

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Wednesday, 25th March, 1992

---

**The President (The Hon. Max Frederick Willis)** took the chair at 2.30 p.m.

**The President** offered the Prayers.

### PETITIONS

#### Australia as a Republic

Petition praying that this House support the goal that Australia be an independent republic by the centenary of Federation, 1st January, 2001, received from the **Hon. Franca Arena**.

#### Forestry Commission

Petition praying that the Forestry Commission of New South Wales be reformed in accordance with the recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee and that the House urge the Government to act immediately for the good of our environmental heritage and the health of the plantation timber industry, received from the **Hon. R. S. L. Jones**.

#### Cat Desexing

Petition praying that because wildlife is threatened by predatory feral cats, and because unrestricted breeding of cats results in their destruction, starvation, injury and disease, there should be compulsory desexing of all domestic cats other than those with registered breeders, received from the **Hon. R. S. L. Jones**.

### PUBLIC HOSPITAL PRIVATISATION

#### Matter of Public Interest

**The Hon. ELISABETH KIRKBY** [2.38]: I move:

That the following important matter of public interest should be discussed forthwith:

The privatisation of public hospitals.

I wish to state my implacable opposition to the privatisation of public hospital services by the Greiner Government for the sake of short-term revenue savings. The Minister for Health and Community Services will be subjecting the people of Port Macquarie to an ideologically motivated experiment, an experiment that will commit them for 20 years, an experiment that will go ahead despite the opposition of about 70 per cent of the population of that area. Because of this experiment we are likely to see the creation of a two-tier health service; one for the well off and one for the poor. The experiment has

proved a disaster in America and will probably be a disaster here if it is allowed to go ahead. The Minister has been on record arguing that the privatisation of Hastings hospital is not a radical step; that it is simply an extension of the current involvement in  
Page 1810

the formation of certain services in public hospitals. For example at the moment the Illawarra regional hospital has a reciprocal agreement with the Illawarra Private Hospital for urology and obstetric services. The Minister insists that there have been no complaints about the quality of care and that what is proposed for Port Macquarie is an "amalgam" of this type of activity. This is extremely simplistic thinking by the Minister. For a start, we are not talking only about the privatisation of a small section of a public hospital's operation - whatever the merits of the involvement of the private system - we are talking about private sector involvement to a far greater degree than ever before.

The Government is proposing that the private sector build the new hospital, lease out the premises of the hospital and manage the hospital. Community health services will be handed over Health Care of Australia, including three community health care centres at Port Macquarie, Camden Haven and Wauchope, a living skills centre, four early childhood centres, a school dental clinic and sexual assault services. The private sector will have far greater control over the provision of public health sector services. I find it most disturbing that the Minister glossed over this fact and its implications. Honourable members must remember that the profit motive is supreme in the private sector. Traditionally the private sector has been unwilling to become involved in the social services sector as it has been more difficult to run these services at a profit and still perform community service functions. In the February 1990 issue of *Australian Society*, the then president of the Doctors Reform Society, Dr John Daniels, described what he called the uncontrollable cost situation in Australia's private hospitals. He said:

In private hospitals the inducement to over service is potent and logical. Illness becomes a commodity which produces dividends, so the higher the servicing the higher the profits to the hospital shareholders. To give a well known example, the rate of caesarean sections for births in private hospitals is double that amongst those not insured privately.

The Minister must come to terms with the financial consequences of his plans to save the short-term costs of setting up a public base hospital in the Hastings Valley. Private sector hospitals are businesses. The Hospital Corporation of America, which has links with the Hospital Corporation of Australia, was set up in part by a man famous for developing the Kentucky Fried Chicken chain. Indeed, in America its hospitals are sometimes referred to as Kentucky fried hospitals. I was disturbed to hear Dr Barry Catchlove concede recently on the "7.30 Report" that no profits would be made in the short-term provision of community health. However, he argued that it would be possible to devise methods of measuring the efficiency of the services later. Mr Wendell Cherry, president of Humana Inc., one of the leading private hospital chains in America, is quoted in the *Business Review Weekly* as having said that he wants to provide a product as uniform as the McDonald's hamburger.

Squeezing complex human services into neat blocks which can be measured easily by accountants has always been a problem. My deep concern is that this private company may lose interest when it realises there is no profit to be made from something like a rape crisis centre, nor should there be. Furthermore, when a private company has such control over public health services, it will be able literally to hold the Government hostage. What safeguards are in the contract to ensure that the prices charged by the company to the Government will be fair? Once a contract has been awarded and the company owns the hospital, what will the Government be able to do if there is a falling

out? Will it be able to build another hospital or take up its business and go elsewhere? How extensively have these tenders been evaluated? Given the lack of community consultation and the haste associated with this entire affair, how could they have been properly evaluated?

Page 1811

The contract will be for 20 years. The involvement of the private sector in the provision of some public hospital services has hardly been in place for more than a few years. How can we know that the quality of service will not erode over time? Apart from the fact that we are not strictly comparing a like degree of control and competition at any one time, we have not been monitoring long enough to know for sure. Yet overseas experience shows that quality is likely to deteriorate as the profit motive takes precedence and public control is reduced. The scandal which has recently erupted over the manager of St Luke's Private Hospital says something about quality control procedures in private hospitals. The fact that there will be a monopoly over health services in the Hastings Valley will not be conducive to maintaining service quality. People will find it difficult to get to alternative hospitals. Honourable members must also ask how staff services can continue to have primary responsibility to the people of Hastings Valley when their responsibility and loyalty will be to a company which will have a monopoly over the employment of health personnel in that area. It is becoming increasingly apparent that the lack of money for much needed capital works is a red herring. It is nonsense to suggest that the people of Port Macquarie will not have a new base hospital unless this option is accepted. It would be perfectly possible for Fletcher Jennings to build the hospital and, for the Government to lease the premises and retain public management of hospital services. I do not believe that the Minister would deny that.

Why will the Government not follow this course? It appears that that is because it desires to save money in the short term, and because it has an ideological commitment to privatisation. At the end of 20 years the people of Port Macquarie will not own a thing - a situation similar to renting something rather than purchasing it. One does not have to face the problem of the upfront cost but one never has much control. Indeed, privatisation of hospital services does not make economic sense. In another place the Deputy Leader of the Opposition stated that the Government will be subsidising the company to the tune of \$12 million each year. At present the Port Macquarie hospital charges between \$600 and \$695 per bed day. According to the board, however, the new hospital will be given \$890 per bed day by the Greiner Government. Furthermore, if one of the cornerstones of economic rationalism is supposed to be competitive markets, why is the Government encouraging a monopoly over health care services in Port Macquarie?

Time and again the Government has argued that there will be efficiency gains from the privatisation of Hastings hospital. If that be so, why has there been a lack of frankness, a lack of consultation in choosing the private option? The private option in which four private companies were requested to tender for the contract to build, own and run the new base hospital in Port Macquarie was officially announced for the first time in September of last year. This was the first time -

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

**The Hon. Elisabeth Kirkby:** With respect, I was informed that, as the Government had no prior objection to this debate, I would be allowed my 15 minutes.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! The honourable member's time for establishing urgency has expired.

**The Hon. J. P. HANNAFORD** (Minister for Health and Community Services) [2.48]: The Government believes that this is an important matter which should be debated but that there should be certain information placed on the record which justifies the debate proceeding. There is a clear difference in the approach that has been taken by the Opposition and that of the Government in the provision of health care services in  
Page 1812

this State. I am on record as saying that the approach which the Government should be taking is to concentrate on the delivery of quality care, and to ensure access to efficiently provided care. Since I became Minister, the Government has moved towards an objective assessment of outcomes in health care. New South Wales is leading the move towards the achievement of outcomes, rather than just putting funds in and being able to show that they have been spent. New South Wales should be endeavouring to achieve a greater relativity between public and private health care; should be making the best use of the resources available; should not have a myopic approach to public or private health care, as is the manner of the socialist left, as endorsed by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition; and should, in fact, be concentrating on the delivery of services to those who need care in this State. This is to be clearly compared with the approach taken by the Labor Party during its period in government.

The former Labor Government was opposed to the involvement of the private health industry in health care services, an approach which the Labor Party maintains today. For the first 11 years of its administration the former Labor Government did not encourage the expansion of private health care or encourage the private health industry to be involved in health care services. It was not until the dying days of the former Government's regime that it considered the involvement of private health care. However, I acknowledge that Ron Mulock, a former Labor Minister for Health, was the first Minister to consider the purchase of public health services from a private hospital. He did that by buying services from the St John of God Hospital near Richmond. During the former Labor Government's administration an average of \$92 million a year was spent on the construction and refurbishment of hospitals. During this Government's administration \$308 million a year has been spent in rebuilding the health system.

**The Hon. I. M. Macdonald:** They are false figures. One cannot compare a 1978 figure with a 1990 figure.

**The Hon. J. P. HANNAFORD:** I am comparing like with like and the annual difference is \$192 million to \$308 million. At present the Government is engaged in the biggest hospital construction program ever undertaken in this State or in this nation. The Government's five-year plan involves a \$1.49 billion capital construction program. In the fifth to tenth year period a further \$1.5 billion will need to be spent in current dollar terms to bring the hospital system up to modern day standards. In the tenth to fifteenth year period a further \$0.6 billion will need to be spent. In the ensuing 15 years \$3.2 billion will need to be spent to update the health care system of this State. This was the legacy from the former Labor Government.

During the administration of the former coalition Government Minister for Health, Peter Collins, an agreement was secured from Treasury that the totality of sales from health service costs could be invested in the health service construction program. In addition to the \$1.49 billion construction program, the Minister sought to advance the fifth year to tenth year projects by selling assets. At that time about \$550 million in asset sales was identified as capable of being realised between 1989 and 1994. When I came to that ministerial office in June 1991 I was advised that only \$209 million would be realised from the asset sales program. Current advice is that Treasury is no longer

willing to identify future sales because a realistic value cannot be obtained for a number of the properties. A property at St Leonards valued earlier at \$40 million today is estimated to realise \$8 million only and therefore will not be put on the market.

Page 1813

This Government having indicated a commitment to proceed with constructing a number of hospitals, clearly the money is not available to build them. Construction could begin but there is no guarantee of their completion as that is dependent on capital funds. The Hon. Elisabeth Kirkby suggested that those assets be leased. Treasury has advised that such a leasing program would add an additional \$30 million to the costs of the Port Macquarie hospital. In addition, because of Loan Council requirements and the way in which the council deals with interest rates in these circumstances, the lease would be treated as a borrowing, and therefore would reduce the overall borrowing capacity. The question of borrowing is an important component. As at 1992 the Government's total borrowing will be in excess of \$1.4 billion in order to meet the health infrastructure costs for the State, an increase from \$461 million in 1988 to \$1,449 million in 1992. Total borrowings of the State were \$18,000 million in 1988, but this has dropped to \$14,000 million. A vast majority of the borrowings are being used to enhance health infrastructure. The Government has had to look at alternative ways to address the needs of the State.

The nature of the infrastructure must be recognised. More than 45 per cent of the infrastructure is older than 40 years and 10 per cent of the infrastructure is more than 90 years old. The infrastructure can be addressed in one of three ways, either by borrowing, taking the money from recurrent funds, or examining other ways of encouraging funds into the system. Encouragement to build, own and operate is one of the major options. I reject totally the suggestion that this option means the total transfer of the health system to private administration. That is ridiculous and without foundation. To suggest that this project is an experiment is again without foundation and to suggest that the project is an Americanisation of health is a distortion. Australia has universal health care which provides access by all people to free health care services in the State. In the United States of America more than 37 million people are not covered by any form of insurance, and therefore cannot get access to any hospital.

**The Hon. Delcia Kite:** That is an absolute disgrace.

**The Hon. J. P. HANNAFORD:** It is an absolute disgrace. I have a firm commitment to the continuation of universal health care coverage in this country, and I will maintain that commitment when debating the future of Medicare in this country. In order to be able to achieve universal equity of access to health that approach needs to be maintained. This particular proposal is aimed directly at providing opportunities for an expanded service. [*Time expired.*]

**Motion agreed to.**

**The Hon. ELISABETH KIRKBY** [2.58]: I thank the Minister for Health and Community Services for his comments to my preparatory remarks and for placing on the public record many of the views that he expressed in a personal interview with me last night when he was attempting to explain his philosophy. However, the Minister should remember that the Liberal party is now bound by the Fightback package delivered by the national leader of his party, Dr. John Hewson. One of my main concerns about this issue is that in the section of the document dealing with health security this statement appears:

Medicare's problems include the overservicing and less attentive service due to bulk-billing, unacceptably long public hospital waiting lists, underuse of private hospitals, oversupply of doctors and concealment of the true cost of the health system. Our proposals are designed to keep costs down and to improve the quality of health care. Our changes will shift some of the cost of health care from the Government to the individual in a way which will still ensure universal cover, protect those on lower middle incomes and retain cost discipline but allow individuals greater scope.

Page 1814

The statement continues:

We will restore the balance between the public and private health sectors by encouraging individuals to provide for their own health care through private health insurance. The best way to eliminate waiting lists is to ensure that more people have access to the private hospital system.

This is fine if a person happens to be able to afford private insurance but the majority of Australians cannot afford private health care. Further statements in the Fightback package are quite ridiculous. It would cost me \$1,600 a year to take up private health insurance which would enable me to go to a private hospital. How many people can afford \$1,600 a year? Dr Hewson says in the fightback package that persons earning more than \$50,000 a year, which all members of Parliament earn, will be charged \$800 a year as a Medicare super levy. Obviously, it will be cheaper than taking out private health insurance. Therefore, why would anybody have private health insurance? Under Dr Hewson's proposal people will probably remain in their present positions and pay that \$800 a year levy. So much for Dr Hewson's package.

The private option, which was applied at Port Macquarie was in contravention of election promises made in 1991. Up to the time of the 1991 State election, the Government, the Premier, the Minister for Health and Community Services and the local member all promised that the new public hospital would go ahead as planned. They strongly denied claims by the local Labor candidate, John Murphy, that plans for privatisation of the proposed hospital were already in place. But only one week after that election the Government announced that it did not have the money to proceed with the hospital and, after a degree of public agitation, the Government announced that it would request specific companies to tender for the building of a new public-based hospital. By September 1991 the Government announced that for legal reasons it could not go ahead even with that proposal and that it wanted Port Macquarie to have a new hospital. It stated that it would request four private consortiums to tender for the build-own option, the private option. Those two promises to the electorate have been broken by the Government. It seems that the base hospital which was promised to Port Macquarie in 1988 will now be a private hospital.

Four companies were asked to tender. One consortium dropped out and another was eliminated because of the lack of a capital base and Australian experience. Health Care of Australia, or HCOA, was in competition with Hospitals of Australia, which runs Port Macquarie Private Hospital. They both became subsidiaries of Mayne Nickless in March 1991. Where is the competition when the two tenderers belong to the same company? However, the preferred tenderer was announced in December 1991 and the plans were first shown to staff in the second week of January. It has been argued that those few weeks in January were the only time that staff had the opportunity for input. During that time many were away on holidays. The staff present were very concerned

and alarmed about the plans that were presented. I am not a bit surprised. In fact, I am told that some of the staff were in tears.

The psychiatric unit had been pushed into four beds at the end of a ward for elderly patients. Additionally, critical areas such as coronary and intensive care were designed without a toilet for patients or staff. The closest toilet was more than 30 metres away. The architects completely failed to grasp the fundamental differences between a private hospital's fast throughput of schedule cases and public hospital's slower throughput of serious medical and accident patients. The staff were appalled by plan mark I. Then there were mark II and mark III. Mark IV slipped backwards because the

Page 1815  
consortium was trying to save costs. Now I am informed that versions 9 and 10 are being considered. It is quite likely that the plans will be changed further after the contract is signed. Honourable members should be aware of that possibility.

Complaints have been received that at the beginning of February the community had not been able to scrutinise the service contract. No one, except for members of the steering committee reporting to the Minister, has seen the service contract. According to the hospital action group, the hospital board had only a day or two to consider the service agreement, which specifies staff levels and the resources that will flow under the contract. A great deal of disquiet has been expressed by the community at public meetings. There have been reports of intimidation of staff speaking out against the proposal, as viewers of the "7.30 Report" would be well aware. The Minister for Health and Community Services refused to address the meetings held in December 1991 and in January this year. A random telephone poll, conducted by the local municipal council which originally wanted to hold a referendum on this matter, showed that more than 75 per cent of the population want a public hospital.

Why do we have to have a public health system? The private sector is ruled by the profit motive. Arguably public hospitals are the most expensive for public health services and traditionally only governments have been prepared to build them and then run them. In Australia the major metropolitan public hospitals tend to be the best equipped, and accreditation procedures and quality control are more advanced in the public sector. Health services staff have mentioned doubts about staffing procedures at the new hospital if profit becomes the overriding motive. They are concerned about nurse to patient ratios and junior to senior staff ratios. Above all, for reasons of social equity it is important that public hospitals are maintained. The American experience shows that as the private sector expands and the public sector diminishes many people who formerly received care in the public sector no longer receive it. A study by the non-profit organisation, Families of the United States of America, found that the average family is now paying up to \$US4,926 a year for health care - an increase from \$US1,742 in 1980. I referred to this in my speech on the Address-in-Reply debate. Continually there is criticism, particularly by the Greiner Government, of the national health system in Great Britain.

The 18th to 24th January 1992 edition of the Economist shows that the Conservative Party in Great Britain has been putting more money into the national health service with significant effect. That country is in recession also and is confronted with as many problems as Australia is experiencing. Waiting lists in Great Britain are now decreasing. Between April and September 1991 the number of people waiting more than 2 years for an operation fell by 16 per cent. Thanks to performance-rated contracts for family doctors, childhood immunisation is now at record levels. Hospitals are handling more patients. If current trends continue, doctors in Great Britain will treat 250,000 more patients in 1991-92 than they did during the previous year. In the first six months

of 1991-92, 7.6 per cent more hip operations were conducted than in the same period a year before. The number of heart operations increased and the number of cataract operations rose by 5.5 per cent. The National Health Service is being applauded by the British Medical Association.

**The Hon. Dr B. P. V. Pezzutti:** It is being privatised, that is why.

**The Hon. ELISABETH KIRKBY:** It is not being privatised. The honourable member should get his facts right. We should be following what is happening in Great Britain and not going down an uncharted road. In spite of the Premier's denials, the move to privatise Hastings District Hospital is a step in the American direction, especially

Page 1816

when taken in conjunction with the stated policies of the Federal Opposition, the \$300 million shortfall in revenue and the poor state of other hospitals in New South Wales such as Hawkesbury Hospital. It has been stated already that private investment will be used in the Prince of Wales-Prince Henry complex and also at Coffs Harbour. Other hospitals to be affected include those at Albury, Moruya and Maitland, as was reported in an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 8th February, 1992. Less than five days ago a compromise on Port Macquarie was suggested in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. It seems that the plan to privatise Port Macquarie hospital has unexpectedly hit a raw nerve. Instead of a natural extension of the use of private contractors, Port Macquarie is seen by some members of Parliament as a fundamental shift of public policy. I and the Australian Democrats believe that this is a fundamental shift in public policy and we do not agree with it. For that reason I have moved the motion. I seek the support of members opposite and I ask our Government members to give careful thought to their contribution.

**The Hon. J. P. HANNAFORD** (Minister for Health and Community Services) [3.13]: The experiment referred to by the Hon. Elisabeth Kirkby is not an experiment, it is an extension of a contractual arrangement which exists throughout a number of hospitals in this State. The first purchasing of public hospital services from the private sector in modern times was that negotiated by Ron Mulock at St John of God Hospital at Richmond. There are similar contracts now with St Vincent's private hospital at Lismore, with Baringa private hospital at Coffs Harbour, with a large number of hospitals in the Hunter Valley - with regard to oncology and the provision of day surgery services - at a number of hospitals throughout the Sydney metropolitan area, and in the Illawarra. The task is to take the opportunity to provide expanded health services to the community, and that is what the Government's obligation should be. Governments throughout Australia are grappling with the same problem. The Western Australia Government is considering the same type of contractual arrangements with two hospitals in Western Australia. The South Australia Government has called for expressions of interest for such a hospital in South Australia. The Victorian Government is pursuing two leasing operations in Victoria, though costs will be substantially broader.

This is not a new concept in the sense of buying services from the private sector. The Government is not privatising the health sector. The Government is purchasing health services in a guaranteed manner from the private sector and guaranteeing that public patients who wish to will be able to seek admission for health care at no cost. The Government is saying to the private sector: "You supply all the funds for the bricks and mortar. You run the hospital efficiently and to strict quality of care standards for the benefit of the people of Port Macquarie". The honourable member suggested that quality of service will be eroded. To the contrary, in the agreement there are in place quality assurance requirements that are unequalled in the health care system in this country. The

Government is seeking to move towards outcomes and new directions in control and quality assurance programs, and that will occur here. The medical staff council at Port Macquarie has been extensively involved in these negotiations to make certain that the quality mechanisms are in place. The medical staff council voted unanimously to support this proposal. In a press release Dr Glen Mackintosh, the Chairman of the medical staff council stated:

At this time the Medical Staff Council is satisfied that every effort is being made to address these issues and that with privatisation we have the opportunity to obtain a hospital within two years which can meet the needs of our area, treat public patients for free and very significantly -

I emphasise those words used by the chairman of the medical staff council. He continued:

Page 1817

- increase the quality and the quantity of public services.

Under this proposal free public bed day numbers at this hospital in any one year will increase from 31,000 to 42,000. Seventy per cent of the beds will be available for public patients. At the present time more than 2,000 patients leave the Port Macquarie area for Sydney or Newcastle for treatment. This hospital will have an increased level of health care services beyond what is available there now. More than 2,000 patients will receive treatment locally; they will not have to travel out of their area.

**The Hon. I. M. Macdonald:** Table the Treasury advice that says that you cannot lease.

**The Hon. J. P. HANNAFORD:** I am happy to read Treasury advice to the honourable member. The advice is that this particular proposal will cost an additional \$30 million. We are looking at a number of guarantees. Free public access to hospital care will be guaranteed. There will be free public access to community health services. Outcomes measures will be available in community health services which are not present in the public health care system. Public patient services to the people of Port Macquarie will increase by 30 per cent. Increased services and expanded access will be provided at least several years earlier than the public options could provide. Quality and quantity of public services will be controlled by the Government. Those types of guarantees are not present in the public or the private system. There will be strong community involvement in health care priorities. I intend to establish, as I announced some months ago, a consumers' committee under section 20 of the Act. A consumers' committee does not exist within the New South Wales health system. Consumers will be able to express their views on access and quality of care. Publicly stated levels of service will be provided, guaranteed by the Health Care Commission. Accreditation will be made under the care standards of the Australian Council of Health, and that accreditation will be required to be maintained.

**The Hon. Dr B. P. V. Pezzutti:** How many public hospitals have that now?

**The Hon. J. P. HANNAFORD:** Very few of the public hospitals could qualify for such accreditation.

**The Hon. Dr B. P. V. Pezzutti:** How many private hospitals qualify?

**The Hon. J. P. HANNAFORD:** The Department of Health will have access to

a hospital for both clinical and management audits. Right of entry exists for complete audit as well as a responsibility for monthly accounting for services being provided.

**The Hon. Elisabeth Kirkby:** You are counting the cost of services over quality.

**The Hon. J. P. HANNAFORD:** Had the honourable member been listening she would have heard me say that we are putting in place quality control mechanisms previously unseen in this State to guarantee quality control of health. She referred to community health. The present form of community health was introduced in 1974 under the Whitlam regime. It was provided as integrated community and acute health care. Right across New South Wales we have totally integrated community health and acute health care. The local health care community of Port Macquarie called for continuity of integrated health care services, and that is being provided under this contract.

**The Hon. Dr B. P. V. Pezzutti:** And we accept it.

**The Hon. J. P. HANNAFORD:** Yes. We accept the call of the local community  
Page 1818

in that regard. Mechanisms are in place to ensure that it is the Government that determines the nature and the level of services. The Government will determine the amount to be expended. The Government will provide the funds for the community health services. The Government will set the outcomes and what is to be achieved through those services. The role of the corporation will be to provide the infrastructure for that - the payroll and the service provision facilities for which we will pay a fee. The Government will achieve the integrated health care system for which the local community has called. We are providing guarantees of employment for the existing staff.

**The Hon. I. M. Macdonald:** They do not want your hospital.

**The Hon. J. P. HANNAFORD:** The community does. The Government will guarantee continuity of current doctor appointments. It will provide also continuity of superannuation entitlements for the staff. A mechanism for renewal of the contracts at the end of the 20-year period will be provided. There are accountability mechanisms in the contract so that if contract standards are not maintained administrators can be appointed and the control of the contract will be taken over by the Government. The Government will completely control the level of health care services provided to the public in this facility. The Hon. Elisabeth Kirkby was critical of me and said that there had been a lack of frankness and consultation with the community about the project. An editorial headed "Open door policy is applauded" in the local newspaper stated:

Mr Hannaford is keen to see that the Port Macquarie Base Hospital project has a clear passage.

His policy of open communication is to be commended. This newspaper, which has taken the Minister to task over many issues relating to this project, acknowledges the efforts being made by Mr Hannaford to address union issues and public concerns.

This process, he says, is to be ongoing. The Minister's door is open for consultation.

And it has been. The Hon. Elisabeth Kirkby stated that I did not attend a public meeting

in the area. That meeting was organised by a front for the unions. After the meeting had been organised my office was contacted to ask whether I was available. I said that I was not available for that date. Notwithstanding that advice, there were paid advertisements saying that I would be at the meeting when the organisers knew that was absolutely untrue. I had other commitments which had been organised previously, which the organisers had been informed of. I went there and met with the action group, which went on record in the newspaper the next day welcoming the open consultation with me. The Hon. Elisabeth Kirkby was critical of the design of the building. The design was developed directly with the medical and nursing staff at the hospital. They totally support the design, because they were involved in it. The Hon. Elisabeth Kirkby was critical of the cost. We must compare apples with apples. Acute care costs at present are about \$605 per patient bed day. Under the new proposal the cost will be approximately \$655 per patient bed day. That is acceptable because of the considerable increase in the level of health care services being provided. The higher the level of care, the more expensive it becomes.

Any patient who presents at this facility will get care for free. The honourable member drew a comparison between public and private health care. If a person buys private insurance and wants to go into private facilities, that is a decision for that person. It is a matter between the person and the insurance company. The obligation of the Government is to meet the public health care needs of the community. That is what the Government is doing. The number of public bed days provided will be increased by more than 50 per cent. Operational beds will increase by 33 per cent. The level of care will be significantly increased. The Opposition is saying that the Government should not

Page 1819  
go ahead with the proposal. As the editorials and the local people have asked, should we wait for ever or take this option? The action group is now saying - and John Hatton is also saying this - that we should build demountables but buy health services under a contract from the private hospital down the road. Where is the consistency?

It is suggested that we buy hospital services from a private hospital for the time being. That is okay, but it is not good enough to build a new hospital and buy public health services from that private hospital. The position is totally ridiculous. There is no logic in it. This issue has been driven totally by politics to justify Bob Carr's statement in the *Illawarra Mercury* in 1986 that he supported private health care services being used to meet the demand for public services. The documents in relation to the project will be released by me when they are signed. There will be public debate on them. I will not go ahead with other projects until the documents are released and there is public consultation. What is needed in this State is health care services. The people of New South Wales want access to extended health care - quality health care, assured health care, with the State taking responsibility. That is what they will get from this Government.

**The Hon. I. M. MACDONALD** [3.28]: We have just heard another attempt by the Minister for Health and Community Services to justify the fact that he is riding roughshod over the people of Port Macquarie to build a private hospital in the area. Luckily I have a Department of Health submission entitled "Port Macquarie Base Hospital, Submission, Section 8, Proposed Private Sector Operator, Health Care of Australia". On the bottom of every page of the document is written "The information in this portion of the submission is confidential and is provided for the exclusive use of the New South Wales Department of Health and Directors and employees of the Hastings District Hospital". I shall now reveal some of the items in the submission which are relevant to the fraudulent attitude of the Minister who is attempting to pull the wool over the eyes of the people of New South Wales. The submission contains numerous

statements about how the HCOA proposal will be implemented. The proposed agreements between the Government and HCOA are most revealing. The people not only of Port Macquarie but New South Wales will be very concerned about them. That concern is made clear at the beginning of the submission under pricing policy item 8.21, in relation to the accommodation bed charge. It states, "The charge rate per patient per day is based on category AA medical benefits fund charge". The submission continues, "Category AA has been nominated as the most appropriate rate because the complexities in the total range of services proposed to be provided at Port Base and the staffing of many departments 24 hours a day to accommodate a significant portion of case load". Tweedledum!

**The Hon. J. H. Jobling:** What are you quoting from?

**The Hon. I. M. MACDONALD:** I am quoting from a confidential Department of Health document. It contains the sorts of details that the Minister failed to provide this Chamber with yesterday and last week when he raved on to the Chamber. He failed again today to present the material. I wish to provide honourable members with some details of the contents of the document. Honourable members will wonder what this AA category really means - Medical Benefits Fund top table cover. What it really means is effectively the doubling of costs to patients. In effect, if this great private hospital is set up in accordance with the Minister's wishes, private patients will be charged at the highest rate of private health insurance - that is the AA category - which is about \$400 a day. Those on basic cover who would normally go to a public hospital would have to find about \$200 a day, so that is a doubling of costs, which the Hon. Dr

Page 1820

B. P. V. Pezzutti would probably like.

Further down the submission - I have only got a short time so I want to read as much of it as possible for the Hon. Dr B. P. V. Pezzutti - deals with non-inpatient services. It points out that all of these privatised companies proposed by the Government be established in a number of areas on the basis that they will operate in a competitive spirit but then seek to have written into an agreement a monopoly; and Health Care of Australia is no different. HCOA wants a monopoly. It says it must have a 20-year monopoly. It does not want competition over that 20-year period. All this money is to be spent, with the Government providing subsidies to the tune of many millions of dollars a day. HCOA does not want competition, as is evident from this confidential health document. Private patients who go to a public hospital usually are not charged theatre fees. Section 8.21 of the document deals with pricing policy. Paragraph (b), theatre fees and labour ward fees, states:

These are based on the theatre banding system agreed between the Private Hospitals Association of New South Wales and the health insurers and reasonable distribution of the anticipated 3,800 procedures into theatre banding has been calculated based on 1988-89 actual procedures performed.

In effect, these patients will be charged theatre fees.

**The Hon. Dr B. P. V. Pezzutti:** What an abuse of this process.

**The Hon. I. M. MACDONALD:** I am not abusing the process. The Minister has made several speeches in this Chamber.

**The Hon. Dr B. P. V. Pezzutti:** Table it.

**The Hon. I. M. MACDONALD:** I am quite happy to table the document, and I will do so at the end of my speech. The Minister has had several opportunities to inform the House of what this proposal is all about, but he has failed to do so. He has failed to do so because it contains several features which, in effect, will create a monopoly situation for this particular hospital, which in turn will result in a doubling of fees. In other words, the health contribution funds of Australia - Medicare and the private health funds - will have to find extra funds to meet the costs that this AA category will impose on them. I would like the Minister to have said that the proposed arrangement will have its down sides, that in fact private patients will have to pay for the AA rating, which is double the rate that private patients pay at present in a public hospital. This document goes on and on, listing a whole range of these confidential arrangements between the Government and the operator. As a consequence, the Opposition is very concerned about the fact that the deal that is being entered into contains many aspects about which the community has not been informed. I could quote section after section from the document to demonstrate that. What it is all about is the private hospitals wanting to be put in a non-competitive situation where they can charge higher fees to meet their increased costs and where, in effect, their profitability is guaranteed. That is what this private health system is all about - the guarantee of profits.

The Minister speaks of community involvement, but he knows very well that that community involvement would be subservient to the private property needs of this hospital. For the Minister to compare this hospital with St John of God Hospital at  
Page 1821

Richmond is to make an erroneous comparison. It is proposed to create a large base hospital, and it should be a public hospital. That hospital is being handed over to the private sector. The Minister has said that Treasury has intimated that that might cost the Government more. He has not tabled that document, even though he asked me to table the document to which I was referring. Not only did he not table the document, but also he has not been able to provide the Chamber with a decent legal opinion to indicate that what he says is right. He is not willing to put up that notion to Crown law officers to ascertain whether it is true and accurate. Nor is he willing to allow the Auditor-General to examine the proposal, to check the veracity and accuracy of his concepts.

The reason that the people of Port Macquarie and the Opposition are concerned about this proposal is that we believe that health care is a core concern. We are desperately concerned about the possible Americanisation of the health system. The Government has talked about privatisation of the health system incessantly; it has made many statements about the subject. It has attempted to apply that philosophy to a whole range of services. The Opposition takes the view that health services should not be privatised in this way, with base hospitals turned into private hospitals. In the United Kingdom, where the gods of the New South Wales Liberal Party are a Thatcherite government, electricity and water companies have been privatised in recent times. We have witnessed what has happened with PowerGen and National Generation. Despite the fact that there has been no input into the United Kingdom electricity system over the past year, there has been a 20 per cent increase in prices to the consumer following the privatisation of both those power companies. Following the privatisation of seven water distribution companies in the United Kingdom, the situation -

**The Hon. D. J. Gay:** On a point of order. I draw attention to your ruling yesterday that a member who quoted several times from a document should source the document properly. The Hon. I. M. Macdonald has quoted from a document on several occasions. His time for speaking is running out but so far he has not sourced that document properly, nor has he tabled it. I ask that his attention be drawn to your ruling.

**The Hon. I. M. Macdonald:** On the point of order. I do not think I am under any such obligation.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! I have already ruled that, in accordance with the customs of the House, it is proper that honourable members source documents from which they quote and indicate when they are quoting and when they are not quoting. If the honourable member is quoting from a document, I ask that he adhere to that ruling. *[Time expired.]*

**The Hon. Dr B. P. V. PEZZUTTI [3.38]:** I draw the attention of the House to the fact that the document about which the Hon. I. M. Macdonald was speaking was not a departmental document but was in fact a submission from an applicant in the tendering process. To that extent the honourable member did what he has done on many occasions; he misled this House. The honourable member has done what the Hon. Elisabeth Kirkby has done frequently; he has told half the truth. I will not say that she told half a lie as well.

**The Hon. Elisabeth Kirkby:** On a point of order. I ask the Hon. Dr B. P. V. Pezzutti to withdraw his suggestion that I tell half truths. I quote from reputable sources.

**The Hon. Dr B. P. V. Pezzutti:** On the point of order. I said what I did advisedly. When the honourable member quoted from the fightback package she quoted Page 1822 selectively and did not tell the full story. To that extent, when I said she tells half the truth, I meant it.

**The Hon. R. S. L. Jones:** On the point of order. The Hon. Dr B. P. V. Pezzutti said that my colleague the Hon. Elisabeth Kirkby spoke half the truth on more than one occasion, not just that one occasion. I ask the honourable member to withdraw the imputation on my colleague's reputation.

**The Hon. Dr B. P. V. Pezzutti:** Further to the point of order. If the Hon. Elisabeth Kirkby states that she finds my remark offensive, I will withdraw it. Unless she states that she finds the remark offensive, I have no reason to withdraw it.

**The PRESIDENT:** Does the Hon. Elisabeth Kirkby find the comment of the Hon. Dr B. P. V. Pezzutti offensive?

**The Hon. Elisabeth Kirkby:** I do find his comment offensive.

**The Hon. Dr B. P. V. PEZZUTTI:** If the Hon. Elisabeth Kirkby finds the comment offensive, I withdraw it.

**The Hon. I. M. Macdonald:** On a point of order. I ask the Hon. Dr B. P. V. Pezzutti to withdraw his statement that I misled the House. I quoted directly from the various annotations and comments on a document entitled "Port Macquarie Base Hospital Submission". I find his statement that I misled the House grossly offensive. I was reading accurately from material that has been supplied to me, which I believe to be accurate.

**The Hon. Dr B. P. V. Pezzutti:** On the point of order. There is no point of order because the Hon. I. M. Macdonald did not at any time indicate that he was quoting from a submission from a tenderer. He indicated in a most deceitful manner that it was a government publication. If that is the case, I do not have to withdraw. He has never

sourced the document. To the extent that I have exposed the honourable member, he now finds himself in a difficult position. I will not withdraw the comment because I am not guilty as charged.

**The Hon. I. M. Macdonald:** Further to the point of order. The Hon. Dr B. P. V. Pezzutti is totally guilty as charged. He has stated that I misled the House. I did not mislead the House. I do not ever mislead the House. I quoted from a document supplied to me, I believe, from departmental sources which outlines clearly the statements I have made.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! The Hon. I. M. Macdonald has sought the withdrawal of the statement by the Hon. Dr B. P. V. Pezzutti that he has misled the House on the basis that it is offensive to him. It is not unparliamentary for a member to allege in debate that another member has misled the House. Such an allegation can be dealt with later in the debate.

**The Hon. Dr B. P. V. PEZZUTTI:** I should like to deal with a few matters of substance which can be sourced. A number of arrangements have been entered into by various governments over time to contract public services to the private sector. I draw the attention of honourable members on the other side of the House to a special interest of mine in relation to private sector tendering for public health services. When in government the Labor Party became involved with the Illawarra Urological Service, a  
Page 1823

service of considerable excellence and worldwide importance. All urological services in the Illawarra area are provided by the private sector, and have been since 1986. During the election campaign in 1988 Barrie Unsworth implored eye surgeons in the Hunter region, who had left the system because of the way in which doctors and patients generally were being treated by the Unsworth Government, to take up the offer of the contract - "\$1,500 for a cataract, do them in day surgery, do them anywhere you like but do them and I will pay for them". That is what Mr Unsworth said. The same arrangement was offered and taken up in the Coffs Harbour area. Honourable members will remember the opening by the Queen of the Mount Druitt hospital, which was funded from the public purse. To obtain the good management structure that the people of Mount Druitt deserved where "Care, Concern and allsorts of Quality" could be written in large letters, the nuns came in to operate it.

**The Hon. J. P. Hannaford:** It is a schedule 2 public hospital.

**The Hon. Dr B. P. V. PEZZUTTI:** The Minister is absolutely right. New South Wales taxpayers paid for the building. The management, care and control of the hospital at Mount Druitt was handed over to the nuns. That was done by the Unsworth Government. The Opposition when in government said, "We will build the hospital and lease it back to the nuns to operate". Any company would make a killing out of that situation. In Victoria police stations have been leased back. What a joke! I do not know whether such payments come off public sector borrowing under the Loan Council arrangements. This year the people of New South Wales have been diddled of about \$250 million by the Federal Government. Since the coalition parties have been in office, the people of New South Wales have been diddled of well over \$1 billion in recurrent costs, not to mention the capital costs.

In Victoria 250,000 people have dropped out of private health insurance funds this year. That has happened as a result of the Keating depression. In New South Wales 50,000 people have done the same. That means that the New South Wales public hospital system has to take care of 50,000 additional people. What is the Federal

Government doing about that? How much did it give the Minister for Health and Community Services to care for the additional patients who are relying on Medicare? Not a penny! In fact in real terms New South Wales received less than ever. The Hon. Elisabeth Kirkby accused the Department of Health of making threats against people in the public health system at Port Macquarie if they spoke out. The Hon. Elisabeth Kirkby again misled the House, to put it bluntly, when she quoted half the transcript of the segment on the "7.30 Report". That matter was put to the Minister at the time. He answered the question and said -

**The Hon. Elisabeth Kirkby:** On a point of order. Once again the Hon. Dr B. P. V. Pezzutti has accused me, in the most vehement terms, of misleading the House. I ask him to withdraw that remark because I find it offensive.

**The Hon. Dr B. P. V. Pezzutti:** On the point of order. Mr President, you have ruled on this matter.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! I have already ruled that it is not unparliamentary or offensive for a member to allege that another member has misled the House. Such an allegation can be dealt with by the member so offended either in reply, which in this case is the right of the Hon. Elisabeth Kirkby, or by way of personal explanation at the appropriate time.

**The Hon. Dr B. P. V. PEZZUTTI:** The Hon. Elisabeth Kirkby is wasting my  
Page 1824  
time, as she wasted the time of the House for 25 minutes. She misled the House by not going on to quote what the Minister said when asked that question. As the Hon. Elisabeth Kirkby knows, the Minister is a man of great honour. He denied that any pressure was brought to bear on any of the staff. I attended the public meeting on behalf of the Minister and faced the people of Port Macquarie. I did that because I believe what the Government is doing is correct. The Australian Democrats are irrelevant. The Labor Party refused to provide services of any sort at Port Macquarie and refused to recognise the need for increased services of any sort on the North Coast. It refused to provide the quality and extent of services desired by the people on the North Coast. Opposition members now have the hide to - [*Time expired.*]

**The Hon. DOROTHY ISAKSEN [3.48]:** In all my years of involvement with politics, I have never known a government to make such a drastic social change without approval from the electorate. Public health has always been a major concern of the electorate. A classic warning for the Government ought to have been the mishandling of the Federal Opposition's health policy prior to the last Federal election. Under our present health system, the sick and disabled, young families and the elderly all have a certain guarantee and security. To make major changes to this system will certainly create community anger. The whole community has an expectation of universal access to the public hospital system. To change that is political suicide. In recent months my own party created problems for itself because of a change to the rebate for medical costs. The Greiner Government's decision to privatise public hospital management is one of the most dangerous and ill advised policy changes it has undertaken. I use the words "ill advised" because I do not think the Government is listening to the electorate. I predict that the Minister is doing to health what the former Minister for Education did to education. These gung ho methods are obviously engineered to draw attention to how tough, how determined, how strong this Minister is. Greiner does not like wimps, so if Ministers flex their muscles the Premier will take notice. Just as the ancient mariner had the albatross, John Hannaford will go down with public hospital privatisation.

The Government has read the situation wrongly if it believes that the people of New South Wales will let it privatise our public hospital system. This is not about money; this is about dogma; it is about the Liberal Party's religion - private enterprise. What about people? Does the Government think they want to give up their public hospital system as they know it? Port Macquarie is only the beginning. Already the Premier is talking about private investment in at least two other public hospitals - the Prince of Wales-Prince Henry complex in the eastern suburbs of Sydney, and at Coffs Harbour. The honourable member for Manly, Dr Peter Macdonald, who has practised for many years as a general practitioner in his electorate, posed the question as to why the Government does not try this controversial social experiment in the metropolitan area, where the public would at least have some choice even if it meant further travel. The people of Port Macquarie can choose only between a public hospital run by Mayne Nickless and the 68-bed Port Macquarie Private Hospital run by Mayne Nickless. Does the Government believe that Wendy Machin is expendable? There is no doubt that the Government intended to privatise the maternity ward at Sutherland Hospital. The hospital board had been approached and had agreed that the third floor would be managed by a private hospital. However, the local member happened to be the Minister for Health Services Management. Miranda is a marginal seat, and he got the message loud and clear. Hence the announcement yesterday that the maternity ward is not to be privatised.

Page 1825

Wendy Machin has not been so lucky. With regard to the Port Macquarie situation, the Government is about to sign a contract with a private company, Fletcher Jennings Health Care of Australia to build, own and operate a hospital at Port Macquarie. Health Care of Australia already runs the major 68-bed private hospital in Port Macquarie. The agreement between the Government and the company will permit the Government to fund the public section of Port Macquarie hospital for 20 years. The company will spend approximately \$80 million to build the hospital and the Government will guarantee to fund 70 per cent of the 160 beds for public patients. The remainder will be private beds which the company will be free to make money out of, as with any private hospital. What is interesting to note is that there will not be any saving on recurrent spending as the per day bed cost will actually be higher than the regional average because, to quote the Government, the level of service will be higher. In fact, its services and equipment will be upgraded to near teaching hospital status. The Minister has also announced that the proposed Port Macquarie Base Hospital will probably take over the running of community health services in the area. Community health services in the Port Macquarie area include: three community health centres; four baby health care centres; a sexual assault clinic; a school dental program; and a living skills centre for developmentally disabled people.

The Opposition is not opposed to private contractors building public hospitals - the Public Works Department no longer undertakes these major works - but it is totally opposed to private management of our public hospitals. Honourable members know from past experience that the conservative elements in the medical profession have fought vigorously against community health services. Now the proposal is to contract these services out to private enterprise. Mayne Nickless might have vast experience in the transport industry or security services, but how confident can we be that it can run community health centres or a sexual assault clinic? The Premier is quoted in the *Sydney Morning Herald* last Saturday as saying that he rejected claims that a public hospital run by a profit-making company would be less caring or offer a lower standard of care than other public hospitals. It is known that this private company will be offering a higher level of service because the taxpayer is footing the bill for bed day costs which will be higher than the regional average. Why is Mayne Nickless so caring? Because its profits

from its growing health services business last financial year helped it to ride out the slump.

The company, Australia's largest operator of private hospitals, established health services as a recession-proof business to help offset future downturns in its traditional security and transport markets. According to the *Australian Financial Review* of 29th August last year, the pre-tax profit of Mayne Nickless fell 10.1 per cent as the effects of the recession stripped the core domestic transport and security business of its usual profit growth. However, the takeover of Hospital Corporation of Australia early in 1991 significantly boosted the expanding health services division of Mayne Nickless, which reported a doubling in revenue to \$137 million. Profit before interest and tax rose by nearly 300 per cent from \$4.3 million to \$16.9 million during the year. The half-yearly report to the Australian Stock Exchange on 20th February this year states that Health Care of Australia, as the Mayne Nickless health care services are now known, recorded excellent results for the half year July to December 1991, with revenues increasing to \$101 million and earnings before interest and tax up significantly to \$15 million. The report states that this result primarily reflects the acquisition by Mayne Nickless of Hospital Corporation of Australia.

Page 1826

While Health Care of Australia - alias Mayne Nickless - has interests in other States, it has its largest involvement in New South Wales. For example, it owns, leases or manages the following: Baulkham Hills Private Hospital - 175 beds; Bexley Private Hospital - 80 beds; Campbelltown Private Hospital - 60 beds; Christo Road Private Hospital - 61 beds; Dudley Private Hospital - 65 beds; Kareena Private Hospital - 70 beds; Lingard Private Hospital - 125 beds; Mosman Community Hospital - 62 beds; North Harbour Private Hospital - 60 beds; Nowra Community Hospital - 60 beds; Port Macquarie Private Hospital - 68 beds; Rock Castle Private Hospital, Harbord - 41 beds; St Vincent's Private Hospital, Lismore - 141 beds; Strathfield Private Hospital - 99 beds; Tweed Heads Private Hospital - 80 beds; and Warners Bay Private Hospital - 80 beds. A number of issues are of vital concern to the Opposition. One is the training of staff. If management of a substantial number of public hospitals is withdrawn and given to a private profit-making company, who will be the teachers and the trainers? What effect will this have on opportunities for country school leavers who wish to enter the health profession? Honourable members should not forget the problem of unemployment in the nursing profession. The private hospitals will not take graduates until they have completed their post-graduate training. Members of the National Party should pay particular interest to this problem because it affects the people they claim to represent. Who will be the deliverers of the community services currently provided in Port Macquarie? Will the existing staff be retained as employees of the Department of Health and Community Services, or in future will they be employees of Mayne Nickless?

I ask the Government to confirm or deny that a clause in its contract with Mayne Nickless will be to the effect that no public hospital will be opened in the Port Macquarie-Hastings shire area during the 20-year contract. If that is so, it precludes areas such as Wauchope and other growing areas from having their own independent health services. Another major concern is that Mayne Nickless, or Health Care of Australia - which is now the largest private health organisation in this State and rapidly becoming larger with the assistance of the present Government - because of its size and expertise will dominate the private management of hospitals; there will be no one except the public sector to compete with it. The Labor Party is not opposed to private hospitals. Hospitals such as St Vincent's Private Hospital, the Mater Misericordiae Hospital, and the Sanitarium Hospital which are excellent hospitals of world renown for those who can

afford them, but they do not form a monopoly as is being created by Health Care of Australia. It is interesting to note that Health Care of Australia has recently acquired the Sacred Heart Hospital in Melbourne - now renamed the John Fawkner Hospital. The question of privatisation of the New South Wales public hospital system is the most important political and social issue facing the people of New South Wales. The Government cannot advance in this direction without giving the public the opportunity to express an opinion.

**Reverend the Hon. F. J. NILE** [3.57]: I wish to speak on this matter of public interest relating to the privatisation of Port Macquarie Base Hospital. I can see many benefits for the public of this State if that hospital is privatised. I believe in the best possible health facilities and care for all people of New South Wales - whether it be public or private. The people of Port Macquarie will not be required to pay one cent for using the Port Macquarie Base Hospital; the public patients who enter the hospital will be treated free of charge. What New South Wales needs is diversification, not regimentation, nor socialism. I am pleased that the Leader of the Opposition in another place agrees with the provision of high quality health care. Mr Carr said in 1986:

Privatisation of health services or fostering competition can achieve various goals such as greater equity, considered desirable by reformist governments, but socialist measures they are not. There really is not much use in the "socialism" any more. It has run its race.

Page 1827

However, some members opposite think the race is still on. In 1990 Mr Carr said:

As a party we no longer see government spending and new bureaucracies as the answers to problems. I have always seen privatisation as a policy to be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

The Leader of the Opposition in this House, in his recent paper, indicated the workability of privatisation.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! Pursuant to sessional orders, business is interrupted for the taking of questions.

#### QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

---

#### HAWKESBURY RIVER FISHING

**The Hon. DELCIA KITE:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Health and Community Services. Because of the unacceptable levels of arsenic, lead, cadmium, DDT, heptachlor, aldrin, chlordane, dieldrin and mercury found ingested in carp in South Creek, a tributary of the Hawkesbury River, will the Minister advise the officer responsible to take immediate steps to erect No Fishing notices to prevent ethnic communities from catching the carp for consumption?

**The Hon. J. P. HANNAFORD:** Obviously the question is directed to me in my capacity as the Minister in this place representing the Minister for the Environment. I will draw the matter to the Minister's attention.

#### POLICE RECRUITMENT

**The Hon. J. F. RYAN:** My question without notice is addressed to the Minister

for Police and Emergency Services and Vice-President of the Executive Council. Will the Minister advise the House on the progress of recruiting this year at the Police Academy?

**The Hon. E. P. PICKERING:** I thank the honourable member for his question and for his continuing interest in the Police Academy at Goulburn. It is somewhat invigorating to receive a question relating to my portfolio which has a little substance. Members opposite, who appear more interested in my corporate wardrobe than policing issues, should take note and also ask questions of substance. I am pleased to advise the House that the next recruit training class will enter the world-class academy in late April. The class will total 122 recruits, many of whom are among the best qualified to join the Police Academy in recent years. Honourable members will be pleased to learn that the class will comprise 29 university graduates, which is almost one-quarter of the total intake. The average age of students in the class is 25 compared to 21 in recent years. This added maturity in a class of recruits is a pleasing development. Doubtless, so far as the public was concerned, one of the surprises of the "Cop It Sweet" television program was the youth of the police officers involved.

The April class will contain seven Aboriginal students, some of whom graduated from special education bridging courses conducted by technical and further education colleges and the University of Newcastle, in conjunction with the Skillshare program. The April class of 122 recruits is the second intake this year. The first class for 1992, comprising 120 recruits, began in January at the academy. At this rate the academy will

Page 1828  
accept annually about 500 trainee police officers. I am delighted that recruiting has resumed at the academy following suspension for a brief period last year. Employment opportunity in the Police Service remains limited. This Government has more than met its commitment to increase police numbers by 1,600, and as a result the service is above its authorised strength of 12,907. This has happened at a time when the attrition rate in the Police Service is at an historical low of 3.5 per cent per annum.

Although I should like to say that this is due entirely to the fact that policing is such a marvellous job, I must acknowledge the influence of the recession. The effect of the recession on employment has resulted in an increase in the number of well qualified people seeking to join the Police Service. This has created an uncharacteristically large pool of applicants who meet the normal entry requirements of the service. Like any employer, the Police Service will take advantage of that to recruit the pick of the crop. I am sure honourable members will agree that the Police Service has an obligation to the community to recruit the best people available for what is one of the toughest jobs in society. However, there is an obvious need to upgrade the recruiting standards to take account of the high quality of applicants. The Police Board has approved a review of recruiting standards which is expected to be finalised by June. In the interim, recruiting standards will be raised by placing greater weight on the maturity of applicants, educational qualifications and job-related aptitude tests. This will mean that academy classes are selected on a competitive basis from the many applicants who meet the minimum recruitment standards. It will ensure that smarter policing, which is a fundamental aim of the Police Service, starts from day one at the Goulburn academy.

#### **DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH COMPUTERS**

**The Hon. B. H. VAUGHAN:** I address my question without notice to the Minister for Health and Community Services. Has the Department of Health purchased, or does it intend purchasing, \$2.5 million worth of Oracle hardware and software? If so, which body - health and community services or health services management - will use the

equipment?

**The Hon. J. P. HANNAFORD:** The Department of Health is purchasing equipment from Oracle but I do not know whether the amount of \$2.5 million is the correct figure. However I will check that and advise the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in due course. The department has embarked on a major investment in software and hardware in order to provide better management systems within the hospital system. That is consistent with the direction being pursued by the Federal Government and all State governments for greater accountability within the health system. This investment is necessary because the Federal Government has indicated its wish to move towards diagnosis related group costing information systems by 1993-94. A massive investment in software and hardware will be required in order to achieve that particular time frame. The Government is embarking on a more intensive program than any other government in the country. Negotiations being pursued between the State and Federal governments on Medicare funding will include a component of capital contribution by the Federal Government into these systems. I will obtain the exact figure for the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, but as I said they are items of equipment that will be used in the health system. That area of administration is under the control of my colleague the Minister for Health Services Management.

Page 1829

#### **QUIT FOR LIFE SIGNS AT NORTH SYDNEY OVAL**

**Reverend the Hon. F. J. NILE:** I ask the Minister for Health and Community Services a question without notice. Is it a fact that quit smoking signs supplied by the New South Wales Department of Health were removed from the perimeter of the North Sydney football ground by order of the New South Wales Rugby League? Under what conditions will the Minister direct the public display of quit smoking signs in football grounds in 1992 as a public health measure which fulfils the spirit of the Tobacco Advertising Prohibition Act 1992?

**The Hon. J. P. HANNAFORD:** This question is a much more intelligent question than that asked by the Leader of the Opposition yesterday. The signs were not removed as a result of an order by the New South Wales Rugby League. As I understand they were removed by order of an officer within the Department of Health, because the Saturday promotional program was aimed at nutrition. We do not have a promotional sponsorship program with the Rugby League or general clubs throughout the metropolitan area. The Department of Health negotiated an agreement 18 months or two years ago with the North Sydney Rugby League Club for a three-year sponsorship. As part of that sponsorship a number of health promotion activities were to be pursued. Quit for Life has not been one of the activities pursued as part of the sponsorship program.

**The Hon. M. R. Egan:** Why not?

**The Hon. J. P. HANNAFORD:** That is a matter for the Department of Health. This issue will be pursued by the department with the North Sydney Rugby League Club because, obviously, any health promotion program will be pursued in conjunction with the interests of the North Sydney Rugby League Club.

#### **STATE WARDS**

**The Hon. ANN SYMONDS:** My question without notice is directed to the

Minister for Health and Community Services. Under what circumstances does he release children from wardship? Specifically, is there an age that presents itself with particularity for termination of wardship? What conditions does the Minister specifically apply to termination?

**The Hon. J. P. HANNAFORD:** From my recollection the wardship operates until the age of 18 years. When a person is 18 years and still a State ward that wardship ceases. From time to time I have signed a number of letters to wards at that stage of their lives. The question of whether a person should otherwise have his wardship terminated is one of assessing that the interests of the child are properly looked after, so that a child is brought into care if the court and officers believe that proper care is not otherwise being provided. If wardship is terminated, it is only on the basis that care is being provided properly, as I understand it, by the natural parents. If that were not so, the wardship would continue and the child would be placed in care. I do not know whether that is the issue the honourable member has in mind. If I have not covered the issue she is concerned about I will provide the information she requires.

#### **TEACHERS FEDERATION**

**The Hon. R. T. M. BULL:** I address my question without notice to the Minister for School Education and Youth Affairs. Is the Minister aware of a press release issued yesterday by the New South Wales Teachers Federation on the Premier's recent statement on future directions in this State? Are the claims made by the federation accurate?

Page 1830

**The Hon. VIRGINIA CHADWICK:** No doubt the Hon. R. T. M. Bull was as concerned as I to read the press release issued yesterday under the name of the New South Wales Teachers Federation. After being Minister for School Education and Youth Affairs for some time, I suspect that I can pick the style of the prose. I always enjoy the somewhat flowery language of the Senior Vice-President, Ray Cavenagh, and I suspect that the lively prose of yesterday's press release from the federation carries all the hallmarks of Ray Cavenagh because, like him, it has a scattergun approach. Most of the federation's concerns would have been addressed had it chosen to read a copy of the statement released by the Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Ethnic Affairs. As a general rule, it is not a bad idea to have read a document before releasing a three-page press release commenting on it. The federation expresses its concern that all schools should gain access to the technological initiatives outlined by the Premier. However, if Mr Cavenagh and his comrades had read the Premier's statement, they would have realised that page 17 of the statement refers to all schools being linked. It reads:

All schools should communicate with each other through computer links as well as enabling schools access to State-wide networks.

The following statement, also on page 17, is in heavy type so that it might be easier for members of the federation to read. It reads:

A technology review will be undertaken to allow all 2,300 schools in the State to be linked by interactive technology.

The federation pointed out that the idea of the new Bradfield college was developed locally. This is true. It was specifically highlighted by the Premier in his statement. The federation expressed its concern about rural students. However, the statement specifically states that the needs of rural students are being addressed. In relation to the

Bradfield concept, the Premier, both in his statement and in his speech, made specific reference to Coffs Harbour, to country schools generally and to a similar Bradfield-style initiative in the western suburbs of Sydney. The federation is rather confused about the languages policy announced by the Premier and clearly outlined in his statement. Regrettably, it does not seem to understand that the initiatives announced complement the widely acclaimed initiative of two years ago, whereby all high school students study a language in years seven to 10. Now, following on from that, we are actively encouraging students to continue that language study through to year 12. Additionally, in a matter dear to the hearts of the Hon. Helen Sham-Ho and the Hon. Franca Arena, extra resources will be put into primary schools.

An appropriate focus is needed on languages of the Asia - Pacific region. This statement presents an initiative rather than simply outlining the priority languages for New South Wales and how this complements the national priority languages. This initiative highlights the importance of Asian languages. There is an allocation of \$5 million for the retraining of teachers, something that one would have hoped even the Teachers Federation would have supported. The federation welcomes the higher school certificate changes, but suggests that they are somehow old hat. However, the Premier points out that until now students have not been able to study the HSC part time. To say that we will change the rules through the Board of Studies so that students can do so is scarcely anything other than an exciting initiative. Also at the moment students cannot get genuine advanced credit in universities and technical and further education colleges. We wish to facilitate that. The Board of Studies is working on these important changes, and I hope that we will be able to release more details shortly. The changes most certainly are not old hat to the tens of thousands of potential students who currently find it impossible to complete the HSC under current rules.

Page 1831

The federation's release is quite predictable. Old habits die hard. It has attacked the basic skills test, a program that has received widespread support from parents and the community in general. While seeking further details on the matter, I received preliminary advice today that the basic skills test has just received an international award. More will be heard about that. The federation predictably attacks that test. Indeed, it attacked choice in schooling when zoning has been acclaimed by parents and individual schools are actively promoting their attributes and areas of interest to their local communities. Similarly, it attacked promotion on merit, which has rid the department of its slavish devotion to appointments based on seniority. It has enabled thousands of our most gifted teachers, particularly women, to rise to positions such as head teacher, deputy principal, leading teacher and principal of schools.

I assure the House that the Government will not resile from its commitment to establish world-class standards in our schools. Basic skills testing, choice in schooling and promotion on merit are essential to the strategy. The direction marked by the Premier on Monday will further advance our commitment to ensuring that we are fully meeting the needs of young people in our schools and that they are equipped with the skills, knowledge and experience they will need to further their education and training post school in order to be responsible citizens of Australia in the twenty-first century. As the Premier said on Monday, being adequate or average or better than last year is simply no longer enough. We have to look outwards and accept the challenge of world-class standards in our schools. It is my sincere hope that the Teachers Federation will be keen to join us in this fundamental purpose for activity. I hope that its commitment to education reform is not reflected by the flowery, knee-jerk negativity of yesterday's press release. One point provides me with some encouragement. The

Teachers Federation's release made no criticism of the establishment of the quality assurance unit in the department, about which my colleague the Hon. R. T. M. Bull spoke so adequately yesterday. I hope this signals its co-operation in this important venture. It is vital to ensure that all students are provided with top quality teaching and learning in all our classrooms and through all our educational programs.

#### **JOURNALISTIC PROTECTION LEGISLATION**

**The Hon. FRANCA ARENA:** I address my question without notice to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and Vice-President of the Executive Council, representing the Attorney General, Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Arts. Is the Minister aware that the Queensland Government intends to introduce into Parliament a journalistic protection bill to give legal effect to the journalistic ethic pledging professional respect for information received? Will the Government consider introducing such a bill in the New South Wales Parliament?

**The Hon. E. P. PICKERING:** I am aware of the background that has created this situation in Queensland. I was not aware that the Queensland Government was moving in this direction. Such a decision should be initiated only by the Attorney General. Given the soul searching that went on in providing similar protections for priests in the confessional, I imagine it would not be an easy task. However, it is a technical matter and I shall refer it to the Attorney General.

#### **HOME BUILDING INDUSTRY**

**The Hon. ELISABETH KIRKBY:** My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and Vice-President of the Executive Council, representing the Attorney General, Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister  
Page 1832  
for Arts. Is the Minister aware that the Federal Attorney-General is planning a review of the home building industry in Australia? Is he further aware that this review will involve consultation with industry representatives, regulatory bodies, builders and consumers? Will the Minister assure the House that the New South Wales Government will co-operate fully with the Federal Government in this long overdue review into the conduct of the building industry? If not, why not?

**The Hon. E. P. PICKERING:** My formal answer to the question is no, and no, but I shall refer the question to the relevant Minister. Given the royal commission that has been operating in this State, New South Wales would be at the forefront of reviewing the construction and building industry.

**The Hon. Elisabeth Kirkby:** Consumers have not been permitted to give evidence to the royal commission.

**The Hon. E. P. PICKERING:** I am sure that the royal commissioner's report is eagerly awaited by the community.

#### **ENERGY ACCOUNTS PAYMENTS ASSISTANCE**

**The Hon. HELEN SHAM-HO:** I ask the following question without notice of the Minister for Planning and Minister for Energy. How will payments under the energy accounts payments assistance scheme be made after the reorganisation of Sydney electricity services on the Central Coast?

**The Hon. R. J. WEBSTER:** I thank the Hon. Helen Sham-Ho for her question and her continuing interest in my portfolios. Sydney Electricity is maximising its efficiency in a whole range of areas, including the growing Central Coast. Part of the reorganisation on the Central Coast includes the establishment of a major service centre at Erina, which I will shortly be opening, and closure of smaller offices at Toukley and Woy Woy. Sydney Electricity is also exploring options to establish agencies in existing businesses. Members of the Toukley branch of the St Vincent de Paul Society informed me of their concerns about the effect the closures could have on the operation of the energy accounts payments assistance scheme, or EAPA. Under that scheme financially disadvantaged people who are having difficulties paying their electricity accounts can go to one of the participating organisations and be assessed for EAPA assistance. These organisations include the Smith Family, the St Vincent de Paul Society, Salvation Army, Sydney City Mission and Careforce.

Assistance is given in the form of 30 vouchers which are taken to one of the branch offices of the electricity distributors. The vouchers cannot be accepted at banks because they are not legal tender. On my direction an officer from the Office of Energy met staff from Sydney Electricity to seek a solution to this very real problem in order to continue this service on the Central Coast and to ensure that EAPA recipients will not be inconvenienced. They will be provided with reply-paid envelopes so that they can forward their vouchers by post to Sydney Electricity's central office. Arrangements are in place to ensure that all recipients are informed of these new procedures. Information sheets outlining these steps will be provided in conjunction with a backup telephone inquiry system. The reply-paid envelopes and information sheets are to be supplied by Sydney Electricity and delivered to the Office of Energy at least one month prior to the closure of the office. Office of Energy staff will then contact the organisations on the Central Coast participating in the EAPA scheme and inform them of the new arrangements and provide them with the reply-paid envelopes and information sheets. I am confident that this new arrangement will alleviate any hardship that may be experienced in that area.

Page 1833

#### **FANMAC AND HOMEFUND LOANS**

**The Hon. E. M. OBEID:** I ask the following question without notice of the Minister for Health and Community Services, representing the Minister for Housing. I draw the Minister's attention to the Premier's admission in Parliament on Tuesday last week that Treasury has asked for an independent inquiry to be undertaken into the operations of Fanmac Limited. In view of bank home loan interest rates falling to 11 per cent and as low as 8.75 per cent, what action is the Government taking to give relief to HomeFund borrowers who are still committed to loan repayments in excess of 12.4 per cent and up to 15.9 per cent interest? Will the Government stop advertising HomeFund loans until a review of Fanmac and HomeFund operations has been completed?

**The Hon. J. P. HANNAFORD:** The honourable member would understand that I do not have the details to answer his detailed question. I shall convey his question to the Minister and obtain a response as quickly as possible.

#### **JEHOVAH'S WITNESS BLOOD TRANSFUSIONS**

**The Hon. ELAINE NILE:** I direct my question without notice to the Minister for Health and Community Services. What is the Government's policy on blood transfusions for members of the Jehovah's Witness sect in view of the death of a 12-year-old girl with

a blood disorder in Melbourne whose parents refused blood transfusions on behalf of the child?

**The Hon. J. P. HANNAFORD:** I am not in a position to answer that specific question off the top of my head. I noticed the issue reported in the newspaper and intended to get advice on it. I will be taking up the issue with my community services portfolio and particularly in relation to the issue involving the Guardianship Board and whether or not there is a right to use the Guardianship Board to be able to intervene in that area if appropriate. I will obtain a detailed answer for the honourable member to her most important question.

#### ADOPTION INFORMATION ACT

**The Hon. Dr MARLENE GOLDSMITH:** My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Health and Community Services. There has been a considerable amount of community interest in the review of the Adoption Information Act. How will the public be able to make submissions to this review?

**The Hon. J. P. HANNAFORD:** I thank the honourable member for her most appropriate question at this time. No doubt many members have an interest in a review of the Adoption Information Act and its outcome for they played an integral role in the formulation of the Adoption Information Act 1990 through the report of the Social Issues Committee on accessing adoption information. When the Adoption Information Act first came into operation facility was provided so that after two years of monitoring there would be a review. On 14th December, 1991, I announced that under this provision the Law Reform Commission of New South Wales would examine the way the Adoption Information Act has been working and its impact on all parties involved. The review is being headed by Professor Richard Chisholm, a part-time law reform commissioner. The terms of reference of the review by the commission are to inquire into and report on the operation of the Act, public awareness of the Act and its implementation.

Page 1834

The commission will consider the effects of the Act on all parties to adoption - adopted people, birth parents, adopting parents and extended families of all parties. To date the Law Reform Commission has received a large number of submissions and inquiries, both written and oral, over the telephone. Next week marks a significant step up in the conduct of the review. In this weekend's newspapers advertisements will appear calling for submissions to the review from the public. They may be either written or oral, and may be given over the telephone. I am also able to announce that there will be a series of public and private hearings to enable people to present submissions to the review. The first of these hearings will be held on 13th April in Sydney. The review will then travel to seven regional centres to take submissions - Newcastle, Dubbo, Tamworth, Lismore, Wollongong, Queanbeyan and Wagga Wagga.

Since 1991 adult adopted persons as well as birth and adopting parents have had rights to be given information concerning other parties to an adoption. There have also been methods of placing a veto on contact between adopting parties as well as facilities for reunions to occur if the parties wish. Though these reforms have been welcomed by the vast majority of people who are parties to adoption, a number of groups have been concerned about the effects of adoption legislation. This review will enable people who are satisfied or dissatisfied with the operation of the Act to have their say. If members of the public have anything to say to the commission, they are invited to contact the commission by telephone or in person, make a written submission or take part in public

hearings. Submissions will be received until 1st May, 1992. I have directed that all correspondence received by my office or by the Department of Community Services relating to the review be made available to the Law Reform Commission. I know that some honourable members are interested in this matter. If honourable members would like further information regarding the inquiry and guidelines, they can obtain it from either the Law Reform Commission or my office.

#### **BLOOD LEAD LEVELS IN CHILDREN**

**The Hon. P. F. O'GRADY:** I address a question to the Minister for Health and Community Services. When will the Government introduce mass screening for lead poisoning of children aged nine months to 48 months? What action has the Government taken to reduce the acceptable blood lead level in children so that the level is in line with the American standard as urged by the head of the toxicology unit at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and other experts?

**The Hon. J. P. HANNAFORD:** Blood lead levels in children are an important issue but there is no information before me which would justify mass screening of children across the State. To the extent that the question would give rise to a suggestion that public health interests across the State would justify such screening and cause alarm in the community, it is totally without justification. I am aware of absolutely no suggestion which would warrant such screening. In certain instances blood lead problems have been identified and the Department of Health has public health workers intensively working with the local communities in the areas to redress the problems. That is being done in a multifaceted way, the details of which are not readily available to me.

**The Hon. P. F. O'Grady:** Is it just in inner Sydney?

**The Hon. J. P. HANNAFORD:** I am not aware that that is the case. There are major programs in Broken Hill and in the Newcastle area. I am not aware that there is such a program in any part of the inner city area. If there is such a problem, I will make certain that the honourable member is acquainted with it. If the honourable member wants details of particular aspects of the programs being pursued, I will be happy to make them available to him.

Page 1835

#### **ELECTRICITY INDUSTRY**

**The Hon. S. B. MUTCH:** My question is directed to the Minister for Planning and Minister for Energy. What initiatives has the electricity distribution industry undertaken to improve operational efficiency so that increases to electricity prices can be kept to a minimum without jeopardising the quality and safety of electricity supply?

**The Hon. R. J. WEBSTER:** The electricity distribution industry is continuing to explore avenues for improved service and greater levels of efficiency. One recent initiative comes through the Electricity Council of New South Wales, an industry advisory body which is co-ordinating a combined purchasing scheme. This scheme allows the industry as a whole to buy plant and equipment - cables and transformers - in bulk and at a greatly reduced price. For example, for low voltage aerial bundled cable a comparison of the prices tendered by recommended suppliers with prices previously tendered to individual authorities indicates savings ranging from 18 per cent to 33 per cent. This is estimated to be equivalent to an overall saving of approximately \$450,000

per annum for the industry. For whole substation distribution transformers the savings to the industry based on estimated usage for 1991-92 is almost \$700,000. Further benefits will flow from reduced lead times and stock rationalisation. In conjunction with the combined purchasing scheme the industry has introduced electronic trading of items using the Government's electronic purchasing system Supplyline, an initiative I introduced when I was Minister for Administrative Services. Specified items and prices have been incorporated into the Supplyline database and these items can be both purchased and paid for electronically, removing the need for time-consuming and costly paper transactions.

With the introduction of this initiative it will be possible to further reduce in real terms prices to customers while providing a better, more efficient service. Apart from the obvious cost savings other positive results will be achieved including: the sharing of stock, which will be possible across the industry; lead times, and hence inventory levels, will be reduced; administration costs will be reduced; and electronic fund transfers will be possible. This means that the people of New South Wales, more particularly industry, will get cheaper and cheaper electricity. Of course, that is good for jobs. Once again the Opposition is seeking to ridicule any proposal that will provide more jobs. The Hon. P. F. O'Grady is pretending to play a fiddle. All members on this side of the Chamber are for jobs, which is more than can be said for honourable members opposite. They appear to want to do everything they can to prevent employment opportunities in New South Wales. I am very proud of this Government's record in electricity pricing. Under this Government the real price of electricity has fallen. Honourable members no doubt recall the blackout days of Paul Landa's ministry when the price of electricity went up 30 per cent in one year.

**The Hon. Dr Meredith Burgmann:** The newspaper says blackouts are looming.

**The Hon. R. J. WEBSTER:** That is Pat Rogan talking. No one takes any notice of him. Until members opposite learn that they are here to represent the working people of this State they will never return to the Treasury benches of New South Wales.

#### CASTLEREAGH EXPRESSWAY

**The Hon. R. S. L. JONES:** I ask the Minister for Planning and Minister for Energy, representing the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Roads: why did the Minister for Roads say yesterday that the Michael Perry and Associates study on the financial viability of the proposed freeways was available when  
Page 1836

I and members of the public have not been able to obtain copies of this report even under a freedom of information request? Is it not a fact that this document is still not available today and that copies cannot be obtained from the Roads and Traffic Authority library? Will the Minister ensure that this study is released and taxpayers are made fully aware of the total cost of the proposed Castlereagh tollway?

**The Hon. R. J. WEBSTER:** I will answer the honourable member's question in due course.

#### FLEET MAINTENANCE SERVICES

**The Hon. I. M. MACDONALD:** I direct my question without notice to the Leader of the Government in this House, representing the Minister for Transport. Is the Minister aware of a \$40 million "Management buy out" proposal of the State Rail Authority Fleet Maintenance Services? Is this proposed buy-out, led by a consortium

headed by Mr Bill Goodwin - general manager of Fleet Maintenance Services, who is on leave - and seven other State Rail Authority fleet managers with the assistance of a leading bank? Given the anticipated loss of 700 jobs, a projected turnover of up to \$90 million per annum, and severe problems in Trackfast, has the Government determined guidelines for such management buy-outs? Does the Minister agree that there could be conflicts of interest and potential use of inside knowledge? Does a code of conduct apply? If not, will the Government review this sensitive area to establish a fair and equitable policy relating to management buy-outs?

**The Hon. E. P. PICKERING:** Had this question been put on notice, I am sure my colleague in the other House would have answered with alacrity. It should be clear to the honourable member that I have no idea of the immense detail about which the honourable member has just burdened the Chamber. I will draw it to the attention of the Minister for Transport, who I am sure, if this proposal has been mooted, will have conducted matters most professionally.

### **PUBLIC SCHOOL FUNDING PRIORITIES**

**The Hon. D. F. MOPPETT:** My question is directed to the Minister for School Education and Youth Affairs. Is the Minister aware of allegations by the Opposition's shadow education spokesman, the honourable member for Riverstone, that schools on the North Shore, namely Barrenjoey High School and Warrawee Public School, were being advantaged over schools in western Sydney? Is there possibly any validity in this outrageous suggestion?

**The Hon. VIRGINIA CHADWICK:** I was alarmed by the preposterous allegation of the honourable member for Riverstone, who is putting forward the spurious suggestion that somehow schools on the North Shore of Sydney were being advantaged compared with schools in Sydney's western suburbs. Before I address that matter one or two comments need to be clearly stated. The first is based on my own observations and experience. When I became Minister for School Education I visited some of the schools on the North Shore of Sydney and found gaping holes in classroom floors and roofs. The health and safety of staff and students was at risk because of the political priorities that had been applied for more than a decade by members opposite who were part of the previous Government. This Government, both the previous Minister and myself, have ordered capital works priorities on the basis of need. I suggest to those who might seek to refute that claim - including the honourable member for Riverstone in another place - that they look to the facts. I have taken the trouble to find out what has

Page 1837

been expended on education in the honourable member's electorate during the past couple of years. The honourable member is critical because a school wants to sell off a slither of its land so that it can build a hall for which it has been waiting for 25 years.

In 1989-90 in the Riverstone electorate actual expenditure on major capital works amounted to \$1.5 million; in 1990-91 actual expenditure, a further \$2.2 million; in 1991-92 actual expenditure, \$7.1 million; and in 1992-93, works in progress - the money has not been totally expended yet - \$10.6 million. The honourable member suggests that it is unfair that a school should want to sell off a slice of its land, to get funds to build a hall for which it has been waiting for 25 years. It might receive \$800,000 or \$900,000 for this piece of land. He claims that it is unfair that the school should trade land for an asset, namely a hall that will be of lasting benefit to the present and future students of Barrenjoey. The honourable member has already received \$7.1 million, and when work is completed by the end of 1993, he will have received \$10.6 million. But what does he want to do with the money? He wants it distributed fifty-fifty. He is not satisfied with

receiving millions of dollars. One third of the entire capital works budget is spent on half of New South Wales while the remaining two thirds is spent on the mid-southwest, mid-west and the growth areas of New South Wales. Is that fair? The argument of the honourable member has nothing to do with equity. It is about ignorance, stupidity or downright greed. The honourable member should look to his facts before he casts aspersions about the long-suffering students at Barrenjoey, who have been waiting 25 years for a hall and are willing to do something to help themselves - which is more than I can say for the honourable member for Riverstone.

#### **ADVANCED SKILLS TEACHERS**

**The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS:** My question without notice is directed to the Minister for School Education and Youth Affairs. I refer to the establishment of advanced skills teacher positions in New South Wales schools. Have 28 advanced skills teacher positions been allocated to schools in the Nyngan cluster, where there are only eight teachers eligible for such positions? In contrast, have only 13 positions been allocated to the Ballina cluster, despite over 200 teachers being eligible? Why is the Government's allocation of the positions deliberately designed to ensure that they cannot be filled by eligible teachers?

**The Hon. VIRGINIA CHADWICK:** I am unaware of the details of the matter raised or, indeed, whether the assertions the honourable member has made in relation to Nyngan and Ballina are correct. Given the honourable member's track record to date, I shall check the facts before I give an answer.

#### **FARRER MEMORIAL AGRICULTURAL HIGH SCHOOL**

**The Hon. JENNIFER GARDINER:** My question is directed to the Minister for School Education and Youth Affairs. Is the Minister aware that the nursing staff at Farrer Memorial Agricultural High School at Tamworth have proposed that their conditions of employment be subject to an enterprise agreement which the school has drafted in conjunction with the nurses? Will the Minister ensure that negotiations between the school, the department and the nurses are dealt with expeditiously so that their request for an enterprise agreement can be granted in the near future?

**The Hon. VIRGINIA CHADWICK:** I commend the Hon. Jennifer Gardiner for her continuing interest in education particularly for rural New South Wales. One of the major thrusts of the Industrial Relations Act is to encourage locally based and, so far as

Page 1838  
possible, locally negotiated enterprise agreements. The reason for this is simple. The best way to make an agreement to suit local needs is to make sure it is negotiated at the local level. I am pleased to say that discussions have taken place covering the matron and two submatrons positions at Farrer Agricultural High School. That typifies this approach to industrial relations. The matron and the two submatrons at Farrer are primarily responsible for providing assistance to any sick or injured children in the school. These valuable employees work on a rostered basis. That includes a requirement to be available during the evenings and on weekends in school terms. In addition to their salaries, a special on-call allowance is paid to compensate for this duty and for overtime. Last year officers of the department were approached with a proposal that the on-call allowance should be increased in line with the allowance paid in other areas. This increase was approved and the matron is now paid an allowance of \$3,820. The allowance of the submatrons has been increased to \$3,592. At the same time further proposals were advanced to review the current leave and roster arrangements to ensure that they best suited the needs of students at the school. It was proposed that the matron

and submatrons should be paid a salary equivalent to that of a registered nurse.

I am pleased to advise that these and many other detailed proposals have been discussed during the past two weeks by officers of the industrial relations directorate of the department, the director of human resources in the northwest region, and school staff. The director of human resources in the region visited Farrer last week and a detailed proposal to restructure the roles of the matron and the submatrons is now being finalised. Attention will be given to ensuring that the provisions of any enterprise agreement will take into account the needs of all school staff and will ensure that the roles and responsibilities of the matron and submatrons, as well as their salaries and conditions, truly reflect the needs of the school. The honourable member can be assured that I will ask the appropriate departmental officers to expedite this matter. If this issue can be resolved to the satisfaction of the matron, submatrons and school staff and a balance can be kept between their conditions and salaries and those of other members of staff at Farrer and other agricultural high schools, the enterprise agreement that will result will be a significant breakthrough in the department.

#### **MUNMORAH POWER STATION**

**The Hon. Dr MEREDITH BURGMANN:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Planning and Minister for Energy. I refer the Minister to the question I asked last week about the proposed privatisation of Munmorah power station. In the light of yesterday's newspaper reports about the possible privatisation of Elcom, does the Minister still not know what is happening at Munmorah? Would he like me to tell him what is happening?

**The Hon. R. J. WEBSTER:** No, I do not need the honourable member to tell me because I know that a meeting was held between a number of backbenchers and a group from the Newcastle region who wanted to discuss the privatisation of Munmorah as some sort of project.

**The Hon. Dr Meredith Burgmann:** George Souris?

**The Hon. R. J. WEBSTER:** No. The honourable member should get her information right. She got it wrong last time she asked me a question and she has got it wrong again. I know how disappointed she is about not being included in the parliamentary cricket team. I will organise a trial for her next year so that she can demonstrate what a good fast bowler she is.

Page 1839

**The Hon. E. P. Pickering:** A female Ian Botham.

**The Hon. R. J. WEBSTER:** My honourable colleague said that the Hon. Dr Meredith Burgmann is the female version of Ian Botham. I would not like to speculate on that because I do not know her well enough.

**The Hon. Judith Walker:** But you will take the time to find out.

**The Hon. R. J. WEBSTER:** We will all be here for a long time, as the Hon. Judith Walker knows.

**The Hon. J. H. Jobling:** The Hon. Judith Walker is not so sure about that.

**The Hon. R. J. WEBSTER:** We hope the Hon. Judith Walker will be here for a long time, because the alternative is not worth contemplating. The group that came to Sydney to speak to these members of Parliament was from the University of Newcastle. Mr Souris was not there, nor was I. I understand that a staff member of Mr Souris was there. I assure the honourable member that is the end of the issue in relation to Munmorah. As to privatisation of the electricity industry, obviously that has clearly been on the Government's agenda since it was elected to office. The Premier has said that until recently the only places in the world that were not pursuing privatisation were Cuba, North Korea and New South Wales. Of course New South Wales is now privatising, and obviously opportunities to privatise power stations may present themselves in the future. At this time the Government, however, has no definite plans to privatise power stations. The Government will do what is best for the electricity consumers of New South Wales. Those options are on the table and will be considered in the fullness of time after full consultation with the industry and the community. I am sad to say that the Hon. Dr Meredith Burgmann got it wrong again, but I hope that I have now reassured her that at this time the Government has no intention of privatising Munmorah power station.

#### **COMPENSATION FOR THE FAMILY OF DAVID GUNDY**

**The Hon. E. P. PICKERING:** On 17th March I was asked a question by the Hon. J. W. Shaw concerning compensation payments for the family of David Gundy. During yesterday's debate one member criticised me for not reporting to the House on that matter. I can now advise the House that I have received, only in the past hour or so, advice from Crown law officers which I will now impart to the House.

**The Hon. J. R. Johnson:** What is the date of the advice?

**The Hon. E. P. PICKERING:** I have a letter from the Attorney General dated 25th March addressed to myself. It reads:

On 17 March 1992 the Hon J W Shaw, MLC, directed to you a question without notice concerning compensation for the family of David Gundy.

A suggested response is attached.

The suggested response reads:

On 17 March 1992, the Hon. J W Shaw, MLC asked a question concerning compensation for the family of David Gundy.

The Attorney General, Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Arts advises:

Page 1840

On 31 December, 1990, Commissioner Wootten presented his report of his inquiry into Mr Gundy's death. He recommended the Government should make amends to Doreen and Bradley Eatts, Richard McDonald and Marc Valentine, and, if possible, the matter should be settled by negotiation.

On 1 May, 1991, the Crown Solicitor wrote to the legal representatives of Doreen and Bradley Eatts, Richard McDonald and Marc Valentine seeking details of any claims. To date no contact has been made by Mr McDonald or his representatives. Mr Valentine's claim is being negotiated by the Crown Solicitor.

On 13 May 1991, the Aboriginal Legal Service indicated, on behalf of the Eatts, a detailed claim would be made as soon as possible.

Nothing was received until 29 January, 1992 when the Crown Solicitor was served a Statement of Claim from the Eatts.

On 20 February, 1992 the Crown Solicitor was given approval to instruct Mr Finnane, QC, to advise on the claim.

The Government has always been more than willing to negotiate settlement. Further, the Government has already paid \$130,449.72 to Ms Eatts to assist in meeting miscellaneous living and travelling expenses, funeral expenses, the cost of grief counselling, and legal costs associated with representation by Senior Counsel at the coronial inquest.

I hope that answer satisfies the Hon. J. W. Shaw as to the present situation.

### **COMMISSIONER OF POLICE SUBVERSION**

**The Hon. E. P. PICKERING:** On more than one occasion recently some interest has been shown by the Hon. I. M. Macdonald in a statement said to have been made by the Commissioner of Police during a recent edition of the "7.30 Report". Given the significance of this matter, I asked the Commissioner of Police to advise me on it in detail. I will read to the House the commissioner's signed representation to me which I received today:

During the course of an interview on the 7.30 Report on Monday, 16th March 1992, I made the following statement: "I am now aware of material that I cannot make public of attempts by a number of leading criminals in Sydney to prevent me from becoming commissioner and that they used a former police officer to achieve that end". It is clear that, as I advised you last week and you told the Parliament, my statement relates purely to events prior to my appointment as Commissioner of Police. As you are aware, during the selection process for the commissioner's position, the Independent Commission Against Corruption received a complaint alleging corrupt conduct on my behalf. The allegations were immediately investigated by Mr Ian Temby QC, Commissioner of the Independent Commission Against Corruption who advised the police board that they were completely without foundation. I understand this finding was reported to Cabinet. It certainly was included in the ICAC annual report.

I hope that clears up that matter.

### **ELCOM COALMINE SALE**

**The Hon. R. J. WEBSTER:** On 11th March the Hon. Dr Meredith Burgmann asked me a question without notice concerning the sale of Elcom coalmines. I am advised that \$239,979 was paid to consultants in association with the sale of Liddell State mine. It should be noted that some of the work undertaken for Liddell State mine, as it was the first one offered for sale, is applicable for future sales and would not need to be repeated.

Page 1841

### **BALLINA SHIRE COUNCIL AND NORTH CREEK BRIDGE**

**The Hon. R. J. WEBSTER:** On 20th March the Hon. R. S. L. Jones asked a

question without notice about Ballina Shire Council. The Department of Planning has been advised by Ballina Shire Council that it does not intend to undertake major construction work outside the period May to August when shorebirds are absent, as required by the concurrence of the Director of Planning for the North Creek bridge and associated works. The council has further advised that it has retained the services of a consultant ornithologist to monitor the migratory birds and to advise on ways to mitigate against environmental disturbance, as required by the director's concurrence. Under the circumstances the migratory birds would not be disturbed by construction during April. As regards any action to ensure that the Ballina Shire Council complies with the director's concurrence, I have requested the Department of Planning to monitor the situation.

#### **WARRIEWOOD-INGLESIDE ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES**

**The Hon. R. J. WEBSTER:** On 20th March the Hon. Dorothy Isaksen asked me a question about Warriewood-Ingleside environmental studies. The answer is as follows:

- (1) On 13th December 1991 I announced the inclusion of Warriewood and Ingleside in the Government's urban development program for residential land release. Rezoning of the land will be preceded by a series of studies. These studies will address issues such as water cycle management, urban capability, flora and fauna, and Aboriginal archaeology. However a number of earlier studies have already addressed issues such as urban capability, transport and employment. The proposed studies will build on the work undertaken. Warringah Shire Council has advised that it proposes to convene and chair a release area management committee to oversee the preparation of these studies and prepare a local environmental plan to rezone the land. The running of this committee will be transferred to Pittwater Provisional Council when it is formally constituted in May 1992.

A brief of the water cycle management study is being finalised. The other studies are not expected to commence until the convening of the release area management committee.

- (2) The Department of Planning has written to the Warringah Shire Council requesting that they now establish the release area management committee. It will be the responsibility of the committee, which is to be convened by the Council, to ensure that residents are kept informed of the progress of studies relevant to the release area.

#### **MINISTER FOR PLANNING AND MINISTER FOR ENERGY: ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT ACT**

**The Hon. R. J. WEBSTER:** On 20th March the Hon. R. S. L. Jones asked me a question about the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. The answer is as follows:

- (1) The answer to the first part is Yes.
- (2) The answer to the second part is Yes.
- (3) Finally, the answer to the third part is No. It is section 23(8)(b) of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act which prevents this delegation. It provides that nothing in section 23, which deals with the Minister's power to delegate his functions under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, authorises the delegation of the Minister's

---

## **PUBLIC HOSPITAL PRIVATISATION**

### **Matter of Public Interest**

#### **Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Reverend the Hon. F. J. NILE** [5.2]: Before question time I said that the members of the Opposition in this House and in the other place have spoken in very favourable terms about privatisation. I wish to refer to a recent quote by the Leader of the Opposition. He said:

We must reject the notion that privatisation or private involvement in infrastructure projects should be self-evidently regarded as a good or bad thing.

I was impressed with arguments put by Professor John Dwyer, whom I am sure honourable members on both sides of the House know as a medical authority in this State and in this nation, in his very strong defence of the entire proposition concerning the Port Macquarie Base Hospital. Professor Dwyer has written to a number of members of Parliament and has stated his case very clearly. He has also provided a statement headed "The case for private sector involvement in public health". Professor Dwyer, under the letterhead of the University of New South Wales - the Prince Henry Hospital and the Prince of Wales Hospital - has written to Mr Hatton as follows:

I believe that Parliament will be looking this week at the question of private sector involvement in public health in general, and the arrangements for Port Macquarie hospital in particular. Having worked in the United States for 15 years and now struggling to maintain excellence in our teaching hospitals here in NSW, I am well aware that private sector involvement in public health is neither inherently good nor inherently bad. It depends entirely on the way the matter is handled. To dismiss out of hand any involvement of the private sector in public health in our own society would be as inappropriate as whole-heartedly embracing the concept without ensuring that the appropriate safeguards are put in place.

Professor Dwyer has provided a statement, which reflects the views of an organisation of which he is president - the New South Wales branch of the Australian University Clinical Professors Association, an organisation of full professors who between them run 80 per cent of the tertiary referral services in New South Wales. It is obviously one of the most esteemed groups of medical authorities in New South Wales and in the nation. Professor Dwyer, in his statement "The case for private sector involvement in public health", states:

Now the window of opportunity for improving the system has improved, for unless a lack of political resolve under ill-informed attack interferes with common sense, private sector finance and management skills may be brought into the public health system. Undoubtedly, this will provide an opportunity for rapidly improving the situation for everybody. Such a development may be politically expedient, for Government certainly can't find the money necessary to both run the health care systems adequately and capitalise new developments, but it may in fact be one of the few blessings to come out of our very damaging recession.

Welcoming the private sector into public health will benefit the system in three ways. Firstly, the initiative will change for the better the way we integrate public and private services.

Secondly, private sector management practices will allow more efficient use of health care dollars, improve initiative and morale, and allow us to decentralise the management of our hospitals. Thirdly, and some, but not I, would say most importantly, a huge injection of capital can be anticipated to create many jobs and better facilities for all.

Page 1843

Professor Dwyer also says that there are advantages in involving private sector management practices in public hospitals. He says:

A centralised, over-bureaucratised management system forcing historical budgets on hospitals promotes inefficiency and lowers the standard of service. Where there are no reward systems for individuals who are exceptionally productive and dedicated, and no way of removing the "dead wood" that clogs up a system, morale suffers. When an individual's effort seems to make no real difference and coming in on budget means less money the following year, work satisfaction falls away and altruism, that essential and ever-so-rewarding ingredient in a health care setting, disappears.

Just as in other areas of Australian work life, it is critical that we become more performance orientated in our hospitals. We must be able to lease equipment, have the flexibility to divert budget allocations promptly and efficiently . . . and devolve control down into smaller units. Most of the hospital administrators in our system are well trained and excellent at their job but they are less efficient than they would like because of the system in which they must work. Let them, under contract to a private sector organisation, continue to run their hospitals but with the new flexibility that would be available and return on dollars spent will improve markedly, as will service and morale.

It has been my impression that when we have a huge bureaucracy, as has developed over many years in New South Wales in the public health system, it does not necessarily mean greater inefficiency. I believe the flexibility of a strong public health system running parallel with a private system is desirable. The same principle can be applied to the education area, where there are private schools and government schools. Perhaps this would create a very healthy atmosphere of competition between the two systems and, of course, co-operation, as will occur with the Port Macquarie Base Hospital. In his summing up, Professor Dwyer said:

Certainly, major change in Australia is difficult to achieve. For the changes we have discussed to occur, public debate based on facts not emotion is essential.

I believe that, as is evident from some of the statements made by members of the extreme left of the Australian Labor Party, who have been taking the running on this issue, it is an emotional issue and, to some extent, Hon. Elisabeth Kirkby indicated the same emotion and strong feelings in her own contribution to this debate - in fact, in introducing the debate. It is not profitable to debate these matters in an atmosphere of emotion. Such debate must be based on facts. Professor Dwyer rightly says there has been suspicion between the public sector and the private sector. I believe honourable members must go beyond that for the good of the people of New South Wales. Our prime concern should be what is best for the people of New South Wales and best for the people of Port Macquarie.

**The Hon. D. J. GAY** [5.9]: The Minister is taking a huge risk letting me loose in a privatisation debate. Honourable members all know my background. I am wet up to my ears and well known as an agrarian socialist in the National Party. I dislike the word "privatise". What I do like is what the Minister is attempting to do for the people of Port

Macquarie. Unlike the Hon. Elisabeth Kirkby, I am not blinkered by some sort of dogma. Reverend the Hon. F. J. Nile was correct when he said that the Hon. Elisabeth Kirkby is blinkered by dogma. I do not know whether it is her English background, or perhaps her time as a trade union official, but she has certainly brought that blinkered dogma into the debate.

**The Hon. Elisabeth Kirkby:** I was never a trade union official.

**The Hon. D. J. GAY:** The honourable member was a trade union official. She  
Page 1844  
was the vice-president of Actors Equity, and she is still acting today. The concept of a private hospital at Port Macquarie is not so objectionable. Most honourable members would agree that St Vincent's Private Hospital is the best hospital in Sydney.

**Reverend the Hon. F. J. Nile:** Mrs Hawke uses it.

**The Hon. D. J. GAY:** That is correct; it is good enough for Mrs Hawke and probably the Hon. Elisabeth Kirkby has used it on occasion. I hope she has private health insurance. Anyone earning a salary similar to that which the Hon. Elisabeth Kirkby earns should have private health insurance. If the people of Port Macquarie were asked whether privatisation would give them a new hospital sooner, the answer would be yes. It will not disadvantage anyone in the public health system. The problem with the privatisation of public hospitals is that it does not fit in with the Hon. Elisabeth Kirkby's particular political bent, or with the scurrilous campaign being conducted by members of the Opposition. A certain newspaper in this State persists in calling the Leader of the Opposition in another place Abe Carr, after that famous president, Abraham Lincoln. It does not take too much imagination to work out why he is not called George Washington - the Leader of the Opposition can tell a lie but George Washington could not. Opposition members have misled the House.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Dr Refshauge, is known to all and sundry in the State as Rumours Refshauge. He spreads everything but the truth wherever he goes. I am sure it horrifies the Hon. B. H. Vaughan to learn that Dr Refshauge spreads rumours. The first thing he does when he visits a town is to say, "The rumour is that this hospital is going to close", or "The rumour is that the Minister is going to privatise this particular hospital". Prior to the former Labor Government losing office in 1988 it promised to spend \$2 billion on the State's hospitals and health services. I have with me a document headed "Health 2000" issued by the former Labor Government, which lists new hospitals, wards, operating theatres, casualty centres and outpatient centres. I have read the document, as I am sure has the Minister for Health and Community Services, and nowhere in the document is there mention of a new hospital for Port Macquarie.

**The Hon. J. P. Hannaford:** The former Labor Government had no intentions of looking after the people of Port Macquarie.

**The Hon. D. J. GAY:** Exactly; a Labor government would not have considered a new hospital for Port Macquarie.

**The Hon. J. P. Hannaford:** Bob Carr will not give them that commitment even now.

**The Hon. D. J. GAY:** That is right; there is no commitment. The people of Port Macquarie would be considerably worse off if the Labor Party were in office. In 1986 the former Labor Government promised a hospital for Lithgow, and the present

honourable member for Bathurst is still waiting. The honourable member is now in favour of privatisation.

**The Hon. J. P. Hannaford:** He wants the Port Macquarie option for Lithgow.

**The Hon. D. J. GAY:** I have never met Mick Clough. People in Bathurst are complaining that the Government has not given them a fair go, but if one has a busy  
Page 1845

schedule round the pool table one does not have much time to canvass Ministers. However, the honourable member for Bathurst said that the Labor Party was not opposed to such a private hospital and that he believed it was important to the Lithgow district. He said that the Australian Labor Party would remain opposed to the privatisation of health services. In April 1986, two years before the former Labor Government lost office, it promised to establish a new hospital at Lithgow, but the Lithgow people are still waiting for that Labor promise. The honourable member for Bathurst is to attend the opening of a bridge promised by the former Labor Government but delivered by the Greiner-Murray Government.

Another member of Parliament who has involved himself in this debate is the honourable member for South Coast. His alternative to privatisation is to provide demountable buildings, similar to those provided by the Labor Party in its safe electorates, such as the demountable high school at Cessnock. John Hatton's solution to the problem is to go out to the back shed, get a saw and conduct a few operations there. This member is dictating what should happen in this State. He is against privatisation of public hospitals but I am reliably informed that he favours privatisation of prisons. It is worth reminding honourable members of the proportion of the vote Mr Hatton received at the last election. He received 15,327 votes, 51 per cent of which were first preference votes. A total of 48.63 per cent of voters did not vote for him. The total first preferences for the three Independents in the lower House was 1.28 per cent of the vote. If the two-party preferred votes for the three Independents is added -

**The Hon. Elisabeth Kirkby:** On a point of order. I fail to see what the vote gained by the Independent members in another place has to do with the debate on privatisation of hospitals. The honourable member should return to the subject-matter of the motion.

**The Hon. D. J. Gay:** On the point of order. I am endeavouring to demonstrate that in a two-party preferred situation the Independents received 1.65 per cent of the vote and that 89 per cent of electors did not vote for them. However, I am happy to return to the subject-matter of the motion.

**The DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Dr Marlene Goldsmith):** Order! The honourable member should follow that course.

**The Hon. D. J. GAY:** I pay tribute to the honourable member for Port Macquarie for the work she has done for her electorate. The honourable member was able to get a promise from the Government to establish a new hospital at Port Macquarie but because of the recession and the fall in the Government's revenue from the sale of its assets, the Minister said that the money was no longer available for the hospital. After much persuasion by the honourable member for Port Macquarie and the goodwill of the Minister, a solution to the problem was found. Had it not been for the goodwill of the honourable member for Port Macquarie and the determination of the Minister for Health and Community Services, the people of Port Macquarie would be in the same situation as the people of Lithgow. [*Time expired.*]

**The Hon. J. F. RYAN [5.19]:** I begin my speech with the following quote:

Privatisation of health services or fostering competition can achieve various goals such as greater equity, considered desirable by reformist governments, but socialist measures they are not. There really is not much use in the "socialist" any more. It has run its race.

No statement better sums up the opinion of Government members on the privatisation  
Page 1846

debate, but these remarks were not made by the Premier or some famed and cold-blooded devotee of economic rationalism; these words were spoken by none other than the Leader of the Labor Party in New South Wales, Bob Carr. The most offensive aspect of the opposition of the New South Wales Labor Party to privatisation is its basic hypocrisy and blatant opportunism. If it were not for the fact that the Labor Party thinks it can win a few political points by siding with rogue motions, introduced by Independent members in another place or by the Australian Democrats in this Chamber and designed to roll the Government, there would not be a debate about privatisation because no principles relating to privatisation are foreign to the alleged ideals of the Labor Party. No threat to the public hospital system arises out of the proposal for a privately financed hospital to provide public patient services in Port Macquarie. In fact, there are a number of advantages. There is no logic in the arguments against privatisation within the Australian public health system. Finally, neither the Labor Party nor the Australian Democrats have any other way of implementing their promises to upgrade the public hospital system other than following the lead which the Government has set.

**The Hon. J. P. Hannaford:** The Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the other place has welcomed the decision of St Vincent's to go to western Sydney.

**The Hon. J. F. RYAN:** I am sure he would; I welcomed that decision. Honourable members will remember remarks made by the Leader of the Labor Party, Bob Carr, when he was under pressure from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation interviewer, Quentin Dempster, to explain how he would tackle funding government revenue programs. Quentin Dempster said:

Well, you won't sell the GIO; you won't sell the State Bank. The Labor Party seems to be against privatisation. You won't contract out; you won't sell assets; and you won't downsize government departments and enterprise.

Under the glare of the television lights, the Leader of the Opposition announced his conversion to privatisation. Privatisation is not foreign to the Labor Party. Labor federally is prepared to privatise public assets such as the Commonwealth Bank and Telecom. The Victorian Labor Government has a vigorous program of selling public assets. The Victorian Labor Government also has proposals for a privatised hospital. Neville Wran was prepared to give Mount Druitt Hospital to the nuns; Ron Mulock was quite happy to contract out services at St John of God Hospital. When it suits the Leader of the Opposition, he is prepared to make positive noises about privatisation as well. As members of this House know, I come from a part of this city where the health needs are so critical that we cannot afford to be fussy about where the money is coming from for our health services. Rates of premature death from cancer are 30 per cent higher than those in the rest of the State. Our death rate from heart disease and stroke is double that of the rest of the State. We have a 30 per cent higher rate of mortality from respiratory disease. This represents an appalling record for an area of the State where the population is relatively younger than that of the rest of the State. The Government has done a great deal to meet those needs from recurrent expenditure. This year the Government has

increased the budget of the Wentworth Area Health Service by 21 per cent; the South West Area Health Service by 11 per cent; and the Western Sydney Area Health Service by 6 per cent.

Other initiatives included in the budget of this year include an allocation of \$8.8 million for the redevelopment of Liverpool Hospital, a quarter of a million dollars for the relocation of the Karitane Family Care Centre from Randwick to Fairfield, millions of

Page 1847

dollars being spent on the upgrading of the Nepean Hospital to teaching hospital status, as well as \$41 million for the relocation of the children's hospital to Westmead. This Government can hardly be accused of not trying its darnedest to put hospital resources in areas where they are most needed and to make them available from recurrent expenditure. Of course the Opposition and the Australian Democrats have attempted to make political capital out of the relocation of resources to growth areas by complaining about hospital closures in the inner city. I need go no further to find a condemnation of the opportunism of the Labor Party and the Leader of the Opposition than the words of one of his former members of staff. I quote the address on this subject of Mark Latham, the Mayor of Liverpool and former research officer for the Leader of the Opposition, given on 19th March in Liverpool:

Health services are an outstanding example of the strength of vested interests in NSW politics . . . Even in the Labor Opposition there are signs that established interests have won control of the hospitals debate. The one East Sydney hospital which logically should be closed is Prince Henry - allowing the transfer of its beds and specialist services to Sydney's West.

Prince Henry is in the State electorate of Maroubra where the local member, Bob Carr, has been the strongest opponent of closure. Equally, the Shadow Minister for Health, Dr Refshauge, representing the seat of Marrickville, has been reluctant to support the closure of inner city hospitals such as the Royal Hospital for Women at Paddington and the transfer of their services to Western Sydney.

In any event, we are not about closing the Royal Hospital for Women. These hardly sound like the words of somebody from the Labor Party, but they are. This attitude at least lacks in humbug and is refreshing even though it comes from someone as antediluvian as the Mayor of Liverpool. Nevertheless, it demonstrates that real decisions have to be made to provide real services. It is not good enough to say that increased services are needed; one must put oneself on the line by saying how those resources will be provided. At least the honourable member for South Coast was honest enough to admit that his means of providing services was to have demountables. Mark Latham is prepared to support the Government's relocation of resources.

**The Hon. J. P. Hannaford:** That is because he has had demountables at Liverpool Hospital since 1951.

**The Hon. J. F. RYAN:** Indeed, he has plenty of demountables to worry about in his own area. Even the proposals by Mark Latham will not provide enough money to fund improvements from recurrent expenditure. The Government has to turn to the private sector to find funds to boost hospital services. The provision of services has been achieved in my area by contracting out services. Where services such as cleaning and catering have been open to outside tender, the savings have been enormous. I understand that savings in the health budget amount to about \$60 million. More importantly, the use of outside contractors has forced public sector unions to agree to more efficient work practices. As a result of contracting out, the South West Area Health Service has been able to deliver improvements to eye surgery services, more

orthopaedic services and clinics for child care at Campbelltown Hospital. A diabetic clinic has been opened at Fairfield. Palliative care services at Camden District Hospital have been upgraded and Liverpool hospital has been able to fund additional teaching staff for doctor training, including the establishment of a Chair of Psychology. All these things are the benefits of privatisation.

The Government's program of privatisation in the health system, which members  
Page 1848

of the Labor Party and Australian Democrats oppose so implacably, has been responsible for cutting waste in the health budget, getting improved health services to the people who desperately need them and making the services available faster. Honourable members cannot have it both ways; they cannot oppose these measures and then say that services must be upgraded. Finally, I mention the other furphy put forward by opponents of privatisation of hospitals. They suggest that if a hospital is privatised the services provided will not be nearly as good. I will outline a six-point safeguard plan that has been guaranteed by the Minister for Health and Community Services and the hospital board of the Hastings District Hospital to ensure that services will not be downgraded. They are as follows:

1. There will be free access for all public patients.
2. There will be equal treatment for all patients both public and private.
3. There will be no discrimination between public and private patients.
4. There will be no pressure to take out health insurance.
5. Open access to Community Health Services will remain for all.
6. There will be a majority of community representation on the Hospital Board which will be responsible for controlling services within the new hospital.

If these guarantees are not delivered, the contract provisions will allow the Government simply to take over the administration of the hospital. Unless members opposite can credibly attack the safeguards, they cannot credibly maintain their claims that health care offered in privatised hospitals will be any less caring than that offered by public hospitals in New South Wales. In fact, it is ridiculous to suggest that private hospitals cannot deliver care with love and understanding. Otherwise, why would so many people prefer, when given the chance, to enter St Vincent's hospital or the Sydney Adventist Hospital. I wish to put on record my pleasure at the announcement today by the Sisters of Charity that the care they provide at St Vincent's at Darlinghurst will soon be extended to the people of Sydney's west.

**The Hon. ELISABETH KIRKBY** [5.29], in reply: It was obvious when I moved the motion that debate on it would be vigorous. It has been vigorous, but it is interesting to note that emotive and overt political remarks have been made by Government supporters. That is indicative of the sensitivity of the issue. The Minister said that the Government is not privatising the health service. He is playing with words. Contracting out to the private sector of the building, owning and running of a hospital is privatisation. The Minister said that services would not be eroded. If the Minister is so confident that services will not be eroded, why will there be no discussion with staff about quality of care provisions to be put in place? All members opposite who have contributed to the debate said that patients will be treated for free. That was a misuse of the words "for free". Public patients will be treated at no cost to themselves through a Government subsidy and Medicare benefit. They will not be treated for free.

**The Hon. J. P. Hannaford:** It will be free for them, with no expense to them - as happens in public hospitals.

**The Hon. ELISABETH KIRKBY:** The amount of subsidy that the Government will have to provide will depend largely on the cost to the Government of services provided by visiting medical officers, who at the new Port Macquarie Hospital will provide the full level of services. There will be no staff specialists, as in some New South Wales public hospitals. Many visiting medical officers charge above the scheduled fee; they charge whatever they think can be afforded.

Page 1849

**The Hon. J. P. Hannaford:** Visiting medical officers charge under the VMO agreement.

**The Hon. ELISABETH KIRKBY:** Changes under the VMO agreement are considerably higher than the scheduled fee and may go even higher, as the Minister knows.

**The Hon. J. P. Hannaford:** We hope not.

**The Hon. ELISABETH KIRKBY:** We hope not but they well may go higher. The Minister also said that the outcomes would be measured - but by what criteria? Will it be by cost control? If costs escalate, will services be cut? The Australian Democrats believe that private hospitals are not a problem. We do not object to private hospitals for those people who can afford them, but private hospitals must be additional to public hospitals.

**The Hon. J. P. Hannaford:** Does that mean I should not be contracting public services at other private hospitals.

**The Hon. ELISABETH KIRKBY:** I do not see any problem in contracting out catering or cleaning services.

**The Hon. J. P. Hannaford:** What about contracts with other private hospitals across the State?

**The Hon. ELISABETH KIRKBY:** The public hospital system needs to be properly funded by both the Federal and State governments. The private health service regrettably will remain for the wealthy alone. The level of my private health insurance would not entitle me to be admitted to St Vincent's Private Hospital, nor would it be necessary to go there. I would rather be admitted to one of the large teaching hospitals, such as Westmead hospital, Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Royal North Shore Hospital or the Prince of Wales Hospital. At no time have I called for demountables. If I had known that the honourable member for South Coast had called for demountables, I would have told him that it was a silly idea. I have no objection to Fletcher Jennings building this hospital but I believe it should be run by the area health board. The Minister said the Government could lease back the hospital from the consortium who built it but that would run him into problems with Loan Council borrowings. I put it to the Minister and to all members opposite that this is simply a political decision. The public subsidy that will be demanded for the F2 freeway could build 10 public hospitals. If the Government is prepared to spend more money on one freeway than on public hospitals, the Government will have to live with that political decision. I turn to what I believe the Government should do. The Government is committed to this course of action. Two most sensible suggestions have been made, one by the New South Wales Council for Social Services, the other in the editorial in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 20th March, which states:

Perhaps the answer is for a select committee of the NSW Parliament to monitor the privatisation of Port Macquarie hospital and report on strategies to develop the health-care system. The committee would have access to all contract documents, including those considered too commercially sensitive for general release. The attraction of the Port Macquarie model to the Government is that it falls outside the control of the Loan Council. It offers the Government the chance to expand its investment in health care at a time of heavy restriction on public borrowing.

If all those documents were made available, even on a confidential basis, to an all-party committee, I believe this experiment could be better monitored than under the system suggested by the Minister. The plan for monitoring Port Macquarie hospital

Page 1850

implementation should include: the time frame; indicators of performance in relation to quality and low income access and how these will be evaluated for success or failure; provision for local community participation; provision for independent and public State-level scrutiny -

**The Hon. Dr B. P. V. Pezzutti:** What is wrong with the Auditor-General's report?

**The Hon. ELISABETH KIRKBY:** - and a firm undertaking that expansion of similar schemes to other New South Wales areas will be strictly dependent on the successful outcome at Port Macquarie and will not be given the go ahead until the monitoring plan outlined has been implemented and the results made available for public comment. I hope the Government is willing to take these monitoring measures on board. This is a most sensitive issue. I am attempting to deal with it in a non-emotional way in spite of what has been said by those who disagreed with me during the debate. The Hon. Dr B. P. V. Pezzutti interjected by saying, "What is wrong with the Public Accounts Committee?"

**The Hon. Dr B. P. V. Pezzutti:** No. I said the Auditor-General.

**The Hon. ELISABETH KIRKBY:** What is wrong is that frequently the Auditor-General has brought down reports critical of the Greiner-Murray Government but no action has been taken to implement proposals that the Auditor-General thought should have been put in place. These reports can be ignored. A select committee's findings would not be ignored to the same degree. Unless independent monitoring is performed, I believe the Government will be buying into many political problems that may have an effect at the next election. If the next election does not occur until 1995, and if things go seriously wrong with the Port Macquarie hospital and public patients do not have access that the Minister hopes they will have, without an enormous blowout that the Minister admits he will have to fund, he and the Government will have to bear the political onus.

**Discussion of matter of public interest concluded.**

**CHILDREN (CARE AND PROTECTION) (CHILD EMPLOYMENT) AMENDMENT  
BILL**

**Bill introduced and read a first time.**

**Second Reading**

**The Hon. J. P. HANNAFORD** (Minister for Health and Community Services)  
[5.40]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Children are this State's most precious asset. They constitute its future leaders, entrepreneurs and work force. The ability to participate in employment today provides them with unique opportunities to develop a positive orientation to work and a broader understanding of the role both of work and of particular occupations within the work force. If it is ensured as a positive experience, this employment can create within them a spirit of independence and, in some instances, the ability to make more informed career  
Page 1851

choices. This experience has benefits for both the individual and the work force as a whole. The opportunity to take part in film and theatrical productions is a very exciting and rewarding experience for a child. But how do we allow children to take advantage of these opportunities without exposing them to health and safety risks?

I am aware of instances in the entertainment industries of children having worked 12 and 13 hour days, and of children suffering distress and illness through being exposed to extremes of temperature. There has also been continuing public concern about the safety of young children engaged in door-to-door selling. The Department of Community Services has had several complaints regarding children as young as nine and 10 years selling sweets in this fashion, often with very minimal and inappropriate supervision. There is therefore, a need to ensure that these employment opportunities are provided without risk to the child's physical and emotional well-being and, additionally, that any mechanism for ensuring the safety of children while employed is provided in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

The responsibility of employers to provide safe working conditions for children in their employ and the responsibility of parents to be effective advocates for their children while in employment are key elements of this bill. The employment of children is currently controlled by sections of the Child Welfare Act 1939 and clauses of the Child Welfare Regulations 1940. It has long been apparent that many provisions of the Act are inconsistent with prevailing community attitudes and with the legitimate requirements of businesses seeking to employ children. In particular, the requirement that children aged 15 years be licensed is contrary to the ability of children to leave school at 15 years and engage in employment. Children under seven years cannot be employed on schooldays or any Sunday. Also, under the current provisions relating to street trading, only boys are permitted to be licenced to sell newspapers. This is obvious discrimination on the basis of gender which no government would endorse. The result has been that for many years most of the provisions of the Child Welfare Act 1939 which relate to children's employment have not been observed or enforced. I may observe that under the existing legislation all those children appearing in *The King and I* should not have been able to participate in that production.

The provisions of the Child Welfare Act also focus on the licensing of the individual child. In practice the parent of each child would be required to apply for a licence for that child each time he or she is employed. In reality, the employer makes an application for a licence for each child that he or she employs. This creates considerable paperwork for the employer and a cumbersome administrative process within the department responsible for the processing of the applications. There are two major changes proposed in the children's employment amendment bill. Firstly, the employer rather than the child is to be authorised. Secondly, the main requirements made upon the employer will be set out in regulation and in a code of practice. This authorisation of the employer to employ children is both logical and practical. The area of concern in the employment of children is the conditions under which children work. This includes consideration of the nature of the work to be performed, the hours to be worked, the age appropriateness of the activities and the provision of nourishment and appropriate attire.

It is therefore more rational that the person who is in the position to control and determine such conditions should be the one whose suitability is assessed rather than each individual child who is to be employed.

The employer's signed commitment to comply with the code of practice will be a major consideration in the granting of an authority. This provision will place the responsibility for ensuring a safe working environment for children clearly with the employer. The authorisation of the employer, rather than the child, will lead to a

Page 1852

reduction in paperwork required of employers and by the department. Under the current system, if the producer of a television series requires 50 child actors in the course of a year, he or she would make 50 applications and the department would issue 50 licences each with differing time periods and conditions imposed. This bill proposes that one authority be issued to the employer who, during its period of validity, may employ whatever number of children he or she requires. Authorities will be valid for a maximum period of one year. This provision is consistent with the Government's better management approach and will result in considerable resource savings to both employers and the department.

While the bill places responsibility upon the employer for maintaining conditions of employment which meet the requirements of the code of conduct, it does not detract from the parent's ongoing responsibility for ensuring the physical and emotional well-being of the child while in that employment. The bill makes it an offence for a person, be that the employer or the parent, to allow a child to be employed in circumstances where the child's physical or emotional well-being is put at risk. The bill places responsibility clearly with the parent for the removal of a child from employment situations in which the child is placed at risk. Should a parent fail to do so when requested, the child would be considered to be at risk within the provisions of the Children (Care and Protection) Act 1987 and appropriate action taken by the Department of Community Services.

Two types of employment which require the employer to be authorised have been specified in the bill. They are: first, any employment situation where the child is involved in entertainment or an exhibition; or, second, offering anything for sale from door to door. Other areas of employment can be prescribed by the regulations but it is the Government's intention to extend those provisions only where there is clear consultation as required by the Subordinate Legislation Act. Certain types of employers will be exempted from the need to be authorised under the provisions of the bill. These would include registered charities, which will be required to comply with the provisions of the Charitable Collections Act or its successor the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991. These exemption provisions will provide sufficient flexibility to prevent children being employed in inappropriate circumstances while not being prohibited from normal pocket money raising activities such as washing neighbour's cars.

In keeping with the profit-making purpose of employers and the Government's policy of rational business management, the bill provides the employer to be charged an economic fee for the issue of an authority. The employer will be liable for only one fee during the life of the authority and will be able to employ a number of children as required. The fee charged will fall within a set range and will be determined on the basis of the anticipated monitoring costs to be incurred by the department. Determination of these costs will include the proposed number of children to be employed, age of the children and previous experience of the employer. There is also a provision for the remission or waiver of fees, where appropriate. The major regulatory functions will be performed by a code of practice to be developed in consultation with industry groups.

The code will be educative rather than prescriptive and will outline the policies and principles that underlie the guidelines it will contain. One element of this code of practice will outline the rights and responsibilities of parents of employed children. It is expected that each employer will be required to provide this document to the parents of every child to be employed. This requirement will encourage parents to be effective advocates for their children in any situation where they believe their children's interests

Page 1853

are being compromised. It is further anticipated that this clarification of parent's roles in protecting the interests of their children will lead to improvements in the safety and welfare of employed children. Information on the proposed changes to children's employment will be given to interested parties in the period prior to debate on this bill to encourage further community awareness of the content of the bill and provide opportunity for public comment.

The approach to children's employment encompassed by this bill provides clear benefits to children, parents and employers. It places the responsibility for the provision of a safe working environment for children with the employer and parents of the children concerned. It requires less departmental intervention and reduced resource input for both the employer and the monitoring body. Its intention has been widely canvassed with employer groups and many of the conditions of the draft code of practice, such as the imposition of special conditions regarding the employment of children under 12 weeks of age and a four-hour daily working limit for children under school age, have been implemented for over three years under the existing legislation. It is the Government's view that this legislation deserves the support of every member in this House. I commend the legislation for the consideration of honourable members. I table a detailed explanation of the provisions of the bill.

**Debate adjourned on motion by the Hon. R. D. Dyer.**

#### **GOVERNMENT LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM**

**Debate resumed from 24th March.**

**The Hon. R. S. L. JONES** [5.50]: The more than 1.3 million private motor vehicles on 19,812 kilometres of Sydney's roadway are causing severe photochemical smog problems combined with industry. The air quality monitoring in Sydney's southwest is already recording peak hour photochemical smog episodes, above the Australian National and Medical Research Council guideline of 0.12 parts per million. If Sydney grows by one million population to reach 4.5 million by the year 2010, which is anticipated by the Government metropolitan strategy for the Sydney region, ozone levels will increase by another 50 per cent. As we are well aware the sea breezes tend to push parcels of air pollution from eastern Sydney into the western basin where they hang to the detriment of the people of southwest Sydney and, in particular, of the Campbelltown region. Recent monitoring of this movement of air parcels has projected ozone levels up to three parts per million in these air basins which, by North American standards, is above the severe levels found in areas like New York, Chicago, Milwaukee, and approaching the levels experienced in Los Angeles. A report by Tim Robertson dealt with a pilot study "Evaluation of Air Quality Issues for the Macarthur South and South Creek Valley Regions of Sydney" by Dr Robert Hyde of Macquarie University and Dr Graham Johnson of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization. The report stated:

The data previously published by the SPCC seriously underestimates the current severity of photochemical smog in the Sydney region. There are gross deficiencies in the knowledge of

the causes and of the distribution of photochemical smog in Sydney. Over the past 15 years there has been a substantial reduction in ozone concentrations measured in the eastern districts of Sydney. Now smog episodes occur most frequently in the western sectors of the region, in areas scheduled for rapid urbanisation and where little air quality monitoring has been undertaken. The SPCC monitors ozone and particular levels at seven sites, Campbelltown, Earlwood, Lidcombe, Westmead, Kensington, Liverpool and Woolooware. None of these sites are in the Hawkesbury basin, where Hyde and Johnson predict the greatest concentration of such pollutants.

Page 1854

A detailed study has been undertaken by Dr Streeton, a respiratory surgeon in Victoria. Dr Streeton recommends that the maximum one hour acceptable level for oxidant, that is photochemical smog of which the main constituent is ozone, should be 0.08 parts per million with a one hour detrimental level - at 0.12 parts per million - that is a level which should not be exceeded without adverse health consequences. On the other hand the SPCC ozone standard is 0.12 parts per million. A high pollution reading as reported by the SPCC exceed 0.12 parts per million. This is misleading because public health is endangered once the absolute standard is exceeded. By reporting a high pollution level the public is not alerted to a problem which may well endanger the health or lives of those particularly susceptible to respiratory problems and, in particular, women. Mr Robertson's report continued:

. . . the SPCC states as medium pollution, an ozone level exceeding 0.05 ppm but below or equal to 0.12 ppm. This is highly misleading. According to Dr Streeton's report, where the level exceeds 0.08 ppm (40 points on the SPCC index), there is a high pollution hazard and, if such a reading is exceeded more than three times a year, an extreme pollution hazard.

The answer to these air pollution problems is, of course, as I have been discussing previously, the use of more public transport and a continued building up of the urban infrastructure; the rebuilding of the centre of the city; consolidation of the centre of the city of Sydney within the heart of the doughnut; and to attempt to somehow bring - at least slow down and not bring to a halt - the rapid suburbanisation of western, northwestern and southwestern Sydney, in particular. There have been proposals to introduce electric buses. The University of New South Wales has taken the world lead in batteries. We have the world lead in the design of electric vehicles and electric motors. It would be a good idea if the Government were to spend a little more of any available funds in making sure that these technologies come to fruition as soon as possible. As we have heard, Los Angeles has introduced legislation to ensure that there will be a considerable number of electric cars on the Los Angeles streets by 2005. More than 300 cities around the world already use electric buses. It is hoped that they will be appearing on Sydney streets before too long. It is good to see the Government has now ordered a number of compressed natural gas powered buses which produce much less pollution than existing buses. It is certainly an advance. A strategy was prepared for Greenpeace Australia called "Air Pollution and Greenhouse, a Transport Strategy for Sydney" by Jacana Consulting Pty Limited of Kent Street, Sydney. The report states:

Hydrocarbon emissions on a per capita basis in Sydney are currently 128 kg per 1000 persons per day (ppd) compared to the Los Angeles region with 90 kg per 1000 ppd.

Our hydrocarbon emissions exceed those of Los Angeles. The report continues:

Nitrogen oxide emissions in Sydney are 51 kg per 1000 ppd compared to the Los Angeles region with 71 kg per 1000 ppd.

This also is getting close to the Los Angeles levels. The report states that without major new policy initiatives photochemical smog in Sydney is likely to exceed the levels in the Los Angeles region within 10 years, which is really a horrifying thought for those who have been to Los Angeles and tried to breathe. One of the strategy options proposed in this Greenpeace report includes new rail links from Epping-Parramatta-Merrylands; Hurstville- Bankstown; St Marys-Badgerys Creek-Glenfield; and City-Darling Harbour-Leichhardt-Airport-Botany. New light rail links are recommended for Wynyard-Brookvale-Mona Vale; Brookvale-Chatswood-Carlingford-Baulkham Hills; Rouse Hill-Parramatta-Hoxton Park; and City-Coogee-Maroubra-La Perouse. The preliminary assessment of the cost of these links is for heavy rail approximately \$1,600 million and for light rail \$1,100 million. The report continues:

Page 1855

The economic benefits of improved public transport have been assessed by the BTCE. In Sydney increasing the mode share of rail from 4.5 per cent to 8.5 per cent was estimated to increase the financial deficit by \$200 million pa, while generating net economic savings of \$1.2 billion per year. There is major potential economic, social and environmental benefits from improving public transport.

The combination of a number of strategies including urban consolidation, increased utilisation of the existing rail system, extension of the rail network, introduction of light rail systems, car pooling and the introduction of electric vehicles could lead to a significant reduction in passenger transport emissions. It has been estimated that a combination of these initiatives would lead to a 21 per cent reduction in 1990 Sydney transport carbon dioxide emissions, a 67 per cent reduction in 1990 Sydney transport reactive organic compound emissions and a 63 per cent reduction in 1990 Sydney transport nitrogen oxide emissions. The period to which these figures relate is not disclosed but presumably when the strategies are put in place, those net reductions in emissions would be the result. Such reductions would be of considerable benefit to the people of New South Wales and would probably save money for the health system as well. A number of people have said that the introduction of electric vehicles would not result in reduced emissions as electricity is produced in coal fired power stations. That is simply untrue. A study conducted by Environment Canada in conjunction with the University of Ottawa has shown that, in the worst case scenario, by using electricity produced in present technology coal-fired power stations, electric vehicles show dramatic emission savings in comparison with petrol engine vehicles. Emissions of hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide are reduced by 99.9 per cent; nitrogen oxide emissions by 81.7 per cent; and carbon dioxide emissions by 53 per cent.

That research is backed up by the United States Congressional Research Service which projects the following ozone-reducing factors for alternative fuels: ethanol, 20 per cent; methanol, 30 per cent; propane, that is liquefied petroleum gas, 35 per cent; natural gas, 60 per cent; and electricity, 90 per cent. Those figures were provided to me by Roy Leembruggen of Elroy Engineering, who is arguably the world leader in electric vehicle technology. Unfortunately, he has received almost no assistance from either the Federal or State government to introduce electric vehicles. Honourable members will recall that he was responsible for the design of our double-decker trains. We are thankful to him for that. He also put forward an alternative strategy for the Sydney Harbour crossing which was ignored but would have cost taxpayers considerably less than the Sydney Harbour tunnel, which is about to open. For some time George Paxinos, the president of the Light Rail Association, has been advocating the introduction of light rail systems in New South Wales, particularly the southeast suburbs system. The Light Rail Association estimates that the southeast region light rail system, including the airport

link, would cost about \$100 million. The association expects that the whole of the proposed scheme for Sydney would cost less than \$550 million, which is equivalent to the aggregate cost of the heavy rail link to the airport and the metrowest project. In an article in the September 1991 edition of *Transit Australia* he wrote:

Light rail is enjoying expansion around the world at an unprecedented rate. According to the International Union of Public Transport it is now the fastest growing form of tracked transport in the world. In the UK, 48 cities are considering the introduction of, or have already introduced light rail. In California, light rail systems have been introduced in San Diego, Los Angeles, San Jose and Sacramento. In Australia, Adelaide has had one light rail line to Glenelg for six decades and more recently Melbourne has converted two lightly patronised rail services (St Kilda and Port Melbourne) to light rail. Canberra may investigate a light rail line.

It is clear that light rail is on the way for Sydney. Now that there is a move in that direction within the Government, I am certain that light rail systems will be introduced  
Page 1856

soon in New South Wales. The money that is earmarked for expressways and tollways would be more appropriately earmarked for light rail, which would be of far greater benefit to the health of the people of New South Wales, particularly those who reside in Sydney. Freeways become blocked soon after they are built, as they have done in Los Angeles and London. Honourable members are very much aware that freeways, which are really tollways, merely facilitate bringing traffic into the city from outlying areas. They enable people to drive into the city when they should not be doing so. Tollways are self-defeating. One finds that traffic problems tend to solve themselves eventually. If tollways were not built, people would be forced, regrettably I suppose, to find other means of transport, hopefully light rail or heavy rail, whichever happens to be available. The introduction of a light rail system would certainly ensure that the public transport system was better patronised. In a press release issued today by the Light Rail Association some information is given about the meeting of Randwick council on 24th March. At that meeting the council voted unanimously in favour of the following motion moved by Alderman Tony Sherbon:

That Council writes to the New South Wales Minister of Transport, Mr Bruce Baird urging him to ensure that sufficient land will be set aside from the Randwick bus depot sale to allow the future construction of a light rail depot capable of storing between 80-90 light rail vehicles.

I have asked a number of questions in relation to light rail systems in this House and have not yet received a satisfactory response. Unfortunately, there seems to be a move towards selling more of the Randwick bus depot than would allow for the construction of a light rail depot at a later date. If the sale proceeds and too much land is sold, the provision of a light rail facility in the future will cost the State Government an additional \$10 million. It would be far better to set aside the additional 0.8 of a hectare, which is necessary for a future light rail depot, than spend an additional \$10 million on acquiring and converting the New South Wales University building. On 18th March, the Minister for Transport wrote to the President of the Light Rail Association, Dr George Paxinos, in these encouraging terms:

As you are aware the Department of Transport is now in the process of completing a discussion paper on the potential for light rail in New South Wales having regard to overseas and interstate experience. The discussion paper is intended to provide a more substantial basis on which to consider proposals for light rail. It is being prepared in recognition of the growing community enthusiasm for light rail systems and the apparent need to be able to determine the most beneficial and achievable proposals.

That is a most enlightening letter from the Minister. It seems that the penny has finally dropped and the proposals for light rail which have been advanced by the Light Rail Association, Greenpeace and other organisations and community groups are now being taken seriously. I believe that any proper examination of light rail systems will lead to their introduction. If the Government introduces light rail systems, that will be to the long-term benefit of the people of New South Wales, particularly those residing in Sydney. Today a notice was circulated in public buses by the Australian Tramway and Motor Omnibus Employees Association which expressed concern about the planned privatisation of bus services. The union is concerned that the privatisation of a range of bus routes will lead to reduced peak, off-peak and weekend services in line with Government guidelines for minimum service levels from private bus operators. The \$1 per day excursion fares for pensioners will not be available on private buses. Multimodal yearly, monthly and weekly tickets cannot be used on private buses. MetroTen tickets cannot be used on private buses either. I will raise this matter with the Minister at some future time.

Last week I informed the media of a video entitled "River Running out of Time", which had not been made available to public groups or members of Parliament since it was produced in June last year. The video was available before the present Minister for Housing assumed responsibility for the Water Board. The Minister for the Environment intended to release the video with much fanfare on World Environment Day, 5th June last year. Apparently the Minister for Housing decided not to release it because it is extremely embarrassing for the Government. It exposes what is happening to the Nepean-Hawkesbury river system. A considerable amount of public money was spent on this excellent Water Board video. It now has had considerable exposure on various television stations. The money has not been wasted. The people of New South Wales are now much more aware of the pollution problems plaguing the Nepean-Hawkesbury river system. The Parramatta and Cook rivers are biologically dead and unsuitable for swimming. They are a disgrace. The problem has been steadily worsening over many years. It is the responsibility of the community and the Government, now that people are more aware of environmental problems and want action, to ensure that these rivers are brought back to life. The Nepean-Hawkesbury river system which supplies 95 per cent of Sydney's water, is in the process of dying. In 1990, the Managing Director of the Water Board, Mr Bob Willson, said:

It must be recognised that the cumulative impacts of multiple decisions on urban expansion are now becoming apparent, and there is a need to seriously review the capacity of the Nepean/Hawkesbury River and other receiving waters to continue to assimilate the runoff and sewage effluent generated by urban expansion.

A number of groups have been working on problems associated with the Hawkesbury River. Dr David Hughes, who represents the Coalition of Hawkesbury and Nepean Groups for the Environment, has been very vocal in that regard. Dr Hughes is a general practitioner who treated patients with illnesses contracted as a result of the pollution of the river. He became personally involved in attempts to save the Nepean-Hawkesbury river system. He is responsible for a number of publications dealing with the problems of pollution. In one such publication he said that, within the river system, a number of disease-causing organisms are to be found - among them polio, cholera, golden staph, salmonella and gangrene-causing organisms - which are a regular feature of microbiological studies of the river system. It is an absolute disgrace. Dr Hughes also believes that if the current grand plan in respect of urban expansion proceeds, the water quality will be further reduced. The further degradation of the Hawkesbury River will

result in \$40 million in tourist, recreation, prawn, oyster and irrigation industries being lost. Honourable members should remember that many people do live off the river.

Approximately forty groups make up CHANGE - Coalition of Hawkesbury and Nepean Groups for the Environment. These groups are based in a number of electorates held by the Government. The honourable member for Hawkesbury has shown considerable interest in this problem. Honourable members should be aware that electors are acutely concerned about water and air pollution problems in the Hawkesbury region. They have been seeking a moratorium on land releases in the west. I believe the Government should carefully consider that suggestion. The Minister for Housing is very much against it but I believe it would be in the interests of a number of members of the Liberal Party, particularly in western Sydney, to support the moratorium on new land releases until some means can be found to stop further degradation of the river system.

Dr Hughes has come to the conclusion that the further growth of Sydney, under current land use and transport strategies, will have serious economic and empirically agreed environmental and social consequences that will last for many decades, and which, because of insurmountable costs of rectification, may plague Sydney indefinitely. The increased suburbanisation of western Sydney will create a water supply problem. On a number of occasions I have called on the Government to introduce demand management.

Page 1858

It has been successful in the Hunter region. The Hunter water supply system now operates on demand management and the demand for water has been reduced by 30 per cent. Residents are now paying for the water they use. A considerable amount of water is wasted on gardens. Instead of choosing native shrubs and trees which do not require as much water, householders insist on planting trees and other plants not suitable to the Australian climate.

*[Interruption]*

The Minister asked about vegetables and herbs. One does not need to flood one's vegetables and herbs as one would a lawn or trees. She might well consider installing a tank on the roof, and use the water from it for the garden - as I do. That would cost nothing except for the initial capital cost of the tank. I had a water tank when I lived at Ingleside. I was not sure about the actual quality of the water, but it certainly tasted better than tap water. Residents are not required to pay for the water they use. Water use is being heavily cross-subsidised by business. This cross-subsidisation is quite dramatic. Of the Water Board's customers, a mere 5 per cent pay 51 per cent of revenue - that is, 70,000 businesses in New South Wales pay 51 per cent of total Water Board revenue. That is a ridiculous situation. Those businesses are providing jobs and wealth to Sydney yet they have to cross-subsidise for water wasted in gardens and on washing cars throughout Sydney. Because of generations of political fear and inactivity on both sides of this House, previous governments have been reluctant to charge residents the full amount.

I believe the people of Sydney are ready for demand management. If it were pointed out to residents that they were paying too little for the water they use and business was paying far too much, they would undoubtedly realise that a number of jobs would be created or saved if lower prices were charged to businesses. A number of businesses have been charged up to 10 times the rate applicable for domestic use, even though many only use as much water as an ordinary household. One woman I spoke to who conducted a business in Manly was paying enormous water rates when she did not use any water at all. She was subsidising the wastage of water by her neighbours. It is

time the Minister introduced demand management in Sydney. I believe the residents of Sydney are in a position to accept such a scheme. The Water Board has 40,000 kilometres of mains in Sydney. It has 1.37 million customers, 1.24 million of which are ordinary households. The burden on business is too heavy.

If demand management is not introduced in Sydney, and if urban and sub-urban expansion continues, there will be a need to build the Welcome Reef Dam, which will cause many problems. Land acquisition and construction costs are expected to be in the region of \$350 million - that does not include the cost of pumping stations and infrastructure to carry the water from that dam to the Warragamba or Nepean dams. The Australian Capital Territory and the Shoalhaven councils have expressed interest in taking water from this proposed scheme. According to projections based on current water consumption the dam will not be required until the year 2005. If demand management were introduced, this dam may not be needed until the year 2025 or 2030. There are many problems associated with the building of the Welcome Reef Dam. Thiess Constructions has expressed an interest in building the dam.

Apart from the \$350 million construction costs and the \$1 million a week electricity costs to pump water to the Wingecarribee Reservoir, which would then flow down the Wingecarribee and be pumped either to the Nepean Dam or the Warragamba Dam, there is the further problem that water in the Shoalhaven River contains considerable amounts of phosphate. If these phosphates enter the Warragamba Dam,

Page 1859

which has traces of blue-green algae already, they will fuel a blue-green algae explosion. When the Hawkesbury River water level is low during times of drought and the Warragamba Dam is opened to flush out the Hawkesbury, phosphates flood in and encourage the growth of blue-green algae. Honourable members should be acutely aware of the problem. The level of phosphates and growth of blue-green algae will virtually kill the Hawkesbury River, which in turn will cause the death of animals and, possibly, human beings. Generally speaking the Nepean River contains 100 per cent treated effluent, with high phosphate levels from urban or agricultural run-off levels. A recent experiment to test the flow of water down the river from the proposed Welcome Reef Dam revealed damage to the creek and the flooding of properties. If the dam were built and the water pumped up, other problems would arise.

Our water supply system should be examined carefully and demand management introduced. The \$100 million that the Government took from the Water Board last year, which in the main was paid by business customers, could have been used to solve the problems of our secondary and tertiary treatment plants at Manly, Malabar and Bondi. That \$100 million would have been sufficient to install a Memtec plant at one of those three outfalls, which would certainly improve the quality of water flowing into the ocean. The Welcome Reef Dam would not be necessary if water from our sewerage system were treated adequately. It would be cheaper in dollar and environmental costs if the water currently flowing into the ocean were reused. If an environmental impact statement for the Shoalhaven River were carried out, including the impact of the phosphates and the blue-green algae growth, the Welcome Reef Dam would be deemed not to be necessary. We must follow the example of other cities round the world and recycle our water.

Apart from the overuse of water, motor vehicles and the gobbling up of greenfield sites in western Sydney, the burgeoning population also causes solid waste disposal problems. Community groups from Sydney and other areas of New South Wales are reacting strongly to proposals to increase the size of waste dumps. Whenever a new dump site is proposed the community threatens to throw out the local member.

The Hon. Kevin Rozzoli reacted quickly when a dump was proposed for his electorate. He jumped on the Minister for the Environment from a great height. The Minister backed down on the proposal, and rightly so. The Maroota State Forest will now become a nature reserve. Many of the tips are filling up. People throw away a vast amount of reusable or recyclable material. Between 1985 and 1986, for example, residents of Sydney and Melbourne disposed of 342,000 tonnes of paper and cardboard, 192,000 tonnes of glass, 138,000 tonnes of plastic, 84,000 tonnes of ferrous metals, 15,000 tonnes of non-ferrous metals, and 820,000 tonnes of other waste in council collected household rubbish bins.

Vast amounts of natural resources are being wasted because there is no adequate incentive to recycle materials. When I was a child every week I used to collect newspapers in a pram and a sack from houses in my area. I received seven shillings and sixpence for each sack. Years ago greater value was placed on materials such as ferrous metals, and people made a fortune from collecting such items. Many years ago I met a rag and bone man who used to go round with a horse and cart collecting bones, paper and lead. He is now a multimillionaire. Paper, glass and cardboard would never have been thrown away; they were valuable commodities. Before my time people used to donate pots and pans and other articles to be used in the construction of fighter planes. In those days metals, glass and paper were valuable. There were no disposal or packaging problems. Most foodstuffs were delivered in their raw state. Nationally 17,000 hectares of land are devoted to the disposal of materials that should be recycled. Apart from anything else, that is an outrageous waste of land.

Page 1860

Domestic solid waste accounts for about one-third to half the total solid waste in major urban areas and, interestingly, in the period 1977 to 1989, there was a 0.99 correlation between domestic solid waste production and gross domestic product growth. The amount of commercial and industrial solid wastes increased even faster. A factual analysis reveals that 47 per cent of the growth in solid waste production is due to population growth, and 53 per cent is due to growth in gross domestic product per capita. The "Population Issues and Australia's Future" report on this particular solid waste issue concluded that there is some significant evidence of negative influence of urban population growth on urban ecological integrity. As honourable members would be aware, I have given notice of my intention to introduce a private member's bill on container deposit legislation. This legislation does not deal with bottles specifically, but containers in general. I am aware that a person who was almost elected, Tony Gentile, is a firm antagonist of such legislation. I suggest that he would put a lot of pressure on the Government not to introduce container deposit legislation.

**The Hon. Patricia Forsythe:** He understands the facts.

**The Hon. R. S. L. JONES:** I wonder whether he understands what is going on in Germany, Scandinavia, the Netherlands, the United States of America and South Australia. Industry is not too keen to collect its own waste, but there is very strong support in South Australia for container deposit legislation. In fact, a survey revealed that 70 per cent of participants viewed the Beverage Container Act as effective in reducing litter. Furthermore, 65 per cent of those surveyed wanted the Government to do more to stop the sale of non-returnable bottles and 70 per cent of the population did not consider convenience packaging superior to returnable containers.

**The Hon. Patricia Forsythe:** Why did the Industries Assistance Commission think it was not a very good idea when it analysed it? The report of the IAC was against

it.

**The Hon. R. S. L. JONES:** The IAC was concerned mainly with the bottom line and not the impact on communities and the environment. I point out that my legislation will cover not only beverage container returns but all container returns, as does legislation in Europe. Before I turn to overseas matters, I should let people know what is happening in South Australia. The following beverage container return rates are being achieved: 750 millilitre pick axe beer bottles, which are refillable, are returned at a rate of 91.1 per cent; 375 millilitre bottles are returned at a rate of 85.1 per cent; one litre glass refillables made by Coca Cola. Amatil are returned at a rate of 97 per cent; the 500 millilitre glass refillables are returned at a rate of 84 per cent; the 300 millilitre glass refillables are returned at a rate of 90 per cent; and 375 millilitre cans from all sources are returned at a rate of 85 per cent. Even polyethylene terephthalate, or PET, which is returned at a very low rate in this State, has a 54 per cent return rate in South Australia. The South Australians are reacting rather well. There is an amazing amount of opposition to the idea of container returns in New South Wales, particularly on the part of a certain member of the Liberal Party and his friends. We should look at what happens in Germany.

*[The President left the chair at 6.33 p.m. The House resumed at 8.15 p.m.]*

**The Hon. R. S. L. JONES [8.15]:** The problem of solid waste is not confined to Australia. Recently I visited a friend of mine on his 25-acre property near Los Angeles. His property used to be in the country but is surrounded now by housing developments and supermarkets. My friend has become a wealthy man. Not far from

Page 1861

his house is a gigantic pile of steaming waste which is leaching into the nearby river system. We must pay that penalty, living in the modern way and disposing in tips and land fills of all the products of our overconsumptive way of life. The community strongly rejects landfill disposal of waste. The Europeans are finally tackling the problem. The Americans have a long way to go for they tend to ship their waste around the world to other countries such as Nigeria to get rid of it. The Europeans are much further ahead of us, the United States and the United Kingdom.

It is worth putting on the record for the benefit of honourable members, in particular the Hon. Patricia Forsythe and the Minister for the Environment, the steps being taken by Germany, Scandinavia and the Netherlands to get rid of their solid waste. In November 1990 the German Minister for the Environment that issued a decree which was given final legislative approval in April 1991. The German proposal is to eliminate packaging from the waste stream by 1995. The ministry estimates that 80 per cent of packaging - about eight million metric tonnes per annum - will be reduced or recycled as a result of the decree at a cost of DM2 billion or \$US1.2 billion each year. The German decree makes industry responsible for the management of packaging waste. The New South Wales State Government bends over backwards to assist industry do whatever it wants to do. The German Government has said that industry will comply. The decree, outlined in a report on waste reduction and packaging in Europe by James E. McCarthy, has three categories:

Packaging used in transportation (pallets, corrugated containers, etc.) must be collected and reclaimed by producers and distributors, beginning 1st December 1991.

That is already happening. The report continues:

Secondary packaging, including blister packs, tamperproof packaging, films and exterior cartons must be taken back by retailers, if the consumer wishes, at the point of sale.

That measure is to begin on 1st April, 1992, a couple of weeks away. The degree provides:

Primary packaging must be collected by retailers, either in their stores or in the immediate vicinity, and reclaimed, beginning 1st January, 1993. In order to motivate consumers to return such primary packaging, virtually all containers for liquids, including beverages, soaps, detergents and paints will be subject to deposits of 0.5 Deutschmarks, or \$0.30 US.

Retailers will be allowed to avoid the deposit and take-back requirements for primary packaging if industry establishes alternative collection and recycling systems that meet stringent goals. These goals will take effect in 1993. Beginning on January 1, 1993, at least 50 per cent of all packages must be collected for recycling. Beginning in July 1995, at least 80 per cent of all packages must be collected . . .

Beginning in 1995, 90 per cent of glass and metal and 80 per cent of other materials (including composites) must be sorted to a quality capable of being recycled . . .

Thus, even if industry establishes alternative collection and recycling systems, most drinks will continue to be delivered in refillable packaging. And if the market share of refillables falls below the target levels, all the beverage containers will be subject to deposits and refunds whether industry has established separate collection programs for recycling one-way containers or not.

Germany has tough new laws requiring all packaging to be returned for recycling or reuse. The German and Japanese economies lead the way. Once again Germany leads the way in disposal of solid waste and is far ahead of New South Wales and Australia generally. I wish the New South Wales Government were as enlightened and advanced as the German Federal Government. Strong measures are also being undertaken in  
Page 1862

Holland in respect of the recycling and reduction of waste. In 1988 the Dutch Government developed and presented to the Parliament a memorandum regarding prevention and recycling of waste materials. That memorandum established targets for waste prevention and recycling of 29 waste streams, and packaging was one of the first priorities. The targets established general goals to be reached by the year 2000, with details to be negotiated between the Government and the affected industries.

The Dutch Government is not imposing on industry but is working with industry to achieve these goals. The Dutch packaging goals are: no increase in the amount of packaging generated; elimination of landfill for packaging waste; an increase in recycling from an estimated 25 per cent of packaging in 1976 to 60 per cent by the year 2000; and qualitative waste reduction by removing such harmful materials as heavy metals and polyvinyl chloride from the waste stream. An accord was signed on 6th June, 1991, which reaffirmed the targets of the 1988 memorandum. These targets set interim goals for the years 1994 and 1997, requiring industry to take back 90 per cent of packaging material by the year 2000. The targets established priorities for product reuse over material recycling. The Dutch are examining reuse rather than merely recycling, a preferred approach to resource wastage. The targets increase return premiums and refunds payable on returns for polyethylene terephthalate from 0.1 guilders, or \$US0.05, to one guilder, or \$US0.5. The guidelines set a recycling rate of 75 per cent for aluminium cans to be achieved within one year - cans will be subject to a return premium if the rate is not achieved - and requires product analyses for 27 types of packaging by 1st December this year.

The results of these analyses will be used to determine whether reusable packaging should replace one-way packaging in specific containers. So The Netherlands is taking very powerful action against the solid waste problem. In many respects the Scandinavian countries have had the most extensive controls on packaging. All have deposit systems that apply in most cases to beer, soft drinks, wine and liquor and at least three of the countries - Denmark, Finland and Norway - have substantial taxes on packaging for liquids that penalise the use of one-way containers. In Denmark domestically produced beer and soft drinks may be sold only in refillable packages. The tax rates on one-way packaging are particularly high. In Norway, for example, aluminium beer and soft drink cans are subject to a tax of NOK 3.50, US 52c, each. In Finland the taxes are as high as FM 3, or US 75c per litre. As a result both countries rely almost exclusively in refillable beer and soft drink packages. Even wine is often sold in refillable containers.

The same countries want to go beyond beverage packaging and to reduce other types of packaging as well. This is exactly what is intended in my bill which I will introduce in this Parliament as soon as it can be brought forward. I do not believe it should be limited to drink containers. This is discriminatory against the drink industry. In the Autumn of 1991 the Nordic Council of Ministers - which includes representatives from Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and three smaller countries - was expected to consider a proposed program prepared by the council staff. Whilst this program was being developed, the following elements were considered likely to be included in the proposal: a reduction in the weight of packaging by 10 per cent by the year 2000 compared with the 1990 level; a target of 70 per cent by weight for recovery and reuse of packaging material by the year 2000; and the development of inter-Nordic guidelines for the environmental assessment of packaging. The Scandinavian countries, Germany and the Netherlands are going a long way towards reducing solid waste and virtually eliminating landfills.

Page 1863

I believe the community of New South Wales would support such moves in this State but I am very much afraid that the packaging industry has this Government by the throat. I do not believe this Government has the guts or the inclination to tackle this problem. It will continue to find bandaid means of solving the problem. The Government should tackle the matter properly and honestly. It should tell industry, "These are the targets and this is what will be achieved". Obviously, this will have to be done in conjunction with other States. If this State acted alone, it would drive industry to Queensland or Victoria. National action is needed. It is about time New South Wales took the lead with the serious solid waste problem. Landfill sites around Sydney are full. There is no room for any more. Waste is being taken further and further to sites outside town. In some cases it is being dumped in the country. That is completely unacceptable. We should follow the lead of Germany, the Netherlands and Scandinavian countries and do that here. South Australia is more advanced than New South Wales in this regard. One wonders why New South Wales is always dragging its heels on such issues. It is about time we were up front, not behind everybody else. I guess it is the influence of industry, which provides most of the funds for this Government's election campaigns.

With levies being charged on developers and the higher cost of developing greenfields sites there is movement of people up and down the coast. There is considerable dispersal of population near Sydney. The increase in population for non-metropolitan Australia was 18 per cent between 1976 and 1986, compared with 13.4 per cent for metropolitan. There is considerable movement of population to areas just outside the city limits. This is called diffuse urbanisation. The reason for it is that

infrastructure costs outside the city are less. This movement causes environmental and other problems. The report "Population Issues and Australia's Future" says that it results in increased consumption of fossil fuel through extended commuting; it takes scarce prime arable land out of agricultural production prematurely; it disturbs fragile ecosystems in coastal zones; and it creates greater cost in the provision of infrastructural services. It also means that more freeways are built, and this tends to attract more traffic and to cause more problems in the city. By slowing down the immigration rate or by some other means the population growth of the city of Sydney should be slowed. There are many gains to be made from doing this. For example, it gains time to develop improved technologies that are likely to be sustainable. It gains time to allow non-renewable resources to last longer and hence buys time to allow their replacement with renewable resources in particular economic activities. It buys time to allow renewable resources to regenerate - for example, our forests, which are being cut down at a non-sustainable rate. It reduces pressure of waste disposal impacts on the environment while better systems of disposal are being developed.

The population of Sydney is assumed to reach 4.5 million by the year 2001 at the current level of increase, giving a 20-year planning horizon and assuming a net overseas migration of 100,000. If average annual net overseas migration to Australia were 140,000 and present internal trends continue the planning period would drop to 15 years. A reduction of migration to 50,000 net per year means the horizon for this population increase to 4.5 million would be 35 years. This would allow a lot more time to provide the infrastructure needed for the population increase. A very large number of young people coming through the breeding age will have children. The population will increase by three million even without migration. Thus there will be population increases in Sydney no matter what. It is interesting to note the impact of population increase on the concentration of wealth. This report makes an interesting statement on social justice, when it states:

Social justice is a state reflecting the right of all Australians to equality of treatment and

Page 1864

opportunity including care for those in need and the removal of barriers imposed on people because of their race ethnicity, religion, gender, birthplace location or economic resources.

Regrettably, Australia has one of the highest concentrations of wealth in the top 10 per cent of the population. It is worth recording how much wealth is concentrated because this wealth is in real estate. Real estate worth is being increased, of course, by the pressure of population increase, particularly in the city of Sydney. In Australia, for example, for shared wealth, the top 1 per cent of Australians control 25 per cent of the wealth. The top 5 per cent control 50 per cent and the top 10 per cent control 60 per cent of the wealth. In Canada, for example, the top 1 per cent have only 21.6 per cent; the top 5 per cent have 45.7 per cent; the top 10 per cent 59.8 per cent. Germany, which is more egalitarian than Australia, has the top 1 per cent controlling 18.7 per cent of the wealth; the top 5 per cent, 33.9 per cent; the top 10 per cent, 45.3 per cent. Sweden is also very egalitarian with the top 1 per cent controlling 20 per cent; the top 5 per cent controlling 42 per cent and the top 10 per cent controlling 57 per cent. Regrettably, the United Kingdom has the top 10 per cent controlling 69.4 per cent, the top 1 per cent, 30 per cent; the top 5 per cent, 54.3 per cent.

The greatest concentration of wealth, is, in fact, in the United Kingdom. This is regrettable. The United States of America has even less concentration of wealth than Australia. We are second only to the United Kingdom in concentration of wealth in the top 10 per cent and the top 1 per cent of the population. This will increase further as the population increases because what happens is that the real estate owned by people who

have been here longer within the inner-city doughnut increases in value. Very often what happens is that those people get out and move up or down the coast. Some have to move from the coast to the city to get jobs. Often they have to live on the perimeters of the city and pay much more for their transport, if they have any at all. They are greatly disadvantaged, unfortunately.

Country members would be interested in these issues. Country members should be aware that as the city population increases the rural services decline. A city increases at a greater rate than the country, there is the rural decline, and we get situations like that at Port Macquarie where the hospital is unfunded and cannot be funded for very many years; and in Albury, Maitland and such places, they do not have sufficient funds for decent hospitals and medical services. Thus the country area is suffering. As the population increases the RTA grabs a greater share of the cake to build expressways with \$1 billion of public money - minus whatever the private investor wants to put in. For example, with the F2, as was discussed earlier, the taxpayers will fund up to \$800 million. If country members were really interested - and, of course, the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Roads should be interested - those funds should be diverted from the useless F2 which is only going to cause terrible environmental and social problems - to the country. However, I do not think country members are really interested in that. The decline in the rural population has exacerbated problems for provision of important services in rural areas and therefore adequate access to services and jobs. Country people simply miss out, no matter which government is in office. The social justice strategy task force report in 1990 stated:

The lack of access to and or delays in the provision of social infrastructure, particularly in areas of high concentration of disadvantaged people on the urban fringes imposes both personal and community costs, lack of basic family support and health services, and can increase the risks of alienation, marriage breakdown and crime and other social issues.

Page 1865

The entire population increase in this State is brought by immigration. This is causing further problems for the poor who unfortunately are forced to live on the perimeter of the city. They have higher transport costs, longer travelling times, poor public transport, a long distance to travel to work and poor opportunities. The poor get poorer and the rich get richer. One proposal of this Government with which I agree would impose levies on developers of fringe land which would result in payment primarily by those who buy that developed land. The major beneficiaries of the finance shift are the preceding generation of existing house owners because the infrastructure costs are will be loaded increasingly on new land development on the perimeter of the city. This same amount of money is added on to the value of the existing blocks in the existing city. Thus the house owners' value rises by the rate of levy, and probably a little bit more than the developers of fringe urban land. Land prices will go up by \$50,000 to \$70,000. This is a windfall gain which is great if one happens to be an existing house owner.

The Water Board is currently levying developers about \$7,000 to \$8,000 a block to cover the capital investment the board believes is attributable to sewerage and water reticulation for the Rouse Hill project. Other expenditure to pay the full capital costs estimated for local government expenditure is estimated at between \$13,000 and \$15,000 per block. There is therefore a levy of \$20,000 a block which increases their cost by \$20,000 over and above that of existing blocks on the market. The availability of lower price blocks under \$65,000 in Sydney will fall to just 24 per cent of the output on the suburban fringe by 1994-95. This is brought about by the charging the infrastructure costs to developers. Eventually it will be passed down to people who end up with those

blocks. It is good to see that urban consolidation is increasing in Sydney. This \$20,000 charge which will no doubt rise as the infrastructure costs are loaded on to developers. This is causing urban consolidation in Sydney. Overall in Sydney the proportion of homes, other than detached houses, has increased from 29.3 per cent of all dwellings completed in 1987-88, to 42.4 per cent in 1990-91. There is a significant increase in urban consolidated dwellings.

At present fringe home purchasers are being subsidised by the public purse. This is leading to excessive investment in land development and will exacerbate inequalities as fewer people will be able to afford the resulting housing. This policy will also exacerbate intergeneralisation inequities as it favours those who purchased homes when infrastructure was subsidised and who are reaping additional benefits from increased property values resulting from the increase in fringe house prices. That inequity is compounded where fringe home purchasers pay similar rates and taxes to establish home ownership. A proposal was put to the committee which produced this report that the Commonwealth Government should accept an obligation to pay for the infrastructure costs of its policy of bringing migrants to settle in Australia. The cost of the migration program to Sydney is substantial. It has been suggested that the Commonwealth Government allocate a special purposes grant to New South Wales of something like \$20,000 per migrant. It is difficult to establish exactly how many migrants come to New South Wales, but each year approximately 40 per cent of Australia's migrant intake comes to New South Wales.

That figure would result in a grant to New South Wales from the Federal Government of about \$1 billion a year. Every year the actual cost to the people of New South Wales as a result of the migrant intake is between \$1 billion and \$1.4 billion in infrastructure costs alone. That is one of the reasons for the Budget blowout of about \$2 billion. If New South Wales did not have to provide infrastructure costs and other costs for the increase in population resulting from the migration program, the Budget this year would be balanced. At present the migration program is costing this country, particularly New South Wales, an absolute fortune. The New South Wales State Government should apply pressure to the Federal Government to reduce Australia's migrant intake to the point where it is sustainable and does not send New South Wales broke, as it is doing at present. Unfortunately the States did not have any input into this report. It is a pity the impact of the migration program on New South Wales was not analysed. Apparently nothing was worked out. The revenue requirements and population changes were not evaluated. That is remiss of the State Government which prides itself on being a good manager. It is not a good manager because it has no idea of what is actually happening.

The use of the beneficiary-pays principle rather than the user-pays principle is another interesting approach. The Standing Committee on State Development has discussed this issue. In 1976 a commission of inquiry into land tenures recommended vesting increases in land values in the Government so that land profits arising from increased density would help fund community services and would not be given to speculative developers. It may be appropriate to reconsider that recommendation if the urban impact of population growth is not being properly managed. Someone has to pay for it. Who will pay for it? The incoming migrants might have to pay for it. The present immigration program is causing an enormous blowout in social outlays. Total social outlays will rise by 30 per cent to 100 per cent in real terms depending on the level of immigration assumed. To fund public expenditure on major social programs in the year 2031, the cost per potential worker might need to increase by about 22 per cent to 30 per cent from present levels, depending upon immigration. From the Federal point of

view, the present migration rate poses a huge problem. Comparing a 50,000 net migration rate and a 150,000 net migration rate, by the year 2031 Commonwealth and State outlays will increase by \$20,000 million per annum.

**The Hon. S. B. Mutch:** On a point of order. The honourable member is reading ad nauseam from a book. He should desist.

**The Hon. R. S. L. Jones:** I am not. There is no point of order.

**The DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. R. T. M. Bull):** Order! I will rule whether there is a point of order.

**The Hon. R. S. L. Jones:** On the point of order. I am not reading at great length at all. I am quoting selectively. I have copious notes and I am making comments from those.

**The DEPUTY-PRESIDENT:** Order! Last night the honourable member was cautioned about quoting from documents. If he is quoting from a book or document, he should notify the House that he is doing so and give identification details.

**The Hon. R. S. L. JONES:** With a 50,000 net migration, by the year 2031 the increase in Commonwealth and State outlays will be vast. Expenditure will rise from \$63 billion in 1991 to \$98 billion in 2031. That is an increase of \$35 billion. With a net migration of 150,000, it will rise from \$64.6 billion in 1991 to \$118.5 billion in 2031. Effectively our children will be loaded up with the cost of these social outlays. The increase between the 50,000 net migration and the 150,000 net migration is \$20,000 million in the year 2031. We will not have to pay for that; our children will pay for it. Unfortunately, it seems that the State Government made no contribution whatsoever to

Page 1867

this report. There are huge communication gaps between planners and providers of physical and social infrastructure including roads, public transport, water, sewerage, education, health and community services. As honourable members well know, planners and providers do not work together; they work at odds with each other. It is ridiculous to separate roads from transport generally. The 1991 report of the Economic Advisory Planning Council:

... integrated plans would co-ordinate the planning of traffic, road networks, parking, public and private transport, with that for urban development and environmental protection, etc. Currently, many of these aspects are planned not taking fully into account urban development planning and vice versa.

The committee was disappointed that the State Government made virtually no contribution to the report because it is one of the most important reports in many a day. Population pressure is causing problems not only in Sydney but up and down the coast. Members of the Standing Committee on State Development realised that population pressures up and down the coast are destroying large areas of pristine coastline and agricultural land and wrecking the coastline for those who already reside there. There is much pressure for development from developers and people who want to live there. On Monday of this week Kempsey Shire Council voted to replace the conservation oriented committee members of Goolawah Reserve, a 1988 Nature Heritage Award winner, with Chamber of Commerce representatives. That push was led by a local real estate agent. There is now a proposal to push a road from Crescent Head through Goolawah through Limeburners Creek Nature Reserve to the Hastings River. That will result in the destruction of, or damage to, the Goolawah Reserve. That proposal may be approved by

the Government, which is so anti-environment.

This Government seeks to provide jobs at any cost to the environment. It is probably the most anti-environment government in the history of this State. Honourable members saw the extraordinary spectacle of the Minister for Planning and Minister for Energy telling this House that he supported investment by hazardous and offensive industries in New South Wales. I have never heard anything like that before in this State. Other States are trying to rid themselves of those industries, but this Government has said that a high temperature incinerator will probably be constructed in a country town. I suppose that proposal will be supported by the National Party. Governments in other countries are much more concerned about the environment than this Government. No doubt members of this House who can read saw a little snippet in the *Sun-Herald* on 22nd March which read:

Mexican authorities yesterday ordered more than 200 industries to slash production by 50 to 75 per cent and banned hundreds of thousands of cars from the roads to battle dangerously high ozone pollution levels.

Mexico, a country much less developed than Australia, took the drastic step of reducing production. The present Government would never do that. This Government actually wants to increase pollution; it wants to increase destruction of the environment because it is encouraging hazardous and offensive industries in this State. That was conceded in this very Chamber by the Minister for Planning and Minister for Energy just recently. The Government wants jobs above everything else. Mexico does not place jobs above everything else. The Government of that country believes the environment and the quality of life of the Mexican people are very important. The New South Wales Government has no thought for the quality of life of the people of New South Wales. It does not give a tinker's cuss about that. Time and again I have referred to destructive developments which the Government has approved.

Page 1868

The Ballina North Creek second crossing, which the Government approved, destroyed ancient mangrove swamps and the breeding areas of birds that were the subject of international agreements and should have been protected. The mangroves have gone and the area is being bulldozed. Local residents of an adjoining retirement village pleaded with the Government not to go ahead with the proposal. It would have cost approximately \$1 million less to go through with the original crossing a few hundred metres further on. The Government spent \$1.3 million extra and destroyed the mangroves. The development passed the retirement village because the council had a development across the river which it wanted to facilitate by pushing this road through at great expense to the ratepayers and taxpayers. I arranged for residents of the retirement village to meet with the Minister but he would not see them. I approached Hon. Patricia Forsythe to meet with them. She was extremely courteous but she did not have the power to do anything. The proposal was approved by the Minister.

Premier Greiner made promises but he let the people down. There was the unedifying spectacle of bulldozers driving into mangrove swamps at Iron Gates and into the koala habitat - all approved by the Government. The Micalo Island development was approved just the other day by the Minister for Planning and Minister for Energy. Today a meeting was held between the Deputy Director of the Department of Planning, and Minister for Energy and Neville Apitz and the Maclean Shire Council to discuss the legality of the approval of the development. The developer has refused to accede to the request from the Department of Planning to not disturb the acid sulphate soil. No doubt

that project will be pushed ahead. It has been approved already. There was the spectacle of a National Party member at Twofold Bay - Mick Allen - building a caravan park right on the forefront of Twofold Bay; he did not even submit a development application. He contravened the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. Honourable members know this ebullient man well. He has upset the media. The other day the Government, yet again, permitted the slaughter of an endangered species. Dead freckled ducks were laid outside Parliament.

I have spent considerable time talking about the need for environmental protection; the need to reduce population growth; the impact it is having both in the city and along the coast of this State. This Government is so beholden to developers that it will do nothing to ameliorate the situation. If this were a government for the people, it would do as governments in Germany, the Netherlands and in Scandinavia are doing: recycle the effluent which is pumped into our oceans; force companies to recycle their products; and plant eucalypt plantations. Had the Government done that many years ago it would not be knocking down the very last of our old growth forests for a pittance and giving the product to the Japanese for almost nothing. Honourable members will recall the appointment of Dr Hans Drielsma by the Minister for Natural Resources - a political appointment. That has been admitted. He was chosen, as a political appointee, to do the bidding of Ian Causley. That has been confirmed. He was at the bottom of the list and was chosen to be the commissioner. The Minister insisted that he be appointed. The Government is on notice. It knows of the public reaction to landfills and to pollution of the waterways; it knows the public reaction to developments up and down the New South Wales coastline. But it has chosen to ignore public reaction and go its own sweet way. This Government will lose, I am afraid, because it will not listen to the people.

**The Hon. ANN SYMONDS [8.54]:** I hope the House will oblige me by allowing me to pay a brief tribute to our former colleague Sir Adrian Solomons. When I came into this House in 1982 I was overwhelmed. My dear friend the Hon. Delcia Kite was not with me in those early months. I recall I was quite horrified when, after I had made a speech about prisons, I saw the figure of Sir Adrian striding across towards me after

Page 1869

I had returned to my seat. I thought I had committed some terrible solecism and that he was about to reprimand me. After all, he was the father of the House. Sir Adrian said to me that he was concerned that I should understand he shared some of my misgivings about the operation of prisons in this State. He said that whenever anyone approached him to discuss the issue of prisons and prison reform, he always insisted that they read "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" before they were permitted to participate in any discussion with him. Throughout the time I knew Sir Adrian he exhibited a deep concern for people at all levels of society, and an appreciation of the role of government in lawmaking as it affected people's lives. He always was the delight of the women's unit because of the way he supported legislation which was introduced gradually in the 1980s to limit the domestic violence suffered by women. He offered many suggestions to the Government about the effect that those laws could have. He reached the pinnacle in defence of women in society. I recall he spoke in the debate on the abortion motion moved by the Hon. Marie Bignold. At this time I should like to recall what he said in that debate. He said:

There is plenty of token equality for women but still very little, in fact.

In that debate he said also that he had been glad to hear the manner in which the debate had proceeded about the liberation of women but, unfortunately, it appeared to be a fact of life that the Judeo-Christian ethic was a male ethic. He voted against the proposal and

he said in conclusion:

We live in a changing society and I am grateful to have lived in that society. I am grateful that, in the short time I have lived, I have seen more emancipation of women, more movement towards the true respect of the place of women in society that has taken place in the whole of history before the day I was born. In other words, in the 65 years that I have lived, more advancement has been made towards a true recognition of the place of women than in all the years of history prior the that date.

He was indeed a civilised man and I miss him. The recent so-called vision statement "New South Wales Facing the World" should be renamed "Backs to the Wall". I cannot imagine this State being viewed in a positive fashion given the extent to which it has deteriorated. The Minister for Police and Emergency Services claimed that the changed government administration "will lead to greater accountability for government and real opportunities for Parliament to debate the proposals for change". By and large, with the exception of the Industrial Relations Bill, this Parliament has not been the means of introducing the massive changes that have occurred in society under this Government administration. Change has been wrought by regulation, policy and budgetary means, and by that means the face of New South Wales is being redrawn, but it is not being done through Parliament. The executive arm of government has never been stronger. The Minister for Police and Emergency Services said further:

A responsible program of privatisation and contracting out with a view to cutting infrastructure costs to industry, reducing the State debt and delivering high quality cost-effective services to consumers is the way forward.

Honourable members know where that program is leading the State. To date this radical remodelling has involved two aspects of restructuring: the abolition of services and the loss of thousands of jobs; and a separation of policy and management. This curious idea of separating policy and management is still being pursued by Mr Sturgess, though it failed disastrously in England. As an example, the Minister for Health and Community Services and the Minister for Health Services Management pass correspondence back and forth. They do not know, nor do we, who should do what in the tortuously structured model under which they are supposed to be operating. Privatisation and contracting out

Page 1870

has brought about the sacking of public servants and the hiring of consultants to do the job at many times the cost of public servants on award rates. It seems that the Government of New South Wales is being administered by consulting adults. The use of consultants by the Water Board has been scandalous. The honourable member for Blacktown noted the attempts to hide the actual amounts paid to consultants, and I refer honourable members to her comments.

As Michael Pusey noted in his book on economic rationalism, economic graduates with no expertise are overrepresented in the public service in Canberra, and I am sure that they are also overrepresented in the operations of this State. It appears that we are handing over policy to accountants. It is an alarming prospect for civilised society to allow accountants to determine how this State should be administered. Economic rationalists assume that the citizens of New South Wales are a commodity. In fact staff are now referred to as human resources. Their goals are different from such former public servants as Nugget Coombes, who believed that the people of New South Wales were to be served by government. Mere business models cannot be used to determine a range of services to the public. There is a conflict between profit and service. The notion of care has been abandoned, a feature that was evident in the recent debate on the restructuring of the children's courts. There is no concept of the need for

care and no recognition of the need for children to be cared for in secluded and sensitive circumstances.

Job applicants with experience in the private sector are welcomed with open arms. The fact that they have no understanding of a department's purpose is no impediment to their being hired. There is some perverseness in the Government's refusal to hire people with real expertise in providing services. Criminologists are not hired to administer gaols. Prisons are now run by former army officers who are openly hostile to modern penological practice. A number of senior executive service appointments are decidedly questionable. One high-ranking and highly-paid senior executive service member in the Department of Health recently asked whether visiting medical officers were doctors. This man, who came from Elders, believes that government has no place in insurance, banking, transport or health. How can this man, who is hostile to the Government providing health care, be of assistance to any government wanting to deliver high-quality health care? The United States model of health service delivery is failing. In the United States the only hospitals surviving are county and schedule 7 hospitals, that is, non-profit making groups. That cannot be denied. A friend of mine on a three-year contract in America was present recently at a national conference of Republican Party women. That conference agreed overwhelmingly that a public funded national health system was desirable.

**The Hon. D. J. Gay:** I cannot imagine a friend of yours at a Republican Party conference.

**The Hon. ANN SYMONDS:** I am a citizen of the world. If the Americans want a similar health system to ours, why are we dismantling it and replacing it with what they have? The creation of the senior executive service is one of my favourite topics. A two-class public service similar to that in the United Kingdom is being created in this State where only graduates of Oxford and Cambridge can enter into one level of the senior executive service - everyone else must go into the lower group. Privatisation is the great theme of our times. It is perhaps an indicator of the Government's values that the Benevolent Society, a charitable institution that has been running a hospital for 178 years, has announced that it will no longer run the women's hospital. Less than a month after this announcement the Government proposes to sign a contract with Fletcher Jennings and Health care of Australia to run the Port Macquarie hospital. HCOA is part of Mayne Nickless, which is known for operating security and transport facilities.

Page 1871

*[Interruption]*

I would love to engage in repartee with the Hon. L. D. W. Coleman but I am conscious of time constraints. Please do not think that I am being discourteous if I ignore his interjections. Usually I would welcome them.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! The honourable member will address the Chair.

**The Hon. ANN SYMONDS:** The Government will subsidise each bed by \$290 per day, so that whereas the Department of Health bed cost is \$400 to \$600 a day on the North Coast, private beds for the Port Macquarie hospital will cost \$890 a day - an additional \$12 million more per year for Mayne Nickless. Since coming to office the Government has supposedly streamlined the public service and rid it of corrupt practices. This would be admirable if it were true. The Independent Commission Against Corruption, which has the powers of Torquemada, was set up to deal specifically with

this problem. Lengthy reports were written but four years after the establishment of Independent Commission Against Corruption not one prosecution has been launched. The spectacle of the remodelling and streamlining of the Department of School Education causes me great distress. I have worked in the system and have maintained close contact with it through friends and family. What used to be the staffing operations of the Department of School Education, which were conducted at the beginning of each year, have now become ludicrous and scandalous.

The human resources development unit now processes throughout the year applications for promotion. I detail two cases that I heard of recently. A teacher seeking promotion flew from the North Coast to Sydney, travelled by hire car from Sydney to Picton for an interview, travelled by hire car back to the airport, stayed overnight at the airport hotel, flew the next day to Forbes for an interview and then flew back to the North Coast. The day after that he flew to Inverell and stayed overnight before attending an interview. He then flew to Leeton for an interview, travelled to Griffith in the afternoon for another interview and flew back to Ballina. He was scheduled to go to two other places, but one of his earlier applications was successful. In the time that he was absent from his school, each day a relief teacher had to be employed at a cost of \$150 a day. The total cost to the taxpayer of that one man's seeking of a promotion must have been at least \$2,000. More ridiculous than that, a woman, also I believe from the North Coast, flew from Coffs Harbour to Sydney, from Sydney to Melbourne, from Melbourne to Hay, where she attended an interview, attended another interview at Wentworth and then flew back to the North Coast. Subsequently, she travelled from Coffs Harbour to Sydney, from Sydney to Merimbula, travelled by hire car to Bega and stayed overnight. The process was then reversed in her travel back to Coffs Harbour. How is that streamlining the process?

**The Hon. D. J. Gay:** Why could she not get a taxi from Merimbula airport to Bega?

**The Hon. ANN SYMONDS:** The honourable member should ask his Minister. Those people in the system who have devoted their lives to the education of the children of this State are incredibly disheartened because they do not seem to be valued in the new system, a system which is resulting in chaos. The system is losing valuable people and the good will of those employed. I am deeply distressed by this so-called streamlining. Our cultural change, the deregulation of the Australian economy, which is what the private sector clamoured for, has delivered nothing to the ordinary Australians who are paying for a decade of corporate takeovers and asset stripping by a handful of corporate executives. It was like a huge game of musical chairs. When the music stopped and the

Page 1872  
recession hit, it was those with real assets and real money who won. Unfortunately, Keating's freeing up of money for investment has resulted in no new manufacturing measures. The boys simply played the short-term money market. In the 1980s there were no productivity increases, no jobs created and greed ran rampant. We must have a debate on tax in this country. We may compare the end result of the Reagan regime with what we may have in this country in the future. The poverty and inequalities in that country are enormous. There has been a decline in taxation from the days of Kennedy, when the top tax rate was 90c in the dollar, to 38c in the dollar under Reagan.

I wonder what this Government means when it says that it is managing better by putting people first, or was it putting people first by managing better? Whatever the slogan was, no doubt it was produced at great expense. Which people have been put first? It is certainly not women. Their health services have been cut back, put at risk or contracted out. Sexual assault services have been put at risk. Sexual assault programs

and community health services have been contracted out to Mayne Nickless, which does not seem to be a suitable body to deliver services to women. Access to technical and further education courses has been restricted. The new opportunities for woman program no longer exists. GIO Australia has abolished maternity leave. It is not children who have been put first. Their services have been cut. The Child Protection Council report reveals that. The latest blow to the children most in need of care is the report on substitute care by John Usher. This has produced the first piece of disappointing advice from this man that I am aware of. The shedding of substitute care is a disgrace to this Government. I hope there is time for that decision to be reviewed. If not, the Minister will rue the day that he contracted out the care of those children. The sale of properties held by the Department of Community Services - its demolition - is almost complete. I have no doubt that before long we will see the complete amalgamation of the Department of Health and the Department of Community Services. No distinct Department of Community Services will remain.

It is not the people who use public transport who have benefited. They have suffered from increased fares and decreased bus and train services. People using private transport have not benefited either. There are proposed tollways for the west and the north. Also motor vehicle registration fees have been increased. Changes to registration procedures came about when the Government forced 10 out of 11 motorists to leave the GIO and insure with private insurers. The Government raised insurance premiums enormously. There was no choice as to insurance company motorists insured with, and they had to stay with that company for two years. Some people were not aware of this happening. In 1989-90 New South Wales motorists paid \$500 million more in third party insurance premiums than was necessary to meet claims. This money should have been refunded to the motorists. Where did it go? Two of the private insurance companies involved were in trouble at that time. The injection of funds that the hapless New South Wales motorists were forced to make available in the form of premiums would have improved the positions of those companies markedly.

Certainly the 14,000 people sacked by this Government have not benefited. It is not the sick who have benefited. There are increased waiting times for hospital beds. There have been hospital closures. Productivity savings in hospitals have been made by introducing contract cleaning, which has meant that hospitals that are no longer clean. The cost is lower, and so is the service. The Department of Health is shedding people who provide services while at the same time paying enormous salaries to members of the senior executive service. I believe that another 45 people from the North Coast region are to lose their jobs. Australia's health care system has been good compared with that of other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries in terms of

Page 1873  
costs and morbidity statistics if the Aboriginal community is excluded. When Greiner finishes we will have a health system like that of the United States, which has very few centres of excellence. The bulk of hospitals are run down and poorly staffed. The health care system is not accessible to a significant section of the community. It is more expensive than any other in the world, and morbidity statistics show that health care is not being delivered as effectively as in Canada, England or the rest of Australia.

I refer the Minister for Health and Community Services to an article in the October 1991 edition of the *British Medical Journal*. It is important that the Minister understands that there is a statistical link between poverty and morbidity rates. The article clearly points out that mortality in England and Wales is linked to social class. The Minister should consider this article before he tampers further with the health system. That article also reveals that for the years 1967-88, which may be seen as reflecting the impact of the Thatcher years, the average real income per decile group of those people on

less than £200 per week has remained static throughout that time. The only group in which real income rose - and rose remarkably - was the group that already earned over £400 per week. The average real income of that group in 1988 was between £700 and £800 a week. Those with an average real income of less than £100 per week in 1967 remained on less than £100 per week in 1987.

The Department of Community Services is being destroyed. The people who looked after abused children and battered wives are losing their jobs. Offices are being closed. Families are in distress and capital assets are being sold off. Last year workers in the welfare area got an award which resulted in salaries being increased. The increases in salary mean that their salaries are still modest, being up to \$30,000. That pales in comparison with the salaries paid to males in the top range of the senior executive service. The implications of this rise are clear. Yet the Government cannot decide how to cope with this issue. The Government does not have sufficient public servants to advise it on how to cope with the new award. It has hired another set of consultants, Nicholas Clark and Associates, an economic consultancy management business, to advise on the extent to which service delivery is affected by the award, the implications of the award on existing funding levels to services, strategies and recommendations on the need for new models of service and or budgets. The aim of this exercise - at great expense - is to persuade agencies to cut services or staff so that the Government will not have to put more money into them. A number of services have been forced to close or have been auspiced, and services such as those provided at Erskine Villa are under extreme threat.

Who benefits under this Government? It seems it is just down to male yuppies riddled with management jargon and simple-minded schemes. Troubled insurance companies have benefited, saved from liquidation by the motorists of New South Wales being forced to take out overpriced policies. Slogan writers and logo designers are getting on. Changing Elcom's name to Pacific Power cost New South Wales at least \$70,000. What a benefit! Management consultants are doing extremely well. The Minister for Police and Emergency Services had the gall to stand at the table in this House and say that the New South Wales Government will not be using the taxpayers of this State to underwrite risky private sector investments. If he has forgotten Eastern Creek, we have not - the black hole the Government cannot dig itself out of, according to the honourable member for North Shore, which has cost \$90 million of taxpayers' money at the last count. There is no room in this State for further so-called microeconomic reform in the New South Wales public service. Services have been drastically cut because of our lack of staff to provide them. It is time for the Government to start increasing public sector expenditure. This nonsense about privatisation and the

Page 1874

free market must stop. John Carroll gave good advice in an article entitled "The Curse of Liberalism" when he said:

What would a pure free market look like? Not Germany, Switzerland or Japan of the '90s. The pure free market is rather the Wild West frontier of the United States - no government, no law, no sheriffs, no restraint.

That is where the Government is taking the people of New South Wales. The managers are not managing better - and the people are not coming first.

**Reverend the Hon. F. J. NILE** [9.23]: I have great pleasure in contributing to the Address-in-Reply debate in response to the brief speech of Her Majesty the Queen when she opened the second session of the Fiftieth Parliament of New South Wales and in commenting on the Government's legislative program as announced by the Leader of the

Government in this House on 5th March, 1992. Her Majesty requested that her speech be brief. Though normally Her Majesty's Speech would include the Government's program, after Her Majesty spoke the Leader of the Government in this House presented the Government's legislative program. The Minister referred in his speech to two matters that are the basis for my present comments. The Minister said:

In the area of law and justice, the Government will continue to provide a high standard of protection for the citizens of the State.

The question is what criteria will be used in establishing those standards of protection in the area of law and justice and on what foundations will decisions be made in that regard. That statement may be contrasted with a further comment by the Minister in his speech:

This morning the Government has introduced legislation to provide for legal casinos gambling in the State.

He also acknowledged the need of casinos to be "protected from criminal influence and exploitation". Confusion was evident in the mind of the Minister about the distinction between law and justice and opening the door to legal casinos while acknowledging the threat of criminal influence and exploitation. That illustrates the problems facing the Government and any other government in passing laws. The Queen reminded us in her Speech of our democratic principles and responsibilities to the people of New South Wales and Australia. Her Majesty spoke of changes that had occurred in Eastern Europe, in particular in the Soviet Union, where people were securing for the first time genuine freedom and a form of democracy, which is still being developed. I had great pleasure in presenting to Her Majesty our address of loyalty which I am sure expressed the sentiments of many other honourable members. I was deeply honoured to receive a reply from Her Majesty. I seek the leave of the House to have the address of loyalty incorporated in *Hansard*.

**Leave granted.** [*See Addendum.*]

**Reverend the Hon. F. J. NILE:** Her Majesty, in a reply dated 20th February, expressed appreciation for our address of loyalty, in these words:

Dear Mr Nile

The Queen received with much pleasure the Address of Loyalty which you passed to her today at the opening of the New South Wales Parliament, and has commanded me to send you and Mrs. Nile her warm thanks. Her Majesty was greatly touched by the warm welcome which she

Page 1875

received today from the people of Sydney, and much encouraged by the large crowds that greeted her everywhere she went. The Queen much appreciated the sentiments which prompted you to write as you did and sends you her best wishes.

Yours sincerely  
Sir Kenneth Scott

I was very proud, as were other honourable members, to have the opportunity, when received as members of this House, to take the oath of allegiance. I have had an opportunity on two occasions, in 1981 and 1991, to take that oath which includes the words "I do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, her heirs and successors, according to law. So help me God". It was fitting that the Queen was able to open this Fiftieth Parliament. Examination of the basis of our

laws in this State and Australia and of the laws received from our British heritage shows that Her Majesty herself takes an oath that focuses on our Christian heritage and the importance of God's divine law - that is, God's law of love. The Queen promised in her oath to "govern the peoples of Britain, the Commonwealth and the Empire according to their respective laws and customs", to "cause law and justice in mercy to be executed in all her judgments", and also "to maintain the Laws of God and the true profession of the Gospel". Those sentiments may be traced back at least to Richard I in A.D. 1189 - in the year of our Lord Jesus Christ. The oath taken by Queen Elizabeth II was put into its final form for the coronation in 1689 of William and Mary, the constitutional monarchs appointed by Parliament after the "glorious Revolution". At their coronation in 1689 the custom of presenting a bible to the Sovereign began. In 1953 this was done for the first time by the Moderator of the Scots Presbyterian Church immediately after the Queen had affirmed her oath with her hand upon the Gospels placed on the altar. First, the Anglican Archbishop said, as he gave the Queen the bible, "Our gracious Queen, to keep Your Majesty ever mindful - "

**The Hon. Dr Meredith Burgmann:** On a point of order. Last week Mr Acting-President ruled that discussion about the Queen in the take note debate was out of order on the grounds that a debate about the constitutional monarchy was also before the House. I ask that the comments by Reverend the Hon. F. J. Nile about the Queen be declared out of order.

**Reverend the Hon. F. J. Nile:** On the point of order. The honourable member may not have heard me say it but I was dealing in my speech with our Christian heritage and the basis of our laws based on the Bible. The quote I was about to make concerns what is said when the Bible is presented to the Queen. I am not discussing a monarchy versus a republic or any such issue; I am dealing simply with the biblical basis of our laws that are passed here in Parliament.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! There is no point of order. I am quite familiar with the rulings given by the Acting-President last week. They related to debate on the issues. Reverend the Hon. F. J. Nile was not debating the issue of monarchy versus republicanism and he may proceed.

**Reverend the Hon. F. J. NILE:** The Queen is presented with the Bible, which emphasises its importance in our national life, with these words:

Our gracious Queen; to keep your Majesty ever mindful of the Law and the Gospel of God as the rule for the whole life and Government of Christian princes, we present you with this Book, the Bible, the most valuable thing that this world affords.

Page 1876

The Presbyterian moderator also adds these words:

Here is wisdom. This is the Royal law. These are the lively oracles of God.

I know that some people feel that the Bible is not relevant today but I believe that through those statements it is. During the service there is a reading from the epistle of first Peter, chapter 2 which contains the words "honour all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honour the king". There is also a reading from the gospel of Matthew, chapter 22, which relates the story told by Jesus Christ which deals with our responsibility as citizens. Members of the House might remember the incident in which certain people came to Jesus. Matthew 22:16 states:

And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, who said, "Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth. Nor do you care about anyone for you do not regard the person of man.

The words relating to caring about man mean that he treated everyone equally without fear or favour. They then asked the question:

Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?

They were trying to trick Jesus into appearing to be pro-Caesar or anti-Caesar. Whatever answer he gave he would be in trouble. The scriptures say in Matthew 22:

But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, "Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Show me the tribute money."

They brought unto him a penny coin and Jesus said to them:

Whose is this image and superscription?

They said to him:

Caesar's.

Jesus said to them:

Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

When they heard these words they marvelled and left him and went their way. In those words, in a simple way, our Lord showed us our responsibility as citizens both to God and to Caesar - Caesar in that case simply representing governments or those in authority. Following that the Apostle's Creed is recited in the service. It includes a summary of the Christian doctrine. The creed recited is:

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth; and in Jesus Christ, his Holy Son Our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead and buried, He descended into Hell, the third day He rose again, He ascended into Heaven and sitteth on the Right Hand of God the Father Almighty; From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead; I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Catholic Church; the Communion of Saints, the Forgiveness of sins, The Resurrection of the Body and the Life everlasting AMEN.

An anointment with holy oil takes place. This relates to the original crowning of King Solomon by Zadock the priest. Included in the service is the anthem of Zadock the priest which was composed by Handel for the coronation of George II. It includes the words  
Page 1877

based originally on "God save King Solomon". A golden orb is presented to the Queen by the Archbishop. It highlights important Christian beliefs. While the orb is being presented these words are stated:

And when you see this Orb set under the cross, remember that the whole world is subject to the power and empire of Christ our Redeemer. For He is the Prince of the kings of the earth; King of kings and Lord of lords, so no man can reign happily who derives not his authority

from Him and directs not all his actions according to His laws.

Obviously laws play an important part in society. There would be chaos without laws. The question I am raising in my speech is: what should be the basis for those laws? There is a kind of contrast in that if we believe in God we are set free from the law. That does not mean that citizens are not obliged to obey the law of the states. Some eccentric Christians down through the ages have taken that literally to mean that they are beyond the law and can do exactly what they please. That was not the intention. The words "the empire of Christ our Redeemer" remind us that as Christians we are saved by God's grace, which is a free, unmerited gift through Christ our Redeemer through Christ's death on the cross. This reminds us of what is in 1 Peter 1:18-19:

Forasmuch as you know that you are not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold . . . But with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot:

John the Baptist used the same imagery when he said as he saw Jesus Christ approaching:

Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

That is another miracle in God's love. As we consider the Government's legislative program for this session we need to be reminded of our responsibilities as members of Parliament. In the same way that the Queen is not an absolute ruler - she is God's servant; she is under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords - it might sound strange but as members of Parliament in a sense we are also God's servants, ministers of God, as stated in the letter of Paul to the Romans in chapter 13. This puts all members of Parliament on a very high spiritual level in relation to God. In Romans 13:1-7 it states:

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant -

Another translation is God's minister:

- an agent of Wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him; if you owe taxes, pay taxes, if revenue then revenue; if respect, then respect, if honour then honour.

We see from that explanation by the Apostle Paul where he places members of the Government. I believe this is applicable to us even though not all members may comprehend it or perhaps even accept it. Looking at this over a period of history, looking at it from God's perspective, those in positions of authority in government or in a parliament are in a special relationship with God, they are God's servants, God's ministers. In a very special way - leaving aside the whole question of ordained ministers and clergy - members of a parliament are in a very special relationship with God. I am  
Page 1878

a minister in two ways: once ordained in the church and also by being a member of parliament.

God, the Creator, has chosen to use in a great variety of ways the mediation of others for carrying out His designs. Those words were used in the motion to which members of the House spoke. Civil rulers or governments in this world are among the number of God's ministers or servants. There is no power but of God but the powers that be are ordained by God. Therefore, it is agreeable to the will of God that there should be civil government. God has given to mankind that reason which points to it as necessary and useful. Therefore, civil rulers or governments are ordained by God but the doctrine of their being divinely appointed does not take from the democratic supposition or practice under our Westminster parliamentary system the belief that the people ought to have a voice in the elevation of those who are, in a civil sense, to rule them. Why does God appoint a civil government or members of parliament as his Ministers and servants? Certainly not for God's own benefit but for the public good. Therefore, civil government, in this case our Parliament, is designed by God for good to the government. Members of Parliament are therefore his ministers for the promotion of the public good, the public happiness, the promotion of good and the prevention of evil. The Leader of the House in his outline to debate on the Government's legislative program stated:

The historic shift begun last session in the balance of responsibility between Executive Government and the Parliament will continue. This shift will lead to greater accountability for Government and real opportunities for Parliament to debate the proposals for change. The Government is committed to introducing legislation in this session to bring about major parliamentary constitutional reform.

This is an encouraging development. Previously all decisions were made by the Executive Government. We are seeing now a process develop where the Parliament is genuinely debating issues, debating legislation, amending legislation and so on. In many ways, I believe, the Parliament has been restored to its true role as being the Government. In the past the Parliament was simply a rubber-stamp. I believe that is a very desirable improvement. It is God's intention that his Government, his servants in Parliament should prove "a deterrent to evil works, to punish evil doers by laws honestly and honourably executed, to prevent the people suffering from one another as to life, property or any of their rights". It is also God's pleasure that those in government should be appraised of those that do well. They should properly encourage those in our society who do what is right. I believe that is also emphasised in our parliamentary opening prayer which states:

Almighty God, we humbly beseech thee to vouchsafe Thy blessing on this Parliament, direct and prosper our deliberations to the advancement of Thy glory and the true welfare of the people of our State and Australia, Amen.

In that prayer there is a very simple statement based on what I have read from Romans 13, "direct and prosper our deliberations". We are, in fact, hoping and believing that God in some way is guiding and directing our minds through our consciences, through our experiences, through counselling, through prayer, through our reading of the Bible and so on, so that His will is reflected in the decisions made in this Parliament. That certainly is what the prayer seeks to express. The Lord's Prayer, in which we join together in unison has in it the words "God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven". We know God reigns in heaven but His will does not always seem to work in practice here on earth. That is because of the rebellious nature of mankind, of sin and evil in our world. Obviously, things are done that would grieve God as much as any man.

I mention that because sometimes when there is suffering, poverty, or severe

Page 1879

famine in the north of Africa or in Ethiopia, somehow people feel that is God's doing. That certainly is not true. It is not part of God's will. God gives mankind free will to do good or to do evil. I believe those are examples of evil being done which would grieve God as much as any one of us. It is important, as we pray for God's direction, that we believe God will answer our prayer. Therefore, in our various ways, we all should have some attitude of reverence for, and belief in, God. Otherwise it would be a contradiction in terms to say the prayer and add, "I don't believe in God". It is also important for us with God's help to nurture in our hearts our faith that we might grow stronger in our role for the honour of God for His own sake and for the sake of the people. Our Lord Jesus Christ in many ways is a perfect model. No one, of course, can be like Jesus, because He is the only perfect person, the Son of God, but I believe He does encourage us to emulate some of his characteristics. That was spelt out in the letter in Philippians Chapter 2:1-11. The Apostle Paul wrote:

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from His love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.

Next follows the important part of the biblical quote I would like to emphasise:

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests but also to the interests of others.

That is a very important concept. The Apostle Paul continues:

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

Who, being in very nature God,  
did not consider equality with  
God something to be  
grasped,  
but made himself nothing,  
taking the very nature of a  
servant,  
being made in human likeness.  
And being found in appearance as  
a man,  
he humbled himself  
and became obedient to death -  
even death on a cross!  
Therefore God exalted him to the  
highest place  
and gave him the name that is  
above every name,  
that at the name of Jesus every  
knee should bow,  
in heaven and on earth and  
under the earth,  
and every tongue confess that  
Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

Another important aspect is that if we are God's ministers or God's servants in the

Parliament, we are also accountable to God. We are obviously accountable to the people through the election processes and by our daily interaction with the people of the State, the voters, the constituents. I suppose a final accountability comes at the elections. A far more serious area of accountability is that if we are God's servants we are accountable to God. That is far more serious than being accountable to the electorate. Each person, each one of us, must die. We must all make an unavoidable personal appearance before the judgment seat of Christ. Each person and each member of

Page 1880

Parliament must stand before God to receive according to the deeds done in the body and their principles of action whether they have been good or bad. In the Bible is a statement where Jesus says hopefully that this will happen for each one of us. We will hear these words on judgment day:

Well done, thou good and faithful servant:  
Thou hast been faithful over a few things,  
I will make thee ruler over many things;  
Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

As I was preparing this speech, those words were very important. I was certain those words should have been addressed to our revered former colleagues the Hon. Sir Adrian Solomons. Because of his faithful service to this Parliament and the people of this State he would certainly be worthy of receiving those words of praise from our Lord. As a practising Christian I am sure he would have received that commendation as part of his eternal reward. I and my wife the Hon. Elaine Nile have many kind memories of Sir Adrian during our association with him in this Parliament. It was a great privilege for us to have played a small role in helping to elect Sir Adrian as Deputy-President and Chairman of committees in the last session which, because of his death, was the last time he served in this Parliament. It was right and proper to honour him in that way. My wife and I, together with other honourable members, extend our sincere condolences to Lady Solomons and her family. If members of Parliament are God's servants, should the people simply blindly obey the Government? The answer depends very much on what the Government does. For example, if the Government forsakes its proper duties, disobeys God's will and does not do good but takes measures to ruin the people, the responsibility of the people to obey ceases. That is what happened in Hitler's Nazi Germany. The citizens of Germany, particularly a large number of Christian citizens, felt they had to remove Hitler from power. They tried unsuccessfully in many ways to do so. A number of Christians in high positions were involved in the bomb plot against Hitler. That was justifiable in those circumstances. It was also justifiable in Stalin's communist Union of Soviet Socialist Republics where many Christians and others resisted that system as much as they could. Many of them paid for their resistance by being sent to prison camps or to Siberia. Submission to an unjust government becomes a fault and resistance a virtue. God has never given up mankind to oppressors or dictators. That is certainly not God's will.

Bearing in mind the Government's plans in relation to law and order on the one hand and its intention to introduce legal casinos on the other, what should be the basis of decisions made by Parliament? What principles of godly government should guide us? The Bible, God's inspired holy word, is the most important guide. Honourable members might be surprised to learn that it has been calculated that more than 70 per cent of references in the Bible are references to government. About 30 per cent are references to personal life. All nations must base their laws and principles of government on a moral code or ethos. What moral code should be followed in New South Wales when we are facing the moral decline and decadence of drug abuse, pornography, street prostitution, brothels, paedophilia, legal and illegal casinos, the growth of homosexuality, child abuse,

abortion, violence, crime and the offensive homosexual mardi gras? Upon what moral code should the Government base its decisions?

An important question relates to the moral basis for the new constitutions now being drawn up for the democratic governments in the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the Commonwealth of Independent States: Ukraine, Poland, Serbia, Croatia, Albania, Bulgaria, Romania and Czechoslovakia. About 12 months ago I met the Polish

Page 1881  
Consul-General and he discussed these issues as the constitution was being developed. A couple of weeks ago I met a delegation from the Commonwealth of Independent States. Members of that delegation said they too were wrestling with the moral issues involved in drafting a constitution after a former dictatorial communist government with little experience of democracy had been deposed. They hope to adopt a new constitution next month. They will learn from that process. The day cannot be postponed when a constitution is adopted to give stability to those Governments. I am sure the Bible will play an important part in those societies because there are many Christians in those countries, whether they are Russian Orthodox, Greek Orthodox, Catholic or Lutheran. I am sure they will play a big part in helping to draft the constitutions, laws and moral codes which will govern their countries. I note from press reports I have read that recently young people walked through the streets of Moscow saying, "Now we are free we can smoke marijuana", as if somehow drug use was synonymous with democracy. Obviously that needs to be clarified. This week I saw on television a number of young people walking through the streets of Moscow totally nude and decorated with body paint. It seems that because of a vacuum people are -

**The Hon. R. B. Rowland Smith:** Is the honourable member not seeing the worst features?

**Reverend the Hon. F. J. NILE:** No. I am merely indicating that laws to cope with these problems have not yet been drafted. After having a repressive communist government under which everything was illegal, there is now a vacuum and they are faced with a difficult problem. They are not in any way out on a limb because we too face the difficult problem of drafting laws appropriate to our day and generation. That is why I believe the Bible still has an important role to play. It contains God's inspired word and, through that, the wisdom of many thousands of years. That wisdom was expressed by King David in Psalm 19:7-11 when he said:

The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is thy servant warned; and in keeping them there is great reward.

God's word is revealed also through the so-called natural laws. They govern the entire operation of the universe from the great heavenly bodies which revolve in their circuits to the most minute atom. Their effect has long been recognised as following an orderly process through gravity, physics, chemistry and mathematics. That is stated clearly by the psalmist who said:

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork.

Laws are the essence of life, for in the observance of the perfect laws of God life is worth while. The keeping of these laws is essential to orderly justice and the establishing of

equity and peace. Without law, anarchy would reign and society would be in a state of lawlessness and political disorder under which no government could function. According to what I have read there has been a tremendous expansion of organised crime, as serious as the mafia in the United States, in the Commonwealth of Independent States, formerly the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Some gangs are so powerful that they are seeking to control parts of Moscow. The police are having great difficulty containing lawlessness. One could say the new federation is on the edge of anarchy. We hope that a regime of law and order, not a regime of lawlessness, will be established. The Bible goes beyond human wisdom. It has within it divine wisdom. The part of the Bible that is so well-known is in the Book of Deuteronomy, which refers to the Ten  
Page 1882

Commandments - which have been described as the perfect moral code. Despite all the attention given to the Ten Commandments over the years in sermons and films, they can be summed up in only 15 verses from the whole Bible. The commandments, statutes and judgments of the Lord can be classified as those laws dealing with human conduct, personal responsibility and governmental accountability to God for the administration of the affairs of his kingdom and the meting out of justice and equity to all. The Ten Commandments have been strongly commended over the years by church leaders. The most Reverend Marcus Loane, for many years Archbishop of Sydney, said:

Every nation and individual needs a moral foundation and faith for daily living. The Ten Commandments has provided such a foundation since time immemorial. In this permissive age of relativism it is again time to stress these moral absolutes. Jesus said, "Those who teach God's laws and obey them shall be great in the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Hon. Sir Charles Court, who has an active faith and also served in the government, said, in regard to the Ten Commandments:

We all need guidance and discipline along the stony path of life. Some need more than others. None can lose their way or fall for want of basic standards if they know and understand the Ten Commandments - and then strive to obey them. I find a regular recital of them is, of itself, a great guide and discipline.

The late Sir James Cardinal Freeman, whom I greatly respected for his leadership, said:

The crisis corroding our family and national life, are religious crises - crisis of faith and a crisis of values. The Ten Commandments provide an invaluable foundation for values in an age of relativism. These ageless Commandments serve as a minimum standard for our Australia Society, both on a personal and community level. May the Ten Commandments guide us in our Relationship with God our Father and with one another.

I believe the Cardinal expressed it very well. Some people have been under the false impression that Jesus Christ abolished the law. That is why he said in Matthew 5:17:

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law of Moses and the teaching of the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of the pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commandments will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

The Ten Commandments have been described as God's law of love and many legal people regard them as the basis for our legal system. The first commandment states that

God must be supreme in the life and activities of mankind. "There shall be no other God to you, except Myself" as Jesus said, "No man can serve two masters. You cannot serve God and mammon" - the god of greed. The second commandment instructs us not to worship idols. Men set up idols whenever they place something above all else, even God, and it becomes an object of reverence in the place of God - for example, the State, the hammer and sickle, heroin, alcohol, the dollar, and so on - reminding us that love of money is the root of all evil. The third commandment says we must not take the Lord's name in vain. Laws against blasphemy must be retained, based on the third commandment. The fourth commandment states, "Keep the Sabbath day holy". Under this law we labour for six days and the seventh day is kept holy unto the Lord. It should be a day of re-creation, a day of worship, a day for family togetherness.

That leads us to the fifth commandment, the sanctity of the family, "Honour thy father and mother". Next to the worship of God is the sanctity of the home and its protection. When men truly love the Lord they will honour their parents. The sixth commandment relates to the sanctity of life. Immediately following the first five

Page 1883

commandments governing man's relationship to God, the Lord sets forth the relationship of men, one to another. "Thou shalt not kill". That is why we must oppose abortion and euthanasia. The seventh commandment refers to the sanctity of marriage. Next to murder, God condemns the pollution of the lifestream of the people. Family life was to be guarded against all moral pollution or corruption. The seventh commandment states: "Thou shalt not commit adultery". Jesus Christ reminded us that even when a man lusts for another woman, he commits adultery with her in his heart. Therefore, we must oppose the promotion of promiscuity, which undermines the family and marriage; we must oppose pornography, which degrades all women; we must oppose homosexuality, which rebels against God's plan for creation - in the beginning God created male and female, Adam and Eve. A healthy nation depends upon healthy virtuous family life and heterosexual relationships.

The eighth commandment is, "Thou shalt not steal." Having given the commandments respecting life and virtue, God set forth man's relationship to his neighbour's goods and referred to the sanctity of private property and the policy of restitution. The ninth commandment is, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." God set forth the relationship of man towards the good name and reputation of his neighbour - by word and deed. That must be respected. The tenth and final commandment is, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife nor anything that is thy neighbour's." Greed sums up why men break other commandments. It leads men to murder, lie, commit adultery, and steal, it causes violence and bloodshed. We should oppose gambling, casinos and anything that encourages greed.

There is an urgent need in our State for a vision for the future, based on those moral principles, on God's divine law. New South Wales is facing massive problems. In the Minister's outline of the legislative program he indicated that New South Wales is facing a deficit of at least \$1 billion. The overseas debt - \$133 billion in February - has now increased to \$145 billion because of the economic policies and vandalism of the Hawke-Keating duo. Another massive problem facing New South Wales is unemployment. The unemployed in Australia number one million. The huge dole payout is sending Australia bankrupt and into a massive budget deficit. More than \$7 billion will be paid out in unemployment benefits in 1991-92. There has also been a dramatic increase in the breakup of families, because of unbearably heavy moral and economic pressures. Approximately 750,000 children come from broken homes. Single mothers, almost 50,000 - 20 per cent of them unmarried teenagers - will receive \$500

million in single mothers' pensions in 1991-92.

New South Wales is also morally bankrupt. The nation's television screens are filled with pornography, violence, nudity, four-letter words and blasphemy, yet the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal has banned Fat Cat and certain episodes of the children's television program Skippy. Newsagencies and service stations are flooded with pornographic magazines and pornographic videos. Our children are exposed to the federally funded Family Planning Association's Teenage Sex Diary and the promiscuous Teenage Hotline. Our schoolchildren are bombarded with permissive sex education programs, the condom culture and homosexual propaganda which fails to teach children that homosexuality is immoral, unnatural and unhealthy. The homosexual activists are attempting to force schoolchildren to accept homosexuality under the guise of a dishonest campaign to combat so-called homophobia. It is an insult to people of other races to link a campaign against racism to a campaign against schoolchildren's rightful rejection of homosexuality. In that regard I support Professor Fred Hollows for his brave stand and courageous statements concerning the AIDS pandemic. He has demonstrated genuine concern for the Aboriginal people of Australia.

There has been a variety of visions presented recently: yesterday there was Mr Greiner's vision for the future; Mr Keating's kick start vision for the future; and Mr Hewson's fightback vision for the future. I believe New South Wales needs a vision for the future. Proverbs 29:18 states, "Where there is no vision the people perish; but he that keeps the law, happy is he." I wish to outline to the House what I believe to be some priorities for the future; what I would term Call to Australia's Vision for the future. We need direction and purpose. Our nation must have a sense of direction, not aimlessness, not going around in circles, not lost in the dark. We need to take to heart our opening prayer in seeking God's guidance. We need to be dependent and obedient to God's direction as revealed in the Bible; as revealed in his Son Jesus Christ and in prayer. We need to remember Romans 13. We are God's servants, God's ministers to advance the glory of God and the true welfare of the people. Dynamic power is available. God has called on us to promote good and to prevent evil, but he does not leave us to struggle under our own strength. God does not give us an impossible vision to fulfil, does not give us a set of laws beyond our strength. God provides the dynamic power, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to strengthen us to do his will; to accomplish God's will in our own personal lives, in our families, in our State, in our nation, in our world - God's world. I am always encouraged by the words of the Apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 1:7, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but the spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" - the spirit of a soldier-like discipline in the battle of life, in the battle between good and evil.

Third, Australia should have a decent society, and I use the word "decent" as the Australian version of the Biblical word "purity" or "pure". Our vision for the future must be based on a firm, strong foundation like the Ten Commandments. As Jesus Christ said in the Beatitudes, Matthew 5:8, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God". Our nation must distinguish between right and wrong, as some things are good and other things are evil. When Israel went off the rails - rejected God's laws - the Bible states in Judges 17:6, "And every man did that which is right in his own eyes". Instead we should observe what the Apostle Paul said in Romans 12:21, "Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good". The philosophy that rejects that God-centred value system is described as secular humanism, which is man centred, not God centred. Fourth, we should acknowledge our democratic heritage and foundations based on our constitutional democratic Westminster system of government, as expressed in our Federal and State Constitutions. Our democratic beliefs are part of our Christian heritage based on the

principle of God's creation of man made in the image of God - the personal worth of every individual - which is best expressed in the historic American Declaration of Independence:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

My vision for the future includes a decentralisation policy. Previous speakers spoke about the overpopulation of Sydney and the problems of pollution and urban sprawl on the fringes of western Sydney. More than 80 per cent of the Australian population lives in cities and towns, mainly on the east coast. A decentralisation plan should be developed to build up the country population, and country residents should not be discriminated against by high living costs, taxes and so on. The vision for the future also envisages the devolution of power - not a revolution, as the International Socialists want. The devolution of power would reverse the growing centralisation of power in the hands

Page 1885

of Federal politicians, and especially the Canberra public service bureaucrats. We do need genuine federalism, with devolution of power from Canberra to Macquarie Street, from Federal to State Government, from State Government to local government, and from local government to the family unit, the family government - which is the smallest unit of government. We should encourage strong family farms, strong family small businesses and so on. That is why I support the citizen-initiated referendum concept in all areas of government, which would give people greater control over their own lives, the community and the environment.

The seventh principle of vision for the future involves development of Australia, or Australia first. No nation should stagnate or turn back the clock to a pre-industrial economy - a peasant economy, which seems to be the vision of the Tasmanian Greens. Australia must develop its natural resources. Its secondary industries should be encouraged to become self-sufficient, and to provide jobs for everyone, especially our youth. It is tragic that more than 40 per cent of youth in Victoria and about 30 per cent of youth in New South Wales are unemployed. One proposal worthy of examination is the restoration of a genuine youth wage to create jobs for young people. It is important that we develop this role. In the book of Genesis, God said, "Be fruitful, and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it and have dominion over it". We need to care for and replenish the environment, while subduing it and benefiting from it. Australia's position needs to be clarified. I believe Australia is a European nation in the Pacific Asian region, not an Asian nation. Australia can never compete with the cheap mass Asian labour force. As was said in debate today in the Federal Parliament, our industries and future jobs should be protected, otherwise Australia will become a gigantic tourist Disneyland, with only one industry - tourism. Some type of tariff protection is necessary to build up Australia's secondary industries, especially the clothing and footwear industries. As Australians have a higher wage level than Asian workers, they should and could pay more for Australian-made products.

The eighth principle of this new vision is diversification, to encourage freedom of choice in society. I have always advocated freedom of choice for parents to choose what type of school their children should attend, whether it be private or public, and that they not be bound by zoning restrictions. As was demonstrated in the matter of public interest debated today, citizens should have a greater choice of hospital care. The final principle is the defence of our Christian heritage, which includes our British heritage, though I recognise the tremendous contributions made by Chinese, Greeks, Italians, and

other people in society and in this Parliament. The fact that we acknowledge our ethnic brothers and sisters does not mean that we should be ashamed of our Christian or British heritage. Therefore we should confidently defend our Westminster system, Constitution, flag, Bible, Christian value system, families and our children. To achieve this renewal of the Australian nation we should follow the oft quoted passages in 2 Chronicles 7:14 which reads:

If my people, who are called by My Name, will humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

**The Hon. B. H. Vaughan:** On a point of order. The monumental irrelevancy of the honourable member's last three, four or 10 paragraphs has deprived us of knowing that Pakistan has just won the World Cup.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! No point of order is involved.

**Reverend the Hon. F. J. NILE:** That quote from 2 Chronicles 7:14 details the  
Page 1886  
steps that I believe are applicable to Australia's renewal as a Christian Commonwealth, or as one nation - and I note that Mr Keating uses the slogan that I often use of "One Nation", but I add "under God". The simple steps are as follows: as a nation, we must humble ourselves. We must pray, seek God's face and turn from our wicked ways. Then we will have God's response and blessing. God will hear our prayers, forgive our sin and heal our land of Australia. We will be able to fulfil the vision of our Australian founders, such as Sir John Downer. He said:

Our Commonwealth of Australia will be from its first stage a Christian Commonwealth.

Alfred Deakin, three times Australia's Prime Minister, prayed on 3rd June, 1898, when the States finally voted in favour of Federation:

God Thy blessing has rested upon us here and we pray that it may be the means to creating and fostering throughout all Australia a Christ-like citizenship.

That is something we should all regard as a prayer for our nation. If we reject the divine law of God, what are the alternatives? I believe that it would create a vacuum, which I have referred to as the danger facing the new democracies in eastern Europe. This vacuum could be filled by either the individual or the State. There would be no mediating structure to generate moral values and therefore no counter-balance to the inevitable ambitions of the State. The direction would then be towards State totalitarianism, as occurred in the then Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, communist eastern Europe and Nazi Germany. With no moral core, no moral code and no ethos comes the loss of community. A community or society is a gathering of people around shared values, a commitment to one another and to common ideals and aspirations that cannot be created solely by government. Constitutions work only because they reflect an actual sense of community or society. The democratic ideals of nations such as Britain, the United States and Australia were granted, as was so clearly put by Alexander Solzhenitsyn in his famous 1978 Harvard address. He said:

Our rights were granted on the ground that man is God's creature. That is freedom was given to the individual conditionally, in the assumption of his constant religious responsibility.

Solzhenitsyn continued:

The West has finally achieved the rights of man and even to excess, but man's sense of responsibility to God and society has grown dimmer and dimmer.

This lack of sense of responsibility to God is the basis for many of our modern social ills and the breakdown of society, with its increasing level of violence. As stated in the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America, a belief that we are made in the image of God is very important. I am sure that all honourable members remember the classic novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. In a very powerful scene Winston, the main character, defies the State and is tortured by the chief party official, O'Brien. As O'Brien administers massive electric jolts to Winston's squirming body, he abandons all pretence and shouts in Winston's ear the following:

The party seeks power entirely for its own sake. We are interested only in power, the object of power is power.

I believe that George Orwell has summed up the situation. Lord Acton stated:

Power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely.

That is why governments need checks and balances as in Canberra where there is the  
Page 1887

Crown, as represented by the Governor-General, the Senate and the House of Representatives; and in New South Wales where there is the Governor, the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly. We also need freedom of choice, diversification and devolution of power to prevent the growth of the all-powerful State as occurred in Stalinist Russia and Hitler's Germany. Christian leaders and members of Parliament must use power with a different motive - not to impose one's personal will on others but to preserve God's plan of order and justice for all based on honesty and integrity. Society has nothing to fear from the Christians or from God's divine law. Every citizen should be actively involved in his duties as a citizen, especially Christian citizens who often prefer to stand on the sidelines and criticise others. I am reminded of the experiences of the brave German christian pastor, Martin Niemoller, the man who stood up against Hitler. He could not be criticised, because his courage and patriotic ideals were well-known and beyond question; he had served as a World War I German U-boat commander. Pastor Niemoller was persecuted by Hitler. He told the following story to discourage apathy and encourage participatory democracy:

In Germany they came first for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the trade unionists and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist. They came for the Catholics and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me, and by that time no one was left to speak up.

That demonstrates the dangers of an apathetic society. Her Majesty, in her speech to the Parliament, reminded us of the following:

Events around the world in recent years have shown the strength of people's desire for the freedom to shape their own futures. We have all been witnesses to remarkable change as the people of many nations, with immense courage and determination, have rejected authoritarian rule and embraced democracy.

She continued:

The best guardian of freedom is Democracy, and this Parliament, like all other Parliaments in Australia, stands in the proud tradition of Democratic government. Each one of you, therefore, carries the heavy responsibility of representing the aspirations of your fellow Australians and of guarding their freedom.

We should respond like Joshua of old in Joshua 24:15:

As for me and my house we will serve the Lord!

---

*Addendum*

**OUR 1992 ADDRESS OF LOYALTY TO THE QUEEN OF AUSTRALIA**

Her Most Gracious Majesty, Our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth, the Second, By the Grace of God, Queen of the Federal Commonwealth of Australia and the Australian States thereof, and of her other Realms and Territories:

As faithful and law-abiding Citizens of the Federal Commonwealth of Australia do we hereby declare and re-affirm our loyalty to and our affection for our Queen, and do we also express our trust that for as many years as you may be spared by God your Majesty will continue to reign over this, our own Commonwealth and People.

Page 1888

Being mindful of your inspiring vows made during your Coronation Services on 2nd June, 1953, whereby you swore "**to maintain the laws of God and the true profession of the Gospel...**", we are re-assured by your Majesty's splendid resolve and dedication "**to cause law and justice in mercy to be executed in all judgments, to the Sovereign's power**", by which we can more securely preserve in our Commonwealth and State Constitutions and in the Parliaments thereof, the essential place and value of our Lawful and Constitutional Monarchy, through all of which there can be guaranteed to us, our children and our children's children the upholding of our Common law rights, liberties and traditions which form a vital basis of our Australian system of the Westminster System of Constitutional Parliamentary Democracy.

We pray and beseech Your Majesty to take no account of the current efforts by a noisy minority to replace our Constitutional Monarchy with a Presidential Republic or to discontinue your heirs and successors of the Crown in Australia or to threaten the removal of our Australian Flag or to threaten the permanence and supremacy of our own Commonwealth Constitution, which embodies the three elements of authority over our Commonwealth of Australia - The Crown, The Senate and the House of Representatives, as amended only by National Referendum, since 1901.

In Witness Whereof, and to joyfully celebrate this fortieth Anniversary of Your Majesty's Reign, do we join fellow-Australians in the signing of these addresses of loyalty, praying that our gracious Queen may ever be sustained by these our pledges of faith, honour and affection.

**God Save the Queen**

**The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS** [10.25]: I wish to contribute to the Address-in-Reply debate and the debate on the Government's legislative program as presented in the House by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Prior to doing so, I pay tribute to the memory of Sir Adrian Solomons, who distinguished himself as a member of this Chamber, as a lawyer and through community involvement. On the legislation of the

Government, I draw the House's attention to a number of Government initiatives in the arts. For the fourth year in succession, the Government has been able to maintain the value of its grants for the arts despite the most stringent economic conditions in more than 50 years. This is not to say that Treasury's allocation to the Ministry for the Arts in 1991-92 was generous; on the contrary, the arts portfolio took severe cuts and, like all areas of government, has worked under heavy constraints. It has sustained its programs and initiatives through a combination of resourcefulness and flexibility. That has put great demands on its program managers.

**The Hon. Ann Symonds:** And the introduction of charges.

**The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS:** I will come to that. Grants to arts organisations were augmented by a transfer of \$330,000 in 1991-92 from the Arts Development Fund. As honourable members may know, this fund was established in 1991 with a capital base of \$1 million from savings achieved by the Ministry for the Arts, together with dividends from the Government's shareholding in the Sydney Entertainment Centre. The fund is used to assist special projects and initiatives. I am sure honourable members would be pleased to know that among the initiatives now under way are the Gunnery Visual Arts Centre in Woolloomooloo, which will open later this year, and the Writers Centre at Rozelle, which opened last September. The range of the Ministry's assistance to the arts has grown markedly under the present Government. Grants are now available for computer assistance, public art, rock music and in other innovative areas as well as traditional fields such as music and theatre. Triennial funding is offered to a range of companies and many important initiatives are being funded for the first time. Progress on the Gunnery Visual Arts Centre has been gratifying. On 4th March South Sydney Council approved a development application to refurbish the building at Woolloomooloo. Work has commenced with a scheduled completion date of 30th June. Unfortunately, the project was delayed for nine months because of a review by the Department of Planning for development applications affected by a liquified petroleum gas storage tank adjacent

Page 1889

to the site. The Department of Planning's new guidelines allow the development to proceed.

As honourable members may know, the project is being funded by the Ministry and with contributions from Mr Franco Belgiorno-Nettis in exchange for a 99-year lease of an adjoining block of land. Mr Belgiorno-Nettis in effect is making an outright gift to the State of \$170,000 in view of the value of the work being carried out by his company and the valuation of the land in question. On completion, that development at Woolloomooloo will enhance the artistic life of the people of Sydney. On the point raised by the Hon. Ann Symonds, severe constraints on Government outlays have forced the Minister and the Premier to allow charges for admission to cultural institutions. Admission targets of \$2.65 million for 1992-93 were set for the institutions. The indications are that the targets at the Powerhouse are not being met, mainly because of recessionary conditions and inflated estimates of what charges would yield. This will affect decisions for the next budget.

**The Hon. Ann Symonds:** It is a tragedy to see that place empty now.

**The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS:** To answer the honourable member, I emphasise that the institutions were given the option to charge but the Art Gallery, for example, did not exercise its option.

**The Hon. Ann Symonds:** The Art Gallery is the last museum not to have charges

for general exhibitions but it does charge for special exhibitions - and we paid heavily for some of the arrangements the Art Gallery has made in recent times.

**The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS:** By contrast, the previous Government in 1987 decided to introduce charges as a blanket policy in 1988. It should be remembered that all other major galleries and museums in Australia now charge for admission and most United States and European galleries also charge. Concessions are available for families, pensioners and students. The influence of charges as a factor in determining attendances is put into perspective by the fact that at Taronga Zoo, where the entry fee is \$12.70, visitation has increased in the last year. There are strong signs that Sydney will soon have at least one new lyric theatre. The Sydney City Council and Ipoh Garden (Australia) Australia Pty Limited have reached agreement in principle on restoration of the Capitol and are expected to sign a contract for a nine-year lease on a site later this month, and work is expected to be completed by late 1994. The theatre will seat 2,100 and have an orchestra pit for up to 110 players and extensive wing and foyer spaces.

The Government has taken action to improve festivals in this State. Carnivale and the Festival of Sydney were brought under the joint management of the Sydney Committee Limited in March 1991. All honourable members should be pleased that the Festival of Sydney this year in particular was an outstanding success. The two events will be held together in January 1993. This will make possible significant administrative savings, a larger and more flexible pool of funds, and a bigger festival with a higher profile. I emphasise that there will be a bigger multicultural arts component in the festival as a result of the changes, and grants for ethnic community events will be maintained. "Masterpieces from the Guggenheim" was the most prestigious and important art exhibition ever staged in Australia, attracting more than 280,000 visitors to the Art Gallery of New South Wales. The total cost of the exhibition was \$6,376,000. Total revenue was \$5,240,000. The Government's investment of \$1.1 million has reaped retail and tourist business estimated to be worth at least \$7 million. The popularity and successful organisation of the Guggenheim exhibition has been a fortunate omen for  
Page 1890  
Sydney's Olympic bid in the year 2000.

**The Hon. Ann Symonds:** We lost out on Toulouse-Lautrec because of a craving for the Guggenheim.

**The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS:** The honourable member visited the Guggenheim exhibition and was impressed.

**The Hon. Ann Symonds:** I paid to go.

**The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS:** The Olympics offer an immense challenge to Sydney's arts organisations. The Cultural Commission appointed by the Minister for the Arts, in consultation with his colleague the Minister for Transport, is already making plans for a cultural festival for the Olympic Games, which will be the most exciting and imaginative arts and cultural festival ever staged in Australia. In relation to initiatives in the arts, the initiatives of the State Government have indeed been very impressive. But other initiatives have been taken in the field of ethnic affairs. In that regard I should like to mention but a few. First, in relation to the provision of culturally appropriate gynaecologists and obstetric services, the Ethnic Affairs Commission is continuing negotiations with the Royal College of Gynaecologists and Obstetricians with the aim of identifying procedures to improve the provision of culturally appropriate gynaecological and obstetric services to women of non-English speaking background and in particular Muslim women. Second, I refer to the symposium on cultural and linguistic matters in

criminal law. The Ethnic Affairs Commission, in association with the Law Foundation, the Law Society and the Office of Multicultural Affairs, is organising a symposium to identify issues pertaining to cultural and linguistic matters in criminal law. The symposium will recommend appropriate action so that the criminal process is better able to cater for the linguistic and cultural make-up of our multicultural society.

In 1992 Law Week will run during the final week of July. The Premier's recent statement "New South Wales Facing the World" includes references to the further development of language skills, including twelve priority languages in schools - languages of economic significance and key community languages. Six are Asian languages, reflecting the importance of consolidating Australia's place in the Asian community. A further initiative is the retrenched workers' rights project, which is a major project of consultation and research to look at training and retaining needs of unemployed workers of a non-English speaking background who are seeking to re-enter the work force after having been retrenched as a result of industry restructuring or economic recession. The report of the project will be a unique contribution to research in the field because it will draw on the experiences of a wide range of stake holders, from program planners to individual workers. The recommendations of the report will contain directions for action for the Ethnic Affairs Commission and Federal and State government departments. The project is being conducted jointly by the Ethnic Affairs Commission and the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission.

Mr President, if I may refer to the matter of community racist attitudes which was raised in the House yesterday, I wish to inform the House of the Government's initiative in school education. The whole school anti-racism project is a pilot program designed to promote racial harmony and positive community relations in schools. It has been developed jointly by the Ethnic Affairs Commission and the Department of School Education. Its first stage will be to give to a metropolitan and a country high school -

Page 1891

Granville South and Moree high schools - the time and resources needed to produce appropriate strategies which involve all aspects of school life, for example, curriculum choices, local school policies, staff development, and various individuals, principals, teachers, students, administrators and local communities. It is to be expected that the strategies will involve the whole of the school environment; not simply pupils - parents, teachers and people within the immediate community.

The second stage will document the experience of the two participating schools to form the basis of a resource package for use by other schools. Half of the budget for the strategy has been contributed by the Commonwealth Government through its community relations strategy. They are but a few of the initiatives that have been taken by the Government in the field of ethnic affairs but they indicate an enlightened approach to the needs of the community. I pay tribute to the Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Ethnic Affairs and the Chairman of the Ethnic Affairs Commission, Mr Stepan Kerkyasharian, who is so ably managing his commission. In closing I also pay tribute to the initiatives I mentioned earlier undertaken by the Attorney General, Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Arts, the honourable Peter Collins, who has given distinguished service to the visual and performing arts.

**The Hon. D. J. Gay:** He has done an excellent job in arts.

**The Hon. J. M. SAMIOS:** Indeed. I also affirm the contribution made to this House by the late Sir Adrian Solomons. From a number of conversations I had with him in relation to the arts I found that his interest in that area was remarkable. I am sure his contribution is appreciated by honourable members.

**Debate adjourned on motion by the Hon. J. H. Jobling.**

**GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICE (PRIVATISATION) AMENDMENT BILL**

**Bill received and read a first time.**

**Suspension of certain standing orders agreed to.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**The Hon. J. P. HANNAFORD** (Minister for Health and Community Services)  
[10.47]: I move:

That this House do now adjourn.

**ROYAL HOSPITAL FOR WOMEN**

**The Hon. ANN SYMONDS** [10.47]: I cannot remain silent on the destruction of the Royal Hospital for Women. On 6th March the announcement was made by the President of the Benevolent Society of New South Wales, Mrs Judith May, and the Minister for Health Services Management, Ron Phillips, that the Benevolent Society was to withdraw from the management of the hospital and consequently the Royal Hospital for Women at Paddington will cease to exist within three to five years. During the society's 178 year history the Royal Hospital for Women has been the focus for excellence in its provision of health services and care for women and babies. The destruction of such an integrated range of services for women seems to be passing without a whimper. I accuse this Government of allowing the hospital to founder under  
Page 1892

the weight of its imposed productivity savings and the dismantling of services such as the on site pathology service leading to a perception that the hospital could not stand alone. My personal involvement with the Royal is that, like many mothers, I had my two children there and all my grandchildren had been born there. So as a consumer I am aware of the superb service. However, I also have an understanding of the range of services provided at the hospital because I served on the board of the Benevolent Society.

I was appointed by Peter Anderson in 1987 and I sat through meetings which attempted to deal with the financial pressures on the hospital's operation - some of which were occasioned by the introduction of productivity savings by the Collins administration in 1988. It took some time for Peter Collins to work out how to remove me from the board. I was there for sufficient time to understand what threat this Government was making to that hospital. The discussion of the need to privatise certain functions of the hospital began with this administration. There were discussions about the Benevolent Society funding a private section of the hospital while government was to guarantee funding to the public section. There are many examples of this mixture of public and private delivery elsewhere and what is commonly known is that the private sector is subsidised by the public sector. I was concerned then at the proposed radical changes to the traditional functions of the society and I am saddened indeed that under the weight of this Government's ideology this radical change is now in place.

I am convinced that many people, including the Minister for Health Services Management, have no idea of the complexity and high standard of services offered at the Royal Hospital for Women for people in the city, the State and the South Pacific region. In fact, it is an outstanding medical service within the Southern Hemisphere. The Royal

Hospital for Women, because of the expertise of its staff, has a worldwide reputation for women's health services. In 1988 this hospital was consulting on 25 per cent of New South Wales patients with gynaecological cancer. The gynaecological oncology unit has only recently been completed. It is an excellent facility which should be retained. The menopause clinic - a first in this State - offers outpatient services to women. The obstetric unit is well regarded by more than 4,000 women each year who give birth there. Hereford House provides mother and child centred care where hospital routines are secondary to the needs of mothers and children. This unit aims to assist parent-child bonding - the mother cares for the child with supportive help from nursing staff. The birthing centre provides a place for women to give birth in a more homelike atmosphere than the usual labour ward. This is a hard-fought gain for women wanting to give birth without an abnormal amount of intervention.

The newborn care centre is a tertiary referral centre for the whole of New South Wales. It provides intensive care cots at level three and level two. Mothers whose babies are at risk and who are likely to need special care on delivery are admitted prior to giving birth to avoid transporting a critically ill newborn baby. This unit also offers counselling services for women and bereaved parents who have babies with abnormalities. In general hospitals, women's health services tend to be low in the hierarchy of specialties. There is a real danger that the services of the Royal Hospital for Women will be eroded unless safeguards are put in place to protect them. If this hospital does not continue as a stand-alone hospital on the Prince of Wales site, or the Camperdown site, women's services will be downgraded if hospital resources are to be cut. In 1992, Mayne Nickless, a security and transport firm, is to be given the go-ahead to run Port Macquarie Hospital, and the Benevolent Society, which has a long history and much expertise, has been forced out of Paddington.

The fate of the Royal Hospital for Women was sealed when this Government  
Page 1893  
was elected in 1988. Feeble assurances that the hospital will retain its identity and stand alone on a new site at the Prince of Wales Hospital or King George V Hospital are not credible or comforting. The Government must undertake, as an atonement for this gross act of destruction, to provide a tertiary referral hospital that is dedicated to all aspects of women's health. A minimum guarantee must be given by the Government to establish a management committee of the Royal Hospital for Women so that real advocacy for staff and consumers will be provided directly to the area health board and not through any government-appointed manager. I mourn for the passing of an outstanding service.  
[Time expired.]

#### **SINGLETON RETURNED SERVICES LEAGUE CLUB**

**The Hon. ELISABETH KIRKBY** [10.52]: I bring to the attention of the House problems that have arisen in Singleton, in particular at Singleton Heights. The local Returned Services League club is proposing to build an annexe in the Singleton Heights area. This annexe will be located across the road from the public school, which has an enrolment of 621 pupils. It was pointed out to the management of the Returned Services League club that a liquor licence could not be granted if the annexe were to be built in the area of the school. But the club still plans to go ahead. In spite of complaints by residents the club has given the following reasons for not using other alternatives: it cannot use the district centre because that area is not building up fast enough; there is no site large enough in Darlington, a small subdivision; cars have to be used by members to get from Maison Dieu, an area just north of town; and cars would have to be used in Gardner Circuit on the fringe of this area. If the annexe is built there it would disrupt residents in that area. Hunter View is also an unacceptable site as cars would have to be

used. The corner of Blaxland Road and Bridgman Road in Singleton is unsuitable because it is a flood area. The club believes that Alroy Park is the best area, but all the arguments that apply to other sites apply to that area.

The management of the Returned Services League club claims that a club on the proposed site will not upset the local community. Most people will walk to the club as they live within one kilometre of the site. They claim also that at peak times there will be only about 50 to 70 cars parked at the club. However, they have had to admit that at peak time as many as 100 cars are parked at the RSL club in the town. They claim that traffic will not be a problem when the school is being used, but Singleton Heights has a large population of shift workers. My correspondent points out that the school is used outside of school hours by Brownies, the Children of God and by the Parents and Citizens Association for meetings and fund-raising activities. It is used also by several other community groups. The Returned Services League proposes to donate barbeques and a children's recreation area to the community if it is allowed to build the club. There are already eight hotels, four clubs and nine restaurants in Singleton, and a bottle shop at Singleton Heights.

The facilities the Returned Services League plans to provide - tennis courts, a gymnasium, barbeques and a children's recreation area - are already provided in other parts of the community. The demand for the club is apparently limited. All the facilities the Returned Services League claims it will give to Singleton Heights are available elsewhere in the town. The only reason it wishes to place the club on the proposed site is to reduce the distance people will have to drive. The residents ask: if it was unsuitable to build the club in Gardner Circuit for fear of upsetting the residents, why is it suitable to build it on the site at Singleton Heights? My correspondent concludes by saying:

I know that the RSL helps a lot in the community but I have two children one who attends school and I feel that this will be a bad example to set to all the children.

Page 1894

I hope that you will be able to help as it seems that the council will not listen . . .

Many people who attended a public meeting to consider the rezoning of the land opposed the re-zoning and the building of a Returned Services League club on the site. However, the council still rezoned the land. The file reference number is DA15-92. I believe the site may be unsuitable for a Returned Services League club as it is in such close proximity to a public school. I ask the Minister for Local Government and Minister for Cooperatives to intervene in this matter, as he has in other matters.

### **PORNOGRAPHIC POSTERS**

**The Hon. Dr MARLENE GOLDSMITH** [10.57]: I bring to the attention of the House a letter I have received from Mr Joe de Bruyn, the Secretary-Treasurer of the New South Wales Branch of the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association, about the proposed ban restricting posters from public view. The letter reads:

On behalf of my Association's 66,000 members, 70% of whom are female, I write to congratulate you on your recent calls to restrict posters advertising soft core pornographic magazines.

My Association's commitment to the struggle for equality for women involves action to

protect our female members from harassment and to uphold the dignity of women in the workforce and in society in general.

Mr de Bruyn continued:

The exposure of society to pornographic material generally emphasises only women's **sexual** roles and reinforces archaic attitudes to women's roles in the community and hence in employment.

This is further reinforced by the exposure of young children and adults to posters advertising pornographic material.

You have the full support of this Association in your attempt to ban such posters.

I am delighted to receive the support of the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association for my private member's motion. Mr de Bruyn and the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association are right in recognising the importance of the issue to equal opportunity for women and the protection of our children. If a picture is worth a thousand words, one must look carefully at the messages pictures convey. I thank the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association for its support.

#### **LIVERPOOL COUNCIL**

**The Hon. J. F. RYAN** [10.58]: Yesterday I asked a question which drew attention to the use of police to eject a Liberal Party alderman, Tony Pascale, from a council meeting at Liverpool two nights ago. The mayor was way out of line in using police to control a council meeting. After all, the alderman concerned merely questioned a ruling of the chair in an orderly manner. Before he was taken from the chamber, the meeting had continued for some time without his participation. Consideration should also be given to the fact that the mayor rejected out of hand a compromise put to the meeting by one of his own Australian Labor Party colleagues before the police arrived. But following the departure of Alderman Pascale there were further developments. The Australian Labor Party used its numbers to pass a resolution of the council forbidding Alderman Pascale from attending any further meetings of the council until he had apologised to the mayor in writing. Before the end of the meeting three members of the Australian Labor Party moved a rescission motion of this decision of the council and then

Page 1895  
voted with the Australian Labor Party against it, purely to disallow any further discussion of the matter for a further three months. The penalty imposed on Alderman Pascale for this relatively trivial offence is far harsher than this Parliament would impose on any one of its members for a far more serious act of disorderly conduct. The tactics of the Australian Labor Party are outrageous and have absolutely no place in a modern democracy.

#### **CARACAS DECLARATION ON NATIONAL PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS**

**The Hon. R. S. L. JONES** [11.0]: Recently, more than 1,500 leaders and participants got together at a meeting in Caracas, Venezuela, of the World Conservation Union for the Fourth World Congress on National Parks and Protected Areas. They adopted a declaration, which reads:

nature has intrinsic worth and warrants respect regardless of its usefulness to humanity;

the future of human societies depends upon people living in peace among themselves, and in

harmony within nature;

development depends on the maintenance of the diversity and productivity of life on Earth;

this natural wealth is being eroded at an unprecedented rate, because of the rapid growth in human numbers, the uneven and often excessive consumption of natural resources, mistaken and socially harmful styles of development, global pollution and defective economic regimes, so that the future of humanity is now threatened;

this threat will not be averted until these problems have been redressed, the economies of many countries have been strengthened, and poverty has been conquered through processes of sustainable development;

many people must modify their styles of living and the world community must adopt new and equitable styles of development, based on the care and sustainable use of the environment, and the safeguarding of global life-supporting systems.

### **NEWCASTLE RAIL SERVICES**

**The Hon. PATRICIA FORSYTHE** [11.2]: Last night before time for the adjournment debate expired I was talking about the rail link in Newcastle. I conclude my remarks by saying that the rail link cuts the city in its heart and is a major constraint on growth. The city council, which voted for the proposal, deserves to be congratulated for having the vision to look ahead to a revitalised city. The lord mayor in particular in standing up to the Australian Labor Party machine has shown the type of courage for which Novocastrians are famous. The honourable member for Newcastle has spoken of the Honeysuckle proposal as exciting. He will have to realise that compromise and a conservative attitude to the city's development will in the long term be to the detriment of this exciting and outstanding proposal.

**Motion agreed to.**

**House adjourned at 11.3 p.m.**

---