

Legislative Council

Thursday, 26 January, 1978

Constitution and Parliamentary Electorates and Elections (Amendment) Bill (Message)
—Electricity Commission (Financial Accommodation) Amendment Bill (first
reading)—Land Vendors (Amendment) Bill (third reading)—Petition—Question
without Notice—Freeways—Landlord and Tenant (Amendment) Bill (third read-
ing)—**Special** Adjournment—Question upon Notice.

The President took the chair at 2.28 p.m.

The Prayer was read.

CONSTITUTION AND PARLIAMENTARY ELECTORATES AND ELECTIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL

Message

The President reported the receipt of the following message from the Legislative Assembly:

Mr President—

The Legislative Assembly agrees to the time and place appointed by the Legislative Council in its Message, dated 25 January, 1978, for a Free Conference with the Legislative Council on the subject of the Constitution and Parliamentary Electorates and Elections (Amendment) Bill.

Legislative Assembly Chamber,
Sydney, 26 January, 1978.

L. B. KELLY,
Speaker.

ELECTRICITY COMMISSION (FINANCIAL ACCOMMODATION) AMENDMENT BILL

First Reading

Bill received from the Legislative Assembly and, on motions by the Hon. D. P. Landa, read a first time and ordered to be printed.

LAND VENDORS (AMENDMENT) BILL

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, and returned to the Legislative Assembly without amendment, on motions by the Hon. D. P. Landa.

PENSIONERS ELECTRICITY ACCOUNTS

Petition

The Hon. E. P. Pickering presented a petition praying that pensioners be allowed rebates on their electricity accounts.

Petition received on motion by the Hon. E. P. Pickering.

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE

SHELLHARBOUR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

The Hon. E. P. PICKERING: I desire to ask a question without notice of the Vice-President of the Executive Council and Minister for Planning and Environment. Is he aware that on 22nd November last I addressed to him in this Chamber a question about the public concern felt by citizens of the Shellharbour area regarding a complex development site called Site 7 200? Is the Minister further aware that on that occasion he undertook to give me the information I sought after having obtained it from the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways? Would the Minister give me some indication of when he will reply to my question, in view of the continuing public controversy on this matter?

The Hon. D. P. LANDA: The honourable member would be well aware that negotiations and representations continue to be made in relation to that site. It is not a matter that at this moment has a stationary or fixed position. The matter of the solution of the transportation problems that are envisaged by certain residents in the area has been raised by me with the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways. However, it is a tremendously complex problem if it is to be dealt with in its entirety. Nevertheless, the matter has been well undertaken by the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways and the Minister for Housing, who together and with my support have put forward a proposal in relation to that site that is credible and of benefit to the area. The problems that are foreseen by some sectors can be alleviated and should not be the source of any further trouble. However, I shall see whether any more up-to-date information is available in relation to the transportation matters raised by the honourable member and other questions raised by him. I shall advise him in due course if there is any further information.

FREEWAYS

The Hon. E. P. PICKERING [2.38]: I move:

That, in the opinion of this House, the Government should forthwith refrain from selling any land previously purchased to provide freeways until—

- (1) it provides the citizens of this State with a comprehensive alternative system of transport, without freeways; and
- (2) allows a full and informed public debate upon such a system.

It is my intention this afternoon to establish, first, that the Government of New South Wales as currently constituted has officially announced the abandonment of a number of major inter-urban freeway developments that were previously planned by the Liberal—Country party governments. I shall also set out that in those public announcements the Government has indicated its intention to rezone properties that were previously zoned for freeway development and indeed to sell all those properties that

were previously purchased in order to facilitate future freeway development. I shall be contending during the course of this debate that that decision was highly irresponsible and was not made as a result of careful planning but was reached as a result of political expediency resulting from pressure applied to this Government by certain groups in the community with recognizable vested interests.

It is in no way my intention to argue that freeways are essential in the inner-urban areas of the city of Sydney. Rather I point out that if the Government intends to make a decision that I would describe as irreversible, and as a result of which the land set aside for freeways is re-zoned and sold so that a future government will be unable, in effect, to go back to freeway-type development, we should know what alternatives the Government has in mind before such a decision is taken. In line with that principle it is my intention to examine the only alternative so far put forward by the Government. That alternative is a small one indeed. On 23rd February, 1977, the Hon. P. F. Cox, Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways, issued a public statement on the subject. I read but a few passages from it. It is headed "Inner Urban Freeways" and it begins in the following manner:

The State Government announced its decision today to abandon major portions of planned inner-urban freeways in Sydney.

The Minister for Transport and Highways, Mr Peter Cox, said today Cabinet had adopted recommendations from its special sub-committee on freeways to abandon large sections of proposed work on the Western, Warringah, Gore Hill, Eastern and Southern Freeways.

Mr Cox said the decision was directly in line with the Government's pre-election promise and subsequent policy that freeways should not be constructed in inner-city areas.

While the Government recognizes the importance of adequate roads in a balanced transport system, it is against inner-urban freeway proposals, which would devastate the areas they pass through.

I invite attention to that last comment, for I shall be arguing later that it discloses the thrust of the Government's reasoning, namely that the inner-urban areas would be devastated by having freeways pass through them. I have no doubt it is that aspect that impinges most upon the thinking of the Government.

The Minister's press release is lengthy and I shall not weary the House by reading all of it, but he did make some other pertinent points. For example, the Minister went on to say that he and his colleagues the Minister for Local Government, Mr Jensen, and the Minister for Planning and Environment, Mr Landa, would work with local councils in rehabilitating and developing areas previously constrained by freeways. He said that the freeway proposals so abandoned would have cost approximately \$491 million on current prices, and said that that sort of money was simply not available. He went on to say that the Government was still considering the future of the northwestern freeway. The rest of the statement gives details of the freeways that were to be abandoned, and so on.

Further to that announcement, on 13th October last the Minister again made a statement about freeway development. It was headed "North Western Freeway". I shall quote only briefly from it. It included the following:

The State Government has decided to abandon major sections of the planned North Western Freeway. The Minister for Transport and Highways, Mr Peter Cox, said today the Government had opted for progressive development of existing road systems in preference to freeway construction.

Mr Cox said Cabinet had adopted fully the recommendations of a sub-committee specially appointed to study every aspect of the North Western Freeway proposals.

"While the Government clearly recognizes the need to provide an adequate road network as part of a balanced transport system, we are opposed to inner-urban freeway proposals, which would devastate residential areas," he said.

Again the principal reason given for the abandonment is that the proposals would result in the devastation of residential areas. In that press release the Minister said that the abandonment of major sections of the northwestern freeway would save the taxpayer \$165 million, and he made the point that the money was simply not available. On that occasion he extended the point to a criticism of the federal Government, which he said was not making the necessary funds available. In the last part of the press release the Minister outlined an alternative to the northwestern freeway, which I shall deal with in detail later. In simple terms, it amounts to an upgrading of Victoria Road from Sydney to Gladesville Bridge. As far as I am aware, that is the only proposition the Government has put forward as an alternative.

The automobile was introduced into our society at about the time of federation, and made an impact on our way of life. Indeed, in the modern city the citizen could scarcely exist without the motor car and the other forms of transport that use our roads system. Honourable members realize that the continuing and increasing use of motor cars has changed the nature of the cities in which we live. In order to give the House some idea of how rapidly that use is expanding, I invite attention to the most recent publication by the National Roads and Motorists Association on the point, in which it is said that the number of vehicles on Australian roads has doubled in thirteen years and is now estimated to be about 7 million. The total distance travelled by Australian vehicles each year has grown at an even greater rate. The distance travelled today is 2½ times the distance travelled thirteen years ago. Indeed, in 1963 cars on the Australian continent travelled 44 million kilometres. In 1976 that figure had grown to 102 million kilometres. The importance of the fact is that it represents an annual rate of increase in the use of motor cars of 10.2 per cent, which is a growth rate that any modern business would be happy to achieve.

Clearly, the pressure to improve road transport has led to a need for freeway-type development. In this connection, honourable members will understand that there are three basic aspects to the design of freeways, and they are worth stating because later in the debate I shall have to refer to this matter again. The first feature of freeway design is that it provides limited access to and egress from the freeway, and the access and egress are carefully and scientifically planned so that a car can come on to and leave the freeway at the speed at which it was travelling on the freeway or on the adjacent highway, and cause a minimum of interference to other traffic in doing so.

The second feature of freeway design concerns the physical separation of opposing lanes of traffic, which is invariably provided. Indeed, often in a well-designed project there is not only physical separation of the traffic but also visual separation to reduce problems of glare in night driving. The third feature of freeway design is that no private ownership is allowed along the sides of the freeway, so establishing an environmental buffer, and at the same time eliminating any possibility of private access to the highway from residential or commercial premises. I see the Minister nodding his head. That certainly is one of the aspects of freeway design.

The Hon. D. P. Landa: Do not think that I was agreeing because I was nodding.

The Hon. E. P. Pickering]

The Hon. E. P. PICKERING: I thought the Minister was agreeing with me. Freeways, like their predecessor the railway, are costly indeed in terms of both capital resources—money and materials—and space. When a decision is made to build a freeway, particularly in an inner-city area, many residents face an agonizing experience. Some have to move from homes in which they have lived for many years. Many people, particularly the elderly, suffer great personal hardship. Any person who does not recognize that as a fact of life is not being realistic. I believe that this aspect has impinged itself upon the Government's thinking and has influenced it in making wrong decisions in regard to inner-city freeways. I am the first to concede that the Government could not be branded as an anti-freeway government. The Government has announced the development of certain freeways outside the city area. My charge is that the Government has abandoned inner-city freeways.

The Hon. D. P. Landa: Are you arguing in favour of urban radial freeways?

The Hon. E. P. PICKERING: I do not wish to minimize the agony that people experience when they are faced with the prospect of a freeway going through their property. However, other aspects must be considered. When an issue is raised that involves a degree of human emotion, some people are always willing to rally to the cause and exploit it for their own political and ideological advantage. I propose now to refer to what Professor A. J. Rose, professor of geography at Macquarie University, said in an article he wrote on freeway development. The article, entitled "The Horseless Carriage and the Anti-Freeway Bandwagon", was published in September last year in a magazine called *Viewpoint*. That publication is produced by the Macquarie University environmental and urban studies group. In referring to people who get on to the bandwagon to defeat freeway development, Professor Rose said:

Bandwagons have always been more freely available than horses; all comers have been readily welcomed; there has been a tendency to achieve social coherency by virtue of being all on the waggon together, so the happiness of togetherness adds to the fact that the ride demands no fare and is also pollution-free. A sense of power may also lubricate proceedings, for a successful bandwagon can crush opposition in the heady manner of a veritable juggernaut. Your really successful bandwagon generates a sort of magnetic aura, and has the ability to attract all sorts of improbable passengers.

Despite all these good things it has going for it, the average bandwagon is not necessarily a highly intelligent form of life, and its structural elements can be rather too polyglot and ill-matched to allow it to be issued with a valid certificate of inspection; defect notices are the likely consequence of rigorous inspection. Alas, the Anti-Freeway Movement looks to partake of the nature of a bandwagon.

The Hon. D. P. Landa: Who wrote that?

The Hon. E. P. PICKERING: Professor Rose, professor of geography at Macquarie University.

The Hon. D. P. Landa: A professor of geography?

The Hon. E. P. PICKERING: He is also an expert in urban studies and he has written many learned papers on this subject. The people who have pushed the Government into making these decisions are among those to whom Professor Rose refers. The thrust of this debate is not on whether freeways are enough; the thrust of the debate should be to prevent an irreversible decision being taken before viable alternatives can be investigated. Having said that, I recognize that few viable alternatives are available in terms of public debate. I would be remiss in this debate if I did not

make some comment in support of freeways in the inner-urban areas. I shall confine my argument to a statement that there is a need for such a system, and touch upon questions of safety, pollution, economics and the overseas experience.

The question is whether we need freeways in the inner urban area of Sydney, and whether traffic volumes justify this type of development. It is obvious that if a freeway development were to be rubber-stamped today, it would take years to be developed completely. As a country member of this House, I do not drive my car into the inner city area frequently—and for that I am grateful.

The Hon. D. P. Landa: The honourable member uses public transport?

The Hon. E. P. PICKERING: Yes.

The Hon. D. P. Landa: Because it is efficient?

The Hon. E. P. PICKERING: Because it happens to go past my door. I propose later to refer to the Minister's interjection. Last October I had occasion to drive my motor car to a business house in this city where I had to pick up some heavy parcels. It was a day on which this House was sitting, and I drove into the city at about 1 p.m. Eventually I found myself travelling along Kent Street, which is one of the four main distributors that take traffic off the Sydney Harbour Bridge. My intention was to turn left into King Street at a set of traffic lights. The day was particularly hot. I intended to make a left-hand turn so I positioned my vehicle in the left-hand lane. In the following thirty minutes I was able to travel only about fifteen feet. Every time the traffic lights turned green in my direction and the vehicles in my lane sought to make a left-hand turn, the street into which they wanted to proceed was blocked with cars travelling from the western part of the city into the main city area.

Finally when I reached the traffic lights I realized that if I made a left-hand turn I would not reach this House by the time its sitting commenced. Eventually, I decided to drive ahead and I travelled almost right round the city before I reached Parliament House. Last week, when some members of this House had occasion to discuss some weighty matters, we were to meet at 11 a.m.—hardly during the peak hour. At about 11.30 a.m. an esteemed member of this Chamber, the Hon. Sir Edward Warren, entered the committee room, obviously upset and distressed, as a man of his integrity and background would be at arriving late for a meeting. Sir Edward explained to the chairman of the meeting that he was late because he had spent twenty-two minutes getting across the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

The Hon. D. P. Landa: Which is serviced by freeways.

The Hon. E. P. PICKERING: Not completely. I have just explained how long I spent in Kent Street after coming over the Harbour Bridge—and Kent Street could hardly be termed a freeway. Those two incidents give some idea of the traffic pressures in this city at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. I would not even attempt to drive into the city during the 9 a.m. peak period, because conditions at that time must be like bedlam. When the Government comes to face the people again—as it will in due course—Channel 10 will not be out each evening filming every fortuitous little railway derailment that seems to occur at the right time; it will have a much easier task—filming thousands of commuters struggling in and out of the city each day—and they are all voters. The average motorists in New South Wales are fed up with the fact that the Government has ceased to worry about problems affecting traffic in the inner-city area. Doubtless, the Government's view is that the more inconvenience motorists suffer, the fewer cars will be driven into the city and the more people will use public transport. The Government had hardly come to office when it reduced rail fares **substantially**. My understanding is that the statistics show that this had little effect on the public transport system.

The Hon. D. P. Landa: You do not know what you are talking about.

The Hon. E. P. PICKERING: If the Minister says I am wrong, perhaps he will produce the relevant figures. The statistics I have seen show that rail revenue dropped after those fare reductions were made.

The Hon. D. P. Landa: But not the number of journeys.

The Hon. E. P. PICKERING: The Minister cannot have it both ways.

The Hon. D. P. Landa: If the honourable member is talking about people going back to public transport, the number of passengers' journeys must be relevant.

The Hon. E. P. PICKERING: If more people had used public transport there would not have been the same percentage reduction in income that resulted from the Government's reducing fares.

The Hon. D. P. Landa: Would not that be only if the increase were above the 20 per cent and costs had not increased during that period?

The Hon. E. P. PICKERING: That may be so. The Minister has all the time in the world to inquire about that. I observe that country members are nodding their heads in assent. We know that country rail freights were increased to pay for the 20 per cent reduction in passenger fares. I am indebted to the National Roads and Motorists Association for providing me with statistics regarding the Sydney metropolitan area. I have been informed by that body that in a normal day in Sydney 6 million trips are made in the Sydney metropolitan area. In addition, one million trips are made by commercial vehicles. Of those 6 million trips made each day, only 1.6 million are made by public transport, which includes buses, trains, taxis and ferries. Some 5.4 million of the 6 million journeys are made between suburbs. Often one finds from examination that there is not a viable public transport system to enable those trips to be made. Of the remainder, 600 000 trips are made each day into the central business district. I am concentrating upon these trips. To keep the matter in perspective, of the 600 000 trips some 150 000 are made in peak hours. Most peak-hour trips are made by public transport.

The Hon. D. P. Landa: The honourable member said that 150 000 trips are made into the central business district of Sydney in peak hours. The figures must be incorrect.

The Hon. E. P. PICKERING: The Minister may check the figures if he so chooses. Of those 150 000 trips, 18 000 were made by motorists driving into the city in the morning peak hours between 7.15 and 9.15. Of the 18 000 trips, 16 000 were made by private vehicles or by vehicles owned by companies and driven by company employees. An analysis of those trips revealed that on 13 300, or 83 per cent of them, the travellers had a strong and compelling reason for driving into the city. The most obvious was their need to use the vehicle in the course of the working day.

The Hon. D. P. Landa: You are referring only to motor vehicle journeys?

The Hon. E. P. PICKERING: Yes.

The Hon. D. P. Landa: The honourable member should distinguish between them.

The Hon. E. P. PICKERING: I thought I had made it clear. On the figures that I have given to the House, in the peak between 7.15 a.m. and 9.15 a.m. some 2 700 journeys could be converted to public transport. Although honourable members of the

Opposition agree that people ought to be encouraged to make greater use of public transport, there is no way in the world that the problems of motorists driving into or out of the city, not only during peak hours but at almost any time during the commercial hours of the day, can be alleviated. In many ways this has put paid to the fundamental argument put forward by the Government. Given that we live in a democratic State and not in an autocratic dictatorship, everyone cannot be prevailed upon, by the wave of a magic wand, to abandon the convenience of their cars and to join the public transport system.

I shall complete the statistics. Of the 6 million journeys that I referred to in the beginning, 4.6 million are by road. Obviously, buses and taxis and other vehicles use the roads. All these transport journeys add to the congestion, which will be ever increasing. I cannot envisage any relief from this congestion in the future. I shall now deal with road safety. Earlier I defined the three basic aspects of the freeway system. By their very nature, freeways are much safer for car transport.

The Hon. D. P. Landa: You say that freeways are much safer than other roads?

The Hon. E. P. PICKERING: Yes, they are safer than the conventional road system.

The Hon. D. P. Landa: You are not saying that they are much safer than public transport?

The Hon. E. P. PICKERING: No. The brochure produced by the National Association of Australian State Road Authorities entitled *Roads and Traffic Safety*, provides some interesting figures. It reveals that in Australia accidents that occur at road intersections represent 46.1 per cent of all accidents. Accidents involving pedestrians represent 11.1 per cent of all accidents. These two areas contribute to 57.2 per cent of accidents. As that type of accident cannot occur on a freeway system it is not illogical to conclude that the incidence of accidents on freeways will be less than half those occurring on conventional road systems. General experience is that the result is even better. I refer again to the article written by Professor Rose, who dealt with the subject of road safety and considered whether we should have freeway development. He said:

Roads deaths most commonly occur at intersections. The pro-impediment argument calls for the maintenance of intersections. Hence it calls for the perpetuation of road deaths at such sites. If we could get as much as one-third of metro-Sydney's daily traffic load onto freeways we could expect a reduction in road deaths by as much as a quarter or a fifth.

The Hon. D. P. Landa: The same argument would apply to public transport, would it not?

The Hon. E. P. PICKERING: Yes; but I have already intimated that is a dream beyond realization. In a democratic society where a government cannot introduce an authoritarian way of life, people cannot be forced to use public transport. This has not been achieved during the time the Government has been in office. Professor Rose said also:

Assuming that the Sydney region generates half the annual road deaths in the State, the absence of an adequate freeway net is costing us, right now, in the order of 100 deaths a year. I for one cannot board a waggon that calls each year for the unnecessary slaughter of more people than perished in the Granville train disaster.

I am a little disappointed that the professor did not explain that in addition to road deaths there are injuries. Every member in this Chamber well realizes that every year many thousands of people are injured on our roads. If one refers to the records one can calculate that if 100 people are killed on the roads 4845 are injured in some way at the same time.

The Hon. W. C. Peters: There are more deaths in the air than on the roads.

The Hon. E. P. PICKERING: It is a well-established fact that not only in Australia but throughout the world it is much safer to travel by air to any place in the world than it is to drive home. When a Government committee considered freeways it put on one side of the balance-sheet the misery and suffering of people who were forced to leave their home and pull up their roots. It realized that children would not be attending the same school in the following year and that elderly couples who had lived all their lives in a district would have to move. This adds up to a lot of human misery, but much of it can be alleviated by a well-meaning and kind government. I wonder whether on the other side of the balance-sheet the committee considered the thousands of people who will be killed and injured, and the thousands of homes that will be wrecked as a result of the Government's decision not to proceed with freeway development in this city.

That is not playing upon emotions. I believe that is a statement of fact; in the first year the casualties will be one hundred, in the second year two hundred, and so it carries on. Obviously the people that have to move for a freeway suffer once. That is the end of that human misery. But if you look to the other side, the misery continues year in and year out without any abatement.

Let me turn now to the question of pollution as it is argued in this freeway debate. There is no doubt whatever that the modern car contributes more to the pollution of city air than any other device. One of the most obnoxious pollutants produced from the internal combustion engine, as a result of inefficient combustion, is carbon monoxide—a highly poisonous gas. In the city of New York it currently produces about 95 per cent of that city's carbon monoxide pollution, in Los Angeles 96 per cent and in Tokyo 99.7 per cent. Nitrous oxide, another pollutant from the internal combustion engine, makes a significant contribution to the pollution of our cities. It is well known to the Minister, because the matter is under some investigation at the moment, that the so-called photochemical smog that bedevils many cities in the world today is brought about as a result of the interaction of ultra-violet light and the pollutants nitrous oxide and other hydrocarbons that emanate from the motor cars in our cities. The subject of air pollution is one that we cannot take lightly. Though the pollution experienced in this city is nowhere near as bad as that of other cities, it is obviously going to get worse.

I shall read a comment made by a person for whom I have the utmost regard, my old university professor, Sir Phillip Baxter. In 1972 at a scientific conference he delivered a paper entitled "Forensic Aspects of Pollution by Petrol Engines and The Power Stations. Are there Solutions?" He said:

We know that in the exhaust from the internal combustion engine there is carbon monoxide, which Sir Ernest described, and which is a highly lethal gas. We know if you run your engine in the garage with the door shut you will die very quickly from it. There is also, in automobile exhaust gases, quite a family of organic compounds, 40 or more of them, some of which are known as carcinogens, that is to say they produce cancers of various kinds. Others are mutagens, they produce genetic changes which can affect subsequent generations.

He continued:

I foresee, once investigations into this matter have gone further, some very interesting compensation cases coming before the court from people who have developed cancers of various kinds and who will seek to establish that these were caused by the inhalation of the exhaust gases from automobiles.

I am sure that the Hon. J. S. Thompson is wondering whether or not Sir Phillip Baxter's forecasts will come true. Let me point out that on 27th October last year in the Australian an article appeared of which I shall read the first part. It was entitled "Air pollution hits 20,000 in Osaka". It reads:

Pollution victims in Osaka, Japan's third largest city, have topped the 20,000 mark.

The majority suffer from respiratory ailments attributed to polluted air in the heavily industrialised city with a population of about 3 million.

Sydney has much the same population. The article continues:

The city's program of identifying pollution victims to make them eligible for financial aid began in 1969.

By the end of 1975 the number had reached 16,384. In 1976 and the first nine months of 1977 3690 were added to the rolls, raising the total to 20,074.

The last sentence is:

The figure includes 752 people who already have died.

In very simple terms, without getting highly technical, a simple statement of fact is that pollution from motor vehicles is inversely proportional to the speed at which they move. Indeed, it can be shown technically—and I do not propose to bore the Chamber with great technical detail—that vehicles clogging city streets bumper-to-bumper in the situation that is commonplace in Sydney contribute enormously to the pollution of a city's air. But with the same number of vehicles travelling along at reasonable speeds on expressways the pollution content is reduced enormously. To give that statement further credence let me once again draw on the article presented by Professor Rose. He said:

The energy-consumption and pollution-generation implications of the (pro-impediment) arguments are also environmentally disastrous. A car stationary at intersection lights delivers zero kilometres of transport per litre of petrol consumed. Anti-freeway arguments demand that we consume at least fifty percent more fuel to do the same amount of transport than would be necessary in a rational highway system. (CSIRO tests suggest that a two-thirds increase would be more normal.)

If I might break from the quotation, that means a very substantial increase in the release of pollutants into the atmosphere, even if only in the form of carbon dioxide. He continued:

The logic of this extends further, for this increased petrol consumption involves vast increases in noxious exhaust emissions. The greatest proponents of photo-chemical smog conditions in Sydney are the anti-freeway waggoneers.

The Hon. W. C. Peters: That compares with Tokyo and New York.

The Hon. E. P. PICKERING: The Hon W. C. Peters has misunderstood me. I have said, and I am sure the Minister has appreciated the import of my remarks, that cars are the greatest contributors to pollution. If the amount of pollution from cars can be reduced the reduction in total pollutants would be enormous.

The Hon. D. P. Landa: That is, I take it, an argument for emission controls as well.

The Hon. E. P. PICKERING: I had intended to deal with that matter. Quite clearly emission controls are desirable. Seeing that the Minister has raised the subject I shall digress for a moment. I believe that while governments have acted responsibly in applying emission control levels, it is a tragedy, considering the finite resources of fuel energies for the automobile, that the methods used have been adopted. Anyone who buys a modern car today will know that fuel consumption has dramatically increased as a result of the application of techniques to reduce emission to specified limits as laid down by the Government.

The Hon. D. P. Landa: That again is rubbish. Emission controls are on some cars. GMH has brought out such a car that does not use more fuel.

The Hon. E. P. PICKERING: It does on most cars. We are using a system that is referred to as exhaust gas recycling. Let me, as a chemical engineer, assure the House that I feel sad if we are approaching the control of pollution from vehicles in this way. It is unfortunate that we have not caught up with the latest developments in America where engineers have devised catalytic methods which have been used in underground coalmines for years. Why we should allow our natural resources to be denuded by adopting the approach that we have taken is beyond my comprehension.

The Hon. D. P. Landa: You had better speak to the industry.

The Hon. E. P. PICKERING: I have just spoken in this place about the matter. The next question the Government raises is that of available funds. Frankly, I am jaded by the number of occasions of late on which Ministers in this State tell the public, "We cannot do this or do that, because the federal Government is not giving us enough money". Let me reiterate the sort of argument on this point that was put forward during the debate on the Appropriation Bill. Government supporters know as well as we do that the total amount of money being made available to the States by the Frazer Government has in no way diminished. In fact, it has increased. The Prime Minister said, in a highly responsible approach, that his Government believes all State governments, whether they be Liberal or Labor, should have the responsibility of deciding where the money that is made available to them will be spent, simply because they are closer to the people and to the problems of their own communities.

Accordingly, even though the Commonwealth has increased the total amount it makes available to the States, it has reduced the amount given in specific purpose grants. The federal Government no longer says to the States in respect of so many matters, "Here is a sum of money. Spend it in the following way". That is what the Liberal Party refers to as its federalism policy. It is unfortunate that Ministers in New South Wales are saying for purely political purposes that this amounts to a reduction by the federal Government of available funds in particular areas. The State certainly cannot say that about roads, because in all years since 1964–65 the federal Government has steadily increased roads grants. Indeed, in the financial year 1977–78 the federal Government will be making \$153.8 million available to New South Wales in roads grants, an increase over last year's allocation of \$137 million or 12.2 per cent. All other States are receiving an increase of only 9.4 per cent.

The Hon. J. R. Hallam: Will the honourable gentleman break that figure down into expenditure in individual cities?

The Hon. E. P. PICKERING: That is not worth doing because the State Government tells the federal Government how it wants the money allocated. I can imagine the Minister saying, "The amount of money we are given for inner-urban freeways has

been drastically reduced." Of course it has, simply because the State Government said to the federal Government, "We are not going to spend our money on inner-urban freeways". The decision is one for the State Government. The fact remains that the total amount of money being received by New South Wales from the Commonwealth has increased dramatically.

The Hon. J. R. Hallam: In real terms?

The Hon. E. P. PICKERING: In real terms. In the press release to which I referred earlier, the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways said on two occasions that the amount of money to be spent on freeways would be curtailed at a saving of \$556 million. I believe that the voting motorist of this State is fed up with having the Minister arbitrarily deciding, "We shall halt freeway development in this area, and the scheme to support the motorist to the tune of \$556 million in a one-off situation", when in the same breath the Government sets aside more than \$400 million to support the loss by the public transport system.

In the debate on the Appropriation Bill my leader the Hon. M. F. Willis went to great lengths to expose the accountancy skulduggery in which the Government engaged in an attempt to hide the fact that it was the first Government to have a loss of more than \$400 million on the public transport system. The motorist is contributing to the financing of that loss. Every year the motorist in New South Wales pays about \$525 million in taxes, fines, sales tax on cars, and the other demands made on his pocket in order to have the right to drive on the roads. In contrast, the Department of Main Roads in 1975–76 spent only \$280 million.

The Hon. D. P. Landa: Surely the great problem is the fact that the motorist also uses the public transport system.

The Hon. E. P. PICKERING: That is true.

The Hon. D. P. Landa: The Hon. E. P. Pickering himself says that he travels into town by train.

The Hon. E. P. PICKERING: I do not think that I represent the majority of motorists.

The Hon. D. P. Landa: There is no doubt about that.

The Hon. E. P. PICKERING: The Minister reacts because clearly he knows that the average man—and the average man is a voter—is fed up with the imbalance to which I refer, as a result of which he pays millions of dollars each year for the right to drive on congested roads, involving taking his life in his hands, in order to get to the local "drug house", if you like, while millions of dollars are poured into the railway system. Often—and I emphasize the word—that system is inefficiently operated.

The State Government must look at the whole balance-sheet in making its decisions. Many more factors must be considered than the effect of freeways on inner-urban areas. Certainly, the problems involved in moving people out of the way of freeway developments are considerable, but on the other hand one must take account of the enormous extra bills the community will have to pay for fuel, transport and freight if the freeways are not built. There is a greater risk of loss of life if we do not have reasonable, sensibly designed roads on which to drive, and the risk of injury increases also. Further, one must look at the cost in the pollution of our cities. This cannot be put off. What has been the experience overseas? I have had prepared a document showing the experience in a number of major cities comparable to Sydney in size. It was my intention to seek leave to have the document incorporated in Hansard, but as some Government supporters might object to that being done, I shall

merely comment on it. I attempted to look at cities in the United States of America with populations similar to that of Sydney in the year 1970. I have taken out also figures on the extent to which those cities had by 1975 developed freeways, with the result expressed in kilometres per million of population. They range from the lowest, Chicago, with 89.5 kilometres, to Pittsburgh, with 178.7 kilometres of freeway development per million of population.

The Hon. J. R. Hallam: What about Los Angeles?

The Hon. E. P. PICKERING: In 1975 Los Angeles had 102.6 kilometres of freeway development per million of population. The average for those ten United States cities was about 120 kilometres per million of population. In 1977 in the city of Sydney—if one is gracious enough to include Gosford, Wyong, Mount Victoria, Colo and Sutherland in the metropolitan area—88 kilometres of freeway were available to service a population said in 1970 to be 3 021 000, and that is 29.12 kilometres per million of population.

The Hon. D. P. Landa: What is the source of that information?

The Hon. E. P. PICKERING: Those figures were given to me by the NRMA, and I have checked a number of them.

The Hon. J. R. Hallam: Did they write the honourable member's speech too?

The Hon. E. P. PICKERING: No, they did not. I take exception to that interjection. I shall not deliver speeches in this House written by anybody but myself. The thrust of those figures is that oversea experience shows that in most modern cities inner-city freeway development has been about four times more extensive than it has in Sydney, and in some instances six or seven times more extensive.

I believe that I have put cogent arguments why there should be a review of the Government's decisions on inner-city freeways. When the Minister announced that the northwestern freeway would be abandoned he said that Victoria Road would be upgraded; proper tidal flow lanes would be provided; traffic management techniques would be applied; local widening of some roads would be carried out and greater separation at three major intersections would be provided. I suppose the Minister was referring to the sort of separation that we see at the end of the traffic tunnel at Kings Cross. The Minister said also that he would provide four overpass bridges for pedestrians. I have taken the trouble to drive along Victoria Road which the Minister said would be upgraded to the extent that it would eventually be as good as a freeway—in fact it would replace a freeway. The Minister said three intersections would be eliminated.

Victoria Road has a total of fifty intersections along its length. Also eleven major intersections are serviced by traffic lights. A total of 100 homes and 200 commercial properties border this road. I drove right along Victoria Road to obtain those statistics. Though I may be slightly out in regard to the number of houses and commercial properties along Victoria Road, the figures I have given in respect of the number of intersections and traffic lights are correct. I should like the Minister to inform the House what effect an underpass and an overpass will have on the three well-developed commercial centres which they will serve. My engineering assessment is that those three commercial centres will substantially disappear. I refer to the commercial centres in Drummoyne, Rozelle and Rozelle Bay. The Minister's press release about this matter contains some unusual statements. For instance, he said that to maximize the use of the Government's investment the new works will be progressively put into use as they are completed.

The mind boggles when one considers what will happen as a result of the provision of the first overpass in a commercial centre in this area. Obviously the traffic that normally travels along Victoria Road will be diverted through suburban side streets. The result will be a great deal of congestion along Victoria Road which will continue for many years. The National Roads and Motorists Association, which examined the Minister's proposal, pointed out that at present Victoria Road has a capacity for handling 3 000 vehicle an hour in one direction. That estimate was made by engineers who are expert in this field. They reported further that the expenditure of a great deal of money would enable 4 000 vehicles an hour to travel along Victoria Road in the one direction. Other statistics show that a freeway in the area could handle 6 000 vehicles an hour, which is the sort of volume that one would expect on such a busy access road to the city. I conclude by reiterating that the Opposition does not accuse the Government of being anti-freeway in the total concept. It accuses the Government of being guilty of shortsighted political expediency in abandoning inner-city freeways. I implore the Government to provide the citizens of this State with some alternatives before it commits itself to what I have referred to as an irreversible decision. I commend the motion.

The Hon. D. R. BURTON [3.34]: At the outset, I reply to the Hon. E. P. Pickering by saying that this Government is certainly not anti-freeway—the Minister and the Government have never said that they were. Doubtless the Minister in his reply will make his position and that of the Government quite clear. The Hon. E. P. Pickering is clinging to an outmoded and discredited theory that the ills of public transport—indeed transport generally—can be cured by the building of bigger and better freeways. That theory has been thrown overboard in almost every country in the world. The Hon. E. P. Pickering produced figures to support his argument and he quoted statistics giving the number of kilometres travelled by motorists in particular cities. However, he did not give the source of those statistics. He would have produced a different set of statistics if he had taken the trouble to speak to the citizens of many of the places he mentioned, particularly in the United States of America.

Recently I was privileged to visit the United States of America on a transport study. My investigations—and the report brought down by the experts who were with me—indicated clearly that the United States has turned away from building freeways and has concentrated more on its public transport system. It has realized that the building of freeways is finite and that a city cannot be built up by continually building freeways in it. If that is done, the result will eventually be a great number of freeways and no people. In the United States millions of dollars—in some places billions of dollars—are being poured into public transport systems. In the past few years the city of San Francisco has invested \$1,600 million in its BART—bay area rapid transit—system, which does not carry anywhere near the number of passengers transported on the Sydney suburban rail network system. The people of San Francisco feel that they are making a good investment by taking steps to reduce the number of vehicles on the road. Despite the fact that vast freeway building programmes have been undertaken in the past, the roads around San Francisco were becoming choked with traffic.

The European experience is almost identical. Some countries that built great freeways twenty or twenty-five years ago are now making massive investments in public transport. Most of the railway systems in the United States of America are privately owned. Many passenger transport systems, which were owned by large railway companies, were allowed to run down because the Government has carried out a policy of building great freeways and highways across the country thereby encouraging people to use their motor vehicles rather than rail transport. Then all of a sudden the

United States Government saw that the situation could not continue. It foresaw the energy crisis looming throughout the world and decided that it must do something to revive the railways.

The result was that Amtrak was formed and operated by the United States Government. That Government took over rail passenger services with the exception of those operating in suburban areas. The United States Government has made massive grants to help public transport. I asked one of the Amtrak officials what happened when a committee of the United States Congress was asked for financial assistance, and whether the committee put a red pencil through the application. He said, "No; as a matter of fact the last time we made an approach for assistance the Congressional committee asked whether we had asked for enough money." I told him that was quite different from the situation in Australia where the federal Government did not adopt such a lavish attitude when asked to assist the States. They are the experiences of many overseas countries, particularly the United States of America, the home of the automobile. In the United States governments are discouraging people from using petrol-driven motor vehicles; they are discouraging the building of freeways and turning people towards public transport. A great deal is being done in the United States of America to develop public transport. The United States Government is making massive investments of public money in public transport; its attitude has been influenced by the mounting energy crisis.

America has greater resources than Australia. Nevertheless it is realizing that its resources are finite and that if it keeps using its oil resources at the same rate as it was some years ago, in a short time it will be largely dependent on overseas supplies. Everybody in that country thought that there was plenty of oil and that it would never run out. Geologists and planners in Australia have told us that unless we discover new deposits of fuel, within about nine years we shall be out of oil and dependent wholly on imports for our energy needs. A tremendous amount of money will be poured out of the country paying the bill. As a result of the world's energy crisis, countries are turning away from the present methods of private transport. Densely populated cities have an increasing pollution crisis, particularly cities like Los Angeles, Chicago and Philadelphia. The citizens of those cities are conscious of the high pollution caused by the automobile.

Notwithstanding the best endeavours of chemical and other engineers, a solution to the emission control problem has not been found. Consequently governments and planners are looking for other alternatives. There are other effects of spin-offs from the automobile industry. One can observe outside some American cities huge dumps of worn-out tyres and old vehicles. The motor vehicle has wreaked destruction on society. We must discourage the use of private vehicles and encourage a return to public transport. I refer the House to some arguments advanced about freeway construction. Although the Hon. E. P. Pickering advanced conflicting arguments, I concluded that he was a strong advocate for building bigger and better freeways.

The Sydney Area Transport Study, which was made by an eminent planner, brought out a plan that would take Sydney into the year 2000. He proposed the building of 545 kilometres of freeways. Sometimes planners do not go into the economics of their recommendations. It has been estimated, I believe fairly accurately, that on present-day prices the construction of those freeways would cost \$6,000 million. It is all very well for the Hon. E. P. Pickering to toss up a figure and state that the money has to be found. He does not suggest where it can be obtained. If that sort of investment is made in freeways, something else must go short. New South Wales, or indeed the Commonwealth of Australia, does not have that sort of money to invest over a period of time on freeways to cure our transport problem. A cost of \$6,000 million

to construct 545 kilometres of freeway represents \$11 million a kilometre—an exorbitant price to pay for a transport system when the same investment in public transport could produce twenty times the result.

The Hon. E. P. Pickering glossed over the important aspect of persons displaced by freeways. He considered that was one of the prices one has to pay for progress and that the motor car is more important than people. I always thought that people were the most important thing in the world. I and the party of which I am a member will continue to think that way. The proposed freeway development within the city of Sydney would require the demolition of 2 070 homes. The people in those homes must be replaced somewhere. Many homes that would have been demolished, particularly by the construction of the western distributor, were occupied by tenants. Last night the House heard a long debate on the need for rented homes in the community. The Hon. E. P. Pickering stated that the destruction of those homes was one price to pay for progress. I doubt whether the people of Glebe or Leichhardt would get much comfort from those remarks. It was further estimated that the basic value of the houses to be demolished if the freeway proposals were instigated was about \$3.3 million.

I wish to refer to some comments made by a gentleman with views that conflict with those put forward by Professor Rose, whom the Hon. E. P. Pickering quoted quite freely in his speech. In an article written by Jim Dare and published on 21st November in the *Sydney Morning Herald* the views of Professor Blunden were mentioned. The professor was replying to the views expressed by a person whose home was in the path of a freeway. The article stated the professor's opinion in this way:

He certainly opposes inner-city freeways, saying Sydney needs a modernized rail system, and a new line, to serve Warringah.

The Hon. D. P. Landa: He is not a geographer?

The Hon. D. R. BURTON: No, he is an eminent professor of highway engineering on whom governments of both political complexions have relied heavily for opinions on transport. The newspaper stated also that Professor Blunden favoured the cheaper, but slower, upgraded arterial road. Now we get to the nitty-gritty:

Mr Allan Viney, the State Shadow Minister for Transport and Highways and a freeways advocate, would attempt to break the stalemate on freeways funds with special State bonds, or let foreign-owned private enterprise build and operate tollways that would be turned over to Australians after 60–70 years. The Arab oil producers might like to invest, he mused . . .

The honourable member for Wakehurst, the shadow minister for transport, is willing to invite Arab oil magnates to own our roads and perhaps turn them over to us in sixty or seventy years' time.

The Hon. W. R. Scott: The honourable member should read the paragraph before Professor Blunden's comments.

The Hon. D. R. BURTON: I shall give the article to the honourable member later and he may be able to read it. I refer now to the alternatives that are available. As far as public transport is concerned, America, Canada, France, Germany and—dare I mention it—Moscow, are looking to investing their funds in such schemes as park-and-ride. Large areas of parking land adjacent to railway stations are acquired and commuters are encouraged to use automobiles for the short distance to the railway station. Commuters can buy the use of parking space for five days when they purchase their railway ticket. They park their automobiles and travel into the city by fast commuter rail service.

In the alternative, where there are bus depots the same applies. One can go to the bus depot, park one's car, ride into the city, come back the same way, pick up the car and drive it home if a bus service is not provided. This is what the authorities are trying to encourage and it is very successful. I had a look at the system in Philadelphia in the United States of America where it is widely used. It was an outstanding success and is going from strength to strength in encouraging people to use the park-and-ride system. Another system is called kiss-and-ride. It depends on the terms one is on with one's wife or girlfriend. It is also a success. A drive-in stopping place is provided. Under that system, the wife or some other member of the family who is not **working** or not a commuter drives the commuter to the station and drops him there of a morning shortly before the train is due to arrive and then drives out of the **parking** lot. At night the reverse procedure applies. I believe the vehicle's stay in the parking area is limited to about four or five minutes. It is enough to let the passenger or passengers off and to pick them up again in the afternoon. That is proving to be a fairly successful venture.

There is great encouragement for all the other forms of transport that do not use as much energy as motor cars, such as motor cycles and push cycles. In many of the places where this experiment is going on in America hundreds of cycle racks are provided, fitted with proper locking devices, enabling the commuter to lock his cycle of a morning and unlock it and ride it home at night. That not only saves energy but also keeps the commuter fit. Great emphasis is also being placed on comfortable waiting rooms where people wait for buses or trains, as well as bus shelters along the **pickup** routes. All these things are encouraging the use of public transport. As I say, governments are encouraging the use of public transport by massive investment in the public transport system.

Further, the use of bus-rail exchanges has proved to be a success, not only in America but also in Europe. Where that system is in use, if one has to go by two modes of transport one is able to join the bus at one's local bus stop, drive into the exchange, which is adjacent to the railway station, get out, walk over to the platform and catch the train. Most of this is done under cover so that people do not have to go outside. It must be borne in mind that in some of the countries that I am referring to the weather in winter is very inclement and undercover bus-rail exchanges are widely used.

Another method of getting better road usage, without the massive investment required for large-scale freeway development, is the use of transit lanes. These have come into favour only in recent years in Sydney with the commencement of the **Balgowlah-Cremorne** transit lane in 1974. The idea is that a vehicle with three or more passengers can use the transit lane. Originally it was to be exclusively for buses but it was found that there were not enough buses to warrant that. Consequently vehicles carrying three or more persons were allowed to use the lane. Its length has been extended to about 6 kilometres and it has proved to be a reasonable success. I have an article giving some statistics on the use of transit lanes, prepared by the Department of Motor Transport on a before-and-after basis. I do not wish to quote at length from the article. I shall confine myself to the pertinent points. It indicates a saving of energy by reduction of both road usage and the time of journeys. The article says:

The transit lane originally was restricted to the morning peak (6.30 a.m.–9.30 a.m.), but subsequently was opened to the evening peak (3.30 p.m.–6.30 p.m.). The lane also was extended along Frenchs Forest Road to Sydney Road in August, 1975, making a total length of approximately 6 kilometres.

In order to evaluate the ability of the transit lane to conserve fuel resources, encourage car pooling, reduce journey time and lower travel costs, a series of "before" and "after" studies were carried out in **1974** and **1975** by the Department of Motor Transport. The results are summarised in Table 2, and show a marked increase in the theoretical capacity of the road system (from **41 300** to **106 900** person-km. per half hour), a significant increase in vehicle speeds (buses **87** per cent, transit cars **84** per cent and other cars 57 per cent), a substantial fall in total journey times (**47** per cent for buses and **32** per cent for cars), and a marked reduction in vehicle operating costs (**36** per cent for buses and **17–22** per cent for cars). The table also shows a **27** per cent saving in fuel consumed by all vehicles on the transit lane, and a significant increase in the number of people using car pool vehicles during the morning peak—from **2 418** in October, **1974** to **3 664** in October, **1975**.

Those figures, taken out by the Department of Motor Transport, indicate what can be done to make better use of the resources that we already have if some effort and planning are applied. I am not suggesting that we should not upgrade roads. I am not suggesting that we never build any more freeways in certain areas, but the proposition put forward by the Hon. E. P. Pickering that we should go on willy-nilly with the programme of freeway building that has been proposed at staggering cost just does not bear examination when there are alternatives to which we can turn.

The Hon. E. P. Pickering did not come up with any alternative to the programme of building freeways as a means of solving the problem. Let me outline some of the initiatives of the Labor Government in trying to alleviate the transport problem. Since we came to government we have allocated **\$200** million for the upgrading and maintenance of the railways. That can be broken down to indicate what we are trying to do to encourage people back on to public transport and to increase its capacity. We are increasing from two to four the rail tracks between Seven Hills and Penrith at a cost of **\$17** million. That is just over the cost of one kilometre of expressway, which is estimated to be **\$11** million. This will improve commuter traffic and the flow of coal traffic from the western mines which is causing congestion on that line at the present time. A further **\$10** million is to be expended on this work between Granville and Westmead to improve the track into the highly industrialized area that is growing rapidly in the western suburbs, an area that the former Government seemed to regard as among the legion of the lost. I am a resident of the western suburbs, as are a number of my colleagues on this side of the House, and we know only too well the difficulties of public transport in the western suburbs.

An amount of **\$25** million is to be spent on quadruplication of tracks on the northern line between Strathfield and Epping, to improve commuter services, and a new bridge over the Parramatta River at Meadowbank is being constructed at a cost of **\$7** million. So when the Opposition asks what this Government is doing, there are just a few of the initiatives that we have been able to put forward in the short time—less than two years—that we have been in government.

Again, on the Illawarra line the Government is spending **\$5** million on the extension of the electrification from Sutherland to Waterfall, where there is no electric service at present. Having made a realistic study of what was possible, the Government hopes to have the eastern suburbs railways operating in **1979**. It has made an extensive survey of modern approaches to rail transport and is initiating in the eastern suburbs facilities such as the bus exchange at Edgecliff. All these things are the result of the Government's determination to follow trends that have been proved successful overseas.

The Hon. D. R. Burton]

The Hon. E. P. Pickering talked about the Government's initiative in reducing public transport fares by **20** per cent. He said that the decision did not result in a greater use of public transport. I can only conclude that he has not done much, reading on the subject, for the figures show that in **1976-77** there was a **10** per cent increase, and the **1977-78** Budget projection is for a **14** per cent increase in revenue to the Public Transport Commission.

The Hon. E. P. Pickering: In revenue, or in passenger journeys?

The Hon. D. R. BURTON: In revenue.

The Hon. W. R. Scott: That increase will come from rail freights.

The Hon. D. R. BURTON: All members of the Opposition shared in the benefits of reduced public transport fees.

The Hon. R. B. Rowland Smith: But our rail freights went up.

The Hon. D. R. BURTON: What is to be done about the State's road system? The Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways said that the Government will consider practical alternatives to freeways. He announced in October last year that Cabinet had considered a number of measures to improve the existing roads system, and the flow of traffic, as an alternative to building freeways. These include the introduction of tidal flow traffic lanes on the Gladesville and Glebe Island bridges similar to the use of lanes on the Sydney Harbour Bridge in peak hours. They include also the widening of Victoria Road between The Crescent, adjacent to Rozelle Bay, and Glebe Island Bridge at a cost of **\$1.03** million, and the provision of four overhead pedestrian bridges at Victoria Road, at a cost of **\$560,000**. These are some of the alternatives the Government is offering; it is not just throwing its hands in the air and saying that the only way to solve our traffic problems is to build more freeways. The Hon. E. P. Pickering said also that fewer accidents occurred on freeways. That statement could probably be substantiated, but experience overseas shows that although there might not be as many accidents on freeways, when they do occur they are usually pretty good ones. All honourable members will recall the disaster on the **M1** motorway in England.

The Hon. R. B. Rowland Smith: That was caused by fog.

The Hon. D. P. Landa: Has the honourable gentleman ever travelled on the Bulli Road?

The Hon. D. R. BURTON: Anyone who has seen the London end of the **M1** motorway would be fearful about having to drive on it, even in the best conditions. Surely we do not want similar conditions here. Coming closer to home, I remind the House that the speed limit had to be lowered on the Calga section of the Newcastle expressway because of the unusual accidents that were occurring there. It cannot be said that accidents do not occur on freeways. Accidents can occur anywhere because of human frailty. The honourable gentleman went on to deplore road accidents. He blamed the lack of freeways, but his argument could be construed as meaning that the more motor vehicles that are put on the roads, the more accidents there will be. I fail to see the sense of his proposition in that connection, for it seems likely that if the Government continued to build freeways at the alarming rate advocated by the Hon. E. P. Pickering, more motorists would be encouraged to take their vehicles on to the roads, and the more accidents could happen.

Some years ago when work on the **Warringah** expressway was just being started, I had discussions with one of the head planners in the State Planning Authority, formerly the Cumberland County Council. At a time when the first houses were being demolished at North Sydney to make way for the expressway I said to this gentleman,

"The expressway will be a great improvement for those who have to travel by car into the city". He said, "The building of freeways to eliminate traffic problems is a pipe dream. It will be about ten years before the freeway has reached a stage where it can carry vehicles, and the day after it is opened it will be jam-packed with cars". That is exactly what happened.

The Hon. E. P. Pickering even dragged Sir **Philip** Baxter's name into the argument. Sir **Philip** Baxter has been one of the leading advocates of nuclear proliferation, and of the lifeboat theory. I commend a reading of that theory to any honourable member who is not aware of it. It is a gem. It holds that all we have to do to survive is keep together in our "lifeboat", and if anybody tries to get in with us, we should crack them over the knuckles and let them drown. I shall not go too deeply into that argument. It speaks for itself.

The Hon. E. P. Pickering deprecated the possibility of increasing fuel bills because of the Government's failure to build freeways. I suggest that he talk to his colleague in the federal parliament, the Hon. J. D. Anthony, who has just done something about fuel by increasing the price by from 9c to 11c a gallon. **All** in all, the honourable gentleman's proposition will not stand scrutiny. The State Government is tackling the problems of transport in a realistic fashion. The honourable gentleman's proposal is not economically sound and it is not one that the Government could possibly support.

The Hon. W. R. SCOTT [4.7]: I support the motion. I ask honourable members to cast their minds back some ten months when an eminent feature writer in one of the major daily newspapers in this State said, "Eleven months in office and between them the members of our State Cabinet have achieved far less than any bunch of **Rotarians** on a weekend busy bee".

The Hon. D. P. Landa: Who wrote that?

The Hon. W. R. SCOTT: The article, which was published in the **Daily Telegraph**, was written by Sue Davey, who is known throughout the country as a feature writer. Although her article is a little light-hearted, it is pertinent to the debate. She wrote:

At least, that's the way it seems to this voter—not in a very generous mood, anyway, as I snatch yet another **parking** ticket from under my car's windscreen wiper.

I have long opportunities, stuck at mushrooming red traffic lights, to reflect on that stirring scene just before the election when I saw Neville Wran on TV, standing on a railway station for effect, pledging to improve transport in Sydney.

Very impressive, I thought. Sincere chap.

Now, I'd sincerely like to see him condemned—for the entirety of what I consider is a looming, lengthy period in opposition—to a perpetual motion vehicle plying up and down the Parramatta Road.

Or see transport minister Cox forced to drive daily in peak hours between Ryde and the city via Victoria Road—dodging petrol tankers, container trailers, double-parked delivery trucks, timber lorries, greengrocers' utes and breakdowns.

The Hon. D. P. Landa: What is the date of that article?

The Hon. W. R. SCOTT: She goes on as follows:

For, as I prepare to mark the Government's first birthday in office by handing over a small fortune for car registration, I realize its major effort in that year has been to abandon Sydney's long-planned \$490 million freeway development.

To be fair, I suppose its a bit difficult to appreciate the problems of the average person when one's drifting about in chauffeured limousines.

Elsewhere in this city, however, people are having a hard time of it.

The Hon. D. P. Landa: What is the date of the report?

The Hon. W. R. SCOTT: 31st March, 1977. At that time the Government had been in office for eleven months. Even in that short time there had been a deterioration in our transport system. Since then the Government has created utter confusion which has affected not only travellers but also the owners of small businesses. That confusion must be cleared up immediately for our traffic problems are getting worse. When this Government came to office there was no traffic confusion. The former Liberal-Country party Government knew where it was going. Even the previous Labor Government in this State, which was in office for a long time, had long-term plans to build expressways. In those days expressways, which were commonly referred to as freeways, formed part of the County of Cumberland plan. At that time everybody knew where he was going. In the past eighteen months the Government has adopted a piecemeal approach to traffic handling and it has paid no regard to long-term planning and the motoring needs of the public.

In 1951 a former Labor government approved the County of Cumberland planning scheme, which was ratified by an Act of Parliament. The expressways, which were part of that plan, were to be built over a period of years. They were planned so that Sydney could have a modern transportation system for motor vehicles similar to those in other major countries—indeed, in some of our States, for example, Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria and Queensland. All those States have adequate expressways around their major cities. The Hon. E. P. Pickering quoted certain figures on a world-wide basis and he related them to the number of kilometres travelled by motorists. When one considers the population of Sydney, which is about 3 021 000, and compares our freeways with those in some American cities an alarming position is revealed. The motorists of this State will be affected by traffic congestion for a long time.

I should like the Minister to tell the House why the Government is going completely against modern trends. The reason is obvious: New South Wales has a government that came into office hellbent on forcing people—whether they want it or not—back on to public transport. Absolutely against the tide of public opinion and the trend all over the world, the Government has apparently decided that the motor car is something that is undesirable; it has decided that people who drive or use motor cars, or for that matter those who use motor vehicles for business purposes, including taxi drivers and truck drivers, must be put to inconvenience. The Government is determined to get people back on to trains and buses at all costs. Because of this attitude a policy has been commenced as a result of which the people of this State are seething over the discontinuance of freeways; they are even boiling more madly over the fact that the Government is rushing hellbent into a rezoning of the corridors on which these freeways were to be built in the future. A possible result of such a rezoning would be that those corridor lanes would be developed by the construction of expensive high-rise buildings which would make it virtually impossible for any future government to re-acquire the land and to make the expressways available at some time in the future.

If, for example, in a few years' time when this Government is no longer in office and by some means, which it does not see available to it at the moment, hundreds of millions of dollars suddenly become available to us to build those expressways, we should not be able to do so for the simple reason that this Government, in its myopic attitude to this very important matter had closed off those options for ever and ever. Then Government members would say, "We did not know what we were doing." The community is saying that right at the present time; the Government is so myopic in its attitude in regard to road transport, so unaware of world trends towards the use of motor vehicles and so determined to push people back on to public transport that it is going to rush helter-skelter into this irrevocable decision in an obstinate way. Such action will create nothing but traffic chaos and prevent any intelligent government at some time in the future from undoing the mess that this Government has created.

Those are not merely the views of the Opposition; they are the views of the National Roads and Motorists Association, an organization that represents approximately one million motorists in this State, the majority of whom reside in the cities. One newspaper report is in these terms:

Keep freeways, NRMA urges

No Sydney land reserved for freeways should be released until there was an alternative to the city's growing traffic chaos, the chief executive of the NRMA, Mr G. F. Webster, said last night.

He said that if freeway plans were scrapped, Sydney would be stuck forever with its acute traffic problems.

Mr Webster said "While improvements to public transport are necessary, it has to be realized that the system cannot handle the full extent of transport needs. An efficient arterial road system, including freeways, is necessary throughout the metropolitan area. Such a system is not just for the benefit of private motorists as many people think. It would benefit the whole community."

I could go on to refer to a great number of other comments that the National Roads and Motorists' Association officials made during the time of this controversy. Another press report is in these terms:

The State Government's reluctance to press ahead with a full-scale freeway program "has a strong resemblance to the Eastern Suburbs railway saga," the president of the Real Estate Institute of NSW, Mr Neville Tucker, said yesterday.

The "too little too late" philosophy would **affect** not only users of the City's inadequate roads but also suburban residents and would have a depressing effect on property values.

.

"Costs keep on rising and the Government's claim that it does **not** have the funds to fully implement a freeway system is an equivocation that can be offered at any time now or in the future.

"Of course the money isn't there, but nobody expects work of this magnitude to be accomplished overnight or even within a few years.

"What we must avoid is a continuation of the Government offering palliatives like transit lanes and clearways as long-term cures."

.

"Sydney needs a clearly enunciated policy which puts emphasis on the long-term health and prosperity of the suburbs. The Government simply has
The Hon. W. R. Scott

to acknowledge the ultimate need for freeway development if this is to be an achievable goal," Mr Tucker said.

"Property values, particularly in the inner parts of Sydney, have been in a state of decline and this will continue unless some form of peaceful co-existence can be worked out between the car and the suburban environment."

Mr Tucker said the Real Estate Institute believed it would cost more not to develop an effective freeway system than to continue with a phased programme of freeway development.

"All the surveys in the world will only tell us what we already know. The roads are inadequate. The car is here to stay.

"We can live with these facts of city life if the Government shows foresight and is prepared to work to a long-term plan."

Debate adjourned on motion by the Hon. W. R. Scott.

LANDLORD AND TENANT (AMENDMENT) BILL

Third Reading

The Hon. D. P. LANDA (**Vice-President** of the Executive Council **and** Minister for Planning and Environment) [4.18]: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

At the second-reading stage the Hon. L. A. Solomons raised a matter that I agreed merited some investigation by me and by the responsible **Minister** in the other place, relating to the problem a landlord might experience should his tenant abandon premises and leave behind certain of his chattels. The Hon. L. A. Solomons expressed concern about what action the landlord could take in regard to furniture that may be left in the premises by the vacating tenant.

I am advised that this matter would require specific legislation and, if necessary, it could be the subject of a further amendment to the Act. The Minister in another place advised me that some guidance may be obtained from the 1971 Victorian legislation, which is along the following lines. A landlord is authorized at his own expense to remove and store furniture. The tenant is **not** entitled to have it restored to him until he has reimbursed the landlord for the cost of removal, storage and any other costs incurred. Further, where no claim of ownership is established to the reasonable satisfaction of the landlord, the landlord may, after the expiration of three months, sell the furniture provided that not less than one month before the sale he has, first, served notice by post or delivery on every person who he knew had an interest in the furniture; and second, inserted in a newspaper a notice of his intention to sell the furniture. The sale must be by public auction. The landlord is empowered to deduct from the proceeds of the sale all costs incurred by him prior to payment of the balance to the owner of the furniture. Any moneys remaining within three months after the sale are to be paid to the credit of the unclaimed moneys fund held by the Receiver of Revenue.

As I said in my few remarks previously, I agree with the Hon. L. A. Solomons that the matter warranted consideration. The Minister in another place agrees that the operation of the Act requires some supervision. If circumstances should arise requiring the Act to be further amended, as proved to be the case in Victoria, the Minister, who is sympathetic to this problem confronting landlords, will consider the matter. I thank the Hon. L. A. Solomons for his concern and for drawing attention to the matter.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Bill returned to the Legislative Assembly without amendment, on motion by the Hon. D. P. Landa.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Motion (by the Hon. D. P. Landa) agreed to:

That this House at its rising today do adjourn until Tuesday next at 2 p.m., *sharp*.

House adjourned, on motion by the Hon. D. P. Landa, at 4.25 p.m.

QUESTION UPON NOTICE

The following question upon notice and answer was circulated in *Questions and Answers* this day.

RABBITS

The Hon. J. R. HALLAM asked the VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL—

- (1) What is the position regarding control and eradication of rabbits in the Western Division of New South Wales compared with the rest of the State?
- (2) Have they reached near-plague proportions?
- (3) What action is being taken by landholders?
- (4) Are Pastures Protection Boards in the Western Division of New South Wales exercising their authority and power to ensure that these noxious animals do not get out of control?

The Hon. D. P. LANDA replied—

(1) As the Western Division Boards cover one-third of the State it is difficult to generalize. Rabbits are known to be in substantial proportions in some parts of the Western Division and in very low numbers in other sections. Drought conditions have reduced rabbit numbers substantially and this reduction in population will continue.

(2) It is not considered that the incidence of rabbits generally in the Western Division is such as to describe them as in near-plague proportions.

(3) Western Division lessees generally have been in a position of low returns from sheep and cattle for some years. The Western Division, an area of very large pastoral holdings of low carrying capacity, works with small labour resources—sometimes only the lessee himself. Because of the low carrying capacity the ability of the lessee to invest money on such required management inputs as rabbit control is limited by the value of the land. Nevertheless, the Pastures Protection Act requiring occupiers of land continuously to suppress and destroy rabbits applies throughout the State including the Western Division.

The techniques are different in these minimal rainfall areas and rabbit control is generally considered only practicable in a drought when numbers have been reduced to a minimum from natural causes. Myxomatosis is still an important factor in keeping the pest under control in the Western Division and elsewhere.

(4) On the information before me I do not think there is a present risk of rabbits getting out of control in the Western Division, although as I have indicated above, they are quite numerous in certain parts. The Pastures Protection Boards of the Western Division in common **with** their counterparts in the Eastern and Central Divisions have a responsibility to enforce the provisions of the Pastures Protection Act in respect of rabbit control; it is a question of availability of resources on the part of the landholder to apply such rabbit control methods as are practicable to these large semi-arid holdings.
