

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 12 October, 1976

Petitions—Printing Committee (Sixth Report)—Questions without Notice—Joint Committee upon Drugs—Local Government (Elections) Amendment Bill (Com.)—Prices Regulation (Amendment) Bill (second reading)—General Loan Account Appropriation Bill (second reading)—Prices Regulation (Amendment) Bill (Com.)—Allocation of Time for Discussion—Adjournment (Women Prisoners)—Question upon Notice.

Mr Speaker (The Hon. Lawrence Borthwick Kelly) took the chair at 2.15 p.m.
Mr Speaker offered the prayer.

PETITIONS

The Clerk announced that the following petitions had been lodged for presentation and that copies would be referred to the appropriate Ministers:

Sunday Hotel Trading

The Petition of the undersigned Electors in the State of New South Wales respectfully sheweth:

- (1) A referendum on Sunday Trading in hotels was held in New South Wales in the year 1969 which showed an overwhelming majority voting against Sunday Trading in hotels.
- (2) It is considered by the undersigned that any changes in the law allowing extension of Sunday Trading in liquor in hotels or in any shop selling liquor will increase the acknowledged evils associated with the consumption of liquor including particularly danger in road travel and in crime, and in damage done to domestic life of wife husband and children in many cases.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray that your Honourable House:

- (1) Will not pass any legislation which will allow any extension of Sunday Trading in liquor in hotels or in any other place where the sale of liquor is permitted.
- (2) If nevertheless it is intended to submit legislation to the House this should not be done until a further Referendum is held to ascertain the wishes of the people as was previously held and which as stated showed an **overwhelming** majority against such legislation.

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

Petitions, lodged by Mr Cahill, Mr Gordon, Mr McGinty and Mr Mason, received.

Gambling Casinos

The Petition of the undersigned Electors in the State of New South Wales respectfully showeth:

- (1) There are at present sufficient legal gambling outlets in the State of New South Wales.
- (2) During the last recently recorded period of a year the amount spent or invested in gambling exceeded the sum of \$4,000 million.
- (3) The opening of Casinos will enlarge this expenditure and will create further inroads upon the amount available to families for the conduct of their domestic life, and will thus cause hardship to parents and children in the home and will also, as experience has shown, be an incentive to stealing, embezzlement and fraud in order to make up for moneys that have been lost through gambling, or which are intended for gambling.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray that your Honourable House will not legislate to legalize Casinos in New South Wales.

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

Petitions, lodged by Mr Cahill, Mr Gordon, Mr Leitch, Mr **McGinty**, Mr Mackie and Mr Mason, received.

Hurstville Planning Scheme

The Petition of citizens of New South Wales respectfully sheweth:

- (1) We believe that it is the responsibility of our Parliaments and of all Australian citizens, both young and old and wherever they live, to protect our National Estate, especially those features which contribute to our Life Support System and quality of life, such as forests, bushland, rivers, estuaries and coasts.
- (2) There is a major public controversy over Hurstville Municipal Council's proposal to destroy the natural bushland in the heads of Gungah Bay, Jew Fish Bay, Lime Kiln Bay and on the eastern bank of Salt Pan Creek by filling.
- (3) Council's proposals are embodied in the Hurstville Planning Scheme, placed on public exhibition on 5 July, 1976. An example of its works can be seen in the current destruction of the western arm of Lime Kiln Bay with garbage filling.
- (4) Environmental damage from Council's proposals mean:
 - Destruction of extensive stands of mangroves which are irreplaceable fish and oyster breeding areas.
 - This break in the food chain results in the loss of food for insects and birds.
 - Loss of filtering effect of mangroves on water quality.
 - Increased pollution due to silt and leachate.
 - Removal of mangrove strip breaks the continuous line of waterfront trees.
 - Destruction of other trees on shoreline due to loss of mangrove buffer.

And your Petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable House will act at once in the public interest remove the proposals for estuarine filling from the planning scheme, inserting in lieu a requirement that Hurstville Council retain the areas concerned as natural bushland and that the bushland including its mangrove stands be managed in accordance with public management plans.

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

Petition, lodged by Mr F. J. Walker, received.

Abortion

The humble petition of the undersigned citizens of New South Wales, respectfully sheweth:

- (1) That as taxpayers we object to the use of funds for abortions under the guise of health payments and/or benefits.
- (2) That no pressure should be brought to bear to hinder the prosecution of those participating in criminal abortion.

Your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable House takes such steps through the appropriate channels to stop the misuse of taxpayers' money and to ensure that the law prohibiting abortion in New South Wales, be properly enforced.

Petitions, lodged by Mr Durick and Mr Jensen, received.

PRINTING COMMITTEE

Sixth Report

Mr Face, on behalf of the Chairman, brought up the Sixth Report from the Printing Committee.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

UNEMPLOYMENT

Sir ERIC WILLIS: I ask the Premier whether last Friday's announcement of Commonwealth Employment Service statistics reveals that unemployment fell during September in all States except New South Wales. Was this the fourth consecutive month during the present Government's term of office in which unemployment increased, a trend that contrasts with the steady improvement experienced in neighbouring **non-Labor** States? In view of the gloomy prospects that these figures present for this year's school-leavers, will the Premier say what specific plans, if any, the Government has to provide some hope and some employment for the State's growing number of jobless youths, or will he continue to be content with wringing his hands and blaming the federal Government?

Mr WRAN: The unemployment situation is bad enough and the degree of confidence low enough in New South Wales without the Leader of the Opposition further lowering confidence by asserting that somehow or other when he disappeared from the ministerial benches the answer to all that ailed the economy of New South Wales went with him. The fact is that unemployment has steadily increased in New South Wales over the past two years.

Sir Eric Willis: That is wrong.

Mr WRAN: The honourable gentleman is clutching at final straws. When he says that is wrong, he is referring to the period immediately after the Christmas and holiday season when there is a natural upturn in employment levels. This happened to coincide with the last weeks in office of the Government that was led by the honourable gentleman. I have gone over this ground a number of times, but I do not mind going over it again. The honourable gentleman and his colleagues have a penchant for referring to industry and business bashing by this Government. The fact is that all sections of commerce and industry welcome the action that is being taken by the present New South Wales Government to stem the rising tide of unemployment in this State. Let me give the genuine reasons why New South Wales has the highest level of unemployment in Australia. Apart from the fact that the principal members of the federal Government, which is led by the honourable gentleman's colleagues, come from Melbourne, not Sydney, and seem to have more interest in what happens south of the border than in New South Wales, there are a number of reasons why this State has the highest level of unemployment. First, despite the lack of effort by the previous Government to retain industry in this State, New South Wales is still the largest manufacturing State in Australia, and so when manufacturing industries are hit by economic recession, the industries of New South Wales are the hardest hit.

Furthermore, under the guidance of members opposite when in government the building construction industry went through a false boom between 1972 and 1974, but when the balloon was pricked something of the order of 40 per cent of all people employed in the building construction industry in New South Wales were progressively thrown out of work. The Leader of the Opposition asks, "What is the Government doing about it?" These are the things that offhand I can state the Government is doing in a positive way: first, a special allocation has been made in the Budget, which was recently presented by the Treasurer, to provide money for extra jobs in New South Wales. Second, \$15 million of water board money is being made available to meet the cost of 750 jobs that otherwise would not be available. Third, the Government is supporting small businesses in New South Wales by making facilities available through the Rural Bank for guarantees, loans and assistance to small businesses. Fourth, the Government has set up the Manufacturing Industries Advisory Council—not a council composed of the Labor Party and the trade unions but a council composed of employers in the manufacturing industry, who have joined with the Government and trade unions in order to devise initiatives to reduce unemployment and to prevent business slipping over the border into Victoria and South Australia, as it did, especially in the automobile industry, under the honourable members who now sit in Opposition.

In addition, the Government has set up the Building and Construction Industry Advisory Council, the purpose of which is to bring employers, trade unions and the Government together with a view to stimulating employment and stopping the rot that had set in under the previous Government. Furthermore, the Government is setting up an inter-departmental committee under the guidance and chairmanship of the Minister for Industrial Relations, to provide, to the extent a State government can, jobs for school-leavers. Indeed, the Government has issued a direction to the Public Service Board that priority is to be given to young people who leave school at the end of this year in filling vacancies in the public service.

However, let it be quite clear that the real control and initiatives lie with the Rt Hon. J. M. Fraser and the federal Government, which is consciously pursuing a programme and policy that is geared not to economic questions or to personal or corporate deprivation, but rather is geared to using unemployment as a tool with which it will fight inflation.

[*Interruption*]

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr WRAN: Despite the special circumstances that relate to New South Wales, the ultimate and only cure will be found in Canberra—and it is to be hoped that the patient is not beyond cure when someone realizes this **fact**.

JUVENILE OFFENDERS

Mr FLAHERTY: I ask the Minister for Youth and Community Services whether in this State persons under 18 years of age who are charged with committing a crime are tried in camera in children's courts and, if sentenced, are retained in State establishments. Is there no alternative to this traditional method of residential care for juveniles? In view of the Minister's recent strong statements concerning a better deal for these unfortunate young people, is this forward-thinking Government contemplating any alternatives to residential care for these juveniles?

Mr JACKSON: It is a fact that young persons under 18 years who are charged with committing a crime are brought before the courts and their case is heard in *camera*—and rightly so. If they are committed, they are kept in what are now called State establishments—no longer institutions as they were called under the former Government. It is a fact also that at present there is no alternative to the traditional method of residential care for juveniles who have committed crime. I am about to experiment with a revolutionary scheme as an alternative to committing young lawbreakers to State establishments. The programme is scheduled to commence in February next year. Magistrates sitting in children's court jurisdiction will soon be able to direct young people between 12 and 18 years of age to attend departmental youth project centres on some evenings and during weekends.

Mr Healey: That is in existence now.

Mr JACKSON: It is not in existence at all. The honourable member has made a statement that is not true. The Government of which he was a member did nothing about this. All it did was to direct the department to inform only members of the Liberal Party or the Country Party of allocations made to their electorates, and ignored the Opposition. I am treating all honourable members equally. They are all important people, and I am informing every member of Parliament what is happening in his or her electorate so far as my department is concerned.

Mr Doyle: We gave you the blueprint.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the House to subside. The Minister is answering a question that has been put to him and I am sure some honourable members wish to hear it.

Mr JACKSON: I will tell you what you gave me—we were so far behind in this State that we could not hear the band. We lagged so far behind every other State in welfare assistance, child welfare, and social welfare assistance that it was not just serious, it was downright criminal. That was why the Premier, the Treasurer and the present Government concurred in my recommendation which resulted in the largest budget allocation in the history of the department over the past twenty years being made for youth, child and social welfare services, and yet we will still be behind all other States in Australia in this matter. The honourable member interjected and I am answering him. If he wants more, I will give him more.

Mr Doyle: On a point of order. You have repeatedly asked Government members not to address their **remarks** to the Opposition but to address them to the Chair. The Minister should be required to address the Chair.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! That is not a valid point of order.

Mr JACKSON: Before I was rudely interrupted I was saying that magistrates sitting in the children's court jurisdiction will soon be able to require young persons between 12 and 18 years of age to attend departmental youth project centres on some evenings and weekends. I repeat that because it is revolutionary. It has never been done in Australia and the only country where something similar has been implemented is the United States of America. As part of the pilot scheme we have purchased a two-storey house at Stanmore, and it is being extensively renovated as a youth project centre. The need in the juvenile justice system for sentencing alternatives to establishment committal has been widely recognized for a long time, and yet it was not until this Government was elected that anybody did anything about it. Plea after plea was made to the former Government to investigate the matter, but it took no action. All it did was to put these young people in places called institutions and to turn the lights out at 7 p.m. The former Government even put them in condemned cells at Tamworth and called the place the Tamworth Boy's Institution. That sort of thing makes criminals out of them. We do not intend to do that. Young persons who go to these establishments as we are calling them, have never had an opportunity in life, and we intend to give them an opportunity. The proposed programme will allow selected young persons to leave the establishment at Stanmore in order to work or to attend school in their accepted surroundings while under intensive supervision, counselling and assistance from officers of my department. That will introduce these young people to a wide variety of recreational and community service activities designed to improve attitudes and family relationships without the often disruptive effect of what we call establishment committal and what the former Government called institutional committal.

Mr Doyle: I think you have got on to the wrong page.

Mr JACKSON: The honourable member should not get upset. He should keep cool, calm and collected. The establishment centre is located close to rail and bus transport to facilitate its widest possible use. The young persons concerned must have an acceptable home or family situation in which to reside.

The Government will allow these people to remain at home in their own environment provided that the environment is not detrimental to their future. Of course, in some cases it is the family background that has directly resulted in these young people committing crimes. If the family background and the residential home are of a nature that it is possible that these persons will commit further crimes, the courts will be advised of this information and magistrates will have the opportunity of knowing all the circumstances. No doubt magistrates in their wisdom will not allow these people to attend departmental youth project centres. The Stanmore centre will be staffed by a senior youth counsellor, a specialist youth counsellor, four youth counsellors and a receptionist-typist. All the seventy-one district offices of the department will co-operate with the counsellors to ensure that young people are given every available opportunity to accept the programme which this Government is initiating in this revolutionary scheme. The programme at the Stanmore centre will be split up into three phases. Phase one will involve intensive care for a period of from two to four months.

[Interruption]

Mr JACKSON: I think the honourable member for Vaucluse should learn something about this subject.

Mr Doyle: This is a ministerial statement.

Mr Viney: On a point of order. In view of the length of the Minister's reply and the detailed nature of its content I suggest that he be permitted to have it incorporated in *Hansard*.

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

Mr JACKSON: Everybody should know about this and I compliment the honourable member for Granville for having asked the question. The intensive phase which will cover from two to four months will involve two evenings a week—Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.—all day Saturday and one full weekend each month. Phase two of the programme, the secondary phase, also involves a period of from two to four months, one evening a fortnight plus an occasional home visit by a youth counsellor and voluntary weekend programmes using community organizations. The Government is co-operating with all voluntary organizations, including youth workers employed by local government authorities, religious organizations and so on in an endeavour to rehabilitate young people without the necessity for them to be sent to training schools and establishments. Phase three, the final phase, will involve one evening a month. Field supervision will be assumed by district officers who will maintain regular contact with the senior youth counsellor until the child or young person is formally discharged from the programme.

This scheme is working successfully in the United States of America. The department has devoted much of its time to devising this revolutionary programme. I look forward to the co-operation of all sections of the community in an endeavour to ensure that young people will have an opportunity to become decent citizens and be removed from the circumstances that lead them to crime. I expect the support of the Opposition in this scheme.

NATURAL GAS

Mr SCHIPP: I direct a question to the Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Mines and Minister for Energy. Is it a fact that on Thursday last the Minister told the House that he would examine the possibility of supplying natural gas to the City of Wagga Wagga from Victoria? Is it a fact also that the Minister followed up that statement with a press release which said that the New South Wales Government planned to supply Wagga Wagga with natural gas from Victoria to speed the supply of gas to other country centres? In view of the fact that the Minister had made no approach to the Victorian Minister for Fuel and Energy nor to the Victorian Gas and Fuel Corporation about the supply of natural gas from Victoria to Wagga Wagga will he tell the House on what basis he was making those statements?

Mr HILLS: I can imagine that the honourable member for Wagga Wagga would be dismayed that the people of Wagga Wagga may be supplied with natural gas. It is the only subject on which he has been able to obtain publicity in the local newspapers. I have been examining the possibility of having natural gas supplied from Victoria. At this stage I do not propose to inform the honourable member for Wagga Wagga as to the discussions I have entered into. They are of a confidential nature.

[Interruption]

Mr HILLS: I am sorry, but I do not propose to divulge the information. I gave an undertaking to the persons with whom I had the discussions and I do not propose to break my word. In all the years I have been a member of this House I do not think anyone has ever heard of my breaking an undertaking. This undertaking was given privately, and I propose to keep my word.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Pittwater to order for the first time.

Mr HILLS: No decision has been made but the matter will be examined in detail over a period, after which a recommendation will be made to the Government. I inform the honourable member for Wagga Wagga, the House and the people of this State that the Premier has given an undertaking that the Government would see that natural gas was supplied to the centres in respect of which undertakings were given by the Australian Gas Light Company. It is my job to see that the undertaking is honoured—and it will be.

MYEE HOSTEL

Mr BANNON: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Youth and Community Services. Is Myee, a home for babies at Arncliffe, serving the needs of mothers-to-be and babies over a period of years, coming under the notice of the Minister's Department? Are suggestions being made that the present use of this home will be discontinued? If so, will the Minister advise as to the future care of these babies and the proposed use of Myee?

Mr Coleman: On a point of order. The honourable member for Rockdale asked whether suggestions had been made and, if so, whether they were true. The question is asking for confirmation of a rumour, and therefore I submit it is out of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I shall ask the honourable member for Rockdale to repeat his question for my benefit.

Mr BANNON: Has the home for babies known as Myee at Arncliffe, served the needs of mothers-to-be and babies for a period of **years** before **coming under** the notice of the Minister's Department? Is it a fact that present use of this home is under consideration and that it may be discontinued? If so, will the Minister advise as to the proposed care of such babies and the future use of Myee?

Mr JACKSON: It is a fact that Myee, in Forest Road, Arncliffe, an establishment run by my department, caters for a maximum of fourteen pregnant girls and sixteen babies. During the past twelve months the weekly population of the establishment has averaged nine, of whom only three or four have been pregnant girls. Myee is one of many establishments about which I have been concerned since I have been Minister. During the past five months a number of major changes have been made in the department, all of which will be of particular concern to those people who are compelled to avail themselves of the care and assistance of that department. On becoming a Minister I was appalled to find that in the past sixteen years the Berry **training** school had not trained one person in dairyfarming. Moreover, that establishment was losing a substantial sum of money each year. In virtually every establishment administered by the department no proper application of funds or **commonsense** was used. In the past twelve **months** Myee has had a large **staff** to cater for fourteen single girls and sixteen babies, but during the past twelve months it has had an average population of only nine.

It is no wonder that New South Wales has been the highest **cost** State in Australia. In this field there has **not** been a **proper** level of administration for a number of years. For this reason the many changes that are being made will be for the betterment of the people concerned and the State in general. It is proposed to close Myee as a mother-and-baby hostel, to transfer the **staff** to other facilities and reopen Myee **as** a hostel for **working-age** boy wards aged between 15 and **17**. This establishment situated in this locality, is ideal for assisting State wards aged between 15 and 17

years who are employed in the city area, and that is what is proposed to be the future use of the establishment. The babies who are at Myee will be transferred to a special air-conditioned unit at Thornbury Lodge at Baulkham Hills.

There is no air-conditioning at Myee. The facilities there are nowhere near as good as those at Thornbury Lodge at Baulkham Hills. Thornbury Lodge is down in numbers so the babies are being transferred from Arncliffe to a better environment where they will have superior conditions for their future welfare. Hostel accommodation is needed for working State wards between 15 and 17 years of age. I assure the honourable member for Rockdale that there will be no staff dismissals. That is the policy of the Government. No staff dismissals will take place in my department, despite the re-organization that is taking place. Not one person has been dismissed. The Government has implemented its policy in accordance with its pledge to the people of New South Wales prior to 1st May this year. Those will be my instructions as far as the policy of the department is concerned. Some of the staff at Myee will be transferred to look after working State wards at the hostels. Some staff members will be retained. Employment conditions of the staff will not change.

ABORTION

Mr J. A. CLOUGH: I address my question without notice to the Minister for Health. Has the Minister seen a report in today's issue of the Australian stating that 50 000 legal abortions are being performed in Australia each year. During the time of the former Government when the Minister was a member of the Opposition, was he a vociferous critic of the abortion law in New South Wales? Did he provide the House with statements and statistics to support his claim that abortion in New South Wales was rampant in clinics and particularly in public hospitals? Will the Minister advise the House what action he has taken since assuming office to prevent abortions in institutions under his ministerial control?

Mr STEWART: I assure the honourable member for Eastwood that any abortion performed in New South Wales, whether in private clinics or in public hospitals, is performed under a law that was instituted in this State during the time he was a member of the Liberal Government, and, indeed, a member of the Cabinet. In fact, it was a common law decision in New South Wales that legalized abortion in certain circumstances. I give the honourable member for Eastwood the undertaking that any abortion performed in New South Wales at present is performed under the common law decision brought down in the courts of New South Wales while he was a member of the former Government.

SUBSIDIES TO THE ARTS

Mr ROGAN: I address my question without notice to the Premier. Has his attention been drawn to the findings of the Industries Assistance Commission inquiry into subsidies for the arts? Will the Premier inform the House whether the Government will act on any of the IAC findings which affect New South Wales? Also, will the Premier inform the House what support the State Government is giving to the arts in this State?

Mr WRAN: Perhaps I might just say this about the IAC report, because it has already been the subject of such well grounded public calumny that there is little need for me to add to the long list of epithets which have categorized it as the quintessential work in ockerism. I should like to make it clear that the IAC report in respect of the arts is falling on very barren ground in New South Wales. Honourable

members will have noticed that this year the State Budget's allocation for the arts was \$2.25 million, compared with last year's allocation of \$1.42 million. In other words, this year the Government has increased the allocation to the arts in New South Wales by something of the order of 58 per cent over the last year's figure. In light of the current debate on the report of the Industries Assistance Commission, I wish to make clear that this year the New South Wales Government will grant to the Australian Opera Company the sum of \$350,000, which is a 75 per cent increase on the amount made available last year to the company. I remind the House that the Australian Opera performs for thirty-two weeks of the year at the Sydney Opera House. The company is of international standing.

Mr Webster: Oh!

Mr WRAN: The honourable member for Pittwater says Oh! in a most derogatory fashion. He is one of the ockers at whom Mr Boyer was directing the IAC report. The Australian Opera Company is graced by Australians of international standing. It is perhaps Australia's most complete company in the performing arts. Until the present federal Government, a private sponsor and now the State Government made moves, its present and future finances were in a parlous state. In the few short months that the New South Wales Government has been in office it has had many discussions with the Australian Opera. Currently that company is introducing a pilot scheme of short films for children. That scheme, which is being finalized, is fairly inexpensive. It is hoped to extend it to comprise five or ten different operas. The films will be available to all primary schools in New South Wales and all the public who wish to see them.

It is expected that the Australian Opera Company or its members will extend their activity in New South Wales. It is not unlikely that in 1977 Newcastle will have a visit by the full company and that artists such as Joan Sutherland will be heard in suitable country venues during their visits to Australia. Certainly I expect that during the next year ensemble quartets or quintets from the Australian Opera will visit country centres. In other words, the New South Wales Government rejects the Industries Acceptance Commission report. It urges the Prime Minister to do the same and it declares its intention to support the arts in its various manifestations by increasing substantially the budget allocation. The Government has determined that the money will not all be concentrated in the city but that facilities will be made available to country people to enjoy the performing arts that are at present enjoyed by people in the metropolitan area of Sydney.

EGG INDUSTRY STABILISATION ACT

Mr PARK: I direct a question without notice to the Minister for Decentralisation and Development and Minister for Primary Industries. Prior to the elections on 1st May certain amendments to the Egg Industry Stabilisation Act were being prepared by the previous Liberal-Country party Government. Will the Minister inform the House whether amendments to the Act are contemplated by his Government?

Mr DAY: Yes, amendments are proposed to the Egg Industry Stabilisation Act and in due course I shall be making a public announcement about them.

STATE DOCKYARD

Mr JONES: I direct a question without notice to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works, Minister for Ports and Minister for Housing. Did the Prime Minister call on workers at the State Dockyard not to have strikes and to refuse wage demands

and indexation for the next twelve months, and on that basis he would grant the dockyard an order to build two 15 000-tonne ships? Following these demands of the State Dockyard workers, has the Prime Minister permitted his Government to grant a 7 per cent increase in doctors' fees? Are these increases to the medical profession causing problems in the economy? Is the Prime Minister showing his hand at having two sets of principles? Will the Deputy Premier point out to the Prime Minister these two sets of principles and call on him to announce to the New South Wales Government and to the State Dockyard the order for two ships to be built at the dockyard?

Mr FERGUSON: In reply to the honourable member for Waratah, yes, the Prime Minister, Mr Fraser, did indicate to the Premier that one of the conditions for the granting of the order for two ANL ships to Newcastle was that the workers accept a wage freeze and give a firm undertaking that there would be no strikes. It is true that doctors were granted an increase in fees. It is true also that at the present time, in regard to my approaching the Prime Minister on behalf of the trade union movement, Mr Hawke, president of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, is discussing the future of the dockyard with the federal Government and we await the outcome with some anxiety.

AUSTRALIAN JOCKEY CLUB

Mr BARRACLOUGH: I direct my question without notice to the Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Tourism. Has the Australian Jockey Club, with the Sydney Turf Club, the Newcastle Jockey Club and many other country race clubs, administered racing in New South Wales with great distinction for 134 years?

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BARRACLOUGH: Did the honourable member for Campbelltown last Thursday in the grievance debate, and under parliamentary privilege, make serious allegations against the Australian Jockey Club? Do the Minister and the Government concur in these allegations? If not, will the Minister refute them?

Mr BOOTH: I congratulate the honourable member for Bligh on his question because it is the first indication that we on this side of the House—even including the period when we were in Opposition—have had that he or his colleagues have shown any interest in racing generally. His statement that the Australian Jockey Club, the Newcastle Jockey Club and country race clubs control racing is absolutely incorrect. The Australian Jockey Club controls horse racing in New South Wales. The honourable member for Campbelltown was within his rights when he made allegations on grievance day last Thursday. He did not allege that I made statements or took any action that I should not have taken. He alleged that the AJC, the organization controlling horse racing in New South Wales, was the organization that committed a misdemeanour. I am not here to defend the AJC. I am here, as suggested by the honourable member for Campbelltown in a series of questions and also in his speech on grievance day, in the role of a member of Parliament and Minister in charge of racing, but not in charge of the AJC. I can seek information from the AJC, but if it does not give the information, there is little I can do about it; the AJC has complete autonomy.

I congratulate the honourable member for Bligh upon his interest because the control of trotting and racing in New South Wales, particularly in country areas, is in troubled times. Letters are continually coming across my desk expressing concern by

racing interests, both trotting and galloping, particularly in the country. Members of the Country Party can verify that there are serious problems in the industry. The control of racing in New South Wales is being seriously examined. As far as trotting is concerned, action is being taken to set up an authority because these autonomous organizations such as the New South Wales Trotting Club and the AJC are not under ministerial control. The New South Wales Trotting Club has a limited membership of 500, who elect a committee—not to control the affairs of the New South Wales Trotting Club but to control trotting in the whole of the State—country and elsewhere.

Sir Eric Willis: On a point of order. The Minister is talking about trotting and control of trotting in New South Wales. The question that was addressed to him related to racing and the Australian Jockey Club and whether the Minister would refute the statements made last Thursday by the honourable member for Campbelltown. It in no way related to trotting; it asked the Minister whether he agreed with what the honourable member for Campbelltown said.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister's reply should be relevant to the question, but there are many facets to horse racing. Therefore, the Minister is in order while he is dealing with horse racing.

Mr BOOTH: I was trying to give the honourable member for Bligh some factual information which apparently, judging by the way in which he framed his question, he did not know. I am not prepared to refute the allegations made by the honourable member for Campbelltown; I do not know the facts. My ministerial responsibility is to seek from the AJC such information as will establish its defence to the allegations. I am not the defendant; the AJC is the defendant. I do not see my role as the defender of the AJC.

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Fuller to order for the first time.

Mr BOOTH: Allegations are made in this House every day. The Minister's responsibility is to ascertain the facts and present them to the House. That is what I have done in relation to one question. It is up to the AJC and the members of its committee to provide me openly with all the information that is being sought, quite correctly, by the honourable member for Campbelltown. As a member of Parliament representing his constituents he is seeking information on their behalf.

COUNCIL YOUTH WORKERS

Mr KEANE: My question is directed to the Minister for Youth and Community Services. In view of the increased budget allocation to the Minister, in particular for youth services, will he consider extending the State Government's scheme which provides councils with financial assistance to employ youth workers?

Mr JACKSON: My department gives every encouragement to local government authorities to employ youth workers, apart from the facilities that are provided for local government to be involved in the regional councils for social development established under the Australian Assistance Plan. Eight local government authorities in New South Wales are at present availing themselves of the \$4,000 a year subsidy from my department to provide youth workers in their own areas. The honourable member for

Woronora was one of the first people in local government responsible for the employment of a youth worker—in the Sutherland shire—and I compliment him and the youth worker upon the work done for youth in that area.

Seven other local government authorities have each appointed a youth worker—Wollongong, Queanbeyan, Waverley, **Ku-ring-gai**, Leichhardt, Broken Hill and Coonamble. The large number of local government authorities in New South Wales that have a responsibility to youth in their areas and are failing to avail themselves of the subsidy to enable them to employ youth workers, shows how serious the situation is. I am pleased to announce that the North Sydney and Mosman councils have joined together to appoint a youth worker for that area.

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

Mr JACKSON: Also, Holroyd council and Shellharbour council are advertising for a youth worker to be employed and they will each be given the \$4,000 a year subsidy by my department. I am advised that ten other local government authorities are considering the employment of youth workers. I hope that every other local government authority in New South Wales will take advantage of the subsidy and accept this aspect of local government responsibility. It is useless for aldermen and councillors to rise in their places in councils and bemoan the lack of opportunities for youth, or criticize the Government for this through the media, when a subsidy is available to councils and they do not take advantage of it. Of the 214 local government authorities in New South Wales, only eight have employed youth workers, three have advertised for them, and another ten are in the process of negotiating with my department for their employment.

I congratulate the honourable member for Woronora on the part that he played in inducing the Sutherland council to employ a youth worker. I congratulate councils that have availed themselves of the subsidy, and those that will employ a youth worker early next year. By that time twenty-one local government authorities in New South Wales will be employing youth workers, but that number is far too low in relation to the large number of councils in New South Wales. This is a serious situation. I appeal to all local government authorities to avail themselves of the subsidy and to employ not only one youth worker but two. There is no restriction; that subsidy can be made available. My department has an increased allocation from the Treasury to subsidize this very important activity. I congratulate the Premier and the Treasurer on making this allocation available to my department in order to encourage local government authorities in New South Wales to provide this most important service.

FARM APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Mr DAY: On 16th September the honourable member for Wagga Wagga asked me a question in relation to a country apprenticeship scheme and I **undertook** to provide a supplementary answer. In January, 1975, a former Minister for Agriculture instructed the New South Wales Institute of Rural Studies to investigate and **report** on the possible need for the introduction of an agricultural training scheme in **this** State. The instruction was prompted by **representations** from a number of individuals and organizations in respect of the need and demand for vocational farm training for school-leavers and the possible ways in which such training could be offered by appropriate educational institutions. The institute established a resource committee to undertake the investigations in accordance with the following terms of reference:

To study evidence of both need and demand for vocational farm training for school-leavers in this State, and to decide whether it is sufficient

to warrant a recommendation by the Institute to the Minister and subsequently to **the** Department of Labour and Industry, supporting the introduction of an agricultural 'apprenticeship scheme, or some other form of training scheme.

To further **consider** the precise training needs of school-leavers **seeking** employment in New South Wales and to advise on the possible ways in which such training could be offered by the appropriate educational institutions; in particular, to consider the most suitable **organizational** and educational methods, standards and curricula for an agricultural training scheme in this State.

The resource committee is comprised of representatives from the institute and the Departments of Agriculture, Labour and Industry, Education, and Technical and Further Education. In addition, the Australian Workers' Union is represented. Two of the institute representatives, being farmers and graziers, perform a dual role. The committee has submitted a detailed interim report which has been endorsed in principle by the institute. The report reviews the current post-school programmes for agricultural education in this State as well as training schemes in other States, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. Reference is also made to the jackaroo system and to proposals for training received by the committee. The need and demand for some form of apprenticeship training has been assessed from two surveys. One conducted with school students attending selected country and agricultural high schools produced 1 485 replies, and the other, a survey of primary producers, 1 180 replies.

In endorsing the report in principle, the institute has accepted that there is sufficient evidence of both need and demand to warrant its support for the introduction of an agricultural training scheme for school-leavers, in particular. However, before submitting a firm proposal for consideration, the institute has requested additional background information and data in respect of the training programme, *per se*, and its funding. Towards this end, the resource committee has been asked to consult further with representatives of the Departments of Labour and Industry, Education, and Technical and Further Education and with representatives of the Australian Workers' Union and producer organizations. A report on the findings and recommendations of the consultations will be considered by the Institute of Rural Studies at its next meeting on 11th November, 1976, following which it is expected that sufficient additional information will be available to enable a firm proposal for an agricultural apprenticeship scheme to be submitted for consideration.

FIREARMS CONTROL

Mr **MULOCK**: On 7th October, while asking me a question without notice relating to the operation of the Firearms and Dangerous Weapons Act, the honourable member for Vacluse made reference to a letter forwarded to me by the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia in August. The honourable member's question implied that I had not replied to the letter or even acknowledged its receipt. I wish to set the record straight and advise the honourable member and the House that I acknowledged receipt of the letter in question by writing to the president of the association on 20th August.

This acknowledgment was forwarded to Mr R. Cerney, President, Sporting Shooters Association of Australia, Box 4756 G.P.O., Sydney. As I stated previously, I signed my final reply to the association during the October long weekend. This reply was forwarded to the president and senior vice-president/legislation of the association on Tuesday, 5th October.

JOINT COMMITTEE UPON DRUGS

Mr STEWART (Canterbury), Minister for Health [3.8]: I move:

That a joint committee be appointed:

(1) To review and report on available current scientific information concerning the pharmacological, psychological and social effects of drugs of dependence, other than alcohol or tobacco, in common use in New South Wales.

(2) To examine and report on available information on the incidence and trends of the use and misuse of such drugs in New South Wales.

(3) To inquire into and report on—

(a) the adequacy of the control of the manufacture, distribution, possession and use of such drugs; and

(b) the adequacy and appropriateness of penalties for offences related to such drugs, the application of those penalties, and the distinction between penalties for offences relating to their use and penalties for offences relating to their manufacture and distribution.

(4) To inquire into and report whether in relation to the distribution, possession and use of such drugs the following are adequate and appropriate:

(a) general education for persons of all ages;

(b) special education for key groups responsible for education, treatment and counselling, detection and law enforcement; and

(c) preventive, counselling, treatment and rehabilitative services.

(5) To make such recommendations on terms (3) and (4) as the Committee sees fit.

(6) That such Committee consist of five Members of the Legislative Assembly and four Members of the Legislative Council.

(7) That Mr Durick, Mr Ramsay, Mr McGowan, Mr Jackett and Mr Wotton be appointed to serve on such Committee as the Members of the Legislative Assembly.

(8) That the Committee have leave to sit during the sittings or any adjournment of either or both Houses and to make visits of inspection within the State of New South Wales, other States of Australia and the Australian Capital Territory.

The terms of reference of the proposed joint committee are virtually the same as those applicable to the original Joint Committee on Drugs which met until April of this year, when Parliament was prorogued. At that stage it brought down a report, recommending to Parliament that the committee be re-established after the general elections. In keeping with the Government's adherence to that recommendation, I have now moved this motion.

For the information of honourable members, the first paragraph of the terms of reference is slightly different from that of the original committee, inasmuch as the original committee under its terms of reference was able to review and report upon **only** drugs that were covered by the schedules of the Poisons Act. The motion proposes the deletion of the limitation of the Poisons Act, so that the new committee will be able

to review and report upon other drugs of addiction, such as, perhaps, some of the aspirins and minor analgesics. The terms of reference have been altered in this area for a specific reason.

Naturally the constitution of the committee has been altered. The Attorney-General and I were members of the previous committee, but now we are unable to serve. Also, the ratio of membership between Government and Opposition members has been altered to take into account the change of government. The Government will have a majority, whereas previously the majority was the prerogative of the Liberal Party and Country Party members.

Mr VINEY (Wakehurst) [3.12]: I congratulate the Minister for Health on being able, at long last, to get this joint committee re-established. I know that the Minister, particularly after the general elections, was very concerned to see the drug committee re-established. Having served on the previous drug committee, he appreciated its role and also the problem of the growing drug abuse in the community. In mid-May, when I was returning from Canberra after seeing the narcotics people in relation to certain information that came to me while I was chairman of the joint committee, but when it was not sitting, I heard on the 1 o'clock news session that the Minister for Health was asking the Premier as a matter of urgency to re-establish the joint committee upon drugs. He also pointed out in that press release that he and the Attorney-General would no longer be able to serve on that committee and that replacements would be necessary. I am genuine when I commend the Minister for Health because I appreciate the battle he probably had to get this committee re-established.

In almost five months, from the time Parliament resumed on 25th May, the net result has been that twenty-five words have been deleted from the terms of reference and five have been added. I shall come **back** to that. I appreciate the fact that the Minister has excluded alcohol and tobacco from the terms of reference; they were not in the previous terms of reference. The new committee, like the previous committee, will receive criticism from various quarters because its terms of reference do not include alcohol and tobacco. This stems from the growing concern in the community about these subjects: it may be that the Government will have to consider establishing a separate committee to investigate the abuse of alcohol.

The Minister referred to the progress report that was submitted by the previous committee, of which he was a member. That committee hoped—and I am sure the Minister wants this to happen—that the new committee would take cognizance of the evidence that had been submitted to it. It would be a gross travesty and an insult to the witnesses if they were called upon to retrace the same ground. In addition, there was a volume of correspondence and submissions that arrived after the committee was disbanded upon the dissolution of the Forty-fourth Parliament. The Minister **will** recall that the previous committee resolved that all that material should be placed in the care of the Clerk of the House so that it could be passed on to the incoming committee. The incoming committee does not have to accept at face value everything gathered by the previous committee. It will have the right to recall witnesses. However, if the new committee resolves to accept all this material as a working basis, I am sure that this will make its work much easier.

I shall refer now to the change in the **terms** of reference. I believe that the Minister believes that the alteration has widened the scope of the investigation. However, I suggest that it has narrowed it. The new terms of reference refer to **drugs** of dependence in common use. Dependence can be a subjective opinion or a legally defined opinion. The previous terms of reference referred to "drugs of dependence in common use in New South Wales that are prohibited drugs, **drugs** of addiction, and

restricted substances within the meaning of the Poisons Act, 1966." My point is, that as a result of the deletion of the qualifications, "drugs of addiction and restricted substances within the meaning of the Poisons Act", the committee will have to form a subjective opinion on what are drugs of dependence in common use.

I do not know whether the Minister is confident that he has not had the **three-card** trick pulled on him by the deletion of those words. There is great argument whether cannabis and its various derivatives are drugs of dependence. There are **two** strong schools of thought on that subject. The previous committee examined cannabis because it was defined in the Poisons Act as a prohibited substance. However, the new committee will not have the assistance of its being defined in the Poisons Act, and will have to rely on the words, "drugs of dependence in common use". It will have to make a decision on the matter. It will have before it the polarized argument throughout the world on whether cannabis is a drug of dependence. I can see the legal profession having a great feast as a result of the argument whether this committee has the right to investigate cannabis and its derivatives. I am not sure, in the light of the **comments** made by the Attorney-General about the decriminalization of the use of marihuana, whether this is an expression of an attitude that marihuana is not really a significant drug of abuse, and whether this lovely little deletion of this phrase has been to the detriment of not only the committee, but also what I believe are the desires of the Minister for Health in regard to what the committee should be achieving.

The same thing applies to many other drugs that are picked up by the dragnet of the Poisons Act and its regulations. If one considers drugs of dependence in common use, one could ask whether the terms of reference cover drugs like **LSD**, **mescaline** and **mandrax**, and a whole list of substances that are apparently currently being abused and are a great threat to the community. I suggest sincerely that the committee's terms of reference would be far better if the definitions had been left as they were, adding, if the Government wishes, the minor analgesics and the other substances, open sellers, self medications, and so on, so that the committee's horizons would have been widened. There would have been no doubt that the terms of reference covered cannabis, **mescaline**, **LSD**, **mandrax** or the other substances to which I have referred. I honestly believe that if the terms of reference are left as they are, with the exclusion of alcohol and tobacco if the Government wishes, and adding a reference to the **minor** analgesics and their effects, they would be much better. I do not think it would be necessary to name **APC** tablets, **aspirins** and so on. If the terms of reference referred to them in the broad term of minor analgesics, the community, doctors, pharmacists and everybody else would know what was referred to.

As the Minister knows, according to the evidence given by two professors of clinical pharmacology, some of the new analgesics do not destroy the kidneys slowly as the older analgesics did; taking them in uncontrolled quantities amounts to committing suicide. They destroy the liver and the person is dead in four days. I appreciate the Minister's concern to ensure that other substances which are widely used are brought within the terms of reference. I hope that if the Minister does not see fit to alter the terms of reference to take in the definitions from the Poisons Act, at least he will spell out loud and clear in his reply, so that the Parliament and the community will know it is his wish and that of the Government, that all substances reviewed by the earlier committee, as well as the other drugs to which reference has been made, will come under the scrutiny of the proposed committee. Apart from that, I support the motion.

Mr **JACKETT** (Burwood) [3.21]: I am particularly pleased that I am being given the opportunity to serve on the proposed new joint committee on drugs, which is intended to carry on the work done by the committee appointed by the last Parliament..

I found it a most absorbing subject and want to say to the House that the personnel of that committee was a completely satisfying association of members of all parties trying to come to an understanding of what I imagine is the most difficult and pressing social problem of our time. I therefore welcome the opportunity of continuing the work that was cut short by the rather sudden dissolution of the last Parliament.

I pay tribute to the incredible and intense leadership given to that committee by the honourable member for Wakehurst, who was indefatigable in his exertions, and ingenious too in his pursuit of areas which he thought should be studied by the committee. I am sorry that his appointment to another select committee has apparently precluded his being a member of this joint committee.

I do not quarrel with the terms of reference of the new committee other than in one particular. I am glad that the present Minister for Health was a member of the old committee, for I know that he is conscious of the extraordinary complexity of this subject and of the work that a committee such as this can do, and indeed of the need for comprehensive terms of reference. The point I want to emphasize is that I should like to see the committee able to study one particular aspect of the age-old problem of alcohol. I know that there are good reasons why alcohol was excluded from the terms of reference drafted and approved by the previous Government, and I have no doubt they are excluded from this committee's terms of reference for the same reasons—and no doubt on the same advice. However, I think that all members of the former committee would agree with me when I say that there is one important area in which alcohol came into consideration in comparison with a drug of present-day significance, and indeed into strong social comparison. I refer of course to marihuana.

I appreciate that the terms of reference have been widened a little already, I imagine because of the experience which the Minister had as a member of the last committee. I refer of course to the use of many of the minor analgesics and others that do not come under the Poisons Act definitions. However, to my mind, the real social problem in this whole question of drugs centres on the question of marihuana. I take this opportunity of making two or three short observations on the deliberations of the last committee in order to explain why I believe it is necessary for the new committee not to be completely excluded from a consideration of the drug alcohol.

A considerable amount of evidence was taken by the former committee, as will be evident to those members of this House who have read its progress report—a document that I commend to all honourable members, because of the evidence which it has fully set out. There was a good deal of evidence indeed that marihuana was the one drug that is socially acceptable to an increasing number of young people in our community. There was indeed considerable evidence, though not by any means conclusive, that marihuana is not addictive. Certainly there would appear to be reasonable grounds for believing that it is considerably less addictive than alcohol, though I would hasten to assure the House that I am by no means ready to accept that without a great deal more expert evidence being sought and obtained. There is no possible doubt from all the expert evidence we heard that there is indeed an effect upon the motor co-ordination of human beings under the influence of marihuana just as there is in the case of people under the influence of alcohol, but much more difficult forensic methods are required for detecting THC content in the blood than are needed for alcohol. There is certainly a great deal more need for evidence to be taken upon the question of what effect the use of marihuana and indeed all the derivatives of the plant have upon the health of those who use it, and especially upon the health of those who use it habitually.

There is also another point which still needs elucidation, and I refer to the evidence that has been brought forward that most of those who are addicted to the hard drugs seem to have graduated from an initial use of marihuana. There was certainly

Mr Jackett]

no evidence brought forward to the committee that the use of marihuana inevitably or even usually leads to the use of the harder drugs. In fact it would seem to me from what we heard that only a small proportion of those who smoke marihuana ever go on to use the harder drugs. However, there was no question in my mind, nor, I think, in that of most if not all members of the committee, that marihuana poses enormous social problems in our society. The proposed select committee is in this respect charged with great responsibilities. It does seem to me to be compelling for us to have some freedom to have a look at the question of alcohol in so far as it comes into comparison with marihuana as a social drug. Quite a number of our witnesses said—and they have been supported by many private conversations with young people I have had over many years—that society has double standards because it condones alcohol by not merely permitting its use but indeed by permitting its active promotion as a drug, which is a proven drug of addiction, yet prohibits and makes criminal the use of marihuana which quite possibly may well be found to be not a drug of addiction.

I find it very difficult, as I think do many honourable members, to answer arguments of this sort from young people who make of the matter an issue of the generation gap about which we hear so much. I should like the Minister and indeed the Government to widen the terms of reference at least far enough to enable study of this argument in depth, because it is in fact the one really crucial issue which we all want to be able to answer and debate. I make it clear that I am by no means convinced of the validity of that argument which is put forward so seriously by many young people in our community. I just do not know what to think, and I would like to know a great deal more in so far as the two drugs come into comparison on social grounds. I find this whole question of the social use of drugs perplexing and saddening. As leading writers and sages through history have said, it is the abuse rather than the use of drugs and particularly alcohol and tobacco that causes society its greatest problems.

There is nothing so sad as to see a brilliant mind fogged by a body weakened and half destroyed by drugs, and nothing more melancholy than to observe the misery of children and indeed men and women themselves whose homes have become the slag heaps of alcohol abuse. There is nothing so sad as the shells of misery and despair that remain from the hopes and happiness of youthful marriage where they knew not how to cope with adversity. That is why I think we should try to come to grips with that one question many of the young people in our midst pose when we say it is a crime to smoke pot but a perfectly legitimate social activity to drink our whisky and beer. If the proposed select committee is really allowed to get to the essence of that argument it will be giving the Government the only really important answer it wants in this whole immense problem of drug abuse.

I am well aware that no problem will be solved by adding one more social drug to those that have been accepted by society for thousands of years, and I am not advocating that in any way whatever. However, I should like to know a great deal more about the place of both kinds of drugs in our changing society, and I ask the Minister to widen the terms of reference just a little further to do this. In every other respect I am happy with the terms of reference and am honoured to have the confidence of the House in sewing again as a member of the committee.

Mr HEALEY (Davidson) [3.29]: I welcome the move by the Minister for Health to reconstitute the committee that was inquiring into the vexed problem of drugs and to give it an opportunity to continue its good work. When the former joint committee was constituted we were conscious of the possible wide-ranging nature of its inquiry. Drugs cover an extensive field, and when one looks at alcohol and tobacco as one aspect of drug use, and as another, at analgesics and other powders and tablets

as well as drugs of addiction and dependence of the types that have been mentioned, one realizes that any committee that investigated and considered such a tremendous subject would necessarily continue its deliberations for a very long time.

At that time it was felt that a widening of the inquiry to include alcohol and tobacco and to take in all the ramifications that might flow from the use of analgesics, headache powders and so on would have involved years of deliberation by a committee of inquiry before it could come up with recommendations. The government of the day had to decide where the most important problems lay. Alcohol and its use is a subject that demands a great deal of attention but I do not suppose that these problems are more pressing now than they were years ago.

When one considers the consequences to the community from excessive use of analgesics one cannot fail to be horrified at what is revealed in reports from the kidney foundation and from doctors who work on renal diseases. The fact that five times more per capita of analgesics are used in Queensland and in New South Wales than in Victoria and in Tasmania raises some interesting questions. In Newcastle the ratio of women suffering from kidney complaints is three times higher than the State average. That, too, poses an important question. All of these questions should be pursued and answers found for them. Whether they can all be dealt with at one inquiry is another matter.

The honourable member for Wakehurst posed the question whether the terms of reference before us will permit the proposed committee to investigate marihuana.. I hope the Minister for Health will answer that query to the satisfaction of members on this side of the House. **Marihuana** has been the subject of investigation in many parts of the world including the United States of America, Jamaica in the West Indies, Great Britain and other parts of Australia. The honourable member for **Burwood** referred to the use of alcohol and marihuana and their effect upon people. I should like to be certain that marihuana is to be one of the drugs covered by the terms of reference now under consideration. The action of the Minister in bringing this matter before the House today would be of far less value if an inquiry into the use of marihuana were excluded from the consideration of the committee.

I have a feeling that nothing but good will come out of the proposed inquiry by members of this House. No doubt at some later date it will be necessary for the Parliament to look at the use of analgesics, alcohol and tobacco. To include all of those matters in a wide-ranging, omnibus type inquiry would only complicate the issue and make it difficult for the committee to deliberate in reasonable time and provide a report within the life of this Parliament. Those matters would require a considerable amount of discussion and the taking of evidence from hundreds of witnesses. It would not be possible to finalize that task within the life of a Parliament. Provided that the Minister's answer is satisfactory to members on this side of the House in **relation** to the inclusion of marihuana within the terms of reference, the Opposition will welcome the reconstitution of the drug committee. Quite frankly, we on this side of the House deplore the delay that has occurred while the **Labor** Party was making a decision in this matter.

It would seem to be a simple procedure to reconstitute the committee and to place its terms of reference before this House. One can only deplore the time that has been wasted and the opportunity that **has** been lost by the Government in not reconstituting the committee **as** a matter of urgency following the recommendation of the previous committee that the work should continue. Probably **the** Minister has had to overcome some problems in having the committee **reconstituted**. It would seem to us to be a straightforward matter, but we are unaware of the ramifications of any behind-the-scenes difficulties in having **a** matter such as this brought before the

Mr Healey]

House. It is to be hoped that the members of the new committee will overcome the delay and the obstacles placed in their way, that they will get on with the job as quickly as possible and bring down a report that is useful to the community.

Mr HATTON (South Coast) [3.35]: I agree with all that has been said by other honourable members and I congratulate the previous Government and this Government on setting up a committee to inquire into the use of drugs. I am pleased that analgesics, alcohol and tobacco have been included in the terms of reference.

Mr Stewart: Alcohol and tobacco have been excluded.

Mr HATTON: Apparently I was under a misapprehension. I should have liked to have seen them all included. I wish to bring two aspects of this subject to the notice of the committee. I should like to see thoroughly investigated the relationship between the present drug laws and the activities of the police and, in turn, the relationship between the police and young people and especially the lack of respect that young people have for the police. I have real reason for grave concern about the relationship between the police and modern youth in the drug scene. I believe that because of the very thing that this committee is trying to expose—the facts—there is an atmosphere of fear in the community about the use of drugs. In this atmosphere I believe that the police may be abusing their powers in regard to arrests of young people, the right to search premises, cars and so on, and in relation to the rules of evidence, particularly the taking of verbal evidence. All of these things has led to a loss of confidence by young people in the police force.

I should like to see the proposed committee examine in detail the day's work of the law enforcement officers in regard to drug problems. Additionally, I put forward a suggestion, the adoption of which would involve the federal Government. I fail to see why Australia does not have an effective coastguard service, particularly along the heavily populated sections of our coastline. Such a service could perform three tasks: it could police fishing, watch for illicit imports and particularly keep an eye on drug smuggling. It is ludicrous to talk about preventing the entry of drugs into Australia when there is no effective coastguard service along Australia's coastline. The nation is left wide open to abuses of this nature. From my practical knowledge of the abalone industry and the fishing industry I know that nobody but a fool would attempt to bring in drugs through a major airport or harbour. It is all too easy to drop a container of drugs attached to a marker buoy over the side of a ship and have them picked up by a nondescript vessel off the coast. I believe that this sort of thing is going on and that the federal Government should take action to eliminate it. The situation in New South Wales will be even more critical when the foreshadowed legislation in Queensland, in which provision is made for life sentences for drug pushers, is brought into effect. Obviously if the problem is as bad in Queensland as it is said to be, this heavier penalty will force drug pushers to come to New South Wales. I should like particularly to draw the attention of the proposed committee to the illicit landing of drugs along our coastline. As far as I am aware these two aspects have not yet been raised in this debate.

Mr STEWART (Canterbury), Minister for Health [3.39], in reply: I thank the honourable member for Wakehurst, the honourable member for Burwood, the honourable member for Davidson and the honourable member for South Coast for their remarks. I assure the honourable member for Wakehurst that there was no battle in regard to bringing this matter before the Parliament. The Government was elected early in April and there was a one-day sitting of the Parliament late in May. One can imagine that with the brand new Government these matters and the consideration of proposed legislation reached peak traffic proportions and it was not humanly possible

to have them all dealt with in the time available. Subsequently, the Government set about its legislative programme, which required the attention of all its Ministers. Additionally, the Government intends to set up other select committees. Therefore, if I may put it this way, a cessor was put on select committees until the complement of various committees was determined.

The honourable member for Wakehurst criticized the Government for taking five months to reconstitute the drug committee. If he had wanted to be both critical and fair, he should have said that it has really taken the Government about four or five weeks to take this action. I do not want to be unduly critical of the honourable member, his colleagues or the former Government but, I feel that I must point out that the previous Government was in office for ten years before it did anything about this problem. Perhaps if the honourable member for Wakehurst had the right of reply he might say that it was only through his initiative that something was done about the problem. As he does not have that right I shall pay him that compliment. The Government's intention is for the new committee to take into consideration the recommendations made by the previous drug committee and the evidence that was presented to it.

It would be quite wrong to expect persons who had presented substantial evidence to the former committee to be called back to repeat that evidence. Perhaps it might be said that it would be better not to recall some of the witnesses to repeat their evidence otherwise the members of the new committee would have to go through some of the trauma of their predecessors. I do not want to be disrespectful to any of the witnesses who gave evidence previously: each of them sought to be helpful with the oral evidence that was given, or in demeanour. There was a lot to be learnt from the personality of some of the people who appeared before the former committee.

The Government intends that the proposed committee will take into consideration the evidence given previously and, if it sees fit, to ask some of the people who gave evidence previously whether they are willing to give evidence again. The Government has no intention of endeavouring to exclude any particular drug from the terms of reference. I asked the Health Commission to provide me with a term of reference that covered everything set out in the previous terms of reference but including analgesics.

I had a special reason for taking that action. I hope that honourable members will understand the situation in which I was placed. The Kidney Foundation approached me regarding the problem of analgesics. The foundation's approach was in regard to bringing down legislation to limit the display, sale and manufacture of analgesics in certain compound forms. I then initiated an approach from the proprietary association. I knew from evidence already tendered before the drug committee that that organization would have an interest in this matter. When representatives of that association came to me I asked them, "Why did you not give evidence to the Joint Committee on Drugs?" They replied: "Because we were expressly prevented by the terms of reference from initiating evidence. Analgesics are not covered under the schedule to the Poisons Act."

It was then that I realized that some of the witnesses who had appeared before the joint committee and gave evidence covered by the terms of reference, were then led into fringe areas as a consequence of questioning by members of the committee. For that reason we want to see that drugs of dependence covered by the Poisons Act include analgesics. I think all members of the former committee will agree that we found that this area certainly required urgent attention. I had to make up my mind whether I would ask the Government to bring down a regulation limiting the sale, display or manufacture in certain compound forms of these types of analgesics or whether I should have more respect for the Parliament and ask it to set up a select committee in this area.

Mr Stewart]

I acted in what I regard as an ethical manner. I decided to withhold any regulation on analgesics until I presented this Parliament with an opportunity to deliberate upon the issue. I intend to ask the Health Commission to present to the select committee a recommendation on the type of regulations to bring down in this area. In no circumstances will the Government tolerate the exclusion of marihuana from consideration by the committee. The Government has made no attempt to limit the committee's terms of reference; rather it has sought to widen them. I am assured by the legal officers and medical officers of the Health Commission that the terms of reference will allow the committee to take into consideration the matters upon which evidence was taken and upon which the former select committee deliberated prior to the prorogation of Parliament. If the committee has any difficulty in that respect I assure the House that the Government will take action to spell it out more succinctly or more explicitly.

I thank the honourable member for Wakehurst, who was chairman of the former committee. As the honourable member for Burwood has said, that committee was a constructive and objective body. Moreover, each of its members pursued only one goal—to place before this Parliament an objective report on drug abuse and to make recommendations for achieving a remedy. If any member were to refer to the original motion moved on this subject, he would find that I was critical about the exclusion of alcohol from the committee's terms of reference. However, after I had heard along with the other members of the committee a considerable volume of evidence, I realized that if we were to hear evidence about the effects of alcohol we would be swamped in one particular area. I assure the House that the Health Commission of New South Wales and I are moving steadily towards a preventive campaign on the use of alcohol. I hope that I will be able to induce the fellowship for the research and treatment of alcohol and drugs to play a greater part in a campaign for preventive care in the use of alcohol.

I have already discussed the matter with members of the Health Commission and certain Sydney businessmen who are particularly interested in the problems of drug dependence. I think we should be able to organize a widely-based programme. For this reason I assured Cabinet that we would be taking action in regard to the use of alcohol in an endeavour to limit its consumption in the community. I appreciate the remarks of the honourable member for Burwood about this problem. However, I feel that Cabinet considered that if the use of alcohol were included in the terms of reference the committee would be swamped by evidence on its use. I am bearing in mind, of course, the great vested interests in that area. It was felt that the attention of the committee could be diverted from other important aspects of its terms of reference.

The honourable member for South Coast spoke about the police and about the need for education in regard to drug abuse. I point out to the honourable member that the fourth term of reference empowers the committee to inquire into and report whether in relation to the distribution, possession and use of such drugs, the following are adequate and proper:

- (a) General education for persons of all ages;
- (b) Special education for key groups responsible for education, treatment and counselling detection and law enforcement; and
- (c) Preventive, counselling, treatment and rehabilitative services.

The honourable member for South Coast mentioned the police force. The police are in a most invidious position. They are primarily detectors of breaches of the law and are responsible for enforcement of the law. The honourable member's suggestions could place members of the police force in a most invidious situation in regard to the attitude they should adopt in this matter. Police officers are primarily law enforcement officers;

they are not drug education officers. The committee could achieve something by looking at the areas mentioned by the honourable member for South Coast. I do not think that we should expect police officers to be education officers and, at the same time, law-enforcement officers. We would find it difficult to impose that line of demarcation. Perhaps there should be a distinct, separate section of the police force concerned with drug counselling, and that might be something at which the committee should look. The former committee heard voluminous evidence from representatives of the Department of Education. I do not think I would be presuming on the thoughts or attitudes of the members of that committee if I said that perhaps they thought that a lot more could be done in that area. We look forward to recommendations from the new committee in this respect. I am sure that members of the former committee agree that this important subject bridges political barriers. The Government looks forward to a constructive report and recommendations from the proposed committee.

Motion agreed to.

Message

Motion (by Mr Stewart) agreed to:

That the following message be sent to the Legislative Council:

Mr President—

The Legislative Assembly has this day agreed to the following resolution—

That a joint committee be appointed:

(1) To review and report on available current scientific information concerning the pharmacological, psychological and social effects of drugs of dependence, other than alcohol or tobacco, in common use in New South Wales.

(2) To examine and report on available information on the incidence and trends of the use and misuse of such drugs in New South Wales.

(3) To inquire into and report on—

- (a) the adequacy of the control of the manufacture, distribution, possession and use of such drugs; and
- (b) the adequacy and appropriateness of penalties for offences related to such drugs, the application of those penalties, and the distinction between penalties for offences relating to their use and penalties for offences relating to their manufacture and distribution.

(4) To inquire into and report whether in relation to the distribution, possession and use of such drugs the following are adequate and appropriate:

- (a) general education for persons of all ages;
- (b) special education for key groups responsible for education, treatment and counselling, detection and law enforcement; and
- (c) preventive, counselling, treatment and rehabilitative services.

(5) To make such recommendations on terms (3) and (4) as the Committee sees fit.

(6) That such Committee consist of five Members of the Legislative Assembly and four Members of the Legislative Council.

Mr Stewart]

(7) That Mr Durick, Mr Ramsay, Mr McGowan, Mr Jackett and Mr Wotton be appointed to serve on such Committee as the Members of the Legislative Assembly.

(8) That the Committee have leave to sit during the sittings or any adjournment of either or both Houses and to make visits of inspection within the State of New South Wales, other States of Australia and the Australian Capital Territory.

And the Legislative Assembly requests that the Legislative Council will appoint four of its Members to serve with the Members of the Legislative Assembly upon such joint committee.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ELECTIONS) AMENDMENT BILL

In Committee

Consideration resumed (from 5th October, *vide* page 1420).

Schedule 1

Mr ROZZOLI: Mr Chairman—

Mr FLAHERTY (Granville), Government Whip [3.53]: X move:

That the question be now put.

The Committee divided.

Ayes, 48

Mr Akister	Mr Haigh	Mr Petersen
Mr Bannon	Mr Hills	Mr Quinn
Mr Barnier	Mr Hunter	Mr Ramsay
Mr Bedford	Mr Jackson	Mr Renshaw
Mr Booth	Mr Jensen	Mr Ryan
Mr Brereton	Mr Johnson	Mr Sheahan
Mr Cleary	Mr Johnstone	Mr Stewart
Mr R. J. Clough	Mr Jones	Mr Wade
Mr Cox	Mr Keane	Mr F. J. Walker
Mr Crabtree	Mr Kearns	Mr Whelan
Mr Day	Mr McGowan	Mr Wilde
Mr Degen	Mr Maher	Mr Wran
Mr Einfeld	Mr Mallam	
Mr Face	Mr Mulock	
Mr Ferguson	Mr Neilly	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Flaherty	Mr O'Connell	Mr Durick
Mr Gordon	Mr Paciullo	Mr Rogan

Noes, 47

Mr Arblaster	Mr Carneron	Mr Doyle
Mr Barraclough	Mr J. A. Clough	Mr Duncan
Mr Boyd	Mr Coleman	Mr Fischer
Mr Brewer	Mr Cowan	Mr Fisher
Mr Brown	Mr Darby	Mr Griffith
Mr Bruxner	Mr Dowd	Mr Hatton

Mr Healey	Mr Moore	Mr Singleton
Mr Jackett	Mr Morris	Mr Taylor
Mr Leitch	Mr Murray	Mr Viney
Mr Lewis	Mr Mutton	Mr N. D. Walker
Mr McDonald	Mr Osborne	Mr Webster
Mr McGinty	Mr Park	Sir Eric Willis
Mr Mackie	Mr Pickard	Mr Wotton
Mr Maddison	Mr Punch	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Mason	Mr Rofe	Mr Rozzoli
Mrs Meillon	Mr Schipp	Mr West

Resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the schedule stand—put.
The Committee divided.

Ayes, 50

Mr Akister	Mr Haigh	Mr O'Connell
Mr Bannon	Mr Hatton	Mr Paciullo
Mr Barnier	Mr Hills	Mr Petersen
Mr Bedford	Mr Hunter	Mr Quinn
Mr Booth	Mr Jackson	Mr Ramsay
Mr Brereton	Mr Jensen	Mr Renshaw
Mr Cleary	Mr Johnson	Mr Ryan
Mr R. J. Clough	Mr Johnstone	Mr Sheahan
Mr Cox	Mr Jones	Mr Stewart
Mr Crabtree	Mr Keane	Mr Wade
Mr Day	Mr Kearns	Mr F. J. Walker
Mr Degen	Mr L. B. Kelly	Mr Whelan
Mr Einfeld	Mr McGowan	Mr Wilde
Mr Face	Mr Maher	Mr Wran
Mr Ferguson	Mr Mallam	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Flaherty	Mr Mulock	Mr Durick
Mr Gordon	Mr Neilly	Mr Rogan

Noes, 46

Mr Arblaster	Mr Griffith	Mr Park
Mr Barraclough	Mr Healey	Mr Pickard
Mr Boyd	Mr Jackett	Mr Punch
Mr Brewer	Mr Leitch	Mr Rofe
Mr Brown	Mr Lewis	Mr Schipp
Mr Bruxner	Mr McDonald	Mr Singleton
Mr Cameron	Mr McGinty	Mr Taylor
Mr J. A. Clough	Mr Mackie	Mr Viney
Mr Coleman	Mr Maddison	Mr N. D. Walker
Mr Cowan	Mr Mason	Mr Webster
Mr Darby	Mrs Meillon	Sir Eric Willis
Mr Dowd	Mr Moore	Mr Wotton
Mr Doyle	Mr Morris	
Mr Duncan	Mr Murray	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Fischer	Mr Mutton	Mr Rozzoli
Mr Fisher	Mr Osborne	Mr West

Question so resolved in the affirmative.
Schedule agreed to.

Schedule 2

Mr FISHER (Upper Hunter) [4.3]: The Opposition opposes the schedule. As I mentioned at the second-reading stage, the only example given by the Government in support of the bill's provision for the popular election of lord mayors of the cities of Sydney, Wollongong and Newcastle, was the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Mr Clem Jones, who held that position for some years. My information is that all he was able to do was to increase the budget of the City of Brisbane to a size that exceeds the budget for the whole of Tasmania. He introduced all sorts of socialized schemes of social services which imposed a load on the ratepayers of the City of Brisbane far in excess of the burdens imposed on ratepayers in other major cities that do not have their first citizen elected by popular vote. It is worth noting that Mr Jones was much criticized for his inability to prepare a proper wicket for a test cricket match.

By the Government re-introducing the system of popular election of a first citizen for the cities of Sydney, Wollongong and Newcastle and for municipalities and councils throughout the State should they so wish, opportunity will be given for colourful people who have no real interest in local government and have not the support or interest of other members of councils, to run for election as lord mayor. The Long Shot Pontiac Perces and the Norman Gunstons who have no experience of local government may impose themselves on councils. This would not be in the best interests of local government. Only those who serve on councils would know who would be the ideal first citizen and best able to run a council. Those councillors should be able to elect the person they consider the most suitable for the position.

The Opposition opposes the proposal to elect a lord mayor for a period of three years and not for one year. An undesirable person not best suited in the view of a council for the position of lord mayor may be imposed on it for three years. That is not in the best interests of councils or of local government generally. For these reasons the Opposition opposes the schedule.

Mr JENSEN (Munmorah), Minister for Local Government [4.6]: It is unfair of the honourable member for Upper Hunter to say that the only reason advanced by the Government to support the election of lord mayors by popular vote is the election by that system of the Lord Mayor of Brisbane. The Government seeks to avoid the kind of wheeling and dealing that goes on in major cities when the election of a lord mayor is imminent. The people should have the right and privilege to elect a lord mayor. For the Opposition to suggest that citizens cannot distinguish between those who are worthy and those who are unworthy is an unwarranted reflection upon the good sense of the community. There is no doubt at all that people can distinguish, as has been demonstrated when they have had opportunities to elect good, bad or indifferent lord mayors. They rejected the indifferent lord mayors put up for office by the Liberals, the civic reform group and the communists and they elected the person who they thought would best perform the onerous responsibilities attached to the office of lord mayor.

There has been no occasion when it can be suggested that a candidate elected under the system of popular vote performed indifferently or that the council led by a lord mayor who was elected in this way was inferior to a council in which aldermen had the right to elect its lord mayor. Mr Nick Shehadie was one of the great men who served on the Council of the City of Sydney. He had the stature, the standing and the capacity to be a great lord mayor of this city. However, as a result of the struggles and strife occurring within the party, the civic reform group tipped him out after one year in office. That was a disgraceful state of affairs.

The members of the Opposition wish to perpetuate that situation. They want an opportunity when there is a decent man in the job to say: "You are no good to us; you will not wheel or deal. Further, you will not put in the position of deputy mayor a person who does not deserve it and you will not appoint as chairman of the finance committee someone who should not hold that position". When because of the manipulation of petty men decent men are not permitted to play the important role for which they are suited, it is time for action to be taken by the Government.

The Government considers that the people of New South Wales will welcome the opportunity to decide who they want to be the lord mayors of Sydney, Newcastle or Wollongong. I predict that dozens of councils throughout New South Wales will take advantage of the provisions of the bill now that they know that the doubt has been removed of their being able to revert to the election of their mayor or president. The councils will eagerly seize the opportunity to let the people choose their first citizen in local government areas. I hope that the Opposition will think twice about its miserable partisan attitude of seeking to perpetuate in office the unworthy. The bill is a great advance and deserves the support of Parliament. It will ensure that men of stature and standing will have the opportunity to be elected for a three-year term and thus give continuous leadership in the important area of local government in New South Wales. I commend the schedule to the Committee.

Question—That the schedule stand—put.

The Committee divided.

Ayes, 50

Mr Akister	Mr Haigh	Mr O'Connell
Mr Bannon	Mr Hatton	Mr Paciullo
Mr Barnier	Mr Hills	Mr Petersen
Mr Bedford	Mr Hunter	Mr Quinn
Mr Booth	Mr Jackson	Mr Ramsay
Mr Brereton	Mr Jensen	Mr Renshaw
Mr Cleary	Mr Johnson	Mr Ryan
Mr R. J. Clough	Mr Johnstone	Mr Sheahan
Mr Cox	Mr Jones	Mr Stewart
Mr Crabtree	Mr Keane	Mr Wade
Mr Day	Mr Kearns	Mr F. J. Walker
Mr Degen	Mr L. B. Kelly	Mr Whelan
Mr Einfeld	Mr McGowan	Mr Wilde
Mr Face	Mr Maher	Mr Wran
Mr Ferguson	Mr Mallam	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Flaherty	Mr Mulock	Mr Durick
Mr Gordon	Mr Neilly	Mr Rogan

Noes, 45

Mr Arblaster	Mr Cowan	Mr Jackett
Mr Barraclough	Mr Darby	Mr Leitch
Mr Boyd	Mr Dowd	Mr Lewis
Mr Brewer	Mr Doyle	Mr McDonald
Mr Brown	Mr Duncan	Mr McGinty
Mr Bruxner	Mr Fischer	Mr Mackie
Mr Cameron	Mr Fisher	Mr Maddison
Mr J. A. Clough	Mr Griffith	Mrs Meillon
Mr Coleman	Mr Healey	Mr Moore

Mr Morris	Mr Rofe	Sir Eric Willis
Mr Murray	Mr Schipp	Mr Wotton
Mr Mutton	Mr Singleton	
Mr Osborne	Mr Taylor	
Mr Park	Mr Viney	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Pickard	Mr N. D. Walker	Mr Rozzoli
Mr Punch	Mr Webster	Mr West

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Schedule agreed to.

Adoption of Report

Bill reported from Committee without amendment, and report adopted on motion by Mr Jensen.

PRICES REGULATION (AMENDMENT) BILL

Second Reading

Mr EINFELD (Waverley), Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Co-operative Societies [4.18]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this measure is to amend the existing legislation provided under the Prices Regulation Act, 1948, to enable a prices commission to be constituted consisting of one full-time commissioner and two part-time commissioners. The commission will carry out the powers, authorities and duties previously exercised and performed by the Prices Commissioner and the assistant prices commissioners. Price control generally in New South Wales is determined by the Prices Regulation Act. This Act was introduced by a Labor government in 1948 when the Commonwealth Government vacated the field of price control. At that time the Government believed that price control should continue and that it was in the best interests of consumers in this State.

The Act gives the Minister discretion to declare any class of goods or services that might be subject to an order fixing a maximum price. There is still a range of goods and services declared under the Act but price control is applied only to bread and the reseller's margin on motor spirit. The decision on whether a maximum price should be fixed for goods and services declared by the Minister and on the actual price is left to the absolute discretion of the Prices Commissioner. The Minister's only discretion is limited to suspending an order by the commissioner for a period of up to twenty-eight days. The final decision as to the price rests with the commissioner.

Though the Act has been variously interpreted, usage over the years and some judicial interpretation have tended strongly to reinforce the view that for all practical purposes the Prices Commissioner and his staff cannot disclose any information obtained in the course of their official duties to any other person, including the Minister. With this interpretation it has been impossible for the Prices Commissioner to hold open inquiries. Though the commissioner cannot disclose any information, for all practical purposes, he and his staff have virtually unlimited power to command any information that may be required in relation to any goods or services whether declared or not, or to any other matter arising out of the Act. This is a sweeping power given to the commissioner under the legislation, which was based on war-time legislation, when it was considered necessary for the commissioner to have this wide authority.

The Government is firmly of the view that these features of the Act are at variance with its policy on price fixing or price justification. This statement does not imply any criticism of the Prices Commissioner or his staff. It is rather a criticism of the Act which does not allow for public inquiries but places the responsibility of price fixing in the hands of one person. The Government believes this is an unsatisfactory situation in modern society. It contends that it is wrong in principle to allow price-fixing powers to be left at the discretion of one person who sets prices without any public inquiry. It is essential, in a democratic community, that applications for price increases of goods and services should be heard in a public inquiry where it is possible for interested parties to appear. The Government believes that the interests of consumer will be best served if public inquiries are held at which consumer groups and others can present their views. This will eliminate the area of secrecy that has surrounded price reviews in the past. Preliminary investigations may be carried out without a public inquiry but, in principle, the Government believe that as far as possible public inquiries should be held. Its purpose in amending the legislation, therefore, is to limit the undesirable features and set up machinery for reviewing prices aimed at ensuring that the best interests of consumers are taken into consideration.

I want to emphasize that it is not the Government's intention to introduce price control on a wide range of goods and services. The amendments are being introduced to allow a more open system and to prevent price exploitation or unjustified price rises. One important function of the new commission will be to make investigations into complaints against excessively high prices. Power has been given to the Minister to request the commission to investigate prices of any goods or services. This will be used when it is believed a company or industry is overcharging or that the consumer is being charged unreasonable prices. The commission will have power to undertake a full investigation and will report to the Minister on what appropriate action is required. When the Minister deems it necessary, he may order a public inquiry to be held to ascertain whether the goods and services should be declared and a price fixed for them.

The objects of the bill are clearly defined and reflect the forward-looking policies of the Government. It is proposed to constitute a prices commission consisting of one full-time and two part-time **commissioners** appointed by the Governor to carry out the powers and duties previously exercised by the Prices Commissioner. The positions of Prices Commissioner and assistant prices commissioner will be abolished. The chairman of the commission will be suitably qualified. One of the part-time commissioners shall be a representative of consumers and the other shall be a person experienced in commerce and business. The term of office for all commissioners will be three years, and it will be renewable.

In establishing a full-time commission, the Act will contain amendments of a general nature to provide for the appointment of commissioners, their term of office, their removal from office and the circumstances in which a vacancy in their office occurs and other related matters. It will be necessary to preserve the rights of a public servant if one is appointed to act as full-time commissioner. The Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Act, 1975, will be amended to determine the remuneration and allowances payable to the full-time commissioner. The two part-time members of the commission shall be remunerated by such *per diem* sitting fees and expenses as are applied to similar statutory appointments.

The Act will also provide for the conduct of meetings of the Prices Commission and specify the circumstances in which public inquiries shall be held, the persons who may be parties to those inquiries and the procedure to be followed. The commission shall hold public hearings at which interested parties may contest applications for price variations and have access to information submitted in support of such applications

Mr Einfeld]

provided that the commission may, at its discretion, limit access to information or hear evidence *in camera* where it is appropriate for confidentiality of information to be preserved. The commission and its officers will be given the same powers of investigation as are now held by the Prices Commissioner and his officers. One important provision will be to preserve the prices regulation orders already in force prior to the commencement of the amending Act.

One further matter with which the amending Act will deal with is the question of penalties. It is proposed to increase the penalties, particularly where more serious breaches of the Act are committed. In these circumstances, proceedings will be taken before the Supreme Court sitting in summary jurisdiction rather than in a court of petty sessions. Though it is the firm view of the Government that the courts should be free to impose the penalties provided by law according to the circumstances as they see them, it is hoped that the Government's action in increasing the penalties will be recognized by the court as indicating a need for consumer protection offenders to be dealt with severely and also have a salutary effect on other organizations that may be exploiting consumers by overcharging.

Before referring in detail to the amendments of the bill, I repeat that it is not the Government's intention to attempt to fix prices on a wide range of goods and services but to provide a system of investigation and monitoring of the price system. Only where it is deemed necessary, or where organizations do not co-operate, will the commission fix prices for goods or services.

I should like to turn now to a detailed explanation of the various provisions of the bill. Clauses 1 and 2 deal with the short title and the commencing date, respectively, as are necessary for the operation of the legislation. Clause 3 lists the schedules under which the Act and other relevant Acts are amended. I shall deal with these schedules in more detail. I come now to the most important section of the amendments which are contained in schedule 1. Item (1) of the first schedule incorporates existing definitions and defines certain terms that are introduced by the amending legislation which are necessary for the operation of the Act. Section 1 (f) has been introduced to preclude the commission from making orders with respect to the rental of any land or premises. I should like to draw the attention of honourable members to item (2) of the first schedule as it is one of the important amendments to the Act. This provision will amend section 4 of the principal Act by replacing it with a new section.

The new section constitutes a new prices commission which shall consist of a full-time commissioner and two part-time commissioners appointed by the Governor. One of the part-time commissioners shall be appointed to represent consumers and the other shall be a person experienced in business or commerce. The full-time commissioner will act as chairman and will be paid remuneration in accordance with the Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Act, 1975. The appointment will be for a period of three years and a person above the age of 70 years is not eligible for appointment. Other subsections deal with the removal from office, vacating of office, filling casual vacancies, appointment of acting chairman and alternative commissioners and fees. These are standard provisions for this type of commission. One subsection sets out the procedures for calling meetings of the commission. The conduct of business at these meetings will be determined by the commission itself. The subsection goes on to state that the three commissioners shall form a quorum. A decision of a majority of the commissioners present shall be the decision of the commission.

Item (3) of the first schedule repeals sections 5 and 6 of the principal Act which deal with the appointment and powers of the assistant prices commissioner and advisors. These sections are no longer required as both the position of Prices Commissioner and assistant prices commissioner will be abolished. I direct the attention

of honourable members to item (4) of the first schedule which is an important provision. Under the new section there are three alternative methods by which an inquiry may be commenced. First, the Minister may for the purposes of determining whether any goods or services should be declared, either direct the chairman to furnish a report to him or direct the commission to hold an inquiry and furnish a report to him with respect to the goods that are specified in the direction. The chairman or commission shall comply with the direction given to him or it as the case may be. Second, the commission itself may, in respect of goods which have already been declared for purposes of determining whether it should fix a price, hold an inquiry unless it obtains the consent of the Minister to dispense with the holding of an inquiry. Third, a person who is a seller of goods or a supplier or carries on a service and the price of whose goods and services has already been fixed, may make an application to the commission in respect of those goods and services. A discretion then lies with the commission to refuse the application or to hold a public inquiry. It is necessary for the commission before commencing an inquiry to give notice of it by advertisements published in the *Government Gazette* and daily newspapers.

At the inquiry any person may apply to be a party, and if the commission is of the opinion that the person has a substantial interest, it shall grant the application. Any party may appear in person or by his agent, counsel or solicitor, and any party may give evidence or call witnesses to give evidence. Inquiries shall be held in public and evidence shall be given in public on oath or affirmation. Submissions in the inquiry shall also be made in public. However, the commission may take confidential evidence in private if it considers it desirable to do so. Witnesses before the commission may give evidence by tendering a written statement which the commission may make public if it considers that it is not of a confidential nature. The commission has power also, if it **thinks** fit, to require or permit a party to the inquiry to make a submission in writing. The commission shall not be bound by the rules of evidence.

Item (5) of the first schedule updates the section and the general meaning is not altered. Item (6) repeals section 40 of the principal Act. This section was originally introduced as a wartime measure and has no application in normal economic conditions. Item (7) deletes section 48 of the principal Act. This was a wartime measure and is not applicable in normal conditions. Item (8) of the first schedule updates the section by inserting "television" as an alternative means of communication. Item (9) repeals section 55 of the principal Act and replaces it with a section which permits the commission, as distinct from the commissioner, to delegate its powers and authorities.

Item (10) of the first schedule amends section 56 of the principal Act by taking out specific mention of certain Acts and replacing it with a general provision, "any other Act". This amendment is necessary because of the large number of Acts which give various government authorities powers to establish prices for certain specific commodities. Rather than spell each Act out individually, it is preferable to have a blanket cover.

Item (11) of the first schedule amends section 58 of the principal Act in order to update the administration policy which was originally prepared for wartime economic conditions. Reference to goods in short supply referred to a specific wartime problem, which would not normally occur in current conditions. A reference to goods and services which are essential to the community will cover all situations at the present time. Subsection (c) of this section is no longer applicable in view of the Government's policy of extending the existing price control legislation. However, I again draw to the attention of honourable members the fact that the main purpose of the amending legislation is to enable the commission to carry out investigations into prices where it is believed overcharging is occurring to the detriment of consumers.

Mr Einfeld]

Item (12) of the first schedule changes the maximum penalties which may be applied by the court. Under the principal Act a body corporate was liable to a penalty not exceeding \$1,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding twelve months, or to both such penalty and imprisonment. Under the amended legislation it has been decided to increase the penalties and to allow the more serious offences to be brought within the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court sitting in summary jurisdiction. Under the new penalties provisions it is proposed that if the matter is heard in petty sessions, a corporation shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding \$2,000 and an individual to a penalty not exceeding \$1,000 and/or six months imprisonment. If the offence is more serious and is brought before the Supreme Court, a corporation shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding \$10,000 and an individual to a penalty of \$5,000 and/or twelve months imprisonment.

Schedule 2 contains consequential amendments to the Prices Regulation Act, 1948. It lists amendments to various sections of the Act which are consequential to the major amendments establishing a prices commission in lieu of a prices commissioner. These amendments include such items as changing the term "Commissioner" to "Chairman" or "Commission", where appropriate. It is my intention to move in the Committee stages amendments to provide a discretion for the Minister, if the public interest so demands, to prevent the publication in the *Government Gazette* of an order under section 20, because circumstances may arise wherein the provisions of section 24 are inadequate. Section 57 (3) of the principal Act is amended so that records need only be kept for six years.

Schedule 3 refers to proposed amendments by way of statute law revision. Item (1) of this schedule repeals section 1 (3) of the principal Act which is no longer applicable. Item (2) repeals section 2 of the principal Act which is no longer applicable. Item (3) omits the definition of Commonwealth regulations, which is no longer applicable. Item (4) repeals section 15 (3) of the principal Act which is no longer applicable as it relates to Commonwealth regulations. Subsections (1) and (2) of section 15 will still give the commission power to enter premises and inspect documents.

Item (5) of schedule 3 repeals section 17 (1) (d) of the principal Act which once again relates to Commonwealth regulations. Item (6) omits reference in section 20 (12) to the Commonwealth regulations and permits production of the *Government Gazette* containing an order published in pursuance of the section to be evidence that the order was at the date of publication of the order approved by the commission or a body or association recognized by the commission. Item (7) of schedule 3 repeals section 60 (2) of the principal Act and inserts a provision whereby section 41 of the Interpretation Act, 1897, applies in respect of regulations as if this measure had been passed after the commencement of the Interpretation (Amendment) Act, 1969. Schedule 4 amends the Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Act by inserting the words "Chairman of the Prices Commission". Under this amendment, remuneration of the chairman shall be fixed in accordance with the above Act.

Clause 6 of the bill is a savings provision which, where necessary, preserves any orders made previously. An order made under section 20 of the Prices Regulation Act, which allows for the determination of maximum prices in force immediately before the date appointed and notified under section 2 (2), shall be deemed to be an order made under section 20 of the Prices Regulation Act, 1948, as amended by this measure. I am sure all honourable members will support these amendments which are designed to provide more effective protection for consumers and to facilitate and strengthen the existing laws in this most important area. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr BROWN (Raleigh) [4.35]: I thank the Minister for the courtesy that he extended to me by giving me a copy of his second-reading speech. This certainly made it easy to follow what he had to say. I do not think anything is lost by being courteous but, having thanked the Minister, I might say that my friendliness towards him on this subject could now cease. When I spoke at the introductory stage I said that what the Minister had said then appeared to be fairly harmless, but that the Opposition would study the bill carefully. I said that controls, restrictions and constrictions generally are abhorrent to the philosophy of Opposition members. I stated, further, that I found no fault with the proposal to investigate complaints. Then I said: "The Minister mentioned also that price-fixing was to be the responsibility of not one person but of the proposed commission. That indicates to me that the idea of price fixing may not have disappeared completely".

That was a better forecast than I thought, because from what the Minister said this afternoon the concept of price fixing certainly has not disappeared. There is to be set up in New South Wales a great establishment to provide for the wholesale reintroduction of price control, with probably a large number of inspectors here, there and everywhere. I am mindful of the fact that during his speech the Minister said on several occasions, "We are not introducing this legislation because we want to bring price control in again". He said that was not the intention. That might be in the Minister's mind at present, but all that the Parliament can look at is what is contained in the bill which, if it is passed, will become the law of the land.

I can understand his anxiety to introduce some consumer legislation, because the only consumer legislation in New South Wales that is of any benefit at all was introduced by the Opposition when it was in office. I know that the Minister was active in a number of fields while he was the Opposition spokesman in this area, and I should imagine that he is extremely keen to be associated with this type of legislation. I assure him that he and the present Government certainly have no monopoly on their professed and proclaimed desire to protect the consumer. If the Minister studies, the legislation that was introduced in the previous ten or eleven years, he will see some first-class consumer legislation on the statute book.

Consumerism has become the in thing. It seems that the Minister and the Government intend to capitalize on this, with some grandstanding and stage management while they are going about it. Honourable members on this side of the House reject price control as another restriction on the freedom of the individual. The subjugation of the individual and his rights to think seems to be a phobia with the Labor Party. Perhaps the fact that Labor parliamentarians are dominated by their outside masters or the caucus system might breed in them a desire for revenge. On this occasion they are taking out their revenge on the public of New South Wales, for it is obviously a desire for some further power over other individuals.

When price control was introduced in New South Wales in 1948 it followed some powers which the Commonwealth took unto itself, I think at the wish of the people of Australia, when World War II began. It is important to get the record straight, because that was almost thirty years ago. I shall give to the House some history of price control in New South Wales and Australia. From the outbreak of war in September, 1939, to September, 1948, prices in Australia were controlled by the Commonwealth Government under defence powers. Control of prices was an important element of national policy directed to the maintenance of economic stability under the stress of war, and to ensuring orderly transition from wartime to peacetime conditions. In September, 1948, administration of control of prices passed to State governments. Provisions were made for Commonwealth and State collaboration throughout.

National security regulations, proclaimed in the first month of war under the National Security Act, provided for the appointment of a Commonwealth prices commissioner with very wide powers to control prices of goods and services declared for that purpose by the Minister for Trade and Customs. The central prices office at Canberra was a branch of the Department of Trade and Customs. The Prices Commissioner made prices orders under the regulations, and deputy prices commissioners, nominated by the respective States, administered the regulations under the commissioner's supervision. Throughout and since the war the administration exercised rigorous control of prices with the object of checking inflationary tendencies and of preventing profiteering, without unduly discouraging essential production and trade.

Price control passed through five fairly distinct phases, the first of which was the short period of ministerial control between the outbreak of war and the appointment of the Prices Commissioner. In this period proclamations fixed the maximum prices of specified commodities at those ruling on 31st August, 1939. Late in September, 1939, general principles of control were established which provided for automatic adjustment of prices to increases in costs. Traders were allowed to add the same percentage margin of profit to costs as they did on 31st August, 1939, costs being defined as the actual into-store cost of the goods being sold or, in some circumstances, the average cost of all goods held at a certain date. The commissioner might increase or decrease profit margins that he deemed inadequate or too high. Prices of many commodities excluded from operation of the general orders, numbers 2 and 100, were fixed specifically, but on the same principle; in a few exceptional cases, however, the formulae absorbed into prices increases in specified costs.

As a part of a general economic policy, interest, rents and wages were pegged early in 1942 and the method of price control was changed to limit profit margins to the actual money margin as at 15th April, 1942. This meant that increasing costs or **enlarged** turnover could no longer result in increasing the incomes of traders, as was possible under the system previously operating. The next phase of price control began with the adoption of the prices stabilization policy. The prices actually being charged by traders on 12th April, 1943, were fixed as ceiling prices with a few exceptions, chief of which were perishable primary products for most of which ceiling prices already had been fixed. That was a most interesting exercise. The ceiling prices applied in every stage of production, (manufacture and distribution; concurrently, provision was made for the granting of subsidies by the Government where needed to offset unavoidable rises in costs.

Prices stabilization was designed to hold the general price level steady, but the price ceiling did not mean a rigid pegging of all individual prices. Some increases in prices were permissible. Examples were traders charging lower prices for particular commodities who might raise their prices towards the level of competitors' prices to cover increases in costs, and, on the other hand, higher prices for materials might be permitted where the resulting increase in costs could be absorbed in the later stage of manufacture or distribution. Subsidies were paid where import prices rose or the increase in prices of local products was arranged for reasons of national policy, or increased costs could not be absorbed by manufacturers or distributors. Eligibility for subsidy was considered by a prices stabilisation committee, and its recommendations, if approved by the Minister, were subject to the final approval of the Commonwealth Treasurer. Traders might ascertain before ordering whether goods proposed to be imported would be regarded as essential, and were paid a subsidy covering increases in landed costs upon documentary proof of arrival of the goods.

At this time, also, orders were made fixing specific maximum prices for hundreds—indeed, one could well say thousands—of grocery lines, for many fruits and vegetables, for woollen piece-goods, cotton yarns, woollen goods, standard cloths and

meats, thus informing consumers of the legal ceilings and at the same time facilitating enforcement of the regulations. Traders in groceries, some fruits and vegetables, liquor and furniture were obliged to exhibit lists of maximum prices or to mark the goods with the actual selling prices. It might not be a bad idea if traders marked a few more prices on the goods they offer for sale.

Uncontrollable factors, such as delayed adjustments and seasonal movements, caused a further rise in the index of retail prices during the first quarter of operation of the prices stabilization plan. This entailed an automatic increase in the basic wage, with a resultant increase in labour costs. To meet this contingency, the Government undertook to refund to employers the amounts paid as basic wage increases. At the same time the price of tea was reduced by 1s. 2d. a lb to its pre-war level, and for potatoes, which at that time were selling at 7 lb for 16½d. in Sydney, the standard maximum price was established at 5 lb for 6d. That was the capital city basis. Importers and growers were subsidized correspondingly. Sales tax on clothing and textiles was reduced from 12½ per cent to 7½ per cent, to take effect as existing stocks were cleared. Clothing was then about 75 per cent dearer than before the war. Control of prices was extended to embrace charges for services including those rendered by State governments, semi-government and local government authorities, for transport, electricity, gas, and so on, as well as private service charges, such as taxi fares, amusements and school fees.

The upward trend of import prices, which became more marked after the war, made the system of holding retail prices steady by the payment of subsidies a significant factor in the control of prices. A subsidy on raw wool for processing tended to keep down prices of locally manufactured woollen goods. Increases in coal prices were avoided by subsidy payments until July, 1947. They kept the price of coal right down. Subsidy payments to dairyfarmers enabled prices of **milk**, butter and other dairy products to be kept stable, or nearly so. In respect of wheat and important base metals, producers were required to absorb increased costs of production in higher prices realized for the proportion of production exported, and local prices were not allowed to rise.

The retail price index relating to basic necessities remained steady throughout the five years from 1943 to 1946. The prices stabilization scheme came to an end in 1947, partly through change of policy, partly from a wide variety of other causes. Regulations pegging wages were modified in 1947, and a shorter working week was introduced in New South Wales in July, 1947. These occasioned increased costs that could not be met by subsidy. Charges for public transport, gas and electricity were increased. Additionally, many increases in commodity prices were permitted and sharp increases occurred in import prices and in prices of exportable primary products. During the latter half of 1947 a significant upward trend in retail prices developed and it continued into 1948 partly as a result of progress toward total withdrawal of stabilization subsidies, modification of home consumption price scheme, and the effects of increases in money wages.

The Commonwealth Government's authority over prices continued into 1948 by virtue of the Defence (Transitional Provisions) Acts of 1946 and 1947, which prolonged operation of the relevant national security regulations. A bill for alteration of the Constitution to empower the Commonwealth Government to make laws with respect to rents and prices, including charges, was passed by the federal Parliament in December, 1947, and was rejected by the electors of all States at a referendum on 29th May, 1948. Arrangements were thereupon made for State governments to assume responsibility for price control as from September, 1948. The voting at that referendum was

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2 618 183 against, 1 793 712 for and 64 106 informal. Arrangements were thereupon begun for the State governments to assume responsibility for price control as from September, 1948.

When we look at the background of prices we see the necessity for price control at one time, but in those days the climate was completely different from the climate today. That was a time when Australia was at war and when a little later Australia was almost under siege. Today Australia is under threat and under siege in a different way. It is under siege by socialism. The freedom and liberty of the individual are under challenge. We all know that socialism can lead to communism.

[Interruption]

Mr BROWN: Apparently the honourable member for Burrinjuck sees some humour in this. He should have listened to what His Eminence Cardinal Freeman had to say in his Labor Day address recently.

Mr Sheahan: The honourable member for Raleigh was not there.

Mr BROWN: I should have been there had I been in Sydney. I took particular care to read what the Cardinal said. Some of you people chuckled a little bit when he made his opening remarks about casinos but you did not chuckle so much when he made his later remarks and referred to socialism.

Mr Sheahan: What has this got to do with prices?

Mr BROWN: It has a lot to do with prices regulating. I am tracing the history of prices in this State—why we needed control at one time and why we do not need control now. I am pointing out that legislation of this nature is a subjugation to socialism and a familiar failure of the Labor Party. Cardinal Freeman said that Labor Day was a day set aside to celebrate the fight that workers had won, unshackling themselves from the bosses. This measure will shackle the individual. When studying the bill I was interested to look at the legislation introduced in 1948. I considered the thinking of that time and the need for price control and I looked at what various people had to say then. I should like to quote some passages from *Hansard* of 22nd July, 1948. The Hon. Frank Finnan, the honourable member for Hawkesbury, was Minister for Labour and Industry and he introduced the bill. I shall not read all that was said but I wish to touch upon a few things, though I hope not out of context. The Minister of the day said:

The object of the proposed law was to amend the constitution so as to give the National Parliament the necessary power to make laws with respect to rents and prices, including charges, or in other words, to give the Commonwealth permanent power to fix rents and prices.

A little later he said:

The Commonwealth Government was of the opinion that the basis was quite uncertain for measures essential to the nation's economic stability, and, therefore, the necessary measure to hold the referendum to give the people an opportunity of expressing themselves on the proposal was passed.

The referendum was held on the 29th May, 1948, when the electors rejected the proposal. The Commonwealth Government lost no time in giving effect to the wishes of the people as expressed at the referendum and determined to relinquish controls exercised by virtue of the defence powers, and thus left the way open for legislative action to be taken by the various States.

Later in his second-reading speech the Minister said:

Taking all the facts into consideration, the Commonwealth Government decided that it had no alternative but to end Commonwealth control of prices, rents and land sales at the earliest practicable date. For the purpose of record I read the terms of the Commonwealth Government's decisions:

- (1) That the Commonwealth Government will relinquish administration of the following controls as from the expiration of the periods mentioned, that is, rent control, two months; price fixing, three months; land sales control, three months.
- (2) That the Commonwealth Government shall invite the State Governments to set up machinery to assume these controls within the periods mentioned.
- (3) That the Commonwealth Government and Commonwealth staffs will give all possible administrative assistance to the State Governments in the setting up of such State controls as the respective State Governments consider necessary and adequate.

The Minister went on to say that the Commonwealth Government's rationing of meat and clothing had ceased on 21st June, 1948. Immediately following the abolition of rationing a Premiers' Conference was held in Canberra to co-ordinate action between the States with regard to price control. I think the important point to note about that Premiers' Conference was that each State had to act uniformly to this measure. The resolution adopted by the Premiers at that conference was:

In the interests of the whole of Australia, it is imperative that the general principles of price-fixing should be as uniform as possible.

That is just as important today, and I propose to refer to it a little later. The next parts of the resolution were:

In order that the interests of individual States should not be jeopardised by the actions of any one or more States, there should be the closest collaboration between the States in the detailed implementation of price control.

It is desirable to reduce to the greatest extent possible the incidence of price controls, and action should be taken immediately to survey all existing orders with a view to their elimination when such course does not interfere with the economic stability of the State concerned or of other States.

Mr Finnan then said:

The Ministers should confer at an early date. The States would not vary price levels without prior consultation. There should be reciprocity in the exchange of goods so that no State would make excess profits from the needs of another.

Mr Finnan then went on to say that when there was price control in one State details should be communicated to other States so that they could apply price control uniformly. I think honourable members will find that apart from those who follow South Australia in a lapdog fashion, no leader of any other State is interested in price control. Recently I spoke to the responsible Victorian Minister and other interested people in that State and they were all surprised that New South Wales was again taking action in this regard on a unilateral basis—in fact, they did not want price control at **any price**.

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Mr Finnan, who was then Minister for Labour and Industry, then went on to say:

The withdrawal or threatened withdrawal by the Commonwealth of price subsidies was one of the greatest difficulties which confronted the States in connection with the taking over of price controls. They have aggregated about £40,000,000 per annum, and it requires no great stretch of imagination to realize that their removal would inevitably lead to quite a substantial increase in prices.

I am speaking particularly about 1948 to try to highlight the circumstances existing at that time. Also, I wish to mention certain things said by people who are respected greatly by Government members, and how they thought in a more enlightened way than Government members are thinking at the present time. In that debate Mr Finnan continued in this way:

. . . there is an important group of commodities for which special arrangements will be necessary when the price controls are taken over by the States. This group comprises hides and leather, tallow, rabbit skins, lead, zinc, copper and tin.

He said also:

It is apparent that unless the prices of these commodities are controlled one of two things must inevitably happen. There will be either a violent increase in prices, or they will be exported to obtain advantage of world prices, with a consequent acute shortage.

Mr Finnan continued:

. . . the Premiers recognized, and as the amity of their discussions and final determinations indicated, the interests of Australia as a whole require that we must work as a team and as far as possible in a uniform fashion if those interests are to be safeguarded. That these interests were greater than political parties was recognised by the Premiers, and politics were entirely forgotten during the discussions.

The people who made those statements recognized that price control would not work and that it was not acceptable unless it was uniform in all States. Mr Finnan went on to say:

I want to assure the House that any items or services that would adversely affect the existing position of food, clothing and shelter will be kept closely under review so that the necessary action may be taken immediately to protect the interests of every section of the community concerned.

He then said:

I venture to say that every member of this House and the people generally, who so forcibly expressed themselves at the Referendum, will agree with the action proposed by this State in conjunction with the other States—to maintain price controls until at least a true picture of the conditions that would be brought about by the elimination of the controls, step by step, can be obtained.

How one could possibly check on that having regard to the variety of goods on the market today, I would not know. Speaking of the other States, Mr Finnan said:

They agreed to a time limit on all controls, and that price controls should be eliminated as quickly and as far as possible.

That was in 1948, and here we are in 1976 with a government—of the same political persuasion as a Minister who wanted to remove controls as soon as possible—introducing price control probably to a greater degree than before. That is our understanding having heard something that the Minister said towards the end of his second-reading speech. The Leader of the Opposition in those days was Mr Vernon Treatt. After referring to the Victorian legislation, Mr Treatt said:

It is to be valid for a period of six months only. That means that at the end of 1948, the Opposition in the Victorian Parliament, in the light of experience, will have an opportunity to assist the Government and—this is the important point—will have the opportunity to say whether the Government has failed in its job of de-controlling wherever de-control is necessary.

He then said that it was something they tried to get into legislation in New South Wales but that it lasted six months. He added that the Government had the right to impose further controls but it kept them on.

Mr Treatt said something else in that debate which I think is appropriate: he referred to the people in the Commonwealth Parliament at the time having the same political complexion as the supporters of the Government then in office in this State. On that occasion he said:

They are all Labour socialists. Every one of them has the socialist outlook that seeks to regiment all sections of the community down to the slightest and most humble activity. This State can expect from the socialists in Government here the same kind of treatment as it has received from the socialists in office in Canberra and I shall prove that the Commonwealth Government has failed to act in accordance with the principles that the Minister fairly and squarely enunciated. It has failed miserably to live up to them. Its actions are proof enough of that fact. When I have pointed out to honourable members what the Commonwealth has done, will this House have confidence that the Minister will use all his influence as chairman at the meetings of the various States to see that the motivating principle of price control is that only those controls are retained that have been proved to be necessary to preserve the economic stability of the State and to protect those who require protection?

At that stage Mr Finnan said, "Yes, I will." Mr Treatt continued:

Then let me inform the Minister of the things that the Labour socialists in the Commonwealth Government have done. For a long time they controlled the price of prawns. That is laughable, but it is an example of how they sought to regiment even the slightest activity of a fishmonger. Hon. members may not be aware that the fixed retail price for prawns numbering twenty-five to the lb was 3s. 6d. a lb. If the prawns numbered from twenty-six up to forty-five to the lb, the price was only 2s. 7d.

He was speaking then about cooked prawns, not the raw prawn. Mr Treatt said also:

Hon. members can imagine what was involved in that arrangement. Here is an unfortunate fishmonger weighing out his prawns. If he puts twenty-five into the bag to make up a lb, he is entitled to charge 3s. 6d. for them. But if the scales weight down to the lb. mark with so much as a prawn head in the bag in excess of twenty-five prawns, and he still charges 3s. 6d. for them, he is subjected to assault by an army of inspectors on the ground that he has committed a breach of a regulation. Does the fact that

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there are twenty-six or forty-five prawns in a bag affect the economic stability of the State? Was it essential for the well-being of the people that the price of prawns should be controlled?

Does the House recognize that the Commonwealth Government, a Socialist Government—required that prawns, cooked or uncooked, should be sold during June, July and August only at 2s. 9d. per lb? It is only when they are sold in other months, if there are fewer than twenty-six prawns to the pound, that the full impact of the law falls upon the fishmongers.

He went on to talk about the hundreds of varieties of cosmetics—and many more varieties are being sold at the present time. He spoke about eyelash growers, tissue creams, open-pore paste, blackhead cream, chin straps, throat-moulding bands and eye shadow. There was no mention of hair restorer or oil for the tongue, and from the attitude of honourable members opposite they are hoping that they can get a few words in.

I shall refer to some of the interesting things that have happened under price control. Though I could talk about them until tomorrow, I shall refer to but a few. It is a notorious fact that the regulations were not being enforced. The regulations had been promulgated for a long time without being enforced because the government of the day realized how silly the law was but did not want to withdraw the regulations. It introduced the black market. Whether there was a black market for prawns if a shopkeeper put twenty-five in a bag instead of twenty-six I do not know. There was a prices commissioner in those days but we are not to have one now; there will be a prices commission. That is a big step forward. The Minister told honourable members clearly this afternoon that he would be the prices commissioner of New South Wales. He indicated that he would move an amendment to let the Minister have power. The Minister will be the prices fixer. But, that is a chapter of my speech for later this afternoon. Mr Vernon Treatt said that the prices commissioner would be subjected to pressure from various groups which would support a contrary view. Mr Treatt said that he hoped that the prices commissioner would resolutely support the principle that price control should exist only when an affirmative case was made out and further control of prices of goods and services should be indulged in only when economic stability, or the protection of the weak, was required. He indicated that that related only to essential services and goods. Mr David Drummond, a former honourable member for Armidale, spoke on the subject, saying:

The Minister says that the bill is in line with the legislation that has been prepared in other States, but section 5 of the Victorian Act reads:

There was different thinking in that State. A socialist government was in power in New South Wales but there was a free-enterprise government in Victoria. Section 5 of the Victorian Act reads:

For the purposes of this Parliament the Government may appoint a fit and proper person to be a Prices Decontrol Commissioner.

The reference was not to a prices control commissioner but to a prices decontrol commissioner. The former honourable member for Armidale said that the legislation in New South Wales indicated that the Government intended to fasten more securely the shackles placed on the people of the State by the federal Government. He continued:

I repeat that one reason why the people rejected the Government's proposals at the recent referendum was in order to prevent permanent control by the Commonwealth of the whole community. Another was in order to make a vigorous protest against the continual and unnecessary interference by any authority with the ordinary activities of the people.

That is what is happening here. The former honourable member for Armidale said also:

. . . the bill flouts the will of the great majority of the people who voted at the referendum.

I believe it to be true, that the majority of people in New South Wales do not want price control today, as they indicated in a referendum in 1974.

Mr Ryan: That was because your mob opposed it.

Mr BROWN: Take it easy; you have been here for only ten minutes—

Mr Ryan: Long enough to acquire as much knowledge as you have.

Mr BROWN: Possibly the honourable member for Hurstville has a lot more knowledge but he needs to be able to put it over and get people to understand. I should not want him interjecting too much, because he could well be called to order. This is what the former honourable member for Armidale said at that time:

. . . the most important factor in any discussion in the principle and practice of price control. The real question . . . is whether we are to have a Prices Regulation Bill and, if so, how far the Government should assume the function of its Federal colleagues.

I come to a distinguished member of the Parliament who served with great integrity and honesty. He was at the time the honourable member for Yass, the Hon. W. F. Sheahan, Minister for Lands, who also spoke on the measure. Unfortunately, like some other great sires, eminent people are not transmitting their characteristics through too well to their progeny at the present time. The late Hon. W. F. Sheahan said:

I never forget the decisions of the people, and I will always respect and accept them. The decision of the people by referendum was that the Commonwealth should no longer be the authority to control prices in this community for whatever period it may decide upon.

Mr McCaw interjected, and the Hon. W. F. Sheahan gave him a short lesson but I am a little kinder to newer members. He said:

You will learn that interjections do not always pay.

Further on, this appears:

At any rate, I am entitled to say that it was decided at the referendum that the Commonwealth should no longer control prices. That is clear. It was asserted that the States should control prices in any field in which it may be necessary. The referendum result has been accepted by the Government and by me. It is no use talking nonsense and saying that it has not got to be accepted. In a democracy it must be accepted, and, what is more, respected.

The decision of the people of Australia at the referendum in 1974 was that they did not want price control. Mr Sheahan continued:

I have occasionally seen a wolf in sheep's clothing. Any Government that will not vacate the price fixation field as soon as it can will be damned, and deserves to be damned, because it is the desire of everyone who has exercised his mind on this matter to vacate it. As a matter of fact, the people are sick and tired of controls over many things . . . We have no love for price control as such, when prices of commodities are fixed in a capricious manner, and when an army of officials is employed in its administration. It is not the desire of any member of this Government unnecessarily to continue price control.

The Hon. W. F. Sheahan, on 22nd July, 1948, said that any government that does not vacate the prices fixation field will be damned and deserves to be damned. He said also that the people were sick and tired of controls, but today a government to which the Hon. W. F. Sheahan paid great allegiance for a long time is reintroducing a prices control measure which, a little later, I shall show is more stringent than anything that came before.

Another case at that time showed how stupid price control could be. It was far worse than the story I have related about whether there should be twenty-five or twenty-six prawns in a bag. I am referring to a case that was decided by the High Court. No doubt some honourable members will be able to quote the case chapter and verse, but I shall read it. I refer the House to the 1946 decision of the High Court in *The King v. Bromhead, ex parte Miss Daveney Pty Limited*. Lieutenant-Colonel Murray Robson said:

This case went to the High Court on appeal from the Supreme Court of New South Wales. The firm of Miss Daveney Pty. Ltd. manufactured confectionery. A price had been fixed for the goods it manufactured, by notice in writing from the Price Fixing Commissioner, under the identical regulation of the National Security (Price Fixing) Regulations that appears in subclause (b) of clause 20 of this bill. Although that firm happened to manufacture confectionery the principle of the decision on this regulation applies to every type of manufacturer, and to the respective type of goods manufactured—the clothes that people wear, the homes in which they live, or hope to live, the food which is processed and which they eat—every conceivable type of manufactured product.

This case is of interest as the company had the price of its goods fixed at what was termed the base year in 1939. It maintained that price for six years notwithstanding that the basic wage had doubled. Lieutenant-Colonel Robson continued:

By August, 1945, as a result of increased efficiency and a general all-round improvement in methods of production, its gross profit increased from 19 per cent to something like 35 per cent.

The company kept its price for six years and improved its efficiency. Its wages doubled. However, because of the increased efficiency and productivity its profit increased from 19 per cent to 35 per cent. One would have thought that it would have been reasonable, having done that, to sell at the same price. The statement continues:

By August, 1945, as a result of increased efficiency and a general all-round improvement in methods of production, its gross profit had increased from 19 per cent to something like 35 per cent. An official of the Prices Commission—and similar action could be taken by an official of the department that the Minister will be administering—suggested to the company that it might consider reducing its turnover by about 20 per cent with the object of reducing its gross profit margin to 15 per cent.

Fifteen per cent was the allowable percentage. One may ask whether that put a premium on efficiency. Today more than ever we want productivity, increased efficiency and the opportunity to sell goods at the same price as they were sold six years before. This firm did it, but under price control it had to reduce its turnover. In other words the staff had to be told to sit down for a few hours each day. That demonstrates the stupidity of it all. Lieutenant-Colonel Robson then said:

This company's efficiency was not affected by the price that was fixed, but because it was efficient it was asked to reduce production. It must be remembered that the gross profit does not all belong to the company. There is

always a third partner in business to be reckoned with, who is also found in everybody's pockets—the Federal Treasurer. Unfortunately he cannot be got rid of.

He was present in the case of this firm to which I have referred. Lieutenant-Colonel Murray Robson said further:

I regret that power to take action similar to that taken on that occasion is contained in this measure. This Parliament has **power** to pass or amend this bill but I urge the Minister to see that his department will not administer it on similar lines to the Commonwealth.

The then Minister for Labour and Industry said by way of interjection that he would not tolerate such action.

Mr Ryan: I remind the honourable member for Raleigh that the time is twenty-five minutes past five.

Mr BROWN: The House has been wondering about the honourable member for Hurstville. Now it has found out one thing: he can tell the time. I am closely governed by Standing Order 142A and by Mr Deputy-Speaker. I wish to refer now to the remarks of another member of the Labor Party. I should not think he is the whitest knight in the most shiny armour so far as that party is concerned but the Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Co-operative Societies probably says about him, "My hero". If the person to whom I refer had not trotted off to London after vacating the electorate of Bondi, the Minister, who had been unkindly rejected by certain people in the federal electorate of Phillip, would not have been able to be a member of this House and give the benefit of his great thinking to the people of New South Wales.

Mr Einfeld: If I had not been a member of the House the honourable member for Raleigh would have been most unhappy.

Mr BROWN: It would have been a shame. Although the Labor Party may not regard Mr Abram Landa as the whitest knight in shining armour, I am sure that the Minister is delighted that he went overseas. That gentleman said that he appreciated the matter of the prawns as for a while he made a living by selling them. He said that the Commonwealth should no longer control prices and that the Government may realize that it had made a mistake. Mr Landa said:

These controls can be a success only if all the State Governments agree, as they appear to have agreed so far, to a uniformity in each and every State of the Commonwealth. I agree that there may be certain items that should be controlled in one State and not in others, but when we come to the important items, if there is a lack of uniformity in the various States then, within six to twelve months, price control will fail completely.

Later he said:

I should say that the Government that attempts to retain controls beyond that stage would be foolish. Competition in respect of the articles produced, in itself will bring price levels within the means of the people. Any Minister or Government that imposes controls after that stage has been reached would be committing political suicide.

I wished to outline those things as I thought they were important to the considerations of the House tonight. Apart from the honourable member for Castlereagh and the honourable member for Manly, most honourable members present were not in the

House at the time to which I am referring and for that reason I considered that I should refer to the thinking that governed the debate at that time. I wished to refer to the socialists, the communists and to what Cardinal Freeman said. In Sweden a socialist government, a model democracy, has just been bundled out of office after a record 44-year term. Writers and commentators on **oversea** affairs generally agree that that government went out of office because the Swedes were in revolt against incentive-killing restrictions and an oppressive bureaucracy that cared for their bodies but dampened their souls.

Though the honourable member for **Illawarra** would be considered competent to speak about socialism—he has said a few words about it, and he was described in certain words by the honourable member for Tenterfield—one thing he should remember about Sweden and its incentive-killing restrictions is that nine-tenths of all Swedish industry is in private hands. The role of the so-called socialist government was to lay on social welfare by dint of massive taxation while laying off the nationalization of industry. I warn the Minister and the Government that private industry badly needs the same encouragement today, as it needs it every day. It does not want restrictions or people being driven out of New South Wales.

Today the House heard the Premier when replying to a question express his concern about record unemployment in New South Wales and blame everybody else for it. But industrialists will not establish their businesses in this State if we place all these restrictions on them. There is no way to **finance** social welfare with the golden eggs laid by private enterprise without killing the goose of private enterprise. Today the great enemy of Australia is inflation, and this measure will not resolve that problem in any way. As I will point out later, it will lead to an increase in prices. Honourable members should remember that it was the **Whitlam Labor** Government that caused unprecedented inflation by pace-setting in wage rises and by a government spending spree which was unrelated to any commensurate rise in productivity. Socialism can set out to give private enterprise a human face or it can opt for full-blown communism, accepting the risks implicit in the fact that no communist country has yet acquired a human face.

This country will prosper only under a system that is free of these restrictions. The marketplace, with its straightout competition, will determine the price to be charged. The present economic climate with its high unemployment is the worst time to think of price control, let alone introduce it. I said in my speech at the introductory stage, and I repeat it—industry wants price control like it wants a hole in the head. This over-zealous move is being headlined as a system of price control under which the consumers will not pay more for goods, but the words "for a little while" should be added to that propaganda. I do not believe that the Minister thinks this legislation will work. It is a grave mistake for New South Wales to introduce this measure when similar legislation has not been introduced in other States. If one can judge from what was said in the Minister's second-reading speech it seems to me that this is more of a prices justification measure. There will be too much restriction, and competing industries will turn their backs on New South Wales. Can you imagine one price in Wodonga for a commodity and a different one in Albury?

Mr Sheahan: What about the price of petrol at Albury?

Mr BROWN: Petrol is easier to handle than many thousands of food prices. A little later I shall give some examples. Price control can become profit control. Without incentives industry will not expand and there will be no rise in employment opportunities. Inefficient industries would welcome price control because prices would be fixed on the least efficient industry with the poorest productivity. Under price control

companies go along with their books and state their case. The fixed maximum soon becomes the realistic minimum. I wonder whether the Government invited representatives of business to confer with it on this matter. It is imperative that this should be done. On this theme John **Ruskin** said:

There is hardly anything in the world that someone cannot make a little worse and a little cheaper, and the people who consider price alone are this man's lawful prey.

Price alone will not govern the selling of the product. John **Ruskin** in referring to this man's lawful prey might well have had in mind the Minister's remarks in which he foreshadowed his amendment to give himself absolute power over the price of every article sold in this State. No one in his wildest dreams could imagine that today we would be bringing in legislation to replace the Prices Commissioner who, the Minister has said, has been tremendously efficient, with the Prices Commission. Now the Minister has told us he is going to move an amendment that will virtually give him the power of veto. That will mean, not in intent but in fact, that the Minister will have power over the price of everything sold in this State. This bill will do away with the Prices Commissioner, not because he has not been doing a first-class job but because he needs some help. So we are giving him some assistant commissioners.

It seems to me that price control will be determined by the political wind blowing at a given time. In this field bread might become a half-baked or even a burnt issue. Justice will be cast aside while we hear more about the big bad manufacturers. What is the true story of bread and its price? At present the Act under which we work gives the Prices Commissioner power to approve the price of bread. If the Minister does not think it is necessary he can by notice in the *Government Gazette* suspend it for twenty-eight days.

On 28th September after seeing a heading in the *Daily Telegraph* I thought that from the way the Minister had managed things, if he decided to leave this institution he could well set himself up as a great promoter. That article in the *Daily Telegraph*, under this caption "Bread up again—Bakers seek increase to 50c a loaf", stated:

The price of bread is expected to rise by 2c in the next few weeks.

This would take the cost of a sliced and wrapped (2lb) loaf to 50c.

An application for a 2c rise is before the NSW Prices Commissioner, Mr Ian Hamilton.

That article, which was written by Harry Potter of the *Daily Telegraph*, had scarcely hit the streets before this article appeared in the *Daily Mirror* of the same day under the heading "No bread rise":

The State Government will not allow the price of bread to rise and will pass a special law to stop it if necessary, the Premier, Mr Wran, said today.

Mr Wran, commenting on an application by bread manufacturers for a 50 cent loaf, said NSW bread was already over-priced.

The Premier said he knew that the Minister had absolutely no power to veto that price rise, if in fact the Prices Commissioner granted one. Probably he learned that if in fact he gave a direction to the Prices Commissioner—and only the Minister can tell us that—he would have acted illegally. To cover that illegal act the Minister now tells us that he intends to move an amendment to give him the power to veto any price rise granted by the Prices Commissioner. The Prices Commission is to be set up with a representative of the consumers. If next week it came to a unanimous decision—assuming it was in operation then—and the political climate so dictated, the Minister

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could veto a price rise. Why have the Prices Commission? Why not have just one powerful czar? Mr Justice Kelleher stated at page 54 of his report on the bread industry:

I do not favour the suggestion that prices should be fixed by a tribunal on which representatives of consumers and manufacturers are included. Experience in regard to industrial tribunals has been that in many cases opposite stands are taken by the members representing the interests of employers and employees in the industry concerned, with the result that the issues have to be determined by the conciliation commissioner. The chances of manufacturers and consumers coming to an agreement on price increases would be somewhat remote and the matter would, therefore, have to be determined in the end by the Prices Commissioner. His primary function is to protect the interests of the consumers; the evidence shows that he has discharged this function satisfactorily and there is no good reason why he should not continue to do so.

One of the root causes of the high price of bread in New South Wales is the restricted hours of baking that do not apply in Victoria, where bread is cheaper than it is here. It is interesting to note that the only other State with price control has the dearest bread in Australia. Another root cause is the discounts that have been bludgeoned out of some bakeries by the supermarkets. They get the baker in on 30 days credit with free returns but the discounts might average 25 per cent. They become such a part of the baker's market that they then say they want a discount of 273 per cent. They get him in to such an extent that if he does not meet their demands he loses his market. This is blackmail. Bakers become dependent to some extent on supermarkets. With price control at the top and high costs at the bottom, the bakers are caught in a vicious squeeze. This is particularly so with some country bakers. The other day the Minister talked about——

Mr Einfeld: On a point of order. I do not want to stop the honourable member for Raleigh. In fact I have been most interested in the history he has been giving. I think he ought to go down as one of the greatest historians of the Parliament. But the situation is that there is a case before the court at the moment. The bread manufacturers have issued a summons against the Prices Commissioner in regard to prices and are asking the judge of the court to direct the commissioner to increase the price of bread. I do not want to stop any discussion on bread in particular, because the honourable member is entitled to some extent to make some reference to it, but I do not want the situation to be embarrassing to the court. While I am bringing up this point of order I am giving the honourable member for Raleigh a breather. In the meantime he might come up to date and talk about the bill itself. He might confine his discussions on bread to matters that will not interfere with the court action, which has been adjourned until a date in November. I think it could be embarrassing if he continues in that strain.

Mr Brown: Mr Deputy-Speaker ——

Mr DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Are you speaking on the point of order?

Mr Brown: Without a doubt. I should not transgress a standing order, Mr Deputy-Speaker. I am speaking on the point of order. I appreciate what the Minister has said and I believe there is a case before the court. I read in the paper about the case, and if anything that I am saying here about the price of bread will impinge on that hearing, I regret it. I shall not discuss the matter at any great length; I have a small matter to tie up. I was in order when I mentioned the Premier's statement about

freezing the price of bread. I was quite in order in giving him a pat on the back for his great statement. I submit that if I can finish my remarks on the cost of bread in the country, it would not in any way affect the case before the court.

Mr Webster: Further to the point of order—

Mr DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I have heard enough to decide the point raised by the Minister and canvassed by the honourable member for Raleigh. I am sure the honourable member for Raleigh will bear in mind the matter raised by the Minister. It is preferable that he avoid touching on the price of bread. It would assist the House if he returned to a discussion of the bill.

Mr BROWN: Thank you, Mr Deputy-Speaker. I believe I have stuck fairly closely to the bill, which is designed to regulate prices in New South Wales. The labour costs of country bakeries are relatively much higher than those of city bakeries, with their vast output and mechanical processors and their lower purchase price of raw materials. Country bakeries pay the full price for raw materials. They also have a freight differential; in two neighbouring towns in my area there is 1 cent difference. If these restrictions are to continue, they will frustrate the Government's avowed intentions on decentralization. Having said that, I shall touch no further on the price of bread.

Mr McGowan: Tell us about the flour mills.

Mr BROWN: You are obviously a smart cookie. I should prefer it if you would not be quite so smart. I know what you have tried to put into the heads of some of the kids at some of the schools. Someone with a similar name did try to force communist ideas down their necks. So when you are without sin, you cast the first stone. Otherwise, sit back in your box because you are not doing too well today.

Mr SPEAKER: I ask the honourable member for Raleigh to ignore interjections, leave me to deal with them, and carry on with his speech.

Mr BROWN: I have mentioned price control and its dangers. I am not under any illusions about the difficulties of effectively implementing this legislation. That is one reason why I am strongly opposed to it. I do not think we should pass any legislation that cannot be effectively implemented. This legislation cannot be implemented. I was concerned when I read the Prices Regulation Act. It was impractical to enforce it. That was one of the reasons for lifting price controls. On 6th March, 1975, the honourable member for Waverley, who is now the Minister, asked the former Premier this question in the House about prices:

Will the Government act to prevent profiteering and prices exploitation: which are rife in the community, such as occurred yesterday in the retail price of the regular 8½ oz pressure-pack can of Palmolive rapid shaving cream, which sold at \$1.20 in a city store, 88c in a suburban store and 76c in a supermarket? Will the Government use its powers under the Prices Regulation Act to prevent such deliberate cheating of the public, of which the item I have quoted is a comparatively small but very real example?

The Premier said that the honourable member for Waverley had gone off the caviar and gone on to shaving cream. He said that he would look at the allegation and take it up with the Minister for Labour and Industry, Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Federal Affairs. That is an example of how difficult it is to implement this legislation. It will be a real administrative jungle. Food stores have become big business. I have here the local newspapers from the outstanding electorate in New South Wales, which is Raleigh. They are the *Hastings Shire Gazette*, the *Nambucca Guardian News* and the *Macleay Argus*.

This has become such big business that five full pages in one issue of the *Macleay Argus* are devoted to food prices. I point out to the Minister how one of these newspapers shows the selling price of Dixie Bell table margarine at 59 cents, 69 cents and 77 cents, all on special. I ask him what price will be fixed for that commodity? Rexona toilet soap is advertised at 34 cents, 38 cents, 42 cents, and 48 cents. Every week one particular brand of chicken is advertised for 50 cents less than the usual price. It might be size 17 this week for \$1.99 instead of \$2.49. Dawn brand toilet paper—the famous do-away-with-newspaper brand—varies from 39 cents to 42 cents, 48 cents and 56 cents. One brand of liquid detergent is advertised at 71 cents and 88 cents. Small tins of the same brand of baked beans and spaghetti are advertised at 11 cents, 12 cents, 15 cents and 17 cents. An advertisement sets out a number of items and includes the words "special price" in respect of some lines. Bearing in mind different prices for the same items, I hope that when the Minister replies to this debate he will suggest what price will be the fixed price.

Mr Ryan: Is the honourable member supporting the bill?

Mr BROWN: I am strongly against it, all the way. I am pointing out the difficulties that occurred before with price control and I am outlining some of the difficulties that will occur again under price control. Recently a most contentious matter has been the discounting of intoxicating liquor. In the latest AHA journal, Mr Barry McInerney, the president of the New South Wales branch of the association, stated that retailers were countering the reduced prices of liquor by putting up the price of groceries. Other difficulties like that will occur when the provisions of this bill are implemented.

Earlier this afternoon the Minister gave the House a good run-down on the bill. In particular he mentioned that under this measure there would be control of the prices for services. How will the Government do that? Suppose that on a rainy, windy night a waterpipe bursts in a man's home. Suppose, also, that there is a fixed price for the plumbing service. The homeowner telephones the plumber but he will think twice before he will hop out of bed in the middle of the night to assist a man **who** might have his house half flooded. This is what will happen if the Minister fixes a price on the charges of service industries.

In Column 8 in the *Sydney Morning Herald* recently a story was told of a man whose air-conditioning unit failed one Friday night. He rang the service company, but when he was told that the charge for a four-hour minimum was \$72 he decided to wait for service until Monday. This would not be an isolated instance of the sort of difficulties that will arise when a price for service is fixed.

The Minister mentioned that further amendments to section 20 and 24 of the Prices Regulation Act are contained in schedule 2 of the bill. Although he said at the introductory stage—and made brief reference to it in his second-reading speech—that the proposed commission would be mainly a body to investigate complaints, I should like the Minister in reply to explain how these complaints will be initiated. Of course, I could write to the Minister and say that I was charged 27c for yoghurt at one store, 23c at another and it is on special for 19c this week at David Jones. Would the Minister investigate that sort of complaint? I suppose that is one way in which to initiate an investigation. How else would a person get a complaint investigated? The Minister said that the law of evidence will not apply at hearings of this tribunal. Why that should be so I do not know. I could not believe that the lawyers in the Government will let the Minister get away with that.

Mr Sheahan: The honourable member does not know what it means.

Mr BROWN: The kindergarten is out. The little boys are coming out again. I am sure the Minister will give the honourable member for Burrinjuck an opportunity to speak later during this debate.

Mr Sheahan: No one will get a chance, the way the honourable member is talking.

Mr BROWN: I am only exercising my democratic right under the standing orders, to which you people subscribe. This is what you said during the debate last Thursday, when we talked about upholding the traditions of this House. I am using my right as a member of the Opposition to point out to the people of New South Wales something that the Government is trying to do under the glib pretence of protecting them. The Government is going to rip them off. The honourable member does not like me pointing that out to the people, but if he wants to dispute what I say he can seek the call during this debate in order to dispute it. Alternatively, he can give the Minister his advice—although I think the Minister would be a lot better off without it.

The bill shows a positive lack of confidence in the Prices Commissioner. At the introductory stage the Minister said that he wanted a prices commission on which the consumers could have their say. The Prices Commissioner has done a wonderful, first-class job, but the Minister still wants the Prices Commission. Today, before the commission is even appointed, he is showing to honourable members that it will be a paper tiger. The Minister has foreshadowed that he will move an amendment to give himself the power of veto. On 28th September the Premier said in the newspapers, "We will change the law to give the Minister that power". I want to know why a commission is to be set up under this legislation if every decision it makes can be overruled by the Minister. I wonder whether that was the real reason, and the very thing that enabled the Premier to make the statement that appeared on 28th September on the front pages of the *Daily Mirror* and the *Sun*.

[Mr Speaker left the chair at 6 p.m. The House resumed at 7.30 p.m.]

Mr BROWN: I believe this bill will be a disaster. At least, it will be a fizzer. It is a bill of double standards, and represents an attempt at public relations by the Government, and nothing else. Even then the Government has not done a good job. It appears to me to be using a sledgehammer to crack a nut. This legislation is only the tip of an iceberg of controls to which we in this State will be subjected. The Minister said in his second-reading speech that section 58 (c) will be omitted from the Act. That section provides as follows:

This Act shall be administered with a view to—

(c) the progressive removal of the control of prices and rates at the earliest possible dates consistent with the welfare of the community.

That provision was written into the Act a long time ago; it is now to be removed. In my view that indicates an intention by the Government to keep price control for a lengthy period.

I ask the Minister to say in his reply to this debate why proposed section 4E, which appears in item (2) of schedule 1, provides that a person who is of or above the age of 70 will not be eligible for appointment as a commissioner, and proposed section 4F provides that a commissioner shall cease to hold office on the day on which he attains the age of 70 years. Most other legislation sets the age of 65 for those purposes, and that is done to encourage men to retire early and to take their superannuation. I ask the Minister to explain why a later age has been proposed in connection with this bill.

I am concerned also about the wide powers set out in proposed section 8A, which is part of item (4) of schedule 1, relating to reports to be furnished to the Minister in respect of such goods and services as the Minister specifies. Proposed section 8C provides that the commission may decide to refuse an application or to hold an inquiry following the making of an order under section 20. I take it that the Minister will explain whether any directions given by him will apply to that procedure also, or whether they will apply only when the commission conducts an inquiry. Will the Minister have the power of veto under proposed section 8C, as he has in other respects? The bill provides in proposed section 8F (5) that the commission will not be bound by the rules of evidence. The Opposition will move an amendment to that provision. We are concerned also about the proposed omission of section 58 (c) which is contained in item (11) (c) of schedule 1. Why that should be suggested is beyond my comprehension.

Our opposition to the bill is not based on a lack of concern for the consumer who is being ripped off. The legislation of the former Government generally, and in particular that dealing with such things as the sale of motor vehicles, demonstrated clearly our attitude in that respect, and any attempt by the Government to construe our opposition here as being against the interests of the consumer would be quite misplaced. Nothing could be further from the truth. The track record of the Liberal and Country parties on consumer protection is the envy of every State in Australia, for we were the first government to introduce this sort of provision.

The Minister says that the legislation will enable inquiries to be carried out into the prices charged for goods. Such inquiries can be carried out under the existing law, and we believe that the additional procedures now proposed will add to the costs for any attempt to control the market mechanism, will restrict the supply of goods. I regard this as a bad measure. I do not know who proposed it, or who made the suggested additions, but it would be fair to say that the intelligence of the person or persons concerned would be so small that they would almost make Andy Capp look like Einstein.

I have endeavoured to review the history of price control and to explain why it was necessary in the first place. I have endeavoured to pick out points in the legislation of 1948 which, subsequently, eminent members of this House said should be done away with as soon as possible, as any government that persisted with price controls would be damned. I have endeavoured to point out the difficulties of administering the Prices Regulation Act, even when it was fully policed, and I have referred to the serious difficulties that will be experienced in the administration of the legislation now proposed. The Opposition objects to the measure in every way.

Sir ERIC WILLIS: Mr Speaker—

Mr FLAHERTY (Granville), Government Whip [7.36]: I move:

That the question be now put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 49

Mr Akister	Mr Cahill	Mr Einfeld
Mr Bannon	Mr R. J. Clough	Mr Face
Mr Barnier	Mr Cox	Mr Ferguson
Mr Bedford	Mr Crabtree	Mr Flaherty
Mr Booth	Mr Day	Mr Gordon
Mr Brereton	Mr Degen	Mr Haigh

Mr Hills	Mr Mallam	Mr Sheahan
Mr Hunter	Mr Mulock	Mr Stewart
Mr Jackson	Mr Neilly	Mr Wade
Mr Jensen	Mr O'Connell	Mr F. J. Walker
Mr Johnson	Mr Paciullo	Mr Whelan
Mr Johnstone	Mr Petersen	Mr Wilde
Mr Jones	Mr Quinn	Mr Wran
Mr Keane	Mr Ramsay	
Mr Kearns	Mr Renshaw	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr McGowan	Mr Rogan	Mr Cleary
Mr Maher	Mr Ryan	Mr Durick

Noes, 45

Mr Arblaster	Mr Griffith	Mr Punch
Mr Barraclough	Mr Hatton	Mr Rofe
Mr Boyd	Mr Healey	Mr Rozzoli
Mr Brewer	Mr Jackett	Mr Schipp
Mr Brown	Mr Leitch	Mr Singleton
Mr Bruxner	Mr McDonald	Mr Taylor
Mr Cameron	Mr McGinty	Mr Viney
Mr J. A. Clough	Mr Mackie	Mr N. D. Walker
Mr Coleman	Mr Maddison	Mr Webster
Mr Cowan	Mr Mason	Sir Eric Willis
Mr Darby	Mrs Meillon	Mr Wotton
Mr Dowd	Mr Morris	
Mr Doyle	Mr Murray	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Duncan	Mr Mutton	Mr Moore
Mr Fischer	Mr Osborne	Mr West
Mr Fisher	Mr Park	

Resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That this bill be now read a second time—proposed.

Mr EINFELD (Waverley), Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Co-operative Societies [7.47], in reply: I do not propose to follow the pattern set by the honourable member for Raleigh and in my reply speak for a long time. While listening to the member for Raleigh I wondered whether he was endeavouring to take his place in history with some of the great historians of ancient days such as Plato and Homer. I wondered also whether the honourable member for Raleigh was trying to emulate Gibbon and give us a history of the rise and fall of price control or something of that nature akin to *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Possibly the honourable member for Raleigh had in mind Toynbee or Tolstoy's *War and Peace*.

The honourable member spoke for almost two hours. He gave us a dissertation on the history of price control since before World War II up to the present. I know that he carefully read all the stories of that time and spent something like half an hour of his tedious two-hour address telling us all about speeches that were delivered in this Chamber in 1948, almost thirty years ago, as if 1948 was about as far as he got in his understanding of the relevance of this Act and what is happening here today. There is a television programme "At last the 1948 Show" and I suppose that is really what impelled the honourable member for Raleigh to talk about these things.

I took it for granted that as the honourable member was leading on behalf of the Opposition, everything he said represented the Opposition's point of view. He spoke of price fixing as something that should now disappear. He suggested that the Government was setting up some great organization for price control with a large army of inspectors policing the commission's decisions. Mind you, I even gave the honourable member an advance copy of my second-reading speech in order that he could read it over for a couple of days and perhaps understand what it was all about. I gave it to him so that he would know that the Government did not intend to set up a prices commission with an enormous inspectorate. In fact, that is precisely the opposite of what the Government is doing. This bill will amend the Prices Regulation Act of 1948. The Opposition was in government for eleven long, weary and exhausting years. Had the former Government wanted to do something about that 1948 statute it could easily have repealed it during that time. However, it did not do so. It maintained price control on bread and the retail margin on petrol. If that is not upholding the principle of price control over those long, tedious and weary years I do not know what is.

The Opposition knows quite well that this Government has a mandate. The Australian Labor Party said not once, but time and again, that upon election to government it would set up a prices commission, how it would be set up and what would be done with it. The Premier, the bright man of politics in this State and, in fact, in this country—the man who has set the initiative and given inspiration to all citizens of Australia—said quite clearly on more than one occasion that on election to government the Labor Party was pledged to the citizens of New South Wales to set up a prices commission. What was the reaction of the citizens of this State? The reaction was to send the Labor Party to government with a majority so that it might put into effect the platform that had been espoused in every city, town and village in New South Wales in which Labor candidates and members of Parliament had spoken in support of that policy.

Labor clearly said that it would set up a prices commission and the role of that commission was spelt out. We said that we should be willing to listen to complaints from the consumers and citizens of this State. Everybody is a consumer, even the honourable member for Raleigh, though obviously he did not consume much of the second-reading speech I gave to him in advance. Labor said it would protect the honourable member for Raleigh and every other citizen in this State.

Labor pledged itself to protect even the Leader of the Opposition, who badly needs protection from some of his friends with their long knives. Labor said it would set up a prices commission of three persons to investigate complaints about rip-offs and exploitation. I ask honourable members to recall how many times I said in this Parliament, from the Opposition side of the House, that Labor would set up a prices commission. How many times did the Leader of the Opposition, in government, deny this right to the people? The result is that now Labor is setting up a three-person prices commission which will investigate exploitation and rip-offs wherever they may take place. If necessary, and I hope it will not be—the Government expects this to be necessary in only a few cases—the commission will set a price for a commodity where it has been found that there is a rip-off element and where the manufacturer has been exploiting the consumers. A price will be fixed when the supplier has tried to take advantage of the community and, under the cover of inflation, cheated the public.

Members opposite are worried, naturally, because the Government might have to deal with some of their friends who have given them financial support. This Government says that the Prices Commission will investigate without fear or favour and by open inquiry. Consumer organizations and others will be heard. The tribunal

will hear all sides of a case. If there is exploitation, cheating, conniving or taking advantage of the public and exploiting the community the tribunal will act. The commission, after open inquiry, will determine that the price of those goods contains a rip-off element. I ask honourable members to ponder what will happen if the commission sets a price for some commodities.

Recently I heard the Leader of the Opposition interviewed on a radio programme and in relation to this subject he said, "Ahah; this is the mystery." I ask him now what is the mystery if the Prices Commission sets a price? Before doing so it will have investigated the matter thoroughly, looking at perhaps five, eight or even ten cases of exploitation before setting a fixed price. The warning will then be there. Anybody who seeks to rip-off the community, exploit customers, cheat the public or take advantage of inflation will get to know about what the Prices Commission can do. They will know that if they step out of line the Prices Commission will investigate the price of their commodity and should they be found to be cheating or taking advantage of the public the price of their commodity will be fixed and, of course, a breach of the decision of the commission will attract severe penalty. Even though the Labor Government has a mandate from the people of New South Wales the Opposition has the impertinence to oppose this legislation. This bill is a most important part of consumer protection. Members opposite suggest that this is an improper action to take. Obviously they overlook the fact that during their eleven years of miserable, unhappy, unfaithful government the Liberal-Country party coalition kept the Prices Regulation Act on the statute books.

The people of New South Wales have now sent members of the former Government over to the Opposition benches so that they can listen to good government, take heed of reasonable legislation and hear what real protection is all about. The Wran Government is determined to provide consumer protection in every area where people may be taken advantage of. I have said on many occasions—and I repeat now—that I am satisfied that the great bulk of businessmen and the majority of entrepreneurs, whether they are in the retail, wholesale or manufacturing side of business, are playing the game with the community. However, the Consumer Affairs Bureau receive many complaints from the public; it gets as many as 500 telephone calls a day. As many as 120 letters of complaint are received in my office each day from people who are dissatisfied with the service that has been given to them or with the product they have purchased. The honourable member for Raleigh claimed that the Government he supported brought in great consumer protection legislation. The fact is that the previous Government brought in what we believed to be a bi-partisan type of legislation. That is why I am astounded that the Opposition is opposing this measure.

When we were in Opposition at no time did we oppose consumer protection legislation; on the contrary, we asked for the introduction of most consumer protection legislation—we encouraged it. Time and again in Parliament we asked for consumer legislation to be introduced, and we made public statements to the effect that the former government should bring in consumer protection with teeth. Even in the few months that we have been in office we have acted by way of regulation in an endeavour to get customer protection, and we shall do more in that direction. We intend to introduce more and more legislation with a view to seeing that the marketplace is cleared up and that people are not taken advantage of.

The honourable member for Raleigh spoke about two or three small items such as shaving cream. He said that on one occasion in this House I stated that a particular brand of shaving cream had varied in price from between 76c in one store to 80c in another and to more than \$1 in another. The honourable member for Raleigh laughed at that; he thought it was funny that anybody would want to make certain that people were not trying to rip off the community. He stated that Rexona soap was being

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sold at four different prices between 34c and 48c, and asked whether that was a big rip-off. When somebody can sell that product at 34c and make a profit, should another store sell it for 48c? In those circumstances should anyone be entitled to sell that product at 48c? I am not saying that the Government intends to control the price of those items; I am merely saying that—

[*Interruption*]

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr EINFELD: —we intend to control the means by which the friends of the hilarious laughers on the other side of the House seek to take advantage of ordinary men and women, decent Australians who want only to get ordinary value for the money they work hard for. Opposition members can laugh but the fact is that we will give protection to any consumer who has been cheated or robbed. This will be the start of a system in which investigations into various aspects of consumer affairs can take place under the control of the chairman of the Prices Commission and his two assistant commissioners. They will be able to investigate complaints of rip-offs and exploitation of the community. I make no apology for the Government's attitude; on the contrary, I am thrilled at the opportunity we have of introducing this three-man prices commission, which will hold open inquiries. The commission will have the opportunity to investigate complaints. We shall see that the ordinary men and women in this community are afforded protection so that if somebody tries to cheat, rob or exploit them, he will be caught and will be unable to continue that practice. We shall give the sort of protection to the ordinary man or woman in the street that we should like to give to our own family. I commend the bill to the House.

Question—That this bill be now read a second time—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 50

Mr Akister	Mr Haigh	Mr Paciullo
Mr Bannon	Mr Hatton	Mr Petersen
Mr Barnier	Mr Hills	Mr Quinn
Mr Bedford	Mr Hunter	Mr Ramsay
Mr Booth	Mr Jackson	Mr Renshaw
Mr Brereton	Mr Jensen	Mr Rogan
Mr Cahill	Mr Johnson	Mr Ryan
Mr R. J. Clough	Mr Johnstone	Mr Sheahan
Mr Cox	Mr Jones	Mr Stewart
Mr Crabtree	Mr Keane	Mr Wade
Mr Day	Mr Kearns	Mr F. J. Walker
Mr Degen	Mr McGowan	Mr Whelan
Mr Einfeld	Mr Maher	Mr Wilde
Mr Face	Mr Mallam	Mr Wran
Mr Ferguson	Mr Mulock	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Flaherty	Mr Neilly	Mr Cleary
Mr Gordon	Mr O'Connell	Mr Durick

Noes, 45

Mr Arblaster	Mr Bruxner	Mr Darby
Mr Barraclough	Mr Cameron	Mr Dowd
Mr Boyd	Mr J. A. Clough	Mr Doyle
Mr Brewer	Mr Coleman	Mr Duncan
Mr Brown	Mr Cowan	Mr Fischer

Mr Fisher	Mr Morris	Mr Taylor
Mr Griffith	Mr Murray	Mr Viney
Mr Healey	Mr Mutton	Mr N. D. Walker
Mr Jackett	Mr Osborne	Mr Webster
Mr Leitch	Mr Park	Sir Eric Willis
Mr McDonald	Mr Pickard	Mr Wotton
Mr McGinty	Mr Punch	
Mr Mackie	Mr Rofe	
Mr Maddison	Mr Rozzoli	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Mason	Mr Schipp	Mr Moore
Mrs Meillon	Mr Singleton	Mr West

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Progress reported from Committee and leave, granted to sit again at a later hour.

GENERAL LOAN ACCOUNT APPROPRIATION BILL

Mr Speaker reported the receipt of a message from His Excellency the Governor recommending the General Loan Account Appropriation Bill. The message was accompanied by a copy of the Loan Estimates, 1976–77.

Loan Estimates ordered to be printed.

Introduction

Motion (by Mr Renshaw) agreed to:

That a bill be brought in to provide for the appropriation of a certain sum out of the General Loan Account and for the application of that sum for certain Public Works and Services; and for purposes connected therewith.

Bill presented and read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr RENSRAW (Castlereagh), Treasurer [8.2]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I present the Loan Estimates for the financial year 1976–77.

This speech details the Government's capital works programme for the coming year. Together with the Budget speech, presented to Parliament on 29th September, it outlines the Government's financial planning for the current financial year.

The Government has framed the capital works programme in the context of severe constraints imposed by the federal Government.

The task has been to set priorities and to select from a wide range of competing needs those projects which the Government believes will best contribute to the enrichment of the life of the people of New South Wales.

In particular we have given a high priority to the Government's commitment to the restoration and modernization of the Public Transport system of New South Wales.

In my Budget speech I emphasized the wish of this Government to co-operate fully with the federal Government in the fight against inflation and in achieving economic recovery.

However, we are convinced that these objectives can and should be achieved without creating massive unemployment.

We are also convinced that the clamp on capital works enforced by the federal Government is short-sighted and self-defeating. It is in this area that we have the gravest reservations about the federal Government's economic strategy. The importance of capital works in providing employment, in stimulating investment, in reviving flagging business confidence in the private sector and in providing a basis for economic recovery, cannot be over-estimated.

Three main factors have shaped this year's capital works programme. They are: the restrictions imposed on State loan allocations by the federal Government; the cut-backs in specific purpose capital payments by the federal Government; and the backlog in capital work inherited from the previous Government of New South Wales.

At the June Premier's Conference and Loan Council meeting, all the Premiers urged upon the federal Government the importance of the capital works programme of the State in enabling the economy to begin moving again.

The States were not seeking handouts; the money sought would have been borrowed, either locally or overseas, and the debt charges would have been met mainly by the States themselves. The federal Government rejected the unanimous view of the Premiers and has severely curtailed the loan programme.

We are convinced that the severe cut-back in these programmes will delay economic recovery and increase unemployment. The federal Government has agreed to support a capital works programme of \$1,356 million for all States. The New South Wales share of this amount is \$431.9 million, an increase over the previous year of \$20.7 million—or only a mere 5 per cent.

The federal Government also took a tight approach to the semi-Governmental programme. Only after the strongest pressure from all the States would the federal Government agree to increase its original offer by \$50 million for all States. The overall allocation is \$960 million, of which New South Wales receives \$360 million.

The two allocations combined gave the States an increase of 10.3 per cent, yet the federal Government itself is planning for an inflation rate this year of 13 per cent. In real terms this means there has been a severe cut in the States' capital works programmes at a time when they should be expanding.

Nor is this the complete picture of the severity of the federal Government's policies.

Under the agreement entered into in 1973 the allocation of funds for welfare housing is the sole responsibility of the Commonwealth. The amount provided to New South Wales for 1976–1977 is \$123,411,000, the same amount as in 1975–1976 which was the same amount provided in 1974–1975.

A second area of concern involves the federal Government's decision to cut back in specific purpose capital payments.

With the exception of public transport, the story is again one of serious reductions in the level of assistance vitally needed to maintain forward planning and initiatives in many important areas.

Specifically the federal Government reduced by \$1.7 million grants for hospital buildings; slashed by \$36.8 million the provisional allocation for growth centres; cut by \$23.1 million the backlog sewerage allocation—this is less than half the amount provided last year—and only marginally increased the allocation to schools and technical education.

I cannot stress too strongly the State Government's deep concern at the approach adopted by the federal Government. The failure to agree to increase allocations at least to match cost increases must have serious implications for contractors, for workers and for the community generally. The damage to the already weakened building and construction industry in this State is well known. The overall effects will be felt for years to come.

In these circumstances the allocation of the available funds between the various State services has been a difficult task. Substantial increases in allocations have been required to meet expenditure on works already committed and in many cases there has been little scope for new works.

The third area of concern involves the huge backlog in almost every vital area of the State's public works programme.

The previous Government adopted the procedure of using capital funds to reduce the Budget deficits. More than \$60 million was used in this way. This has worsened the backlog in essential public works.

I propose to outline the specific allocations under the broad headings of Public Transport; Health; Education; Water Supply and Sewerage; Housing; Other Community Services; Conservation and Rural Development; Ports; Electricity; and General.

Of all the services the Government provides, public transport, because of years of neglect, is an area which must receive urgent priority from the Government.

The simple fact is that if the New South Wales public transport system is not restored to a sound basis then it will pose a grave threat to the entire fabric of the Government's financial structure.

Under the previous Government the Public Transport Commission deficit escalated to a figure representing nearly 10 per cent of the total Budget expenditure.

This cannot be allowed to continue.

The Government is pledged to provide a modern, reliable service to the community.

Mr Renshaw]

As I mentioned in the Budget Speech the downward slide in public transport must be arrested. We have begun with a 20 per cent cut in fares. This was just the first step in a major programme to improve and modernize the service.

Accordingly, we now propose a huge injection of capital funds this year. The Public Transport Commission's allocation has been stepped up to \$152 million—\$50 million more than last year's expenditure; one of the largest single increases in the history of New South Wales.

This year's allocation is made up of:

- \$120 million from General Loan Account, including Commonwealth grants under the Urban Public Transport Agreement of roundly \$25 million;
- \$12 million from its own borrowings; and
- \$20 million from the Railways Renewals Fund.

Our aim is to provide fast, safe, clean and comfortable trains, buses and ferries. To achieve this, considerable emphasis must be given to the modernization of the passenger rolling stock in the urban rail system.

In this field programmes are well under way. Deliveries are proceeding under an existing order for the supply of 50 double-deck suburban rail carriages and an order has been placed for a further 100 carriages. In addition, a contract has been let for 30 double-deck inter-urban motor and trailer cars. Action is also being taken to renew the signalling system in the precincts of Sydney Station in order to eliminate bottlenecks and to facilitate the movement of trains in this heavily trafficked area.

In the case of buses, we are looking closely at the question of further leasing arrangements in order to conserve capital funds for other essential transport purposes.

Major expenditure this year on the Eastern Suburbs Railway has been deferred pending the Government's consideration of the investigations by the Board of Review established to inquire into the future of this project. There is no need for me to dwell here on the bungling of the previous Government in relation to this work and the consequent burden that has been imposed on the taxpayers of this State—the facts are well known. We will be formulating policies, based on expert advice, to overcome the mistakes of our predecessors to the extent that it is possible to retrieve the situation at this stage.

The Government also intends to restore the efficiency and competitiveness of the State's rail freight services. Accordingly, the Public Transport Commission's allocations provide for an extensive programme to improve freight facilities. This includes the acquisition of new rolling stock, workshop modernization, the upgrading of tracks and so on.

With regard to rolling stock, the current contracts for 500 wheat hopper wagons and 500 coal wagons will largely be completed during 1976–77. Tenders will be called this year for an additional 500 coal hopper wagons and 200 flat wagons.

In money terms, the major heads of expenditure will be:

- \$30 million on passenger rolling stock—more than double last year;
- \$40 million on goods rolling stock;
- \$26 million on workshops and other facilities; and
- \$11 million on signalling and communications.

The balance will be spent on electrical works, plant and equipment, the two new ferries intended to be built by the State Dockyard and various other works. Funds have also been reserved for existing commitments on the Eastern Suburbs Railway and for possible needs should a decision be made to continue with this work.

Our public transport policies also imply significant changes in emphasis for road works programmes. As recently announced by the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways, the future of proposed expressway works in the inner city areas is under close scrutiny and it is envisaged that a number of these projects will be scrapped, freeing homes and other properties resumed or under threat because of previous planning in this field.

In keeping with our general policy special allocations are being provided through the Traffic Facilities Fund for engineering and control facilities that will greatly increase the traffic flow capacity of the existing urban road system. As mentioned in the Budget Speech, a special grant of \$2.5 million is being made from the Consolidated Revenue Fund to help with this programme.

The Department of Main Roads will be involved in these developments as well as continuing its responsibilities for the main roads network throughout the State.

The Department's major sources of funds are motor vehicle taxation and Commonwealth road grants but supplementary assistance is provided by way of loan allocations and borrowing authority. These latter provisions amount to \$19 million this year compared with \$15 million in 1975–76.

Overall, the Department is undertaking an expenditure of almost \$300 million on road and bridge works throughout the State in the current financial year.

Health is another field where there are major problems and the Government now faces a mammoth task in coping with the need for new, expanded and upgraded hospital facilities.

Our task has been made more difficult by expenditure cuts by the Federal Government.

In 1975–76 New South Wales received almost \$45 million in grants under the Hospitals Development, the Community Health and the School Dental programmes. This year the figure has been cut by \$2 million. The effect of this, when inflation is taken into account, is a serious reduction in the amount available for this year's programmes.

In the face of the reductions by the Federal Government and the very restricted growth in Loan Council allocations, it has been decided to maintain the flow of funds for hospital works by increasing the level of direct borrowings by public hospitals and the Health Commission. Overall, it is intended that \$8.8 million be raised in this way compared with \$1.5 million in 1975–76. Individually, the borrowings will be within the figure of \$800,000 set by the Loan Council for the smaller authorities so that there will be no impact on the State's semi-Governmental borrowing programme.

Hospital borrowings of this nature are guaranteed by the Government and the Government has to find the funds required each year for debt servicing costs.

In this way we have managed to increase the total allocation to \$110 million for the coming year. Last year \$88 million was spent from the General Loan Account and borrowings supplemented by \$15 million from the Hospital Fund, making a total of \$103 million.

Mr Renshaw]

During 1975–76, 20 major works were completed in public and psychiatric hospitals and it is expected that a further 22 major projects will be finished in the current year. We have decided to press on with the construction of the Hospital Complex at Westmead which will provide a range of urgently needed hospital services in the poorly serviced Western Metropolitan region. Expenditure on the project could reach \$38 million this year.

With the very small increase in the overall works allocation this would normally have meant that many other projects also of a high priority would have had to be deferred. However, the special arrangements I have outlined concerning borrowings will allow us to proceed with a number of these works.

Within the overall allocation, funds to the extent of \$1,600,000 have been provided for the purchase of new ambulances and for other items designed to improve ambulance operations.

An amount of \$3,815,000 has been included for Community Health, involving both Commonwealth and State provisions. Development in this field was initiated by the previous federal Government and the Commonwealth meets 75 per cent of the cost of projects.

The sum of \$4,264,000 included for School Dental Services is made up of both State and Commonwealth contributions for the development of this scheme. Prior to 1st July last, the federal Government met the whole of these costs. However, as I commented in my Budget speech, it cut its contribution by 10 per cent without prior consultation with the States. This left us with no option but to make up the difference from State funds.

Finally, an amount of \$807,000 has been allocated for miscellaneous health services to cover minor capital expenditures on a wide range of health facilities and equipment.

As indicated earlier, we are committed, as a Government, to maintaining a high rate of progress in the Education programmes as well as those for Public Transport and Health.

This year's allocation for schools has been influenced by two important factors.

First, the expected decline in the rate of growth of enrolments will ease to some degree the pressure for additional facilities.

On present estimates, an increase of only 10 000 is expected in enrolments next year compared with an increase of 13 000 in 1976. Although tentative, the estimated increase for 1978 is 7 000.

Second, there was an unexpected increase last year in the school building programme. This was largely as the result of the slackness in the building industry which meant works progressed more quickly than could be anticipated. As a result, as the financial year progressed an additional \$30 million was used, which under normal circumstances would have been funded from within this year's allocation.

In addition to this \$30 million, the allocation for this year will be \$139 million, roundly the same as the initial allocation last year.

Further, to make the best possible use of our resources, we have authorized the Department of Education to incur commitments totalling \$14 million on the basis that payments will not be required before July next. This special arrangement will also help the building industry which is sorely in need of additional work.

The significant fact is that the department's new works programme is designed mainly to meet primary school accommodation needs for 1978 and secondary school needs for 1979. Contracts are being let for five new high schools and thirteen new primary schools as well as major additions and improvements at selected schools in both city and country areas, including a number due for completion in 1977.

An amount of \$18.8 million, including \$12.8 million from Commonwealth grants, has been provided for technical and further education. Provision has been made for further expenditure on new technical colleges at Miller and Ryde, and on major additions at the Meadowbank, Grafton, Bathurst and Parkes Technical Colleges. The allocation also allows for a start on major additions at Dubbo, the purchase and conversion for technical college purposes of a building at Ultimo and the Argyle School at Goulburn.

A sum of \$1.1 million has been allocated from loan funds to the Teacher Housing Authority for the provision of housing for teachers in country areas of the State. In addition, the Authority has been authorized to borrow up to \$800,000 for this purpose.

The drastic reduction in the allocation by the federal Government under the National Sewerage Programme is not only a severe blow to the State's Water Supply and Sewerage programme but a tragic setback to thousands of families who have already been waiting many years for sewerage. This year's allocation has been reduced to \$19.7 million which is less than half of the \$42.8 million made available by the federal Government last year.

Nevertheless, the State Government has done all it can to ensure a reasonable expansion in the overall water and sewerage programme.

The Metropolitan Water Sewerage and Drainage Board has been allocated a borrowing authority to raise loans totalling \$118 million, an increase of \$19 million over last year. In addition, the State Government is to provide \$28 million from the General Loan Account, including \$1.5 million as grants for Government assisted schemes.

Further, the Government recently gave undertakings to the Board to facilitate the use of \$15 million of its reserve funds. This will enable further expansion of facilities and increased employment opportunities in keeping with the Government's policy of doing everything possible to relieve unemployment.

In all, the Board's works programme provides for capital outlays totalling \$190 million.

The Board's Shoalhaven Scheme is now nearing completion and will require a much lower expenditure this year than in 1975–76. This has permitted funds to be diverted to sewerage works, the more labour-intensive section of the programme. Allocations for these works will involve a record amount of over \$140 million in 1976–77.

Capital grants and advances to the extent of \$1.5 million will be provided to the Hunter District Water Board from General Loan Account to supplement the Board's direct borrowing authority of \$12 million. The Board will also receive an allocation from

Mr Renshaw]

the Commonwealth under the National Sewerage Programme but the reduced amount available from this source will prevent the Board from making the progress felt desirable in overcoming the backlog of sewerage works in its area of operations.

Special steps have been taken to ensure that the Board will not have to retrench workers in the current financial year. This has involved the use of comparatively small reserves held by the Board.

This year we have provided \$16.8 million to subsidize council expenditures on water supply and sewerage projects in country areas, an increase of \$4.5 million or 37 per cent on the amount made available in the previous financial year. While a substantial part of this allocation will be required for works in progress, it is proposed to commence 16 new water supply projects and 15 new sewerage schemes. Appropriate borrowing authorities have been provided to the councils concerned so as to enable them to meet their share of the costs involved.

An allocation of \$1,278,000 has also been provided for the South West Tablelands and Fish River Water Supply Schemes.

As I mentioned earlier, the allocation of \$123.4 million for welfare housing is the same as the provisions made in each of the past two years. In real terms this means a serious drop in the level of housing activity financed through the Housing Commission and terminating building societies. Coming at a time when there is a large list of applicants for welfare housing and a serious recession in the building industry in New South Wales the Commonwealth attitude to this most important activity can only be regarded as indefensible.

At the Premiers' Conference in June and on several occasions since then, New South Wales and other States have pressed for an increase in the overall allocation for welfare housing. But unfortunately for thousands of young home seekers the federal Government has not been prepared to reverse its decision.

The Housing Commission's share of available funds has been determined at 70 per cent of the total allocation, or \$86.4 million. This will be spent on the 3 000 projects in progress at 30th June last and on some 4 000 new homes to be commenced during the year.

Last year the Commission had to concentrate on completing dwellings under contract at June, 1975. No new works could be commenced which involved expenditure in 1975-76.

Because of the Housing Commission's commitments, only 20 per cent, or \$24.7 million, of the available funds could be allocated to terminating building societies in 1975-76.

This year, the allocation for societies has been restored to their normal 30 per cent and \$37 million will be paid into the Home Builders' Account for advances to societies.

I turn now to the other community services which cover child welfare, police, courts and prisons, the public buildings generally programme, tourism, sport and recreation, the various activities under the Minister for Lands, the Planning and Environment Commission and the Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority.

Provision has been made in the allocation to the Minister for Public Works for expenditure of \$3.2 million on child welfare buildings.

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The redevelopment project at Lynwood Hall, Guildford, was completed last year and work will proceed this year on the new remand shelter at Wollongong and the new home for wards at Gosford. The allocation also provides for a start to be made on a new shelter at Werrington Park and major extensions to the Worimi Shelter at Newcastle. The cost of these two projects is estimated at **\$2.5** million and, when completed, they will provide much needed modern facilities.

The allocation of **\$6.2** million for police buildings is **\$2.7** million more than last year.

Despite this, the allocation will only provide for the commitments in respect of major works in progress at 30th June, **1976**, the continuation of a programme of minor works which will include improved residential accommodation for officers in charge of police stations and lockup keepers, and the purchase of a number of police station sites.

Major works under construction include a new police station at Queanbeyan, which is being constructed in conjunction with a new court house, a station at Warilla which will be a major police communications centre and a station at Nowra.

Arrangements have also been made for a further six medium sized police stations to be constructed under the deferred payments scheme.

An amount of **\$8.2** million has been allocated on the vote for the Minister for Public Works for expenditure on court projects in **1976-77**. The great bulk of this sum—more than **\$6.5** million—has been earmarked for two large projects that are currently in progress—the Commonwealth-State Law Courts Building in Queen's Square and the Queanbeyan Court Complex.

Because of the acute funds position, new works have had to be confined to the acquisition and preparation of a site for a new Court House at Gosford, renovations to the old Supreme Court building in King Street, and works at Wyong and Walgett.

The Commonwealth/State Law Courts Building is expected to be operational in the first half of **1977** when all Civil Divisions of the Supreme Court with their Registry Offices, and the Sheriff's Department will take up occupation. The new complex which is jointly financed by the Commonwealth and State Governments and ultimately will have cost more than **\$40** million to construct, will provide **34** Court-rooms and **47** Chambers as well as ancillary facilities within the State jurisdiction.

The allocation for Corrective Services is **\$2.8** million. This is another section of the overall works programme where there is obviously a need for increased expenditures. Very careful consideration needs to be given, however, to the nature and scope of the works to be undertaken and their location, and this is proceeding. The findings of the Royal Commission will be important to this review.

In the meantime, provision has been made for an extensive programme of additions and modifications designed to improve existing centres to be undertaken this year.

The major items under Public Buildings Generally are the new office block at Rawson Place and the Parliament House project. The allocation also provides for work to commence on new office accommodation at Broken Hill and Gunnedah.

Work at Rawson Place is now proceeding smoothly and it is hoped that this troublesome project will be brought to a speedy completion. Expenditure this year should be **\$3.9** million.

Mr Renshaw

Some weeks ago the Premier announced that a special review was being made of the Parliament House project. Subsequent investigations have shown that work must continue to at least ground level and this has been approved.

The cost to complete this project has now risen to an estimated **\$25 million** and large allocations will be needed over the next two or three years if the work proceeds as originally planned.

There is no question that the new facilities are sorely needed and we are seeking a satisfactory solution to the cash problems involved. The Premier will be making an announcement on the matter as soon as the review is completed and decisions are reached.

As honourable members are aware, special action is being taken to increase the funds available from soccer pools for the development of sport and recreation facilities throughout the State.

The Loan Estimates include provision for an additional expenditure of **\$974,000** on the State's Sport and Recreation Service Centres and facilities. This is an increase of nearly **\$700,000** on last year's outlay.

As mentioned in my Budget Speech, substantial funds are being made available through the new Tourist Industry Development Fund to expand tourist facilities. A separate allocation of **\$330,000** has been made from loan funds to develop and improve the State-operated resorts.

The allocation to the Minister for Lands includes **\$4,330,000** for the development of Crown land for home sites and it is anticipated that approximately **1 800** blocks will be made available during the current year in the metropolitan and country areas.

An amount of **\$5,250,000** has also been included for the development of National and State Parks, historic sites and parks and reserves generally. Of this sum **\$3,250,000** is to be transferred to the National Parks and Wildlife Fund for the acquisition and development of new and existing areas throughout the State.

The programme of acquisition of selected coastal lands which have special scenic value is being maintained. An allocation of **\$3 million** has been made to the Minister for Planning and Environment for this purpose in **1976-77**.

The Planning and Environment allocation also includes **\$2.5 million** for the Government's half-share contribution to the County of Cumberland Planning Scheme. A further **\$200,000** has been set aside for acquisition of land in the Warkworth district near Singleton which contains large coal deposits.

An amount of **\$540,000** will be available to the State Pollution Control Commission to provide equipment required for noise, clean air and water pollution control.

The Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority is proceeding with the construction of a building for the Archives Authority and the State's Automatic Data Processing Service. It is expected that expenditure on the project in **1976-77** will amount to **\$3.8 million** and regard has been had to this requirement in the determination of the Authority's borrowing allocation at **\$8 million**.

I now propose to deal with Conservation and Rural Development. This heading embraces the allocations for the Water Resources Commission, and for soil conservation, forestry, agriculture and decentralization and development.

An amount of \$36,490,000 has been allocated for the State's programme of irrigation and water resources development by the Water Resources Commission. This is an increase of almost \$6 million or 19 per cent on last year's provision.

The allocation will enable the Commission to proceed with the construction of Chaffey Dam on the Peel River. This dam, which is now estimated to cost over \$17 million, is a dual purpose storage for irrigation and for augmentation of Tamworth's water supply. The Tamworth City Council and the Department of Public Works will contribute \$2,880,000 towards its cost.

Provision has also been made for an allocation of \$2,350,000 for expenditure on the distributary works on the Gwydir River to secure the efficient use of water from Copeton Dam.

The construction of the weirs on the Namoi River will continue and a start will be made on Weeta Weir. The programme for further distributary works on the Macquarie River below Warren will also be maintained.

The Government is giving a high priority to essential capital works needed to protect the State's investment in irrigation development. It has allocated \$400,000 for urgent improvements to Berembed Weir, \$600,000 for work at Burrinjuck Dam, \$500,000 for essential drainage and other works for Griffith land development, and \$100,000 for improvements to Yanco Weir.

Works of river and foreshore improvement, farm water supplies and works within irrigation areas and districts will be continued together with the programme of investigation and development of the State's groundwater resources for a number of river valleys throughout the State.

Funds are also provided within the Commission's allocation to meet the State's contributions to the River Murray Commission and the Dumaresq-Barwon Border Rivers Commission for the construction of Dartmouth and Glenlyon Dams respectively.

I referred earlier to the relatively large increase in the amount provided for this section of the programme. The total of \$36.5 million is the maximum amount which could be provided and this has called for a close review of the priorities to be afforded the various works competing for funds.

We are committed to the Dartmouth and Glenlyon Dams and the Chaffey Dam is urgently needed. If we are to get any real benefit from past investment the Gwydir River distributary works and those in the irrigation areas just have to go ahead.

After providing for these works, we had no option but to defer the letting of contracts for other major projects such as the Windamere and Cudal Dams.

While the deferment of these works will undoubtedly disappoint many people in the areas involved, it has to be appreciated that money is just not available for the works at this juncture.

An amount of \$1.7 million has been allocated for soil conservation works in 1976–77. This will permit continuation of the programmes undertaken on the foreshore areas of major dams and in river catchments. Other activities of the Soil Conservation Service include research and investigation on open cut coal mines in the Hunter Valley and a restoration programme in the Snowy Mountains.

Mr Renshaw

While the Forestry Commission's programme has had to be reduced over the past three years it is hoped that employment levels and work output can be maintained without further reduction in 1976–77.

A significant part of the Commission's overall activities has been financed for a number of years from Commonwealth advances under the Softwoods Forestry Agreement which expired on 30th June, 1976. An extension of the Agreement for one year to 30th June, 1977, has been proposed and will be accepted by the States. New plantations of 5,000 hectares will be established in 1976–77. This is considerably less than the annual establishment of 7 500 hectares in earlier years under the terms of the 1971–76 Softwoods Forestry Agreement.

The future development in softwoods forestry will remain uncertain pending any new proposals for Federal Government assistance in this area and their consideration by the State.

The Commission's silvicultural work on indigenous forest areas and construction activities generally will be continued this year at about the same level as 1975–76.

The Minister for Primary Industries will have an amount of \$1,129,000 this financial year for expenditure on projects associated with the promotion of Agriculture within the State.

The projects involved in the main provide for the modernization of research facilities to improve the quality and efficiency of research being carried out for all agricultural industries in the State. These works are being developed at the various agricultural research stations and other departmental establishments, including the Tamworth and Yanco agricultural research centres and the Wagga Agricultural Research Institute.

The Grain Elevators Board will be provided with a substantially increased borrowing authority of \$11 million in the current financial year to enable the board to make further progress with its expanded construction and modernization programme. The board's programme this year provides for major expenditures on the upgrading of the Newcastle Terminal Elevator and the provision of additional storage required to handle the increased quantities of coarse grains now being shipped through the port. Additional storage and improved facilities are also being provided at a number of other centres.

A total of 9.8 million has been allocated to the Minister for Decentralisation and Development for the Country Industries Assistance Fund—\$3 million from General Loan Account, \$6 million from Consolidated Revenue and \$800,000 from direct borrowings.

In the continued absence of any federal Government policy determination in relation to growth centre development the overall level of funds likely to be available to the Bathurst–Orange Development Corporation is extremely difficult to assess.

At this stage the federal Government has indicated that only \$2 million will be made available for the growth centre of which \$368,000 will be required to meet the immediate commitments of the four councils for certain municipal works and \$1,632,000 will be available to the Development Corporation.

The Government has reaffirmed its undertaking to support existing growth centre development and an allocation of \$7 million has been made to the Development Corporation comprising \$4 million from State loan funds and \$3 million from private borrowings.

Negotiations are still proceeding with the federal Government for funding of the Albury–Wodonga growth centre.

The availability of modern port facilities is essential to the State's economy. Increasing emphasis is being placed on the growing wst of handling exports and imports. It is vital that our ports be developed to cater for the larger ships now operating on many of the trade routes and have efficient cargo handling equipment.

The Maritime Services Board hopes to call tenders before the end of the year for the deepening of Newcastle Harbour while further work on the development of Botany Bay will be very much dependent on the findings of the present enquiry.

In the Port of Sydney, the redevelopment of berths at Darling Harbour will **continue** and new workshops are being provided.

In all the Board plans to spend \$26.9 million this year, including \$9,635,0001 from the General Loan Account.

The Minister for Public Works, Ports and Housing has also been allocated an amount of \$8.5 million for harbour and river works to be carried out by his Department. Almost \$2.5 million of this amount is for the development of tourist and fishing ports, including extensive improvements to the Hastings River entrance at Port Macquarie which are expected to cost roundly \$1.3 million.

A sum of \$1.4 million has been provided for Port Kembla Harbour Improvement Works, including improvements to the existing coal loader. The contract for the major deepening of Port Kembla was completed during 1975–76.

Other provisions made within the Harbours and Rivers allocation include \$1 million for beach protection and improvement works and \$1.76 million for flood mitigation works on tidal sections of coastal rivers. The agreement with the federal Government under which that Government provided assistance for flood mitigation works on the tidal and non-tidal sections of certain specified rivers expired on 30th June last. **As** yet there is no indication from the federal Government that it will join in a further scheme of assistance.

Within the allocation for the Minister for Mines and Energy, a provision of \$20 million has been made from State loan funds towards the capital works programme of the Electricity Commission. The Commission will also have access to direct borrowings of \$42 million which will further supplement funds available from its **own** sources.

The major expenditures in 1976–77 will be concentrated on works in progress designed to provide additional plant capacity in the Commission's power stations of some 2 560 megawatts when completed. It is expected that the first of two 660 megawatt turbo generators will be brought into service at the Vales Point Power Station in the third quarter of 1977, with the second planned for the third quarter of 1978.

The first of two additional 500 megawatt boiler and turbine units at **Wallerawang** has been completed and went into commercial operation in July. As well, the **first** of four units in the pumped storage hydro-electric scheme utilizing the waters of the Shoalhaven River and its tributaries is expected to be in operation early in 1977.

Mr Renshaw]

The major new work in the Government's forward planning programme to ensure adequate future power supplies for the State is the new Eraring Power Station estimated to cost some \$300 million. This station is expected to be commissioned in the early 1980's and has been located near coalfields on the western shores of Lake Macquarie to keep electricity production costs to a minimum.

It is expected that the power station, the largest in Australia, will employ more than 400 people when completed with extra jobs being provided in New South Wales coalfields to produce the additional estimated two million tonnes of coal per annum that the station will require.

A further \$508,000 has been provided on the Minister's Estimates for rural electrification subsidies. This subsidy scheme, which is financed on a dollar for dollar basis by the Government and the Electricity Commission, is designed to assist the extension of electricity to new consumers in country areas.

Other items of general interest which have been provided for in the Loan Estimates include: \$5.8 million for government agency schemes for primary producers conducted through the Rural Bank; \$1 million for the provision of dwellings in country centres by the Public Servant Housing Authority; \$1 million for housing, launches and computer facilities for the Police Department; $\$ \frac{1}{2}$ million for the provision of vessels, buildings and other pilotage and navigational facilities for the Maritime Services Board; \$300,000 to help meet the cost of upgrading certain key roads serving sugar cane producing areas in the North Coast Region; \$400,000 for the construction of emergency airstrips in country locations; \$800,000 for the State Brickworks for upgrading and modernization; \$580,000 for additional equipment for the State Dockyard pending the outcome of the present negotiations with the Commonwealth.

In addition, councils and county councils borrowing more than \$800,000 have been allocated \$121.1 million from the semi-governmental borrowing allocation. This is an increase of \$16.9 million on last year.

That completes my review of the programme.

It should be emphasized that the Capital Works Programme is a continuing process for the improvement of the quality of life of the people of New South Wales.

Within the severe constraints imposed for this year by the federal Government we have endeavoured to set our priorities to secure the maximum long term benefit for New South Wales and its people.

I have said before that this government rejects the concept of creating unemployment to reduce inflation. We believe that the key to the fight against inflation is continuing wage restraint within the wage indexation guidelines. Such restraint requires co-operation between governments, business and trade unions; but we believe that the creation of mass unemployment would destroy the basis for that co-operation and for that restraint. That is one of the reasons why the New South Wales Government is so concerned about the federal Government's attitude to capital works spending.

Nonetheless we are determined to do what we can, within the severe limits imposed this year by the federal Government.

In the Budget and in this Capital Works Programme we have set out to do just that—to play our part as a responsible and responsive Government.

Debate adjourned on motion by Sir Eric Willis.

Loan Council Allocations to New South Wales

(i) ALLOCATIONS FOR GOVERNMENTAL WORKS AND HOUSING:

	1972-73 \$000	1973-74 \$000	1974-75 \$000	1976-77 \$000
Works	259,382(a)	269,629	334,309(b)	431,873
Housing	57,200	86,000	123,411	123,411
Total \$	316,582	355,629	457,720	555,284

(a) Includes special Commonwealth grant of \$4,246,000 for school buildings.

(b) Includes New South Wales' share, \$18,616,000, of additional \$60 million approved for all States in February, 1975.

(ii) ALLOCATIONS FOR BORROWINGS BY STATUTORY AUTHORITIES AND MUNICIPAL COUNCILS:

SHIRE AND COUNTY

	1972-73 \$000	1973-74 \$000	1974-75 \$000	1976-77 \$000
"Semi-governmental Authorities"*	175,485(a)	199,949	244,767(c)	360,108
"Local Authorities"†	42,477(b)	46,948(b)	52,921(b)	78,130(d)
Total \$	217,962	246,897	297,688	438,238

* Each borrowing more than \$400,000 from 1972-73, more than \$500,000 from 1974-75, more than \$710,000 from 1975-76, and more than \$800,000 from 1976-77.

† Each borrowing \$400,000 or less from 1972-73, \$500,000 or less from 1974-75, \$700,000 or less from 1975-76, and \$800,000 or less from 1976-77.

(a) Includes New South Wales' share, \$9,585,000, of additional \$27.5 million approved for all States in March, 1973.

(b) Actual borrowings.

(c) Includes New South Wales' share, \$14,823,000, of additional \$50 million (including a further \$10 million for Queensland) approved at the February, 1975 Loan Council meeting for the purpose of assisting employment.

(d) Estimated borrowings. No limit has been placed by the Loan Council on aggregate borrowings in this group for 1976-77.

APPENDIX II

Functional Classification of New South Wales Government Loan Expenditure*

	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75	1975-76	Estimate 1976-77	
	\$m.	\$m.	\$m.	\$m.	\$m.	percent
1. Transport, Roads:						
Rail and other	38.7	45.5	60.9	89.0	120.3	..
Roads and bridges	1.5	1.5	2.0	7.3	8.3	..
Total	40.2	47.0	62.9	96.3	128.6	21.5
2. Ports, Harbours, and Rivers	15.1	17.5	16.6	9.0	18.8	3.2
3. Electricity	19.2	18.7	18.6	20.6	20.5	3.4
4. Conservation and Land Settlement, etc.:						
Conservation of water, soil, and forests, including flood mitigation	28.1	29.1	37.4	44.6	50.7	..
Land settlement, National Parks, etc.'	3.6	4.2	6.5	6.5	9.6	..
Rural and other services	4.3	4.5	3.5	6.6	6.9	..
Total	36.0	37.8	47.4	57.7	67.2	11.2
5. Water, Sewerage, and Drainage	31.2	31.8	40.3	46.4	47.6	8.0
6. Housing†	64.0	1.6	3.5	8.7	2.5	0.4
7. Health and Hospitals	26.6	37.2	59.8	86.5	101.3	16.9
8. Education (including technical and further education projects (a))	96.7	107.0	152.5	183.8(b)	157.8	26.4
9. Other Services	23.5	23.1	32.5	36.0	54.0	9.0
Total (1 to 9)*	352.5	321.7	434.1	545.0	598.3	100.0

* Includes expenditure from new loan raisings; Commonwealth funds for specific and general purposes; and repayments arising from previous years' expenditures and disposal of assets.

† From 1st July, 1973, expenditure on welfare housing met from Special Deposits Account instead of General Loan Account.

(a) 1973-74 and earlier years include expenditure on advanced education and universities for which Commonwealth assumed responsibility as from 1st January, 1974.

(b) Includes special supplementation of \$30 million—see text.

LOAN SPEECH

Copy of Treasurer's Loan Estimates Speech, together with appendices, tabled and, on motion by Mr Renshaw, ordered to be printed.

PRICES REGULATION (AMENDMENT) BILL

In Committee

Consideration resumed from an earlier hour.

Clause 2

Page 2

10 (2) Except as provided in subsection **(1)**, this Act shall commence on such day as may be appointed by the Governor in respect thereof and as may be notified by proclamation published in the Gazette.

Mr CAMERON (Northcott) [8.57]: I move:

That at page 2, line 11, after the word "day" there be inserted the words "not sooner than three years from the date of assent to this Act".

I am a total opponent of price control in all of its manifestations. I regard it as being a delusion and a snare that merely leads the community into imagining that this type of artificial, socialistic control can, in effect, control the operations of the free market. It cannot. Wherever price control has been attempted in any part of the world it has failed, and failed lamentably. Hence, I believe that the whole of this amending bill ought to be delayed for three years, by which time, I am confident, control of the Treasury benches will have been returned to the Liberal and Country parties, which will then simply not put into effect the disastrous measures proposed in this legislation.

There is no doubt in my mind that what the Committee is here considering will mushroom under the administration of the Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Co-operative Societies into a monolithic, socialist enterprise that will impose irksome attempts at price control on the whole of the business community. I am convinced that the Minister, sound as his judgment is in many areas, is totally defective in his judgment on this subject. **The** Minister simply has a blind spot. **He** imagines that this type of artificial exercise can be effective when all it does is generate artificialities that plague and irk the whole community.

I have a great respect for the judgment of elder, senior members of the community, but if given a choice between the judgment of the Minister and that of Professor Hayek, the Nobel Laureate at present visiting this country, whose work in **terms** of basic economic theory and general social philosophy has won him such recognition, I would have no hesitation whatever in choosing the judgment of Professor Hayek. If one looks at some of the professor's writings, it becomes crystal clear that what the Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Co-operative Societies is doing in this bill is merely tinkering at a tremendously complex 'matter, not realizing all the consequences that flow from it.

An attempt to use a tiny fragment of Keynesian economic theory without **realizing** that one cannot use that fragment unless one immediately invites all of

the other manifestations of **control** outlooks is, I believe, pathetic indeed. In some of his later writings, Professor Hayek committed these words to print:

This process by which attempts to control inflation by price ceilings lead to ever more comprehensive governmental controls, is self-accelerating also, because once production becomes dependent on rationing, licensing, permissions and official allocations, a constant overhang of money becomes necessary to keep goods flowing. No centrally directed economy has yet been able to operate without relying on the effect of an excess supply of money to help overcome the obstacles it creates.

The whole of Professor Hayek's theory is that one cannot take a fragment such as price control without the inevitable attraction in due course of such other fragments as rationing, licensing, **permissions**, official allocations and so forth. They are magnetic; the one attracts the other. I think it tragic that we have in control of this delicate area of government a Minister with the particularly defective outlook of the Minister responsible for this bill. I do not know whether he has forgotten anything but it is apparent to me that he has learned nothing from **Labor's** twenty-four years in control of the Treasury benches between 1941 and 1965. The same philosophy that he is attempting to resurrect now was applied throughout those twenty-four disastrous years and obviously in the interim the Minister has learned nothing. It has been argued, quite powerfully, that one of the factors that brought down the Chifley **Labor** administration in 1949 was its long-persisting dedication to the selfsame defective theories of price control, rationing and so forth which the Minister for Consumer Affairs is again exhibiting this evening. I have no basic **doubts**—

Mr Einfeld: On a point of order. Mr Chairman, I am extremely reluctant to interfere with the fluent flow of language from the honourable member for Northcott.

Mr CAMERON: The Minister is merely interrupting my thought stream.

Mr Einfeld: Was there a thought stream? I did not think there was. The member is speaking to clause 2 of the bill and he has moved **an** amendment that the legislation should be postponed for three years. He has come up with some sort of absurd and mysterious method about which Professor Hayek was speaking in his economic theories. Apparently the honourable **member** thinks he can discuss the whole bill, which he failed to do at the second-reading stage. We did not even hear from the honourable member at that stage of the debate. I suggest that he should confine **himself** to why this legislation should be postponed for three years. It was the honourable member who chose the period of three years. We have heard of no reason why the period should not be two years and ten months, three years and six months or even four years. It is my view—and I ask you **to** uphold it because I think it is logical and reasonable—that as the Committee is dealing with clause 2, and only clause 2, the honourable member for Northcott, who is trying **to** use whatever fluency is at his disposal in order to debate the whole bill, should be called back to clause 2. I submit that this discussion is out of order, for discussion on the whole bill is permissible only at the second-reading stage.

Mr Cameron: On the point of **order**—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The question before the Committee is that certain words be added to the clause. The effect of this is that the member now speaking is limited in his remarks to the reason why the legislation should be deferred for **that** period. The honourable member is not permitted to range over the whole scope of the bill.

Mr CAMERON: Mr Chairman, the reason why the operation of the bill should be postponed to a date not less than three years from the date of assent is that its whole concept is defective and will not work. The legislation is founded upon a completely outdated economic theory. For this specific reason I am putting to the House as strongly as I can that, even if the House should be so unwise as to pass the legislation at this stage, it should become operative only after the period I have put forward, bearing in mind that by that time a new administration, more realistic and more responsive to the operations of free enterprise and more sensitive to the operation of price mechanisms, will be in control of the Treasury benches in this State and will I hope put this disastrous concept into permanent suppression. Those basically are the reasons why I put this argument so strongly. Previous socialist administrations have tried the selfsame argument and have found that that approach has failed.

Mr F. J. Walker: On a point of order. Obviously the honourable member for Northcott is opposing the bill. In pretending that he is merely endeavouring to extend the time for promulgation of this legislation for a period of three years he is putting forward arguments why it should be defeated in this Chamber. It is not proper for the honourable member to adopt that course. If he wishes to extend the period for three years he should be giving rational reasons why a time period such as that should be imposed and why the bill should not be brought into effect before then. The honourable member should not be telling the House why the bill should be opposed and defeated. I put it to you, Mr Chairman, that the honourable member for Northcott is being frivolous and vexatious. He is trifling with the House, wasting the time of honourable members, limiting the time available for the budget debate and thus denying his colleagues the right to speak during that debate. I ask that the honourable member for Northcott be brought to order.

Mr Cameron: Mr Chairman, I did rise on the previous point of order to put a proposition contrary to that which was put to you but you did not allow me to speak and you made a ruling. To my astonishment you ruled adversely to me without permitting me to argue the point of order. Obviously, I wish to put firmly in relation to both points of order that if I move an amendment that the commencement of the bill should be deferred for three years, it is an inherent part of the argument supporting the amendment that I should be entitled to put to the Committee the reasons why it should be deferred. That is precisely what I was doing during the whole of the time since I first rose to speak on my amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is some substance in the point of order taken by the Attorney-General. I intimate to the honourable member for Northcott that it is not necessary for the Chairman to hear everyone who might rise and attempt to speak on a point of order. The Chairman may make a decision on any point of order that is raised at any particular time.

Mr Wran: One would think that a former Speaker would know that.

Mr CAMERON: One would expect a lawyer to know that a judge does not give his ruling without first hearing the evidence from both sides.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

[Interruption]

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I call the honourable member for Rockdale to order for the first time. The debate is limited to the amendment before the Chair. Members cannot canvass the full scope of the bill and they cannot deliver a second-reading address. I ask the honourable member for Northcott to limit his remarks to the amendment before the Chair.

Mr CAMERON: I do that with great enthusiasm. The specific argument that I put to the Committee on why the Act should not come into force immediately is that New South Wales is suffering from critical unemployment. Learned economists such as Professor Hayek have argued powerfully that the type of socialistic control envisaged in this measure will worsen unemployment. In that respect I should like to quote again from Professor Hayek relating to the proposition that at this stage in the economic cycle it is most undesirable that a repressive type of socialist control such as this should come into effect. The professor continued:

The ultimate transition to a centrally directed economy seems thus inevitable if inflation is allowed to continue while its effects are partly suppressed by a price stop. There seems little prospect that governments in such a situation will effectively prevent further inflation and not merely suppress its most visible consequences. As inflation becomes more rapid the demand for its discontinuance will also become more pressing, but the amount of unemployment caused by every slowing down of inflation will simultaneously increase. We can probably expect governments to make repeated further attempts to slow down inflation, only to abandon them when the unemployment they produce becomes politically unacceptable.

Mr F. J. Walker: On a point of order. Mr Chairman, the honourable member for Northcott is again canvassing your ruling. He is dealing with inflation and unemployment. He is certainly not dealing with the extremely narrow and precise point that is before the Chair, namely why this measure should be promulgated in three years' time and not sooner. I submit that it is not competent for him to proceed in the way he is now doing.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I uphold the point of order. I direct the honourable member for Northcott to limit his remarks to the question before the Chair, and that is why the bill should not come into effect for three years. The debate must be confined to a limited range. The honourable member cannot proceed along the lines that he has been following. His remarks would have been more suitably made at the second-reading stage.

Mr CAMERON: If I had the choice of every conceivable period that I might have included in the specific terms of this amendment, ranging from but one minute to, say, three hours or three years, to a century or to infinity, I suppose I could give reasons to justify the choice of any of those periods. However, from my point of view, opposing artificial socialistic attempts at price control as vehemently as I do, I would be thoroughly happy to see it brought forward 1500 years—that being as long as the period between the fall of the Roman Empire and the present day. I see in the artificial attempts of this Government to deal with sensitive matters such as the free market, a similarity with the types of thought stream that led to the fall of Rome 1500 years ago. In point of fact, I have chosen the specific period of three years because it is the term of a normal Parliament. A government that devotes itself to bizarre forms of economic thinking, as there are in this amending bill, will in my view certainly not last more than three years.

The passage of three years will see the return to sanity in government; it will see a return to viable economic policies and not to the completely artificial and unreal policies that are so much a part of the thinking of this Minister. Everything that is being attempted here was attempted by the Whitlam Government—and it lasted for only three years. As soon as the Prices Justification Tribunal was mooted by the Whitlam Labor Government, many of the historians sat down and tried to——

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have indicated to the honourable member on previous occasions that he is limited to the question before the Chair, and that is why this bill should not come into operation sooner than three years from the date of its assent.

Mr CAMERON: That is what I am arguing, Mr Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: I feel that the remarks that you are now making concerning the former Whitlam Government have little relevance to the question before the Chair. I would remind the honourable member—in fact I direct him—to return to the question before the Chair.

Mr CAMERON: The question before the Chair is that the commencement of this amending bill be not sooner than three years from the date of Royal assent. That is the precise proposition I am arguing. I submit that it is strange that I am not to be permitted to engage in an ordinary illustration of that proposition.

Mr Wran: One would think a former Speaker would know that.

Mr CAMERON: I would think that the Premier, who purports to be a Queen's Counsel, would have a little insight into the ordinary rules of debate and the ordinary propositions of arguing that are built into an argument on any abstract principle.

Mr F. J. Walker: Do not be offensive.

Mr CAMERON: You cannot fail to be offensive; it is part of your nature and there is no escape for you from the natural offensiveness that is built into you. I submit strongly that even if this bill is passed this evening, it should not come into effect now or even in one year's time because the present socialist administration will still be in office; nor should it come into effect in two year's time because the present socialist administration may perhaps still be in office. Its commencement should be deferred for at least three years by which time it is certain that economic sanity will have returned to New South Wales.

Sir ERIC WILLIS (Leader of the Opposition) [9.15]: I support the amendment that has been so capably moved by the honourable member for Northcott. I shall be as brief as I possibly can. Although the Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Co-operative Societies protested during his second-reading speech that it was not his intention to expand price control over a wide range of goods and services, it is the inevitable consequence of this measure that that should be so. The whole purpose, the whole thinking, behind the bill is that a large bureaucracy should be established along the lines of the one that existed during the second world war. This, of course, will mean inevitably that a great number of public servants will be required to administer the scheme.

Mr F. J. Walker: On a point of order. My point of order is that the Leader of the Opposition, who knows better, is embarking on a second-reading speech. He is saying the same sort of things that his colleagues put to the House at the second-reading stage. I submit that he is confined, as was pointed out earlier, to the narrow point why the bill should be deferred for three years.

Sir Eric Willis: On a point of order. I know that the Attorney-General does not believe in allowing the Opposition even to get out of hand, but I was attempting to make my first point—I intend to make half a dozen points—to indicate that if the Government has a policy of cutting back on the size of the public service, it cannot simultaneously contemplate an increase in the bureaucracy, which is a good reason why the bill should be deferred for three years. If I am not to be permitted to utter

three sentences without being interrupted by points of order taken by the leader of the House, it will not be possible for me, or for any member, to develop any point and to indicate to the Chair that I am speaking on a matter that is relevant to the question before the Chair.

Mr Day: On the point of order. The Leader of the Opposition is known for his general attitude when he is called to order by the Chair. I submit that under clause 2 the Leader of the Opposition is confined to discussing the merit or otherwise of the bill. Mr Chairman, I draw to your attention the fact that the Leader of the Opposition—in fact all Opposition members—had plenty of opportunity during the second-reading debate to discuss the bill. Clause 2 simply provides that the bill shall commence on the date on which it receives Royal assent. The Leader of the Opposition, under cover of an amendment moved to clause 2, is attempting to continue the second-reading debate upon the bill. He is using as a cover for this argument some spurious point of order to the effect that the date of Royal assent should be fixed in three years' time.

Mr Cameron: What about the point of order?

Mr Day: I am dealing with a point of order. You behave yourself for a change; you are not in the chair any more; you are a simple backbench Opposition member.

Mr Wran: You would think a former Speaker would know better.

Mr Day: One would expect him to know better but he displays such arrogance that one would think he was still in charge of the House. Mr Chairman, I submit that the Leader of the Opposition ought to be directed to confine his remarks to the amendment before the Chair, which is simply that the operation of the bill should be deferred for three years. The point is not whether the clause is meritorious or otherwise; it concerns merely the date upon which the bill should receive Royal assent.

Sir Eric Willis: On the point of order. The Minister for Decentralisation and Development and Minister for Primary Industries has made two points which must be refuted lest there be any misunderstanding about the position. I do not know whether he was asleep or absent, but the fact is that I had no opportunity to say anything at the second-reading stage, for the simple reason that I was gagged. My other point is that I submit that I am perfectly entitled to advance arguments why the measure should be postponed for three years. That is precisely what I was doing but it is obvious that I am not to be permitted to speak on this bill at any stage. That is the intention of the Government led by the Fuhrer who sits on the front bench.

Mr Einfeld: On the point of order. It is quite clear that the Opposition intend; to speak on this clause, and probably subsequent clauses, to try to make up for the fact that the leader in the debate for the Opposition spoke for something like one hour and forty-five minutes and gave the House a history of the whole area of price-fixing in New South Wales, which was quite irrelevant to the measure. He thought his name was Toynbee. We heard the honourable member for Northcott, in an endeavour to back his argument, advancing arguments of Professor Hayek who is about the only man in Australia who would be supported by the honourable member for Northcott. Professor Hayek is a present-day Otto Niemeyer. Niemeyer presented New South Wales with the depression in 1932 and the economic morass into which Australia fell. Now the honourable member for Northcott and Professor Hayek want to do the same thing. The Leader of the Opposition, on the ground of talking about a three-year extension period, has talked about the growth of bureaucracy which is a fantasy, and has nothing to do with the argument that the bill should not come into operation now but in three years' time. I ask you to rule the Leader of the Opposition out of order.

The CHAIRMAN: I have listened to the matters raised on the point of order. Again I remind honourable members that the debate is limited at the present stage to the amendment before the Chair, which is that the legislation should come into effect not sooner than three years from the date of assent to the Act. In the second-reading stage the House decided on the principle of the bill. In Committee honourable members are going into the details of the bill. While the amendment is before the Chair the Leader of the Opposition is limited to very narrow argument on why the bill should not come into effect for three years.

Sir ERIC WILLIS: That, Mr Chairman, is the most commonsense thing that has been said in the past few minutes.

Mr Einfeld: Including what the Leader of the Opposition said.

Sir ERIC WILLIS: I could advance a host of sound reasons why the bill should be postponed for three years. The first is that at this stage we have before the House the Budget which indicates that it is the intention of the Government to cut back the public service of New South Wales by something between 2 700 and 3 200 employees. At the one and same time a bill is before the House which provides the means for establishing a great, mushroom-like, growing bureaucracy. During the second world war a similar body in this State had 520 employees. The Government, by this legislation, is about to provide something along the same lines. Obviously those two things are incompatible. That is a good reason why the legislation should be deferred until once again there is a normal growth rate in the public service. Instead of seeing the Minister frustrated for some considerable time while the public service is being cut back, he can have his mushroom-like bureaucracy grow in his great Prices Commission at the one and same time as the legislation becomes operative. The second reason why there should be a postponement of the effect of the legislation is that it is a well-established fact that price control is not of any value unless it is nationwide. As all honourable members know, four other States in Australia——

Mr Einfeld: On a point of order. The Leader of the Opposition is talking to the second-reading stage of the bill.

Sir Eric Willis: I am not.

Mr Cameron: The Leader of the Opposition is giving reasons.

Mr Einfeld: I do not think his argument is much good. Even if the Leader of the Opposition had introduced the argument at the second-reading stage I am doubtful whether any honourable members would have listened. However, it is a second-reading argument and I ask you, Mr Chairman, so to rule.

Sir Eric Willis: Again, I have been interrupted before I got out one sentence. If this is the kind of practice that is to be followed in the House obviously there will be no Parliament. Instead there will be a chaotic state of affairs. I was about to advance the viewpoint, when I was rudely interrupted by the Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Co-operative Societies, that if we defer the legislation for three years, by then either the other States of Australia may have come to the same point of view as the Minister, or vice versa. That is a good reason why we should not be like Paddy in the regiment with everyone else out of step. It is perfectly in order for me to advance such an argument.

The CHAIRMAN: I uphold the point of order. The question of price control Australia-wide has nothing to do with the question before the Chair. The matter could have been fully canvassed during the second-reading debate. I ask the Leader of the Opposition to return to the question before the Chair.

Sir ERIC WILLIS: The question before the Chair is whether or not the date of coming into effect of the legislation should be deferred for a period of three years after the Governor assents to it. I would not for one moment suggest that the Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Co-operative Societies was engaging in some sort of sham or mimicry. He is a sincere man. All honourable members know that he would not go in for any such misrepresentation of a bill. If honourable members accept the premise that it is a genuine bill, a genuine attempt to establish a Prices Commission to provide for price control in New South Wales, as the Minister has fervently advocated on so many former occasions, New South Wales will be out of step with the rest of Australia. It would be highly desirable that some time should be spent either in persuading the other States to see the sweet, reasonable logical argument of the Government or, alternatively, perhaps this State could be persuaded to get into step with the rest of Australia.

I put it to you seriously, Mr Chairman, that if the coming into effect of the legislation is not deferred for three years and instead there is a continuation of business bashing, all business people will be frightened out of New South Wales and unemployment in this State will continue to rise, as it has been, while unemployment in the rest of Australia is being reduced. New South Wales will be the poor relation of the rest of Australia. That is a good reason why honourable members should defer the coming into effect of this type of legislation. Everywhere I hear the same sort of thing from people in the business community. They are scared stiff of what will happen following the enactment of this type of legislation. I suggest that if we defer it for three years——

Mr Day: On a point of order. The Leader of the Opposition is again arguing the merit of the measure. I submit that the time and place to debate the merit of the measure is in an honourable member's second-reading speech. The honourable member for Northcott has moved an amendment. I submit that it is a spurious amendment and it is designed really to provide an opportunity for an additional second-reading debate. That is in fact what members of the Opposition, including the Leader of the Opposition, are doing. The Leader of the Opposition had the right to lead in the debate at the second reading stage. He refrained from exercising that right and option and now, under cover of the spurious amendment, the Leader of the Opposition is trying to debate the second reading once again and to debate the merits or otherwise of the bill.

The false indignation of the Leader of the Opposition is known to all honourable members. I submit that it should not convey anything to you, Mr Chairman, other than that he is using the time of the House in an effort to debate in Committee the second reading of the bill and to avoid the decision of the House that the second reading was to be terminated, when he decided to stand on his feet. I submit, with great respect, Mr Chairman, that you should order the Leader of the Opposition to confine himself to the reasons why this meritorious measure should be implemented either immediately or in three years' time. At this stage he is not allowed to debate the merit or otherwise of the measure.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! As I intimated to the Committee in the first instance, it has no control over what takes place while the bill is being discussed at the second-reading stage. The matter of who led for the Opposition, or who did or did not then speak on the bill, is of no concern to the Committee. All that the Committee is dealing with at present is the narrow subject of whether the bill should come into effect immediately or not for three years. A proposed cut-back in the number of employees in the public service has nothing to do with the question before the Committee. State-wide or Australia-wide price control also has nothing to do with the

question before the Committee. Those matters should have been debated fully at the second-reading stage. I ask the Leader of the Opposition to return to the question before the Committee.

Sir ERIC WILLIS: I am sure that it is quite obvious to everyone that if the operation of the bill is deferred for three years it will allow much greater time for thought, reconsideration and re-examination of the whole question, and give the Government an opportunity to decide whether it is being a little too hasty in this regard. With respect, I call to witness three former **Labor** Premiers, including, Mr Chairman, your late esteemed father the Hon. J. J. Cahill, who in **1956** rejected a request for price control put to him by the **Labor** Council of New South Wales. In **1959** or **1960** the Hon. R. J. Heffron and in **1964** the honourable member for Castlereagh when Premier also rejected this proposition.

Mr F. J. Walker: On a point of order. Although this Parliament's history is no doubt fascinating and of great interest to its members and the public, it is not relevant to the narrow, specific and minute issue before the Committee, which is whether the bill should be promulgated upon assent or whether a period of three years should pass before it comes into effect. When the Leader of the Opposition was a member of the former Government he was the first to stand up and take a point of order should any of the **Labor** Opposition dare to stray one inch from the subject-matter before the House or the Committee. I submit that it is unfair and unreasonable to expect honourable members to have their time wasted by the Leader of the Opposition who now seeks to recite a history of the Parliament of New South Wales and speak of the actions of various Premiers. No doubt they are matter of interest and of great importance but I submit they are not relevant to the question before the Committee.

Sir Eric Willis: On the point of order. I submit that it is perfectly logical to any reasonable person that when submitting an argument in support of a deferment of a matter further consideration should be given to what may have not already been considered. The reason I was advancing was that if in the opinion of three great former leaders of the **Labor** Party price control was unnecessary, then it ought to be reconsidered by the Government. Obviously it is rushing the measure through without giving proper consideration to the opinions of those three former leaders of the **Labor** Party.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I uphold the point of order taken by the **Attorney-General**. I indicate to the Committee that I have already ruled that the Committee has no control over whether the bill is necessary; that matter has been decided in the House. The **Committee** is now debating whether the bill should commence immediately or three years hence. I direct the Leader of the Opposition to confine his remarks to the question before the Committee and not to go into the history of matters relating to the bill which, as I intimated earlier, could have been canvassed at the **second-reading** stage.

Sir ERIC WILLIS: If I had not had so many points of order taken on me I should have been finished long since. I wish to say shortly two things: a deferral of the legislation for three years would enable the Government and its supporters in this Parliament to re-examine the results of the only two referendums held on this subject, when the people of New South Wales clearly indicated that they did not want price control. I also remind the Committee that there is no time limit on me in Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member for Raleigh spoke at great length on the bill and intimated that he was **leading**—

Sir ERIC WILLIS: You, Mr Chairman, said that you do not know what happened at the second reading of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN: I accept that. I ask the Leader of the Opposition whether he is leading or whether someone else is leading for the Opposition?

Sir ERIC WILLIS: In Committee?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Sir ERIC WILLIS: I am leading for the Liberal Party and I assume that the honourable member for Raleigh is leading for the Country Party. In the event I do not want any more than ten more seconds, if I may be permitted to say something. With great respect, I intimate that as Leader of the Opposition I do not have in Committee any time limitation—not that I intend to speak at any length. If there is a deferral for three years then perhaps even this socialistic-minded Government will realize that there is neither need for the legislation nor value in what it seeks to do. It is contrary to the wishes of the people and maybe they will realize that it would be against the best business interests of New South Wales if the Government pursues it and in the best interests if it were to defer it.

Mr EINFELD (Waverley), Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Co-operative Societies [9.35]: It is most difficult to reply to arguments that were completely out of order. However, I ought to sound a warning note. The Opposition is trying to scare the business community. It is bashing business and it ought to stop. All the Government has done with the bill is to amend the Prices Regulation Act which the former Government allowed to operate for its eleven exhaustive years in office.

Sir Eric Willis: On a point of order. As I was restricted by you, Mr Chairman, to giving reasons why the bill should be deferred for three years, why should not the same restrictions apply equally to the Minister—or again are we going to have the exhibition of one set of rules for one side and another for the other?

The CHAIRMAN: While I am in the chair I shall endeavour to uphold impartially the standing orders so that they apply equally to the Leader of the Opposition and members of the Opposition as to supporters of the Government. In Committee the Minister is entitled to answer arguments raised during the debate on the clause and that is exactly what he is doing at present.

Mr EINFELD: I shall do it briefly. The honourable member for Northcott talked about artificial socialistic control and the Leader of the Opposition talked about the inevitability of there being a large bureaucracy. Both statements were not only untrue but indeed absurd. At the second-reading stage the House approved of an amendment to the Prices Regulation Act. The coalition Government, by not repealing the principal Act accepted it and for those eleven years operated under its provisions. The Government is seeking to amend that Act to make it more practicable and realistic. I have said it before, and I say again, that there is no question of any extension of price controls, an idea that Opposition members are trying desperately hard to sell to the community. It wants to frighten our citizens. If anybody is frightened it will be as a result of the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition and the ultra right-wing member for Northcott—a decent type of fellow—who is so impressed by the ridiculous arguments of economists. When Gerald Ford had a meeting with twenty-two economists of the United States of **America**——

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the Minister to keep to the schedule.

Mr EINFELD: I agree that I am straying from the schedule, Mr Chairman. The facts are that economists do not agree. In three years' time the position might be quite **different**, as it was when the three former Premiers referred to by the Leader of

the Opposition made their statements. This is not 1948, or 1964; it is 1976. An investigative inquiry is needed at this moment—not in three years time. To those entrepreneurs in the community who are trying to exploit customers and normal citizens, I say that now is the time—not three years hence when the Leader of the Opposition may not be here. If he is not here, I shall say nice things about him as he has not been that bad, although he has been bad enough.

Sir Eric Willis: Is the Minister trying to kill me off?

Mr EINFELD: No, I only want him to retire quickly so that he is out of everyone's hair and the Parliament can proceed properly with a decent Leader of the Opposition. That is all I wish to happen. Now is the time when action is needed to investigate exploitation and rip-offs. If there is no exploitation or rip-off there will be no declaration of goods or services. If everybody is as pure as the driven snow, as the Leader of the Opposition and the honourable member for Northcott contend, there will be no price control of any description. It is only where the commission investigates and finds exploitation that that will happen. The Government, I need hardly say, does not accept the amendment and obviously will vote against it.

Mr GRIFFITH: Mr Chairman—

Mr FLAHERTY (Granville), Government Whip [9.41]: I move:

That the question be now put.

The Committee divided.

Ayes, 49

Mr **Akister**
Mr **Bannon**
Mr **Barnier**
Mr Bedford
Mr Booth
Mr Brereton
Mr Cleary
Mr R. J. Clough
Mr Cox
Mr Crabtree
Mr Day
Mr Degen
Mr Durick
Mr Einfeld
Mr Ferguson
Mr Flaherty
Mr Gordon

Mr Haigh
Mr Hills
Mr Hunter
Mr Jackson
Mr Jensen
Mr Johnson
Mr Johnstone
Mr Jones
Mr Keane
Mr Kearns
Mr L. B. Kelly
Mr McGowan
Mr Maher
Mr Mallam
Mr Mulock
Mr Neilly
Mr Paciullo

Mr Petersen
Mr Quinn
Mr Ramsay
Mr Renshaw
Mr Rogan
Mr Ryan
Mr Sheahan
Mr Stewart
Mr Wade
Mr F. J. Walker
Mr Whelan
Mr Wilde
Mr Wran

Tellers,
Mr Face
Mr O'Connell

Noes, 46

Mr Arblaster
Mr Barraclough
Mr Boyd
Mr Brewer
Mr Brown
Mr **Bruxner**
Mr **Cameron**
Mr J. A. Clough
Mr Coleman

Mr Cowan
Mr Darby
Mr Dowd
Mr Doyle
Mr Duncan
Mr Fischer
Mr Fisher
Mr Griffith
Mr Hatton

Mr Healey
Mr Jackett
Mr Leitch
Mr **McGinty**
Mr Mackie
Mr Maddison
Mr Mason
Mrs Meillon
Mr Moore

Mr Morris	Mr Rofe	Mr Webster
Mr Murray	Mr Rozzoli	Mr West
Mr Mutton	Mr Schipp	Sir Eric Willis
Mr Osborne	Mr Singleton	
Mr Park	Mr Taylor	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Pickard	Mr Viney	Mr McDonald
Mr Punch	Mr N. D. Walker	Mr Wotton

Resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the words be inserted—put.

The Committee divided.

Ayes, 45

Mr Arblaster	Mr Griffith	Mr Punch
Mr Barraclough	Mr Healey	Mr Rofe
Mr Boyd	Mr Jackett	Mr Schipp
Mr Brewer	Mr Leitch	Mr Singleton
Mr Brown	Mr McDonald	Mr Taylor
Mr Bruxner	Mr McGinty	Mr Viney
Mr Cameron	Mr Maddison	Mr N. D. Walker
Mr J. A. Clough	Mr Mason	Mr Webster
Mr Coleman	Mrs Meillon	Mr West
Mr Cowan	Mr Moore	Sir Eric Willis
Mr Darby	Mr Morris	Mr Wotton
Mr Dowd	Mr Murray	
Mr Doyle	Mr Mutton	
Mr Duncan	Mr Osborne	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Fischer	Mr Park	Mr Mackie
Mr Fisher	Mr Pickard	Mr Rozzoli

Noes, 50

Mr Akister	Mr Gordon	Mr Neilly
Mr Bannon	Mr Haigh	Mr O'Connell
Mr Barnier	Mr Hatton	Mr Paciullo
Mr Bedford	Mr Hills	Mr Petersen
Mr Booth	Mr Hunter	Mr Quinn
Mr Brereton	Mr Jackson	Mr Renshaw
Mr Cleary	Mr Jensen	Mr Rogan
Mr R. J. Clough	Mr Johnson	Mr Ryan
Mr Cox	Mr Johnstone	Mr Sheahan
Mr Crabtree	Mr Jones	Mr Stewart
Mr Day	Mr Keane	Mr Wade
Mr Degen	Mr Kearns	Mr F. J. Walker
Mr Durick	Mr L. B. Kelly	Mr Wilde
Mr Einfeld	Mr McGowan	Mr Wran
Mr Face	Mr Maher	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Ferguson	Mr Mallam	Mr Ramsay
Mr Flaherty	Mr Mulock	Mr Whelan

Question so resolved in the negative.

Amendment negatived.

Question—That the clause stand—put.

The Committee divided.

Ayes, 50

Mr Akister	Mr Gordon	Mr Neilly
Mr Bannon	Mr Haigh	Mr O'Connell
Mr Barnier	Mr Hatton	Mr Paciullo
Mr Bedford	Mr Hills	Mr Petersen
Mr Booth	Mr Hunter	Mr Quinn
Mr Brereton	Mr Jackson	Mr Renshaw
Mr Cleary	Mr Jensen	Mr Rogan
Mr R. J. Clough	Mr Johnson	Mr Ryan
Mr Cox	Mr Johnstone	Mr Sheahan
Mr Crabtree	Mr Jones	Mr Stewart
Mr Day	Mr Keane	Mr Wade
Mr Degen	Mr Kearns	Mr F. J. Walker
Mr Durick	Mr L. B. Kelly	Mr Wilde
Mr Einfeld	Mr McGowan	Mr Wran
Mr Face	Mr Maher	Tellers,
Mr Ferguson	Mr Mallam	Mr Ramsay
Mr Flaherty	Mr Mulock	Mr Whelan

Noes, 45

Mr Arblaster	Mr Griffith	Mr Punch
Mr Barraclough	Mr Healey	Mr Rofe
Mr Boyd	Mr Jackett	Mr Schipp
Mr Brewer	Mr Leitch	Mr Singleton
Mr Brown	Mr McDonald	Mr Taylor
Mr Bruxner	Mr McGinty	Mr Viney
Mr Cameron	Mr Maddison	Mr N. D. Walker
Mr J. A. Clough	Mr Mason	Mr Webster
Mr Coleman	Mrs Meillon	Mr West
Mr Cowan	Mr Moore	Sir Eric Willis
Mr Darby	Mr Morris	Mr Wotton
Mr Dowd	Mr Murray	
Mr Doyle	Mr Mutton	Tellers,
Mr Duncan	Mr Osborne	Mr Mackie
Mr Fischer	Mr Park	Mr Rozzoli
Mr Fisher	Mr Pickard	

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 4

Mr EINFELD (Waverley), Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Co-operative Societies [9.55]: I have an amendment to schedule 1, item (5)——

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee is considering clause 4 at the present time.

Mr EINFELD: Clause 4 deals with all the schedules. Subclause (1) provides that the Prices Regulation Act, 1948, is amended in the manner set forth in schedules 1 and 3.

The CHAIRMAN: Any amendments to the schedules must be moved when the Committee is discussing the schedules individually. At the present time the Committee is discussing clause 4, which deals with the amendment of Act No. 26, 1948.

Mr EINFELD: Are you ruling that the amendment I desire to move to schedule 1, item (5), which appears at page 15, line 17, can be moved at that stage?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Sir ERIC WILLIS (Earlwood), Leader of the Opposition [9.58]: I make it quite clear, so there will be no misunderstanding, that the Opposition will be voting against this clause, which is the most important clause in the bill because it provides the authority for the schedules which will amend the principal Act. Therefore, as it is the kernel of the whole matter, we believe this clause is contrary to the best interests of the people of this State. Because we opposed the second reading of the bill we must necessarily vote against this clause. I do not intend to speak on it at length. The Government has made it clear that it does not propose to permit me to say what I want to say on behalf of almost half the people of this State—those who support our point of view. It is probably more than half now, and after this bill has been enacted it will definitely be more than half the people of this State.

It is obvious that the bill is a bad piece of legislation. It has been hastily prepared and badly drafted. It is completely unnecessary. It is out of step with legislation in the rest of Australia, as it is with the legislation of previous Labor governments. It will serve no useful purpose whatever. For these reasons, and for others given both here and in other places, the Opposition will oppose the clause.

Mr EINFELD (Waverley), Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Co-operative Societies [9.59]: I confine my reply to saying that of course this is an important clause—

Mr Dowd: On a point of order. I sought the call at the same time as the Minister—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is no point of order involved.

Mr EINFELD: I merely confine myself to saying that I agree that this is an important clause. What the Leader of the Opposition and his supporters do not realize is that the Government has a clear mandate from the people of New South Wales, because the setting up of the Prices Commission was clearly enunciated to them by the Premier—that great, inspiring leader of democratic thought in Australia. Also, I have said it on innumerable occasions. In fact, for more than six years the Prices Commission and this particular clause have been mentioned to the people clearly and unequivocally in this Parliament, outside this Parliament, and in every part of New South Wales. It is all very well for the Leader of the Opposition to say how many people support him, but I tell him that the majority of the people in New South Wales support this legislation, this party and this Government.

Sir ERIC WILLIS: Mr Chairman——

Mr FLAHERTY (Granville), Government Whip [10.3]: I move:

That the question be now put.

[Interruption]

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I call the Minister for Conservation and Minister for Water Resources to order for the first time.

The Committee divided.

Ayes, 49

Mr Akister	Mr Gordon	Mr Paciullo
Mr Bannon	Mr Haigh	Mr Petersen
Mr Barnier	Mr Hills	Mr Quinn
Mr Bedford	Mr Hunter	Mr Ramsay
Mr Booth	Mr Jackson	Mr Renshaw
Mr Brereton	Mr Jensen	Mr Rogan
Mr Cleary	Mr Johnson	Mr Ryan
Mr R. J. Clough	Mr Johnstone	Mr Stewart
Mr Cox	Mr Jones	Mr Wade
Mr Crahtree	Mr Keane	Mr F. J. Walker
Mr Day	Mr Kearns	Mr Whelan
Mr Degen	Mr L. B. Kelly	Mr Wilde
Mr Durick	Mr Maher	Mr Wran
Mr Einfeld	Mr Mallam	
Mr Face	Mr Mulock	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Ferguson	Mr Neilly	Mr McGowan
Mr Flaherty	Mr O'Connell	Mr Sheahan

Noes, 46

Mr Arblaster	Mr Hatton	Mr Pickard
Mr Barraclough	Mr Healey	Mr Punch
Mr Boyd	Mr Jackett	Mr Rofe
Mr Brewer	Mr Leitch	Mr Rozzoli
Mr Brown	Mr McDonald	Mr Singleton
Mr Bruxner	Mr McGinty	Mr Taylor
Mr Cameron	Mr Mackie	Mr Viney
Mr J. A. Clough	Mr Maddison	Mr N. D. Walker
Mr Coleman	Mr Mason	Mr Webster
Mr Cowan	Mrs Meillon	Mr West
Mr Darby	Mr Moore	Sir Eric Willis
Mr Doyle	Mr Morris	Mr Wotton
Mr Duncan	Mr Murray	
Mr Fischer	Mr Mutton	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Fisher	Mr Osborne	Mr Dowd
Mr Griffith	Mr Park	Mr Schipp

Resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the clause stand—put.

The Committee divided.

Ayes, 50

Mr Akister	Mr Gordon	Mr O'Connell
Mr Bannon	Mr Haigh	Mr Paciullo
Mr Barnier	Mr Hatton	Mr Petersen
Mr Bedford	Mr Hills	Mr Quinn
Mr Booth	Mr Hunter	Mr Ramsay
Mr Brereton	Mr Jackson	Mr Renshaw
Mr Cleary	Mr Jensen	Mr Rogan
Mr R. J. Clough	Mr Johnson	Mr Ryan
Mr Cox	Mr Johnstone	Mr Stewart
Mr Crabtree	Mr Jones	Mr Wade
Mr Day	Mr Keane	Mr F. J. Walker
Mr Degen	Mr Kearns	Mr Whelan
Mr Durick	Mr L. B. Kelly	Mr Wilde
Mr Einfeld	Mr Maher	Mr Wran
Mr Face	Mr Mallam	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Ferguson	Mr Mulock	Mr McGowan
Mr Flaherty	Mr Neilly	Mr Sheahan

Noes, 45

Mr Arblaster	Mr Healey	Mr Punch
Mr Barraclough	Mr Jackett	Mr Rofe
Mr Boyd	Mr Leitch	Mr Rozzoli
Mr Brewer	Mr McDonald	Mr Singleton
Mr Brown	Mr McGinty	Mr Taylor
Mr Bruxner	Mr Mackie	Mr Viney
Mr Cameron	Mr Maddison	Mr N. D. Walker
Mr J. A. Clough	Mr Mason	Mr Webster
Mr Coleman	Mrs Meillon	Mr West
Mr Cowan	Mr Moore	Sir Eric Willis
Mr Darby	Mr Morris	Mr Wotton
Mr Doyle	Mr Murray	
Mr Duncan	Mr Mutton	
Mr Fischer	Mr Osborne	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Fisher	Mr Park	Mr Dowd
Mr Griffith	Mr Pickard	Mr Schipp

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Clause agreed to.

Progress reported and leave granted to sit again tomorrow.

ALLOCATION OF TIME FOR DISCUSSION

Mr F. J. WALKER: On behalf of the Premier I give notice under Standing Order 175B that it is the intention of the Government to deal with the following business: Prices Regulation (Amendment) Bill, all remaining clauses and schedules; report stages and adoption of report, by 3.45 p.m. on Wednesday, 13th October, 1976.

ADJOURNMENT

Women Prisoners

Mr EINFELD (Waverley), Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Co-operative Societies [10.14] I move:

This this House do now adjourn.

Mr DOWD (Lane Cove) [10.14]: The matter upon which I wish to address the House concerns the prisons inquiry which is at present proceeding. A group of lawyers known as the Women Lawyers Association have, over the past few months, had contact with various prisoners at the women's prison at Silverwater and at Cessnock. This group is concerned to present a point of view to the commission to ensure that when the commissioner makes his findings all points of view have been represented. The group of which I speak has made submissions to the Attorney-General and his department to the effect that it would like to propose certain rehabilitation measures and it would like to call certain brief evidence and to make certain submissions in order that the present unequal situation affecting women prisoners in this State may be looked at.

We have had a proud tradition under the former Government in the way of improving the prisons system, and we have seen a movement out of the dark ages which the former Government inherited in 1965. This group of women lawyers made a submission to the Attorney-General's Department that it be entitled to have legal aid so that it can make a brief submission to the commission. The group wishes only to retain perhaps a barrister instructed by a solicitor, to spend a day or so to obtain instructions, and to place before the commission the material that it has gathered. I understand that the submission has gone from the Attorney-General's Department to the Premier's Department. Although I do not know its fate, I have some reason to believe, from the women lawyers who have spoken to me, that the submission has not yet been favourably dealt with by the Premier's Department.

I ask the Premier to give consideration to granting this request which is, of course, *de minimis* in terms of the astronomical cost with which the Government must already be concerned in regard to this commission. The women prisoners in this State must not be made to feel any form of discrimination; they must feel that they are entitled to have put before the commission proper proposals for rehabilitation, for we should like to think that out of this commission, which the former Government initiated, we shall see some further advances in the rehabilitation and improvement of the prisons system. Some women who are already represented before the commission represent a certain point of view. However, this group wishes to make certain submissions that are not consistent with the view of which I have spoken.

I bring this matter to the attention of the House because all honourable members would like the findings of the Royal commission to result in a further improvement of the prisons system. The request I make is a fairly simple one but it is important to this voluntary association which does not have large funds. People still have to give up their time. They have already given up some time. They need only two or three days in which to make this submission. I ask the Premier whether he will grant this request so that these people will be able to place their submissions before the commission.

Mr WRAN (Bass Hill), Premier [10.18]: I must confess that I cannot say that I have seen the application by the Women Lawyers Association for the provision of some legal aid before the commission. However, I shall seek it out and give it due

consideration as I have been invited to do by the honourable member for Lane Cove. I think that it is worthwhile to emphasize—as the honourable member for Lane Cove has done—that there is already representation before the commission on behalf of women prisoners by an organization called Women Behind Bars. That organization is represented by Miss Pat O'Shea, a member of the New South Wales bar. Though the Government is anxious to ensure that all points of view are adequately ventilated, it is equally keen to ensure that the astronomical costs to which the honourable member referred are not necessarily puffed up by a duplication of legal representation. The honourable member for Lane Cove and the Women Lawyers Association may be assured that what has been said here will be duly considered and some formal advice will be directed to the applicants in due course.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned at 10.21 p.m.

QUESTION UPON NOTICE

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

OMBUDSMAN

Mr MAHER asked the **Premier**—

What moneys were expended for:

- (a) Salaries
- (b) Office accommodation
- (c) Expenses for the Ombudsman and his **staff**

during the years ended 30th June, 1975, and 30th June, 1976

Answer—

Actual expenditures on the Office of the Ombudsman during the years ended 30th June, 1975, and 30th June, 1976, **were**—

	1974-75	1975-76
	\$	\$
(a) Salaries	20,775	170,904
(b) Office Accommodation	7,930	24,142
	(6,402)*	(25,677)*
(c) Expenses	13,914	9,862
	<u>\$42,619</u>	<u>\$204,908</u>

* A miscalculation of the leasehold area occupied by the Office of the Ombudsman was rectified during **1975-76** and consequential rental adjustments made. The figures in the brackets reflect these adjustments. Also the partitioning and furnishing of the Office was financed from Group Vote funds administered by the Public Works and Government Stores Departments. The nature of these Group vote allocations prevents the ready isolation of expenditure figures on single operations, but the relevant costs for the Office of the Ombudsman have been estimated at **\$6,000**.
