

Legislative Council*Wednesday, 25 August, 1971*

Credit Union (Amendment) Bill (first reading)—
Questions without Notice—Governor's Speech:
Address in Reply (Ninth Day's Debate).

The PRESIDENT took the chair at 4.28 p.m.

The Prayer was read.

CREDIT UNION (AMENDMENT) BILL**FIRST READING**

Bill received from the Legislative Assembly and, on motions by the Hon. F. M. Hewitt, read a first time and ordered to be printed.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**BEER SLOPS**

The Hon. C. J. CAHILL: I ask the Minister for Decentralisation and Development and Vice-President of the Executive Council a question without notice. Has it been reported that some beer drinkers in New South Wales could be drinking what is known as beer slops? Have beer slops been known to contain such items as cigarette butts and dead matches? Will the Government have issued and enforced regulations to provide for the universal use of an adequate amount of indigo dye in every beer-pulling drink tray? Are some beer drinkers being fleeced by up to 15 per cent in volume-ounces by the use of what are known as deceptive glasses? Will the Government have regulations issued and enforced to ensure that no beer is sold in this State except in standard size and indelibly branded glasses?

The Hon. J. B. M. FULLER: I have seen a report on this matter that was highlighted yesterday. I do not know whether the report was accurate, but I have no doubt that already an inquiry is being conducted into its correctness. I am sure that if the story is true, action will be taken to see that the law is enforced, and any other action needed will be taken.

TENANCY BONDS

The Hon. W. J. GERAGHTY: I ask the Minister for Decentralisation and Development and Vice-President of the Executive Council a question without notice. Is the Minister aware that the amounts charged by many estate agents for rent bonds and associated charges have reached a level that is causing a heavy financial burden on the incoming tenant and in some instances reaches exploitation levels? Is the Minister aware also that owing to the steep increase in open market rents a bond equal to four weeks rent together with section 5A lease charges commonly exceeds \$100 to \$120? Is he aware that upon termination of tenancy it is not unusual for disputes to arise on alleged damage and the like and that substantial portions of the bond are withheld and not refunded? If these are facts, will the Minister refer the matter to his colleague, the Minister of Justice, seeking consideration of an appropriate amendment to the Landlord and Tenant (Amendment) Act, 1948, to restrict the amount of bond to two weeks rent where satisfactory references can be given to the owner or his agent by the incoming tenant? Will the Minister consider also the need for tenants to have access to the fair rent board as a suitable tribunal for the settlement of disputes over refund of bonds?

The Hon. J. B. M. FULLER: I do not know anything of the matters referred to by the Hon. W. J. Geraghty. I shall refer the question to my colleague, the Minister of Justice. I have no doubt that he will look into it.

PUBLICATIONS ON DRUG ABUSE

The Hon. EILEEN FURLEY: I wish to direct a question without notice to the Minister for Decentralisation and Development and Vice-President of the Executive Council. Is it a fact that the New South Wales Government is carrying out a massive campaign to educate the community, and youth in particular, on the evils and results of drug abuse? Is it a fact also that as part of the campaign the Department of Health has issued a series of excellent leaflets, which are available freely to the public? As honourable

members appear not to have received copies of these publications, will the Minister arrange with his colleague, the Minister for Health, for each honourable member to receive them, and any subsequent publications of a similar nature?

The Hon. J. B. M. FULLER: The publications referred to by the Hon. Eileen Furley are excellent. They deal with the use and abuse of drugs. I shall certainly see that copies are made available to honourable members. Drug abuse is a big problem in the State at the moment and the Department of Health has produced literature well worth the attention of every member of the community.

MOTOR VEHICLE NOISE

The Hon. EVELYN BARRON: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Decentralisation and Development and Vice-President of the Executive Council. Is the Minister aware of the press statement on noise made by road vehicles? What is to be done about the motor bike or the rider who deliberately revs up for noise, and the motorist who screams around the corner, or has faulty tyres and rends the air purposely to make noise? Is this not a more important matter to deal with, and certainly more real, than waiting for an indefinite period to catch up with new cars, which should not make a noise?

The Hon. J. B. M. FULLER: The aim of some people is to buy a new car that does make a noise. That is the sort of problem the honourable member is referring to. The motor transport authorities and the police are clamping down on noisy exhausts as much as possible. I know that persons can be proceeded against for making excessive noise with a motor vehicle, and if any instances are brought to the notice of the police, they will act against the offenders who are disturbing the peace of inhabitants of suburbs in the metropolitan area. However, the matter is a difficult one. I believe the police are acting in a reasonable manner and in the course of time I hope they will be able to stamp out excesses in this regard.

SURCHARGE ON BLACK STEEL

The Hon. W. J. GERAGHTY: I ask the Minister for Labour and Industry the following question without notice. Is the Minister aware of the surcharge recently imposed upon all Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited black steel products amounting to \$7.50 on all orders supplied which are less than one ton in weight? Is the Minister aware also that this heavy extra charge is causing economic hardship and disruption of trade in small engineering establishments, motor repair shops, and similar undertakings where the order of ton lots is not possible or practicable? Is it a fact that the effect on the surcharge and consequent cost inflation on the orders delivered to this type of business undertaking is indicated by the following example: an order for two 25-foot lengths of 1½ inch angle iron invoiced at \$7.30, plus surcharge of \$7.50, would mean a total charge of \$14.80 and an order for two 20-foot lengths of flat steel invoiced at \$8, plus a surcharge of \$7.50, would mean a total charge of \$15.50? Will the Minister verify the report that, following the switch by the trade to the purchase of bright steel in order to avoid surcharge, more recently the price of that product has been advanced by \$32 a ton? If these are facts, will the Minister make inquiries into the means by which the surcharge was discontinued in South Australia and examine every other means by which this burden may be lifted from the users of black steel in this State, and at the same time prevent a further inflationary tendency?

The Hon. F. M. HEWITT: In answer to the honourable member, I am aware of the surcharge that the steel distributors have placed on small orders of less than one ton. I have had a number of complaints from buyers of these small quantities. As a result, representatives of the wholesale steel industry have come to see me and I have reason to believe that that method of marking up will be changed in order to price each quantity appropriately rather than impose a surcharge. As the honourable member said, a surcharge can work to the detriment of the small buyers, particularly one who may want even as much as one ton. In order to get steel to his particular specifications, which sometimes is

not carried by all the distributors, he has to shop around and sometimes is faced with more than one surcharge. I have reason to believe this will be altered in the near future.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH: ADDRESS IN
REPLY

NINTH DAY'S DEBATE

Debate resumed (from 24th August, *vide* page 551) on motion by the Hon. M. F. Willis:

That the following Address be adopted and presented by the Whole House to the Governor, in reply to the Speech which is Excellency had been pleased to make to both Houses of Parliament, viz.:

To His Excellency Sir ARTHUR RODEN CUTLER, upon whom has been conferred the decoration of the Victoria Cross, Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order, Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, Knight of the Most Venerable Order of St John of Jerusalem, Governor of the State of New South Wales and its Dependencies, in the Commonwealth of Australia.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY—

We, Her Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the Members of the Legislative Council of New South Wales, in Parliament assembled, desire to express our thanks for Your Excellency's Speech, and to assure you of our unfeigned attachment to Her Most Gracious Majesty's Throne and Person.

2. We beg to assure Your Excellency that our earnest consideration will be given to the measures to be submitted to us.

3. We join Your Excellency in the hope that, under the guidance of Divine Providence, our labours may be so directed as to advance the best interests of all sections of the community.

The Hon. F. H. COCKERILL [4.45]: I spoke yesterday on matters relating to education expenditure and I drew particular attention to the cost of free transport for schoolchildren, an amount of \$13,400,000, and the cost of aid to independent schools, in round figures \$6,000,000, included in last year's budget allocation. These items of expenditure are payments that have greatly increased in the life of this Government. Great stress was made by the Government on its claim that its aid to independent

schools would not have any adverse effect upon the allocation of funds to government schools. The addition of two heavy items to the education budget, without provision having been made for them, must gravely affect some phases of the department's activities.

Let me put it more simply. In 1964 the Labor Government increased the allocation for education by \$23,000,000 so that the allocation represented 35 per cent of the total budget expenditure. In 1970 the education expenditure is still in the range of 35 per cent of the total budget expenditure but it now includes payments on two items that have developed so strongly in recent years. Obviously the expenditure on education generally must be affected adversely.

Yesterday the Minister made some reference to the matter of loans. I concede that the Government has made considerable advances in the matter of loans to schools. Of course that would be so because loans for public works throughout the State have risen from \$140,000,000 to \$210,000,000. One consideration that must not be overlooked is the increased costs in the past five years. In all these circumstances, if the Government did the right thing and used its loan account for capital works to meet school requirements but made inadequate allowance on the budgetary side for the actual functioning of the education system, an imbalance must occur somewhere. That imbalance is causing all the strife we are now having with the education system.

I do not subscribe to the belief that suddenly all schoolteachers have become monsters. I know that a number of them are very much incensed about the present situation. I do know one schoolteacher who is a communist, but I know some who are conservative. Until recently some had not participated in any type of industrial action but they have found themselves becoming more and more incensed. The situation that has developed is that the Minister has his back up against teachers who feel that he has prematurely made up his mind about any matter they might put to him.

Yesterday I referred to a basis upon which to judge this Government. When Government supporters were in opposition

they continually criticized the Labor Government. The present Minister for Public Works, when in Opposition, said that the Labor government was borrowing New South Wales into bankruptcy. He criticized the Labor Government for its rate of borrowing. Everybody knows that the rate of borrowing by this Government has increased each year. It is increasing now at a rate much faster than previously. If there were any truth in what the Minister for Public Works said when in Opposition, New South Wales should now have reached the stage of bankruptcy. Yet, borrowing is continuing and the Government's new cry is that it is having difficulty borrowing more money. The state of our loan commitments is far in excess of what it was when Labor went out of office.

True it is that in this period during which borrowing has reached its peak the Government has had quite an extraordinary existence. In the five years since coming to office this Government, has had only one surplus. At this stage its accumulated losses total \$24,800,000, taking into consideration that this year the Government has pumped \$23,000,000 into the budget and has finished with a deficit of \$7,000,000. The Government has taken out of loan funds—a procedure never before adopted—approximately \$24,000,000, so that in the past five years about \$31,000,000 has gone from loan funds into the budget. How can it be said that the Government has done a good job? Members on the Government benches might say that circumstances have prevented a good job from being done, and they might put forward all sorts of excuses. However, in the light of the budget figures it would be impossible to substantiate the claim that the Government has done a good job in administering the State of New South Wales.

I now wish to speak principally about the city of Newcastle. I shall refer to a series of articles entitled "Promises, Promises" that have appeared in the *Newcastle Sun*.

The Hon. F. W. SPICER: Who wrote these articles?

The Hon. F. H. Cockerill

The Hon. F. H. COCKERILL: I shall explain. The *Newcastle Sun* could be described only as a conservative newspaper. The first article in this series referred to "The Great Train Fiasco", and reads:

When the Askin Government came to power in the mid-sixties, the new Minister for Transport, Mr Morris, was quick to let Newcastle know that he like the locals was not happy about the city's dilapidated railway station.

He is reported as having said:

I am not proud of it. However, I am hopeful that something can be done about the condition of the station in the not too distant future.

That was back in 1965. The people of Newcastle were delighted when in September, 1966, the Minister for Transport announced plans for a completely new station at Newcastle with a 12-storey administrative block at a total cost of \$1,500,000. There were no if's or but's in the Minister's statement. He produced a handsome architectural drawing and announced without reservation that work would start on the project in the first half of 1968. The building and the station were to be sited at the eastern end of the old station and the main entrance to the station was to be located in Watt Street. I do not think there would be many members of this House who have not at some time been on Newcastle station. Few people would have failed to notice that for a city of the size of Newcastle, its railway station is a pretty poor advertisement. The Minister made definite promises that something would be done. The article continued, under the sub-heading "Five Years Later", still quoting the Minister:

This building will be an adornment to the city of Newcastle. The station will be the best in New South Wales.

Nearly six years later it still has not happened—and does not look like happening. The Minister gave many assurances but nothing has happened. The article continued:

... the Railways Commissioner, Mr McCusker, dashed any lingering hopes the locals may have held when he bluntly told two deputations he was keen to see a new railway station in Newcastle but did not believe it was possible.

Since then the old Newcastle railway station has been given a lick of paint and some bricks have been knocked down here and there to permit the reconstruction of part of the station as a new booking office. This is a clear indication that the station will be there for many years to come. Under the heading of "Government silence on deepening the port" the article continues:

The estimated cost of deepening work in Newcastle harbour is trifling compared with the benefits to be obtained from a national point of view from increased export trade.

It is claimed in the article that the Hon. Sir Edward Warren made that statement. The article continues:

The Premier told the Legislative Assembly he would make a statement "in a day or so" on proposals to deepen the Newcastle harbour bar and channels.

Mr S. Jones, M.L.A., had asked whether, two years ago, Mr Askin said the Government would deepen the bar and channels to forty feet.

Perhaps the matter has slipped the Premier's memory.

Like a lot of other things relating to Newcastle, we've heard no more about it!

The people of Newcastle are gravely concerned about the state of their harbour. Irrespective of whether the general picture depicts it as a coal-loading port, it is necessary to have the harbour deepened to handle shipments of the many other kinds that are being dealt with in the port. I need not remind members that ships of enormous size are now being built. It appears that there is no guarantee that the Government will honour its promises in respect of Newcastle Harbour. The next article in the paper "Promises, Promises" is headed "Official smokescreen over our State offices". Newcastle is the second city of this State and there is no doubt that the demand there for service from public offices is higher than in any other city in this State except Sydney. Though several government office blocks have been built in electorates represented by the Country Party, not one has been built in a Labor-represented electorate, and there does not appear to be any prospect of getting one at Newcastle. This paper emphasizes that seven years ago in the last

year of office of a Labor government, a public announcement was made in these words:

The State Government is proceeding with plans for a nine-storey Central Government Office Block in King Street, Newcastle.

At that stage a decision had been made on a site, and ever since then the city council and the Newcastle Chamber of Commerce have been pressing this Government to reach a determination on the matter. Considerable controversy arose over a proposed site, but it is generally believed at Newcastle that all that is necessary is for the Government to make a definite stand on the matter and an office block will be built. The publication goes on to say:

Mr Morris has replied blandly by "calling for Newcastle authorities to settle on a definite site".

This, he said, was what had held up the building of a Newcastle State office block for so long.

Mr Morris must not be too astonished if Newcastle rejects that conclusion as hogwash.

Those concluding words represent the general feeling of the people of Newcastle. Another article in this paper bears the heading "Plans a' plenty—but no action on East End". I am sure that members who have travelled to Newcastle have seen the big area of marshalling lines beyond the railway station. This area has been the subject of dispute with the Government for many years. Proposals have been placed before the Government, but the matter is still unsettled in spite of the Government's promises to reach a determination on it. The development of the whole city is held up pending a decision, and it is only natural that the result has been considerable criticism of the Government at Newcastle. The last matter dealt with in this paper is the floating dock. I spoke about this problem during the budget debate last year. If the number of promises made on this matter were reduced to writing they would fill as many volumes as are in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

Though the Minister for Public Works has been to Newcastle often and has expressed his concern, the fact remains that the floating dock is now 42 years old. It used to be able to hold ships of 15,000

tons, but it can now handle only ships of 9,000 tons. Even so, the workers there are apprehensive about the safety of operations. Despite all the promises to construct a new, bigger floating dock, nothing has eventuated. Though I have expressed my views on the subject and have criticized the Government in relation to it, sometimes it is better to quote criticism that comes straight from the horse's mouth. Therefore I shall read a little more extensively an article on this matter that I am sure will be of interest to honourable members on the Government side of the House. The article states:

The Newcastle branch of the Liberal Party intends to attack the State Government and "give them hell" over alleged neglect of the city.

"We're incensed over the present situation," Mr Malcolm Barnes, President of the Newcastle Liberal Party, said today.

Mr Malcolm Barnes has been a Liberal Party candidate at a number of elections. The article continues:

"We think it's about time Newcastle got a fair deal."

The campaign will be launched at the branch monthly meeting next Monday.

He urged members to attend the meeting and voice the strongest possible protest.

Mr Barnes described the current state of affairs over the city's advancement as "intolerable".

The motion to be put before the meeting is that the branch is "most seriously concerned with the quite obvious neglect of Newcastle".

It continues that the branch is "no longer willing to accept vague promises regarding the development of Newcastle" and "urgently requests" action.

Transport—The Railways Department refusal to release East End land and the "decrepit conditions" of Newcastle and Broadmeadow railway stations.

The circular points to the existence of nine railway level crossings in the city and inner suburban area. It demands an answer on:

Electrification of the Gosford-Newcastle line.

East End re-development—Zara Street, power station and Fort Scratchley.

The deepening of Newcastle Harbour to at least 40 ft and the provision of a new graving dock.

The provision of an off-shore loader for the future coal export trade.

A State office block.

The Hon. F. H. Cockerill

The lack of any Government support for cultural activities.

Government safeguards for Newcastle as a major wool-selling centre.

It is generally believed in Newcastle—and the statement to which I have just referred strongly supports this belief—that the Government has discriminated against Newcastle because the Government parties have no political representation in Parliament. In another newspaper article that I do not have with me strong criticism is offered of the Liberal Party-Country Party Government on the basis that it has ignored Newcastle completely, even to the extent of never appointing anyone from Newcastle to membership of this House. It would appear that the Government's opinion is that it has no one in Newcastle good enough to be a member of the Legislative Council. I can scarcely believe that. I do not rate myself so much above other citizens of Newcastle.

The Hon. H. D. O'CONNELL [5.11]: I support the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply so ably moved by the Hon. M. F. Willis and seconded by the Hon. L. P. Connellan. I wish also to refer briefly to the sad passing of John Stevenson and John McIntosh. I shall make no further reference to that subject but I assure the House that this brevity does not mean that I do not feel deeply about their passing. The temper of the debate on this occasion has been most moderate and a great credit to the House. If honourable members opposite have any illusion that we underestimate the importance of unions in the community, they are sadly mistaken. We do not denigrate the unions or wish them ill. We recognize them as an essential part of the economy and the Government has recognized them by its ready assistance in helping with the financing of the building of a new trades hall. On all occasions the Premier has demonstrated his concern to discuss matters with the unions and to pay due regard for the work of the unions.

Things sometimes get out of hand and sometimes even union managements lose control of issues. This is not the fault of individuals. I know that many honourable member on the opposition benches have

given a lifetime of service to the union movement and they may be sure that they have my respect and the respect of my colleagues. Honourable members will recall that the Hon. T. P. Gleeson, the Hon. H. J. A. Sullivan and the Hon. C. J. Cahill all had the common theme of co-operation and collaboration at this time when the finances not only of Australia but indeed of many nations are in dire peril. This must be a matter of grave concern to every one of us. We are all in the one boat and it is up to us to attack the problem in the best way that we can.

I do not propose at this stage to pursue some of the matters on which I had intended to speak. I shall cut down on what I have to say and I hope that when the House is considering the Budget we shall be able to have more discussions and co-operation in helping to straighten out the economic difficulties that will be forthcoming. I have seen a comment that if all the economists in Australia were put into the one room it would be extremely difficult to get them to come out of it with the same idea on how to handle this problem. There is one common denominator and that is human nature. If we can do something about human nature and get it into our minds that we must co-operate, it might be possible to avoid the serious troubles that have faced us in the past. I hope that these difficulties are not inevitable. I believe that we can co-operate to get ourselves out of the situation that faces us today.

I want to refer specially to one matter that I believe ought to be examined in orthodox fashion. I refer to my speech last year when I said that water rates were the old man of the sea around the neck of the ratepayer. The Leader of the Opposition said that Mr Coady in another place also had invited attention to the alarming increase in water rates. Therefore I shall address some remarks to the House about the Metropolitan Water Sewerage and Drainage Board. We recently heard the Lord Mayor of Sydney announce a grand design for future living in the great city of Sydney, yet unless urgent action is taken the design will lack the basic essential—a good water supply. In the view of many people, the basic need is for a change in

the control of the Metropolitan Water Sewerage and Drainage Board. It is a semi-government authority. The Government appoints the president and deputy president; five representatives are elected by local government, and ministerial control of the board is extremely limited. I contend that the constitution of the board should be changed so as to make it a statutory authority, corporation or commission with members appointed by the government of the day. It should be subject to reasonable ministerial control and should consist of some full-time and some part-time members.

In illustration of my point I might inform the House that the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission has a chairman and two commissioners—all full-time appointments. The Electricity Commission of New South Wales has a chairman and deputy chairman, both full-time appointments, with three commissioners who are part-time members. They are outside people—appointees with experience in finance, business and administration. The Maritime Services Board has a president, vice-president and one permanent full-time commissioner, with four part-time, nominated commissioners. The Rural Bank of New South Wales has a president and two commissioners who are full-time appointees, and it has two part-time commissioners nominated by the Government. Water is taken for granted but it has first priority in the life of people. Nothing lives or grows without water. It has been estimated that the average person who lives to 70 years of age uses 21,000,000 gallons of water. The authority for that statement is no less a person than Sir Paul Hasluck, our Governor-General.

The human body is 70 per cent water and a loss of 20 per cent results in dehydration and death. For such a basic, essential service as water, no wonder we look at the management and control of this huge undertaking. We have the necessary degree of skill in operation by officers and workmen, but at the top level of policy, finance and direction we have a board which, because of the nature of the election of local-government members who

dominate the board, frankly lacks the necessary objectivity and competence to run a giant business. Parish pump politics and back scratching are all too often experienced at local-government level. Most people feel that the election of the majority of the board, that is five out of seven, by councils has nothing to recommend it. People generally are concerned with high municipal rates, but more so with water rates which have risen to such an extent that they now match, or exceed, the municipal rate. Rates have just risen 9 per cent and the loan position and interest payments are frightening in these circumstances.

When we look at the Electricity Commission results, the gas company's results, along with the Rural Bank and the Maritime Services Board and the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission, we note that the public interest and the public pocket are much better served by these bodies. For some inexplicable reason the water board, as a statutory body, is beyond control, influence or guidance from the elected representatives of the people—that is, any government of the day. The Minister for Local Government and Minister for Highways, the Minister for Public Works, and in fact, any Cabinet Ministers from the Premier and Treasurer down, are powerless and have not even limited power. This is undesirable. It is contrary to basic tenets of parliamentary democracy. Governments of all kinds over the years have experienced this inability to exercise reasonable control.

I feel sure there would be a better deal for all water, sewerage and drainage ratepayers if good management were ensured at the top management level, free from sectional interests. At present management of the board is geared to local-government politics and parochial interests. It must be remembered that the highest proportion of the electorate to vote at the last local-government election was approximately 27 per cent. Therefore, the representatives of 27 per cent of the electorate are responsible for the election of this indifferent management of the board, for the high rates, and in particular for high water rates. Water quality,

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judging by the complaints of housewives, has never been worse. Drinking water in Sydney has been deteriorating in quality. We want the best, not the worst for this great city. Although, as I said earlier, the lord mayor has announced a grand design for future living in this city, it will be null and void without good water.

For the past forty years, in which time I have been also deputy mayor of Randwick and an executive member in local government, I have seen the deterioration of the ratepayers' interests under the administration of inefficient, incapable, pressure-group, parish-pump, local-government-elected members of the water board, which is a colossal and important public undertaking. Do honourable members know that the water board is a \$1,000-million concern? Obviously, water, sewerage and drainage are essential to national health. It is a matter of life-and-death urgency that we up-grade the quality of the water and service given by the board. It has been obvious for some time now that crisis point has been reached in regard to pollution. The financial capacity and the organization needed to handle the problem are beyond the water board. Water rates are soaring. Within the past few days the press announced to anguished ratepayers that drainage rates on a property valued at \$100,000 will cost some ratepayers as much as \$750 a year.

Over the years the growth of the Metropolitan Water Sewerage and Drainage Board has been colossal. Weaknesses in its structure and control have been apparent for more than thirty years. When I, in association with other aldermen and citizens of Randwick, endeavoured to prevent the pollution of our beaches by protesting against sewerage and trade wastes being dumped into the sea, the board was deaf to our warnings and demands. The water board of those days is a far cry from the great undertaking of today. It has been, and still is, beyond the control of the Parliament, the Government, the people and the ratepayers. It is a so-called semi-government body, directly responsible to no-one. This ivory tower situation of the board

promotes at board level inefficiency and remoteness from government and the people. This is not meant to be personal criticism of the president or the deputy president of the water board, but it is criticism of the outmoded system under which they must operate.

The board enjoys the best of two worlds—lack of proper ministerial control, and New South Wales Government guarantee of all its loans. The guarantee is given with public money. This indicates the need for better use of the ratepayers' money and more responsibility by the board to the people. When the financial position of the Metropolitan Water Sewerage and Drainage Board is looked at, it is realized that for every dollar raised in loan money more than fifty cents is required immediately for interest payments on debt. Therefore, the Government has to come to the party and provide additional funds for special works. The Government should bring down legislation to change the water board structure, which should become a statutory authority, commission or corporation having a chairman and deputy chairman, both full-time, and a suitable number of part-time representatives chosen for their skills in management, finance and technology. Through this re-organization the board would get the drive, the thrust, and the competence to provide this great city and its environs with water of good quality at an economic price, a good, economic sewerage system, a good drainage system, and there would be less pollution.

Some 190,000 houses are still unsewered. Ratepayers of Sydney should not ask for, expect or receive less than their basic needs as residents of a great city. It is of interest to note that the board's balance sheet at 30th June, 1970, discloses that it is, in fact, near enough to a \$1,000 million concern. Further, loans provided by the New South Wales Government are shown at \$162,265,896; advances provided free of repayment obligation at \$77,147,606; and loan liability remitted by the New South Wales Government at \$21,117,302. He who pays the piper should call the tune. Irrespective of the nature of the government of the day, that government through

its mandate, must be able to exercise necessary and equitable control to protect the ratepayers' and taxpayers' money. This money is handled by the Metropolitan Water, Sewerage and Drainage Board, with government backing and under guarantee but free of government control.

I hope that the Government, in the interests of the ratepayer, will consider my suggestion. The number of persons who own or are buying their own homes today is a high proportion of our community. It seems to me that when water rates exceed municipal rates, it is time something practical and sensible was done about it. Recently I examined the roll of electors for the central ward of the municipality of own their own homes. We are becoming a nation of home owners, and the man on Randwick and found to my astonishment that 90 per cent of the persons in that ward a fixed income, especially if he has a young family, deserves all the help we can give him. I am pleased to support the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply.

The Hon. N. K. WRAN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [5.27]: I join in the expressions of sympathy that have been extended to the relatives of Major-General John Stevenson and the Hon. John Charles McIntosh. I congratulate the Hon. M. F. Willis upon his maiden contribution to the debates in this House, in which he lucidly disclosed his dedication to the *status quo*.

His Excellency's Speech assured Parliament that a comprehensive programme of legislation of importance to the State of New South Wales and its people was to be introduced by the Government during this session. Our hopes of some imaginative legislation were soon dashed when His Excellency detailed that legislative programme. With the exception of one or two items of interest, it was singularly uninspiring. Measures to remedy or at least to check inflation did not even rate a mention. The collapsing rural economy, we discovered, is to be supported by amending legislation to provide less death duties for primary producers and by the establishment of an institute of rural studies—hardly the sort of stuff that will bring confidence back to the rural economy. However, this debate on

the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply has provided in part the answers to the obvious deficiencies in the Government's proposed legislative programme.

Let me take first the subject of the collapsing rural economy. Speakers from both sides of the House have expressed deep concern for the future of many thousands of primary producers at present facing ruin. It is common talk that within the next twelve months thousands of farmers and graziers, caught between falling prices and rising costs, will be compelled to abandon their land and to seek subsistence elsewhere. Faced with a rural crisis of such catastrophic proportions it was hoped for the sake of the people on the land and for the sake of our country, that this Government would take some definite and positive steps to avert or at least to alleviate the present impending disaster.

It was obviously in the mind of the chairman of the Country Party, the Hon. L. A. Solomons, that a reduction in interest rates or a moratorium in respect of principal repayments would be forthcoming from the Government, or that the Government would swallow its pride and adopt the policy of the Australian Labor Party of a State guarantee on loans up to \$50,000,000 and a State subsidy in respect of interest repayments over 3 per cent. None of these things was forthcoming in the legislative programme adumbrated by His Excellency the Governor, and the countryman is left to contend with what is going to happen after he is dead in the hope that something will come out of the establishment of an institute of rural studies.

With all the self-adulation that the members of the Government have showered upon themselves in this Address-in-Reply debate there has not emerged one constructive idea or plan from which the farmer or the grazier can take comfort. The fact is that unlike the land, the decline in whose prosperity it mourns, the capacity of the Government for imaginative legislative assistance has proved barren. The role of the Government in this matter can be likened to a bystander who is spellbound by

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the magnitude of a disaster unfolding before his eyes and is seemingly powerless to do anything to change the course of events.

I turn now to another important matter that has been ignored in the legislative programme of the Government—the subject of inflation, its cause and control. The reason for the omission of this subject from the programme became apparent from the muted speech of the mover of the motion, the Hon. M. F. Willis, and, indeed, from all the speakers on the Government side. From them we have learnt two things: first, that the present danger to the economy of New South Wales resulted from irresponsible industrial action and claims for increased wages; and second that inflation, or increasing prices and increasing costs—put in terms that we all know and understand—is a problem throughout the western world and there is really nothing that this Government can do about it.

This refrain was taken up by all Government speakers who, when not engaged in sychophantic backslapping, took time off to lay at the feet of the trade unions all blame for the disorders that have beset the community. The charge that wage increases are the main cause of price increases is nonsense. The opposite argument that price increases are the main cause of wage increases is equally untenable. Australia, particularly New South Wales is experiencing a period of intense inflation. Particularly in the rural sector of New South Wales, inflation borders on stagflation. According to the Government, strikes and wage increases are responsible for this state of affairs. I repeat: this is nonsense. Many factors are responsible for increasing costs and increasing prices.

The Hon. Cyril Cahill in a speech which was most condemnatory of the performance of the Government—although he pretended to support the motion—mentioned many of these factors last night. At the risk of repetition I should like also to mention some of them. The injection of large sums of foreign capital into our national economy has contributed to inflation. The use of foreign capital for the uncontrolled construction of sometimes unwanted multi-storey buildings

in our cities has contributed to inflation. The earning of vast profits by many companies and the division of large dividends and capital earnings amongst investors has contributed to inflation. The mining boom and the unprecedented levels of investment and gambling in mining stocks have contributed to inflation. The failure of the Government to release adequate land to home seekers, thus allowing land prices to soar under the joint pressure of the demands of buyers and the cupidity of sellers, has contributed to inflation.

The sharp increase in the Government's own bus and rail fares has contributed to inflation. The federal Government's heavier postal and telephone charges, and its imposts on tobacco, also will contribute. Unilateral and uncontrolled price increases in consumer goods and services will increase inflation. The facts that I have mentioned as contributing to inflation have contributed to increases in the costs and prices of commodities and services of all kinds including, of course, the cost of labour—in other words, wages. When wages have increased, so, too, have prices and costs of some goods and services directly or indirectly related to such wages. In other words, the inflationary bind which we are experiencing results from the interplay of many factors. Those factors are material in the continued upward trend of prices and costs.

It is quite wrong to keep harping, as does the Government, that political strikes and wage increases are major factors in the inflationary spiral. It cannot be denied that they are factors. However their significance in the general scheme of things has been exaggerated out of all proportion by both the federal and State parliamentary Liberal parties. Indeed, in New South Wales the Government, using as its instrument the Minister for Labour and Industry, who sits in this House, and the Chief Secretary, who still thinks he is the Minister for Labour and Industry but sits in another House, has been playing a cunning game for some months now. The game is called stirring. These honourable gentlemen have been given the task of stirring up a law and order issue based on industrial dissatisfaction.

The purpose of the game has been two-fold. First, it is to deflect attention from the fact that the Government has done and will do nothing to check increasing prices and costs; and second, to pave the way for a law and order issue so as to assist not only the Government of this State but also the federal Government in the event of a federal election later this year. We all know that the recent back-stabbing in Canberra has put an end to the idea of a federal election this year, but it is equally clear this Government intends to keep the industrial law and order issue alive at all costs.

Let me return to the role played by the Minister for Labour and Industry and his partner, the Chief Secretary. They have been engaged in an all-out propaganda war against the trade unions—a war designed to show that the unions have caused prices to rise and that as most trade unions support the Australian Labor Party, in some way the Australian Labor Party is to blame for the present state of affairs and not the Government. After the narrow win in the February elections the Government apparently made an important decision. The Ministry of Labour and Industry was moved from the stormy shoals of the Legislative Assembly to the comparatively serene waters of the Legislative Council.

The scheme has gone astray. A few short weeks ago, in a worsening climate of economic and industrial relations and by way of a substitute for a constructive programme designed to check inflation and restore purchasing capacity to wages and earnings, the Minister for Labour and Industry, aided and abetted by the Chief Secretary, embarked on what appears to be a deliberate course of action. It is a provocative, divisive course. It is non-constructive in the sense that its purpose is to play politics and to pretend to find ways and means of restoring value to earnings and stability in industrial relations which, under the present Government in New South Wales, have steadily deteriorated since 1965.

The first real thrust in this little campaign occurred early in July. Honourable members will recall that at that time members of the building trades unions had been awarded by the Industrial Commission of

New South Wales, presided over by His Honour Mr Justice Sheehy, what has been called full accident pay. That award entitles injured workers while on workers' compensation to receive the differential between the workers' compensation rate and their ordinary rate of pay. When the workers in the building trades unions received that award other unions served notice that they would be claiming a similar entitlement for their members.

It must be remembered that the Minister made his statement at a time when an award had been made by the Industrial Commission of New South Wales in favour of certain building trades unions, at a time when certain dissentient employers—by no means representative of the majority but nevertheless employers in the building trades—had moved in the New South Wales Court of Appeal by way of writ of prohibition for the quashing of Mr Justice Sheehy's order. It was made known by those same employers that should they not succeed at the court of appeal they intended to appeal to the full bench of the Industrial Commission against Mr Justice Sheehy's order. In that climate, and under those circumstances, the Minister for Labour and Industry in a well publicized intemperate outburst threatened to abolish the Workers Compensation Act. He threatened also that if this campaign for full accident pay proceeded it would result in the abolition of the rights of workers to bring actions for damages at common law in circumstances where they had been injured, or indeed killed, as a result of the negligence of employers.

The second thrust in this campaign came from the Chief Secretary who, it must be remembered, represents the Minister for Labour and Industry in another place. On 5th August the Chief Secretary made his now famous bludgers, shirkers and loafers speech. In the course of that speech his thrust was not confined to bludgers, shirkers and loafers. On the same day that the Chief Secretary gave vent to those memorable words he asserted also that previously full accident pay schemes had been rejected,

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apart from some isolated cases involving a few communist-controlled unions. His very words were:

Apart from a few communist-controlled trade unions this matter has been rejected as unworkable and unthinkable by all responsible government and trade-union officials.

He conveniently forgot that such schemes have successfully operated for many years in the Sydney County Council, the Council of the City of Sydney, the Electricity Commission of New South Wales and the New South Wales Fire Brigades, as well as a number of other important public and private undertakings, none of which is troubled by communist-controlled unions.

The opening of the communist can by the Chief Secretary was apparently too much for the Minister for Labour and Industry to resist. A few days later, when addressing members of the Printing and Allied Trades Employers Association at their annual dinner, the Minister engaged in some arithmetical juggling in order to inform those assembled that communists controlled Mr Hawke. Inferentially, the Minister was asserting that communists controlled the Australian Council of Trade Unions. What nonsense. At that same gathering the Minister for Labour and Industry threatened that what he described as continued trade-union tyranny would inevitably lead to government intervention. This was, in fact, a double reference to union involvement in strikes of a political nature on one hand and the Government's divisive remedy of compulsory secret ballots in trade-union matters on the other hand.

The Hon. E. K. E. VICKERY: What is wrong with that?

The Hon. N. K. WRAN: I am delighted that the honourable gentleman has given me the opportunity to expand on the point. It was not altogether in the train of what I was about to say. History has proven that system quite wrong. The Minister, in introducing this legislation through the Chief Secretary in another place, has ignored the fact that this was a so-called remedy tried in 1912. It was included in the very first Industrial Arbitration Act introduced in New South Wales in codified form. In 1959 it was taken out of that Act

as redundant. The Minister has not learned the lesson of Queensland where in 1961 a similar provision was introduced into industrial laws. It was used on only a few occasions but found to be unworkable. Ever since it has lain in abeyance. Although section 98 of the Queensland Act remains on the statute book, it is not used. Furthermore, section 45 of the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act authorizes the conduct of secret ballots when ordered by the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. I assure honourable members that my research indicates that this power has rarely been used.

So that I may really demonstrate to the honourable gentleman who posed this question the value of such a power, let me say that the last occasion on which the Commonwealth authority sought to use it was in the Atlantean bus dispute. A New South Wales Government instrumentality, the Department of Government Transport, administered by the Commissioner for Government Transport, opposed the conduct of a secret ballot as an infringement of the commissioner's rights to conduct his affairs as he saw proper. That is why this piece of legislation is divisive. The Government knows it is divisive and hopes that the Opposition and the unions will take the bait and play into its hands. The Government may be assured that this will not happen. To use a trite expression, people can be fooled some of the time but on this issue they will not be fooled all of the time.

History and circumstances, together with the intelligence of the ordinary citizen, are against the Government in this matter. The Minister, having made his announcement at the printing trades dinner, went to Melbourne where he met his colleague the Victorian Minister for Labour and Industry. No doubt as part of the fraternal goodwill that exists within the Liberal Party between Ministers, whether they be State or federal, it was decided that a statement should be issued. On 13th August, the Victorian Minister issued a statement in which he said there might have to be some government intervention if industrial unrest did not cease. But the Minister here was not content to leave it at that. He, too, issued a statement on 13th

August in which he said, in relation to suggestions that some unions would seek compulsory unionism in their ranks:

Transport workers were being used as enforcers in getting compulsory unionism. Their powers are frightening. They are striking at the drop of a hat.

Either the Minister was ill informed or he spoke without reference to the facts. Whatever the position, it was lamentable for him to make such a provocative, groundless charge in respect of a union that has a record second to none in the industrial field on behalf of its members and its relations with employer bodies. That the Minister had so transgressed did not pass unobserved even by sections of the conservative press, for in the *National Times* of last Sunday, 23rd August, Mr Eric Walsh contributed an article on industrial relations which appeared on page 16 under the heading "The Wrong Union, Mr Hewitt". I do not propose to read all the article. At least Mr Walsh, unlike the Minister, checked his facts. Having mentioned the well-publicized statement of the Minister to which I have referred, Mr Walsh stated:

Behind that screen Mr Hewitt, with his Victorian counterpart, Mr A. J. Rafferty, is quietly planning the introduction of legislation in both States which will shake the trade-union movement, or those sections of it under State awards. . . . Mr Hewitt's attack on the Transport Workers' Union, alleging the "blackmail of employers" on the compulsory unionism question, seemed calculated to create a climate in which the proposed industrial changes could take place with a maximum of public support.

Every public utterance of the Minister and of the Chief Secretary since the beginning of July has been designed to create an industrial climate that would enable them to effect changes to the law with a maximum of public support. In other words, they have been endeavouring to create a false situation in which they could emerge as heroes on white chargers.

The Hon. T. P. GLEESON: Has the public no rights?

The Hon. N. K. WRAN: The public has every right, and every thinking member of the public, including every thinking member of this House, will support the independence of the trade unions. The history of

the western world supports the view that where trade unions are strong the rights of the individual are greatest; and where the trade unions are weak the rights of the individual are weakest.

The Hon. L. A. SOLOMONS: Does the honourable member suggest that secret ballots will wreck unionism?

The Hon. N. K. WRAN: Let me answer the honourable member in this way: the political party to which the honourable member belongs has no policy on unionism. It is too busy making submissions to the federal Government for assistance for the people whom it represents as it cannot get that assistance from the Government of this State. The fact remains that the International Labor Organization and the United Nations Organization have expressed alarm and concern in more than one paper about government interference in Australia in the affairs of trade unions. Members opposite should go to the trouble of reading those documents.

The Hon. L. A. SOLOMONS: Will the honourable member answer my question about whether secret ballots will wreck unionism?

The Hon. N. K. WRAN: One thing at a time. The bill will come before this House within a few days.

The Hon. L. A. SOLOMONS: I shall be most interested to have the honourable member's answer to my question.

The Hon. N. K. WRAN: I will debate that matter all day and all night if necessary, and I hope that the honourable member will give me the pleasure of joining in debate with me. Mr Eric Walsh, having given his view of what the Hon. F. M. Hewitt was about, then went on to nail the lie to his charge against the Transport Workers Union, when he wrote:

The January edition of the official journal of the Long Distance Road Transport Association, in an editorial condemning strikes as "the lowest form of blackmail", said "It is fair to say that the Transport Workers Union in New South Wales is a responsible body doing its best for its members . . . recent discussions indicate a willingness to assist in overcoming industrial problems."

He quoted the Master Carrier's Association in this way:

The Master Carriers' Association described it as a "well-organized and virile union", and the association president, Mr J. F. Fiddy, in March said his industry had not been beset with "turmoil which has beset other industries."

The illuminating point that emerges from Mr Walsh's article is that these views of the Transport Worker's Union had been expressed before the Minister's outburst but the Minister had not taken the trouble to read them. In the face of the various kite flying on the question of industrial law and order by the Minister and the Chief Secretary, last night in another place the debate proceeded on the much-vaunted secret ballot legislation on which the Hon. L. A. Solomons is so keen to join issue with me in debate.

Let me deal with the significance of the effect of strikes on the economy and the campaign that is being conducted by the Minister to divert attention from the real problems that are the cause of current industrial dissatisfaction. First, it is charged that there are too many political strikes, that political strikes are a curse in their economic effect and that something must be done about them. Let us not consider what the Minister says or what is stated by that adjectival expert, the Chief Secretary, on the matter. Rather let us consider what is set out by the federal Bureau of Census and Statistics in its publication reference No. 6.6 which deals with industrial disputes in Australia and had an embargo placed on its dissemination before 22nd July this year. Perhaps it was not in the Minister's hands when he made his statement and therefore he was not aware of the extent of political disputes and strikes in Australia when he made his intemperate outburst.

The fact is that in the whole of Australia for the March quarter of this year there were 618 strikes. The statistician gives them the gentler name of industrial disputes, but the definition makes it clear that this means strikes. Of the 618 strikes in all industries in Australia, 31 can possibly be ascribed to

political bases. The prescription "other" for the 31 strikes to which I have referred is set out in this way:

Disputes concerning protests directed against persons or situations other than those dealing with employer and employee relationship, for example political matters, fining and goaling of persons, protests against lack of work, and lack of adequate transport, non-award public holidays, accidents and funerals, no reason given for stoppage, etc.

If every one of those 31 strikes was, in fact, a political strike, it would be as well then to consider the causes of the other strikes in the total of 618 that occurred in the March quarter. Though some interesting reasons are given for them, all those reasons emanate from dissatisfaction of employees in relation to wages.

Of the 618 strikes in that quarter, only 119 related to claims for wages, 199 related to managerial policy, and 116 to physical working conditions. I am sure many honourable members would be familiar with the statistician's publication but physical working conditions as a reason for industrial disputes cover, for example, safety issues, protective clothing and equipment, first aid services, uncomfortable working conditions, lack of or condition of amenities, shortage or poor distribution of equipment and material, condition of equipment, new production methods and equipment, arduous physical tasks, and so on. This much is clear: political strikes were at the lower end of the table of causes. At the higher end of the list were managerial policy and physical working conditions. Strikes for these two reasons were almost double the number of strikes in respect of wage increases.

The document shows one other important factor. If one were to listen to the Minister or—if one could—to the Chief Secretary and Minister for Tourism and Sport, one would think that almost every worker in Australia spent more of his time on strike than at work. What is the fact, not the fantasy? What do the figures show? The figures for the March quarter of 1971 show that the average number of days lost by a worker directly or indirectly affected by the strike issues—not the whole working force of the country—was 1.6 days. The

March quarter was one in which the number of industrial disputes had declined in comparison with the previous quarter, which itself had declined against the quarter before that. For the December quarter a worker lost 2.56 man days. Where was the Minister for Labour and Industry then? Apparently he was not showing the same interest in affairs as he has exhibited at the present time. There was no cry then for law and order on the industrial front when the number of man days lost by each worker was almost twice the number in the March quarter of this year.

The simple fact is that something is wrong with the Government in New South Wales. When we look at the state of affairs in New South Wales in relation to industrial disputes and compare it with the situation in the next biggest State, we see that New South Wales has more than 50 per cent of the industrial disputes for the whole of the Commonwealth. For the March quarter of 1971 there were 630 industrial disputes for the whole of the Commonwealth of Australia and 338 of them were in New South Wales. At the same time as we in this State were having 338 strikes, on Mr Hawke's home ground—down in Victoria—there were ninety-three strikes. The Government is hoping to prop up Mr Hawke as a whipping post for the Australian Labor Party. The number of working days lost in New South Wales under this Government was nearly four times the number of working days lost in Victoria. Is this an indication of responsible government in New South Wales, or fostering of good industrial relations in New South Wales? Why is there this huge discrepancy between the industrial affairs of Victoria and of New South Wales? Why is it that 53 per cent of all industrial disputes are in New South Wales? Why is it that 55 per cent of all workers involved in disputes in Australia are in New South Wales and 62 per cent of all working days lost from disputes are lost in New South Wales? Why is it that 61 per cent of the estimated loss of wages by disputes is lost in New South Wales? It is not enough to blame political strikes. These statistics show that only a comparative few of the total number of strikes were political.

I pose for the serious consideration of the House this question: is the level of industrial unrest in New South Wales largely because of the inactivity of the Government in the fields that really count? In other words, has the Government itself to blame? The role of the Government is to govern. It is to lead, not to mislead; it is to unite, not divide. Yet in the face of rising costs and prices the Government has done nothing. In the face of increasing industrial unrest, until last night when this phoney secret ballot legislation was introduced in another place, the Government has done nothing except to put up a smokescreen instigated by the Minister, aided and abetted by the Chief Secretary, that the failing economy and the rising inflation result from trade-union action. I submit to the House that the public will not be fooled for long by these cynical tactics.

One asks what ought to have been done about rising costs and prices. We have heard time and again the Minister throw back in our teeth that it was a Labor government that decided not to re-enact the Prices Regulation Act but the fact is that the Prices Regulation Act remains on the statute book and circumstances in 1971 are totally different from what they were when the famous Cabinet minute, conveniently released by the Minister prior to the recent elections, was made in 1964. Since 9th December, 1970, which is the date on which assent was given to the amendments to the Consumer Protection Act, what has the Government done in respect of intrastate collusive practices? We know that in the past few months the federal restrictive trade practices tribunal has dealt with collusive price fixing arrangements in the frozen food industry. What has been happening in New South Wales? I have heard of no action taken by the Consumer Affairs Bureau or the Consumer Affairs Council in relation to well-known collusive trade practices. Are we to suppose that none exists or are we to suppose that like Lord Nelson the Government prefers to pretend that they do not exist?

In the heat of the election campaign the Premier promised a Royal commission on prices. No Royal commission on prices has

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been set up and we all know that we shall have no Royal commission into prices, yet no one on the Government side will say so. At least a Royal commission, a genuine inquiry into what are the things affecting prices and costs, would inform us so that we could all make some intelligent contribution on what sort of action ought to be taken to arrest rising prices. The attitude of the Government—and indeed it was echoed by the Hon. C. J. Cahill last night and by other speakers—is that surely something must be done and surely something should be done but after all, we cannot do anything in New South Wales. Does the Government seriously suggest that nothing can be done in respect of land prices? Even today the headlines in the press scream that in New South Wales the price of land has doubled within five years. In other words, this has occurred during the term of office of this Government. The headlines scream, too, that the cost of an average house has increased by \$6,000 in the past three years.

Is this increase in housing costs something that rates the concern of the Consumer Affairs Bureau? Is this something that rates the concern of the Minister who has the responsibility for checking costs and prices? I assure honourable members that they can search through the Government's legislative programme, through the attacks that the Minister has made on the trade unions, through everything that the Chief Secretary and Minister for Tourism and Sport has ever said, and they will find not one word suggesting that the people are to receive help from the Government by the institution of some effective land sales control. The attitude of the Government is, "We can do nothing". Why be in government if it can do nothing? The fact is that there are things that can be done.

Price control could, to a measure, be effective in New South Wales, but even if it were not effective, why is the Minister sitting here tonight: why is he not in Canberra seeking to give his powers to the Commonwealth, trying to induce Sir Henry Bolte and the other Liberal premiers, or the premiers of Western Australia and South Australia, to do the same thing? If the

States are impotent in this matter, is it not a consideration of such national importance that they should be doing something instead of sitting smugly by, saying that in the face of grave industrial troubles the Government can do nothing apart from bringing in a bill to require secret ballots to be taken in trade unions? The Government is using a sledgehammer to crack a nut, and knows it. The Government knows also that it is being provocative, and is not facing up to what really ails our society today.

If the authorities in Canberra will not take the responsibility for prices, why is the Minister not endeavouring to secure agreement on uniform State legislation to deal with the matter? This has been done with the Companies Act and with other laws. Is not inflation important enough to warrant some thought along those lines? But no, nothing has been done. I suggest that nothing will be done because that would be contrary to the interests to which the Government kowtows. It will not do anything to check the control by those interests of markets, of capital or of investment. All this Government has done to show its power, its strength, its capacity to check rising costs and inflation is to sack 135 men from the Department of Public Works—a most discreditable performance, and the Government will rue the day it ever made that decision.

Of all the areas in which some action could be taken, with all the powers at its disposal, the only thing the Government could find to do was to inconvenience and incommode loyal servants of the Department of Public Works and their families by giving the men the sack. I have submitted in the course of my remarks that the increasing industrial unrest reflects increasing dissatisfaction among wage and salary earners. Ordinary people are not fools. The employees, the wage and salary earners, comprise something like 90 per cent of the population. They know, as Mr E. G. Whitlam said in federal Parliament last night, that the division of national wealth is going against them. It is not because they like it that the ordinary men and women, the ordinary wage and salary earners, take two

jobs, that they send their wives out to work, that they seek overtime. They like their leisure, they like the comfort of their families and of their domestic life, as do all of us.

The working situation I have described is common already in our society, and becoming more common. It is a situation born of the need to bring enough money into the average home in this State to make ends meet. It is the duty of the Government and the Minister to find the causes of the present state of affairs. It is not good enough for them cynically to deplore the effects of dissatisfaction. There is no substitute for doing something positive, but that is exactly what the Government is not doing. At least in the federal arena for the past year or so, the Australian Council of Trade Unions and the Department of Labour and National Service—indeed the Minister in charge of that department—have been engaged in an earnest discussion in which the major employers also have taken part, to seek a way of reframing the industrial laws, of bringing them from the nineteenth century up to 1970 to meet the needs of these times.

However, nothing has been done on those lines at State level because the Government is cynical in these matters. It really does not have the interests of the ordinary man at heart. Indeed, I have heard it said during this debate that the Australian Labor Party wants to abandon the system of conciliation and arbitration. Government supporters are—if not constantly, certainly repeatedly—telling us what are the policies and platforms of the Labor Party. Any person who suggests that the Labor Party seeks to abandon the system of conciliation and arbitration has not acquainted himself with its policies on industrial relations. I do not wish unnecessarily to occupy the time of the House in quoting from documents, but in view of the remarks that have been made more than once during the debate, I think it necessary to lay that charge low.

The Australian Labor Party at its federal conference held at Launceston this year adopted an industrial relations policy

which, among other things, dealt with the Commonwealth Constitution and the Conciliation and Arbitration Act. In relation to the Australian Constitution the industrial relations policy of the party states:

Labor believes the Constitution must be amended to allow the system to be modernized. Its policy, then, is expressed, firstly, as proposed constitutional amendments—

- (a) to enable the Parliament of the Commonwealth to establish industrial machinery for the resolution of all questions relating to and the determination of the terms and conditions of employment and the terms and conditions of contractual relationships with independent contractors and so as to extend federal jurisdiction to State-employed teachers, nurses, police officers, fire fighters and the like, and to give the Commission—

and this is an express reference to the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission—

—power to grant applications for a common rule for all employers in a particular industry;

- (b) to abolish the present system under which judicial and arbitral powers in industrial matters must be exercised by different bodies;
- (c) to enable federal jurisdiction in industrial matters to be exercised by State industrial tribunals and wages boards;
- (d) to limit the High Court's power of intervention in cases where a question of law is referred to it.

In the next section, only the preamble of which I shall read, the following appears under the heading "Conciliation and Arbitration Act":

Because an amendment of the Constitution is neither quick or easy, Labor's policy must provide for amendment of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act within the present constitutional powers. It is proposed that the Act be amended to provide—

There are then set out a number of *placita* from (a) to (n), the first of which is the appointment of conciliation committees and employer-employee councils in addition to the existing machinery, and the second of which is a fixed term appointment for members of the commission and conciliators. So much for the charge abroad, for the rumour being fed, that the Labor Party wants to abandon the system of conciliation and arbi-

tration. The question is, what has this Government done to solve the present industrial unrest?

What has this Government done to give people earning low incomes and medium incomes, and the people on fixed incomes, some assurance of their progressive and greater participation in the national wealth? I submit that it has done nothing. This is an annoying and frustrating attitude. It is not the result of the Government having no power to act within the framework of the law. The Minister has ample powers under the Industrial Arbitration Act to put investigations in train that could lead to improvements in industrial relations, and a consequent improvement in the general welfare of our society. I have already referred to the cynical attitude of the Minister for Transport and the Department of Government Transport in the Atlantean bus dispute. The Government turned its back on a secret ballot to determine the attitude of the bus employees involved in the dispute over the Atlantean buses. The cynicism was compounded when there was an apparent settlement of that strike at a meeting which the Premier attended, but this was merely a device to get the Government out of transport difficulties associated with the Royal Easter Show.

Further provocative action was taken by the Minister and the Commissioner for Government Transport. Another strike occurred, but conciliation prevailed when Rotary International held a convention in New South Wales. An important dignitary who was associated with the government instrumentality held high office in Rotary International, so the stoppage came to an end when the Atlantean buses were operated by two men. Powers do exist to deal with the industrial situation yet the Minister and the Government say that nothing can be done. There have been industrial problems in our community before. When one looks at the records, one finds that the power given to the Minister for Labour and Industry in the 1959 amendment of the Industrial Arbitration Act—before this Government came to office—was used by the former Government on a number of occasions to add the prestige of that Government to the settlement of an issue before

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an industrial tribunal. By appropriate use of the Minister's power to intervene a tribunal could be impressed with the importance of an issue and perhaps would make interim orders and speedily come to a decision that would all the more readily bring industrial dispute to an end.

Section 30B of the Industrial Arbitration Act defines the jurisdiction of the Industrial Commission in court session. Under paragraph (h) of subsection (1) of that section the Industrial Commission of New South Wales sitting in court session has the power to hear and determine any industrial matter which the Minister, of his own motion or upon a request from the president, refers to the commission in court session. From my quick researches I have ascertained that when the Labor Government was in office the Minister for Labour and Industry on at least three occasions referred important industrial matters to the Industrial Commission in court session. There was the determination of teachers' salaries, which was a hot industrial and political question in 1959. The Minister referred that matter to the Industrial Commission for determination. At about the same time the scientific officers in the division of science services in the Department of Agriculture, a key group in the graduate sector of the public service, were dissatisfied with their salaries and conditions. In the course of proceedings to determine their claims the Minister for Labour and Industry intervened and referred the matter to the Industrial Commission of New South Wales in court session. In 1963 the Minister for Labour and Industry referred to the commission in court session the all-important matter of salary fixation for the academic staff of the University of New South Wales.

Under the regime of the present Minister for Labour and Industry, in the midst of what he has chosen to characterize as untold industrial dissatisfaction, neither the Minister nor his department has taken one step to refer any industrial matters to the Industrial Commission in court session. The power is there but it has not been used. Indeed, the only matter that has been referred by the Minister to the Industrial Commission of New South Wales has not

been a reference under section 30B but was an inquiry under section 35 into a shorter working week. Section 30B is one under which the Industrial Commission has power not only to hear matters but also to make determinations which would be binding on the Minister and the union. I hasten to add that section 35, though it is important, empowers the Industrial Commission to inquire into and report on matters but does not empower it to make definitive decisions relating to the subject matter of the investigation.

[Mr President left the chair at 6.28 p.m. The House resumed at 7.52 p.m.]

The Hon. N. K. WRAN: Before the dinner adjournment I was examining what the Government has done to solve industrial unrest in this State and I was looking at that question in the light of powers available to the Government under the Industrial Arbitration Act. I direct the attention of honourable members to the Minister's power under section 30B of that Act to refer an industrial matter to the Industrial Commission in court session for determination by that tribunal. In addition to the powers that the Minister has under that section, he has also extensive powers under section 35 of the same Act.

It is notable, having regard to the election promise of the Premier—thus far not carried out—that there would be a Royal commission into prices, a term that was watered down a few weeks ago by the Minister in this House to an inquiry, that the Government already possesses wide powers to act in this way. The Minister has at his disposal in section 35 of the Industrial Arbitration Act the power to order an inquiry into the prices of commodities or services. That section, so far as it is relevant, states:

(1) The commission is further empowered to exercise the following functions and perform the following duties:

- (e) to investigate and report on any matter referred to it by the Minister as to the prices of commodities or services, and as to whether or not monopolies or trade rings exist for the purpose of unfairly keeping up the prices of commodities or services.

Perhaps in due course either in this debate or on some future occasion the Minister will inform the House whether under his jurisdiction and guidance the Consumer Affairs Bureau, the organization expressly charged with protecting consumers in this State, has been concerned with the sort of exercise referred to in section 35 (1) (e). If there is express power—irrespective of the broken promises of the Premier and irrespective of the watering-down of the Premier's promise by the Minister for Labour and Industry—why is it that in this climate of rising cost prices and increased costs of services and industrial dissatisfaction we hear charge and countercharge by the Minister and his colleague in another place, the Chief Secretary? Why is it that though we have an industrial commission with jurisdiction to investigate and report on any matter as to prices of commodities or services, in this time of unparalleled trial in our economic development since World War II the Minister leaves that power unused? It is interesting to note that section 35 (2) provides a definition of commodities. A commodity is:

(a) Any article of food (other than eggs, milk and butter);

(b) Any article of clothing or apparel;

(c) Any building material;

(d) Any article which enters into or is used in the composition or preparation of any of the foregoing commodities;

(e) Any other goods or articles which the Governor, upon the recommendation of the Minister, declares in the Gazette to be a commodity.

Paragraph (e) is a most important provision which means that there is in the hands of the Minister for Labour and Industry the power to order an investigation for the benefit of the public into any commodity that is referred to in the compilation of the consumer price index. There already exists power to ascertain how that price is fixed and whether there are forces at work in the community which might affect those prices. We all know that there are forces at work in our community fixing prices and perhaps forcing prices up to a level best suited to themselves.

The Hon. N. K. Wran

This is a most interesting section of the Industrial Arbitration Act. All the instruments for an investigation are in the law now. There is no necessity to invoke an inquiry under the Royal Commissions Act. There is no necessity for new legislation. Provision already exists in the Industrial Arbitration Act for holding an inquiry. The Government's inactivity and the failure of the Minister in this House to invoke the provisions of this Act are indictments of the Government's attitude towards the real problems in the economic and industrial context of this State. Unless the Government and the Minister use the power already available it is virtually an admission of failure to cope with problems facing each and every citizen in the community.

Before leaving the discussion of the Industrial Arbitration Act I should like to indicate to honourable members that the Industrial Commission is empowered also to consider and report upon any other matter referred to it by the Minister. It may be that on a construction of this section the term matter is wider than the term industrial matter as defined by section 5 of the Act. If one assumes the limited construction and accepts that matter means industrial matter, then by definition in this Act industrial matters mean:

Matters or things affecting or relating to work done or to be done, or the privileges, rights, or duties of employers or employees in any industry, not involving questions which are or may be the subject of proceedings for an indictable offence; and, without limiting the ordinary meaning of the above definition, includes all or any matters relating to—

(a) the wages, allowances or remuneration of any persons employed or to be employed in any industry . . .

If the Government says that the unions are pushing wages to unfair levels and as a consequence they are adversely affecting the cost-price spiral, why has not the Minister referred the matter to the Industrial Commission of New South Wales? He has not done it and the Government will not do it for it knows the answer already. The Government is putting forward a fallacious case and it is endeavouring to create a situation

that it hopes to be able to turn to its advantage. It hopes to take advantage of the misfortunes of the ordinary people.

The Hon. T. S. McKAY: Ultimately one runs into the constitutional difficulties. When one ascertains the information from the source that the honourable member has mentioned one still has the constitutional difficulties to overcome, unless the federal Government joins in.

The Hon. N. K. WRAN: I do not agree with that view. The Hon. C. J. Cahill adverted to it yesterday. The answer to the interjection is that one might run into section 92 of the Constitution in respect of some commodities but one would certainly not do it in respect of intra-State transactions. It has yet to be argued in the High Court but the development of the law in relation to section 92 will almost certainly undergo a change. I do not mean the court's construction of section 92; I mean its interpretation of the powers of trade and commerce. It is easy to sweep positive action under the carpet—

The Hon. T. S. McKAY: I was not suggesting that.

The Hon. N. K. WRAN: I am not suggesting that the honourable member is, but I am saying that the Government is doing it. It is sweeping these matters under the carpet and saying that a difficulty would arise because there may be a challenge in the High Court. Payroll tax and receipts tax were challenged in the High Court, but both issues were resolved. No one knows precisely what the law is unless someone has the courage to challenge it. In view of the number of constitutional lawyers available to the Government, it is shameful of the Government to hide its head over price control, pleading that the situation might be affected by an attack based on section 92 of the Constitution.

The Hon. T. S. McKAY: Does the honourable member expect a change of attitude by the High Court?

The Hon. N. K. WRAN: I do not think it needs a change. I would expect a change in attitude, but I do not think one is necessary to bring down effective legislation on

price control. No one is fatuous enough to think that one Act of Parliament can change the economic state of affairs into which our country has been allowed to drift during many years of Liberal-Country party government, but surely it behoves any government worth its salt to do something to check that tendency. All I have heard during the debate from every member on the Government side of the House is that nothing can be done about it. If nothing can be done on this vital matter we might as well all pick up our papers and go home. We should be serving a completely futile, impotent purpose as members of this House if the Minister and the Government convinced us that we can do nothing about this vital question.

We on this side submit that by doing nothing the Government is deserting its responsibility on the most important areas of inflation and industrial dissatisfaction. The sooner the Government stops playing politics on this matter and stops making, through the Minister for Labour and Industry and the Chief Secretary, divisive attacks and accusations against trade unions, and the sooner the Government gets down to seeking reasons for the dissatisfaction and enacts laws to correct it the sooner these problems will be solved.

The Hon. F. CALABRO [7.58]: I congratulate the Hon. N. K. Wran on his eloquence, but with respect to him I feel that he is out of touch with present public thinking on many of the problems confronting society. I congratulate the Government on its programme as outlined in His Excellency's Speech—a progressive programme that is quite in line with those put forward previously by the Askin Government. Its implementation will enable New South Wales to keep to the forefront, a position that it has attained after six years of Liberal-Country party Government. Six years ago New South Wales was lagging behind all other States in many fields.

The Hon. J. J. MALONEY: Who told the honourable member that?

The Hon. F. CALABRO: Opposition members have quoted many statistics in this House and if the honourable member refers to those for six years ago, he will find that I am correct.

The Hon. J. J. MALONEY: Somebody has been misleading the honourable member.

The Hon. F. CALABRO: I certainly know who has been misled. This State was in a stagnant condition after twenty-four years of ineffective Labor government. Opposition members have described the Government's programme as uninspiring. Naturally it would be for the Labor Party, but not for the people of New South Wales. Though the rural industries are confronted by grave problems, this State is experiencing unprecedented progress.

The Hon. C. HEALEY: Where is the progress evident?

The Hon. F. CALABRO: The honourable member should look about him. That this State is moving forward is evident in the establishment of new industries, public works projects and the construction of new schools.

The Hon. W. C. PETERS: The Department of Public Works put off 135 men.

The Hon. F. CALABRO: The Government must clamp down on inflation and if it has not enough money to spend in one field surely something must be done about it. For my part, I should rather see public works carried out on a contract basis than by day labour. As I said, we have a big problem in the rural industries but this problem is world-wide and not confined to New South Wales. I believe that present and proposed Commonwealth and State measures will considerably mitigate the hardship being experienced in rural areas. I was amazed to hear the Hon. R. R. Downing claim that under Labor New South Wales was the most financially stable of all the States. It would not be surprising if this were so. Any government can achieve financial stability by refusing to spend all available finance in providing essential public works for the community. This is exactly what Labor did while it was in government. It failed to spend the finance available to it

to provide essential services. This is by no means a desirable way for a government to achieve absolute financial stability.

The Hon. F. H. COCKERILL: The Labor Government spent more in proportion on public works.

The Hon. F. CALABRO: The people want services today, not in fifty years time. The Government is providing those services. The Leader of the Opposition did not say that under Labor hundreds of thousands of people in Sydney alone were without sewerage and that the transport system was obsolete. Schools and colleges were in a state of decay and many of our hospitals were below the standard of those in underdeveloped countries.

The Hon. J. J. MALONEY: We should have been shot.

The Hon. F. CALABRO: Labor was not shot—it was thrown out of office. Unemployment figures in New South Wales under a Labor government were among the highest of any State. Small shopkeepers were hounded and beaten into submission for giving extra service to the public by remaining open a little longer. Now the Askin Government has put New South Wales out in front of the other States, which certainly was not the position when Labor was in office. It is providing modern services for the people of New South Wales. Now it appears that the Labor Party, through its industrial unions, is trying to sabotage the Askin Government.

The Hon. C. HEALEY: What about the shortage of school teachers?

The Hon. F. CALABRO: I shall explain something about that in the next few weeks. As I said, it appears that the Labor Party through its industrial unions is trying to sabotage the Askin Government's magnificent efforts providing New South Wales with a standard of living equal to any in the world.

The Hon. J. J. MALONEY: That cannot be so.

The Hon. F. CALABRO: What country has a better standard of living than New South Wales? Owing to the full employment

conditions resulting from the efforts of the Liberal-Country party Government, leftist union bosses find themselves in a powerful position to impose their misguided will on the Government and the community.

The Hon. W. C. PETERS: Are union bosses any different from bus bosses?

The Hon. F. CALABRO: They have competition but today the union bosses do not. It appears that right-wing unions are afraid that they will be outdone by the left-wing unions and they, too, are making claims for enormous wage increases which cannot be met. Therefore the strike weapon is used ruthlessly to bludgeon employers into submission.

The Hon. J. J. MALONEY: What is a left-wing union?

The Hon. F. CALABRO: The honourable member has a wide experience of unions so he would know. The strike weapon is used to bludgeon employers into submission and up goes the cost of living. This is what causes inflation but the Opposition blames the Askin Government for inflation. As the Minister for Labour and Industry said recently, it is time that the trade unions took stock of their responsibilities. They cannot expect to enjoy the fruits of a free-enterprise system and at the same time do their utmost to destroy it. So much production is being lost as a result of strikes, shirking and far too high wages for work done, that most Australian production is priced out of world markets.

The Hon. W. C. PETERS: How do you know that?

The Hon. F. CALABRO: You are familiar with local government, to take just one field. So am I. You know of the cost of local government under Labor administration.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The honourable member should address the Chair.

The Hon. F. CALABRO: As I said before the interjection, strikes, shirking and far too high wages for work done mean that Australian industrial goods are priced out of world markets. In fact, Australia depends upon the export of primary prod-

ucts and minerals and on the inflow of foreign capital, about which Labor has so much to say, to pay for imports. Still, members of the Opposition say that any strike that results in improved conditions and extra money for unionists is a successful one and that the union movement has no intention of relaxing the pressure. We can see no sign of repentance or responsible action; we have no promise of increased output for extra pay. The so-called silent majority is looking to the Government for leadership in this crisis. The people want this State to be run by their democratically elected government, not by union bosses. They want progress and prosperity, not radicalism and anarchy. If the Government will make a stand to bring back order and commonsense in the industrial sphere, it will have the respect and support of the people of New South Wales.

The Hon. J. A. WEIR [8.10]: I know it is customary to congratulate an honourable member upon his maiden speech, but I should be forever branded a hypocrite if I were to congratulate the mover of this motion. The best I can do is to commend him on his loyalty to his big brother and to the Liberal Party. The Hon. M. F. Willis attacked friends of mine who have worked hard in the trade union and political movements since they were boys. He attacked the Hon. J. J. Maloney. He attacked a man for whom I have the greatest admiration, Mr Pat Ryan. Pat Ryan is a modest man; he is modest in his demeanour, in his working-class habits, in his way of life. He is a man who works all day, who travels in buses to and from work, and yet is branded by a Government supporter as an evil person.

Pat Ryan is a good and honest union secretary. Like a lot of union secretaries, he works long hours. In spite of what Government supporters, including the Hon. F. Calabro, may say, most trade-union leaders do their best to avoid strikes and disputes. An example is the Hon. F. W. Bowen, who works hard and assiduously as a trade-union officer. Three years ago he began to negotiate a new award. He had to go overseas, and before leaving was promised that everything would be all right. It was not: it

came unstuck. I learn today that almost three years later the award has still not been finalized. After about fifty years of strike-free existence, his union—not the union boss, but all the union leaders assembled at the trades hall—decided that it would stop work for one day. The union members were goaded into doing so. The negotiations have cost the union \$15,000 or \$16,000 that it could ill-afford.

Another example is the clothing trades union which has been negotiating a new award for two years. The Textile Workers' Union is engaged in a work value case. I do not know the details, but I will guarantee that negotiations are in their eighteenth month—and this in a low-wage industry. I shall give honourable members some of the rates of pay and let them make up their own minds. I am wondering why there has not been a revolution. I know that many people are doing well—not only the bosses in some of the luxury line industries, but many of the workers also. One knows, for example, how clubs are coining money. Despite the remarks of the Hon. F. Calabro, hundreds of men have been dismissed from their employment. There has been a tightening-up in various places, including government departments, and there is a surplus of labour in almost every country town.

At Wauchope recently seventeen people were put off at a plywood factory. That has serious effects in a place like Wauchope. I inquired how serious the position was and was told: "It is pretty serious. The plywood we are selling on the Brisbane market at \$33 a 100 square feet has been landed from Singapore for \$27 a 100 square feet". The future for Wauchope looks bleak. One Sydney fellow called to see me at my office. On his looks, most people probably would not employ him. He is in his middle fifties, but looks a good bit older. He wanted a job. I rang firms in the vicinity of Glebe, where he lived. There was no work available for labourers. They said to me: "Have you got a machinist? Labourers are a bob a dozen." Ten to twenty labourers a day are calling at some of these places looking for work. Eventually I was able to tell this

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man that I could get him a job at Homebush Bay, where there has been big development in the past ten years.

The Hon. E. K. E. VICKERY: During the term of the Askin Government.

The Hon. J. A. WEIR: That is right, and during the period before the Askin Government. This chap said to me, "What are the wages?" I said, "Fifty dollars a week as a labourer." He had been earning \$52 a week in his previous employment at Glebe. Government supporters talk about average wages of \$80 a week. The newspapers are full of that sort of tripe. They must be putting in salaries of their executives to reach that figure. This man said to me: "Joe, I cannot go to Homebush Bay for \$50 a week. It will cost me \$7 a week for tax and \$12 a week to get there. That would not leave me much, would it?" I told him that I would check. I found that the tax would be \$6.15 a week, leaving \$43.85. He would have to travel in a bus from Glebe to Central railway station at a cost of 18 cents each way, or \$1.80 a week, leaving \$42.05. He would then have to travel from Central railway station to Homebush. The fare would be 73 cents a day as a result of the Askin Government's decision to increase fares, or \$3.65 a week. That would leave \$38.40. He would then have to get from the railway station to Homebush Bay and that would cost him \$1.15 a week, giving him a take-home pay of \$37.25.

The allowance paid to the sick and unemployed—and there are unemployed in pockets all over the State—for a single adult is a miserly \$10 a week and for a married adult, \$17 a week. If this fellow did not go to work he would get \$17 a week and if he went to work he would get about \$35. That is not an unusual case. Every day I go to jobs and hear the workers complaining: "What about our dough? Is this all we're getting?" At the present time, despite our supposedly booming State, wages are down, overtime is down and bonuses are down. These are the facts of life, and the Hon. F. M. Hewitt knows it.

The Hon. L. A. SOLOMONS: And profits are down.

The Hon. J. A. WEIR: I agree. The honourable gentleman does not have to tell me about profits being down in the timber industry. I am trying to keep up with the Joneses myself, but who helps us? Of course profits are down in the timber industry. Profits are down because costs are up: the Government has increased royalties by 50 per cent and rail freights by 50 per cent. When I go to a timber merchant he tells me that one-third of the cost of the timber off Crown land that is landed in Sydney goes to the State Government in royalties and freights, and he gets what is left. Investigations of public companies throughout Australia have shown that the timber industry is not doing well. Yet somebody is willing to spend \$300,000,000 to import timber. It is certainly not the timber merchants or the timber workers who are getting a cut out of it, but I understand that \$63,000,000 of the \$300,000,000 went to the steamship companies.

The Hon. P. M. M. SHIPTON: Would that be for softwood?

The Hon. J. A. WEIR: Mainly for softwood. Honourable members ask why the workers are discontented. Fellows I know who have never had a beef in their lives go home to their wives—

The Hon. E. K. E. VICKERY: Maybe that is the cause of the trouble.

The Hon. J. A. WEIR: As a matter of fact, I met one fellow who told me he was having difficulty making ends meet. He was earning \$50 a week, and he had a sweetheart on the side. I do not know how he did it. When I visit the timber yards I tell the fellows there to keep calm, that the industry is not going too well and that they know how the boss is going. As the Hon. F. M. Hewitt knows, the last of the big timber yards have disappeared. Less than three years ago five or six amalgamations led to a big complex out at Homebush Bay, but it has now closed its doors. It could not sell out to anyone else or get any help to stay in business, so it had to close down. However, when that timber complex closed down the employees were treated rather generously considering that it is an industry that has rather tough employees.

When workers go home they read in the newspapers how good things are for a lot of people; how well other people are doing, that politicians are thinking about giving themselves an increase in salary, and so on. Then when the husband comes home with his pay packet containing something like \$46 or \$48 a week, his wife, who has read these same articles, picks on him. The husband then goes back to the timber yard, the boot factory or the metal foundry where he works and waits for the first victim he can pick on, and usually it is the union official.

Despite what the Government says, it is the unions who are trying to keep peace in industry. It is only a minority group who are involved in strikes. The Hon. F. M. Hewitt and other members of the Government proposed not only to deal with all the unionists but also to have a go at the unions. I do not know why they want to do this. There are a lot of naughty non-unionists. I shall give an example. Early in February, after negotiations, we obtained from the court an increase of \$4.20 for our tradesmen. This amount was paid by most employers. An official of the employers' association in our industry, which is one of the few registered associations of employers in New South Wales, telephoned me and said: "There is a strike on. What are you going to do about it?" He told me where the strike was. I looked at my records and said that the strikers must be either staff men or non-unionists and I was not going to do anything. He said that they were.

I ask the Hon. F. M. Hewitt to think about this. The man from the employers' association, a trained industrial officer, knew he could do nothing about the situation so he rang the employer and told him that the strikers were non-unionists and that nothing could be done. The employer said, "Can't you do something?" and he said, "No". The Government realizes it is legislating to have a go at the unionists, but what is it going to do about the non-unionists?

The Hon. E. K. E. VICKERY: Make them join the union.

The Hon. W. C. PETERS: That will get over all the problems.

The Hon. J. A. WEIR: That is a good suggestion. Some of the employers have had that same thought, not because of their love for the unions but because they are smart. They know that the employees who are in a union can be penalized and they know that nothing can be done to a non-unionist. The non-unionist has all the advantages of the law and all the protection it provides. Elaborate federal and State departments have been set up to protect the non-unionist but the employer cannot do anything to him. He can thumb his nose at the boss.

The Hon. L. A. SOLOMONS: The boss can give him the sack.

The Hon. J. A. WEIR: If he is out on strike, the boss does not have to sack him. He has got the employer on toast. There are some non-unionists and returned soldiers who are smart enough to know this. Let us look at the position from a federal point of view. The non-unionist gets the protection of the law but cannot be penalized. The unionist can be penalized, but the non-unionist can tell the boss, the government, and everyone else, to go hop it and there are no controls over him. The Government is going to legislate against the unionists. Why does the Government not legislate against the non-unionists? The non-unionists have been accepting everything that we have gained over the years.

Let me go back to the situation of the husband who takes home his weekly wage and has a wife who has read the articles in the newspapers about the average wage being \$80. If that wife telephones Hot Line or some of these two-way radio talk shows and says, "My husband is only bringing home \$45 a week", she is told: "We do not believe you. We have read that the average weekly wage is \$80". Some people believe that everything they read in the newspapers is the fact. I have here a new award for the metal trades industry and the top rate is \$66.60. This was obtained after strikes had occurred. There are other, lower rates. I know there are over-award payments.

The Hon. L. A. SOLOMONS: Do you know of anyone in that industry who works for the award wage?

The Hon. J. A. WEIR: I know of hundreds of people who work for award rates of pay. I know that there are all sorts of gimmicks. A fellow told me that his boss had said that he was going to pay him a \$5 over-award payment, but not for all purposes. He wanted to know what that meant. In our industry the rate for that man is \$64.80. At the present time we are lagging behind the metal trades but we are trying to keep up with the Joneses as from next Wednesday, and I do not know whether we will. This worker receives \$64.80 and his employer gives him a \$5 over-award payment, but not for all purposes. The boss knows that there are labourers and other people knocking at the door and this is when the employer becomes cagey. What chance has a chap got in a country town such as Gwabegar? How does any wife feel when she reads in the newspaper about the "Time Bomb Budget"? All this talk about wages she never sees is enough to drive any woman up the wall. She takes it out on her husband and in turn he takes it out on the union secretary and then I go to my executive committee.

The Government's newspapers have already decided—they are not my newspapers—that the cost of living has gone up by \$1.57 a week. We should not have to go to the arbitration court, as we will in October, and convince the court that the cost of living has gone up. Everyone here, except perhaps the Hon. F. Calabro, agrees that it costs more to live. He feels that he is doing all right. We will have to get the taxation people to have a look at his affairs. However, everyone agrees we are going bad. In October the unions will have to get barristers and witnesses to the court and laboriously prove that the cost of living has risen.

The newspapers have told us that in recent times the cost of living has increased by \$1.57 a week. The trade-union movement should have no trouble in convincing the court in November that the national wage should be increased by, say, \$5 or \$6, for increases have already taken place in the goods that we purchase. But there will be trouble to convince the court. The

unions will have to go before the judges and the barristers will be there too, bowing to each other. It is a crazy set-up. I can tell them all now that the cost of living has gone up: I do not need help from the statisticians to know that. The learned judges will listen to what is said, will think about it for a few days and then they will say that they will strike the difference. They will give an increase of \$5—the federal Treasurer will get \$2.50 and the worker will get \$2.50. His portion will have to pay for goods that have gone up by \$5 in price. It is crazy but we cannot do anything about it.

Recently I read in a newspaper article that economists and statisticians predicted that in ten years the average weekly wage would be \$200. I do not know that I will last ten years to see that happen. If I do no doubt the going will be pretty rough. Of course, members sitting on the Government side of the House will not be in government then.

The Hon. E. K. E. VICKERY: We will still be here.

The Hon. J. A. WEIR: There is only one thing that will keep you there. On present indications the Government could not win an argument on a soap box.

The Hon. Sir ASHER JOEL: But we will win at the ballot.

The Hon. J. A. WEIR: I will tell you what you will have to do in order to win. The Government will create a bogey man in Melbourne. The Hon. F. W. Bowen has reminded me that history records that in the days of the Romans whenever there was a crisis they got over it by throwing a couple of Christians to the lions. The Liberal-Country party coalition has adopted this policy in the federal and State spheres. They have talked about spies, commo's and all sorts of people in an attempts to distract the people from a consideration of the real issues. They will do it again. For about a month the Government will hammer the Australian Council of Trade Unions and the trade-union movement and accuse them of creating strikes. Then the South African cricket team will come here and someone

will start off the action. Some psychopathic liberals will throw stones at the cricketers and blow whistles so that the people will become distracted. Then there will be an election.

Instead of the real issues being contested, the side issues will come to the fore. Little thought will be given to the cost of rents, how much it costs to get to work and how high are our taxes. All these things that hurt working class people will be thrown aside. There will be a distraction. I do not know what the distraction will be—it may be as I have suggested. However, I am sure the Government will arrange something. One thing I shall always be aware of is that the parties whose members sit on the Government benches cannot govern in their own right. The Liberal Party is in the minority; the Country Party is in the minority; and the independents are in a minority. Labor will always have a majority. Labor may not govern but if will have the majority. The Government will find some way to distract the people but I hope that the people of this State and Australia will realize that it is merely a distraction and hit it to leg. The people will give Labor the chance to govern.

Let us go back a few years to when Sir Robert Menzies said he would put value back into the pound. From that time on we have gone backwards. It was only a fluke five years ago when the Liberal-Country party coalition gained power in this State. Members who sit on that side of the House know that what I say is right. They know the circumstances through which they won the election.

The mover of the motion that we are now debating attacked good trade-union leaders who have worked hard all their life and have not enjoyed many pleasures of life. These trade-union leaders have spent a lifetime serving people. Most of them have no interest other than to work long hours and at least three nights a week and sometimes on Saturday. This is their life and that is what they do, rightly or wrongly. Members opposite criticize them. I do not dislike many people but there are some people in the trade-union movement

I do not like. But whether they are right, left or centre, I know they are trying to serve the members who have elected them. That is the only thing I believe the compulsory ballot system is good for—electing officers. Most union officials do a good job. For half a century I have served the trade-union movement and for a great number of years I have attended union meetings of a Thursday night.

The Hon. EILEEN FURLEY: Not all union officials are dedicated as you are.

The Hon. J. A. WEIR: They are. None of these men is paid overtime. I do not know a trade union leader who does not average a working week of 60 hours. They get nothing out of it. Many of them are on wages less than the top man in the industry in which they are involved. This is their life and they give their all. Yet they go home and Mum reads the paper and finds headings which say "Time Bomb Budget", "Everything goes up \$1.57 a week", "Who says Billy's budget is crook?", "Twenty per cent rise for M.P.s on way" "Headmasters critical of wages", "Budget—what you will pay", "Personal and company tax" and references to increased postage charges, television and radio licences, telephone charges and chemist bills and dearer cigarettes and petrol. Mum reads this and says to Dad: "Can't you do any better? These loafing politicians are giving themselves an increase." Often they refer to politicians in an uncomplimentary way but I shall not use the ugly word that has been used to describe us. I am not the only union secretary who thinks this way. I have been spat upon, kicked, punched and insulted.

The Government says it will legislate to control strong trade union leaders. I am connected with an industry which has had little if any disputes, though I do not want any compliments for that. One of the reasons might be that our industry on present thinking might be expendable. Other industries, such as the clothing industry, are expendable.

The Hon. R. W. MANYWEATHERS: We cannot go about without clothes.

The Hon. J. A. WEIR: Under the present thinking the clothing industry is expendable. Already twenty-five shoe factories in Australia have been closed. One might ask why. The Commonwealth Government allows cheap shoes to be imported from overseas. The textile industry is hard up against the wall. These industries probably will be phased out because the policy of the federal Government is to sell more things overseas so that we can import cheaper goods. Mum continues to read the paper and she sees press headlines such as "The Liberals are crook", "Police hound doctors, says M.L.C.", "Increase in smokes", "Priest on the breadline"—there is a beauty—" \$3,000,000 for army blue". The housewife reads all these things and then remembers that her husband takes home only \$45 a week. She continues to read the paper and sees another heading, "Politicians after increase". That gives her something to think about and she is most unhappy. These are the things that make her unhappy, yet members on the Government side wonder why men go on strike.

Men do not go on strike lightly. I was involved in an extremely long strike that left its mark on many people. I took an active part in the timber strike of 1929 and I learned a lot of lessons before it was settled. I know of firms that went broke, of homes that were broken into and of men who went to gaol. What oppressive legislation. I always say to workers: "Don't be over concerned about the penal clauses in the Industrial Arbitration Act. If they cannot get you on the roundabout, they will get you on the razzle-dazzle." By this I mean the Crimes Act. If ever I am required to make the choice—thankfully I have been able to dodge doing that—I shall choose to be dealt with under the Industrial Arbitration Act, not the Crimes Act.

The Hon. F. Calabro and other Government members who have criticized the workers for going on strike do not know the fundamental reasons underlying the action taken by the men. Recently there was a forty-eight hour strike by metal trades workers. They were successful, and the men accepted what was offered to them by the employers. I acknowledge that over-award

payments are being made in my industry as well as in others. The award applying to workers in the timber industry is an all-embracing one that applies also to other industries. After negotiations that took some months and a forty-eight hour strike the metal trades award was varied. Last week the increases for metal trades workers were announced. The rate for a blacksmith or farrier was increased by \$6 to \$63 a week. The blacksmith's striker had his rate increased by \$4.50 a week to \$49.20. The crane attendant and the dogman also received increases of \$4.50 a week to take their rate of pay to \$51.90. The millwright received a \$6 increase to bring his wage to \$66.60, and a similar increase and rate of pay was awarded to the motor mechanic.

Let it not be said that no one receives the award rate of pay. Believe me, whenever there is a surplus of labour, the employer sticks to the award rate. Admittedly, other attractions are offered such as bonuses and overtime. A fellow receiving a rate of \$66.60 a week pays \$9.90 in tax, which reduces his take-home pay to \$56.70 a week. Do not forget that this man is a tradesman. Process workers—and there are thousands of them in the metal industry—are taxed \$5 or \$6 on their award rate of \$49.20 a week. Bear in mind that I am talking about a new award, not an old one or one that is soon to be determined. Many unions, including mine, will now try to catch up with the Joneses. Does anyone blame us for doing it? Does anyone say that the timber worker, the clothing trade employee or the felt hat worker should not go to court and try to get at least a similar rise in pay? After all, the metal trades rate has always been regarded as the measuring rod.

If the employer does not meet our request, what do we do? We try the arbitration system. In most instances we shall succeed, especially when the facts are placed before the court. Later in the year the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission will not really need to take the economic condition of the nation into consideration. It will know that the cost of living has risen in this State by at least \$5 a week. If there is any justice in the

world the court, without waiting to hear argument, should announce a rise of \$5 a week. Of course, it will not do so; it will follow the usual protracted procedure.

I do not intend to give the various award rates applicable to employees in the metal trades industry. It is sufficient to say that a 1971 New South Wales State award incorporates an increase of \$6 a week for the men covered by it. The position is somewhat confusing in that an hourly rate of pay is stipulated as well as a weekly rate, and this is often another cause for trouble. Some people wonder why the workers approach their trade union leaders on issues like this. I assure members that the approach is usually not from the leader to the rank and file, but from the rank and file to the leader. The workers want results from their union. They make requests to union leaders like the Hon. F. W. Bowen.

The Hon. F. W. BOWEN: And they get results, too.

The Hon. J. A. WEIR: That is so. The Hon. R. B. Marsh informs me that his telephone rarely stops ringing. I do not have to boost the reputations of these men, but when I hear attacks being made on them by members who have never associated with them I feel it my duty to have my say. Nobody has to protect the Hon. J. J. Maloney. He can speak for himself and he is capable of protecting himself, although he is a modest fellow who usually does not do so. When the mover of the motion referred to the number of small shops that were closed when the Hon. J. J. Maloney was Minister for Labour and Industry I did not know whether he was being serious. For his information, for every small shop that was closed during the last five years of Labor administration 100 are now closing down. High rents and lack of custom are forcing them out of business.

Another factor has been the construction of big buildings in this city. Many Liberal supporters have lost their businesses and they are now paying for voting for the Civic Reform group. It is said that the sort of development going on in this city is progress. I do not know whether it is, especially after reading what the Hon. Edna

S. Roper had to say during this debate. It is all very well if one has a business in the dress-circle part of Sydney. The position is quite different for people who are situated at the southern end of the town. Even the Government has some land lying idle there. It is a wonder that someone does not put in a crop of potatoes and make a profit out of his enterprise.

The Hon. E. K. E. VICKERY: They would probably get the blight.

The Hon. J. A. WEIR: Probably so. From Liverpool Street down to George Street the city is dying a slow death. The Government should do something about it. If it gets rid of the city markets a large number of businesses will go out of existence in that part of the city. The up-town Sydney development association has pointed out that in addition to the effect upon workers and business people in the area, banks, shops, indeed thousands of businesses, will be adversely affected. Members who are old enough to remember it will acknowledge that at one stage the city, from Grace Bros down to Circular Quay, was quite lovely.

With the developers moving in at the northern end of the city the railway end is being slowly strangled to death. Honourable members may say it does not matter. It may not matter to us but it will matter to the people who come after us. I read yesterday that an application had been made to build a large block of flats at the railway end of the city. That is good but it is not enough. Unless the Government agrees to what the uptown association is suggesting, the city will die. Millions of dollars are being spent on building the Institute of Technology in Broadway. It is a magnificent building. The old Marcus Clarke building is being used for technical education.

Millions of dollars are allocated for technical education but only peanuts for primary education. Surely technical education must start at the primary level. Unless the kiddies are taught at the primary level what chance have they at the technical level? Those of us in the trade-union movement who are associated with some of the young men on the job know that they can hardly write their name and have difficulty with

their spelling. We are trying to teach these people technical matters but I suggest we should look at the primary end of education before we get too worked up about technical education.

I should like to refer to an interjection when one of my colleagues was speaking about secret ballots. I was associated with the great timber strike of 1929. The bosses were tough and so was the judge—as well as a few of the other people. In those years from 1929 to the early thirties the trade-union movement was strong. Industry has its turn and then the union movement has its turn. The timber workers were strong in their union. We were solid. We were chosen as the ones upon whom the attack was to be made for increased hours, lower wages and an increase in the proportion of juvenile labour. All these things were foisted on the trade-union movement. They even found a judge in Queensland and brought him down to deal with the timber workers.

In the period from 1929 to 1930 I saw good working-class men who had never done a wrong thing in their lives thrown into gaol for offences for which a man today would be fined \$10. Jimmy Cable got two years for assault. Another man who was caught up in this was Johnny Dwyer, a decorated returned soldier. His offence was throwing a stone at a tram. I admit that there were scabs on the tram.

The Hon. EILEEN FURLEY: Probably there were innocent people on the tram, too.

The Hon. J. A. WEIR: No. It was a special tram to carry scabs to work. Johnny Dwyer denied that he threw the stone. He was a good Christian. I shall not say what religion he was but he used to go to church twice a week. He was picked out of a line-up as a person committing an assault and he was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment. He was only one of them. I am sure that Johnny does not mind my giving his story. He has gone to the great beyond, but other men still alive today were sentenced to six months or twelve months' imprisonment for various offences. One fellow

received thirty-four summonses for marching the street carrying an offensive weapon. It was not an offensive weapon; it was a stick with a flag on it. The charges were not under the Industrial Arbitration Act but under the Crimes Act. The court said that the workers did not want to be out on strike and that a compulsory ballot should be held. Conditions were appalling: men were out of work and others had lost their homes. Wives had left their husbands and husbands had left their wives.

The Hon. J. J. MALONEY: And the employers had locked out those who were not on strike.

The Hon. J. A. WEIR: That is right. This little booklet that I have here sets out the ballot paper as follows:

BALLOT PAPER

on a secret ballot under Section 56c of the Act.

The following question is submitted to the members in the States of Victoria and New South Wales of the Australian Timber Workers' Union:—

Are you prepared to work under the existing award of the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration, dated 23rd January, 1929?

YES.

NO.

Strike out the word which *does not state* the answer you desire to record as your vote.

The "yes" was on the top and the "no" was underneath. I guarantee that no draw was held for the position on the ballot paper. To the everlasting credit of all members of the timber trades union, thousands of ballot papers were burnt that day. This is reported in a booklet that was published years after when the trade-union movement had enough money to publish it. That was the answer given by the timber workers to the court's decision that they hold a compulsory ballot. Some of the fellows, a little more enthusiastic, decided to burn an effigy of the judge. I see that the Hon. Sir Ashel Joel is nodding. Some of the workers even made the suggestion that if the judge had been there they would have burned him too.

The Hon. Sir ASHER JOEL: It was a tough strike.

The Hon. J. A. WEIR: It was a tough strike, all right: I am a socialist with some capitalist weaknesses. Next year I shall have been associated for fifty years with the timber industry. I suppose after all that time I have mellowed a bit but I shall still prosecute an unscrupulous employer—and believe me, we still have some unscrupulous employers and cheats. There are still workers who cheat. I do not mind if someone wants to have a compulsory ballot to try to displace me from my office in the union; but if someone suggested to my members that we should have a compulsory ballot on an issue that we believed to be right, I should tell them to do the same thing that we did in 1929—burn the ballot papers.

The Hon. Sir ASHER JOEL: Were not the basher gangs prevalent then?

The Hon. J. A. WEIR: How would I know? The honourable member was a reporter at that time, I understand.

The Hon. F. W. BOWEN: The bosses employed the basher gangs.

The Hon. J. A. WEIR: I understand that some of the employers had men protecting them. Is the honourable member referring to them as basher gangs?

The Hon. Sir ASHER JOEL: I am not referring to that.

The Hon. W. C. PETERS: Was that the New Guard?

The Hon. Sir ASHER JOEL: This is long before the New Guard.

The Hon. F. W. BOWEN: The Hon. Sir Ashel Joel knows who these basher gangs were and so do I.

The Hon. J. A. WEIR: I have been diverted. The timber industry and other industries have a lot of problems. The union knows that as well as the employers. We are facing strong competition from imports, prices are rising and many factors other than wages are influencing the situation. The Hon. C. J. Cahill spoke of increasing production. Members of the timberworkers union in the western district responded to a call to try to reduce costs and to produce more. The Hon. F. M. Hewitt knows

the circumstances. Cypress timber comes from the western districts of New South Wales and from Queensland. The Queensland timber was being sold in this State at a lower price than the New South Wales timber, at a time when costs were rising. Buyers were reluctant to purchase the timber from this State. There was competition also from Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania.

A circular was sent to the western districts cypress sawmillers telling them on no account to reduce prices. They could not do so anyway; they were on a small profit margin. However, one way in which they thought they could solve the crisis was to allow the men to work only three weeks in every four. That was acceptable to them, but it appeared that the men would not be paid for the week they had off, and that was unacceptable to the men. That was the approach to curing the ills of over-production. The timber was coming off forestry commission land, but the price could not be reduced. According to the sawmillers—and I believe some of them—royalties and freights take one-third of the cost of timber landed in Sydney. I assure honourable members that wages do not account for one-third of that cost.

I was happy to hear the Hon. M. F. Willis make his maiden speech, but I did not like his attack on the Hon. J. J. Maloney, on the trade-union movement, or on Mr Pat Ryan. Everything worth while that we have in Australia began in New South Wales, and most honourable members, whether they be farmers, businessmen or trade-unionists, have something for which they can thank the trade-union movement.

The Hon. P. M. M. SHIPTON: Then why throw it away?

The Hon. J. A. WEIR: We are not throwing anything away. We are fighting to hold what we have got. When I think of the achievements to which I can lay claim, to which my forebears can lay claim, I think of the sorts of things for which the working class have always valiantly fought and for which they have made sacrifices. I am not being dramatic when I say that men have gone to gaol for those things. Miners,

timber workers, seamen and others have gone to gaol to defend what they knew to be a principle. Men have been shot for what they believe. I remember the case of the man Flanagan who was shot and killed by what we call a scab in Bridge Road, Glebe, during the transport strike in 1917.

The Hon. T. R. ERSKINE: He should have been serving his country in 1917.

The Hon. J. A. WEIR: How does the Hon. T. R. Erskine know that he had not done so? Two of my brothers served their country, one at the age of 15 and the other at the age of 17, and they continued to fight for their country all their lives. They got nothing out of it. They died with hardly a zack to their names. They fought to make Australia what it is. They fought for a 44-hour week; they fought against the 50-hour week, just as my father fought against the 60-hour week. My mother worked for 2/6d a week. That is the sort of background against which I was reared, and yet Government supporters talk about the need to conduct compulsory ballots in trade unions. Let them try it. I am a moderate sort of a joker, but if I think a worker has been unjustly treated, I will do everything in my power to see that he gets justice. Believe me, if some employers today thought they could get away with the things that they did in the 1900's, they would try it, despite what honourable members opposite may say.

The Hon. C. A. F. CAHILL [9.6]: It is usual in this debate to congratulate the mover and seconder of the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply. In accordance with precedent I intend to do that, but first, I should like to congratulate the Hon. W. G. Keighley upon one of the most magnificent speeches I have heard in this House. The honourable member dealt with the contentious subject of abortion. I do not want to go into the merits or demerits of that subject, but I think that such a carefully thought-out, well-reasoned and intelligent speech should not pass without congratulation. The honourable gentleman's sincerity was obvious. He dealt with a most difficult problem that perplexes all those who consider it.

I congratulate also the mover and seconder of the motion upon their speeches. The Hon. L. P. Connellan gave a thoughtful address. The Hon. M. F. Willis delivered a polished and carefully prepared speech, indicating beyond doubt that we have with us in this Chamber a most able debater. I regret that I cannot extend my congratulations to the content and substance of his speech. To do so would be to compromise my sincerity. His remarks clearly establish his right to be a political as well as a blood brother of a person who refers to the workers of this State as bludgers, loafers and malingerers because a union had the temerity to seek for its members who were injured at work, and to obtain from an industrial tribunal, the right for those members to receive workers' compensation at full rates of pay.

That judgment by an arbitration court provoked unbecoming—perhaps revolting would be a better word—expressions from the Chief Secretary and Minister for Tourism and Sport. The judges and politicians, railwaymen under section 100B of the Railways Act, and transport workers under section 124 of the Transport Act, as well as many other persons in more favoured positions receive full pay when they are injured at work. That fact does not attract any such criticism from the Chief Secretary and Minister for Tourism and Sport. However, when the ordinary workers seek what belongs to the judiciary, the politicians and the company executives, the Minister describes them as bludgers, loafers and malingerers. The concluding remarks of the Hon. M. F. Willis show clearly that he is a person who would strongly support the views of the Chief Secretary. It is obvious also that the mover of the motion is having a fervent love affair with the Government. His speech was characterized by the myopic tendency of some young lovers.

That tendency enabled the Hon. M. F. Willis to make statements clearly in conflict with fact, and to make generalizations without the support of any evidence. He seems to be labouring under the impression that the thing to do is to assert something and that proves it. Most of the speeches I have heard in this House are supported

by some statements of fact: the honourable member seems to be under the impression that it is quite sufficient if he makes a statement. Strangely enough, when he was not wearing the rose-coloured glasses through which he views the Liberal Party he made a few statements with which I could agree, and though he did not support them with facts, I will. I shall deal with those later.

As a result of the honourable member's myopic tendency he was able to congratulate the Government on what was a most insipid and uninspiring Governor's Speech. Of course, what I say is not intended to be in any way critical of His Excellency the Governor. The Governor's Speech is a purely political document prepared for His Excellency by his advisers. This document was a complete negation of the promises and policies enunciated by the Premier when he made his election speech. Before the last State elections the Premier said quite a number of things. As the Hon. M. F. Willis said—and I congratulate him on conceding the point—inflation is one of the greatest problems confronting the Government. Everyone in this Chamber knows that this is so. Likewise those outside the Chamber are aware of this situation. Leaving aside the smokescreen of the Government blaming the unions for increasing wages, everyone knows that rising prices is one of the major causes of inflation. As inflation was such a dominant feature and issue at the elections, the Premier realized it was necessary to deal with it—or to deal with it temporarily until the elections were over. It is easy to make promises and disregard them when the promiser does not have sincerity. The only people who make promises and keep them are those with sincerity.

I invite the Hon. M. F. Willis, who has the right of reply to the debate, to tell the House why the Government has not implemented its promise to the electors that if it was elected it would set up a Royal commission to look into prices. The Government which made that promise more than

six months ago has since completely disregarded it. The Premier's exact words in his policy speech were:

The Government has decided to set up a Royal commission to thoroughly investigate price increases and associated matters. The commission will commence as soon as possible and will call evidence from manufacturers, retailers and any person who may be able to give helpful information. The Royal commission will be asked to expedite its hearings.

What hypocrisy that is. More than six months have elapsed with nothing done. The Government was going to tell the Royal commission to expedite its hearings but there has been no sign of any action. This is typical of the promises of this Government—anything to collect votes. It is typical of the promises made in the preceding election campaign in an attempt to get the votes of the teachers, when the Government said that it would set up an education commission but after it was elected conveniently forgot all about it and did nothing. Will the Hon. M. F. Willis indicate in his reply why a solemn promise that was made to the electors was blatantly breached? Will he explain to this House how he can in all conscience congratulate a government that is guilty of a breach of trust of this nature? So much for the Royal commission on prices. Let us look at what else this Government had to say. The Premier promised:

Meanwhile we will continue to do our utmost in all ways open to us to try and contain prices as much as possible, including strengthening the powers of the Consumers Council and Consumer Affairs Bureau. Existing laws covering restrictive trade practices will be strengthened. Commonwealth legislation has not yet been properly tested. If it is shown to be effective and required in the public interest we will enact complementary legislation.

I propose to deal with that promise to the electors, section by section. One is entitled to assume that when a person as responsible as the Premier makes announcements of this nature, he will implement them, but this policy statement is riddled with hypocrisy. I will give my reasons and facts in support of what I say. I am not content, as is the mover of this motion, just to make statements and just because they are made, assume that they are sufficient. I will support with facts everything that I say.

The Hon. C. A. F. Cahill

Let us deal first with the second part—the existing laws covering restrictive trade practices. What existing laws? These laws are supposed to have been in existence for six years but one might ask, what existing laws governing restrictive trade practices will be strengthened? Will the Hon. M. F. Willis in his reply tell us what existing laws the Premier was referring to? The statement was made that the Commonwealth legislation has not been properly tested. The honourable gentleman could have been referring only to the Commonwealth Restrictive Trade Practices Act, designed and constructed by the Chief Justice of Australia, Sir Garfield Barwick when he was Commonwealth Attorney-General.

The Commonwealth legislation was watered down from the former Attorney-General's original draft to something not altogether innocuous but of little use. To make that legislation effective it was essential that the States should enact complementary legislation and they were asked to do so. But, has the New South Wales Government complied with this request? No. Some States have introduced legislation complementary to the Commonwealth laws in an attempt to make those laws workable. The New South Wales Government has refused to do so. Yet the Premier of this State has the effrontery and I say deliberately the hypocrisy, to say that if the Act is shown to be effective and required in the public interest, the Government will enact complementary legislation.

If the Premier knows anything at all, if the Attorney-General knows the slightest thing about the law or if any of the Ministers of the Crown know anything at all, they must know that the Commonwealth Government has asked the New South Wales Government to introduce complementary legislation to make the Commonwealth legislation effective. They know that unless the States do so the Commonwealth laws will not be fully effective. That is the true position and members on the Government side of the House know it. The Government has refused to do what the Commonwealth has asked. The Premier has said that if the Act is shown to be effective

New South Wales will introduce complementary legislation but he knows that the Commonwealth laws cannot be effective until New South Wales does its part. This was just so much poppycock served up to the electorate.

The Premier said that the Government will do its utmost to contain prices yet the Government's attitude seems to be that the election is over so why should it worry. Obviously this is so, because the Government has done nothing. In fact, after the federal budget was delivered the Premier praised it and said it was a good budget and in the interests of the country. Perhaps the Hon. M. F. Willis, replying for the Government in this debate, will answer another question. Speaking not as an economist but as a man in the street possessing some commonsense, if there is an inflation problem, how is it contained by bringing down a budget providing for a surplus of more than \$600,000,000, increasing post and telegraph charges, increasing the cost of television and radio licences and indirectly increasing road and air transport by imposing extra petrol tax? Will the honourable gentleman explain to me and to other honourable members of this House—I think we are entitled to this explanation—how that sort of budget confines inflation?

It is agreed that inflation exists yet the federal Government has budgeted for a surplus of \$600,000,000. Additionally, the Commonwealth will receive \$20,000,000 or \$30,000,000 from increased postal charges and a substantial amount from the extra tax on petrol. Despite this the Government says it is endeavouring to contain inflation. To me that is nonsense. Obviously it is not nonsense to the Premier, who praised the federal budget. If that is the type of budget we are to see in this Parliament, heaven help New South Wales.

The Hon. J. B. M. FULLER: The honourable gentleman will be able to debate the New South Wales budget when it is introduced.

The Hon. C. A. F. CAHILL: I will do that. I shall not disappoint the Minister. The Government has done precisely nothing in the past year or two. Members on the

Opposition side of the House have been saying there is only one way to deal with this problem—peg prices and wages. According to the leader of the federal Liberal Party and the leader of the State Liberal Party this is quite impracticable. It is indeed strange that although in most things the Commonwealth Government tags along behind the United States of America, clinging to its skirts, in this particular instance it refuses to do so.

The Hon. J. B. M. FULLER: How did pegging wages and prices work in the United Kingdom under a Labour government?

The Hon. C. A. F. CAHILL: I do not propose to go into what happened in Britain. I am not aware of the details but if I were I would answer the Minister. Ministers of the Crown in New South Wales travel to overseas countries quite a lot where they have a first-hand opportunity to obtain the facts about these matters. Ministers enjoy many overseas trips but I have not yet seen or heard anything of real substance in the nature of a worthwhile report from them on their return. I have not heard anything said in this House that has intimated the discovery of a practical solution to any of our problems. On the other hand, as a result of some Ministers going to the United States of America we have seen the enactment of one of the most extraordinary pieces of legislation introduced in this State—the Clutha Development Pty Limited Agreement Act. In that country several Ministers, whoever they were, presumably met Mr Ludwig who cast some spell over them. They returned to New South Wales and with the weight of numbers had passed through this Parliament an Act giving the Clutha company extraordinary and powerful rights. Those rights override local-government laws and State laws. They are rights of a nature never before given to a private company in this country—rights to do as it pleases with our countryside and our environment.

The Hon. J. B. M. FULLER: The honourable member knows that is a silly statement to make when the provisions of the legislation to which he is referring are related to the pollution measures that went

through this House during the last Parliament. When the honourable member makes a statement like that, it makes one wonder whether he knows what legislation has gone through this House.

The Hon. C. A. F. CAHILL: If I understand the Minister correctly, he is saying that although broad powers are given in the Clutha Development Pty. Limited Agreement Act, we need not concern ourselves about them as the Government has introduced other legislation—

The Hon. J. B. M. FULLER: Such as the bill to establish the State pollution control commission.

The Hon. C. A. F. CAHILL: If the Minister wants a reply to his interjection he should be at least courteous enough to keep quiet while I am replying. I do not need any help from him. It is still doubtful how far that particular authority can go. It is all very well for the Minister to laugh. Apparently he regards this as humorous.

The Hon. J. B. M. FULLER: I was laughing at something said by the Hon. J. A. Weir.

The Hon. C. A. F. CAHILL: I am not surprised at that. The Hon. J. A. Weir is always humorous. A former Minister for Foreign Affairs and former Attorney-General, Sir Garfield Barwick, who is also an active conservationist, has indeed been active in calling for an inquiry into the situation. I was diverted from what I was saying to refer to the Clutha Development Pty. Limited Agreement Act, which I do not want to discuss in detail now for it will come up later in the session. I assure the Minister that it will then be dealt with at some length. The simple fact in regard to inflation is that the Government is not willing to fix prices, although it is willing to fix wages.

The Hon. F. M. Willis, the mover of the motion, made a number of allegations during his speech. It is simple enough to say that A, B or C is the position, but it is useless to use them as factual arguments. It is even worse to misquote the facts. For example, he made a general remark that in

1964 the average weekly earnings in this State were well below the national average. That is quite untrue. Tonight I obtained from the Parliamentary Library a copy of the monthly return of statistics that was issued by the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics at Canberra in June this year. Set out in this publication are the average weekly earnings for every year since 1960 for each employed male unit. As the honourable member mentioned the year 1964, let me give the figures for the financial year 1964-65. On page 34 of this publication it is shown that the average weekly wage in New South Wales was \$56.50. In Victoria it was \$56.40, in Queensland \$50.40, in South Australia \$50, in Western Australia \$49.50 and in Tasmania \$51. The national average was \$54 a week, so the worker in New South Wales was far from being in receipt of less than the national average.

If the Hon. F. M. Willis would prefer it, I shall go back to 1963-64. The average wage in New South Wales was then \$56.50 compared with the national average of \$54. Therefore, it was completely untrue for the honourable member to claim that average weekly earnings in New South Wales in 1964 in this State were well below the national average. It is a pity that an honourable member should give in his maiden speech what he calls facts that turn out not to be based on fact. When he put aside his rose-coloured glasses, apparently accidentally, he said something quite unwittingly. Probably he did not realize that he was being critical of the political party of which he is a member in commenting upon Great Britain's entry into the European common market.

For the past ten years the man in the street has known that there was a strong possibility that Great Britain would join the European Economic Community. Even the average well-informed man in the street knew that if this should happen it could have serious effects on Australia's rural industries. Anybody who thought—naturally I am not referring to the Ministers of the Crown of the present Government—would

realize that other markets would have to be found for our produce in anticipation of what might occur.

The Hon. F. M. Willis made a staggering discovery. With great sincerity and with some vehemence he announced that we must diversify our rural markets and adopt a new, dynamic approach to marketing. I congratulate the honourable member. If his colleagues, like the average man in the street, had displayed an awareness of the position ten years or so ago, there would not be as much concern now about Great Britain's entry into the European Economic Community. Though we on this side of the House know what the situation is, at least a new Government member is able to tell the Government what we have been emphasizing for a long time—that it should have a dynamic approach to marketing.

By the clearest possible inference the honourable member is saying that the Government has had no dynamic approach to marketing. The Hon. M. F. Willis made two extraordinary statements that are so remote from the facts that it is not really kind to refer to them. However, the honourable member is an able debater and has the opportunity to reply to what I am saying. I trust that he will have the courage and the integrity to answer some of the specific questions that I have directed to him.

Before I come to the next part of my speech I should like to refer to this classic. Praising the Government with his telescope the Hon. M. F. Willis said that consumers now have protection. He adduced no evidence in support of that contention; apparently a statement from him is to be regarded as axiomatic. There can be only one answer to such a statement—what rubbish.

I have already dealt with that statement when referring to restrictive trade practices and the failure of the Askin Government to adopt the Commonwealth legislation. I covered portion of my argument when I referred to the failure of the honourable member's Government to honour its election promises.

I go a little further and refer to typically unctuous legislation of this Government dealing with consumer protection and the Act of Parliament known as the Consumer Protection Act. It is good advertising but as for protecting, it does nothing. I do not make statements without giving evidence to support my contention.

The Hon. F. M. HEWITT: Is that why the Western Australian Government is copying the Act?

The Hon. C. A. F. CAHILL: I do not know whether the Western Australian Government is copying that legislation but the fact that some other government may copy useless and unctuous legislation introduced by one government is not a justification of the measure. I do not know, and I am not concerned about, what the Western Australian Government does, but I am vitally concerned about what the Government of New South Wales has failed to do. The one thing it has failed to do is to protect the consumer. It is almost inane for the Minister to say that some other State is copying the legislation and therefore it is all right.

The Hon. J. B. M. FULLER: We have imagined from the honourable member's comments that Labor governments set precedents that could well be followed and he has been trying to sell that idea to the people of New South Wales.

The Hon. C. A. F. CAHILL: I am speaking about legislation introduced by the Government of New South Wales. I do not care whether some other government is Labor, Liberal or communist. If it is so stupid as to follow this New South Wales Act it is heading for trouble. If it is a Labor government, I criticize it for its action. I do not believe that it would copy this Act and I should need more proof than the Minister's interjection to be satisfied on that score. It is a toothless bit of legislation. The Minister for Labour and Industry glibly says that the Western Australian Government is copying it. I doubt whether it is but that is quite irrelevant. The Government has been unctuous enough to introduce legislation and call it the Consumer

Protection Act. The fact that another government, whether Labor, Liberal or communist, saw fit to bring down the same legislation is quite irrelevant. The whole question is whether the Act is effective. Does it justify the Government's claim that it has the interests of the consumer at heart?

The Hon. EILEEN FURLEY: The council has taken up a number of cases on behalf of consumers and with considerable success.

The Hon. C. A. F. CAHILL: I am coming to that very point. The council should have more power and the consumer should have protection. I propose to refer to the report. The Government realized that it had to do something. It did something but without going the full distance. As far as I am aware—and again the Hon. M. F. Willis may correct me if I am wrong; he may consult with the two Ministers in the House—not a single prosecution has been launched under the provisions of that Act.

The Hon. F. M. HEWITT: That is wrong.

The Hon. C. A. F. CAHILL: How many have been launched?

The Hon. F. M. HEWITT: Two successful, and one unsuccessful.

The Hon. C. A. F. CAHILL: That is magnificent. Three prosecutions have been launched since the Act was proclaimed. Both the *Daily Mirror* and the *Sun* run columns about complaints by consumers. Those complaints literally run into thousands. We have had three prosecutions, and I suppose we are expected to say that the Government has done a good job.

The Hon. EILEEN FURLEY: Many cases have been solved by negotiation and legal action has not been required.

The Hon. C. A. F. CAHILL: Perhaps the simplest way to deal with that interjection is to refer to the report of the chairman of the Consumer Affairs Council and to the activities of the council and the Consumer Affairs Bureau for the year ended 30th June, 1970. The Act was introduced in 1969 and in two years the Government has launched three prosecutions. One need only read the

newspapers to see how many complaints there are. One need only read the report of this council. Only one good thing emerges from all this. Because the report has been tabled in the House, the information may be published in the newspapers. Indirectly this has done some good. Unscrupulous manufacturers and dealers have been named in the report and the publicity in the newspapers has put some of them out of business for perhaps a week or two weeks—the time necessary to float another company under a different name. Under the company legislation of this State a man may be a criminal and still be a member of the board of a company.

It is interesting to look at this report. I have no doubt that honourable members have read it. It sets out nefarious practices in retailing and manufacturing, and makes some recommendations. The report was printed on 16th September, 1970. The Premier promised at the time of his election to do his utmost to contain prices. He said that his Government would strengthen the powers of the Consumer Affairs Council. If he were sincere, why has he not implemented some of the recommendations of that council? Under the heading "Sales Practices" on page 11 the report contains the following comment:

Council considered three-party trading stamps to be against the best interests of consumers and recommended that appropriate legislative action be taken to outlaw them in this State.

I have looked at the Governor's Speech, but have been unable to find any mention of such legislation. On page 12 the report deals with pseudo-invoices in the following terms:

Council recommended to the Minister that legislation be passed making it an offence to send to any person, whether through the post or otherwise any advertisement that is in the form of or made to resemble currency, a cheque or an invoice or statement of account; and that the Postmaster-General should be requested to seek legislation or amend the Postal Regulations to that end with regard to the sending of advertisements through the post.

As far as I am aware, nothing has been done about that. Perhaps the Hon. M. F. Willis could tell me whether I am mistaken

and indicate what has been done about it. The report deals with motor vehicle comprehensive insurance on page 13 and says:

Council therefore recommended to the Minister that it would be in the best interest of consumers if an inquiry were to be held into all aspects of motor vehicle insurance and that the activities of Motor Marine and General Insurance Co. Ltd in particular be investigated and, if malpractice was revealed, prosecution be launched if at all possible.

Again as far as I am aware, nothing has been done about that, although I am open to correction. If there is any sincerity in the Government, the mover of the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply will answer these matters. If something has been done, let him tell honourable members what it was, and when it was done. He has access to both Ministers. The report deals then with deceptive packaging. The following appears on page 14:

Council considered the matter and inspected samples of packages collected by the Superintendent of Weights and Measures and recommended to the Minister that regulations be brought down in New South Wales under the Weights and Measures Act on the subject of slack filling and forming of containers, but that such should be uniform in all States. It is suggested that discussions to that end should be undertaken as soon as possible.

There is nothing in the Governor's Speech dealing with that. A lot has been said in this House about allowing services to be rendered in such a way as to permit members of the community to be robbed. On the subject of false and misleading advertising the report makes the following comment:

The Commissioner suggested that the addition of the words "or service" after the words "letting on hire of any goods" would extend the scope of the section sufficiently. Council agreed with this suggestion and it was recommended to the Minister that the Act be amended accordingly.

As far as I can see, nothing appears in the Governor's Speech to suggest that this is going to be done. In regard to referral selling, the following appears on page 16 of the report.

There is no doubt that this form of referral selling as practised in the home renovation field is a burden on consumer. It is significant that it has been prohibited in some countries. Council is favourably disposed towards similar action here, but before making

any firm recommendation to the Minister, it has requested that the Commissioner conduct a further investigation into all forms of referral selling, and this has commenced.

Perhaps the mover might indicate what has been done in that regard. I ask these questions for the simple reason that although more than six months has elapsed since the report was made, not one thing has been done to implement the Premier's promise. He may have appeared sincere when he made it, but the statement obviously was insincere. The Government has not done its utmost in all ways open to it to try to contain prices. The Premier promised that his Government would also strengthen the Consumer Affairs Bureau and the Consumer Affairs Council. The Government's idea of tackling inflation is to provoke the unions and to blame them for inflation. Apparently it does not matter about companies that are making huge profits; it does not matter about prices; let them soar; do not worry about requiring employers to submit their proposals for price increases to an appropriate tribunal, but by all means make the workers put their case for a wage increase to the Industrial Commission.

Might I say one thing about the Premier's concern with price control as evidenced by his statement to appoint a Royal commission to inquire into price increases, and by his remarks on inflation. The Premier and his Government have given the inflationary spiral a terrific boost. True enough, the Premier promised that there would be no fare increases in the financial year in which he was speaking, but on the first day of the next financial year he imposed fare increases of 50 per cent, the highest fare rise in the history of this State. If that is not inflationary, I do not know what is. His counterpart in Victoria increased fares by only 15 per cent. Recently I visited Western Australia. Some time before leaving, I inquired about sending my car to Perth by train. The charge quoted to me by the Department of Railways was \$300-odd.

The Hon. H. D. AHERN: It does not go on a gold pass?

The Hon. C. A. F. CAHILL: Of course not. Unfortunately I did not send my car until 2nd July, by which time the freight

on a vehicle, instead of being \$300-odd had risen to \$420. I was given a docket showing where the money went. I have forgotten the actual figures, though they are available. However, I assure honourable members that of that \$420, although four railway systems were involved—New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia and the Commonwealth—more than half went to the Government of New South Wales, for only a small portion of the journey.

The Hon. H. D. AHERN: Be fair: 800 miles out of 2,500 is not a small portion of the journey.

The Hon. C. A. CAHILL: There were four railways concerned. Ostensibly more than half of this amount went to the New South Wales Department of Railways.

The Hon. E. K. E. VICKERY: Why did the honourable member not get an Avis car and be done with it? He would have saved a lot of money.

The Hon. C. A. F. CAHILL: We are supposed to patronize the railways in order to make them pay. This is getting off the subject, but the New South Wales Government Railways used to issue calendars with the caption "Make the railways pay". As the result, in an action for damages against the New South Wales Commissioner for Railways at Newcastle where one of these calendars was prominently displayed opposite the jury box, after the case had proceeded for one week the jury made the railways pay to the tune of about \$60,000.

I have taken up more time than I should but I propose to take up a little more time. The Premier said in his policy speech that the law reform of this Government has been an example to the whole nation. The only comment I make is, what an example. It is an example to be avoided by the other States.

The Hon. EILEEN FURLEY: Some lawyers take the opposite view.

The Hon. C. A. F. CAHILL: That is because they are infected by the Liberal Party. I need not go into a lot of detail on this occasion. I have previously dealt with a

number of these so-called reforms. An example of the Government's idea of law reform is its decision to abolish juries in motor-car accident cases because insurance companies were losing money. This has been successful for the insurance companies and unfortunate for the average member of the public but this Government is not concerned with the average member of the public. We now have an extraordinary situation with judges. It is almost unbelievable how incredibly mean and penny-pinching some judges can be. Some of them are living in the past. Some judges think they are being generous when they think in monetary terms of the 1950's. I want to give a few examples of what can happen as a result of the law reform of this Government. In one case a boy of 16, who had a bright future, was blinded in a motor-car accident. A judge who was not mean gave him \$103,000. Medical and hospital expenses of \$3,000 were included in the verdict. It is difficult to imagine a greater tragedy, but the appellate judges reduced the verdict to \$63,000.

I read a recent report concerning a girl of 16½ years, who was most attractive and was going abroad to do some skiing. I cannot remember all the details. She was a great athlete and scholar, which was conceded in the judgment. She was made a paraplegic with urinary and other problems. The judge, who was not ungenerous, gave her a verdict for \$100,000 which included \$65,000 for past and future medical and hospital expenses. The remainder of the verdict was to compensate her for this devastating injury. Tonight I asked an honourable member opposite what he thought it was worth for the injury and he said \$200,000. What was seriously argued in the court of appeal was whether or not \$35,000 was too much for this girl who was expected to live until at least 50 or 60 years of age. One would hardly be able to buy a house with that amount.

The Hon. EILEEN FURLEY: She would have to be skilfully looked after for the rest of her life.

The Hon. C. A. F. CAHILL: After making a provision of \$65,000 for her medical and hospital expenses, the sum of

\$35,000 was to compensate her for her injury and loss of enjoyment of life. It was argued in the court of appeal that the \$35,000 was excessive. Mr Justice Jacobs, in the course of his judgment, after pointing out that she was a girl who previously had a bright future and was also a great sportswoman, referred to the catastrophic effect on her life and said that he thought the verdict was not excessive. The other two judges thought that \$100,000 was too much and the verdict was reduced to \$94,000. This is another example of the Government's law reform.

I want to examine the law reform position a little further. I know as well as any lawyer on the other side of this House that if I have a case involving a man who has a broken leg, he may get a verdict of x dollars from one judge, or x dollars plus 5 per cent from a second judge, or a sum of $2x$ dollars from a third judge or from yet another judge he may get a verdict of $2\frac{1}{2}x$ dollars. That is a well known fact of life. It is incredible that there is this meanness and parsimoniousness among some of the judges. I concede that some judges are fair and reasonable but the views of some others are beyond belief. The same situation applies to the judges of the court of appeal. Some of them still think in money terms of the 1940's, some in terms of 1945 monetary values, and a small minority think in terms of the 1970's.

The law reform of this Government is only of benefit to the people it really represents. The examples I have given are of substantial cases but the same thing occurs all along the line. A woman in her forties has her life wrecked in a motor car accident and will have to move around on crutches until she dies. She goes before the court and is lucky to get \$15,000. That happens under this so-called law reform. Some other law reforms of this Government include amendments to the Small Debts Court Act and the Districts Courts Act. The main object of these amendments has been to simplify the collection of debts. When I think of law reform the test I apply is, how does it help the average person? The type of law reform introduced by this Government does not help the ordinary

citizen. It helps the big financial institution but not the man in the street. Costs are now payable in relation to actions taken in the small debts court yet this court is supposed to be the poor people's court. The Government calls this law reform.

A computer is used to list the names of debtors who appear before the courts and the Government sells those lists to credit bureaux. The credit bureaux of New South Wales pay to the Department of the Attorney-General and of Justice \$4,000 a year for this information. This service has been provided for the past three years. It may be described as an administrative matter not covered by the statutes. It is disgraceful. Is it any wonder that this Government is called the debt collectors' government? I noticed in His Excellency's Speech a reference to the District Courts Act. The Government intends to perpetuate the mistake it made in amending the Supreme Court Procedure Act by carrying similar changes through to the District Courts Act. The amendments to the Supreme Court Act were referred to by His Honour Mr Justice Jacobs as a great leap forward to the 1870's in law reform. The only effect is to increase the costs and procedures necessary to get before the court. The Hon. L. A. Solomons would understand what I am referring to. Procedures similar to those introduced into the Supreme Court Act were provided for in the Commonwealth sphere and immediately doubled the cost of obtaining a divorce. Yet, this is called law reform.

What I call law reform is a reform of the law that brings benefit to the community as a whole, not merely to a section of the community. I cannot recall this Government bringing down any single piece of legislation that has brought substantial benefit—there have been minor benefits—to the majority of the electorate. The Government has seen fit to make 18-year-olds liable to be sued but has not given them the right to vote. Apparently it is quite all right to let the debt collectors get at these young people but it is wrong to give them a vote. All I can say about the Governor's Speech is that it is a most insipid document and a negation of the Premier's election speech. The policy of this Government *qua*

the evils of today is pathetic. I invite the mover of this motion in his reply, instead of merely making general statements, to answer the matters to which I have referred relating to the Premier's election speech and to explain the Government's failure to implement the promises I have specifically referred to.

The Hon. H. D. AHERN [10.16]: I support the mover and seconder of the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply. I should like a little licence to enable me to make some comments about some of our distinguished colleagues on the other side of the Chamber. One is at a disadvantage when speaking late in the evening. It is easy to wear out one's welcome and I am well aware of that. However, speaking late in the evening has the advantage of allowing one to listen to speeches made by other members. Tonight I have been intrigued by the verbosity of my learned friend the Hon. C. A. F. Cahill, I have enjoyed the glamour of the Hon. N. K. Wran, the dramatics of the Hon. J. J. Maloney and the common sense of the Hon. F. W. Bowen. That sums up my thoughts after listening to those distinguished speakers tonight. I wish I had been acquainted with the Hon. C. A. F. Cahill thirty years ago before I spent many years at the University of Sydney trying to learn something about inflation. I can see from what he said tonight how much time I wasted in years of study, burning the midnight oil over a textbook, *Theory of International Trade*, in which Haberler Gottfield gave about 250 reasons for the trade cycle. Tonight the Hon. C. A. F. Cahill came out with all the solutions to our problems. It seems to be almost necessary that we should immediately allow a Labor government to take over the administration of this State, under the leadership of the Hon. C. A. F. Cahill, to get us out of our troubles.

The Hon. F. W. BOWEN: In those days you would have accepted John Maynard Keynes as an authority, would you not?

The Hon. H. D. AHERN: It is getting a bit late in the evening to talk about Keynes. I shall refer to the Hon. N. K. Wran who romanced in a remarkable way about constitutional amendments. My mind went back to when Stanley Melbourne

Bruce tried to fix up arbitration in this country. What a calamity followed. I should like to add to that the efforts of Dr Evatt in 1944 when he also attempted to tidy up industrial arbitration. The suggestions made this evening by the Hon. N. K. Wran would not be acceptable to the people of Australia. That is obvious from what has happened in the past to centralize arbitration.

I should like your indulgence, Mr President, to ask honourable members to picture three little boys playing on the sandhills at Bondi many years ago. Suppose they are named Jim Maloney, Fred Bowen and Francesco Calabro, though they might not all be of the same age. Jim Maloney and Fred Bowen are playing in the sand but they will not let Francesco Calabro play with them. They say, "You don't build your sand castle the same way as we do, so you cannot join in with us." That attitude represents Labor's paternalistic approach to compulsory unionism. If I turn that phrase around, it is still a fair way to explain Labor's attitude. No one supports unionism more than I do but honourable members opposite take the view that if someone is not in a trade union he should not benefit from its gains. That is both unfair and childish.

The Hon. W. C. PETERS: What about the professional side? There are a few unions on that side.

The Hon. H. D. AHERN: I shall turn now to the more serious side.

The Hon. W. C. PETERS: Tell us about the professional side—the lawyers and auditors.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. H. D. AHERN: His Excellency the Governor made a good speech because he had good material for it. The Government has done a great deal in community development and the people responsible for writing His Excellency's speech did not have a difficult job this year. I congratulate the Hon. M. F. Willis and the Hon. L. P. Connellan. I can understand why the Hon. C. A. F. Cahill was so annoyed with the Hon. M. F. Willis. The Hon. M. F.

Willis impressed me immensely when he talked about the "somnambulist Labor administration". I could not imagine a better phrase than that. It covers Labor's administration during those years when I was sitting on the other side of this Chamber.

The Hon. J. B. M. FULLER: I have been like that for some time.

The Hon. H. D. AHERN: I shall take the hint and not read any of the other challenging phrases that I noted in the Hon. M. F. Willis's speech. In fact my years of advocacy of constitutional reform seemed justified when I found the Hon. M. F. Willis saying that the federal Government has become omnipotent, dominating in all fields, because of its financial grip. This is a good reason why we should have a federal constitutional convention. The House may be interested to know of the progress made by the Hon. George Reid, Attorney-General in Victoria.

The Victorian Government has passed legislation paving the way for constitutional reform. Both Houses have, without opposition, passed legislation for the setting up of a constitutional convention. The Attorney-General, the Hon. George Reid, has visited New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania, in which States he has received the unqualified support of the Premiers and the Leaders of the Opposition. Today or tomorrow the Hon. George Reid is visiting South Australia and he will visit Western Australia early next week. So there is a movement afoot. We in this State do not have to worry about what the Prime Minister of Australia is doing—the Commonwealth is only the junior member in this Federal system. I support the wise thoughts expressed by the Hon. M. F. Willis.

In a more serious vein, I should like to pay my respects to the Hon. J. C. McIntosh whose hospitality we always appreciated when we were at Lismore, and also his help when we were up there barracking for the Liberal party. I deeply appreciated the broad outlook of the Hon. J. C. McIntosh.

I need not say anything about Major-General John Stevenson except to comment on one point that no-one has yet men-

tioned, and that was his unqualified willingness to take on difficult tasks. I shall mention only one example—the time when he became secretary and treasurer of the Nexus Vote No Committee. That was a serious thing for a man in his position to take on. He was challenged by his federal colleagues, particularly the Clerk of the Senate, if I remember rightly, and naturally by many honourable members. His action impressed me.

I pay my respects also to the ex-Senator Tom Bull, who joined with Major-General Stevenson in the fight against the Canberra referendum proposals. I place on record my appreciation of the ex-Senator's willingness to join in the fight for constitutional review.

I have only two things to talk about tonight. One is compulsory municipal voting. The other is the Royal commission on the failure of the West Gate bridge, and I have a special reason for talking about that, because of the challenge in both the New South Wales Parliament and the federal Parliament to John Holland (Constructions) Pty Ltd, an organization that was awarded contracts by both Labor and Liberal governments in this State. I shall come to that in a moment.

The House might allow me to say briefly that compulsory voting in local-government elections is adopted only in Queensland. There was a period when it was in operation in New South Wales, but the Hon. P. H. Morton, in his capacity as Minister for Local Government and Minister for Highways, departed from it. The abolition of compulsory voting at municipal elections has drawn a continual stream of criticism from the Local Government Association of New South Wales, a body which wants a return to compulsory voting. I think compulsory voting in local government is a dead letter. Quite apart from all the arguments that could be advanced against compulsion, I submit that compulsory municipal voting cannot be implemented. Councils have shown no willingness to enforce it. The very fact that they do not implement it is a basic weakness. When councils start to implement it, they get into the field of prosecuting citizens for not voting. My

learned legal friends might tell me that this is a simple offence, but as soon as the person who has not voted refuses to pay the fine that has been imposed, the offence is carried forward into the criminal and penal field.

It seems to me to be absurd to have a man being moved into the criminal law field because of a decision not to vote in a local-government election. I think the local-government people are making a spectacle of themselves by their attitude in trying to bring back compulsory voting. Broadly, it seems to me to be a product of their own ego: they do not like the low percentages. At the last elections the proportion of voters was between 25 per cent and 30 per cent. Any one of us who knows something about local government voting knows that in the United States of America and in England, where voting is not compulsory, the proportion is in the range of 50 per cent, 60 per cent or 70 per cent. If local government really wished to present a better image, it could do much better than pass resolutions at local-government conferences in favour of compulsory voting, at the same time expressing unwillingness to accept that bribery and corruption are undesirable qualifications for election to municipal office.

I intended to talk about the Clutha Development Pty. Limited Agreement Act, but I shall make only a brief comment. Sir Garfield Barwick made a remarkable statement on behalf of the National Conservation Foundation. It is beyond my comprehension that the Chief Justice of Australia should enter into a completely political field. With all due respect, this sort of thing provides another reason why there should be a constitutional convention to review the High Court, which is completely impossible in present conditions and circumstances. I had intended also to say a few words about my friend Mr St John, Q.C. His statements on coking coal are completely inaccurate. Like gas coal, coking coal is becoming almost obsolete, as the modern trend in steel making is to use the oxygen-lance process. Not so many years ago we heard protests about the export of gas coal from northern New South Wales, but today it is difficult to sell gas coal and in a few years hardly anyone will want it.

The Hon. H. D. Ahern]

Finally, I should like to make a few observations, without any detailed preparation, on the West Gate bridge. My only reference to the Royal commission is its impact on John Holland (Constructions) Pty Ltd, a company in which I have no professional interest. I had a professional interest in the Spit bridge and in the King Street bridge.

I have no interest of any sort in the West Gate Bridge, the contractors responsible for the work on it, or any of the people connected with it. However, in view of Opposition questions in the lower House on John Holland (Constructions) Proprietary Limited, including the attack in the federal Parliament I am prompted to say something on the matter. I do not remember whether it was a Liberal or a Labor attack in the federal House, but it certainly prompted the Minister for Works, Senator Wright, to state that as he did not have any information available at that stage, he felt that it was too early for him to comment on whether the John Holland group should be allowed to continue with its government contracts. I think the organization has four bridges under construction for this Government, and obviously it must have some contracts with the federal Government also. I received a copy of the report on the collapse of the West Gate Bridge only recently and I have not had time to study it but I intend to take the opportunity to read several extracts from it. Though my references to the project will be brief, any member can go further into the matter if he wishes. At paragraph 1.1.1 of their report the commissioners have this to say:

There can be no doubt that the particular action which precipitated the collapse of span 10-11 was the removal of a number of bolts from a transverse splice in the upper flange plating near to mid-span.

In simple everyday language this means that somebody removed some bolts that had the technical effect of making a span that was in two sections less strong when it was treated as two half sections. I hope I have made myself reasonably clear. When the bolts were removed the finished structure did not have its full strength. There was endless argument over who was responsible

for removing the bolts, but I am not offering any comment on that aspect. At this stage I do not feel that is relevant.

The Hon. C. A. F. CAHILL: What will our Government do about that?

The Hon. H. D. AHERN: I am speaking now as a technical person, just as the Hon. C. A. F. Cahill did when he was speaking on inflation. The commissioners make this statement at paragraph 10.1.5 in their report:

As in the case of other parties, the J.H.C. group bears a first-class reputation as an efficient organization, and has competed in the Australian construction industry for some years, with marked success, being responsible for a number of important structures, mainly in reinforced concrete.

It is important to bear that in mind. The report continues:

It had experience in structural steel to a limited extent only. The work performed as the contractor for contracts for F and C on the West Gate project was entirely satisfactory, and although these contracts fell somewhat behind schedule, this was not a serious delay.

The relations between J.H.C. and the labour unions has been good on these contracts, although there had been some difficulties. The company management had an excellent reputation for good labour relations, were rightly proud of the extremely good record for safety . . .

That J.H.C. lacked the special expertise necessary for the work involved in this contract, was manifestly plain to the authority and the consultants and indeed was clearly stated by Holland himself without equivocation.

Mr Holland himself admitted this lack of specialized work on sophisticated steel structures. The commissioner's report continues:

This imposed responsibility for the physical task of assembly and erection of the boxes plus control of labour, but did not require the company to rely upon its own personnel for the sophisticated specific calculations and highly technical decisions necessary to ensure the safe and satisfactory completion of the contract.

At page 103 the commissioners made this statement:

The responsibility for the final act which triggered the collapse of span 10-11, namely the removal of bolts from the 4-5 splice—is a matter that has given us great difficulty.

After a most careful scrutiny of the whole of the evidence we are satisfied that the J.H.C. engineers, while they did not actively oppose the unbolting as a means of getting rid of the "buckle", were wise enough to entertain very serious apprehension about doing this at the stage in erection of the half spans which had been reached.

The commissioners made this comment:

For these reasons, we cannot attach any part of the responsibility for this tragic act to J.H.C. or its personnel.

These were the commissioner's findings on John Holland (Constructions) Proprietary Limited, which had numerous contracts with the New South Wales governments, both this Government and the previous Government. Therefore, I suggest that there is no reason for any member of the Opposition or any member on this side of the House to be concerned about the company's competence to carry out its current contracts.

The Hon. M. F. WILLIS [10.36], in reply: Having sat in this House late on a number of nights during the last Parliament at the behest of the Opposition, I am delighted now to have the ball at my feet. I am also pleased that the Hon. C. A. F. Cahill is present. I did not know that he had access to the records of our family optometrist. Both my political blood brother and I are myopic, but I assure the honourable member that the prescriptions we have both physically and politically give us both clear, perfect eyesight. I was going to add for the honourable member's benefit, that perhaps the parsimonious judges whom he criticized might act as they do because they were at the bar too long before gaining their judicial appointments.

I found much interest in the far-ranging contributions of members in this debate. I am tempted to comment at length on many of the matters that were raised, especially by Opposition members. Although I had intended to confine my remarks when replying to the debate to certain issues raised by the Leader of the Opposition and by the Hon. F. W. Bowen, I have succumbed to the temptation of including a reply to remarks made by the Hon. N. K. Wran. I cannot permit his errors on the economic and industrial scene to pass without comment.

I deeply regret that the Hon. R. R. Downing is not present tonight. I wish him a speedy and full recovery and I hope he will return soon to his place in this House. Some of the matters he mentioned were echoed by many of his colleagues. Other matters they raised form the essence of the Opposition criticism of the Government's policy and administration and they highlighted also the weaknesses of the Opposition's attitudes. The Leader of the Opposition attacked the Government on three major problems of government that he called crises. I, too, referred to the problem of State finances, inflation, costs, the problems of education and the problems of our rural industries.

In regard to State finances the Hon. R. R. Downing proclaimed that New South Wales is on the verge of bankruptcy by contrast with the financial stability that obtained under former Labor administrations. He condemned the Government's deficit budgeting. I suggest that the Opposition should ask why the Government has adopted this device. The simple answer is that it wishes to get this State on the move again after twenty-four years of economic stagnation attributable to the Labor Party's old savings bank syndrome that you should never borrow funds to boost the economy. I was indeed disappointed when before the dinner adjournment tonight one of the bold new breed of the Labor Party, the Hon. N. K. Wran, disclosed that he, too, is infected with this economic syndrome which, I might add, is as dead as the great depression. The alternative to deficit budgeting is to have the State stagnate, to slow down—as happened under Labor. This is precisely the reason why the electors put the Liberal-Country party Government into office. Ask any successful businessman who has a thriving enterprise and I wager that he will say that he borrowed as much capital as he could lay his hands on.

The Leader of the Opposition and other Opposition members condemned the Government for using loan funds, as if there is something sacrosanct about them. He neglected to mention that in that way a far better financial deal is achieved for the States. He did not mention the fact that by

The Hon. M. F. Willis]

arrangements negotiated by this Government with the Commonwealth Government, over the next five years the Commonwealth will take over \$1,000 million of this State's debt, which effectively converts these loans into interest-free grants. In turn, this gives us a far greater flexibility than Labor ever organized. The Leader of the Opposition claims that his government did better relatively out of the federal Government, but I fail to see this when one considers that the loan allocations have grown each year in favour of this State, and so has the *per capita* reimbursement.

The Hon. R. R. Downing spoke at length, as have other honourable members on inflation and the cost of living. He branded New South Wales as the dearest place in which to live, but he neglected to acknowledge that it has the highest weekly earning rate in Australia, \$1.60 or nearly 2 per cent over our nearest rival, Victoria, and \$8.20 or 11 per cent over the Labor State of South Australia. He merely saw fit, as did the Hon. J. J. Maloney, to quote the consumer price index in isolation, which I submit is not valid logic.

The Hon. C. A. F. CAHILL: I hope you remember that.

The Hon. M. F. WILLIS: I will. The Leader of the Opposition, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and the Hon. F. W. Bowen made much of the rise in prices of land. They would have the Government do what Labor did, release for development vast areas of unserviced and unsewered land. The legacy of that policy still exists today in large areas of Sydney, which are unserviced and unsewered. At least when this Government releases land, in contrast with what Labor did and the policy in some other States, it ensures that these areas are fully serviced. This is a major factor in adding to the cost of land, but ask anyone with a pan service and he will say it is worth it.

The Hon. F. W. BOWEN: I doubt it.

The Hon. M. F. WILLIS: Have you got one?

The Hon. F. W. BOWEN: I had one for twenty years.

The Hon. M. F. WILLIS: I bet you would have preferred not to have it.

The Hon. F. W. BOWEN: Yes, but it assisted me to pay off my land.

The Hon. M. F. WILLIS: These days people would prefer to pay the high prices if it means the provision of services such as sewerage. The Opposition should be aware that under its programme the Government proposes to release 24,000 serviced housing blocks per annum. The calculated demand is only 14,000 blocks a year. In this way it hopes to contain the price of land.

Much has been said by members of the Opposition about inflation. Members of the Opposition will not acknowledge what every economist tells us, that the present inflation is due to cost-price pressure. One honourable member referred to the Government's "holy cow of productivity". As I said previously, a higher living standard comes only through higher productivity. But what has happened of late? Productivity has been rising at only half the rate of wages and that is why we have inflation and rising prices. If one wants higher wages, shorter working hours and longer vacations, one must pay for it by higher productivity or by inflation.

The Hon. W. C. PETERS: Does that apply to the professional man, too?

The Hon. M. F. WILLIS: Yes, it does. I lay the cause of present cost pressures, price rises and inflation at the feet of the leaders of Labor. I hope that when the honourable member takes his seat on the Australian productivity council he remembers that while productivity lags all that the workers get from strikes is pie in the sky—it vanishes in increased prices before the workers can benefit, and then the same silly cycle starts all over again without any thought about productivity.

I found the views put forward by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition on inflation most interesting. He attributed the problem—and probably rightly so—to the huge inflow of foreign capital with this country, and this State, in particular, enjoys, to the mining boom and to the exploitation of mineral wealth which we dis-

covered and is saving us economically in the face of our rural problems. In addition he attributed inflation to company profits. Does he not realize that all these things make this country and this State one of the most buoyant and strong economies in the world? They give us our high standard of living, heavy demands for labour and the splendid conditions and wages which the workers of this State enjoy. Would the honourable member have us turn away from foreign investment? Would he tax companies out of their profitability and destroy the very economic structure on which our society depends for its high standards? To postulate what he has submitted is sheer nonsense. I am thankful that Labor economic theories such as we have heard do not prevail in this country.

I turn now to the comments on education made by the Leader of the Opposition. He canvassed at length the present situation and suggested that some Government supporters would blame our present problems on the Wyndham scheme. I shall not disappoint the Opposition. I will expand that blame a little. The present shortages in education are fundamentally due to Labor's introduction of the Wyndham scheme prematurely, at three months' notice and without any prior adequate planning. This, coupled with the growing affluence of our society, means that whereas under the previous Government only one third of secondary students went on to higher education, nowadays that figure is nearly 70 per cent. What did Labor do in anticipation of a teacher shortage? It built one teachers college in twenty-four years. By contrast, this Government has built or started four such colleges in the past six years.

The reasons for the teacher shortage are many and complicated. Except those in the age group over 60 and 55, and trainee teachers, the resignation rate of practising teachers is much the same as it has always been. This is a competitive and affluent society. A teachers college scholarship on a \$1,000 bond is the cheapest way of getting a university education today. Any student worth his salt can earn \$1,000 in his vacations and then pay off his bond without a thought of ever being a teacher. That is what I did when I was at university.

The Hon. J. A. WEIR: You must have had some good friends.

The Hon. M. F. WILLIS: No, I worked as a shop assistant, believe it or not. These days many more young teachers travel overseas. Because of the high physical standards required by the Department of Education of applicants for scholarships and the fact that they suffer no loss of benefits compared with other groups, when they are caught up in national service they are lost to teaching for two years. I am suggesting that the Government is suffering from the legacy handed down by a Labor government in 1962 with its ill-prepared and premature introduction of the Wyndham scheme. It is a legacy that will have to be carried for several years. In the face of this situation the Government has mounted a vigorous recruiting campaign for overseas teachers. It has installed a large administrative staff in schools to enable teachers to be released for teaching. It is presently arranging the legality of permitting former teachers to return to work. This is being done in addition to its vastly increased education expenditure.

The Leader of the Opposition gave his attention to the problems of the rural sector and suggested that the Premier made no proposal in his 1971 policy speech to deal with these problems. I would remind the Opposition with respect that in 1965, when New South Wales was in the grip of its worst drought ever, the then Premier, the Hon. J. B. Renshaw, made no reference in his policy speech to the problems then facing our farmers.

On being elected this Government, having solicited funds from the Commonwealth, spent in 1965-66 about \$45,000,000 on drought relief. The Government also for the first time instituted a comprehensive drought relief scheme, including special concessions for road as well as rail transport, special assistance for stock sales in drought areas and unemployment relief in country towns to help maintain the economic level. In addition, the Government has induced the federal Government to provide \$32,000,000 for rural reconstruction. It has established the Local Government Assistance Fund. The allocation is

about to be doubled so as to ease the rate burden on farmers. The Government has undertaken to provide for the maintenance of main and trunk roads in country areas. This is to operate from 1st January, 1972. The Government has introduced, too, the concept of special death duty relief for primary producers which will be gradually extended during the current Parliament. All this adds up to a tidy programme of relief and assistance for rural areas. The criticisms of the Government in these three spheres that I have mentioned cannot be sustained in the face of the facts.

In conclusion, I should like to comment on the matter raised by the Hon. F. W. Bowen, referred to last night by the Hon. F. H. Cockerill and dealt with tonight by the Hon. N. K. Wran. I refer to strikes. It distresses me to see moderate, responsible and respected right-wing leadership of the Labor movement succumbing to the power of the militant left. Those three honourable gentlemen have championed the right to strike in virtually any situation or, as the Hon. F. W. Bowen, put it, "intervention in all fields of human endeavour—a new era when the Labor movement expresses itself in precise terms." I, too, accept the right to strike but not to the extent or extents that we have seen lately. Those honourable gentlemen neglected to acknowledge the basic truth that for every right there is a corresponding and equally onerous duty. In this case it is the duty to be prudent and responsible, to strike only when all else has failed, to strike only on issues intimate to self-interest and not to inconvenience and jeopardize other sections of the community.

The trade-union movement, now clearly under the domination of the militant left, has forgotten this duty. I can only assume from the remarks of the Hon. F. W. Bowen and the Hon. F. H. Cockerill that they are forecasting, at the Australian Council of Trade Unions Congress, the death knell of Labor's support for the arbitration system which has served this country so well. Mr Heffernan, the State senior vice-president, has already said that the arbitration system should be in the dustbin. It appears that the Hon. N. K. Wran does not agree. He

is sticking to the book in this matter and it will be most interesting to see who prevails.

It would be most regrettable if the arbitration system were to go, especially if it is to be succeeded by what is called collective bargaining. The leaders of labour in any country where collective bargaining prevails will say how they envy our arbitration system. I only hope that the arbitration system persists, especially if it is strengthened by both federal and State legislation. This is what the bulk of workers want. They showed in a recent Gallup poll their support for a secret ballot for strikes. I applaud the Government's decision to legislate in this field. This action will certainly give those who I believe are the responsible majority a chance to override irresponsible leadership.

The Hon. N. K. Wran was also searching for reasons for the high incidence of strikes in New South Wales. I shall make bold to tell him. We have the most buoyant economy, the least unemployment, the highest wages and the greatest demand for labour. These make a happy hunting ground for what is tantamount to industrial blackmail. The honourable member's quotations of the reasons for strikes are interesting. He said that they were, first, the conditions of work; that is, while the boss needs your services, you screw him for every concession you can get. The second was managerial; that is, when labour is at a premium, you tell the boss how to do his job, and, if he does not like it, you strike. The third reason was wages—but no thought for increased productivity. The last reason was political; that is, when you want a long weekend, and your pay packet can stand it, you take it. If the Hon. N. K. Wran combines those comments with his views on economics, he has an ideal recipe for inflation.

I believe that the criticisms levelled by the Opposition during this debate have failed completely to detract from the lustre of the Government's record and its proposed programme as set out in His Excellency's Speech. I have much pleasure in commending the motion to the House.

Motion agreed to.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I have to announce that I have ascertained it to be the pleasure of His Excellency the Governor to receive the Address in Reply at Government House tomorrow, Thursday, 26th August, 1971, at 4.45 o'clock p.m.

Motion (by the Hon. J. B. M. Fuller) agreed to:

That the House do proceed on Thursday, 26th August, 1971, at 4.30 p.m. to Government House, and there, at 4.45 p.m., present to the Governor the Address in Reply to the Speech His Excellency the Governor had been pleased to make to both Houses of Parliament on opening the Session.

House adjourned, on motion by the Hon. J. B. M. Fuller, at 10.58 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 25 August, 1971

Printed Questions and Answers—Questions without Notice—Credit Union (Amendment) Bill (third reading)—Housing Indemnities (Amendment) Bill (second reading)—Port Kembla (Further Development) Bill (second reading)—Plant Diseases (Amendment) Bill (second reading)—Newcastle Gas Company Limited Bill (second reading)—Second-hand Dealers and Collectors (Amendment) Bill (second reading)—Closer Settlement and Public Reserves Fund (Amendment) Bill (second reading)—Public Trusts and Other Acts (Amendment) Bill (second reading)—Trustees of Show-grounds Enabling (Amendment) Bill (second reading)—National Parks and Wildlife (Amendment) Bill (second reading)—Adjournment (Pollution of Murrumbidgee River and Yass River: Rezoning of Land at Lake Illawarra).

MR SPEAKER (THE HON. SIR KEVIN ELLIS) took the chair at 2.30 p.m.

MR SPEAKER offered the Prayer.

PRINTED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

PROPERTIES RESUMED FOR CLUTHA DEVELOPMENT PTY LIMITED

MR MALLAM asked the MINISTER FOR MINES AND MINISTER FOR CONSERVATION—(1) Will he indicate (a) how many properties in the Camden district will be involved either by way of full or partial resumption for the purposes of the construction of the railway line by Clutha Development Pty. Limited, and (b) how many dairy farms will be adjacent to