financial counselling within the guidelines given to the Financial advisers - that is, that the borrowers overall financial situation was not to be taken into account.

I challenge the Minister to come back to this table and explain to this House and to the HomeFund borrowers in this State how this situation could come about. I do not find it at all amusing. I find it absolutely disgraceful that there has been no training and that the borrowers' overall financial situation was not to be taken into account. [*Time expired.*]

Ms MACHIN (Port Macquarie - Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister Assisting the Minister for Roads, and Minister Assisting the Minister for Transport) [3.22]: I would like to hear why urgency should be granted over a number of other interesting and important issues. Obviously the honourable member is not aware of the standing orders. The real reason behind the motion is the demonstration to be held tomorrow, which Mr O'Keeffe and the honourable member for Heffron have helped to organise. This is all about a media opportunity for the honourable member for Heffron. On the one hand she says, "We have to do this in a hurry," but when

Page 408

the Government does something quickly, such as setting up an advisory service in a short time as directed by the Parliament last year, she says, "That is not good; it was too rushed; they were not properly trained".

She has not replied to any of my letters asking for her input into that service. I do not want briefs. If she has complaints that the Government has not heard about, why does she continually refuse to give them to me or to the Government so they can be properly investigated? It might be useful for the Independents to listen to the reply, as they listened to the honourable member for Heffron. I would have thought they might like to listen and to think about whether or not this important issue should be brought on simply because a rally will be held outside Parliament House tomorrow.

A number of complex issues are involved, with which the honourable member for Heffron does not want to acquaint herself. She does not want to recognise the facts. It was made clear by her adviser Mr O'Keeffe at a meeting at Plumpton 10 days ago that the Labor Party wanted to make this a political issue. It wanted to keep this on the agenda to make things more difficult for the Government. That will not help the borrowers. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss with the honourable member for Heffron, or anyone else in this House, any problems the Opposition has with the HomeFund Advisory Service. The honourable member for Heffron has raised more new material today, of which I was not aware because she will not forward it to the advisory service, the HomeFund Commissioner's office or my department. How are those problems meant to be addressed?

If the honourable member for Heffron were fair dinkum in helping the borrowers, she would make that information available. If the Independent members are serious about HomeFund - in fact, if they would even listen it might help - I would counsel them to take a little more time. The Government is not refusing to debate legislation, but it was brought on in a hurry and no information has been provided to the Government about these problems. Some matters in the bill do not even relate to the advisory service. At the very least we should be considering this matter a little more fully rather than rushing into it tomorrow in an ad hoc way, in a politicised way for the sake of a demonstration and media coverage that the honourable member for Heffron is so desperate for on this issue. I believe that many of her colleagues know she is not fair dinkum about helping HomeFund borrowers; they have failed to support her for a long time. This motion should be rejected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The question is, That the motion be agreed to. All those in favour say aye, to the contrary no. The noes have it.

Mr Beckroge: The ayes have it.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The noes have it. I called quite clearly that the noes had it.

Mr Beckroge: I did not hear.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have informed the House on many occasions about the relevant procedures of this House. Statements being made by the member with the call or by the Chair are the primary matters that should be listened to by honourable members who wish to know what is going on. Members should not plead that because of their inattention or excessive noise at a particular moment they were not able to hear. It is not for the Chair or the member with the call to speak above the level of audible conversation. On a number of occasions today I have directed the attention of members to excessive audible conversation in the Chamber.

I do not intend in future to extend tolerance to members who are not following proceedings or are having discussions with their colleagues. It behoves all members to conduct themselves in a proper fashion in the Chamber so that they can hear. Having said that and having given that warning for the future, I am prepared to restate the question on this occasion because I should not want it thought that I would take an unfair advantage of any situation. However, I warn honourable members that the Chair cannot allow such irregularities in proceedings to recur. In future, members will have to concentrate on what is happening in the House. Members stand warned about what the attitude of the Chair will be in future.

Question - That the motion be agreed to - put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 46

Ms Allan	Mr Markham
Mr Amery	Mr Martin
Mr Anderson	Mr Mills
Mr A. S. Aquilina	Mr Moss
Mr J. J. Aquilina	Mr J. H. Murray
Mr Bowman	Mr Nagle
Mr Carr	Mr Neilly
Mr Clough	Mr Newman
Mr Crittenden	Ms Nori
Mr Doyle	Mr E. T. Page
Mr Face	Mr Price
Mr Gaudry	Dr Refshauge
Mr Gibson	Mr Rogan
Mrs Grusovin	Mr Rumble
Mr Harrison	Mr Scully
Mr Hunter	Mr Shedden
Mr Iemma	Mr Sullivan
Mr Irwin	Mr Thompson
Mr Knight	Mr Whelan
Mr Knowles	Mr Yeadon
Mr Langton	
Mrs Lo Po'	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr McBride	Mr Beckroge
Mr McManus	Mr Davoren

Page 409

Noes, 50

Mr Armstrong	Mr Morris
Mr Baird	Mr W. T. J. Murray
Mr Beck	Mr O'Doherty
Mr Blackmore	Mr D. L. Page
Mr Causley	Mr Peacocke
Mr Chappell	Mr Petch
Mrs Chikarovski	Mr Phillips
Mr Cochran	Mr Photios
Mrs Cohen	Mr Richardson
Mr Collins	Mr Rixon
Mr Cruickshank	Mr Schipp
Mr Downy	Mr Schultz
Mr Fraser	Mrs Skinner
Mr Glachan	Mr Small
Mr Griffiths	Mr Smith
Mr Hartcher	Mr Souris
Mr Hatton	Mr Tink
Mr Hazzard	Mr Turner
Mr Humpherson	Mr West

Dr Kernohan	Mr Windsor
Mr Kinross	Mr Yabsley
Mr Longley	Mr Zammit
Dr Macdonald	
Ms Machin	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Merton	Mr Jeffery
Ms Moore	Mr Kerr

Pair

Mr Ziolkowski Mr Fahey

Question so resolved in the negative.

Motion negatived.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Re-ordering of General Business

Mr J. J. AQUILINA (Riverstone) [3.35]: I move:

That General Business Notice of Motion (General Notices) No. 17 (Inquiry into the Board of Studies) be re-ordered to take precedence on Thursday, 10 March 1994.

This motion calls for an urgent public inquiry into the operations of the Board of Studies and the circumstances surrounding the decision by the Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Minister for Tourism and Minister Assisting the Premier to sack Mr John Lambert as President of the board. I do not believe there is any more urgent matter to discuss than this. All honourable members would be aware that the telephones and facsimile machines are running hot. There is speculation about why this sacking took place. People are demanding answers to the reasons behind this peremptory sacking of Mr John Lambert.

A lot of questions need to be answered about the operations of the Board of Studies and the nature of the sacking of Mr Lambert. It is important therefore, for these matters to be aired in this Chamber. We must get on with the job of holding a public inquiry as quickly as possible to ensure that members of the public are reasonably satisfied about the sacking of Mr Lambert and the general operations of the board. I would have moved to have this matter considered prior to tomorrow, but I am conscious of the fact that I should work within the standing and sessional orders of this House. I believe this is the proper way to go about it. This matter is of sufficient urgency to warrant it being given priority tomorrow to be discussed under general notices of motion.

Mr O'DOHERTY (Ku-ring-gai) [3.38]: There is no reason for this House to reorder the business paper in the way suggested by the honourable member for Riverstone. There are a number of reasons why we should not reorder the business paper. The first has to do with the fact that eight colleagues of the honourable member for Riverstone placed matters on the business paper before him. The question before the Chair at the moment is whether we need to bring on this motion ahead of eight other motions which have been on the notice paper since Methuselah was a boy. These motions are trotted out every week. We have the same old things, the same old policies time and again, but members of the Opposition bring up matters in the media that they want to run with. The Opposition lost on HomeFund. This is a second go, a second chance.

Honourable members last week debated a similar matter of public importance in this House. On

that occasion the Opposition was saying that the sky would fall in and other things would happen, but none of them did. Now members of the Opposition want to revisit the whole matter after the Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs has taken the sort of action that they were looking for last week. It is a joke! The Opposition wants to revisit this matter time and again. How often does this House have to waste time hearing what the honourable member for Riverstone has to say about the Board of Studies? We dealt with this matter last week. The Opposition was wrong then and it is wrong today because the Minister has taken action that was required of her under the appropriate Act.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is too much interjection from the Opposition benches.

Mr O'DOHERTY: Everything has been done according to the book. There were concerns about the Board of Studies, so the Minister instituted the appropriate inquiries.

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

Mr O'DOHERTY: There were concerns about the relationship between Mr Lambert and the Minister. In the end, after several warnings in Executive Council, the Minister gave him appropriate notice and his services were terminated. Other than to reopen the question for political purposes, there is nothing to debate. There is no reason why this House should waste its time reordering the notice paper to bring this debate on again tomorrow when we have already had the discussion.

Page 410

Question - That the motion be agreed to - put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 49

Ms Allan	Mr McManus
Mr Amery	Mr Markham
Mr Anderson	Mr Martin
Mr A. S. Aquilina	Mr Mills
Mr J. J. Aquilina	Ms Moore
Mr Bowman	Mr Moss
Mr Carr	Mr J. H. Murray
Mr Clough	Mr Nagle
Mr Crittenden	Mr Neilly
Mr Doyle	Mr Newman
Mr Face	Ms Nori
Mr Gaudry	Mr E. T. Page
Mr Gibson	Mr Price
Mrs Grusovin	Dr Refshauge
Mr Harrison	Mr Rogan
Mr Hatton	Mr Rumble
Mr Hunter	Mr Scully
Mr Iemma	Mr Shedden
Mr Irwin	Mr Sullivan
Mr Knight	Mr Thompson
Mr Knowles	Mr Whelan
Mr Langton	Mr Yeadon
Mrs Lo Po'	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr McBride	Mr Beckroge
Dr Macdonald	Mr Davoren

Noes, 47

Mr Armstrong	Mr W. T. J. Murray
Mr Baird	Mr O'Doherty
Mr Beck	Mr D. L. Page
Mr Blackmore	Mr Peacocke
Mr Causley	Mr Petch
Mr Chappell	Mr Phillips
Mrs Chikarovski	Mr Photios
Mr Cochran	Mr Richardson
Mrs Cohen	Mr Rixon
Mr Collins	Mr Schipp
Mr Cruickshank	Mr Schultz
Mr Downy	Mrs Skinner
Mr Fraser	Mr Small
Mr Glachan	Mr Smith
Mr Griffiths	Mr Souris
Mr Hartcher	Mr Tink
Mr Hazzard	Mr Turner
Mr Humpherson	Mr West
Dr Kernohan	Mr Windsor
Mr Kinross	Mr Yabsley
Mr Longley	Mr Zammit
Ms Machin	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Merton	Mr Jeffery
Mr Morris	Mr Kerr

Pair

Mr Ziolkowski	Mr Fahey
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Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

POST-CONVICTION INQUIRY (QUASHING OF CONVICTION) (DOUGLAS HARRY RENDELL) BILL

Message

Motion by Mr Mills agreed to:

That the following message be sent to the Legislative Council:

Mr President -

The Legislative Assembly requests that the Bill for "An Act to provide for the assessment of compensation in relation to the conviction for murder imposed on Douglas Harry Rendell" forwarded to the Legislative Council for concurrence during the third session of the present Parliament and not dealt with because of prorogation, be proceeded with.

Legislative Assembly
9 March 1994

K. R. Rozzoli
Speaker

RURAL LANDS PROTECTION (NOXIOUS ANIMALS) AMENDMENT BILL

Message

Motion by Mr Martin agreed to:

That the following message be sent to the Legislative Council:

Mr President -

The Legislative Assembly requests that the Bill for "An Act to amend the Rural Lands Protection Act 1989 to make red foxes and feral cats noxious animals for the purposes of that Act; and for related purposes" forwarded to the Legislative Council for concurrence during the third session of the present Parliament and not dealt with because of prorogation, be proceeded with.

Legislative Assembly
9 March 1994

K. R. Rozzoli
Speaker

SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE M2 CASTLEREAGH TOLLWAY

Suspension of Standing Orders

Mr LANGTON (Kogarah) [3.50]: I move:

That relevant standing orders be suspended to allow General Business Notice of Motion No. 18 (Select Committee on M2 Castlereagh Tollway) to be called on forthwith and dealt with at this sitting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before the honourable member for Kogarah begins his contribution, I should remind honourable members that procedures in regard to urgent matters are in a trial phase. By agreement of both sides of the House the mover of the motion may speak for five minutes and one other member may speak to the motion for five minutes. Order! I call the honourable member for Moorebank to order.

Mr LANGTON: Standing orders should be suspended because there is nothing before this Parliament today that is more important than planning the future of Sydney. The suspension of standing orders will enable honourable members to hear a debate on the activities of the Roads and Traffic Authority, the Department of Planning and the Department of Transport in respect of the planning,
Page 411

assessment and determination to build the M2 tollway. Such a debate will enable honourable members to evaluate the urgent necessity for a parliamentary select committee to conduct a full inquiry into the M2 tollway, including the adequacy of assessment of feasible alternatives to the M2, the cost-benefit ratio of the project, the impact on government finances of the public subsidy for the project and the extent of that subsidy, and the veracity of information produced by government authorities and departments in support of the project.

Standing orders should be suspended to enable honourable members to learn that the Roads and Traffic Authority predetermined the outcome of the northwest transport link environmental impact statements; to learn that published documents unfavourable to the M2 were omitted from those statements; and to learn that a submission on the environmental impact statement by the National Parks and Wildlife Service was not included in the assessment report. Standing orders should be suspended to allow honourable members to learn how the Roads and Traffic Authority inflated traffic figures for the purposes of the environmental impact statement; and that the studies on noise and air quality impact in

the environmental impact statement were not conducted according to acceptable standards.

Suspension of standing orders will allow debate on the level of government subsidy and public risk in this project and how these matters have been concealed by the Roads and Traffic Authority for the purpose of having its proposal accepted. Suspension of standing orders will permit the revelation of the Roads and Traffic Authority involvement in assisting prospective tenderers with their submissions. Suspension will allow the House to consider the implications of a highly subsidised tollway for the taxpayers of New South Wales and the ramifications for other road projects around the State. Suspension of standing orders will enable honourable members to understand the gravity of allowing the Roads and Traffic Authority to proceed with this project without having a full inquiry.

Debate will enable the House to learn of the manner in which the environmental impact statement processes have been manipulated to predetermine their outcome. Debate will enable honourable members to realise that the Roads and Traffic Authority never intended accepting the findings of the Woodward commission of inquiry into the Castlereagh Freeway. The matter before the House is urgent. People are being kicked out of their homes. More homes will be destroyed to build the M2 than were lost in the recent bushfires. Suspension of standing orders will give honourable members the opportunity to debate the wisdom of building a 21 kilometres tollway when such a project contradicts the policies espoused in the Integrated Transport Strategy and Sydney's Future documents. Standing orders should be suspended because the future of Sydney is at stake. The health of our children and our environment is at stake. Standing orders should be suspended to allow debate now, because every day pollution in Sydney worsens with every new car that comes on the road.

Childhood asthma in western Sydney has reached epidemic proportions. Nothing could be more urgent or important than the health of our children. The suspension of standing orders will allow the House to be shown that the greater the road capacity, the greater the traffic volume. Suspension of standing orders will allow the House to debate the urgent necessity for a select committee to inquire into a major infrastructure project that has been clouded by secrecy and has widespread severe ramifications for Sydney and New South Wales. This matter is urgent because, given the record of the Roads and Traffic Authority in this State, if we delay debate on this matter, if we delay the decision to set up a select committee to inquire into all matters concerning the M2 Castlereagh Tollway, it will be too late; it will be too late to have a debate or any inquiry into this decision, because the Roads and Traffic Authority will be out there, as the Minister said in his recent press release, to fast track this project, to speed up the signing of the contract.

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

Mr LANGTON: Nothing before the Parliament is more urgent than a debate on this issue. The Roads and Traffic Authority must be brought to account.

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

Mr LANGTON: The activities of the Department of Planning and the Department of Transport in relation to all matters concerning the M2 are of enormous public concern. They should be fully considered by a parliamentary select committee. I ask all honourable members to support this motion for urgency so that the select committee can be established as soon as possible.

Mr BAIRD (Northcott - Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads) [3.55]: It is an absolute farce to describe this matter as urgent, when tomorrow is allocated for private members' motions to be brought before the House. It is farcical to suggest that standing orders should be suspended so that the House can deal with the motion now. It is 10 months since the environmental impact statement was determined; six months since expressions of interest were called for; four months since expressions of interests closed; and the honourable member for Kogarah did nothing. He now tells the House that this

debate is so urgent that everything else should be put aside.

This process was started in 1988. Since then the honourable member for Kogarah has asked one question about this issue. Now he proposes that the House should suspend all business in order to debate his motion. The honourable member for Kogarah has had plenty of opportunities to debate this subject but has failed to do so. Why is he seeking to suspend standing orders today? The matters raised in the motion can be dealt with before the courts. That is the proper forum for challenging the validity of the

Page 412

environmental impact statement process. Anyone can go to the Land and Environment Court on the issue. A select committee is not the appropriate forum and should not replace the Land and Environment Court. The matters raised in the motion concerning financing and the tenderers' offers have not yet been finalised. The motion refers to the cost to the Government, but that has not yet been determined. The contract has not been written.

Mr Langton: You know and you will not tell us.

Mr BAIRD: The contract is still being negotiated. On what basis is the honourable member speaking about the cost to the Government? Everything will be published, in accordance with the commitment of the honourable member for Eastwood as Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee. If the honourable member for Kogarah is a member of the Public Accounts Committee, he will have full access to all of the material. This matter has been in the public arena for many years, especially since the Government made a commitment in 1988 to improve transport facilities to the northwest of Sydney by constructing the F2. The environmental impact statement was put on display in May 1992, almost two years ago, for three months. The honourable member for Kogarah could have moved to set up a select committee at that time to examine the whole issue.

When the environmental impact statement was put on display that was the time for him to act. But he has waited until the companies have spent \$10 million. I ask him whether he believes that his actions following that expenditure will encourage people to invest in New South Wales. After companies have invested that amount he wants to come in at the death knell and knock off the project. The honourable member for Kogarah wants to put at risk the amenity of the people who live in the northwest and tell them that they cannot have this road. He proposes that the House suspend its business so that he can cause delay. He knows that there have been marches in the area in support of having this road constructed. I would not suggest that he goes out to the area in a hurry.

This matter is urgent only in the mind of the honourable member for Kogarah. It was referred to the ICAC and the ICAC, was not interested in it. If that was the proper forum where impropriety could have been determined, that opportunity was taken. The ICAC examined the issue and refused to take it further, as the honourable member well knows, despite his best efforts and the efforts of the Coalition for Transport Action Group, whose representatives are sitting in the public gallery. It is six months since the Government called for expressions of interest from the private sector to build and operate this tollway. Are we going to make it possible in this State for anyone to bring a motion of this nature before the House after the whole of the financing of the project has been developed, work has been carried out, \$10 million has been spent by the developers and the proponents, and all the information is available to this Parliament? It is hardly encouraging for them if we put aside all business to debate this motion and the project is delayed.

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

Mr BAIRD: This project would create 2,000 direct jobs in New South Wales and 4,000 indirect jobs, and would ease the incredible traffic chaos to the northwest of Sydney, which all honourable members on the Government benches behind me suffer day after day. The Opposition has no members in the

northwest who experience these difficulties. They want to have this inquiry to delay the project. The experience in this House of such inquiries is that the project would be delayed by at least three years. That is what they want. Yesterday in this Chamber the honourable member for Kogarah complained that the Government was not pushing the project fast enough. Today he complains that we are fast tracking it. Every process has been followed to the letter. If it were not followed to the letter, the Independent Commission Against Corruption would have said so. The honourable member for Kogarah wants to stop this project for political purposes.

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

Mr BAIRD: Urgency should be denied.

Question - That standing orders be suspended - put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 48

Ms Allan	Mr McManus
Mr Amery	Mr Markham
Mr Anderson	Mr Mills
Mr A. S. Aquilina	Ms Moore
Mr J. J. Aquilina	Mr Moss
Mr Bowman	Mr J. H. Murray
Mr Carr	Mr Nagle
Mr Clough	Mr Neilly
Mr Crittenden	Mr Newman
Mr Doyle	Ms Nori
Mr Face	Mr E. T. Page
Mr Gaudry	Mr Price
Mr Gibson	Dr Refshauge
Mrs Grusovin	Mr Rogan
Mr Harrison	Mr Rumble
Mr Hatton	Mr Scully
Mr Hunter	Mr Shedden
Mr Iemma	Mr Sullivan
Mr Irwin	Mr Thompson
Mr Knight	Mr Whelan
Mr Knowles	Mr Yeadon
Mr Langton	
Mrs Lo Po'	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr McBride	Mr Beckroge
Dr Macdonald	Mr Davoren

Page 413

Noes, 47

Mr Armstrong	Mr W. T. J. Murray
Mr Baird	Mr O'Doherty
Mr Beck	Mr D. L. Page
Mr Blackmore	Mr Peacocke
Mr Causley	Mr Petch
Mr Chappell	Mr Phillips

Mrs Chikarovski	Mr Photios
Mr Cochran	Mr Richardson
Mrs Cohen	Mr Rixon
Mr Collins	Mr Schipp
Mr Cruickshank	Mr Schultz
Mr Downy	Mrs Skinner
Mr Fraser	Mr Small
Mr Glachan	Mr Smith
Mr Griffiths	Mr Souris
Mr Hartcher	Mr Tink
Mr Hazzard	Mr Turner
Mr Humpherson	Mr West
Dr Kernohan	Mr Windsor
Mr Kinross	Mr Yabsley
Mr Longley	Mr Zammit
Ms Machin	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Merton	Mr Jeffery
Mr Morris	Mr Kerr

Pair

Mr Ziolkowski Mr Fahey

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Motion for suspension of standing orders agreed to.

Consideration of Urgent Motion

Mr LANGTON (Kogarah) [4.10]: I move:

(1) That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon the conduct and activities of the Roads and Traffic Authority and the Department of Planning in relation to the planning, proposal and determination of the M2 Castlereagh Tollway, with regard to the following matters:

- (a) the decision to build the M2 Castlereagh Tollway contrary to the recommendations of the Independent Commission of Inquiry (Woodward Report);
- (b) the cost and benefits of the project;
- (c) the planning forecasts used to justify the project;
- (d) the impact upon Government finances of a subsidy to private investors in the M2;
- (e) the veracity of information produced by the Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) and the Department of Planning (DOP) and the Department of Transport (DOT) and those agencies' consultants in promoting this road and in assessing its environmental, social and economic impacts;
- (f) the adequacy of the RTA's DOP's and DOT's assessment of feasible alternatives to the M2;
- (g) the concealment and/or omission of known and relevant data from the EIS processes;

- (h) the "additional changes which it (the tenderer) considers would enhance the Link's viability" envisaged in the Invitations for Preliminary Proposals;
- (i) the omission of additional changes from the North West Transport Link EISs;
- (j) the involvement, if any, of the RTA, the DOP, the DOT and those agencies' consultants, in seeking local government and community support for the project;
- (k) the consequences of the RTA holding executive responsibility for the project proposal, environmental assessment and project determination under Section 64 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979;
- (l) the fast-tracking of the awarding of the contract from December 1994.

(2) That the Committee consist of six members nominated in writing to the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, being -

- (a) three Government members nominated by the Leader of the Government;
- (b) two Opposition members nominated by the Leader of the Opposition; and
- (c) one Independent member nominated by the Independent members.

(3) That the Committee have leave to sit during any adjournment of the House; to adjourn from place to place; to make visits of inspection within New South Wales and other States and territories of Australia; and have power to take evidence and to send for persons, papers, records and things; and to report from time to time.

(4) That should the House stand adjourned and the Committee agree to any report before the House resumes sitting:

- (a) the Committee have leave to send any such report, minutes of proceedings and evidence taken before it to the Clerk of the House;
- (b) the documents shall be printed and published and the Clerk shall forthwith take such action as is necessary to give effect to the order of the House; and
- (c) the documents shall be laid upon the Table of the House at its next sitting.

The story of the M2 Castlereagh tollway, now known by its public relations friendly name, the North West Transport Link, is a long and sorry saga of secrecy, deceit, manipulation, maladministration and bulldozer-inspired planning. However, it is not a story of ignorance, because the Roads and Traffic Authority has always known exactly what it was doing, what it wanted to achieve, and has done anything to achieve it. The Government made a commitment to build the F2, now the M2 tollway, in 1989. For a reason or reasons unknown the Government decided that, unlike many others, it is determined to honour this commitment; nothing will stop it or the RTA from building this road. The Chief Executive of the Roads and Traffic Authority, Mr Bernard Fisk, in the June 1993 *Australian Business Monthly* stated:

We realised early on that if we didn't obtain private sector financing for these (tollway) projects, they simply wouldn't take place in the foreseeable future . . . This removed the fear within the RTA that it was taking the bread from the mouths of the engineers.

The Opposition always had the feeling that Mr Fisk was working for the public as a public servant, but, of course, he states that he is a servant of the engineers. He admits that the real purpose of the toll roads is not traffic alleviation or commuter amenity but a job creation scheme for RTA engineers. Several grave matters regarding the M2 have been raised as a result of the activities of the RTA and only a select committee of this House can fully investigate them. I shall provide details explaining why the committee is necessary. However, I draw attention to some activities of the RTA that, had they been carried out by a publicly listed company, would have caused the company to be delisted from the stock exchange and barred from any corporate activity in this country.

I refer specifically to the concealment and omission from the commission of inquiry and subsequent environmental impact statements of known and relevant data available to the RTA; the deliberate concealment of the cost to the taxpayer of this project; the deliberate involvement of the RTA in the manipulation of local government and community support for the project; the total failure by the RTA to consider any non-road alternative to the M2; and, finally, the extraordinary situation where the RTA is the planner, the assessor, the judge and the jury of a project that has the potential not only to destroy people's quality of life but also to destroy this city.

To understand the extent of the sinister role of the RTA in the M2 determination it is necessary to refer to the history of the matter. In August 1989 the F2 proposal became the subject of a commission of inquiry under section 119 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. The report of the Woodward commission of inquiry into the Castlereagh freeway was released. The commission rejected the proposal on environmental, social and economic grounds. It found that the RTA had inflated employment growth in North Ryde and the lower North Shore to support its case to build the road, thus inflating traffic figures. When questioned on this during the hearing of the commission, the RTA produced entirely new traffic figures which it claimed would be the result of the predicted employment growth in Ryde and North Sydney.

However, just four days later the RTA presented yet another set of figures to the commission. This time the increase was claimed to result from the population growth in the northwest sector and not from North Shore employment growth. When called on to substantiate the claim of the RTA on the northwest sector population growth, the Department of Planning stated that its population figures were not significantly different from the first set of figures on which the environmental impact statement was based. In other words, the RTA makes up population figures to justify this road. There is no factual basis for the figures.

Yesterday the honourable member for Eastwood cited inaccurate figures. He should be aware that the Rouse Hill population figures have been revised downwards to 80,000 by the year 2010 and not the 250,000 cited yesterday. He should ascertain the correct figures because he is peddling misinformation that has been provided by the Department of Planning and the Roads and Traffic Authority. Unable and unwilling to take no for an answer, the RTA proceeded to submit to the Minister a report on the commission of inquiry that stated that the outcome was unexpected. It was not only unexpected; it was unwanted. It was unwanted by the RTA, former Premier Greiner, the former Minister for Roads, Wal Murray, and by the present Minister for Transport and Minister for Roads, the honourable member for Northcott.

The RTA wasted no time in seeking to override the commission's findings and to restart the road project. Within weeks the RTA had made its submission to the Minister, a submission made available and public only after persistent efforts by community groups that applied for documentation under freedom of information legislation. The report states that the F2 is critical to the RTA's vision - that is the first time we have ever heard that the RTA had a vision - and claims massive public demand for the road. Two strategies were proposed in the report. The first was total rejection of the report of the commission of inquiry. That course of action is drastic and was not recommended because it could attract legal action, could cause major confrontation between community groups and the RTA - though how that can be reconciled with the earlier claim that the road is desired by all residents is beyond me - and could well fail.

We all know that the RTA wants to be sure of the outcome of any action before it proceeds. Therefore, that strategy clearly was not recommended.

The second strategy was not only recommended but endorsed as follows: "Action: Adopt strategy two as outlined. Draft press releases are included as appendix 4". What was strategy two? Those who have followed the pattern of behaviour of the RTA in this matter would be aware that the strategy is exactly what has happened over the past 3½ years. The strategy was the partial acceptance of the report, to reject the social engineering concept - as they call it - that car travel must be restrained. Recently, I might add, this notion was advocated by the Premier and the Minister for Transport when they launched the "Integrated Transport Strategy and Sydney's Future" documents. The Minister and the Premier have no idea what they are doing from one day to the next.

They also state, ". . . to accept that there is a need for a comprehensive land use transport strategy for Sydney that addresses the rising concerns of the environment - but that 'the F2 Castlereagh freeway should not await the study'." Why not? Was the RTA so concerned that such a study might find against the F2? Other aspects of the strategy included revised traffic data, something that the RTA has become quite expert at; new environmental impact statements; and private bus services and tolls. The same report reveals that by pure coincidence Hornsby Council had called a public meeting at which motions were carried that concurred exactly with those the RTA was proposing. The RTA report also notes that

Page 415

Hornsby Council co-ordinated efforts on behalf of other affected councils to "bring the findings to public notice and to encourage a broad public demand for construction of an environmentally sympathetic Castlereagh freeway". The "Guidelines for Proponents" document describes the action co-ordinated by Hornsby Council as a ground swell of support for a northwest transport link, which had not been expressed previously. And, of course, if we all believe that, there are fairies at the bottom of the garden.

Documents suggest there was a deliberate effort to mobilise public opinion in a certain way, and only an inquiry will uncover the extent to which this occurred. We need an inquiry to determine the real cost-benefit ratio and the cost to taxpayers. The northwest transport link environmental impact statement working paper, entitled "Economic Evaluation", by Applied Economics and Manidis Roberts, estimates construction costs of more than \$450 million and a further \$109 million for property acquisition, the latter to be found from Roads and Traffic Authority and Government funds. The indicative financial model, which the RTA used to put the proposal to the Government, gave a construction cost of \$400 million. The Minister's press release quoted a figure of \$500 million. Traffic volumes were calculated for the EIS using a toll of 70 cents. Additional background information supplied at the pre-submission meeting by the RTA to proponents states that the assumptions for the tolls are \$2 for cars and \$4 for trucks. They cannot get their facts right. The Minister should remember that if one wants to be a good liar one has to have a good memory. The Minister does not have one, and the RTA certainly does not. In December 1992 the RTA indicated that the Government subsidy could be as high as 50 per cent. The indicative financial model proposes a subsidy of only about 30 per cent on the lowest construction cost. An RTA community newsletter on the northwest transport link, issued in 1993, states:

The project will be mainly funded by tolls . . . RTA funds will pay for any building costs not covered by the toll revenue.

What is the point of private sector involvement if it means that all the risk is being borne by the public sector? The risk is to taxpayers' money. The Minister's own press release is headed "M2 Privately Funded Tollway". That headline is grossly misleading. It is not a privately funded tollway. The guidelines for proponents, in section 2.4, under "Risk", state:

Proposals should be developed so as to minimise the risks to be borne by the public sector and (without limitation) be on the basis that the successful proponent must bear all construction risk, and traffic risk related to the expected revenue for its share of the financing of the project.

What does that mean? It simply means the proponent must minimise all risks to the public sector, especially risks pertaining to construction and traffic. It does not oblige the proponent to bear the risk, simply to minimise the risk. That does not equate with a private venture where that sector bears the risk. In a letter to the Coalition of Transport Action Groups the chief executive of the RTA stated:

When definitive offers are available and a final offer negotiated, the actual funding requirement of the Government and its timing will be specified.

In other words, when the deal has been stitched up and the contract has been finalised, then and only then will the RTA let the taxpayers of New South Wales know what they will be up for. The guidelines also state that the RTA will acquire and lease to the successful proponent all land required for the link. Why has only \$15 million been allocated in the current Budget for the M2? Land acquisition will cost at least \$100 million. What other road projects in the current 1993-94 capital works budget will be dumped to find the money to purchase the land?

A committee is needed to inquire into the level of subsidy. What will be the impact of the subsidy on other road projects? What will be the impact of the subsidy on Loan Council borrowing limits? What will be the impact on government funds when, as happened with the M5, the builders come forward needing further subsidy? What will happen when, as occurred with the M4 and M5, local councils impose rates on a private operator? Will the RTA foot the bill for those? Will the toll be 70¢, \$2, \$3 or \$4? These matters have not been made public and no opportunity has been given for public discussion of them. The Public Accounts Committee 1993 report on "Infrastructure Management and Funding in New South Wales" found that transparency of contracts is essential. The only thing transparent about this saga is the absolute determination of the RTA and the Minister to build the M2. In 1990 the honourable member for Gladesville, as reported in the *Daily Mirror* of 12 September 1990, stated publicly:

The toll idea should be scrapped . . . Like the lights, that would only clog up the traffic and encourage motorists to go back into residential by-passes.

The Minister was not interested in the contribution of that backbencher. In fact, we know he is not interested in the views of his own branch members. He refuses to meet with them or to discuss this issue with them. He will not even talk about it to people on the train. It seems that tolls are not the only money-spinner on the M2 agenda. Section 3.2.1 of the guidelines, under the heading "Financing", states that the proposals must include information regarding the proposed toll revenue and all other proposed sources of revenue. What are those other proposed sources of revenue? I am sure the RTA knows. In the guidelines the RTA volunteers to:

. . . engage in discussions or negotiations with any proponent for the purpose of clarifying or improving its proposal. The RTA may, in its absolute discretion, conduct simultaneous discussions to clarify or improve proposals with more than one proponent.

How can that be ethical? How can it be called a legitimate tender process when the RTA will work with tenderers to submit the proposal the RTA wants. How many proposals did the RTA assist - one of
Page 416

them, all of them? Were RTA staff employed to provide this assistance? How does that qualify the M2 as a private venture. That is the question the taxpayers of New South Wales are entitled to ask and to receive an answer to. The RTA knew exactly what it wanted, for it wrote a proposal which guaranteed it would get it. The RTA proposal effectively allowed it to write the tenderers' submissions, regardless of environmental impact statements and commissions of inquiry, and certainly regardless of propriety. The RTA has shown only contempt for the environmental impact statement process.

The RTA deliberately withheld known information, the "Road Transport Future Directions" document, from the 1992 environmental impact statement. The RTA environmental impact statement assessment report claims that the future directions study of the RTA commenced after the start of preparation of the

1992 environmental impact statement. That is an absolute lie. A progress report to the future directions study specifically states that the study commenced in July 1990. Maunsells, who prepared the EIS for M2 east, knew about the document because it appeared in their list of references. But the RTA did not want to acknowledge "Road Transport Future Directions". Is it any wonder, because the report damns the Roads 2000 strategy, which the RTA used to prop up its arguments for the M2. The EIS claimed:

The Roads 2000 network remains the long term planning target for the RTA and hence for the purpose of this EIS.

Omission of material from an EIS is a breach of clause 65(c) of the 1980 Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulations. What does the RTA care about environmental impact statements? Time and time again that authority has proved that it regards the EIS process as merely an impediment to getting its own way; or worse, it has manipulated the EIS process to achieve its predetermined position. The guidelines state:

Proponents must be prepared to construct the link as currently determined. However, a proponent may propose additional changes which it considers would enhance the link's viability. The changes should be identified separately. They will be assessed by the RTA, and if part of a firm offer . . . the RTA will determine if a supplementary EIS is required.

Why would the RTA determine that an EIS is required? Its history shows it would do anything to avoid having another EIS. The M2 may or may not be constructed according to existing environmental impact statements. Only the RTA knows, and it is not telling. The RTA is not telling us: it is not telling anyone. An inquiry is needed to determine exactly what is proposed. The Australian Conservation Foundation, Greenpeace, the Total Environment Centre, the Wilderness Society and the Nature Conservation Council have all called for a parliamentary select committee inquiry. They are concerned that public transport alternatives have not been considered by the Government. They have questioned the competency of the RTA research and documentation, the Government's response to the commission of inquiry, and the extent of the public subsidy. Link-Up, an umbrella organisation for Sydney's transport lobby groups, recently criticised the role of the RTA in planning transport initiatives. In its submission to the Department of Transport on the integrated transport strategy that group said of the RTA:

Their record of strategic planning, not to mention accountability, is deplorable.

Any honest member of this House would agree with that. What alternatives to the tollway were considered in the environmental impact statements? Clause 57(h) of Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulations 1982 requires an examination of "any feasible alternatives to the carrying out of the proposed activity". This time, instead of carrying out an EIS into the M2, the EIS supposedly examined the northwest transport link and had the M2 as the alternative. It is two bob each way - the old pea and thimble trick. They were going to get their way no matter what happened. The supposedly independent assessment of the northwest transport link EIS was carried out by the Environment and Community Impact Branch of the Roads and Traffic Authority. That is right: it was carried out by the Environment and Community Impact Branch of the RTA, because they said this branch was not involved in the preparation of the assessment report. It was signed by Maxine Cooper, General Manager, Environment and Community Impact Branch of the Roads and Traffic Authority. However, the assessment report itself was signed by Annette Ross, Environment Manager of the Sydney region of the RTA.

The second submission of the National Parks and Wildlife Service dated 4 November 1992 to the EIS was not included in the appendices to the assessment report. This clearly demonstrates the consequences of the RTA holding executive responsibility for the proposal, assessment and determination. It clearly demonstrates that it was the intention of the RTA to construct the M2 and it clearly demonstrates that any device or manipulation required to achieve that end would be and is being employed by the RTA. There is not time today to cover all the issues of concern, and a parliamentary

inquiry is required urgently. There are other matters relating to evidence on noise being omitted or flawed, and serious doubts about the RTA's response to the submission of the Environment Protection Authority.

We have known since the 1970s and the findings of the Kirby inquiry that the provision of more road space in itself generates more traffic. Traffic increases to fill the space available on roads. I am astounded that someone who claims to be intelligent, as the Minister does, would not know that that is a basic principle of traffic management. In any event, the M2 will not provide a magic solution to the traffic problems in the northwest, even without an increase in traffic. It will simply pick up traffic, and provide some relief to Carlingford and Epping roads, but will dump that traffic at the junction of the already congested Epping and Pittwater roads. The bus lanes are a pathetic attempt by the Government to masquerade something as a public transport initiative.

Page 417

The proposed bus service would start at an unpopulated point in Seven Hills. There is one stop at Pennant Hills Road where there are no other public transport links. The bus would then proceed to Epping station, where the service would terminate and where the rail service is at near capacity. A select committee is needed to inquire into all of the above and, let me assure you, a great deal more. No final contract can be awarded for the construction of the M2 as long as these serious allegations remain unresolved.

Should the committee's findings reveal any maladministration in the processes which have led to the decision to construct this tollway, the entire process of environmental impact assessment must be recommenced, this time openly and honestly; and no decision on whether to build the road should be made until that process is complete. It is urgent that a committee of inquiry be set up as quickly as possible. The RTA simply cannot be trusted to continue to determine this major project without all the matters relating to it being made open and public. I ask all honourable members to support this motion.

Mr BAIRD (Northcott - Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads) [4.33]: The honourable member for Kogarah, who moved what he considered to be an important motion, wasted eight minutes of debating time. He ran out of material. His speech was written for him by representatives of the Coalition for Transport Action Groups - people in the gallery. Then he had nothing to say. It should be clear that these people live close to the proposed freeway. They suffer from the NIMBY syndrome; they do not want it to go near them. However, hundreds of thousands of people in the northwest are calling out for this road project, which the honourable member for Kogarah would deny them.

Debates on this subject have taken place since 1984, and if representatives of CTAG were honest, instead of trying to make out that they are great friends of public transport, they would admit they want to stop this road so it does not go near their own homes. Compare the claims about the environmental process, the probity issues, and the council with what occurred at midnight on the evening that the tunnel project was discussed in this House. No appeal was allowed, not even to the Land and Environment Court; councils could not become involved; there was no way in which anyone could touch it. It was totally underwritten by the former Labor Government; there was no way the tunnel project could go broke. The previous Labor Government picked up on the hypocrisy of the honourable member for Kogarah on two fronts.

The tunnel project was proposed when the previous Labor Government was in power. However, it did nothing - it did not even call for tenders or expressions of interest. This Government has followed every part of that proposal. If the Opposition wants to look at something that is on the nose, look at the tunnel project, not this one. The Opposition only wants to stop this project for blatant political reasons. It does not care about the people of the northwest. The fact that eight members here can testify to the fact that this is the biggest single issue -

Mr Langton: They will not be here for long.

Mr BAIRD: If the motion succeeds, the honourable member for Kogarah will have people out in the streets like we have never seen before. His name is mud in our area. Mention the word Langton at public meetings and watch people go wild, because he is the one who wants them to sit in traffic jams for an hour and a half in the Hills district, as the honourable member for The Hills would know. He wants them to endure that slow crawl, with fumes coming out of cars across Epping bridge. He has attacked Bob Morris, who was in charge of the process. In my experience in the public service, no one has greater integrity than Bob Morris. He is an outstanding, capable person and no one can point the finger at him about the snide innuendos that are made both by the honourable member for Kogarah and by CTAG. It is an absolute disgrace.

I should put on the record that Bob Morris is an outstanding officer. Heaven forbid that the honourable member for Kogarah should ever become Minister, but if he did he would find Bob Morris to be a most loyal and trustworthy person, a person of the greatest integrity. There have been various questions from the honourable member for Kogarah, and there have been censure motions because the Government was not moving fast enough. Then he said the Government is moving too quickly.

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

Mr BAIRD: This project is close to being signed up and it is worth a large amount of money, 2,000 direct jobs and 4,000 indirect jobs, but the honourable member for Kogarah wants to stop it. He does not care. He should give one good reason why he wants to stop it. He gives vague reasons but the reality is pure politics, because all the processes have been followed. The honourable member for Kogarah would not understand the requirements for transport in the northwest in terms of traffic jams. This is the most important project in the northwest. It is 10 months since the EIS was determined, six months since expressions of interest were called, and four months since expressions of interest closed. There has been no mention previously by the honourable member about what the Government should do - no questions, motions or anything else. He simply raised it today.

The Labor Party has left its run a bit late, but it is costly to the private sector. The amount of \$10 million has been expended by the private sector on this project. The head of the Bayer company said in relation to problems with investment in this State and in this country as compared with Germany, "We have tougher guidelines in Germany but we know that if we follow the processes and we meet those requirements, at the end of the day we will have a project". Here, one can never be sure. It is a disgrace that the

Page 418

private sector can be encouraged to develop its plans, spend \$10 million and at the eleventh hour an inquiry can be demanded in this House. Putting politics aside, if this is the way the honourable member for Kogarah believes investment in this State can be encouraged, it is an absolute joke.

In real terms this will have ramifications on the private sector. People in the market-place are already starting to talk about it. We can kiss goodbye other major projects that are under consideration right now - the M5 project through Wolli Creek which will link with General Holmes Drive, a very important project which has the highest cost benefit ratio of any project in New South Wales, the Pacific Motorway and the Eastern Distributor. The taxpayers of this State will not thank the Labor Party for this. The environmental assessment processes have already cost the Government \$4 million and there has been an unprecedented level of community involvement.

What are the views of people in the northwest in regard to this matter? People protested in the street. After the rally even the members of the CTAG went quiet. The streets in Epping were blocked as a result of the march. On the day of the march 40,000 people called out, "What do we want? The F2. When do we want it? Now". They know that the Opposition wants to destroy homes along Carlingford Road. It wants to destroy the environment by increasing traffic flow in that area. This march was

reported on the front pages of newspapers in that area. People who drive their cars every day, not basket weavers in the northwest, are concerned. Local newspapers have also voiced concern. An editorial in the *Northern District Times* states:

The question at the moment is whether northern and southwestern Sydney motorists want another holdup on the long awaited M2 tollway.

Even with an investigation of an alleged RTA wrongdoing, the State Opposition, pushed along by the anti-tollway lobby groups, have decided, now that a consortium is about to be selected to build the road, to call for a public inquiry into the funding of the M2.

But are the harassed motorists and residents of Epping and Carlingford really concerned about that? With the build up of traffic generated by the burgeoning northwestern suburbs a solution has to be found.

Instead of a costly public inquiry it might be more efficient to do a comprehensive poll of motorists to see if they mind wearing part of the cost of the road they have come to expect on its way.

They are not my words; they are the words of an editorial in a major newspaper in that area - the *Northern District Times*.

Mr Langton: How about a bit of leadership? You should not be guided by newspaper editorials.

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

Mr BAIRD: I remind the honourable member for Kogarah that we are here to implement the agenda of the people in New South Wales. We do not come into this Chamber because asphalt turns us on.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai to order.

Mr BAIRD: This road will make a significant difference to the quality of life of people who live in our electorates. The Government makes no apology to the honourable member for Kogarah for that, because it is our responsibility to look after the people in our electorates. Surveys which have been conducted in the area reflect the true position. Surveys conducted last year show that 68 per cent of people in the catchment area were aware of the proposal. Those close to the expressway and arterial routes were more aware of the proposals than those further away from them. The survey also reflects the preference of routes by respondents. Sixty-six per cent preferred the expressway option; 26 per cent preferred the arterial road option; 4 per cent wanted to do nothing; and 4 per cent expressed no opinion.

Sixty-six per cent of those who live in the northwest want this tollway, yet members of the Opposition are saying that they know better than all of them; they know what is best for them. Members of the Opposition want to widen existing roads, increase traffic flows and disturb people's lifestyles. They do not know what people in that area have to say. This whole issue is about community action. On the day of the protest and at public meetings that were held in that area people spoke out strongly. Members representing electorates in the northwest who have been to many of those public meetings would be aware that the number of people who attend ranges from 500 to about 4,000. No other issue that I and other Government members can remember has caused more public concern than the Castlereagh freeway. No other issue brings people out in droves as does this one.

Everyone asks, "Why does the Government not build the freeway? Why is it taking all this time?" It is taking time because this Government is going through the processes. We make no apology for that. Opposition members might ridicule the fact that the Government is going through the proper processes. A person from Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu who is totally independent of the Roads and Traffic Authority

will have responsibility for probity issues. That is the way it should be. The Independent Commission Against Corruption reviewed this matter as allegations were made by various protest groups. I am sure some people present in the gallery today made similar allegations. The Independent Commission Against Corruption threw out these allegations as they had no substance.

The Woodward inquiry referred to this northwest section and made recommendations to the Government as to how it should construct the freeway. The Castlereagh expressway between North Ryde and Baulkham Hills has been in existence for 27 years. In some places it has been in existence for 40 years. The people who protested and those present in the gallery today knew when they bought their houses where this tollway was to go. So they should not say now, "This tollway will destroy our environment and our lovely bushland area". It was evident to them at the time that this area was designated a freeway area.

Page 419

In 1988 the Liberal Party-National Party coalition came to office in New South Wales. It made a commitment to improve transport facilities in the northwest of Sydney by constructing the F2. That was confirmed again as part of the 1988 metropolitan strategy and in the document *Sydney's Future*. In 1989 preliminary offers were invited from the private sector for the F2 between Epping Road and Pennant Hills Road. The proposal lapsed when the Woodward inquiry was initiated in August 1989. That was a small project, but the project about which we are talking now is much larger.

Following the release of the commissioner's report there was a groundswell of support for a northwestern transport link. As a result of the commission's findings two major environmental impact studies were carried out into the rapidly growing transport needs of the northwestern metropolitan area. The corridor for the study extended from Lane Cove River at North Ryde to Pennant Hills Road for the eastern section, and to Old Windsor Road for the western section. The environmental impact study established that the preferred option was a four-lane expressway in the existing transport reserve with combined bicycle and breakdown lanes and an exclusive two-way, two-lane busway for the section west of Beecroft Road. There is no reason why, in the future, that expressway could not be dedicated to light rail, if that is appropriate.

A determination was made on 20 May 1993 in accordance with the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. The link will be constructed generally as set out in the preferred option in the environmental impact statement. The determination included modifications to the interchange at Pennant Hills Road and the provision of an additional crossing of the link. Conditions of project approval were also included. The public announcement of this determination was made in May 1993. Four preliminary proposals were received from the private sector to finance, construct, operate and maintain the link. Honourable members would be aware that expressions of interest were received from the Northwest Motorway Company, the NTA Consortium, the Hills Motorway Ltd and the Northwestern Link Pty Ltd.

Those proposals were assessed by the Roads and Traffic Authority with assistance from expert external advisers, including Deloitte, on probity issues. On 11 February I announced that Hills Motorway Limited had been asked to submit a final offer within three months. We heard from the honourable member for Kogarah about how much this project would cost the Government. He said that roads would be forgone because of the way in which the Government has gone about this matter. The honourable member for Kogarah is so interested in what I have to say that he is leaving the Chamber. The contract has not been signed. The final terms have not been agreed to. So how can the honourable member for Kogarah suggest that this project will cost the Government a lot of money? What other schemes will disappear from the books because of this project? If the honourable member knew what the figures were, he would be shown to be a farce because he is a long way from the truth in terms of the cost. He is wrong, wrong, wrong.

The RTA commissioned Morgan Research Centre Pty Limited, as I have outlined before, to survey public support for the project. The Coalition for Transport Action Groups has not challenged the environmental impact statement process in the Land and Environment Court. Despite their interest in this project, their actions in many of these areas go way beyond a simple lobbying group because they became a political force at the last election by distributing newspapers around my electorate, making out it was a legitimate newspaper, simply to unseat me. They were politically driven; they did not say that they were CTAG. However, that is what they were doing, absolutely. They were up to their neck in it. Nevertheless and despite all, I won with a 4 per cent swing to me. Everyone knows that the more this group lobbies against me the more my vote increases. Another claim was that the decision to build the M2 was contrary to the recommendations of the Woodward inquiry. That is not correct; the current proposal is not the same as that considered by Commissioner Woodward. Everything required by the commission was overtaken and incorporated in the two environmental impact statements.

Mr Langton: Who wrote that line for you?

Mr BAIRD: At least I have it in the appropriate place; I do not have outside lobbying groups writing my material for me. Everything required by the commission was undertaken and incorporated into the two environmental impact statements that went on display in 1992. The honourable member is quite incapable of writing material himself. In particular, the widening of Carlingford Road was extensively considered and then rejected by the committee during the environmental impact statement process. The new environmental impact statements thoroughly examined public transport options and recommended an integrated approach which incorporated an exclusive bus roadway west of Epping and a bus priority scheme to the east of Epping.

Costs and benefits of the project must be considered in the light of this being the single most important transport project for the northwest of Sydney. The benefit of this project is that it will provide an integral link into the growing northwest of Sydney. It will link the new northwestern sector to Macquarie University, North Ryde business park and the lower North Shore. The importance of the M2 to the northwest sector cannot be underestimated. Cherrybrook is growing; every time I visit that area new roads and houses have developed. People want to know when the Castlereagh freeway is to be built. The Government is serious about locating jobs nearer to where people live. The only way to achieve this in the northwest sector is with the M2.

A number of major employers are anxious about the F2. The cost to the New South Wales taxpayer will not be known until the final offer is made.

Page 420

Construction costs stated in the environmental impact statement were \$492 million, which does not include land acquisition costs. However, the actual cost is likely to be considerably lower than the environmental impact statement cost because of the efficiencies of using the private sector. Projects such as the M4 and M5 came in well under budget and well ahead of schedule. The CTAG and others have criticised certain planning assumptions about the northwestern sector in the environmental impact statement. The Roads and Traffic Authority used MSJ Keys Young Planners Pty Limited to prepare projections of future populations and employment along the road corridor. The projections refined those used in Sydney's future planning and provided a range of likely outcomes for assessment of the transport demand in the northwestern area.

These projections were not dreamed up by the RTA; they were developed by outside consultants who have no axe to grind. I tell it the way it is, as the projections are. No more, no less. To date, while the northwest has developed at a slower rate than anticipated, blocks of land are now coming up for sale. The total development is now more critical for future growth in Sydney. The northwest is now the primary growth area for Sydney.

The impact upon Government finances of a subsidy to private investors in the M2 is another claim made by the honourable member for Kogarah. The Government has made it clear from the beginning

that a Government contribution would be required. The honourable member for Kogarah has publicly stated, "We did not say before that there was to be a Government contribution". The honourable member was quoted extensively in the newspapers as calling for this inquiry and that was one of the major reasons that he gave. Yet in the estimates committee, of which the honourable member was a member, I was asked by the Hon. Elisabeth Kirkby about the M2 project. I told the honourable member that the total cost is estimated at \$550 million, but that as a toll road to be constructed entirely by the private sector it would not be viable.

It was always anticipated that there would be some contribution by the RTA. On page 3956 of the estimates committee transcript I said to the Hon. Elisabeth Kirkby, "We have made it clear from the start, as I said in my earlier comments on the M2, that we anticipated that there would need to be a substantial contribution" - from the Government. That is in the *Hansard* record of the estimates committee proceedings. Talk about the honourable member saying he will give a few clues on how to be a good liar! He should know. The honourable member ran out to the press, spoke about this matter and said, "We never told them that". There it is in black and white.

It is obvious that the honourable member for Kogarah simply does not listen. Further questions about the veracity of information were produced in promoting this road and in assessing its environmental, social and economic impacts. The RTA relied on expert advice for all planning projections, traffic projections and environmental based data. In assessing impacts the RTA properly adopts the figures that provide the worst scenario for environmental impacts or economic benefit. It errs on the side of conservatism. What happened with the tunnel project? Application could not be made to the Land and Environment Court. None of that applies in this case. All the safeguards are in place. If the lobby groups want to apply to the Land and Environment Court they are able to do so. That is something the lobby groups could not have done with regard to the tunnel project.

Another claim related to the adequacy of the RTA's assessment of feasible alternatives to the M2. The RTA comprehensively explored all alternatives put forward by the commission of inquiry and is obliged by environmental legislation to consider alternatives to the M2. The State Rail Authority was involved in that process. The RTA canvassed a wider range of approaches, including traffic calming, public transport, upgrading existing arterial roads, expressway development, or doing nothing. The preferred solution was an integrated approach which included public transport and expressway development. A new transport strategy outlines this link, and that is part of the overall plan for the integration in Sydney. That is not new in terms of road projects; they were developed in 1948. It takes a little while for the honourable member for Kogarah to get up to date.

The strategy refers to concealment or omission of known and relevant data from the environmental impact statement processes. It is not quite clear what the honourable member for Kogarah means. He was referring to allegations by good old Professor Goldberg, who manages to be involved in all these inquiries. Professor Goldberg was at the Pyrmont heliport site giving advice on why that project should be stopped. If one wants a protest group, Professor Goldberg will attend and give the data needed. In reality, the data could not be substantiated.

As far as the M2 is concerned, the RTA has gone to great lengths to make all documentation public. Suggestions that information has been suppressed or ignored are absurd. I see many freedom of information requests for CTAG and they are always granted. After the commission of inquiry the RTA briefed the Government on how to proceed, including an option for doing nothing. That would appeal to Opposition members. Remember when Neville Wran was in Opposition? What did he do? He said he would put people back on public transport, cancel all the freeway routes and cancel all the plans. The result of that was chaos on Sydney's roads. The Government is having to do this because of neglect during the Wran years. The honourable member for Penrith would know full well that all those corridors were sold off and are very difficult to get back. That is one of the main reasons for the traffic shambles of today. Wherever one goes, whether it be the eastern distributor, the M4, the Concord link, anything at all, the land was sold off by former Premier Wran.

Tenderers were asked to consider other claims or additional changes that would enhance the link's viability. This was asked of proponents because our experience with other toll roads is that the private sector is able to achieve considerable economies of design while keeping the form of the original project. It would be irresponsible to prevent the private sector from sharing the benefits of a cheaper project with the taxpayers of New South Wales. Until the Government has received a firm final offer from the selected proponent, it is premature to consider this matter. I am sure all honourable members will agree with that. Why would we agree to this before the tender has been developed?

Then one has the allegation about the involvement, if any, of the Roads and Traffic Authority in seeking local government and community support for the project. The honourable member made that allegation because he does not understand the strength of feeling about this road in the northwest. There is no need to orchestrate anything. The community has determined the direction and asked the RTA to come to the meetings. The councils, to a man, are in favour of the road project. We have not endeavoured to develop their enthusiasm; they have called for the construction of this tollway. The honourable member for Kogarah should speak to members of any of the councils in the northwest about their views. Without being asked by us they have come out unanimously in favour of the M2 Castlereagh freeway. They include Ryde City Council, Baulkham Hills Council, Hornsby Council, Parramatta City Council - all of them are in favour of it. That demonstrates the level of community support.

Other claims made by the honourable member related to additional changes that the tenderers consider would enhance the link's viability; the involvement, if any, of the Roads and Traffic Authority in seeking local government and community support for the project, which I have mentioned; and the consequences of the RTA holding executive responsibility for the project proposal, environmental assessment, et cetera. If the honourable member for Kogarah is so concerned, why has he not used the environmental legislation to challenge the validity of the environmental impact statement process? He was at liberty to do that but simply did not take the opportunity to do so. Another claim relates to the fast tracking of the awarding of the contract from December 1994. There has been no fast tracking. This is the same member who accused me of slow tracking other projects.

I do not know how quickly the honourable member expects the rail link to the airport to be constructed. The hypocrisy of this man is unbelievable. Honourable members on this side of the House are not Laurie Breretons who come into the House at midnight and make sure no one appeals against the decision. We do things a little differently. This project is an integral transport link and will create 2,000 direct jobs and another 4,000 indirect jobs. The honourable member for Kogarah is trying to deny the State that additional employment.

The record is clear for all to see. Polls validated by the Morgan research group and others have shown that two-thirds of the population of the area support this road project. Councils support it, as do members of this House. Let us get on and build this road. The honourable member spoke about the risk to the Government. No risk to the Government is involved in the underwriting, unlike what happened with the harbour tunnel. If the companies collapsed, we would still get a road. If the companies involved with the tunnel had collapsed, they would have had to be propped up because of the way the former Labor Government structured the deal.

We have followed logically the appropriate structures and requirements. The EIS process has been extensive - 14,000 submissions were received from various people. The whole thing has been done with the utmost integrity and openness. All aspects of it can be examined. If we are able to proceed, the State will realise what a great deal it has been for the people of the northwest and New South Wales. This road must be built. The traffic chaos in the northwest must come to an end. If this inquiry proceeds, the people of the northwest of Sydney will have one person to blame: the misguided, unbelievable member for Kogarah.

Mr KNOWLES (Moorebank) [5.3]: I support the motion moved by the honourable member for Kogarah for the establishment of a select committee to inquire into the establishment and construction of the M2 tollway. I can understand the Minister for Transport being passionate about the issue because the site of the tollway is close to his own electorate. Having gone through the farce of an assessment and contractual process associated with the M5 tollway, I can understand his passion. The residents I represent and those represented by other members, such as the honourable member for Campbelltown, are fed up with some of the statements made by Roads and Traffic Authority officials and government officials in their attempts to convince us that this is a clear and transparent process.

I do not believe that the Roads and Traffic Authority should be permitted to build the M2 tollway until the Parliament is satisfied that it will result in a clear and unambiguous public benefit; that the community interests and public good issues are properly balanced with the commercial objectives of the toll operator and the Government; and finally, that the processes involved in moving towards the selection of the successful contractor and the environmental assessment for the project have been scrupulous and rigorous. I want to be satisfied that the contractual, economic, social and environmental considerations for the tollway have been properly considered. At this time the Parliament cannot be satisfied that the work has been properly done.

There are two main parts of the current M2 assessment processes that require further scrutiny. The environmental assessment processes administered under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act are being poorly handled and the contractual

Page 422

arrangements between the Government and the successful tenderer need further scrutiny. In both instances it is clear that the Roads and Traffic Authority is using outdated and poorly regarded assessment and management methods. Let it be assumed for the moment that the construction of the M2 using private sector funding is a good thing. If so, is it not appropriate that the air of mystery associated with the contractual arrangements be removed? Is it not appropriate that the taxpayers of New South Wales be given confidence in the Government's processes so that these types of infrastructure funding arrangements can be well regarded, as they are at present in many other countries?

In that sense my argument is not really about whether there should or should not be private sector involvement in infrastructure provision. My concern is to ensure that from the perspective of government there is clear accountability and transparency in the process. Sadly, the New South Wales Government - and particularly the Roads and Traffic Authority - seems to have a level of paranoia about contract transparency that is not shared by others. That is not my view alone; it is shared by diverse groups, such as peak environmental organisations, resident action groups - some of whose representatives are present today - the NRMA, the Auditor-General, and the Government's own Public Accounts Committee in its recent reports about infrastructure management.

The Roads and Traffic Authority in its document "Invitation for Preliminary Proposals to Finance, Design, Construct, and Maintain the North West Transport Link" has indicated specifically that it will use the 1990 "Guidelines for Private Sector Participation in Infrastructure" of the Department of State Development as the basis for the commercial and confidentiality considerations associated with this contract. That is despite the fact that the Public Accounts Committee clearly criticised those guidelines and recommended a total overhaul of them to incorporate a much wider range of public accountability considerations in the assessment process. In the most recent Public Accounts Committee report, No.73, at page 14 in paragraph 1.5, referring to the State Development Guidelines, it is said:

These guidelines, however, provide no details on government policy on risk-sharing between government and private sector. They give no direction on the criteria the government might adopt when considering possible joint ventures between government and the private sector, of which there have in fact been very few in NSW. They explore no possible forms of co-operation between government and the private sector. They give no guidance on information the government would undertake to provide

as background for any such co-operative projects. They discuss no regulations or laws relating to government/private co-operation. In short, there is little stated policy at present relating to government/private sector co-operation in infrastructure provision in New South Wales.

Clearly the Government's own Public Accounts Committee, whose chairman is in the Chamber and I hope will speak in this debate, will try to reconcile the difference between the document that the Minister is touting around and the guidelines set up by the Public Accounts Committee to establish proper transparency procedures so that the public can have confidence in the process. In 1993 I wrote to the chairman of the Public Accounts Committee asking that the committee, as part of its inquiry, consider the failure of the Roads and Traffic Authority, in relation to the M5 tollway, to properly consider the public in the contractual and environmental assessment of the project. I suggested a schedule of matters that should be published when any government agency is dealing with the private sector in the provision of public infrastructure, such as tollways. I am pleased to note that in a recent report the PAC has endorsed my concerns and made recommendations about public disclosure policy that go far beyond the 1990 Department of State Development guidelines, the ones used for the M2 tollway. They include recommendation 46:

That for all privately-financed projects above \$5 million, the agency prepare, within 90 days after the contract is signed, a summary of the main points of the contract, unless the contract has been disclosed in full in the meantime.

I take the point that the Minister made, that the contracts have not been signed at this stage. But if the track record of the RTA on the M4 and the M5 is anything to go by, there will never be any contract summary, we will never know anything about it, and this air of secrecy will continue. Recommendation 47 went on to be specific:

The committee believes that the elements in the summaries should include: the full identity of the successful proponents, including details of cross ownership of relevant companies; the duration of the contract, including details of future transfers of assets of significant value to government at no or nominal cost and details of the right to receive the asset and the date of the future transfer; the identification of any assets transferred to the contractor by the public sector; all maintenance provisions in the contract; the price payable by the public; the basis for changes in the price payable by the public; provisions for renegotiation; the result of cost-benefit analyses; and the risk sharing in the construction and operational phases quantified in NPV terms (where possible) and specifying the major assumptions involved.

None of that information in relation to the M4 or M5 is available, or has ever been published. The chairman of the Public Accounts Committee nods his head in agreement. I suspect that if the Roads and Traffic Authority is allowed to continue its present method of operation - in fact it must because it has bound itself in this document to its preferred tenderer - none of that information will ever be brought to light because that is a responsibility of a government that is trying to promote the use of private sector infrastructure to provide public facilities.

[Interruption]

The Minister should go on record as saying that he has promised to provide that information to the public. That will be an interesting exercise when the company, should it be successful, comes back to the Minister and says, "Minister, we have entered into a document with you that deals on page 8 with confidentiality provisions and that uses the guidelines

Page 423

for private sector participation and infrastructure provisions". What is the Minister going to do? Is he going to say, "Sorry, all bets are off because the Public Accounts Committee is not using the guidelines any more"? Is he going to compensate them? Clearly the Roads and Traffic Authority needs to understand that the levels of accountability that it has used historically and which are incorporated in this

current tendering document are totally inadequate to ensure public confidence. A second area of concern is the vague wording in the introduction of the preliminary proposals document, which at page 3 invites the consortium:

To propose additional changes which it considers would enhance the link's viability.

I mentioned at the outset that I have had some experience with the M5 tollway contract and the Government's view of what it regards as ensuring viability. In my submission to the Public Accounts Committee on this issue I quoted the response of the then Deputy Premier and Minister for Roads to my objection to the deferral of the construction of a number of access and exit ramps. Clearly, they were designed to channel and hold traffic on the tollway and ensure a revenue strength for the toll operator. In his response, the then Deputy Premier said:

A condition of the offer to build the toll road was that a number of ramps be deferred, including the west facing off-load ramp on to Heathcote Road, to ensure the project's commercial viability.

I submit that the taxpayers of New South Wales have a right to be concerned about that sort of approach and to ask whose interests are being served by that type of response - certainly not those of the public. This approach of ensuring commercial viability fails to recognise the other roles of government, particularly to ensure the preservation of the public good. At public meetings during the M5 debate officers of the RTA - and Mr Morris is present today and he will recall this - openly acknowledged the need for those ramps to be provided upfront. However, in an effort to ensure the project's commercial viability, the RTA agreed to those ramps remaining closed. This is a clear abrogation of government responsibility in favour of a commercially advantageous result for a private operator of a major component of public infrastructure, and yet it seems that, from the M2 experience in this document, the RTA has learnt nothing.

This current document for the M2 tollway continues to invite The Hills motorway group to make variations to the proposal to ensure its commercial viability. That is not good enough. I think an inquiry as outlined by the honourable member for Kogarah is the appropriate way to test these viability issues. Look what happens when the assumptions regarding commercial viability go horribly wrong. For example, there is now clear evidence that the assumptions on traffic volume for the M5 were hopelessly overestimated. Traffic counts suggest average daily vehicle numbers in the order of only 55 to 60 per cent of predicted volume are currently being achieved. This means a shortfall in revenue, and as a consequence the Government had to prop up the tollway operator by handing over a \$50 million low interest subordinate loan and a further construction contract on the Casula crossroads missing link, without tender and certainly without public scrutiny.

The same thing could happen on the M2 tollway. Given the vagaries of the market-place, such an occurrence is more likely to occur than not. Therefore, the public needs to know whether and how the toll operators can vary their price; is there some form of price capping mechanism; has the Government made any financial contribution or subsidy to ensure viability; what control does the Government have in relation to poor or non-performance; what criteria were used in determining the various cost-benefit relationships of each tender bid; and, when the roads are transferred back to Government at the end of the contract, what are the contractual obligations in relation to the maintenance, standards and conditions of the road at that point in time? I am concerned that if the current RTA model for assessing contracts is allowed to continue, the people of New South Wales will be continually in the dark. These concerns can only be addressed by a full and open public inquiry. There are more issues that I would like to talk about, but time will prevent me from doing so.

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

PETS PARADISE STORES

Mr SHEDDEN (Bankstown) [5.15]: On Sunday, 28 November 1993, Mr Darren Scolkie presented a 12-week-old puppy to a veterinary hospital in Bankstown. The puppy had been purchased an hour before presentation at the veterinary hospital from a Pets Paradise store in Bankstown Square. The puppy was emaciated; it was about half the weight of a normal Maltese puppy. The pup had profuse diarrhoea, a thick discharge from both eyes, and was depressed. It died on Monday, 29 November 1993.

In the past three years this has been a common scenario in New South Wales. Hundreds of members of the general public have had to endure the disgust, rage and heartache of viewing sick and diseased animals being sold from Pets Paradise stores all over New South Wales. Pets Paradise stores are not the only pet shop offenders but are definitely the main culprits. I have been informed that over a six-month period the RSPCA had some 200 complaints about pet shops, 99 per cent of which were about Pets Paradise.

Pets Paradise is a Melbourne based company with about 12 outlets in Sydney. I am also informed that if the pets are sick the stores will sell them cheaply. How it is possible that stores like Pets Paradise get away with this? The reason is the absence of any regulations or codes of practice by

Page 424

which to control pet shops. In 1990 regulations controlling the activity of pet shops were repealed, together with regulations controlling riding schools, dog kennels and catteries, et cetera. The reason for the repeal was that, despite their enforceability, they were inadequate and outdated. The overriding consideration was the Government's push for self-regulation. The Government intended creating a code of practice for the regulation of pet shops. The codes of practice were to be included in the review of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act - POCTAA. To this day this has not occurred. We have been able to see clearly the effects of self-regulation in the pet shop industry.

The Government was warned regarding the disastrous consequences of this move. These warnings have been vindicated. We have now a situation where hundreds of people have been affected by the interference of the Minister for Agriculture in the drafting of the review of POCTAA and his lack of actions in the institution of the much vaunted codes of practice. The situation is now critical. Veterinary hospitals and clinics all over the State have had to cope with distraught owners of puppies and kittens which are being presented with preventable and often fatal diseases a few hours to days after purchase from Pets Paradise and other pet shops. The diseases suffered include heavy parasite burdens; parvovirus, a virus that causes severe gastroenteritis and often death; ringworm; severe respiration difficulties; and chronic vomiting and diarrhoea. The list is endless. This does not take into account the poor housing conditions the animals have to endure - placed under hot lights all day; no air conditioning at night in shops or shopping malls; often being left for long periods without water; the lack of any staff with knowledge of animal care or handling; and the often disgustingly medieval facilities for food preparation.

There is a lack of veterinary attention for the sick and diseased animals, and no veterinary examination, worming or vaccination of animals prior to their sale. The stores do not take responsibility for any illness the animals might be suffering due to their lack of care. Animal welfare agencies, such as the Animal Welfare League, are besieged with hundreds of complaints involving Pets Paradise. In many cases, owing to a lack of enforceable regulations, they are powerless to assist. Will the Minister for Agriculture indicate when he will finally stop interfering and allow the review of POCTAA, together with the codes of practice regulating pet shops, to be put to Parliament? The cruelty and heartache he has inflicted by his inaction must cease.

Mr CAUSLEY (Clarence - Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, and Minister for Mines) [5.20]: It is perhaps fortuitous that I have had to listen to the diatribe from the honourable member for Bankstown. Though there is some support from the Government that animals should not be placed in serious deprivation within pet shops, the examples mentioned by the honourable member are, in my view, an exaggeration.

Mr Shedden: Have you received the fax?

Mr CAUSLEY: I have received the fax. I refer now to the alleged interference by the former Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries. He had nothing to do with this. The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act is under review; so far the committee has made progress and the document is with Professor Egerton, though I have not seen it. It is a furphy to say that the Minister is interfering in the process. He has not interfered at all. Under the review of the Act procedures will be put in place to eliminate alleged cruelty. One must look at the issue objectively. Certainly, people are obsessed with the issue but there have been instances where animals have been mistreated.

Mr Shedden: Check with the RSPCA.

Mr CAUSLEY: I have checked with the RSPCA. That is the body that should be taking some action, but at the present time it does not have the power. As soon it has the appropriate powers the alleged cruelty can be alleviated.

MAITLAND COURT SUPPORT WORKER

Mr BLACKMORE (Maitland) [5.22]: I bring to the attention of the House a problem that will arise in Maitland on 25 March, when Maitland will lose its court support worker for domestic violence victims. The Federal Government provided funding through a one-off grant of \$23,000 for the employment of a court support worker. During the past 12 months the support worker has assisted 158 Maitland children and 100 Maitland women who were victims of domestic violence; 89 women have sought apprehended domestic violence orders and 52 have not returned to the domestic violence environment.

When the announcement was made, the Federal member for Paterson stated on the public record that the aim of the one-off grant was to increase community awareness about domestic violence and that this is now the responsibility of State Government. It is amazing that after 12 months - despite the value of the position - the Federal Government has walked away from the matter. In the Parliament the Federal member issued a challenge to the Premier to show that the family is a high priority for his Government in 1994. It is intolerable that the Federal Government can find \$30 million for sports rorts but chooses to abrogate its responsibilities by not continuing to fund a court support worker for domestic violence victims in this, the International Year of the Family. To add insult to injury a headline in the *Maitland Mercury* states, "Politicians battle over funding for city violence officer". This is not the responsibility of the State Government. It was instigated through a Federal grant. Page 9 of today's *Daily Telegraph Mirror* carries the bold announcement "\$2.5m to escape violence". The article reads:

Women in nine rural and remote regions will receive more than \$2.5 million to help them escape domestic violence.

The money will fund projects to provide information, counselling and referral for women experiencing violence and in some cases material assistance if they decide to leave a violent partner.

assess services in times of crisis.

But the Federal Government has failed to continue funding for a service which has been operating efficiently in Maitland. Each week three children and two women report as victims of domestic violence - though I do not have statistics to show the number of males assisted with domestic violence orders. Correspondence has been had with the Minister for Community Services, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Minister for the Ageing, Mr Longley, in an effort to pursue this funding. The Minister in his letter states:

As you are aware, funding for this worker was received from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet . . . this project does not fit within the guidelines of any of the Department of Community Services' funding programs.

The Minister for the Status of Women also stated:

Although my administration is able to give assistance such as that outlined above, I regret that as the Ministry for the Status and Advancement of Women is not a funding body, I am unable to provide funds for a court support worker.

I call on the Government to provide funds because the Federal Labor Government has failed in its responsibilities and duties to the family in the International Year of the Family. I ask that the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries make representations on my behalf.

Mr CAUSLEY (Clarence - Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, and Minister for Mines) [5.27]: This matter demonstrates that Federal members are becoming interested in interfering in State affairs because they have nothing else to do.

Mr Martin: I think Harry has your measure.

Mr CAUSLEY: How about we talk about the \$2 million Harry promised and other promises made in the last election campaign. Being one of the areas the Prime Minister did not expect to win, he threw money all over the place and made numerous promises. The member for Page said it was great news that \$2 million had been allocated for a port at Yamba. After the election the Federal Government said it did not really say that, but said instead, "We will put up \$1 million if the State puts up \$1 million". The Federal Government reneged. I suspect that the situation is similar in Maitland. The Federal Labor Government makes many promises but it does not have the money and does not provide the goods. The honourable member for Maitland rightly states that the Federal Government does not carry through with its promises and the local Federal member is notorious for interfering in the affairs of the State. Even the honourable member for Myall Lakes will agree with that.

Mr Martin: He has always done the right thing by my electorate.

Mr CAUSLEY: In my view the Federal member does not do anything. This afternoon the honourable member for Port Stephens has proved that he has little room to comment because he is always wrong; he never gets it right, and I dare say that the comments he is making at the present time are so far off the mark - *[Time expired.]*

CENTRAL COAST WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTRE

Mr McBRIDE (The Entrance) [5.29]: Yesterday was International Women's Day and today is Women's Health Day. Earlier today, in recognition of the official nomination of these days, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and shadow minister for health presented to the House a petition with more than 652 signatures calling for urgent attention to the present and future funding requirements of the Central

Coast Women's Health Centre at Wyoming. The organising of the petition was notable because it was a community based campaign run independently of the centre. I wish to pay particular credit to Ms Pam Kelly for her persistence and determination in pursuing her belief in the centre's importance to the women of the Central Coast. But perhaps a more significant reflection of the widespread respect and appreciation for the centre, its staff and its work was the large role men played in organising the petition, specifically Ern Beattie, who also deserves a vote of thanks.

A short profile of the Central Coast will assist in appreciating the centre's community value. The region has an annual growth rate of more than 4.5 per cent - the second fastest in New South Wales. That is matched by a large number of sole parent pension recipients - more than 5,740 at last count. The Central Coast has an unemployment rate higher than the national average. The area's population has changed dramatically in the past 10 to 15 years. Though the Central Coast was once considered solely a retirement area, the majority of its recent population growth has come from young, low to middle income families. Many parents of young families are commuters, and it therefore follows that the tyranny of distance imposes a major burden on the family unit.

This diversity of aged and young women, with conflicting but equally deserving demands, has left the women's health centre with a dilemma as to how best to service its clientele base. Its chief role is to adopt a holistic approach to health provision, emphasising early intervention and prevention programs that address women's health needs. In 1993 the centre delivered services to more than 13,000 women - more than 50 women every working day. Those services range from counselling support, through health education and promotional programs to clinical-paramedic services. The continued increase in demand on the women's health service has in part resulted in waiting times spiralling. The centre now has waiting times of eight weeks for counselling and support services, three weeks for clinical services such as gynaecological health, and as long as six months for health education and promotional programs, which have almost come to a standstill.

Page 426

Delays in accessing the centre's services are unacceptable. In many instances women who use these services have drawn on great reserves of courage to deal with domestic violence, sexual assault and other serious issues. Further, it must be remembered that the Department of Health has conducted several audits of the centre and found it to be efficient and effective to the highest degree. There can be no question that the centre's management and staff are using their resources as well as can be expected. However, for all the pressure placed on the centre by accelerating demands, it is the question of resources that is undermining the centre's work, as is reflected in the lengthy waiting periods. I understand that only last week the centre received its budget for the coming year and was granted a 2.5 per cent funding increase. This is the seventh consecutive year in which funding has only matched the inflation rate. Further, in the same period the centre has not received any real increase in grants or any other moneys to enhance the services it provides.

Over a period when the population increased by 65,000, or 32 per cent, the centre has received no real increase in funding. On viewing this simple comparison there can be no doubt that the Fahey Government - in the Year of the Family, I might add - has failed in its duty to Central Coast women and their families. As someone with a wife and two daughters I am well aware that women are more comfortable in dealing with other women in regard to medical prevention and treatment. Women share a sense of familiarity about their specific needs; and the centre is the only outlet on the Central Coast in a position to fill that role. The Fahey Government has shown a heartless disregard for the basic needs of women by allowing continual shortfalls in funding. There is no doubt the Minister for Health is aware of these particular concerns. In the past few years representations have been directed to him regularly outlining the funding crisis facing the centre. Representations about the centre are being made by members from both sides of this House.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition and shadow minister for health has twice visited the centre to

see at firsthand its operations. I am sure it is not presumptuous of me to say that he was more than impressed by its work and conscious of the need for improved funding arrangements. All that is being asked of the Fahey Government is for women of the Central Coast to receive their fair share of funding. Surely funding arrangements could be structured to match the growth in population and demands. It is a simple request. Without the Minister's assistance the women of the Central Coast are only going to face longer waiting times and a further decline in health services. I urge him to act immediately.

OLD BAR POLICE RESOURCES

Mr TURNER (Myall Lakes) [5.34]: I wish to raise a matter concerning policing of Old Bar and Wallabi Point in the Myall Lakes electorate. The Neighbourhood Watch organisation in that area is extremely good and has been most active. I have attended some of that organisations's functions and I commend it for its work. Neighbourhood Watch has expressed concerns because of the area's growth - probably the fastest growing in the Greater Taree City Council precinct - that the time is fast approaching for a greater police presence. At present police service the area from Taree, which is about 15 minutes away by car. The police do a reasonably good job. However, at Christmas time there is a great influx of tourists. Old Bar is a popular beach area. A couple of years ago we were fortunate enough to have two police stationed permanently at Old Bar during the summer holidays. That arrangement worked well. Police kept an eye on the place, and there was less vandalism by out-of-towners. Elderly folk in the community enjoyed a sense of security.

About 50 per cent of the population are retirees or elderly people, the remainder being young families who are starting to make their mark. About 300 pupils are enrolled at the local school. I have received requests from Neighbourhood Watch and other organisations to attempt to attract a higher police presence, especially at nighttime and during weekends, and for a permanent stationing of police over the summer period, with a view to there being ultimately a permanent police station. Those organisations have raised with me the possibility of purchasing or leasing the Old Bar school residence, which apparently is shortly coming on to the market, not necessarily for a police station - the residents are realistic people - but perhaps as a police residence. When numbers warrant it, those premises could be used as a police station. The school residence, which I have inspected, is relatively new and ideally sited. I believe it would make an excellent police station, should the Minister be able to proceed in that direction.

I congratulate the Neighbourhood Watch people on their approach to policing. They are concerned, as are many others, that police are tied up with administrative duties. Taree has almost 47 police; as happens in many similar areas some police are on duty, holidays, sick leave or court duty. Often only a few police are available for duty. Neighbourhood Watch suggested that perhaps civilians could do administrative work and therefore free police officers for general duties. I congratulate them on that forward-thinking approach. I seek from the Minister an assurance about a higher police presence in the Old Bar area. The area is law-abiding, but unfortunately times are changing. Strategic zones need policing. An alcohol-free zone near the beach park area is working very well and has brought improvements. Nevertheless, undesirables, as in any community, make the beach unpleasant for use by the general population. In this day and age, residents of Old Bar would be most appreciative if given an assurance that they are not isolated from the mainstream, that police are available, and that their request for police upgrading is being considered.

Page 427

Mr CAUSLEY (Clarence - Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, and Minister for Mines) [5.38]: I assure the honourable member for Myall Lakes that the Minister for Police is aware of the honourable member's concerns for the residents of Old Bar. Recently the Minister approved the appointment of two additional police to the Taree patrol. The mid-North Coast patrol commander has taken the policing needs of Old Bar into account when allocating their duties. In particular, increased mobile patrols will be

directed to the Old Bar area to target alcohol-related crime and traffic offences, which are matters of concern to residents. During the Easter weekend the area will receive special attention. Plans are already under way for a police presence at Old Bar during summer holidays. The Minister has advised me that he has requested the Commissioner of Police to furnish him with a full briefing in respect of the particular matters raised by the honourable member for Myall Lakes. The Minister will inform the honourable member when that briefing is received.

APPOINTMENT OF COMMISSIONER FOR THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

Mr GAUDRY (Newcastle) [5.40]: Questions have been raised by some of my constituents following the hearing last Friday when Commissioner Ian Temby gave evidence. Mr Temby is due to retire from his office after five distinguished years of service to the Independent Commission Against Corruption. Questions have been raised as to why, after five years, the Government has not been able to have a smooth transition process by appointing a new commissioner and why there have not been changes made to the Independent Commission Against Corruption legislation when the parliamentary joint committee has spent nine months preparing a report and bringing that report forward to Parliament.

Mr Causley: On a point of order: I do not like to interrupt members during private members' statements, but private members' statements must specifically relate to issues of importance within a member's electorate. He may raise matters of concern to him and to his constituents. The matter the honourable member is raising is outside that principle and is out of order.

Mr Gaudry: On the point of order: I mentioned both the questions that were raised with me within my electorate. Specific reference has been made to my electorate in the recent past by the honourable member for Charlestown concerning brothels in the electorate and references to the ICAC in relation to these matters. It is of great concern to the electorate that these serious matters have been raised at a time when a new commissioner has not been appointed at the termination of services of the current commissioner - and a review of the Act has not been processed.

Mr Kerr: On the point of order: the member must show a connection in his remarks about the Commissioner for Independent Commission Against Corruption and brothels in his area. I fail to see how changes to the Act would impact in any way on the general law regarding brothels.

Mr Gaudry: Further to the point of order: the matter is of concern to my electorate. References have been made to the ICAC. It is of great concern that these issues have not been dealt with. The fact is that Commissioner Temby has completed a five-year term but his replacement has not been announced by the Government.

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Tink): Order! The honourable member is debating the matter he referred to earlier. A ruling of Speaker Rozzoli in regard to the limitation of private members' statements reads:

The purpose of private members' statements is to raise matters that fall more directly within the member's electorate or matters of a very specific electorate nature. Private members' statements are not to be used to canvass a matter which is obviously of statewide importance.

Bearing in mind that ruling, I am of the opinion that the member is raising a matter that he should not be raising during private members' statements. The example he gave - and I think I was in the chair at the time - was of the honourable member for Charlestown referring to the ICAC in relation to a specific matter. A matter concerning the Independent Commission Against Corruption may be raised if it relates directly to a factual situation involving a member's constituent. The matter has been developed by the member for Newcastle on the basis that it is an issue of statewide importance rather than an issue

affecting a specific electorate. I cannot allow the member to continue in that manner, but I give him the opportunity to be more specific.

Mr GAUDRY: I take your point, Mr Acting-Speaker. It is certainly a matter of statewide importance

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER: Order! I do not want to interrupt the honourable member again; this matter should not be raised in a private members' statement unless it can be linked specifically to a local factual issue.

Mr GAUDRY: In terms of the local situation, it is a matter of concern to constituents in my electorate that this has come up at a time when specific matters have been referred to the Independent Commission Against Corruption through the honourable member for Charlestown. People are concerned that the effectiveness of the ICAC in their area will be hindered. [*Time expired.*]

GLADESVILLE ELECTORATE TRAFFIC

Mr PETCH (Gladesville) [5.45]: It is ironic that I rise in the midst of a debate on the F2 motorway to talk about traffic problems in the Gladesville electorate. As I have said on many occasions, the geographical location of the Gladesville electorate places it in a position of having north-south traffic travelling along Lane Cove Road as well as

Page 428

east-west traffic travelling along the Epping Highway and Victoria Road. I welcome the Minister's announcement recently that work on the overpass in Devlin Street and Victoria Road Ryde will commence in 1995. My constituents will welcome that news.

The problem being experienced at present relates to traffic that travels along residential roads in an attempt to avoid the arterial road system. A classic example is the traffic that commences in the Eastwood electorate at Lovell Road and travels along Quarry Road. This has been a subject of contention and aggravation to local residents for many years. It became of grave concern when residents attempted to take the law into their own hands and blockade the road. I do not condone people breaking the law but I can understand their reasons for doing such a thing - purely out of frustration.

Ryde Council has conducted a traffic survey; it engaged experienced engineers. I believe Sinclair Knight and Company were the engineers that carried out a detailed study of measures to address the traffic problem and relieve residential roads of the burden of much of this through traffic that, I hasten to add, has neither an origin nor destination in the Gladesville electorate. That company recommended the construction of a county road that would start at First Avenue Eastwood and terminate at the Epping Highway. That proposal has been on the drawing board for many years - as had the F2 Freeway. With a price tag of \$80 million it is understandable why the county road has been placed towards the end of the roads program.

My electorate colleagues and the mayor of Ryde had discussions with the Roads and Traffic Authority to see if a less ambitious design for a road could be achieved. At the same time I wrote to my constituents in Kent Road, Eastview Avenue, Ruse Street, Milroy Street, Baringa Street, Gibbs Street, and the general area around Kent Road to seek their opinions as to what impact the county road would have on Kent Road. As a local community based member I feel that it is important to obtain consensus in regard to the community's feeling before making requests to Ministers, departments or anyone else.

About 400 letters were sent out and those who responded clearly made their views known that they did not at any stage want Kent Road closed. They were all concerned that the bus services could be disrupted, and they were concerned about many other factors. Because there is such a variation in the

views of people, I ask the Minister that the whole area between Eastwood and the Epping Highway be canvassed, the views of the people be obtained, and that an amount be set aside in this year's budget to undertake an environmental impact statement and consultative process so that the Government can make an appropriate decision in regard to the county road.

Mr CAUSLEY (Clarence - Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, and Minister for Mines) [5.50]: I congratulate the energetic member for Gladesville on his statements today in the House. Last week I was in the Chamber when he raised a similar matter of considerable interest to his electorate. The honourable member for Gladesville has shown initiative in raising this issue. He has done so to try to obtain from the Minister for Transport and Minister for Roads funding for his electorate in the next Budget. That is admirable. I am sure the Minister for Transport will take on board the member's statements concerning his electorate. I again congratulate him on his attempt to protect his constituents.

CABRAMATTA POLICE AND ASIAN GANGS

Mr NEWMAN (Cabramatta) [5.51]: Tonight I wish to bring to the attention of the Minister for Police and Minister for Emergency Services the growth of Asian gangs in Cabramatta town centre. Last Monday, in broad daylight, two police officers attempted to arrest a female Asian gang member in Cabramatta town centre. In the course of that arrest the female Asian gang member tore off her blouse and publicly exposed herself, causing a large crowd to gather. It was not long before about 100 people surrounded the two police officers and menaced and jostled them. A member of the gang grabbed one police officer's car keys and threw them on top of a shop awning. The police officers, in desperation, called code 1 because they were in extreme trouble.

I draw this matter to the attention of the House because Asian gangs have increased in number - they have nearly doubled - in Cabramatta town centre. Last year Cabramatta had the assistance of extra police and its police patrol was strengthened. However, it appears that the strategies that have been deployed have not resulted in a downturn in the growth of those gangs. I am concerned about the safety of police officers in the Cabramatta area. In the daytime it is reasonably peaceful. However, the method of attack of those gangs is cunning and careful. There has been an increase in crime, ranging from chain snatching and bag snatching to extortion, which these gangs specialise in. I interviewed a shopkeeper who informed me of the gruesome methodology of these gangs. They have a revenge mentality. I am concerned also about the size of these gangs. They outnumber local police two to one. At present there are about 200 members of the "Five T" gang and five other gangs are in existence in that area. The gangs are very menacing and bold; they have complete contempt for the law and the police.

Mr Cochran: Send them home!

Mr NEWMAN: The only thing that frightens them is the possibility of deportation if they are caught. If they are not citizens and they serve a gaol term, deportation is possible. That is probably the best thing to do. I have written to the Minister for Police and Minister for Emergency Services and suggested that police officers of Asian descent should be sent to the Cabramatta patrol as their skills could be better used there. A liaison committee should be established to make police more accountable. Task Force Oak should be located in Cabramatta. We

Page 429

should have a better public relations program aimed at improving the police image in Cabramatta and restoring the confidence of the Asian community in the police force. The number of detectives should be increased. We should also have a reciprocal visit by the Los Angeles Asian crime investigation unit, which is doing a great job.

During the evening we should have more regular beat police patrols. I am concerned about the situation that is developing in Cabramatta. That area has great potential as a tourist resort as 196,000 people walk the streets of Cabramatta in any one week. But we have this small, terrible element in the

Asian community that is causing these sorts of problems. I appeal to the Minister to look again at some sort of strategy to combat these problems. Unfortunately, matters are getting out of hand. The police have told me that they are concerned and that, on more than one occasion, code 1 has had to be called because police officers, while doing their duty in the shopping centre, have been surrounded by gang members. I know the Minister for Police is concerned about this issue, but it appears that no clear strategy is in place to combat the problems. *[Time expired.]*

LAKE EUCUMBENE BOATING SAFETY

Mr COCHRAN (Monaro) [5.56]: I wish to report to the House a matter that, under normal circumstances, would have been just another summertime boating tragedy. The incident to which I refer was close to home. The wife of a cousin of mine, a dear friend, was tragically drowned in Lake Eucumbene on the night of 2 January this year. On the afternoon of 2 January Margaret Kennedy and her brother-in-law, Joseph Kennedy, went on a fishing expedition on Lake Eucumbene. Both of them were keen fishermen. Regrettably, neither of them could swim, but they both wore lifejackets. The matter I wish to raise relates to a number of safety issues that should be highlighted in a report which should be prepared by the Minister responsible - the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Ports.

The pair were travelling in a light aluminium boat, which had a flat bottom - probably not the best designed boat for that lake. Needless to say, they went to the best fishing spot on the opposite side of the lake. On the way back they ran into a storm. The boat, which overturned, sank to the bottom of the lake. Despite my efforts and the efforts of police, volunteers and Margaret Kennedy's husband, who searched all night, we were not able to find the couple. The police launch, which was sent out that night, used floodlights to search around the lake. Regrettably, the pair were not able to be found.

On the morning of 3 January the pair were found on an island. They had drifted all night but, tragically, Margaret was deceased. The boat had sunk in high waves - a boat which had been described by its owner as unsinkable. Floodlights on the police launch had passed over the couple, but they were not seen during the night. It was determined by me and by the police that it is extremely difficult to see these sorts of boats in choppy water. There are no distinguishing colours between the boat and whitewater. Margaret Kennedy died after two and a half hours in the water. Joe Kennedy, her brother-in-law, supported his mate and sister-in-law for a further 11½ hours in freezing water. All of those who had anything to do with this incident would acknowledge Joe Kennedy's bravery in sustaining his hold on his sister-in-law for 11½ hours in freezing conditions.

One always looks for a silver lining after any tragedy. As a result of this incident I recommend that every lifejacket that is produced should have reflective tape on it. That comment is borne out by the fact that, last year, during the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race, a person who had gone overboard was found in the middle of the night in a wild storm simply because he had reflective tape on his lifejacket. It should also be mandatory for flotation tanks to be installed in all recreational boats. I am told that they are mandatory in boats that are leased for recreational purposes. That is not the case when they are sold to private individuals. That is a recommendation which I believe should come from this incident. I believe that bright or reflective coloured material should be placed on hulls, and inside and outside boats to the waterline. The reason for that is if one is flying over a vast area of water, either at night or during the day, reflective material or distinctive coloured material would be easier to see.

These matters need to be considered. Though the death of Margaret was a tragedy of stunning proportions to those who knew her, we should look for a silver lining. A lesson has been learnt from this tragedy and action can be taken to prevent families from being subjected to the emotional torture we went through during the Christmas period. I place on record my acknowledgement of the bravery of Raymond Joseph Kennedy, who stuck with his beloved mate for 11½ hours in freezing conditions. That bravery is seldom recognised in this day and age.

Mr CAUSLEY (Clarence - Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, and Minister for Mines) [6.1]: I acknowledge the statements made by the honourable member for Monaro. I was of the understanding that boats had flotation material incorporated in the seats, that they were stuffed with foam and made the boats less likely to sink. Also, I had thought that people could cling to those seats. It surprises me that a flat bottomed boat sank. I have noted the issues raised by the honourable member for Monaro and I certainly will refer them to the relevant Minister.

LIQUOR ADMINISTRATION BOARD AND Mr JOHN WOLFE

Mr FACE (Charlestown) [6.2]: I bring to the notice of the House tonight what can only be described as an anomaly in regard to debts that are left when a person or a company buys a hotel, and it
Page 430

is time that the Government faced the fact that there is an anomaly. It is unjust and leaves the way open for people to break the law. They may not break the law in the sense that they have committed an offence, but I find it hard to believe that they have not. If someone was to rob a person of \$40,000 they would be deemed to have committed a crime and yet the law as it stands, or as it did in this case, allows this to occur.

I relate the case of Mr John Wolfe, who is the licensee of the Star Hotel, Sussex Street, Sydney. Mr Wolfe purchased the hotel from the previous owners, Peter Baskerville and Allan Preston. Baskerville's name is probably fitting because he is a bit of a hound in that he, along with Preston, left Wolfe with a debt of \$42,000, plus penalties. Since that time, interest has accrued on a debt that Wolfe had nothing to do with. The law allows that situation to exist and people like Baskerville and Preston to get away with it. The Liquor Administration Board - the LAB - comes out of this in an appalling light, not only in the way it allowed it to happen in the first place, but also in its unjust treatment of Mr Wolfe.

The debt came about as a consequence of moneys that were owed on approved amusement devices. The Star Hotel has 10 AADs allowable under the Act. When Mr Wolfe purchased the premises his solicitor did all the appropriate searches, but it is not a statutory obligation to check that the AADs were paid for, as might be the normal procedure in conveyancing transactions. This case highlights the anomaly that Baskerville and Preston knew would not show up until the next quarterly payment was due. It was not taken into account at the time of the purchase of the hotel.

Mr Wolfe, finding himself in this position - and it is beyond my comprehension why the police were not called in - had the temerity to take this matter to court and to win, and of course that changed the whole situation. The LAB, and I am not criticising it, would not be deterred into admitting that there was an anomaly, appealed to another court, and on that occasion the LAB was the winner. As a consequence, Mr Wolfe was left in this situation. Apparently the officers of the LAB, as distinct from the board itself, have been sympathetic to what has happened - it is supposed to never happen again. But the board has been completely intransigent on this matter: pay up or else!

Today when I spoke to Mr Wolfe he advised that the latest threat is that he will have his machine licence taken from him and he does not know whether his hotel licence will be revoked. He has been in the hotel industry for 10 years and never owed a cent. He has written, even though he believes that the debt is an unjust one, to the Premier and to the Chief Secretary. At this stage they are making inquiries. In the meantime this man does not have \$42,000 and has further appealed on this unjust debt to the LAB to pay in instalments.

This really adds insult to injury. The LAB now tells Mr Wolfe that he must show proof of his financial circumstances, his liabilities, his income and everything he has, to prove whether he can pay the \$42,000; or he will be closed. That is a disgusting set of circumstances, to say the least. It is high time that the Chief Secretary - who would know of this case - and her department look at the entire circumstances of

this case. If one never had concerns about the LAB, one would have to have them after this. A review of the whole case needs to be undertaken so that it does not occur again; and the perpetrators who did the wrong thing, Baskerville and Preston, should be pursued. Why it was not referred to the police I do not know.

The investigative staff at the LAB do not have those skills, and I would have thought that the police would have looked at this matter. Many questions need to be asked and I will continue to ask them in regard to this situation until the man is left alone, and the proper courses are pursued in regard to the debt. A proper procedure needs to be set up so that when hotels change hands, ownership of AADs is established, and any other moneys owing are taken into account. Baskerville and Preston, who created the debt, have left it to Wolfe. [*Time expired.*]

Mrs COHEN (Badgerys Creek - Chief Secretary, and Minister for Administrative Services) [6.7]: I thank the honourable member for Charlestown for his comments on this matter. I am well aware of the Wolfe case. I have written to the LAB and asked them to re-assess their decision and I am awaiting their advice. I am also extremely concerned that such a matter could happen, where it could not happen in a simple conveyancing transaction in the general real estate market. I have directed the department to look at revising the legislation so that this cannot happen again. However, Mr Wolfe's case is of great concern to me.

I have been in touch with the LAB and I await their latest advice on Mr Wolfe and his treatment. I am also looking at my own ability to act on this matter. As the honourable member would be aware, the LAB acts in a magisterial fashion and has certain obligations under the law, as does the Minister - and they are often quite separate. The matter is in hand and is being closely supervised. I will be looking for satisfactory explanations and I look forward to the support of the honourable member for Charlestown when I bring in an amendment to the Act to ensure that this cannot happen again.

CONDUCT OF Mr PHILIP NIPPER

Mr HUMPHERSON (Davidson) [6.8]: I raise a matter which incensed me when I first became aware of it and more so since late December. It involves Mr Philip Nipper, who formerly resided at 12 Cottage Point Road, Cottage Point. Mr Nipper is the former proprietor of Johnny's Stage Door Dinner Theatre restaurant at North Sydney. Mr Nipper is a liar and a fraud. He has lied not only to a constituent of mine, but also to my staff, to the Department of Consumer Affairs, to myself and to many others. It transpires that Mr Nipper appears to have defrauded many people throughout the community and now has gone to ground.

Page 431

Initially I was approached by a constituent, a pensioner who lives in Forestville, who had made a booking, along with a number of friends, at the Johnny's Stage Door Musical Dinner Theatre restaurant in North Sydney. On 7 November my constituent rang that business to confirm a booking for 24 November and paid a deposit of \$120 in advance. She was then told that her booking was the only one for the show, and therefore the booking would be cancelled. She was promised that her \$120 deposit would be refunded by return mail. She then entered into the most elongated and unfruitful exercise in pursuit of a refund of that deposit. In excess of 40 or 50 telephone calls and letters were made and on each occasion my constituent received promises from Mr Nipper, but she has failed to receive any refund.

Mr Nipper promised a refund cheque on 26 November 1993. He provided my constituent with a cheque number and the number of an account with the Westpac Bank at North Sydney; but no cheque arrived. She then contacted my office and after a number of conversations between my staff and Mr Nipper he reiterated that he would send a cheque. Of course, nothing transpired. I contacted Mr Nipper towards the end of January, when he claimed that none of the circumstances I related to him was correct.

He advised me that the situation was to the contrary.

Mr Nipper has defrauded my constituent, a pensioner from Forestville. She has spent a significant amount of time and money pursuing this matter without success. Mr Nipper told the Department of Consumer Affairs, with which I raised the matter, that my constituent had cancelled the booking; that it was not his fault; that there had been some confusion with his staff; that he was no longer involved directly with the restaurant; and that the show did proceed. That latter assertion is interesting, given that no one was booked to see the show. Mr Nipper and his staff told my constituent on many occasions that payment would be made, but that has not happened. On 31 January Mr Nipper gave me an assurance that he would check his records and call me back. He has not done so. He is now unable to be contacted. He has moved from his address at Cottage Point and his telephone has been disconnected. He assured me that he had given no undertakings to refund this money.

Mr Phillip Nipper is a crook of the first order. The public should be aware of him and warned about him. I understand that he is still presenting cheques to a number of business people in the community and that they will never be honoured; they will bounce. He has no money and is heavily in debt, but is continuing to take advantage of many innocent people in the community. I hope that the Minister for Police and the Minister for Consumer Affairs will do all in their power to pursue Mr Nipper to recover the money he owes and to ensure that appropriate penalties are imposed upon him. The public should be warned that whenever they hear the name Phillip Nipper they should steer well clear of him.

Private members' statements noted.

[Mr Acting-Speaker (Mr Tink) left the chair at 6.12 p.m. The House resumed at 7.30 p.m.]

SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE M2 CASTLEREAGH TOLLWAY

Consideration of Urgent Motion

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr TINK (Eastwood) [7.30]: In one respect I was grateful for the contribution by the honourable member for Moorebank. He seems to have read the Public Accounts Committee reports on infrastructure financing which of course you, Mr Acting-Speaker, would be aware are first-class works. It is plain, though, that if he has read all the report, which is doubtful, he certainly has not quoted it fairly or quoted it in any way that presents the full flavour of it. One of the main issues that we have addressed in the volume 1 report that he spent some time on, was this question of intervention by parliamentary committees in the process of overseeing and vetting infrastructure projects. It is made very clear on pages 162 and 163 of the PAC's report No. 73 that we do not believe it is appropriate for parliamentary committees to intervene in infrastructure projects at this time in their gestation.

I think it is also worth noting that some of the things that we have suggested in this report - the timely intervention of the ICAC, the provision of advice by the ICAC, the use of white knights to vet for probity - have all been undertaken with the M2. As the Minister said, the ICAC has given advice in the matter; it was approached about the matter and has obviously seen fit at this point not to become involved. I think it is commendable too that a white knight from Deloitte is overseeing the process that is currently in train; that is what the Public Accounts Committee believes should happen. But any intervention by a parliamentary committee at this stage is not something that would on any fair reading of this report be supported by the PAC.

The foremost point in the motion by the honourable member for Kogarah is, of course, the hoary old chestnut of the Woodward inquiry report. I think it is very important to note that in the context of this report a few things are pretty plain. I agree with Commissioner Woodward on one thing: that the current

capacity of the road system in the Epping and Eastwood area is totally inadequate to cope with the traffic problems and through-traffic problems that bedevil the whole of my electorate.

That said, Commissioner Woodward went on to suggest that there be a widening of Carlingford and Epping roads. That proposal has been roundly condemned by literally thousands of people in the whole of the northwest area. On a previous occasion I presented a petition with some 15,000 signatures - I have got a copy of it here - and just tonight I have received another 3,000 signature petition on the same subject. There just cannot be any doubt about what the people of the northwest want by way of improved transport and improved roads in their area.

Page 432

The Woodward commission of inquiry was inconsistent and totally contradictory in a couple of key respects. Woodward himself said that the capacity of the road widening that he recommended would only provide a fraction of the capacity of the proposed F2; and he also said that the road widening he was proposing would cost a lot more than the F2. Those comments have been borne out in all the subsequent EIS processes, and if I wanted an independent arbiter in all this I would not look beyond the NRMA.

The NRMA also considered the Woodward report, and its summary was quite damning. It said amongst other things that it considered that the report failed to properly consider the effect of increasing noise, air pollution, congestion and crashes on the local residents of Epping, Eastwood, Marsfield and North Ryde. The NRMA said that the alternative suggested by Woodward was certain to be more costly than the expressway. It said that the alternative suggested by Woodward would cause more social disruption than the original expressway proposal, and came to a number of other conclusions which also very severely castigated the Woodward approach.

So what did the NRMA recommend? It suggested that the options recommended by Woodward be evaluated quickly and the implications of them compared publicly with the expressway proposal. That is precisely what happened with the exhaustive northwest sector environmental study into the transport links. That is what that was all about, and it went on for 2½ years. There were 14,000-odd submissions received and well over a 100,000 newsletters were put out for public comment. The response was absolutely overwhelming in favour of the F2 and absolutely against the road widening options suggested by Woodward.

What I suggest comes out of this, even if you take account of Woodward to a level that I do not think he deserves, is that there is a crying need to do something about increasing the capacity to take road transport through that corridor. I do not think there is anybody who disagrees with that. That said, the clear message from the community and from the whole process that has been gone through is that the Woodward option of levelling over 300 houses - which is about double the body count that the member for Kogarah referred to in relation to the expressway option - is just not on.

That was contemplated or planned for, and we should return to what common sense has suggested we do all along: look at the original corridor. The member for Kogarah purports to be interested in public transport, and I would have thought that one of the great things about the proposal now mooted is that it is the first project in New South Wales which, with regard to a major road proposal of this type, includes the specific capacity for public transport in the context of exclusive bus lanes to be converted later to light rail.

That is something that works in other States of the Commonwealth, and it is something that the member for Kogarah's colleagues never had the wit to worry about when they were in government and planning roads. We are actually trying to provide an integrated transport strategy, yet on such an important topic the member for Kogarah could not utilise all of his allotted time. He finished speaking with seven minutes still available to him. This was the great motion that we were all waiting for; the great

motion that was going to take up Parliament's time today and tonight; the great motion around which he was building his pitch for the first part of the parliamentary proceedings this year. Yet he could not even speak for the full 30 minutes.

The honourable member for Moorebank had an even higher deficit. I think he ran out of steam after about 12 minutes or 13 minutes - and that was after spending many minutes in misrepresenting the PAC report. The costs and benefits of the project - an issue raised by the motion - have been more than adequately traversed in a number of reports. The costs and benefits relating to capacity, the provision of an integrated transport proposal for the first time, and the actual dollar costs all come down very strongly in favour of the M2.

All the forecasts are there. We have documents coming out of our ears dealing with quantity, size and all the rest of it. For the Eastwood section alone, this is the final result produced by Maunsell, with an easy reference and comparative tables for people like the honourable member for Kogarah. All of this was justiciable. It was capable of being taken to the Land and Environment Court on any matter where it was alleged there was some omission, misrepresentation, error, fault or any other defect. It is all here, yet nothing happened. As the Minister has said, months have passed since this exercise was completed and no action has been taken in any court proceedings whatsoever. The court is the means by which to challenge the process, rather than by a motion in this House when all else has been put to one side, forgotten or otherwise not taken up.

This Government has done more to increase accountability in New South Wales, at its own cost, than any other jurisdiction in the western world. The Independent Commission Against Corruption is now overseeing all sorts of matters and is involved in the probity and accountability process. There has been no action by the ICAC on this project except to provide advice. This motion is a last throw of the dice to attempt to stall, by any means possible, a project on a road that, on all objective criteria, has undergone the most exhaustive assessment in this State's history. The motion is a last ditch attempt to stop its construction. Because the honourable member for Kogarah could not win a case in the Land and Environment Court, did not have a matter with legs before the ICAC, and had nothing to run anywhere else, he proposed this motion. If it is successful, it will be disastrous for private participation in infrastructure.

One of the matters the Public Accounts Committee found when it looked into this issue is that the M4 is probably the only type of stand-alone

Page 433

private project in New South Wales that the private sector can build totally, and even that is questionable. There is absolutely no way that other stand-alone mass transit projects like light and heavy rail can be built with private money. The Public Accounts Committee has said - and I guess it is implicit in this debate - that there comes a time when the question of what we think in substance amounts to a public-private partnership must be addressed. There is nothing wrong with that. Light rail and heavy rail proposals will not proceed unless they are embraced in a fair dinkum fashion.

The number one proposition in pursuing that course is to ensure that these things are recognised for what they are. Contributions of the sort made by the honourable member for Kogarah on this type of development - and, frankly, he ought to know better - in which he persists with pretending that the project must be totally private or it is not viable, are not helpful. Many people throughout the private sector want to invest considerable money in light and heavy rail projects and mass transit projects, but when the sorts of totally partisan signals emanating from the honourable member for Kogarah are sent out to them from this Chamber they get cold feet and will walk away from those projects.

Mr Langton: It is called democracy.

Mr TINK: It is called political risk. The political risks in some of the honourable member's comments are about as lethal as mortar bombs in Bosnia so far as private participation is concerned.

The honourable member for Kogarah is about as dangerous as a mortar bomb falling in the middle of Sarajevo when it comes to the assessment of these sorts of projects by the private sector. He may not like roads or spending money in the northwest sector of Sydney. He has all sorts of political agendas. That is fine, but he should realise that when he or people in the gallery want to run with light and heavy rail projects involving private sector investment - because that is what it will take - the private sector will remember the disgraceful contributions he has made in the past 48 hours. His remarks send all the wrong signals to investors, and they will go elsewhere.

The shadow minister for transport, who wants to run the transport and roads portfolios if, heaven forbid, the Australian Labor Party gains office at any stage in the remote future, will have scared off all those private investors. It is a disaster. These things have to be assessed and addressed on a fair dinkum basis. The motion is a disgrace. There are a number of other issues I would like to touch upon. The Minister, more eloquently than I could ever do, has traversed the degree of concern about the future of this project in my electorate, The Hills electorate, and even to some extent to the north, the further northwest and the west. It takes a fairly good effort to get the people of Epping, who are normally fairly quiet, self-sufficient self-starter types not greatly involved in politics, to come out in their thousands - and there are estimates of crowds of 4,000 - to follow through on this proposal.

That is the measure of concern about through traffic in residential streets. That is the level of concern about the loss of residential amenity. That is the level of concern about the threat to the safety of children who are playing in what ought to be local streets, trying to get to and from school. Anyone would conclude that these are killing zones. I am sure members of the Staysafe committee would agree with that statement. That is what Carlingford Road is. The inference to be drawn from the views expressed by the honourable member for Kogarah is that that road ought to be widened as some solution to the problem. That is an obscenity. The commonsense solution is to go back to what has been planned in some sectors for 40 years and in all other sectors for not less than 25 years.

I suppose throw-away lines in this place are fairly common but I will never forget, nor will 90 per cent of the people who come from my area, from The Hills and elsewhere, the contribution made by the honourable member for Kogarah on 6 September 1990, when he referred to the F2 as a yuppie way. That, to my mind, summarises the absolute cynicism with which he approaches this whole exercise. Everyone in Epping who has to cross Carlingford Road to get kids to school, everyone who has to cross their own local roads without getting run down by traffic that ought to be properly catered for on properly constructed roads that have been planned for 40 years will remember the comments of the honourable member for Kogarah. They will be mindful that the ALP view on this is that it is a yuppie way, that it is for yuppies.

The heck it is for yuppies! This is for saving people's lives. It is for claiming back some suburbs which had been for many years quiet residential areas but have now become traffic islands. They will become median strips, or possibly reflector lights in the middle of the road, tiny islands in what is otherwise a killing zone, by the time the honourable member for Kogarah is finished with them. That is what could happen if we do not get serious about doing this job. The context and nature of this motion overall, which in its unamended form concludes in an absurdity, really summarises the whole issue. The absurdity in its unamended form was "should the committee's findings reveal any maladministration". If that is not an example of a fishing expedition, of casting the net for the hell of it to see what comes up, I do not know what is.

This Chamber knows that parliamentary committees have an important role. However, if those committees become involved in fishing expeditions related to inquiries and environmental impact statements that have taken two and half years to reach finality, and if this Parliament thinks it should do the same job - because that is what it is invited to do under these terms of reference - then I reckon two and half years will be spent just working out the parameters of the debate. There are two boxes of material in the Chamber which do not even come close to providing the sort of material required on the second EIS which was carried out. The

question for all honourable members is whether they want to go over the same course that has already been traversed twice, taking the next two and half years to do it.

Taking that course would suit the agenda of the honourable member for Kogarah, because all he wants to do is stall the project, put it off or kill it in the hope that the money that was to be invested in the project will go elsewhere in the State. That is the agenda of the honourable member for Kogarah. People in the south, east and west are sweet; they have the M4, the M5 and the M6. People in the northwest, so far as the honourable member for Kogarah is concerned, can go to hell. All we are asking for is the same sort of consideration that they have had. We are not mad freeway builders. We just want the basic road network that should have been put in place about 30 to 40 years ago. We want to integrate public transport with that in a way that Opposition members never had the wit to contemplate.

I am staggered that the honourable member for Riverstone is about to participate in this debate. I would have thought this project was in his constituents' interests. He should talk to the Federal member for Parramatta, Paul Elliott, and the State member for Parramatta about their concerns. The Federal Australian Labor Party member for Parramatta strongly supports this project. I suspect he has a much better idea of what the project is about and what the real concerns of the constituents of the honourable member for Riverstone are than the honourable member himself. He is riding shotgun for the honourable member for Kogarah and, heaven knows, he needs all the help he can get after his performance in this debate. The honourable member for Riverstone might even be able to fill in the missing five minutes for the honourable member for Kogarah. *[Time expired.]*

Mr J. J. AQUILINA (Riverstone) [7.50]: Mr Acting-Speaker -

Mr Baird: You are going to speak against this, and it is a road to your electorate?

Mr J. J. AQUILINA: Absolutely. I am going to speak against the M2 for precisely the reason the Minister has interjected about. The road will lead to my electorate and will dump thousands of vehicles and people there every day. I want to go through some of the details of the motion. One would think, having listened to Government speakers, that what is proposed is totally outlandish and outrageous. The motion of the honourable member for Kogarah calls for a select committee to be established to inquire into and report on the conduct and activities of the Roads and Traffic Authority in relation to this matter. What could be wrong with that? After all, everyone has had their say except the people who will be most affected, and they are the representatives in this Parliament of the various electorates concerned. I would like an opportunity to have my say about how my constituents, who reside in the northwest sector, will be affected by this proposed roadway. The people of Riverstone have not had an opportunity to voice their opinions and concerns. Let me make one thing plain. An attempt may be made to point the finger at various individuals, authorities or groups. I will not point the finger at the Roads and Traffic Authority.

Mr Baird: You wouldn't want to!

Mr J. J. AQUILINA: The Minister says I would not want to. Of course I would not want to. Why should I? I have no reason to do so. I have the utmost respect for the authority and its senior officers, particularly Bob Morris, who is present in the Chamber and with whom I have liaised on many occasions. During the term of office of the present Minister, as opposed to his predecessor, I have had nothing but positive responses. There has been a grateful response from my constituents. I can well appreciate the concerns of the Minister and Government members about wanting to build this road as quickly as possible. It may satisfy the needs of their constituents, but it does not satisfy the needs of my constituents or anyone else further out than Old Windsor Road.

That is precisely what we are talking about in this debate, because I represent, proudly and willingly, the electorate of Riverstone, the boundaries of which are at the very end of the proposed roadway. I ask

all Government members who have spoken in the debate what they envisage will happen to the tens of thousands of vehicles that travel each day towards the northwest and finish up at the proposed intersection of the M2 and Old Windsor Road. Where will they finish up? The Minister knows only too well, as does Bob Morris and everyone else in the Roads and Traffic Authority. They will end up on a two-lane substandard road called Abbott Road, which will be supposed to farm out all of that traffic into the whole of the northwest sector. That is totally unacceptable.

Abbott Road is the boundary of my electorate. It is a flush seal road and is built on an easement for an eight-lane road. Frankly, if the M2 is built without Abbott Road being fully constructed, the thousands and thousands of vehicles travelling on the M2 will go precisely nowhere except onto a substandard road. I was intrigued by the contribution of the honourable member for Eastwood. On a number of occasions he could not get his Fs and Ms right. On some occasions he spoke about the M2 and on other occasions he forgot that this road will be a tollway and started referring to the F2. I remind the honourable member for Eastwood that we are not talking about a freeway; we are talking about a tollway.

Another matter that needs to be taken into consideration is the financial impost upon the people who will need to travel along this road and who, in many cases, will have no other alternative way of getting to work other than by paying a massive toll. I assure honourable members that my constituents do not want the M2 if it will pour thousands of vehicles onto local roads and not provide any cost adjustment to cope with local needs. The issue of the F2 or M2

Page 435

or the Castlereagh Expressway or whatever one wants to call it is not new. It has been around for many years. It has been the subject of countless reports but, notably, no one seems to be able to come up with the correct answers.

I went through my files on this matter, which are more extensive than those of the honourable member for Eastwood or the present member for The Hills, who are johnny-come-latelys in relation to this whole issue. I went through several fairly old reports. The honourable member for The Hills might like to read a report of the Baulkham Hills Council on this matter dating back to about 1983. I have a copy of it in my files. He might also like to read a report presented by the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils in May 1985, which again points to several reasons why it is totally improper to proceed with this proposal without proper constraints. Even now, about 10 years later, those constraints have not been duly considered. Despite a substantial number of years having elapsed, no one has taken any positive action to overcome the various problems.

Frankly, the issue needs to be looked at in relation to where the M2 will go and what traffic it will take off local roads in the electorates of such members as the honourable member for Eastwood and the honourable member for The Hills. It also needs to be looked at in terms of where the traffic will end up and who will bear the brunt of the cost. Earlier when the urgency motion was being debated the Minister made a statement to the effect that if this road does not proceed the interests of all members living in the northwest will be jeopardised. I wonder if the Minister knows who the people living in the northwest are. They do not live in Hornsby, and they do not live in the electorates of Eastwood or The Hills. The interests of the people who live in the electorates of Riverstone and Hawkesbury will be most grossly affected by the imposition of the M2.

The people of those electorates will not receive any substantial benefits from the construction of the M2. Their lives will be jeopardised because vehicles will come along a superbly constructed road and end up in limbo. They will end up in nowhere land. These cars will pour onto roads in the electorates of Riverstone and Hawkesbury, and beyond. Who will bear the cost of what happens from there on? I have raised the issue of Abbott Road with Blacktown Council, the Roads and Traffic Authority and Federal authorities. Everyone acknowledges that that is a major concern. After all, if a superbly constructed tollway ends up on what is basically a substandard rural road, problems must be expected. Everyone says something must be done about it, but no one has come up with any answers or ideas. No one has shown where the money is coming from. That is what I really need to find out.

Mr Baird: Westpac.

Mr J. J. AQUILINA: The Minister says it is coming from Westpac. Coming from Westpac for what? Maybe the M2. Tonight will the Minister give me any guarantees about Abbott Road, when this road will be constructed and what type of construction it will be?

Mr Baird: It is a Federal responsibility. It has promised money for it.

Mr J. J. AQUILINA: The Minister interjects and says it is Federal responsibility.

Mr Baird: On a point of order: the honourable member should return to debating the M2 proposal. However, he has raised the question of Abbott Road and it is important to clearly understand that there has been a Federal promise to fund the road.

Mr J. J. Aquilina: On the point of order: there is no point of order on this matter. The Minister is arguing the point I am debating.

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Hazzard): Order! There is no point of order.

Mr J. J. AQUILINA: The issue of Abbott Road is directly linked to the motion relating to the M2. Obviously one cannot have a road starting nowhere and finishing nowhere. Yet, if it is proposed that the M2 will finish at its intersection with Old Windsor Road and Abbott Road, the M2 will end up nowhere. I should like the select committee inquiry to take into account where we are heading with this road, who it is supposed to serve and what the overall results will be. At the moment I understand that four plans exist for the construction of Abbott Road. The first relates to a four-lane carriageway with a median strip, an intersection with Old Windsor Road and traffic lights.

The second plan has an overpass over Old Windsor Road from the M4 into Abbott Road. The third plan has an overpass at the other end of Abbott Road, leading into Seven Hills Road North and Johnson Avenue, Seven Hills, and the fourth plan involves three lanes each way along Abbott Road. If we cannot get the plans right at this stage, what guarantees will we have that Abbott Road will be constructed prior to completion of the M2 - even with an overabundance of generosity by the Federal Government in relation to pouring funds into the area? I put the Minister on notice that on behalf of my electorate I will not tolerate anything less than a full construction of Abbott Road prior to the M2 being built because to do otherwise would be criminal.

Mr Baird: You want the M2 but you do not want to pay for it.

Mr J. J. AQUILINA: I want the M2 after it has been properly researched.

Mr Baird: On a point of order: the honourable member for Riverstone, though speaking in support of the motion and its call for an inquiry, by his own admission has said that he is in favour of building the M2.

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr J. J. AQUILINA: The Minister has had his chance to debate this matter. If he does not know what he is talking about he should have the courtesy to keep quiet. I did not interject upon Government speakers, even though this matter is vital to my

Page 436

electorate and my residents. After all, the honourable member for Eastwood raised issues about lives being put in jeopardy. Of course I understand his concern about Carlingford Road and other roads throughout his electorate. But the lives of my constituents also are in jeopardy, as the Minister knows

only too well. If thousands of vehicles are to pour from the tollway onto substandard roads, this will result in potential death. I remind the Minister of the roads involved. As well as Abbott Road, traffic will be entering Sunnyholt Road, Lalor Road and substandard arterial roads and, need I remind the Minister, roads which go across level crossings.

Is the Minister fair dinkum when he says that he proposes to construct a tollway of super standard that will pour thousands of cars every day on to substandard roads which then, in turn, must cross level crossings in order to reach various dispersion points around Sydney? We should assign this proposal its right priority and ensure that the horse is in front of the cart, and not vice versa. Before any super roads are constructed, arterial and local roads should be of sufficient standard to carry the flow of traffic that will ensue. We should rid ourselves of the anachronisms such as the northwest sector. They are well known not only to me as the local representative but also to the honourable member for Hawkesbury, the Hon. Kevin Rozzoli.

Thousands of vehicles cross over level crossings in urban areas and those crossings should be eliminated. Already Lalor Road has 25,000 vehicles a day travelling over Quakers Hill level crossing. If upgrading is not carried out on Quakers Hill level crossing prior to the construction of the M2, more vehicles each day will traverse that level crossing and this will result in increased potential for danger and for train and vehicle collisions. In recent times we have had a sorry record in this regard. As recently as 10 February - and quite ironically at the same time the mayor of Blacktown, others and I were talking to Mr Morris and other senior officers of the Roads and Traffic Authority - a serious collision with a train occurred at the level crossing in the area proposed.

I ask who will bear the cost of constructing local roads to carry the increased heavy traffic of the M2 once it is completed. Again the local councils will be made the scapegoats and will have to provide funds through ratepayers to build local roads. The Minister may be enlightened by what is being said, but he can refer to various studies conducted several years ago. I should like to make a brief reference to a report prepared by the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils dated May 1985. In those days the equivalent body was the Department of Main Roads. Under the heading "Current Urban Development Programme" the report states:

The result is a major cost to Councils arising from the State Government's policy of releasing land for urban development in the region. Hence, Councils are placed in a position of funding roads that are clearly not local and one would assume not a local responsibility.

An example of this problem is Lalor Road which runs through the Quakers Hill release area in Blacktown. Lalor Road will form a major link road between Richmond Road and Sunnyholt Road and is expected to carry more than 25,000 vehicles per day.

That was the prediction back in May 1985; it has been realised and surpassed, even today. What is the Minister's prediction, following inquiries and studies about what will happen to local roads around the city of Blacktown and the Hawkesbury as a result of the possible construction of the M2 pouring tens of thousands of vehicles on to our local roads? I say to the Minister and to the Roads and Traffic Authority that I want the M2, but I want it only after it has been properly researched, properly documented, appropriately costed and only after suitable local roads have been constructed.

I do not want tens of thousands of vehicles pouring on to substandard local roads and Blacktown ratepayers having to pick up the bill to make up for the Government's rushed inadequacies and kowtowing to those such as the honourable member for Eastwood who want to look after their constituents to the north of Old Windsor Road at the expense of the lives and quality of life of the residents of the electorate of Riverstone. This despicable situation warrants further inquiry. A select committee with members from both sides of this House is the only way to proceed with this matter.

Mr RICHARDSON (The Hills) [8.10]: I wondered why the honourable member for Riverstone

seconded the motion by the honourable member for Kogarah. I could not understand it. He is actually a neighbour of mine in The Hills. His constituents will benefit enormously, as will mine, from construction of this road. But 28 minutes into his speech we heard the truth: he is in favour of the M2 and wants the road built, though with some strings attached. His ambit claim is for removal of level crossings, upgrading of local roads and establishment of arterial roads. However, he should be making representations in the appropriate way to the Minister, as other members do. The honourable member made his representations tonight in a roundabout way. He took some time to get to the truth, but now that we have heard it from him I am glad to know he will be crossing the floor and voting with the Government on this issue.

The speech by the honourable member for Kogarah has been heard before. As the Minister said, the speech was written for the honourable member by someone else. I have read all that material. I have a boxfull in my office. All that information is available. I have discussed it with members of the Coalition of Transport Action Groups and Seriously Concerned Residents Against Pollution, SCRAP. We have been down that track. The matter is exhausted and is over. The honourable member for Kogarah represents an electorate that is about as remote from The Hills electorate as is possible in the Sydney metropolitan area. He has not visited The Hills electorate since he was in knickerbockers and went there to inspect the chooks his grandfather kept. It is about time he again visited The Hills and found out for himself what we have to endure there without roads to cope with the area's growth. I want to give the honourable member for Kogarah the facts about The Hills electorate because he does not seem to know anything about it. The electorate is the fifth

Page 437

fastest growing in New South Wales, having enjoyed an 11.36 per cent growth since the last election. I predict that by next year, with Rouse Hill coming on stream at the end of this year, The Hills will be the fastest growing electorate in New South Wales. Manidis Roberts made germane comment about the M2 in its environmental impact statement:

Most of the transport corridor is located in Baulkham Hills Shire. Like much of north-western Sydney, Baulkham Hills is experiencing rapid population growth as it changes from a predominantly rural to a more urbanised community. Surveys conducted by Council's Community Services Department -

That is the same council that the honourable member for Riverstone said in 1983 was against this road. I continue:

- have identified inadequate transport as the Shire population's major concern. Most of the transport corridor has been developed since 1950 . . .

Considerable new development is occurring or planned in Baulkham Hills, Castle Hill and towards the Rouse Hill development area. The study area's residential population is growing strongly and is forecast to grow from 902,000 in 1990 to 1,225,000 in 2006 and to 1,365,000 in 2016.

All we have is a network of inadequate roads to cope with that growth. Because of Labor's stalling tactics this road has been 30 years in the making. This Government, which came to office six years ago, has attempted to do the right thing through the EIS process. I remember Fred Caterson, a former member for The Hills, saying the road would be started by the end of 1988. It is now 1994, enormous growth has occurred in The Hills electorate, yet the first sod to commence the road has not been turned. The Minister for Transport and Roads said that in the last election he received a 4 per cent swing in his electorate. During the by-election last year I stated publicly on a number of occasions that I was in favour of the M2. I received a 1.9 per cent swing - the first swing towards a Government in a by-election in more than 13 years. Residents of The Hills electorate are more sensible than the honourable member for Kogarah and understand the need for roads. It behoves the honourable member, as shadow minister for transport, to come to The Hills electorate and experience some of our traffic jams.

He should travel out to the electorate any Friday evening at about 6 p.m. He should come to Beecroft and live through the experience of one of my constituents when two Fridays ago it took him one hour to travel 2½ kilometres. Traffic jams on Beecroft and Boundary roads are the worst in Sydney. But does the honourable member for Kogarah know or care about that? Members of Parliament have a duty of care to their constituents. The honourable member for Riverstone said that members do not attend Parliament to represent their constituents. Who does he represent - the chooks I mentioned?

Pennant Hills Road is like a river that needs bridges for those who want to cross it. At the moment it is like a river that can be crossed only by ferries and those ferries are causing traffic jams. This can do Government is all about putting in roads where they are needed. I hear jeers from members opposite, but I shall tell them about the attitude of the honourable member for Kogarah to the JetCats providing services to Parramatta. He said a channel could not be dredged and that the JetCats would never run. JetCats do travel to Parramatta. They have been so successful that the honourable member complained there were not enough JetCats to service all those who wanted to use them. The honourable member's attitude is to be expected from the so-called can do Opposition - and long may it remain in opposition.

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Hazzard): Order! I have tolerated and allowed licence to members but I am beginning to lose patience. Honourable members should desist interjecting across the Chamber.

Mr RICHARDSON: The Maunsell study on the eastern part of the road predicts 30 per cent to 37 per cent peak period car traffic demand growth through the corridor by 2006, and that such increase could not be accommodated by the existing road system, which is already close to capacity or is overloaded. Hopes of travel suppression and reversal of road traffic growth are not sustained by the study's conclusion. The Manidis Roberts report on the western part of the road concludes:

If the link were not built, congestion would increase in the transport corridors and peak periods would lengthen. The mobility of all people in northwestern Sydney would be reduced.

That mobility is less than wonderful at present. I have lived 15 years in Beecroft and have seen those traffic jams progressively lengthen, mostly in the last three years, from 200 metres to two, three and up to four kilometres along Beecroft Road. I shudder to think what would happen if the interlink is not built and Rouse Hill goes ahead, as it will, at the end of this year. More than 70 per cent of those living in The Hills are in favour of the M2. They, unlike the honourable member for Kogarah and the honourable member for Riverstone, understand the problem.

The Maunsell report found that demand for public transport within the forecast period cannot justify the heavy expenditure required for new fixed-track construction. What does the report recommend, and what is the Government going to do? The Government is to put dedicated bus lines along the expressway that can be upgraded to light rail according to population demands. That is a sensible attitude towards funding, private sector funding and the electorate's transport needs. The M2 is an essential link in our integrated transport strategy, which envisages employment in the suburbs. At a breakfast a couple of weeks ago I was talking to Allan Zammit, general manager of the North West Business Park. He said to me he would not be able to attract business to that park if the M2 was not built.

We are not merely talking about commuters, about people getting to and from work; we are not talking about 2,000 jobs that the Minister said would be created through the construction phase of the road. We are talking about the long-term loss of thousands

Page 438

of jobs for the people of the northwest. The honourable member for Kogarah would do that single-handedly through this motion, which is more of a private member's bill than a motion. I do not think a motion as long as this has ever been moved in this Chamber. I would canvass a number of other issues, but my colleague the honourable member for Baulkham Hills will probably cover them. However,

I wish to raise the issue of those people living along the route of the proposed expressway who expected to have their homes bought. I received today a fax from Mr Adrian West of Mahers Road, West Pennant Hills, which is along the line of the freeway. The letter states:

On Tuesday evening I believe that there were a couple of reports on the news of the Opposition moving for an enquiry into the F2. Seeking confirmation of this, I rang the RTA and spoke to a Mr Howard Penn who advised me that Brian Langton was moving for an enquiry and if the Opposition was successful then the whole F2 project would be put on hold pending the outcome of this enquiry.

As far as I am concerned this is totally unacceptable, our lives have already been thrown into chaos and any further delays will only add to the enormous pressures that we are living with.

I ask the question how is it possible that after all that has transpired the Opposition can still force an enquiry, this particular tollway has always been a hot potato and I would have thought that because of the controversy the Govt would have been very careful to cross its T's and dot its I's.

I believe that I and my neighbours are entitled to assurances that irrespective of the enquiry resumptions will still take place on the same basis as before.

Government members know that members of the Opposition could force an inquiry. All they have to do is move a motion and they may have the numbers in the House. It is not something that this can do Government is encompassing; it is not something that this can do Government wants to occur. The Government understands the need for certainty for the people whose homes and lives are affected by the F2. It understands the need for certainty for people like the 65-year-old man who telephoned me and said he wanted to sell his house and retire. However, he cannot get out. He cannot sell it, because the road has not been built, and therefore he has no certainty. The honourable member for Kogarah does not care about people like that. To him the 65-year-old is a yuppie, just another one of the yuppies who want to use the road. I am sure the House will see it the Government's way and will reject this motion.

Mr MERTON (Baulkham Hills) [8.22]: This motion is about the delay and frustration not only of the elected Government's mandate but of the express wishes of the people of northwestern Sydney. By any criteria this is a case of bowing to the vested interests of a minority group. A 1993 survey showed that 66 per cent of people want the M2. At a protest meeting recently 4,000 people took to the streets - this is unknown in the northwest part Sydney - and their message was simple and clear: they are sick to death of the congested roads in the northwestern part of Sydney and they want the M2 freeway. Only 5 per cent of people who were surveyed wanted nothing done.

The honourable member for Kogarah has moved this motion. One may well ask what has the honourable member for Kogarah to do with this? The answer is simply that he is the Opposition spokesman for transport. He knows little, he cares little, and he has very little to do with the interests, aspirations and desires of people of northwestern Sydney. He is here today on a political mission. The Government is here today on a mission of morality, a mission to ensure that adequate transport facilities are provided for the people of northwestern Sydney.

The shadow minister was unable to provide any details of what he described as serious allegations. He spoke in general terms of the conspiracy theory, but again offered no details. He was long on rhetoric but short on detail. The snake oil salesman's speech today was far better than his speech yesterday. In fact, he had a different scriptwriter. Alas, when the script came to an abrupt end it was like the old freeways that Neville Wran stopped. He came to an abrupt end because he had no more material, no more substance, and nothing further to contribute to the debate. He simply ran out of words. Indeed, he ground to a halt. One might say he ran into a vacuum, which is consistent with his general outlook on life.

Yesterday I was unkind enough to say that the honourable member for Kogarah had a room

temperature IQ. If that is the case, today must be the middle of winter, because he has lived up to his reputation. This is a question of minority interests against the interests of the silent majority in the Hills area. People are sick to death of the present traffic difficulties. The idea of the M2 freeway is not new. It has been on the books for 30 to 40 years. The majority of people who have moved into that area were well aware of the proposal. It has been argued that the freeway will interfere with substantial areas of bushland. Much of that bushland was left untouched with the express purpose of being a corridor for the M2.

Mr O'Doherty: Otherwise it would be full of houses.

Mr MERTON: Otherwise it would be full of houses, as the competent, keen and energetic member for Ku-ring-gai informs the House. The councils of Parramatta, Baulkham Hills and Ryde support the road. There is a moral, a lesson, a story in the fact that the elected representatives of the people in those areas realise that the M2 is a necessity and is required to provide for adequate transportation in the area. I understand that some members of the political party to which the honourable member for Kogarah has sworn allegiance also support it. The concept of the M2 goes far beyond party politics. It goes far beyond the idea of what a different council might decide. It goes to the truth of the matter, and the truth of the matter is that unless adequate transport facilities are provided in the northwest of Sydney the area will grind to a halt.

Much has been made by my friend, the honourable member for Kogarah - we are still friends, believe it or not - that the northwest sector, which was contemplated to have about 80,000 homesites, will not

Page 439

have so many homesites. The northwest sector is an ongoing concept and eventually there will be 80,000 homesites, which will represent a population the same size as that of Canberra. If honourable members opposite think the roads are difficult now, when the northwest sector is fully developed they will be impossible. In the absence of the M2, what are the alternatives? One alternative is the widening of Carlingford Road, which would take fewer cars and would cost the same as the M2. This would mean resuming more houses, as the honourable member for Davidson reminds me, and would result in an inadequate road, which would be a token bandaid solution to an ongoing problem.

Other items must be considered. I wish to refer to some points raised by the honourable member for Riverstone, who spoke of level crossings. Of course level crossings will have to be upgraded; that is a basic fact of life. However, I must admit I was surprised, after being subjected to the tirade of the honourable member for Riverstone, that at the eighteenth minute of a dramatic twenty-minute experience listening to his oratory, or his lack of oratory, he virtually stunned the House. The Minister almost fell off his chair and some other members, who were patient enough to wait with great expectation to the end, heard him utter the magical words, "I want the M2". That is unbelievable. It is a bit like putting the Mafia in control of the Mint for this man to say he wants the M2.

Quite simply, the honourable member for Riverstone will vote against the M2, which nevertheless he wants. I do not understand his politics, but I am certain many people in the Riverstone electorate would be pleased to have reasonable and realistic access to the city. The honourable member for Riverstone would like to deny those people access to the city because of party politics and because he is pandering to a minority interest. This Government is not like that; it is prepared to make decisions. Everyone is not pleased with the concept of the M2. We understand that. Some people object to it. But we must not overlook the fact that about 66 per cent of people surveyed said that they wanted the M2. If one went to Epping railway station on any day of the week and conducted a survey, 100 per cent of the people surveyed would say, "We need the M2". In his contribution the honourable member for Riverstone spoke about upgrading Abbott Road. Of course, Abbott Road will have to be upgraded. However, we need the expressway.

The honourable member for Riverstone spoke also about increased traffic on local roads. I really do not understand his logic. If people want to go to Sydney either they will use existing roads, which include

many local roads, or they will use the M2. There will not be an increase in traffic simply because of the M2 expressway. People who have to go to the city will go one way or the other. So the argument of the honourable member for Riverstone falls short of being logical. I am aware that the number of cars on the expressway will increase as years go by, but they will be using an upgraded and safer facility with less pollution, less lead in the atmosphere and at less cost to taxpayers. If the honourable member for Riverstone had his way, cars would be travelling bumper to bumper down side streets, preventing people from getting out of their driveways. That is what the honourable member for Riverstone is about, which is consistent with Labor Party philosophy.

The Labor Party opposes expressways. It does not believe people should be able to travel to work in a reasonable degree of comfort within a reasonable time. Many other issues have been raised in this debate. I spoke a moment ago about the M2 ending at Old Windsor Road. A recent Federal study investigated linking Old Windsor Road with the M5 south of Liverpool as part of the national highway system. The honourable member for Riverstone is not aware of the proposals of his Federal masters for this area. He should attend a meeting of a Federal transport committee, if such a committee exists, to establish exactly what is planned. This Government is prepared to work with the Federal Government because it wishes to look after the people of New South Wales. I believe that many of the fallacies about the M2 should be addressed.

Allegations have been made by an organisation called Coalition for Transport Action Groups, which I understand is represented in the Chamber tonight. That is its right. We encourage people like that to attend parliamentary debates. They would have been well entertained tonight by the honourable member for Kogarah, who is a wonderful little performer. I inform people in the gallery that the debate has not been completed. The honourable member for Kogarah has a final performance before we vote on this issue. No doubt he will go in for the kill, which is his right. The snake oil salesman never fails to please. Today and yesterday he put on a wonderful performance. Yesterday, when his emotions ran strong, I was a little worried about the lectern, but I understand it is adequately insured so there was no real crisis. The estimated construction cost of the M2 in the 1992 environmental impact statement is \$492 million. That environmental impact statement, which was prepared by a reputable consultant, was based on construction techniques and the rates applicable at that time.

Since the construction of the M4 and M5 motorways some productivity gains and efficiencies have been achieved. The Government believes that the estimate of \$492 million to construct the M2 is fair and reasonable. This Government is about saving money. The difference between Government members and Opposition members is that Opposition members keep priming the pump. They believe that taxpayers are a group of people who can be drained for eternity. The Government believes that the cost to taxpayers of constructing the M2 will be just less than \$260 million. When this matter has been resolved and contracts have been signed, the Minister will publicly disclose the actual cost to the taxpayer. The Government believes that those costs will be well within the estimate.

Page 440

We have only to look at the record of this Government and compare it with the record of the previous Labor Government to see that the coalition Government has been open and frank and has kept people fully informed. It does not do the honourable member for Kogarah much credit to denigrate the Government's progress in this regard. Compare what this Government has done and what the Labor Government did with the harbour tunnel project - a clandestine midnight affair, and the only thing missing was the night train to Paris. This Government is completely open and honest. It has conducted two environmental impact studies and established a commission of inquiry to look into this matter. It has invited members of the public to submit proposals. To date, 14,000 proposals have been received.

The Government has held meetings with people involved in various aspects of construction to determine what will happen in particular areas. This Government has been completely open, forthright and clean in conducting this exercise. As the Minister said earlier, Mr Bob Morris, a man of utmost

integrity, has acted for the Roads and Traffic Authority. If someone comes into my electorate office with questions about this project - of course, some people are concerned about this matter and it is logical for them to be concerned - I seek answers from Mr Morris or one of his officers. They have always been forthright in their answers. But the matter goes further than that. I would like the honourable member for Kogarah to listen to what I have to say because he is playing with the lives of people, which is a serious matter.

Many people who have lived in an area adjacent to a freeway for 15 to 30 years are not sure whether their homes will be taken or whether they will get adequate compensation. For the past 12 months they have been unable to ascertain what is likely to happen. All issues are on hold. The honourable member for Kogarah is prepared to subject those people to more uncertainty, more trauma and more worry to suit the purposes of his own political agenda or the agenda of some minority group. That is completely unfair. A decision has been made; let us continue with it. People have acted on the basis of that decision. The RTA has already acquired a number of homes. At last people realise what is likely to happen to them. If this motion is passed tonight, this uncertainty will continue. This matter is urgent and should be resolved tonight so that people know what will happen.

A constituent of my dear friend the honourable member for The Hills wrote to him and said, "I have had enough. I want the matter resolved. We need the road". It is unfair for the Labor Party to interfere in this matter. How clean were the hands of members of the Opposition when they came into the Chamber tonight? It is about 10 months since the environmental impact statement was determined; six months since expressions of interest were called; and four months since the time to lodge those expressions of interest was closed. The private sector has already invested millions of dollars in response to the Government's call for expressions of interest. Four preliminary proposals were received involving more than 20 companies. I suggest that if there is any law, if there is any justice, if there is any equity as far as this application is concerned, the Labor Party is bound by delay, laches and lack of good faith in not bringing this application earlier; that is the difficulty. To bring it up at a late stage is again unfair. If this motion is passed it will have a detrimental effect on the Government's ability to pursue other projects, such as the eastern distributor, the M5 and the Pacific Highway toll roads. Quite clearly the private sector will not be prepared to become involved with a Government that will either change its mind or be in a position where it cannot control the situation.

This is a dangerous situation; it means that the eastern distributor could well be in jeopardy, as well as the Pacific Highway tollroads. This motion is about delay and about frustration of the elected Government's mandate. Quite clearly the Government went to the people in 1991 with a specific proposal to build the F2. If tonight, at the twelfth hour, Parliament were to decide that this was not to happen, or if it were to be put on hold, it would be an injustice. It would be an injustice for the many people who have supported the Government in its mandate to build the freeway. It would be an injustice in so far as the voice of a minority group would prevail over the elected majority. I suggest that this motion should be declined, that the House should knock this motion back and that the people of the northwest of Sydney should be given a tangible sign by the Parliament that their expressway will be built. Unless the expressway is built, the horrendous traffic conditions will be impossible in the future.

Mr LANGTON (Kogarah) [8.41], in reply: I do not know why the honourable member for Baulkham Hills is not still in the ministry, he is awesome. Mr Acting-Speaker, this is not about a political agenda, this is about honesty and openness in government.

Mr Baird: Like the tunnel project.

Mr LANGTON: Here we go about the tunnel. Minister, I hate to tell you this but we are talking about the M2 tonight. I know the Minister has been preoccupied in the last couple of days, I know the Minister has been a bit upset.

Mr Baird: You have been.

Mr LANGTON: Yes, I have been busy. I have been busy with all these Government frontbenchers, Ministers and backbenchers ringing me and asking, "What do you have for Bruce today? Do you need a bit more?". Then they see me in the corridor and pat me on the back and say, "Good on you, get on to Bruce, he deserves that. We will get you a bit more information, we have got a bit more on him".

Mr ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Hazzard): Order! The honourable member will speak to the motion.

Page 441

Mr LANGTON: I was responding to the interjection. The Minister is preoccupied with the tunnel. We know he has tunnel vision but this is becoming ridiculous. Quite honestly, the Minister had to concentrate on the tunnel because the processes of arriving at the position the Government has taken on the M2 are totally and utterly indefensible. That is why the Minister had to sidetrack about the tunnel, and that is why all the backbenchers who participated in the debate found difficulty in speaking to the motion. The debate is about honesty and openness in government, and openness in the processes of government dealing with private companies in the provision of public infrastructure.

That is what this motion is about and that is why there is now an urgent need for a public inquiry. An inquiry conducted under the auspices of this Parliament is needed to ensure that all of the processes in relation to the M2 project not only have been undertaken, but have been undertaken openly and honestly. Taxpayers need to know exactly what their commitment will be, not just in the short term or whether it will be \$300 million or \$400 million upfront, but also in the long term. Taxpayers need to know not only the ramifications of their putting cash into this project, but the long-term ramifications of the effect of this project on other Government borrowings. For example, what will be the effect on roads that will not be built because money is put into this project? What will be the likely effect of other projects that will not be carried out because the funds needed for this project will cut into Federal Loan Council borrowings? Those matters must be in the open, and taxpayers in the 1990s have the right to know about them, but even in 1994 they do not know about them. That is why this select committee is needed.

Earlier tonight when the Minister very briefly managed to talk about the M2, he attacked people in the gallery. He accused them of the NIMBY syndrome - the not in my backyard syndrome. Perhaps the Minister would be aware that the great majority of people who have expressed concern about the M2 processes do not live in the area directly affected by the M2. They are concerned about the processes of good government, accountability and honesty - all the things that the Minister does not believe in. The Minister will not get that through his head. He will not understand that some people in this community - quite clearly not on the Government side of the House - are interested in probity, propriety and transparency of government dealing with private industry.

The Minister attacked Dr John Goldberg. He said, "If you want to start a protest group, call Professor Goldberg". I inform the Minister that if a noise expert is needed, you call Dr Goldberg. I have a copy of a letter addressed to Dr Goldberg inviting him to address the Second International Symposium on Transport Noise and Vibration, to be held in St Petersburg, Russia, in October this year. The letter states:

I am aware of your recent work and scientific contributions in topics of interest to participants of the symposium and . . . I would suggest that you present this paper on "Traffic Noise".

An international symposium; a man of international repute. The Minister, in his usual gutless fashion, said of this world expert, "If you want a protest, call Professor Goldberg". That is something the Minister will live to regret; that is one reason why the Government backbench and frontbench have been troubled during the past few days. Government members are sick of the Minister taking advantage of people like that. They are ringing me and patting me on the back; they are putting pieces of paper under my door. I

cannot get enough of it, and the Minister is on again tomorrow.

The Minister said that people of the northwest have a right to the M2. That puts it in context; we now see where the Minister is coming from. The Minister regards the road as a right and he will not accept any criticism of it. I believe that the people of the new release areas have a right to expect that they might eventually have public transport and might live their lives without every member of their families having to own their own car, to get about their daily business of going to work, to shops, to school or wherever. That is what people regard as their right, rather than the right to a road.

The people of western Sydney have a right to better quality air. I am sure that even the Minister for Transport, in that foggy area that is his brain, will be aware that the people of western Sydney are badly affected by smog. They have a right to clean air. Parents in western Sydney have the right to expect that their children will not suffer from asthma simply because the public transport is inadequate. The only transport solutions this Minister has is to have more roads and more smog. That is what I am speaking about when I speak of rights. The other thing the Minister went on about at length was his obsession with my use of the term fast tracking. I assure the Minister that there is a big difference between fast tracking and doing nothing. Our criticism of the Minister - and it is justified and has not been defended by the Minister - is that he has not done anything. He has announced an airport rail project 13 times. I do not know how many times he has announced the tilt train. One runs out of fingers trying to count his announcements - but nothing happens. Opposition members have levelled all sorts of criticisms at the Minister, all of them completely justified. But we have never advocated fast tracking to avoid public scrutiny.

Mr Baird: You cannot have it both ways.

Mr LANGTON: Let me make it clear that we have attacked the Minister's fake press announcements and his petulant attempts to get his face on the front page of the *Daily Telegraph Mirror*. The people of the State want announcements about projects that will go ahead; they want announcements about public transport. But they do not get them from this Minister. All they get from him are fake projects for

Page 442

the sake of getting a good press release. The Opposition has not and will not advocate fast tracking to avoid due process. When we speak about fast tracking of the M2 we are speaking about the fact that in December 1993 the RTA community newsletter proposed that a contract would be awarded in December 1994. On 11 February this year the Minister issued a press release in which he said the awarding of the contract would be possible by mid-1994 - six months earlier.

That is what I am talking about when I refer to fast tracking and undue haste in signing the contract to avoid due process, to have the contracts all stitched up before the people of the State - the taxpayers, who have a right to know - have the opportunity to look at the processes that have been followed. The Minister said that people who have to drive their cars every day want the M2. If they have to drive their cars, undoubtedly that is so. However, if they have to drive their cars it is simply because public transport is inadequate. The honourable member for Baulkham Hills said that there would be between 80,000 and 100,000 people in the northwest sector, in direct contradiction to the reference to 250,000 people by the honourable member for Eastwood. Members on that side of the House have as many different figures as the RTA has. They pick figures out of air to suit their argument. I wish they would get their act together. They do not know what they are talking about.

As I said, the people of the northwest have to drive their cars because of the inadequacy of their public transport. The honourable member for Baulkham Hills said, "Reasonable comfort and reasonable time in travel are only available by car". I would hate to have to ask the honourable member for Baulkham Hills to write a reference or testimonial for the Minister for Transport. This Minister has held the transport portfolio for six years and his best mate on the backbench says that the only way to get around Sydney in comfort is to go by car. What a marvellous testimonial that is to six years of public

transport development by the Minister! When the Minister needs to put another sheet of paper in the curriculum vitae he has been hawking around to the head-hunters, he should not get it from Wayne Merton. I have not moved this motion to advocate or advise against the construction of the M2 per se. My concern is with the processes that have been employed by the RTA and other departments, and their consultants, to arrive at the authority's predetermined position, and that is, to build the M2.

Mr Baird: The honourable member does not have the people from CTAG -

Mr LANGTON: I am glad the Minister interjected. I shall tell him a few things about the way the RTA operates. I have a letter, and the allegation raised in it is not unusual; I have heard it before. It relates to traffic lights on main roads that are likely to be affected by construction of a future -

Mr Baird: On a point of order: the motion seeks to establish a select committee to stop the construction of a major freeway. It does not deal with traffic lights. I know that the honourable member for Kogarah has lost the plot, but the subject of this debate is a parliamentary inquiry into the M2 freeway.

Mr Langton: On the point of order: when speaking about freeways one must be able to speak about roads that are affected by the construction or non-construction of freeways.

Mr W. T. J. Murray: On the point of order: the honourable member is supposed to be replying to the debate and should not be introducing new material.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I uphold the point of order. The honourable member cannot introduce new material when replying to the debate. During the course of the debate I considered at some length the terms of the motion, and traffic lights have no relevance to it. The overriding reason for upholding the point of order is that the honourable member may not introduce new material when replying to the debate.

Mr LANGTON: The RTA has deliberately and consistently manipulated various processes in an attempt to get its own way. It has manipulated lights to slow down traffic in an endeavour to get people to support the freeway proposal. It is happening with the M2 and it happened with the M4.

Mr W. T. J. Murray: That is a scandalous lie, and you know it.

Mr LANGTON: The honourable member for Barwon might tell me what happened in September 1990 at the meeting in Parliament House. He was there, the Minister for Transport was there and people from the RTA were there when they discussed the possibility of putting white pegs in Carlingford Road to scare people who might be affected by a widening of that road.

Mr W. T. J. Murray: That is absolute rubbish.

Mr LANGTON: The honourable member was there, the member for Eastwood was there. Will the member for Eastwood deny that?

Mr Baird: I was not there.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the Minister for Transport to order. I direct the honourable member for Kogarah to return to the subject of the motion and his reply to the debate. I have already instructed him not to raise new matters and he is obviously flouting my ruling. He will return to relevant matters or I will direct him to resume his seat.

Mr LANGTON: How can anyone make a fair assessment of the necessity for or viability of a road when the documents are full of misinformation, neglect known but available data, and omit submissions? How can the Minister say that the

environmental impact statements are adequate when so much has been neglected? He accused Opposition members of delay in raising their concerns. Apart from the fact that Parliament has not sat for a few months, I was busy with a few things in the past couple of days; a great deal of information has been coming to Opposition members in the past six months or so; and, in particular, the Minister decided to bring the process forward by six months. It reached the stage when we had to move. Clearly sufficient information is available now to warrant the setting up of a parliamentary select committee to inquire into these matters.

The Minister has suggested that the Independent Commission Against Corruption would not investigate the matters put to it with regard to the M2 because they had no substance. That is not quite true. It did not investigate matters brought to its attention because the allegations concerned private companies and therefore were outside its jurisdiction. How can the Minister claim that he has always advocated that the M2 would not be totally privately funded? I have his press release headed, "M2 privately funded tollway". I have here in the "New South Wales Government Insight" a document headed, "M2 Privately Funded Tollway". It is either privately funded or it is not. If it is not, the Minister is misleading this House and the people of New South Wales. If it is not a privately funded road, tell them; but the Minister cannot have it both ways.

I do not understand what the Minister means by the words "privately funded". Perhaps he does not know what is meant by the words "public subsidy". Either way, the Minister is incapable of having presided over the process that has gone on so far - all the more reason why this committee should be established. In conclusion, I quote from an article which appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on Friday, 4 June 1993, about this tollway:

The tollway can succeed only if the State Government gives the company which builds it lots of help, which means hard cash, long-term subsidies or concessions, such as development consent on land surrounding the tollway.

It went on to say:

The study by Michael Perry and Associates in 1987 found that the F2 ranked thirteenth of thirteen options in terms of financial viability, last in a group classified as very low probability -

Mr Humpherson: On a point of order: Mr Speaker, earlier in the debate you made it clear that the introduction of new material by a speaking member in reply was out of order. As well, the honourable member for Kogarah has been exceedingly repetitious. I ask that you direct him to return to the substance of the debate and to address the remarks made by members of the Government in response to his motion.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am of the view that in drawing attention to that article the honourable member for Kogarah is endeavouring to address some of the matters raised by members of the Government. But in any event his time has expired.

Question - That the motion be agreed to - put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 42

Ms Allan	Mr Markham
Mr Amery	Mr Martin
Mr Anderson	Mr Mills
Mr A. S. Aquilina	Mr Moss
Mr J. J. Aquilina	Mr Nagle

Mr Bowman	Mr Neilly
Mr Clough	Mr Newman
Mr Crittenden	Ms Nori
Mr Doyle	Mr E. T. Page
Mr Face	Mr Price
Mr Gaudry	Mr Rogan
Mr Gibson	Mr Rumble
Mr Harrison	Mr Scully
Mr Hunter	Mr Shedden
Mr Iemma	Mr Sullivan
Mr Irwin	Mr Thompson
Mr Knight	Mr Whelan
Mr Knowles	Mr Yeadon
Mr Langton	
Mrs Lo Po'	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr McBride	Mr Beckroge
Mr McManus	Mr Davoren

Noes, 46

Mr Armstrong	Mr W. T. J. Murray
Mr Baird	Mr O'Doherty
Mr Beck	Mr D. L. Page
Mr Blackmore	Mr Peacocke
Mr Causley	Mr Petch
Mr Chappell	Mr Phillips
Mrs Chikarovski	Mr Photios
Mr Cochran	Mr Richardson
Mrs Cohen	Mr Rixon
Mr Collins	Mr Schipp
Mr Cruickshank	Mr Schultz
Mr Fraser	Mrs Skinner
Mr Glachan	Mr Small
Mr Griffiths	Mr Smith
Mr Hartcher	Mr Souris
Mr Hatton	Mr Tink
Mr Hazzard	Mr Turner
Mr Humpherson	Mr West
Dr Kernohan	Mr Windsor
Mr Kinross	Mr Zammit
Dr Macdonald	
Mr Merton	<i>Tellers,</i>
Ms Moore	Mr Jeffery
Mr Morris	Mr Kerr

Pairs

Mr Carr	Mr Downy
Mrs Grusovin	Mr Fahey
Mr J. H. Murray	Mr Longley
Dr Refshauge	Ms Machin
Mr Ziolkowski	Mr Yabsley

Question so resolved in the negative.

Motion negatived.

Page 444

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE UPON THE SYDNEY WATER BOARD

Message

Message received from the Legislative Council advising that it had agreed to the reporting date for the Joint Select Committee upon the Sydney Water Board being extended until 19 April 1994.

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION INQUIRY INTO PROTECTION OF PAEDOPHILES

Message

Mr Speaker reported the receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:

Mr Speaker -

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution:

That this House requests the Independent Commission Against Corruption to investigate:

- (a) allegations that some members of the Police Service of New South Wales have by act or omission protected paedophiles from criminal investigation or prosecution, and in particular the adequacy of major investigations undertaken by the police in relation to paedophiles since 1983;
- (b) whether the procedures of or the relationships between the Police Service of New South Wales and other public authorities adversely affected police investigations and the prosecution, attempted or failed prosecution of paedophiles; and
- (c) the conduct of public officials related to the above matters.

The investigation is to be conducted with a view to determining the matters referred to in section 13(2) of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988.

An interim report is to be prepared and submitted to both Houses of Parliament by 1 October 1994.

At the conclusion of the investigation a report is to be prepared, information passed to other authorities as appropriate and the Commission is to monitor responses to the report's recommendations.

The Legislative Council requests that the Legislative Assembly pass a similar resolution.

Legislative Council
9 March 1994

M. F. Willis
President

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH: ADDRESS IN REPLY

Fourth Day's Debate

Debate resumed from 8 March.

Mr HUNTER (Lake Macquarie) [9.14]: I wish to contribute to the Address in Reply to the Governor's Speech given on 1 March in the Legislative Council Chamber. I listened carefully to the Governor's Speech, waiting to hear the Government's proposals for the next 12 months and how they will help the people of Lake Macquarie. I was saddened that he mentioned only two issues closely linked with the Lake Macquarie area. One was the lead task force that is to report later in the year to the Government with recommendations on the State's lead problem, and I shall speak on that issue later. The other area was the bushfires.

The Governor mentioned the devastating bushfires that occurred in January. He took the opportunity to express his sympathy to those who had suffered loss. He mentioned also his admiration for the successful efforts of the State Emergency Services personnel and the thousands of volunteers, including some from other States, who ensured that the impact on the people of New South Wales was minimised. I join with the Governor in expressing my sympathy to those who suffered loss. The fires were particularly bad in the Lake Macquarie area, with the loss of one life, loss of property, the destruction of many hectares of bushland and the devastating environmental consequences that flowed.

On the first day of the fires I visited certain areas and spoke with firefighters in an effort to ascertain what damage had been occasioned at that stage. Unfortunately, the fires continued for two weeks and the damage was much greater than first expected. I congratulate the firefighters, the men and women from the Department of Bushfire Services and the New South Wales Fire Brigades, volunteers, police and others on their excellent work. Also, I wish to thank those who provided a comprehensive briefing to me and other members of Parliament when the Leader of the Opposition, Bob Carr, visited Lake Macquarie. The honourable member for Swansea, Don Bowman; the honourable member for Wallsend, John Mills; the Hon. P. F. O'Grady; and the Deputy Mayor of Lake Macquarie, Councillor Jill Hall; accompanied me and the Leader of the Opposition as we toured Lake Macquarie inspecting fire damage and speaking to those involved.

We met with bushfire personnel and inspected the Lake Macquarie bushfire control centre at Boolaroo. We were informed that if the fires had not been controlled they may have impacted more on the western side of Lake Macquarie, resulting in greater loss of property. Firefighters pointed out that under existing legislation they cannot enforce government departments to clear their land. A number of areas around Lake Macquarie owned by government departments have high fire loads and, unfortunately, many requests to those government departments - the Department of Health is one I remember - have gone unanswered. Those lands still have a high level of fuel and, given similar circumstances to those that existed in January, could cause significant problems to the people of the Lake Macquarie area.

After inspecting the Boolaroo fire control centre we travelled to Mount Sugarloaf, where we were able to look across the entire Lake Macquarie and Newcastle area. This enabled us to see how far the fires had extended from the west, across the lake towards the eastern seaboard. We then travelled south down the F3 freeway to the office of State Forests at Morisset and there we met with personnel. Firefighting co-ordination for fighting fires from the Hawkesbury to the northern Hunter region was explained. I should like to thank Bob Hatton, the regional commander of the Department of Bushfire Services; Steve Sowter, the Lake Macquarie fire control officer; Peter Smith, the Lake Macquarie

Page 445

emergency controller and district officer of New South Wales Fire Brigades; John Craige, the regional commander of New South Wales Fire Brigades; Doug Crotty, the zone commander; Bob Tait from the New South Wales Fire Brigade Employees Union; and Steve Shaw from State Forests, for their efforts on 24 January in briefing us and bringing us up to date on what happened during the early weeks of January. In relation to education and training the Governor said:

My Government is concentrating on schools as the centre of the public education system.

He then spoke about capital and maintenance expenditure, about which my constituents have some concern. For many years residents at Bonnells Bay have been pushing for a new school. After much harassment by the local community and representations from the former member for Lake Macquarie, Merv Hunter, the Government announced allocation of funds for the building of Bonnells Bay school. That school has now been completed and I invite the Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs to visit my electorate in the near future to perform the official opening ceremony. I congratulate the Government on construction of the new school.

Last year funds were allocated for the planning stages of the new Barnsley school to be built on a new site. The existing school is an unsatisfactory collection of about 11 demountables on a site prone to flooding. It is time that the area had a new school and I ask the Minister to ensure that extra funds are allocated in the coming budget for its construction over the next 12 months. A more pressing problem is at the Rathmines Primary School, which has more than 400 students but only three permanent classrooms. The rest of the school is comprised of 16 demountable buildings. At one stage last year a class had to be held on the assembly hall stage because of lack of space. One parent wrote to me last year as follows:

The area is growing by the day and with the sewerage coming through and another estate on the way, the school is only going to get bigger. It really is disgusting that the school has reached this size with no permanent classrooms in sight.

Two weeks ago, following persistent lobbying by myself and the local community, the Minister for Education announced she had allocated funds for the planning stage for a new school at Rathmines. I commend her on that decision but point out that she gave no guarantee that funding for construction of the school will be forthcoming. On Monday I attended Rathmines school for the induction of student office-bearers. While there I spoke to a number of parents, staff and students. They were all concerned that funding is allocated in the next Budget for a new school to be commenced on the existing site. I commend the Minister on her announcement of funding for planning, but funding should be allocated for construction of the school.

About three weeks ago I was called to Rathmines school by concerned parents and the Rathmines Progress Association. They were worried about the safety of students of a morning and afternoon on the roadways around the school, particularly Rosemary Row, which is very narrow. Buses and many cars pick up students in the afternoons. No adequate bus bays or parking areas have been provided. In attendance at the meeting were Councillor Alan Hunter, Councillor Lorre Manning and David Pavey of Lake Macquarie City Council. We heard the parents' complaints. I raise these issues in the hope that, as the planning of the new school progresses, safety problems can be addressed.

A bus bay needs to be provided for students arriving at and departing from the school. Parking is needed for parents to collect their children in the afternoons. A number of other safety measures such as kerbing and guttering and concrete footpaths will ensure the safety of children attending that school. I bring that matter to the attention of the Minister and ask that it be taken into consideration when the planning of the school commences. Cleaning hours at schools in the Lake Macquarie electorate have been cut with privatisation of the Government Cleaning Service. The *Newcastle Herald* of 1 February 1994 carried an article headed "Cleaners warn of fall in hygiene standard":

Hygiene standards in schools would fall after cleaning hours were cut by the Department of School Education's new contract cleaning service, a spokesman for the cleaners' union has warned.

The article reports that the principal of a school in my electorate, Mr Brian Collins, said his school's cleaning hours had been reduced by two-thirds in the past six years. The article continued:

"You turn up to school and you are confronted with the cleaner who says we have got this cut in job hours," Mr Collins said.

"Six years ago the school had 133 cleaning hours a week," he said.

This was cut to 99 hours, then to 60.

This week's cut would reduce the cleaning to 42.5 hours per week.

"We are looking at a 30 per cent cut in cleaning hours and I just feel that certainly wasn't the scenario (when the issue was raised last year)," Mr Collins said.

"People could legitimately ask, 'Where is the bottom line?'"

I quote another article in the *Newcastle Herald* of 3 February 1994, entitled "Asthma worry over school cleaning cuts":

The principal of Toronto Public School, Mr Norm Lilley, said yesterday that he is particularly concerned for the many students with asthma problems, worsened by a build-up of dust.

Because one cleaner was required to clean what it had previously taken three cleaners 78 hours to do each week, Mr Lilley feared that school hygiene levels would fall.

'(The cleaner) is going to put herself in her grave: she's trying to do what she used to do in 48 hours in 32,' Mr Lilley said.

Six years ago three government cleaners were given 78 hours a week to clean the school.

This dwindled to 48 hours, but when contract cleaning company Tempo Cleaning Services took over from the Government Cleaning Service on Saturday, the hours were cut again to 32 a week.

Page 446

One cleaner now has six hours and 20 minutes each day to clean 11 classrooms, two toilet blocks, a library, administration block, teacher resource room, computer room, early intervention centre, teacher's residence, the footpaths, quadrangle and carparks.

The survey I have conducted of schools in the Lake Macquarie electorate has produced startling figures on the cut in school cleaning hours. At Lake Macquarie High School approximately 18 hours per week have been cut. Wallsend High School has seen a cut of 40 hours; at Awaba 1.5 hours per week have been cut; at Barnsley, six hours per week have been cut; at Biddibah eight hours will be cut when the cleaner is relocated to another school in the near future; at Biraban 5.5 hours have been cut; at Blackalls Park 2.5 hours per week have been cut; Fassifern has had a three-hour cut in cleaning; Fennell Bay has had an estimated 18 hours cut from the school's cleaning; Toronto Primary School has had a 16-hour cut; cleaning at West Wallsend has been cut by 16 hours; and at Wyee, when the cleaner leaves this term there will be a cut of five hours. Contrary to what the Minister said previously in Parliament, the standard of cleanliness cannot be maintained with these cuts. Despite the Minister's assertions to the contrary, I do not believe the cleanliness of these schools can be maintained. I have received a letter from cleaners at one of the schools. They asked me to look into the matter for them. They stated in their letter:

The lessening of hours in the school is making it difficult to maintain past standards of cleaning. It should be noted that under new contractors, Tempo Cleaning Service, cuts have been made amounting to 17½ hours per week over the 4.5 cleaners.

The Lake Macquarie community, principals, cleaners, parents and students are concerned that these cuts to cleaning hours will translate into schools not being adequately cleaned. The Governor in his Speech mentioned how the TAFE HSC pathway would equip year 11 and 12 students with skills for entry into further vocational education and training and that it would enable them to continue their education and training at a TAFE college or university. This is very important for the people of the western side of Lake Macquarie. No TAFE college exists between Wyong and Glendale. For students in those areas to have easy access to a TAFE college, land should be set aside now so that such a college can be built.

I call on the Government to look at this problem. I ask the Minister for Education to look at it closely. The Minister, who lives in the Lake Macquarie electorate, is familiar with the area. It is time that a tertiary education facility such as a TAFE college was established on the western side of Lake Macquarie. Information given to me from the Hunter Institute of Technology is that a total of 2,371 students are enrolled in TAFE programs in the Lake Macquarie electorate. Under the heading "Employment and Economic Development" the Governor referred to the Tourism Commission being granted extra money to stimulate growth in domestic and international tourism to New South Wales. Further in his Speech he referred to the Olympics and the support through the International Sporting Events Council for a number of major sporting competitions in 1994. That support has been given. By combining the issues of tourism growth and the Olympics, Lake Macquarie can capitalise on the year 2000 Olympics.

My electorate contains the largest lake in the Southern Hemisphere, a lake which is surrounded by 170 kilometres of foreshore and which is only an hour and a half in travelling time from Sydney. I propose that the Government assist Lake Macquarie City Council in promoting an international sailing regatta to be held on the lake each September - in Spring, the same time of the year as the Olympic Games will be held. The regatta could be held from 1996 through to the year 2000 and would provide many international competitors with the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the conditions that exist in Australia, not too far from Sydney Harbour, where Olympic sailing will take place.

Another proposal which Lake Macquarie City Council should consider, with the assistance of the State Government of course, is the rehabilitation of Munibung Hill. Munibung Hill is a major land mass behind the suburbs of Speers Point, Warners Bay, Macquarie Hills and Argenton. It is a denuded hill which needs upgrading and rehabilitation. I propose that Lake Macquarie City Council, together with the State Government, consider improving that area, working in co-operation with private landowners such as Pasminco Metal Sulphide, the company which operates the lead smelter in the area. The area can be greened and the tourist potential for the site can be used, linked with the international sailing regatta. [Time expired.]

Mr ROGAN (East Hills) [9.34]: I am delighted to join with my colleagues in speaking on the Address-in-Reply debate. I refer particularly to the Governor's Speech. Much comment has been made about the manner in which the Governor, Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair, has carried out his duties. I do not intend to add much to what has been said, particularly now that the Premier has announced a 12-month extension of the Governor's term of office, which was due to conclude in August this year. I join with the Leader of the Opposition in criticising the appalling speculation that was allowed to develop in the community following selected newspaper stories, deliberately planted - indeed, deliberately planted by the Government - to undermine or threaten the Governor in order to send the message by the Government that it wished the Governor to exercise his reserve powers to issue writs for an early election.

The Governor has visited many of the electorates of honourable members, and I trust those members were treated with much more courtesy and respect for their positions as members of this Parliament than I received when His Excellency visited my State electorate of East Hills. The Padstow public school parents and citizens association, which may not rank high on the Richter scale in this place, each year conducts an arts and crafts exhibition. This has been a longstanding tradition in the East Hills electorate. On 20 August 1993 the Governor joined the ranks of

other distinguished persons who have been invited to open the function, for example, persons such as Bill Collins and well known artists. Might I say, with all due humility, that I had the honour of opening this arts and crafts exhibition. I am not aware of the protocol on these matters, but I received no advice from the Governor's office that he would be attending. Indeed, during the course of the proceedings there was no acknowledgment of my presence and position, despite the fact that I made a special point of greeting the Governor and his wife when they arrived at this function. I tried to make them as welcome as one can make a person of his position. I have held office for more than 20 years, which makes me somewhat unique in this place.

Various groups in my electorate know that while I, as a member of Parliament, am custodian of the position as the member for East Hills, it will be held with the due respect the position calls for. When that position was not recognised, I told the Governor in a very polite way, through his equerry, that I was most unhappy that he had failed to recognise my presence and my position. I hope other members of Parliament have not experienced this discourtesy when the Governor has visited their electorates. I do not like to say this, but it prompted a thought in my mind that the treatment I received may have been because I am a Labor member of Parliament and not a coalition Government member. I would not wish this to be the case. However, that sort of gross discourtesy can only raise speculation in one's mind that this may have been the case.

I wish to direct some remarks to a reference in the Governor's Speech to the family. The Premier indicated in his announcements and in the speech he prepared for the Governor that his Government is committed to supporting and strengthening family life to ensure a better future for our children. The actions of the Government certainly do not fit the rhetoric, because the actions that have been carried out by the Government to undermine the family force one to question the sincerity of the Government's position. For example, 1,000 Department of Community Services staff have been sacked; 23 local welfare offices have been closed - a quarter of all Department of Community Services offices. Fifty per cent of the work of those offices was with abused children.

The positions of 77 child protection officers have been abolished and regional centres, which provided intensive services for abused children and their families, have been closed. I refer to areas such as Montrose, Burwood and similar centres in Newcastle and Wollongong. The staff of the child protection unit has been cut from nine to two. Police mistreatment units at Flemington, Wagga Wagga and Campbelltown have been closed. The Government has underspent its community services budget by \$170 million since 1988. It underspent its budget by \$11.2 million on child protection alone in its first three years, despite official figures showing child abuse notifications have increased from 17,500 to 26,700 between 1989-90 and 1992-93.

The Government has failed to reach agreement with the Commonwealth on child care funding to establish 3,500 centre-based long day care places, 9,840 outside school hours care places and 3,500 family day care places. That is the appalling record of a government that professes to support the family. The services to which I have just referred are supposed to assist families in greatest need. Families in New South Wales are the highest taxed in Australia. Under this Government they are paying \$1,600 more each year for water, rail fares, TAFE and school fees. In 1994 average household water bills were 82 per cent higher than they were in 1988. Annual increases in rail charges have outstripped the consumer price index. I could speak at length about the attack on families by this Government. This Government has reduced services provided to families and increased taxes and charges.

I wish now to refer to a statement in the Governor's Speech that deals with the national grid. As shadow minister for minerals and energy, I wish to make a few comments about the national grid. Prior to the elections in 1991 the Opposition put forward a proposal for a national grid - indeed, the proposal was put forward in 1989, well before it was on the national agenda and well before it was talked about by this Government. The Opposition supports the national grid proposal. We fully support an open, competitive market for electricity across State boundaries. We believe that a national grid would enable eastern States, particularly New South Wales, to capitalise on present electricity overcapacity. A

national grid would better co-ordinate the power supplies of the eastern States by establishing a database for load forecasting, costing and tariffs. It would enable greater economies of scale for transmission facilities and, if properly controlled, lead to a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. It would also create a competitive market for the distribution and sale of electricity between eastern States.

As I indicated earlier, Labor is committed to an open market and to the sale of electricity across State borders. I hope that legislation to be introduced by the Government will be part of our commitment to the national grid. Electricity transmission must be separated from electricity generation - a matter which would be fully supported by the Opposition. When this legislation is introduced it will receive the full support of the Opposition provided safeguards are included for current Pacific Power employees. A board, which is separate from Pacific Power, should be established to oversee these matters. I draw to the attention of the Minister concerns which have been raised - which I echo - in *Electricity Week*, an authoritative newsletter published for the electricity industry, dated 14 February this year. That newsletter, which warns that the Australian grid could ruin opportunities for demand management, states:

The National Grid Management Council is warning governments that opportunities for demand management could be inadvertently destroyed unless design of the southern and eastern Australian electricity market is carefully tailored. The warning comes in a long-overdue paper being prepared by the NGMC for consideration of the Council of Australian Governments.

Page 448

I hope any legislation introduced by the Government contains a provision to ensure that demand management and energy conservation measures are not overlooked and are given the priority they deserve. The Governor in his Speech mentioned minerals. I would like to deal specifically with the coal industry. All honourable members would be aware that, in recent times, this industry has been the subject of a national strike. Members of the United Mine Workers Union who were employed in the coal industry did not want to disrupt that industry. They did not go out on strike in pursuit of higher wages; they went out on strike because they could see that the industry was being jeopardised by the actions of coal companies intent on going to Japan and selling out the interests of this State by accepting coal prices that were far below the true value of that valuable commodity.

I remind honourable members that coal is this State's major export. Last year it represented an export income of \$3 billion for this State and \$6 billion nationally. The last set of figures I have available show that 14,458 people are employed in the coal industry. In 1992, 15,820 people were employed in the industry, but in June 1992 that figure was reduced by 1,362. Over the past 10 years productivity in the coal industry has increased by 80 per cent. This was owing to the co-operation of the work force and to investment by coal companies. Because of the importance of coal to this State and to this nation's economy I called for a national summit on 18 February to examine coal prices. I submitted - I am pleased that this has the support of the Queensland Minister for Minerals and Energy - that this summit should examine the need to review current practices adopted by Australian companies for the sale of coal.

I submitted that the summit also should examine the role of government; initiatives which could lead to a joint approach by major coal producing nations such as Australia, the United States of America and Canada, which collectively represent 88 per cent of the world's trade; the impact on Australia's coal reserves as a result of the closure of some mines and the subsequent sterilisation of coal reserves; the implication on both State and Federal economies if further price cuts are accepted by coal companies; and, most important, long-term employment prospects in the coal industry. I notice that the *Newcastle Herald*, which has a fairly even-handed approach to industrial matters, in an editorial of 5 March entitled "Coal price rage justified", stated:

The United Mine Workers Union is entitled to be angry about the negotiating tactics used by Japanese coal buyers. If the union demanded a \$500 a week pay increase for its members coal

companies would immediately emphatically reject the claim, yet the cuts of 8 per cent to 10 per cent in price and 10 per cent to 20 per cent in tonnage forced on Australian coal and coking coal exports by Japanese steel mills will cost companies the equivalent of such a pay rise for the 20,000 workers in the black coal industry. Put another way, the benefits of productivity gains made by the industry in the past decade have been gobbled by the Japanese companies unwilling to acknowledge that the people whose efforts produced the gains should share the rewards.

I also wrote to the New South Wales Minister and called on him to support the summit. Though I have not had a response from him, I am hopeful that in a bipartisan manner, and in a way of showing an interest in the industry, the Minister will join the call for a national coal summit. At this stage it would appear that the Federal Government and the States will join together to have the equivalent of a national summit: a special meeting with the Australian Coal Council, including industry, unions and governments.

The Governor in his Speech referred to the horrific bushfires that this State has suffered. On 23 January I made formal representations to the Minister for Police and Minister for Emergency Services seeking the establishment of a bush fire brigade in my electorate. My electorate is unique in that it is bordered on one half by the Georges River, and has a significant amount of bushland. Naturally, while the beauty of bushland is to be enjoyed, there is the ever-present risk of fire. For that reason I have asked the Minister to support the initiative of a local constituent, supported by a number of other people in my electorate, to establish a bush fire brigade that will uphold the great traditions of other bush fire brigades that performed such wonderful work during the recent bushfires. Bush fire brigades have done a magnificent job in the many years leading up to the recent bushfires. Members of this House who have bush fire brigades in their electorate would be well aware of that. I wish to refer now to transport and roads, and particularly to Davies Road, which is a major north-south arterial road through my electorate. I called for funds for that road in the last State Budget and will be calling for funding for it in the next State Budget.

Mr COCHRAN (Monaro) [9.54]: As have other members, I respond to the Governor's Speech with a great deal of pride. The Governor has visited my electorate; and despite the remarks of the previous speaker I was delighted that the Governor was able to be there. The Governor certainly carried out his duties with great dignity and showed his tremendous capabilities. I was delighted by the announcement on Monday that the Governor was to be reappointed. I commend the Premier for his wisdom in choosing to reappoint the Governor for another 12 months. During the past six years I have seen my electorate go through a process of transition and economic recession - depression, if you like - which has caused a great deal of heartache and anxiety to the people in my electorate.

In his Speech the Governor referred to the state of the New South Wales economy. I am bound to say that without the good management of the Government, initially the Greiner-Murray Government and now the Fahey-Armstrong Government, we would not be enjoying the progress many business houses have made, particularly in my electorate, under the threat of a recession. The person who imposed interest rates of 23 per cent on businesses in New South Wales, who imposed high inflation, who created Australia's \$180 billion to \$200 billion debt, and the person who created the situation where at one stage one million

Page 449

people were out of work - and in excess of 900,000 are still out of work - is now the Prime Minister of Australia. He should not be proud of that. The Prime Minister should be ashamed of the statement that it was "the recession we had to have". I admire the tenacity, courage and determination of people in my electorate who survived this recession, despite mismanagement by the Federal Government.

Health care is in tatters - no wonder, because of the way the Federal Government has mismanaged Medicare and the medical services of this nation in general. Private health insurance is expensive. Many people have opted out of private health insurance and have placed a further burden on Medicare and the national economy. Good, sensible, prudent management of this State has given many people an opportunity that they would not otherwise have enjoyed if the Unsworth Government had continued in

office after 1988.

Today the Premier spoke about the great advances in tourism. There is no question of that. Tourism is an industry of the future. In my electorate the rural industry is seeing an improvement in commodity prices. The industry has learnt to live with the ever-increasing cost of production, as it did in the 1890s, 1930s and 1950s. Rural producers are prepared to cut their cloth to suit circumstances. They will throw the cheque-book into the bottom drawer and be willing to sweat it out once again to support the government of the day.

The fishing industry in Eden has gone through a period of revival and, in conjunction with the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, is putting together property rights legislation to protect their resource. Since I have represented the Monaro area fishermen have shown a great willingness to address the problems of resource security in their industry. There is a wide recognition that the fishing resource is not an infinite resource but a finite resource. That resource must be protected. Everyone in the industry, from the fishermen to those involved in the transport industry and the Fish Marketing Authority, has to play a part in protecting the future of the fishing industry.

Little needs to be said again about the great courage and tenacity of people in the southeast forests who have survived despite the protestations, the bitter attacks, the sabotage and the industrial problems caused within their industry by the deep greens and extreme elements of the green movement. And they will continue to survive. I am pleased to predict that resource security legislation will be introduced into this House. It will provide people in the industry with the level of security and future that they certainly deserve. The forest industry has been through a management revolution, of which it can be truly proud. Twenty years ago the management practices of the forest industry were certainly in need of attention. The Forestry Commission, as it then was, recognised that need and adjusted its practices. The industry is now subjected to the most stringent conditions of any forestry operation in the world. The model the industry set has been adopted by other forestry industries throughout the world. The industry has been acknowledged as conducting its operations in a way that is most sympathetic to the environment.

Officers of State Forests, especially those who work long hours, deserve credit. I refer particularly to people such as Phil Clements of Bombala, the manager of forestry in that region. I know that he gives more than 40 hours a week, probably closer to 60 hours. For much of that time he does not undertake proactive work on behalf of the industry but is responding to claims made by the extreme greens and involving himself in environmental impact studies. A good deal of his work is irrelevant to the procedure for the management of the forests. Nevertheless he persists and, as with those engaged in the industry in the southeast forests, is prepared to play the game, provided he has security of forestry resources and is guaranteed a future. People have adopted and adapted to the various forms of management plans that have been introduced into the industry. They are willing to cut the coat according to the cloth.

I should say a little more about the tourist industry. In addition to the announcement made by the Premier today, the Minister for Tourism has conducted a magnificent campaign to promote tourism in New South Wales. In the southeast, especially in the Monaro electorate, enormous opportunities are available for the development of tourism. However, development should not occur at the expense of residents and those who wish to enjoy a simple, quiet lifestyle. Their interests must be kept in mind when consideration is given to the development of the tourist industry.

When one travels through the Snowy Mountains one enjoys the magnificent views, clear water, fresh air, and the developing road system. One can visit the ski fields and waterways and then travel down the coast to places such as Eden and Pambula, which have some of the most superb golf courses and recreational and fishing areas in the State, and magnificent views across Twofold Bay. From the north of the electorate up to the mountains, through Adaminaby, one goes into the high country with its open air and beautiful watercourses. The electorate has much to be enjoyed by international travellers, particularly those who seek to get away from the overpopulated parts of Europe and America and to enjoy nature's best. I believe the Snowy Mountains has that to offer.

The state of the economy depends on the retail sector as well as the tourist industry. In the main street of Queanbeyan, Monaro Street, across the bridge heading towards Cooma, on the left-hand side of the road almost every shop is vacant. That is the result of the recession. But people are fighting back. The retail sector is developing. Those who prudently managed their businesses have adjusted to the times and are making progress. Queanbeyan provides great opportunities. The economy of the city is underpinned by the most affluent city in Australia, the national capital.

People throughout Australia acknowledge that Queanbeyan is a city of the future. The Jerrabomberra Estate has 1,500 building blocks. A

Page 450

new school will be constructed on the estate in the near future. The developing high schools of Karabar and Queanbeyan now offer a curriculum that is attracting people from across the border with the Australian Capital Territory, where it is claimed there is an advanced style of education. I predicted three years ago that Queanbeyan high schools would develop to the stage where they attracted students from across the ACT border. That is happening now. The retail section has suffered as a result of the recession but, as I said, is fighting back and seems to have a brighter future.

The effect of the economy on families is easing. Home loan interest rates have been reduced for people who were struggling to hold on to their family homes two years ago. They have adjusted to meet the existing circumstances. Many people lost their homes but others have struggled on with that great Australian spirit, which is alive and well in the Monaro electorate. I admire those people greatly. Car maintenance costs have a profound effect upon families. Many families are finding it exceedingly difficult to maintain the family car. Every time another few cents are added to the cost of fuel, the cost of running the family car and registration, there is an effect on the average family. They should be given consideration, not because they are voters, but because they are average family people struggling to make a quid and survive. The maintenance of the family car is a fundamental matter. Monaro is looking good. It has potential and is beginning to struggle out of the recession. I am confident that the resilience of the people there will help them to emerge from the recession in fine style. They have something to look forward to.

The Olympic bid was a great success. All credit for that success should go to Bruce Baird, John Fahey, Rod McGeoch and everyone else involved. I congratulate all of them. All Australians will be the beneficiaries of their efforts, as will successive generations. I strongly commend the honourable member for Murray, Jim Small. I am not aware of any other individual who made such a magnificent effort to promote the Olympic Games in such an inimitable way. Jim Small rode his bike more than 2,000 kilometres around the electorate, visited almost every school and promoted the concept and spirit of the Olympic Games. That was a superb, outstanding singular effort by one person. It encapsulated the spirit behind the Olympic bid. The House should pay tribute to him for his efforts.

Jim Small not only rode his bike around his electorate, but he also rode it to Sydney. I joined him for part of his journey. I assure honourable members that so long as I live I will never again travel more than 25 kilometres on a pushbike. Jim Small had the courage, dedication and commitment to make that trip and I respect him for it. Much remains to be done between now and the year 2000. It is time people started to identify the issues that will benefit people in the year 2000 and future generations, together with the work that must be done for the staging of the Olympic Games. I refer to things such as taking advantage of the languages other than English program. We should begin to prepare our children, who will be the hosts for the Olympic Games, so that they will be able to speak languages other than English. The infrastructure must be developed now. We must identify the languages that will have to be used on signs and in other respects.

The people of New South Wales must begin to develop a sense of courtesy so that international visitors to the Olympic Games will be treated with the highest degree of respect and dignity and will leave Australia's shores with an enthusiasm and willingness to return. The presentation of the Olympic Games

must be given considerable thought. These must be Australian Olympics, not a copy of what has happened elsewhere. They need to be individually Australian, representative of the Australian people. The Aboriginal people should be given every opportunity to show their pride in and understanding of Australia's countryside. The follow-up that must occur after the Olympic Games will have to be planned now, so that it will benefit future generations.

The lead-up to the Olympic Games has done a great deal to promote regional development. I am pleased that the Minister for Small Business and Minister for Regional Development is present in the Chamber. I am aware that a strategic planning paper has been prepared in draft form. I look forward to its presentation to assist members to identify the opportunities in country areas and to produce tangible support for those who want to consolidate existing industries and develop new industries in country regions of New South Wales.

The drain on Sydney's environment has reached the stage where its people will have to consider a population cap, some sort of development restrictions, because its waterways, beaches and air are being polluted. Sydneysiders make a terrible mess of their environment, yet they spend much of the time in country areas criticising people there. They should look after their own backyards first. The Olympic Games will provide New South Wales with a great opportunity to develop its outlying regions, and I look forward to the support and the assistance of the Minister for Small Business and Minister for Regional Development in that aspect.

I wish to mention a few other matters in relation to health and area health boards. The efforts of hospital board representatives of the community in my area have been beyond the call of duty. I pay tribute to Hope Marland of Queanbeyan, one of the greatest community workers I have known, who has made an enormous contribution to the area health board. I ask the Minister for Small Business and Minister for Regional Development to inform the Minister for Health that Queanbeyan does not have a full-time ambulance station. It is desperately in need of one. It must be the only town with a population of 28,000 that does not have a permanent ambulance station. That is an absolute disgrace and it is about time something was done about it.

Page 451

I pay tribute to the firefighters who were engaged in fighting the Sydney fires over Christmas and January. As a former fire control officer for the Cooma-Monaro shire, I know the pain and anguish of the families involved and the desperate tiredness that firefighters feel after fighting fires for several days. Their bravery, courage, discipline and professionalism will long be remembered by Sydneysiders, but it is something that the people in the New South Wales bush have taken for granted for generations.

Mr SULLIVAN (Wollongong) [10.14]: I endorse the comments made earlier by my colleague the honourable member for East Hills about the courtesy extended to members by the Governor. I do not criticise the Governor, because I feel the problem lies with his aides who have a blinkered view of the way they should be performing their task. I apply those comments also to a number of Ministers who, notwithstanding protocol, visit electorates without notifying local members. That is a gross discourtesy not only to the local members but also to the constituents of those electorates, but I will say no more on that matter. I will restrict my contribution to the comments made by the Governor when he spoke about the environment, and particularly the State Government's aim for the environment. On page 13 the Governor said:

The environmental policy of my Government rests upon a balanced approach towards the environmental protection and economic development of the State. Its various programs recognise the need for greater certainty, predictability, flexibility and innovation, as well as the need to work closely with industry and in partnership with the community.

On its face I guess that is a worthy objective and I shall relate it to an instance that occurred in the

Illawarra. I also refer to page 17 under the heading "Transport," where the Governor said:

Completion of the Government's Integrated Transport Strategy will provide the framework for regional transport strategies for Central Sydney and the Lower Hunter.

My question is, what has happened to the Illawarra? Let us look at the situation that applied in the Illawarra when the Port Kembla coal loader sought expansion, and eventually after a commission of inquiry, was granted approval. The Port Kembla coal loader, the one constructed by the State Government and known as the first loader or the No. 1 berth, if you like, commenced operation in 1964. It had a 2 million tonne capacity per annum and in the 1970s it was upgraded to 7.2 million tonnes per annum. A second loader, sometimes referred to as No. 2 berth, was constructed and commenced operations in 1981. It had a 14 million tonnes per annum capacity.

The first loader, No. 1 berth, was reserved for coke and other materials. Of the 14 million tonnes per annum, 12 million tonnes were to come by rail and 2 million tonnes by road. It was anticipated that it would be expanded to 20 million tonnes per annum at some stage in the future. Between 1981 and 1990 road haulage was allowed to increase from the original 2 million tonnes per annum maximum to 6 million tonnes per annum maximum. Since 1990, with handling and other improvements, the consortium that took control of the loader - whom I will refer to later - had the capacity of the loader lifted to 15.5 million tonnes.

The consortium that currently runs the coal loader comprises Austen and Butta Limited, Australian Iron and Steel Pty Limited, Clutha Services Pty Limited, Kembla Coal and Coke Pty Limited, Metropolitan Collieries Limited, Denehurst, and Oakbridge Limited. The collieries served by this coal loader are quite extensive. They comprise: in the southern coal fields, South Bulli, Metropolitan, BHP Collieries, Wongawilli/Elouera, Appin, Tower, Cordeaux, Westcliff and Tahmoor; in the Burragorang Valley, Brimstone, Nattai and Oakdale; and in the western coalfields, Baal Bone, Clarence, Charbon, Western Main, Invincible and Canyon. All of these collieries covering the western and southern coal fields provide coal that passes through the Port Kembla coal loader.

The fundamental problem with the coal loader is road haulage. State Environmental Planning Policy 7 limits road delivery hours of coal to between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday to Friday - with exemptions on public holidays - and limits road receipt to an effective 300 days per year. However, there was an exception, which local residents find to be more the norm than the exception, that where exceptional circumstances exist the Minister may approve of a differentiation of these hours and days. Frequently, coal is delivered at any hour of the day or night and on any day of the week.

The expansion of the coal loader began in December 1992 when the Port Kembla coal terminal submitted a development application and an environmental impact statement to Wollongong city council. In March 1993 Wollongong city council released a development and planning committee report which recommended conditions of consent for the development application. These conditions were that the amount of coal to be transported by road was restricted to 1.5 million tonnes per annum in the first year after consent and 1 million tonnes thereafter. This compares with the existing 6 million tonnes per annum transported by road which was forecast in the EIS to increase to 6.3 million tonnes per annum by 1996-97.

The second condition was the withholding of consent of the proposal until council had negotiated an agreement with BHP Collieries committing them to complete the O'Brien's Drift upgrade. The third condition was the requirement that Port Kembla coal terminal take over ownership of Port Kembla Road and responsibility for the possible construction of a cycleway crossing of that road. That basically set the scene. As a consequence, Port Kembla consortium thought that these foreshadowed conditions were too onerous and subsequently withdrew the DA prior to consent being given. Subsequently the DA and an EIS were resubmitted under SEPP 34, which deals with major employment generating industry development, to the State Government. The

Department of Planning notified Port Kembla coal terminal that additional matters should be considered. In June 1993 the Minister for Planning directed that an inquiry be held to consider, "The environmental aspects of any development application covering the upgrading of the Port Kembla coal terminal". That is important. Further matters to be considered by the inquiry can be summarised, and I shall refer to page 11 of the report of the commission of inquiry, which states:

The effect on haulage of coal resulting from any reduction in capacity of the South Bulli mine;

The effect on road haulage of coal of the O'Briens Drift upgrade being delayed or not proceeding;

In fact it is not proceeding. The report continues:

The implications of any changes in the transport mix for coal being transported between mines and the terminal;

The capacity of the rail network to handle increased traffic and identification of the need for any upgrading.

The response to the call for submissions that came through to the inquiry was quite clear. I shall summarise and quote from page 16 of the report of the commission of inquiry. The Environment Protection Authority noted:

The need to adopt a total rail option for the transportation of coal from the Burragorang Valley, and doubt as to the Applicant's claim that total road haulage by rail is not possible due to lacks in rail infrastructure.

When one refers to the Office of Economic Development the report states:

The Office of Economic Development supports the minimisation of road haulage of coal . . .

The New South Wales Police Service made a submission and listed the following problems with road haulage:

The problem of trucks queuing on Port Kembla Road whilst waiting to discharge their loads at the terminal. This queuing of coal trucks creates hazards for other road users and should be avoided;

The Service approves the use of B-doubles on safety and noise reduction grounds but is concerned that Wollongong Council has not given approval for B-doubles to be used on Port Kembla Road;

The level of motor vehicle accidents associated with trucks, especially those entering the F6 Freeway; and

The potential increase in the number of coal trucks on public roads.

The Water Board made the following comments:

The Water Board is concerned at the impact of coal haulage by road on employees of the Wollongong Sewerage Treatment Plant, with respect to safety, inconvenience and dust.

Camden Council expressed concern that there should not be an increase in the level of coal hauled by road through Camden. Wollondilly Council emphasised the negative environmental, social and economic impact of road haulage of coal along Barkers Lodge Road and through Picton Town Centre.

Wollongong Council is clearly opposed to coal transported by road and wishes to put a limit on it. The Consumers Transport Council states:

The Consumers' Transport Council raise concern regarding the ongoing trucking of coal down the Mt Ousley Road with associated noise, air, pollution, road crash risk and negative impacts on tourism, property values and any proposal to broaden the economic base of Wollongong City.

Healthy Cities Illawarra submitted as follows:

Healthy Cities Illawarra is particularly concerned with the adverse social and environmental impacts of road-hauled coal and requests that no further increase in road haulage . . . be allowed.

The submission from the Illawarra Retirement Trust states:

The Trust objects to any development which might increase the level of road hauled coal.

The report quotes the South Coast Conservation Society as saying:

The Society raises concerns over increased road haulage of coal and noise from road transport. It submits that rail solutions such as the Maldon Dombarton line should be investigated.

The South Coast Labor Council argues for a balanced solution to meet industry objectives, environmental needs and community concerns. Also, I have a ten-page list of residents within close proximity of the F6 and Masters Road who wrote to me to express their objection to the proposal but I do not have the time to read out their names. On their behalf I wrote to the commissioner of the inquiry, and what was his response? He said, "No restrictions on road haulage despite representations". That summarises his stance. I wish to refer to issues of concern to many people and organisations. I have yet to find one person or organisation that objects to the expansion of the coal loader. They are objecting to the expansion or the continuing level of road haulage of coal.

A number of reports on noise pollution have been prepared out in the Illawarra area. These include "Noise Study of Coal Haulage Routes in the Illawarra" by P. Loveday, 1984, dealing with problems of noise pollution; "Wollongong and Port Kembla Pollution Control Study," produced by the State Pollution Control Commission in 1986, dealing with noise pollution from road use; "Report on Noise Surveys Conducted at 41 Phillips Crescent, Mangerton for Mr and Mrs T. J. Brodie," by Associate Professor R. T. Wheway in 1990; and a "Traffic Noise Study" prepared in 1992 by Healthy Cities Illawarra and the Environment Protection Authority.

The reports conclude that certain readings show that a higher level of noise pollution in the Illawarra along the F6 and Masters Road has been recorded than anywhere in Sydney; that the goals of the World Health Organisation are exceeded, in some cases by significant amounts; and that the goals of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development of 30 to 35 dBA at nighttime and 40 to 45 dBA for daytime are significantly exceeded. Bob Wheway in his report states, "The occupiers of 41 Phillips Crescent, Mangerton are subject to high noise levels". Anyone who is acquainted with Bob Wheway could not accuse him of being excitable or likely to exaggerate. The report of Healthy Cities Illawarra concludes:

Page 453

The 1992 Healthy Cities Illawarra EPA Traffic Noise Study has revealed that road traffic noise levels on the major arteries in the area are very high.

In view of the fact that existing road noise impact is greater than rail noise impact, there is some benefit in relocating freight and coal transportation from road to rail.

Additional strategy of encouraging the erection of noise barriers adjacent to noisy roads is likely to result in greater overall noise benefits. A cursory analysis of Mt Ousley Road, F6 Freeway, and Masters Road indicates that such barriers would be practicable and would provide significant noise level reductions.

Yet, notwithstanding all that, the commissioner of inquiry in his report of December 1993 did not make any recommendation about noise barriers or relocating coal transportation from road to rail. Why should the decision of the commission of inquiry be criticised? First, because it clearly ignored a fundamental environmental problem in the Illawarra. Second, the State Rail Authority stated to the inquiry that it could move 20 million tonnes per annum of coal to Port Kembla coal terminal. The SRA says it can move all coal that is to be shifted. Third, government policy on the transportation of coal is being ignored. I shall quote from page 36 of the report of the commission of inquiry, which states:

Government Policy on Transport of Coal . . . to make effective use of substantial existing rail infrastructure and related port investment, and

to minimise environmental impacts on the community, given that, unlike many other countries and states, New South Wales coal is required to travel through urban areas to reach ports.

A further ground for criticism is that the decision rejected the RTA request that the developer pay section 94 levies for road improvements, that is, sound barriers and maintenance. Commissioner Carleton made a decision that makes transport as cheap as possible for coalmine and road transport operators. The people of the Illawarra will suffer, especially those who live along Mount Ousley Road, the F6 and Masters Road. The whole exercise is most disappointing, questioning as it does the need for the commission of inquiry. The Illawarra is the only area in New South Wales where coal is transported by truck in such volumes through urban areas. In the western coalfields all the mines have been told they have to get their coal on to rail. In the Hunter Valley all coalmines have been told they have to get their coal on to rail. In each case that has been done. One exception where that has not been done has been in the Illawarra. Road transportation of coal will reach 6.3 million tonnes per annum. If it grows like Topsy as it has in the past, half the coal going to the Port Kembla coal loader will go by road. That would be 10 million tonnes per annum. The Government has to address that unsatisfactory situation if it is to live up to the statement made in the Governor's address:

The environment policy of my Government rests upon a balanced approach towards environmental protection and the economic development of the State.

No balanced approach is being taken in the Illawarra; whatever comes out of any development must be accepted. Residents and the environment are not afforded any protection. The Minister should intervene in this most deplorable situation.

Mr KINROSS (Gordon) [10.34]: I have much pleasure in contributing once again to the Address-in-Reply debate. I wish to comment on the Governor's outline of the Government's program in this final year leading up to the election in March next year. As I said last year in the Address-in-Reply debate, His Excellency's Speech was of excellent quality, following his speech on Australia Day at Darling Harbour where thousands of people gathered to hear him. The politicisation by the Labor Party of the Governor's term is most unfortunate. It is a great hypocrisy that Labor members should comment how wonderful it is that the Governor has been given a further term - members on this side of the House agree with that decision - but also push Labor's policy for a republic and other similar issues. During His Excellency's Speech last year there were several interjections. Less courtesy was displayed than befitted the Governor's standing in this community and the respect with which so many people regard him.

I turn to the specific issues addressed by the Governor, which could be summed up in the theme

"The community and the Government working together". I shall return to that theme when I comment on the good work of the catchment management committees on land and water conservation generally, but especially in the Gordon electorate. That theme was picked up last night in the foyer of Parliament House at the launch of the total catchment management system by the Hon. George Souris. The Governor referred to the most important International Year of the Family and the role played by community services. We should always be aware of working towards improving services for families, in particular during this recession that we were told by Paul Keating we had to have. Services are needed all the more to deal with rapid social and economic changes in a modern society.

Governments have to provide a level of services to cater for a community's demanding needs. The 1994 International Year of the Family will provide an excellent opportunity to focus on the importance of the family in the Australian community and to take stock and realise how many measures must be addressed to further those ends. A community group in my electorate has done a very good job with what is called the Gordon recession program and what is now known as the Gordon Career Transition Centre. Indeed, the Leader of the Opposition, though he did not notify me he was coming, visited my electorate and that centre.

The Gordon Career Transition Centre is doing an excellent job trying to assist those who have been unemployed for some time to get back on their feet, with confidence-instilling measures and offering and suggesting different approaches to better enable them to return to the work force. That body is holding a series of seminars in March, a couple of which I have already attended. They are working to promote within the community a much better understanding of some of the problems faced by the unemployed. According to a recent survey, residents of the Gordon electorate have fairly high disposable incomes. Those who lose their jobs do not think first of welfare.

Page 454

They attempt to sustain their standard of living from their own resources. That creates difficulty after a job loss. The sad fact is that many middle-aged people are losing their jobs. Similar difficulties have been experienced in the finance sector and by those in the computer industry. New South Wales continues to lead Australia in its approach to and its responsibilities for older people. Late last year on behalf of the Minister for Transport and Minister for Roads I launched a seniors stepping-out program designed to make people more aware of their responsibilities for older people on the roads. Younger people need to be on the lookout for older people crossing roads. Sadly, most pedestrian accidents occur with the elderly.

In relation to education and training, I am pleased to report that once again schools in my electorate performed very well. A number of the high schools in my area performed as well as the private schools. Pymble Ladies College produced the top student in New South Wales for the year. Turramurra also produced one of the top male students - at least in the top 100 - Mr David Sharma. Altogether, six schools in my electorate produced 60 students out of the top 100 schools in New South Wales, which is a commendable achievement. Pymble Ladies College was fourth in the State, producing 26 students; Ravenswood twenty-fifth, with 10 students; Masada College twentieth-sixth with nine students; St Ives High School forty-first, with seven students; Killara High School fiftieth, with five students; and Turramurra ninetyeth, with three students.

There can be no doubt that schools in my electorate and on the North Shore generally - because those high schools draw from far beyond the electorate of Gordon - performed as well as the best of private schools in this State. That is a great acknowledgment of the efforts of this Government in trying to encourage excellence, promote quality of teaching and provide sufficient resources to a number of those high schools. There is a move towards some sort of specialisation or emphasis in some of those schools. Turramurra will concentrate on technology and industry, Killara High School will concentrate on the arts and music, and St Ives High School will emphasise languages. That is a great achievement.

Killara primary school received some attention in last Sunday's *Sun-Herald*. I say openly to the residents who have expressed some concern that I have no tolerance for racism, as is the case with most other members. It is anathema to the Australian way of life in a multicultural society to show racism of the type I have heard surrounding a proposal to build a cultural centre at Killara primary school, situated towards the end of Spencer Road, Killara. The proposal has a lot of merit. The honourable member for Monaro spoke earlier about the necessity for language schools. With this proposal, Australian students will be taught the Japanese language, along with some of their cultures. That will go a long way towards making Australia much more aware of its place and role in the world. For too long we have been a law unto ourselves, perhaps because Australia is an island. Australia and New South Wales will reach maturity when we realise that we have to interact with the wider world and that we are just a small blimp on an elephant.

Dealing with the Governor's comments about initiatives for women, I am pleased to support an active group in my electorate called Liberal Women Networking. Under the stewardship of Mrs Rhondra Vanzella, it is an active and rewarding group. I have had the benefit of attending a few of the group's functions and it continues to show every sign of growing from strength to strength. Recently the Liberal Party changed its preselection system not only by tapping into a wider grass roots level, but by changing its preselection system for the upper House to provide that for every male preselector there will be a female preselector. That totally outstrips the mere lip-service which we have heard from the Labor Party about its initiatives for women. I am sure it is clear to the taxpayers of New South Wales that the Fahey-Armstrong Government has shown that there are some most competent women, as is reflected in the ministry today.

I now refer to employment and economic development. The Government knows it is making inroads when Wayne Goss says, "We have to make sure that New South Wales does not close the gap", because the Government is closing the gap. Queensland was only ahead thanks to many of the reforms and debt reduction measures adopted by the previous Bjelke-Petersen Government. New South Wales is growing stronger by the day. Last year the Treasurer announced that there had provisionally been a surplus for the five months to November 1993. No doubt that can only continue with the awarding of the Olympic Games to Sydney. This, as many honourable members have suggested, has ignited the spirit that lies within us all, a spirit that was picked up recently in the bushfire crisis that substantially affected my electorate. I shall return to that later.

The budget framework as set down clearly provides broader goals, not the quick fix that we always heard in those hard Labor years. We must realise that we have to set longer range targets to enable proper reform, especially public sector reform, to be achieved. The government trading enterprises show how the reforms will continue to improve the quality of efficiency and service provided to the customer. Dealing with police and emergency services, I am pleased that at last a new police station will be opened at Gordon on 24 March. I will attend that opening with the Minister for Police and Minister for Emergency Services. That new police station is long overdue. For many years the police station for the whole of my electorate was housed in a 1920s or 1930s style federation home, on the left as one heads north on the Pacific Highway. It was totally inadequate to service the growing needs of my electorate, and indeed the North Shore generally.

In the portfolio of emergency services, I was pleased to see the Minister in my electorate at the time the fires broke out on Friday 7 January - who

Page 455

could ever forget it - and the excellent work that was carried out by volunteers across New South Wales generally, again picking up the spirit that lies within us all. I pay a personal tribute to all those volunteers who came from as far as Cootamundra. The coincidences that occurred in the many days that I attended with the firefighters was incredible. One volunteer who came from Cootamundra was a very good friend of my cousin. As a young child I regularly stayed on his property, just out of Gundagai. The effort of the firefighters was remarkable and thanks must go to all those volunteers. Indeed, a couple of weeks ago the Premier visited my electorate and made a presentation of a number of awards to those

volunteers and other key members of the community for the significant effort they made in the bushfire crisis.

In relation to the environment, it is trite to say that the electorate of Gordon has an environment to which many others aspire. Recently there has been an expansive role for the catchment committees in my electorate. I refer specifically to the good work undertaken by the Middle Harbour catchment committee under the chairmanship of Dr Harley Wright and the Lane Cove River catchment committee under the Deputy Mayor of Ryde Council, Mr Jim Hull, and Rosemary Turner, as co-ordinator. It must never be forgotten that those people work on a voluntary basis; they do not get paid for their services. They play an important part in the development and sustainability of the environment and ensure that Ku-ring-gai Council and surrounding electorates share and continue to share in the great environmental assets of the area. I would go so far as to say that my electorate and its environment are one of the seven wonders of New South Wales - to use the phrase used in this Government's tourism promotion campaign.

I turn now to deal with transport. Good work has been done in my electorate in upgrading Killara and Gordon railway stations. Undercover facilities have been provided for times of inclement weather. Another priority is the Pacific Highway. I realise that this is a difficult, long-term goal to which we have to aspire, because at the moment the Pacific Highway is a nightmare. When I travel from the north to come to Parliament House it is a battle for me to get to Parliament on time if I leave any later than 7.30 a.m. We have to examine further options. One of those options is Archbold Road, a secondary road in my electorate. Can this State Government continue to devolve responsibility to local councils to manage such programs, given the substantial delays on Archbold Road - a road which goes through Lindfield, Killara and St Ives? Are councils the appropriate body, as they sometimes have a parochial interest which clearly would not serve the interests of the people of New South Wales, and certainly not people in electorates far beyond Gordon?

Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Thompson.

House adjourned at 10.54 p.m.
