Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 4 October, 1976

Petitions—Questions without Notice—Joint Committee upon Drugs—Loan Fund Companies Bill (Int.)—Building and Construction Industry Long-Service Payments (Amendment) Bill (Int.)—Long Service Leave (Amendment) Bill (Int.)—Appropriation Bill (Corn.)—Grievance Debate—Bills Returned—Joint Committee upon Drugs—Printing Committee (Ninth Report)—Loan Fund Companies Bill (Int.)—Allocation of Time for Discussions-Questions upon Notice.

Mr Speaker (The Hon. Lawrence Borthwick Kelly) took the chair at 10.30 a.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 Minister:

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.

Petition, lodged by Mr Lewis, 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 abortion 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 abortions.

Your Petitioners humbly pray that the 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 Lewis and Mr Ramsay, received.

Pedestrian Bridge, Wiley Park

The Petition of certain citizens of the Lakemba Electorate respectfully sheweth that in view of the heavy volume of traffic on King Georges Road, Wiley Park, an over-head bridge is urgently required to enable children attending schools in the vicinity to cross King Georges Road in safety.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray that your Honourable House will take immediate action to have the bridge across King Georges Road, Wiley Park, built as soon as possible to safeguard the lives of the children attending Lakemba Public School and Wiley Park Girls' High School.

Petition, lodged by Mr Durick, received.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

TRANSPORT FINANCES

Sir ERIC WILLIS: I address a question without notice to the Treasurer. I ask whether the relevant financial statements show that the 1976–77 Budget was drawn up on the basis of an anticipated $17 million decrease in revenue from the Public Transport Commission's passenger services on trains and buses. Did the Treasurer's colleague, the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways, indicate to the House yesterday that instead of revenue from these services decreasing, it is increasing? Will the Treasurer therefore advise the House of the manner in which the additional budget revenue of $17 million--or is it more?—will be allocated?

Mr RENSHAW: I think even the Leader of the Opposition would agree that the day-to-day balances in relation to the transport services are not sent to the Treasurer. In view of the involved matters raised in this question I shall have certain inquiries made and let the Leader of the Opposition and the House know the result.

NIGHT COURT SITTINGS

Mr BARNIER: Will the Minister of Justice and Minister for Services indicate the response to the new facility now available to persons wishing to have their cases heard at the night sittings of the court of petty sessions at Blacktown? Is there any indication of the likelihood of these hearings benefiting persons who would otherwise lose time from work in having their cases heard?

Mr MULOCK: The details of the first night sittings of courts of petty sessions at Bankstown, Blacktown and North Sydney, which began on Tuesday last, have not reached me and I am therefore unable to reply to that part of the question asked by the honourable member for Blacktown. However, information I have received indicates that only a limited number of matters were set down for hearing, but these included some defended cases. That was the position in all three courts. A trial period of six months has been set to ascertain public response to night sittings of courts. If the response to the philosophy that led to the move is favourable, night sittings will be arranged at other places. To date $1,700 has been spent in advertising the new arrangements in Sydney daily newspapers. I am anxious that as much information as possible about the matter be made available to the public, and particularly to those who receive summonses from this time onwards. If such persons write to the clerk of petty sessions at any of the courts to which I have referred and ask to have their matter set down for hearing at night, that will be done. The object is to ensure that persons do not lose time from work through having to go to court, and to ensure that they do not have to choose between losing time from work and missing the opportunity to advise the court of extenuating circumstances in their case which could result in a reduction in penalty.

I have been informed that the introduction of computer operations prevents any further information being added to the summons in its present form, but I have asked that the idea of attaching red stickers to each summons, indicating that the matter can be heard at a night court, be pursued. It may well be that the cost of such a procedure would be less than the cost of advertising in newspapers that cases may be heard at night sittings of courts. I believe that that would be the best way to ensure that the trial period produces some basis on which we can work in the future. There is little purpose in having a trial for six months if that fact is not brought to the attention of persons who receive summonses.

COUNTRY RAIL SERVICES

Mr PUNCH: I ask the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways whether, in view of the statement made by the Premier during a visit to Bathurst last weekend, he will assure the House that the department will not now cancel daylight diesel train services between Lithgow and Orange, Lithgow and Cowra, Lithgow and Mudgee, and other important centres in the Central West of the State?

Mr COX: The proposed cancellation of the services referred to by the Leader of the Country Party was never before me. In fact, it was proposed in the Swan report, which was commissioned by the previous Government. That report recommended the major curtailment of services throughout rural areas. If the Swan report had been acted on, most branch lines in country districts would be closed. There is no intention to cancel the services referred to by the honourable gentleman. The Premier went to Bathurst and gave a clear undertaking that those services would not be cancelled.

PACKAGING OF SALAD AND VEGETABLE OILS

Mr ROGAN: I ask the Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Co-operative Societies a question without notice. Has the Minister's attention been invited to a recent statement by Mrs Phyllis Johnson, president of CARP, expressing further fears about the storage of salad and vegetable oils in plastic containers on supermarket shelves? Did the statement suggest that the containers are virtual time-bombs, as the vinyl chloride monomer contamination that can result from the storage

of salad and vegetable oils in plastic containers could cause cancer of the liver? Does the New South Wales Products Safety Council have the power to recall from supermarket shelves oils packed in this manner? Will the Minister order an investigation into the claims, and will he report the results to Parliament?

Mr Pickard: On a point of order. Mr Speaker, yesterday you ruled that questions asked by members should be short so that Ministers might give short answers. I submit that the details and information required by the question asked by the honourable member for East Hills will necessitate a lengthy answer from the Minister.

Mr SPEAKER: The Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Co-operative Societies may answer the question reasonably briefly.

Mr EINFELD: I should like to offer my respects and compliments to Mrs Phyllis Johnson, whose name was mentioned by the honourable member for East Hills in his question. Mrs Johnson is a fine lady and is widely admired for her ceaseless fight to assist consumers. I have seen the statement mentioned by the honourable member suggesting that vinyl chloride monomer, which is used in the manufacture of polyvinyl chloride containers, has under some conditions caused cancer. Reports from overseas claim that deaths have occurred among workers involved in the manufacture of that substance. These reports have caused deep concern to authorities in New South Wales. For some time there have been doubts about the injurious qualities of this type of container. Health authorities of the Commonwealth and this State have been looking at the matter. I, too, have been looking at it so far as it affects consumers. I shall make further inquiries in response to the honourable member's request.

The possibility that food containers made of this substance might be dangerous will no doubt be examined by the newly established products safety committee, which will meet next week. I shall discuss the matter with my colleague, the Minister for Health, and if there is any possibility of harm from the use of food containers made from this substance, honourable members and the public may be assured that it will be banned from use in New South Wales. That action will be in furtherance of the policy adopted by the Wran Government since coming to office in May, to give at every opportunity protection to the consumers of this State. The Government will examine the submissions that have come from various authorities competent to examine this matter and if it is found that this substance is in any way injurious its use will be banned.

LEGAL AID

Mr CAMERON: My question without notice is directed to the Premier. Has the president of the Law Society of New South Wales described the $300,000 a year extension of State legal aid announced by the Premier as a plan for State Government employees to take over the provision of legal defence in all courts of petty sessions in major metropolitan areas? Does the Premier accept that description as accurate? If not, in what respect is it inaccurate? If that description is true, does the Premier's plan constitute a first step towards a socialized legal profession?

Mr WRAN: I did read what was said by Mr Murray Hooke, president of the Law Society of New South Wales, a gentleman for whom I have some regard but for whose statement I have somewhat less regard. It is staggering that Mr Hooke should have spoken in terms to suggest that a government-supported system of legal aid represented some invasion of the rights of the individual. It has only been in recent

years under the prompting, first, of the Australian Legal Aid Office, which was established by the previous national Labor Government, and more recently by the determination of the present Government, through the Attorney-General, to close up the obvious gaps in respect of legal aid that exist in this State, particularly in the courts of petty sessions, that I have observed the Law Society taking more interest in cases other than those at the Supreme Court and the District Court levels.

When the honourable member for Northcott speaks of a socialized legal profession, I say with some diffidence—but nevertheless confidence—that it is only because of his short acquaintance in a practising capacity with the legal profession that he could possibly have misunderstood the nature of that profession, as indeed Mr Hooke has done. The very nature of the profession depends upon the independence and the integrity of its members. The honourable member for Northcott is suggesting virtually that the legal profession is no longer capable of maintaining its individuality and integrity merely because poorer sections of the community are being provided with a better system of legal aid than the Law Society was able to provide. No amount of tokenism or patronage by the Law Society is a substitute for a real, comprehensive legal aid system.

What the honourable member for Northcott is trying to defend is a system by which a few solicitors were put on a panel as court solicitors so that the poor, intransigent, downtrodden public could come as supplicants and be assigned somebody who was not of their choice and whom they had never seen before. Sometimes these solicitors turned up; sometimes they turned up late and often they did not turn up at all. If the honourable member would consult the records of the central court of petty sessions he would see that the solicitor who was assigned to conduct that service more often than not turned back the assignees because they did not arrive on time to take instructions.

[Interruption]

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

Mr WRAN: It would do more credit to the honourable member if, instead of endeavouring to support an ineffective system of legal aid, he contributed something to the debate to provide universal legal aid in the courts of petty sessions of this State, an objective and purpose well under way under the guidance of the Attorney-General.

WOMEN IN RACING

Mr MALLAM: I ask the Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Tourism whether many women own and train racehorses and whether some of them ride in races. Is it a fact that without the support of women the racing industry would be very small potatoes? Are women not allowed to become members of the Australian Jockey Club? Are they excluded from taking part in the control or management of the racing industry? Will the Minister, when he institutes his proposed reforms to this important industry, ensure that women are properly represented on any authority that is established?

Mr BOOTH: It is appropriate that the honourable member for Campbelltown should ask this question. The Government has a policy in relation to this matter and legislation will be introduced into Parliament later to deal with discrimination. As far as the Sydney Turf Club is concerned there is no discrimination. A woman may make an application to become a member and may become a member of the club. The Act is quite specific. The only problem is that the application form refers to

men. In the opinion of the Parliamentary Counsel the word men means men and women. There is absolutely no objection to any woman making an application to become a member of the club. The Newcastle Jockey Club has already admitted a number of women. The first woman admitted was the former Lord Mayor of Newcastle. That was widely acclaimed by the whole community. The Australian Jockey Club is an autonomous organization. I thought that by this time it would have got the message that as far as the Government is concerned women who make application for club membership should be treated in the same way as other applicants. I shall do what the honourable member for Campbelltown suggests. The Government is vitally concerned about discrimination against women, especially as far as becoming members of these clubs is ccncerned. I shall do what I can to overcome the problem.

COLOUR OF RAILWAY CARRIAGES

Mr JACKETT: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways. Did I, on Tuesday, 19th August, 1975, ask the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways at that time to avoid acute visual pollution by painting suburban trains a silver colour? Has the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways announced that the Public Transport Commission will now revert to the dirty brown yukky colour used for so long in the public transport system of New South Wales? Are the new stainless steel carriages best left unpainted for many sound and economic reasons? As the trains will still have a pronounced piebald effect with the painted and unpainted carriages, will the Minister now seriously consider the use of a silver colour, as is used on many London underground trains, and spare people from psychedelic nightmares that would result from a reversion to what would obviously be seen as class distinction between first-class and second-class carriages?

Mr COX: It is true that the honourable member for Burwood raised this matter on a previous occasion with a former Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways. Referring to the colour of carriages, the honourable member used the term yukky. The colour consultant who considered the question virtually recommended against blue and white. Notwithstanding that, the former Public Transport Commissioner, Mr Shirley, went ahead with it. The colour did not prove satisfactory, because of weather conditions and other factors associated with the running of trains. For that reason the present commissioner, Mr Reihir, made a determination that when the carriages that are at present painted blue and white are due to be repainted they will be painted tuscan red. The silver-coloured carriages that are being built will remain silver. A decision has been made which will get away from the piebald effect that has been evident for some time.

COMPLAINTS AGAINST POLICE

Mr HATTON: I ask the Premier whether, to retain public confidence in the police force and to maintain within it practices and standards of which the police and public can be proud, the Government intends to arrange for an independent authority to investigate complaints against the police? If so, is it considered that the Ombudsman is the appropriate authority for that purpose? If not, what organization is being considered? If the Government intends to move in this important area, when can the people of New South Wales expect some action?

Mr Coleman: On a point of order. As this very question was asked two or three weeks ago and answered by the Premier in some detail, I submit that it should be ruled out of order.

Mr SPEAKER: I have no recollection of the question.

[Interruption]

Mr Coleman: I have it in my pocket.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Coleman: I produce it; the Premier can read his previous answer.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Premier has the call.

Mr WRAN: Unlike the honourable member for Fuller, I have no need for recourse to aides-memoire—and I shall explain later to the honourable member for Davidson what that means.

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Premier has the call and should be permitted to answer the question asked by the honourable member for South Coast.

Sir Eric Willis: On a point of order. On behalf of members on the Government side of the House, I ask could you, Mr Speaker, request the Premier to give his answer in the English language.

Mr SPEAKER: No point of order is involved.

Mr WRAN: If it will assist the honourable member for Davidson, I shall give my answer in monosyllables. It is correct, as the honourable member for Fuller has said, that a similar question was asked by him a few weeks ago, but the matter still remains pertinent and appropriate. I am indebted to the honourable member for South Coast for again drawing the attention of the House, the public and myself to a matter that is under consideration by the Government. The policy of the Labor Party was that the powers of the Ombudsman might be extended to embrace complaints against the police. In recent times I have had discussions with the Police Association.

As I mentioned in my earlier answer, an in-depth seminar considered the question of complaints against the police and the manner in which they should be investigated and dealt with. The Government has the benefit also of the report of the chairman of the Australian Law Reform Commission, Mr Justice Kirby. Without my finally committing the Government, it is fair to say that it is tending towards an adoption of Mr Justice Kirby's recommendation, namely, that an independent tribunal be established for the investigation and determination of complaints against members of the police force. Such a body would be of service to the public interest——

Mr Coleman: On a point of order. The three points mentioned by the Premier—seminar discussions, Labor Party platform and the Commonwealth Law Reform Commission report—were dealt with in his previous answer. I submit that this is tedious repetition and that the Premier is trifling with the House and wasting its time.

Mr Hatton: On the point of order. There is nothing in the standing orders that would prevent the Premier from referring to detail that is relevant to the question and, I hope, leading up to his informing the House when action will be taken.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! It has been the practice of the House and it is clearly spelt out in *May* and in *Campion* that questions are not in order which repeat in substance questions already answered or to which an answer has been refused. In deference to the point of order of the honourable member for Fuller, I feel that I have erred in allowing the question. I shall be watching the position much more closely in future. I call upon the Premier to conclude his answer.

Mr WRAN: It will serve the interests of the public and the overwhelming majority of members of the police force, who perform their tasks day in and day out with credit to themselves and the State. It seems to me that the final matter raised by the honourable member in his question—with due respect, Mr Speaker, I am not endeavouring to canvass your ruling in any way—makes the question proper, relevant and admissible. He asked, when is this likely. I expect that towards the end of this year or certainly by the beginning of next year the Government will be in a position to make a definitive announcement on the decision it reaches on this vitally important matter.

CENTRAL MAPPING AUTHORITY

Mr OSBORNE: I direct my question to the Premier. I ask him whether during negotiations for relocating the Central Mapping Authority from Sydney to Bathurst an agreement was reached between the Public Service Board and the Central Mapping Authority staff that a subsidy would be provided on bridging finance interest for home purchases? Is the Premier aware that this subsidy scheme was to have continued until June, 1977, but it ceased on 31st August, 1976? As the decision to shorten the time available for this form of assistance is causing financial hardship to a number of members of the CMA staff, will the Premier confer with the Public Service Board with a view to having the original date, June, 1977, restored as the date on which this assistance will cease?

Mr WRAN: I must admit that I am not aware of the terms of the agreement referred to by the honourable member for Bathurst. If it appears that, wittingly or otherwise, there has been a breach of any arrangement or a breach of faith with employees of the Central Mapping Authority, I shall see that it is corrected. I shall certainly discuss the matter with the Public Service Board and let the honourable member have a detailed and positive reply early next week.

HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Mr WILDE: My question without notice is directed to the Minister assisting the Premier. Recently did the Minister advise the House that the Government would introduce legislation to prevent the demolition of buildings of historic significance? Will this legislation encompass other features of our national heritage that are under threat through negligence, neglect or exploitation for private gain? Can the Minister advise the House when the legislation is to be presented and the details of it?

Mr Coleman: What about Bedlam Point?

Mr HAIGH: They ought to have taken the honourable member for Fuller there. It is true that I advised the House that the Minister for Planning and Environment was proposing to have legislation prepared to protect the heritage of this State, I am happy to advise the honourable member for Parramatta that such legislation is being prepared and it is hoped that it will be brought before this Parliament at an early date. It will be designed to protect not only historic buildings but also areas of historic importance and significance. I am sure that when the legislation comes forward, the honourable member's fears will be allayed in regard to the constant threat to more than 200 beautiful old properties in the Parramatta district. I am certain that he and other constructive members of the House will give full support to the legislation. What is being done is in marked contrast with the attitude of the Liberal–Country party

Government, which sat idly by for eleven years and allowed beautiful historic monuments and areas of marked purpose and interest in the history of this State to be vandalized and despoiled. In answer to the interjection by the honourable member for Fuller in relation to Bedlam Point, all I can say is that the previous Government created a situation of bedlam in this State.

DEAF MENTAL PATIENTS

Mr HEALEY: I address my question without notice to the Minister for Health. Does he know of any psychiatric hospital or public hospital ward in New South Wales where deaf people with psychiatric problems can be referred? Are there any psychiatrists with manual communication skills available in any of our psychiatric hospitals or public hospital wards? If not, in accordance with the policy of this Government and the previous Government to provide interpreters for those who need them, will he consider providing an unobtrusive service within the framework of existing mental health services similar to that available in Western Australia since 1967?

Mr STEWART: The question asked by the honourable member for Davidson is an interesting one. I shall have the matter inquired into to see what the situation is in New South Wales. If this sort of facility is not available and it should be, then certainly the Government will take it up.

CAR MARKETS

Mr JONES: I direct a question to the Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Co-operative Societies. Does the Government license car dealers and second-'hand car yards? Was this legislation brought forward for the protection of the public? Is the present car selling on a Sunday at the Flemington markets licensed? Do the operators of this market claim to give protection to the public by way of checking titles? Are the operators a registered firm? Could recently stolen cars be sold from this site? Does a firm intend to start a similar operation at Newcastle? Will the Minister fully investigate this operation with a view to licensing the site and the dealers in a manner similar to existing second-hand car dealers, so as to give further protection to the public?

Mr EINFELD: The honourable member for Waratah brings forth a question that has been the subject of a number of representations made to me by car dealers in the Sydney metropolitan area and one in Newcastle. It concerns the proposal to establish a motor-car market in Newcastle similar to those at Flemington and Grace Brothers parking station in Broadway. One Sunday recently I visited these markets and looked carefully at their operations. It appeared to me, as it does to the heads of my department, that no breach of the Motor Dealers Act is taking place at these places. The Motor Dealers Act was introduced by the previous Government and implemented by this Government. That legislation, which was more closely inspected and investigated by us than it would have been by our predecessors, protects the public by providing for warranties on motor vehicles both new and used. The operations of the Flemington and Broadway markets are being carefully watched by inspectors of the Department of Consumer Affairs. So far we have not been able to ascertain that any dealer has been selling stolen cars or doing anything that contravenes the present law. We shall continue to watch the position closely. There is no evidence that stolen vehicles are being sold in those areas. It is a fact that there are signs at the two markets to the effect that titles are carefully examined, and that insurance and other

services are available. I pointed out at those markets that there was no way that they could guarantee title, and that they should be more careful in the signs they exhibit. These markets are used as a centre by people who would normally advertise their vehicles for sale in the ***Sydney Morning Herald,*** the ***Daily Telegraph*** or other publications that contain classified advertisements. For the present at any rate, the Government does not propose to take any action in the matter.

MOTOR CYCLE RIDERS LICENCES

Mr ROZZOLI: I ask the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways whether recently he issued a statement that the Government will be introducing a system of graded licences for motor cycle riders. Is this grading system based on the horsepower of the motor cycles to be ridden by the licensees? Would the Minister consider extending this grading system to the drivers of motor cars and trucks?

Mr COX: It is true that on 1st January next year graded licences for novice motor cycle riders will be introduced. I have had discussions with the distributors of motor cycles and the various motor cycle associations, and have found that they are all in agreement with the proposal. At this stage I do not propose to introduce a graded system for motor car drivers licences, but now that the honourable member for Hawkesbury has raised the subject, I am willing to have some investigations made in relation to that matter.

RAIL QUADRUPLICATION BETWEEN STRATHFIELD AND EPPING

Mr McGOWAN: I ask the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways whether he intimated recently that the Government is planning the quadruplication of the railway track between Strathfield and Epping. Will the Minister inform the House of the cost of this proposal, when the quadruplication will be completed, and what advantages will flow to the commuters of the Central Coast?

Mr COX: It is true that in this financial year we have allocated *$2.5* million towards the cost of quadruplication of the railway between Strathfield and Epping, and I am hoping that this section will be completed in three years. The benefits that will flow from this undertaking will be that we shall be able to separate the freight and passenger activities, and as a result effect an improved timetabling arrangement for the people who travel from Gosford to Sydney. I do not know the total figures involved in this quadruplication programme, but I assure the honourable member for Gosford that these works have been given a high priority by the Government.

NEWSPAPER PRINTERS STRIKE

Mr N. D. WALKER: I ask the Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Mines and Minister for Energy a question without notice. Is it a fact that members of the Printing and Kindred Industries Union employed by John Fairfax & Sons Limited are participating in an illegal strike? Is it a fact that the full bench of the Industrial Commission of New South Wales sat on this matter on Tuesday of this week and recommended that the members of the union return to work? Is it a fact that staff employed by John Fairfax and Sons Limited are printing newspapers? Is the Minister aware that newsagents in the metropolitan area are collecting their own newspapers by using trucks from Avis Rent-a-Car System Ltd and other firms? Is he aware that yesterday members of this union contacted Avis Rent-a-Cars and the other firms and informed them that, if they hired their vehicles to newsagents——

Mr F. J. Walker: On a point of order. My point is taken on two bases: the first is the prolixity of the question, and the second is that it is giving a tremendous amount of information and is not asking for information.

Mr SPEAKER: I am concerned with the length of the question, and also with the fact that the honourable member is using the words "are you aware", which is tantamount to giving information. All the remarks so far have been in the nature of giving information, and therefore I have to rule the question out of order.

GERIATRIC NURSING HOMES

Mr O'CONNELL: I ask the Minister for Health whether he is aware that Woy Woy and its associated centres of Ettalong and Umina make up the largest country centre in New South Wales. Are you aware that the concentration of aged persons——

Mr Healey: On a point of order. Mr Speaker, you just ruled a question out of order because an honourable member was using the words "are you aware". The honourable member for Peats is now using the same words, and is giving information and not seeking it. I ask that you rule his question also out of order.

Mr O'Connell: On the point of order. Mr Speaker, you have ruled on many occasions that a member may give sufficient information in order to give the Minister some background to enable him to answer the question. I have used the words "are you aware" on only two occasions, and not the twenty-seven occasions they were used by the honourable member for Miranda.

Mr Pickard: On the point of order. Mr Speaker, in your previous ruling you did not refer to the number of times the expression was used; you merely made the statement that when the honourable member used the words "are you aware" he was giving information. On that one ground you ruled the question out of order, because it was giving information and not seeking it.

Mr SPEAKER: Previous decisions by Speakers in regard to the words "is it a fact" and "are you aware" have been rather flexible. It is fair enough for an honourable member, when asking a question, to use those words once or twice. In those circumstances I should accept the question. On this occasion, although the honourable member for Peats has used the words "are you aware", I believe that so far he is in order. However, if he continues to use those sort of remarks he will certainly be out of order.

Mr O'CONNELL: I shall not use that expression again, Mr Speaker. I ask the Minister whether the concentration of aged persons in the area to which I have referred far exceeds the State average, but no nursing home—either public or private—exists in this area. Does this cause great hardship for the elderly people concerned? Will the Minister contact his federal counterpart with a view to having concerted action taken to remedy this lack of care for the aged, and ensure that suitable nursing home accommodation is provided at an early date?

Mr STEWART: This, like other questions from the honourable member for Peats, is a good question. I believe that people generally would be aware of the fact that a great number of aged and elderly persons live in the Central Coast area. Indeed, on my visits to country areas since I have been Minister for Health I have noticed this problem in many country towns, although the total numbers affected in isolated areas are not as great as the numbers on the Central Coast at Woy Woy and Gosford.

Some years ago the former Liberal-Country party federal Government entered the field of care for the aged by providing subsidies to the owners of private nursing homes. At that time many people expressed alarm at federal Government money being

phased into the private sector. They believed that the development of care for the aged should be the responsibility of government, voluntary agencies or religious bodies. A large number of private nursing homes now exist throughout Australia as the result of that erroneous policy adopted by the federal Liberal-Country party Government in 1969 or 1970.

We do not have the funds at our disposal to provide this vital accommodation, but the Government has a personal interest and policy in regard to care of the aged. I shall take up this matter with my counterpart the federal Minister for Health in an endeavour to have federal moneys made available to the three tiers I have mentioned; that is, with the State Government providing this care or, alternatively, its being provided by voluntary or religious bodies working under State Government authority or legislation. I know that this is a serious problem, especially on the Central Coast. I shall certainly do what the honourable member has requested.

FLOODING OF HUME HIGHWAY

Mr COX: On 19th October, the honourable member for Burrinjuck asked me a question, which was reported at page 1877 in *Hansard,* with respect to the condition of flooding on a section of highway in the vicinity of Jessops Cutting Bridge over Jessops Lagoon and the construction of a new bridge in that area. I undertook to give the honourable member a detailed reply.

It is a fact that a new bridge is to be built in this area and that traffic will be diverted to council roads. When flooding occurs at the south end of the road works, the traffic uses the flood detour on main route 279. The highway will be raised in various stages above general flooding. First, a 3-mile section will be raised to give consistent level to cater for a 25-year flooding cycle. In this 3-mile section provision is made for the construction of two bridges as well as other structures including drainage structures. Completion of the design for this length are well advanced, and the department proposes to proceed with the necessary work in stages as soon as possible following completion of the general deviation.

JOINT COMMITTEE UPON DRUGS

Motion (by leave, by Mr F. J. Walker) agreed to:

(1) That the Progress Report of the Joint Committee upon Drugs, together with minutes of proceedings and evidence tabled in the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council on 25 May, 1976, be referred to the Joint Committee upon Drugs appointed this Session.

(2) That the foregoing resolution be forwarded to the Legislative Council with a request that the Council concur in the resolution.

LOAN FUND COMPANIES BILL

Introduction

Mr EINFELD (Waverley), Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Co-operative Societies [11.211: I move:

That leave be given to bring in a bill to prohibit persons, other than exempted persons and companies declared under this Act to be loan fund companies, from operating loan fund schemes; and to regulate the affairs and activities of companies so declared.

The object of this bill is to give protection to subscribers to companies operating loan fund schemes, commonly known as mutual home loans funds. More than 10 000 subscribers have invested almost $15 million in the funds, the activities of which have been the subject of numerous complaints by the subscribers. At present in New South Wales eleven companies operate loan fund schemes. Broadly speaking, a loan fund scheme is a scheme whereby persons regularly contribute amounts of money to a fund over a period of time with a view to becoming entitled at some date in the future to receive a loan of a comparatively large amount out of the funds.

The funds will continue to be registered under, and subject to, the Companies Act but will be subject to further controls that restrict and regulate their operations, just as, for example, the Money Lenders Act imposes restrictions on certain registered companies. It is proposed that the Registrar of Co-operative Societies, who will be known as the supervisor of the funds, be responsible for exercising these further controls. The supervisor will be given fairly strong powers to protect investors and the funds. In extreme cases he could suspend fund raising, appoint an administrator to conduct the funds or even make application to the Supreme Court to wind up a fund if it is not acting in the best interests of its subscribers.

More information is to be provided to subscribers to the funds through the funds' making regular financial reports to the supervisor and notification in the press of loans offered and made by them. It is proposed that there shall be a compulsory thirty-day cooling off period for new members, and for applications for membership to show that undertakings have been given, the rights of withdrawal, if any, and whether the fund is willing to specify the likely period within which a loan will be available. There is to be provision for easier withdrawal by existing subscribers. The maximum period that a person will have to wait for a withdrawal refund will be three years. There is to be no discrimination by the funds either for or against any person when obtaining a loan or priority to a loan. It is proposed to prohibit the affairs of a loan fund company from being managed, controlled or promoted by a management company. In addition, the investment of funds in other companies is not to be permitted.

I shall, of course, explain the provisions of the bill in detail at the second-reading stage. At this stage, I shall say only that loan fund companies do not have either the backing or approval of the Government. The purpose of the bill is to protect the small investor and the seeker of consumer credit. I commend the motion.

Mr GRIFFITH (Cronulla) [11.24]: The motion relates to legidation that was conceived and prepared entirely during the life of the former Government. The Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Co-operative Societies is merely continuing what the previous Government began. The companies to which the proposed legislation relates are commonly known as mutual home loan fund companies. They are merely an extension of what used to be known as the Starr-Bowkett system. Such schemes have proliferated in recent years and, from my knowledge, one of the most unsatisfactory features of their activities has been that they have operated under the control of management companies. Although I am not personally aware of any wrongdoing by management companies with regard to these funds, there certainly were opportunities for malpractice and for excessive charges to be made.

I know that a large number of persons complained about the activities of a number of these funds, the availability of loans, the amount of money that they were required to pay in, and particularly their inability to get back moneys if they decided that they no longer wanted to continue their membership of a fund or if they required the money for some other purpose.

The members of the Opposition believe that probably one of the biggest investments people make in their lifetime is in buying a house. It accounts for perhaps the largest single regular payment they ever make. Therefore, it is tremendously important that the Government do everything it can to protect people's investments in that respect. On the surface I imagine that the Opposition will not be opposing the bill, for it was legislation that would have been introduced by the Liberal-Country parties had they been in office still, and unless there has been dramatic change in the past few months, it is likely that the Opposition will approve of the legislation, welcome it, and assist the Minister in getting it through Parliament as quickly as possible.

Mr MALLAM (Campbelltown) [11.27]: I support the motion, for it will enable legislation to be introduced to deal with persons who are guilty of one of the greatest swindles that has ever occurred in this State. I was amazed when the honourable member for Cronulla, a Minister in the former Government, said that the Liberal-Country parties intended to do something about this matter had they remained in office. They had eleven years in which to act, and did nothing while people were swindled of millions of dollars in this State. It was hypocritical of him to speak as he did. I have never heard such nonsense.

I ask the Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Co-operative Societies to consider disclosing in his second-reading speech the eleven companies operating in this field, the names of their directors, and their associations. They are all management companies. I am sure everybody would get a shock if that were done; it would be found that a lot of the directors are friends of the Opposition. That was why for eleven long years the Liberal-Country parties would not bring in legislation to protect people from exploitation by mutual home loan fund companies. It was hypocritical of the honourable member for Cronulla to talk about the ordinary person who buys a home making the largest investment of his life. That is right in a way, but not in the way that the honourable gentleman has in mind. If the Government he supported had wanted to protect the ordinary home purchaser, it would have done something about the matter. Yet all the time he was in office he sat on the Treasury benches or stood up and mumbled away, but did nothing about it.

The honourable member for Cronulla said that he will support the bill. I wonder what he will say if the Minister makes the disclosure I have suggested, naming the directors concerned and telling the House something of the men and women some of these companies have swindled. I have received complaints over the years about mutual home loan funds. The honourable member for Cronulla says that they are an extension of the Starr-Bowkett system. Many of the directors of Starr-Bowkett societies are honourable people. They know their job, but many of those who are directors of mutual home loan funds are crooks who have swindled the ordinary workers.

I compliment the Minister for introducing this legislation. It seems that I am continually praising him for the courageous stand he takes to protect the consumer. Recently I was congratulating him in this House for taking on the bread manufacturers, a wicked monopoly that produces pig food not fit for dogs. The Minister is now entering the field of mutual home loan funds. It appears that he intends to take on the crooks who were sheltered by the former Government, which made knights of some of them—and a lot of whom are being prosecuted today. The honourable member for Cronulla used $10 million of Housing Commission money to bail out some of the crooks in this city, who are now being prosecuted, but he says he wants to protect homebuyers. I shall wait with interest to hear what the honourable gentleman has to say when the bill is being debated.

Mr PETERSEN (Illawarra) [11.30]: I congratulate the Minister on the magnificent initiative he has shown in introducing this bill to deal with so-called mutual home loan funds. I know of the deep concern and interest he has in this problem. I know that he feels deeply about human tragedy involving mostly working people who have been swindled by the crooks who run some of these funds. At least one fund with which I had some dealings was simply a variation of the old chain-letter scheme; and the earlier a person came into the scheme the more chance he had of obtaining a loan, and the more people he persuaded to join the scheme the quicker he might obtain a loan. The whole scheme was ridiculous and totally untenable. What happened in reality was that people who came into the scheme rather late in its operation had to wait longer and longer before obtaining a loan.

The person on whose behalf I made representations to the Minister would have had to wait about twenty-three years before getting the home loan for which he was contributing. The prospectus advertising of that mutual home loan fund was absolutely fraudulent. This sort of legislation indicates the basic difference between the Labor Party and the Liberal-Country party coalition. The coalition Government, when in office, administered the State on behalf of people who operate this type of scheme and fraud.

There is a fine line between the respectable capitalist and the non-respectable capitalist who is, in effect, a swindler. It is the same as the difference between Sir Henry Morgan and Blackbeard the pirate—whether one robs in good company or in bad company. We must control the people who rob in bad company. The Wran Government is not barred from doing so by an association with people who rob in good company, Again, I congratulate the Minister who is the finest Minister in charge of these matters that this State has seen for many years. This bill is long overdue and I support it.

Mr EINFELD (Waverley), Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Co-operative Societies [11.33], in reply: I am encouraged by the comments of the honourable members who took part in this debate—the honourable member for Cronulla, with whose comments I shall deal later, and the honourable member for Campbelltown and the honourable member for Illawarra, both of whom, in the few months I have been Minister, have continually brought to my notice the plight of people who have invested money in home loan funds and who are, to say the least, uneasy and anxious about what will happen to their money. My office and that of the Registrar of Co-operative Societies have received many letters, queries and telephone calls about money invested in this type of fund.

The honourable member for Cronulla was my immediate predecessor as Minister for Co-operative Societies and was having prepared legislation with regard to these funds. However, the matter was under consideration by the former Government for at least six years. Some years ago, when I sat on the other side in Opposition, I asked a question of the former Attorney-General, Sir Kenneth McCaw, about the Mutual Home Loan Fund and other similar funds, but all I got was what might be termed an equivocal answer. I have always had an uneasy feeling about these funds. The Mutual Home Loan Fund was prosecuted for putting out a misleading prospectus but no other action was taken against it and it continued to rake in money. As far as I am aware, these funds now have a total of $15 million.

I should like to inform the honourable member for Cronulla that important changes have been made in the legislation I am presenting, compared with that which he was drafting. My legislation is more direct. It deals much more carefully with what happens to shareholders' funds. Shareholders and subscribers will soon have a say in the operation of these funds. As I said earlier, the first big change is that

people will be able to get their subscribed money back within three years from the date on which they make application. That is almost half the period which was envisaged in the bill prepared by my predecessor.

The new bill will provide that subscribers who have shares will be able to vote at meetings of the company. It provides that if the company is to be liquidated, shareholders will participate in equal proportion and in an equal way with shareholders who are promoters. That is a vital area of change affecting a most serious matter. Home loan funds might be similar in some way to Starr-Bowkett societies, though those societies have always been co-operative organizations owned by the people who subscribe to them. The difference is that home loan funds were never owned by the people who subscribed to them but by the promoters who had management companies operating them. As far as I can see, those management companies were getting a good deal of cream out of the deal. The bill provides that there will be no such management companies. When I deliver my second-reading speech I intend to deal with these matters in greater detail.

I have listened carefully to the honourable member for Campbelltown who always makes a solid contribution to debates in this Chamber. I listened carefully also to the honourable member for Illawarra who is most anxious to protect constituents who have been mulcted and robbed. The honourable member, as usual, made a worthwhile contribution. I was reassured by the honourable member for Cronulla's saying that his party would not oppose this measure. I hope he meant both in this House and in another place. When this bill is enacted the Registrar of Co-operative Societies will be empowered to take steps, not only to learn what is taking place in these companies but also to ensure that they are run in a proper way. At present the Government does not know what these companies are doing and it does not have power to find out. That situation will be remedied.

I fear that some companies will not be as sound as many people think they are. One company which has now changed its name to Newbridge Finance Limited is being investigated by the Corporate Affairs Commission in an endeavour to ascertain who is the manipulative partner concerned. I think that the Newbridge Finance Company was previously known as Mutual Real Estate Funds, which did not operate successfully in any way for those who lodged money with it. There is real cause for concern and worry. Of course, not all home loan funds are bad, but the government authorities have received enough letters, telephone calls and complaints from people to cause them to have this bill enacted as quickly as possible so that appropriate action may be taken.

Motion agreed to.

BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY LONG SERVICE PAYMENTS (AMENDMENT) BILL

Introduction

Mr FERGUSON (Merrylands), Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works, Minister for Ports and Minister for Housing [11.38]: I move:

> That leave be given to bring in a bill to amend the Building and Construction Industry Long Service Payments Act, 1974; and to validate certain matters.

The purpose of the bill is to amend the Building and Construction Industry Long Service Payments Act of 1974, which blazed the trail for the provision of long service benefits to workers in the building and construction industry who were denied those

benefits under the Long Service Leave Act of 1955 because of the nature of the industry in which they were employed. The proposed amendments are aimed at improving and widening the application and operation of the long service scheme for workers in the building and construction industry, as well as validating certain payments that have been made by employers to the Builders Licensing Board.

When the original bill was being considered by this House in 1974, as Deputy Leader of the Opposition I supported it and described it as a pathfinder for Australia in providing 'benefits to casual workers in the building and construction industry. I still subscribe to that view, which is borne out by the fact that comparable legislation has since been passed by the Parliaments of Victoria and South Australia. The amendments contained in this bill are directed towards solving the problems which have arisen since the commencement of the scheme, as well as giving effect to various worthwhile suggestions put forward by interested sections of the industry, and to widening the eligibility for participation in the scheme by workers in the industry.

A major problem that has arisen relates to the payment of contributions to the scheme to the Builders Licensing Board and this bill proposes to validate those payments. The original Act was proclaimed on 27th December, 1974, but the regulations prescribing the contribution rate were not finalized until almost seven months later. They were proclaimed to take effect from 1st September, 1975. As legal advice indicated that the regulations could not be made retrospective to the commencement of the original Act, it is now necessary to amend the Act in order to validate the receipt of long service charges which were paid to the Builders Licensing Board during that period.

Amendment is also necessary to validate the registration of certain foremen who have been registered as workers under the scheme. The provisions of the Act are also being extended by amendment to include lofty crane drivers, electricians, construction labourers, clerks of work and the construction supervisors employed under contracts of employment. Other amendments of an administrative and routine nature are designed to protect workers' entitlements, clarify definitions, and empower the board to remove the names of workers from the register where no service credit has been made in the register for a period of four years. The board will also be empowered to invoke a penalty on employers who fail to keep prescribed books and records.

The proposed amendments contained in bill will give rise to a certain anomaly in relation to the Long Service Leave Act of 1955. With the consent and on behalf of the Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Mines and Minister for Energy, I propose later to introduce a bill to amend the Long Service Leave Act to remove this anomaly. It is the belief of the Government that the amendments contained in this bill will be to the significant advantage of those workers and employers who are affected by the Act and will facilitate its administration. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr DOWD (Lane Cove) [11.42]: The Minister in seeking leave to introduce the bill has used fairly fullsome terms in describing the actions of the former Government in entering what is a most difficult field, that is, working out a proper formula to give protection to people in the building industry. The Act, which was obviously a trail blazer, does require adjustment, and the matters outlined by the Minister appear to be proper amendments to it. If they support their promise, the Opposition will probably agree to the measure. The building industry is troubled at the present time. I hope the Government will reconsider its proposed redundancy legislation, which was foreshadowed by the Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Mines and Minister for Energy. I do not think he realizes the effect that it would have. We have to

make sure that we allow the construction of houses and that we do not penalize those who wish to develop this State and provide housing. The Opposition will probably support the bill under consideration for we want to see people employed in this industry placed in no less an advantageous position than those employed in any other industry.

Motion agreed to.

Bill presented and read a first time.

LONG SERVICE LEAVE (AMENDMENT) BILL

Introduction

Mr FERGUSON (Merrylands), Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works, Minister for Ports and Minister for Housing [11.45]: On behalf of the Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Mines and Minister for Energy I move:

> That leave be given to bring in a bill to amend section 4 of the Long Service Leave Act, 1955, so that long service benefits under that Act may be not given or paid in respect of a registered worker under the Building and Construction Industry Long Service Payments Act, 1974, unless an application for the benefits is made.

The purpose of the bill is to prevent any employer from giving, under the Long Service Leave Act, 1955, to a person who is a registered worker under the Building and Construction Industry Long Service Payments Act, 1974, any long service leave, or from paying to that person under the Long Service Leave Act, 1955, any payment in respect of long service leave unless an application has been made so that the option of the employee to take benefits under either of those Acts is preserved. As I indicated in my introductory remarks on the Building and Construction Industry Long Service Leave Payments (Amendment) Bill, 1976, the amendments contained in that bill gave rise to a certain anomaly in relation to the Long Service Leave Act of 1955. On behalf of the Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Mines and Minister for Energy, I am proposing to present this bill to correct that anomaly.

The Government believes that this amendment will protect the right of an employee to exercise his personal preference as to the benefits he wishes to receive in respect of long service. The amendments will also serve to protect the interests of the employer. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr DOWD (Lane Cove) [11.46]: The Opposition does not oppose leave being granted to introduce this bill, which would appear to cure a problem that has arisen. When we examine the full extent of the bill we shall probably be able to give it our full support and help complete the framework that will protect both employers and employees.

Motion agreed to.

Bill presented and read a first time.

APPROPRIATION BILL

In Committee

Consideration resumed (from 20th October, *vide* page 2085).

Clause 8

[Minister for Health]

Mr LEITCH (Armidale) [11.48]: I should like the Minister to give honourable members an explanation of what appears to be an apparent reduction of expenditure as set out in the budget papers. The total expenditure under the appropriation of the Minister for Health in the last financial year was **$433,483,075,** and the estimated expenditure for the current financial year is **$427,670,337. A** qualification must be put on 'both those figures because this year dental services are included in the estimates at **$3,659,668,** whereas least year this estimate was included in the allocation for the administration section of the Health Commission. I presume a further qualification would need to be made—and the Treasurer referred to this in his budget speech—namely, that the hospital fund had benefited by the infusion which occurred when the Medibank changes took place. Further, I note that **$7** million more was paid to the hospital fund from poker machine taxation. When all those figures are taken into consideration and an allowance is made for inflation, on the surface it would appear that there is an apparent reduction in the estimated expenditure, though I realize that this may not be so. Possibly the Treasurer may give honourable members an explanation in this regard.

It is about time that the House was given some idea as to the efficiency of functioning of community health centres. Many value judgments would be required to assess the need in this difficult area. A lot of money is being spent on the centres and the concept is a good one. Some evaluation should be attempted to see if the idea is working out as hoped, or whether some alteration should be made in the interests of greater efficiency.

The last matter I want to refer to is the contribution to that worthy organization, the Dental Health Education and Research Foundation. Excellent results are becoming evident. Following a stage where it was widely accepted that people in Australia had the worst teeth in the world, suddenly there has been a tremendous improvement. No doubt part of it has been due to fluoridation, but that does not seem to be the whole answer. The improvement probably reflects improved standards of care and wider community acceptance of the idea of better dental health. Honourable members should pay tribute to the members of the dental profession who, as well as performing their own work, have supported the Dental Health Education 'and Research Foundation. I am pleased to see that the Government has seen fit to continue to assist this foundation.

Mr KEARNS (Bankstown) [11.52]: May I briefllly direct attention to the part of the estimate for the Minister for Health that refers to administration, embracing the training of personnel in the paramedical field. I stress the need for decentralization of paramedical facilities. I should like to refer to assistance to hospitals, to allied services and to staff training within those areas. I make a special plea for the extension of facilities to assist the parents of children who are suffering from a serious condition known as spina bifida. Such a child has much difficulty in exercising the kidneys, bladder and bowels. In many cases these organs have to be manipulated manually by the parent or by some other person.

The only places where assistance can be given to these people, from a nursing and therapy point of view, are at two hospitals in the metropolitan area of Sydney. It would be of great benefit to the parents of such children if the services they require could be decentralized.. At present they must come to Sydney. If the services were

decentralized, at least into areas such as Newcastle and other major regional hospitals throughout the State, that would help, though it would still be necessary for parents and children to travel. The Minister for Health should examine the facilities available to people travelling to seek treatment. An instance was brought to my attention in which a mother and a child were required to travel by train, sitting up during the whole journey of 14 hours duration. That was necessary to get to the city to obtain treatment. During the whole of that time the mother had to look after the needs of her child in degrading conditions which were detrimental to the child's welfare. It is impossible in such circumstances to cater properly for the normal needs of the human body, and special difficulties are associated with those suffering from this complaint.

I make a plea for these people. About 500 patients are scattered throughout the whole of the State. Those who live in the country areas are at a great disadvantage in obtaining the necessary medical treatment and having to travel to the two centres in Sydney where the only treatment is available. There should be training courses for country doctors and nurses and for the physiotherapy services necessary for the successful treatment of the condition. If adequate health services to cater for the needs of the community are to be established, we must ensure not only that they are created but also that they are available to people outside the metropolitan area.

Mr TAYLOR (Temora) [11.56]: The matter in the estimates to which I refer is item C8, relating to the ambulance transport service. By a bill that is at present before the Parliament it is intended to change the status of the service quite considerably. I notice no substantial increase in the allocation to it this year. The ambulance transport service is administered and financed almost entirely by the Government and by contributors to ambulance funds. The old idea of holding raffles and other money-raising ventures is disappearing. The estimates do not disclose any large increase in the Government's contribution to ambulance services. Obviously, if the service is to be run as intended, without the old fund-raising schemes, it will cost considerably more. I support the idea of having ambulances run without the need for fund-raising activities by the officers. Those officers are highly trained and should not have to spend their valuable time running raffles. An increase of only $150,000 is shown in the estimates. That amount would not be a substantial increase over what was paid in the former twelve months. The allocation for 1975–76 was $3 million.

Bland shire in my electorate runs the only ambulance conducted by a shire council. The service is paid for out of the general council rate. I know there are many arguments that could be put for and against that procedure, but the fact remains that the ambulance is available free of charge for all sporting fixtures within the Bland shire. Within the past few weeks I have had brought to my notice the case of a small group of people planning a carnival which will include night trotting. If there is to be trotting, an ambulance must be in attendance at the ground, and the committee running the carnival has been asked to find $28 for having the ambulance present and $14 an hour for an ambulance officer. The carnival will probably show a profit of only a couple of hundred dollars, so there is not much point in having the function if that sort of charge is to be imposed. I draw attention to the fact that difficulties will confront people organizing sporting functions in small towns unless the Government is willing to meet the additional costs involved in maintaining ambulance services in these areas.

In my drawing attention to this important point that may have a big effect in country areas, I do not wish to give the impression that I do not agree with the way ambulance services will be administered in the future. I want to ensure that finance is available to ambulance services. Because of the charges, some organizations

may not be able to afford an ambulance and as a result would not be able to hold function. I refer to gymkhanas and similar functions which may find too great the cost of $28 to have an ambulance at a ground and $14 an hour for the officer to man the ambulance.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 10

[Minister for Decentralisation and Development]

Mr BRUXNER (Tenterfield), Deputy Leader of the Country Party [12.1]: I wish to refer to clause 10, which relates to the allocation to the Minister for Decentralisation and Development, and to discuss several sections of the budget papers pertaining to that allocation. It is appropriate to record, first, that the Opposition had expected, in view of the comments of the Premier and of the Minister for Decentralisation and Development, a much more spectacular allocation in the Budget towards the promotion of decentralized industry and population in New South Wales. In making his rural policy speech during the election campaign the Premier expressed the following criticism of the previous Government's record and policies towards decentralization:

> Ten years ago, the New South Wales Government allocated $6 million for decentralization programmes. After ten years of inflation, the allocation has risen to the princely level of $8.4 million. By contrast the Victorian Government has developed a comprehensive and successful decentralization programme. The Victorian Government's investment is at the level of $100 million a year—more in one year than this Government has provided in a decade.

Those remarks were followed by comments by the incoming Minister for Decentralisation and Development who, in public and several times in this House, has been highly critical of the record of the former Government and in particular of the record of the two previous Ministers, the Hon. Sir John Fuller and myself. The Committee would agree that I should express surprise today that the princely level to which the Premier sneeringly referred is not being raised by his Government. When he criticized that level he omitted to mention that over the period during which the former Government was the first government in Australia to have a full-time Minister and Department of Decentralisation, it expended a much larger sum than the Premier mentioned. It compared fairly favourably on the figures.

Between 1941 and 1965 when New South Wales had a Labor government the total allocation towards decentralization was $3.6 million. In the period up to the time that I went out of office—and there were some months between then and the election—the total expenditure through the Department of Decentralization was $88 million. We were looking forward to celebrating the establishment of the 1000th relocated or expanded country industry in New South Wales. I hope that the Minister for Decentralisation and Development will persuade the Treasurer, who was responsible for his Government's establishment of a part-time decentralization organization, to allocate much more. I do not think that the Minister will want to do that at the moment, as the Treasurer when delivering his budget speech said:

> The lack of business confidence and the reluctance of firms to engage in new investment was reflected in the level of expenditure under the State's decentralization programme in 1975–76. The total outlay of $6.7 million was a marked decline on the previous year's expenditure of $14.8 million. At 30th June, there was a balance of $5.1 million in the Country Industries Assistance Fund.

That balance has assisted the Treasurer in other fields of his budget. It has meant that the allocation to decentralization will not have to be as great. The new allocation will be added to the money already remaining in the country industries assistance fund but it is only maintaining the previous level.

The lack of business confidence and the reluctance of firms to invest in New South Wales was a direct result of the disastrous economic policies of the Whitlam Labor Government. I had the doubtful privilege of being Minister for Decentralisation and Development during the period that we felt those repercussions. Time and again I was told by local and, more sadly, by oversea industrialists and intending investors, "You cannot expect us to come into New South Wales or Australia and invest money while you have a government like the present one in Canberra." Fortunately that Government has been removed from the scene and confidence is rising. New South Wales must be ready to share that confidence with the other States of the Commonwealth.

If the Premier and the Minister for Decentralisation and Development are critical and if they consider that Victoria has done a better job than New South Wales —and I doubt that statement—I assert that the $100 million is a completely fictitious amount. The Victorian Government has never expended in any one year that sum through its Department of Decentralisation. While the Minister and the Treasurer are bringing the Budget before the Parliament let them back it up with a firm indication that the Government will pour more money into decentralized industry. I do not think that the Government will do that. I believe these were just mouthings on the election hustings.

Yesterday afternoon in the House there was a debate which went right to the heart of the lack of confidence and the lack of intention to decentralize industry. The first question any Minister for Decentralisation or director of that department is asked by a businessman contemplating relocating to the country is, "What will be the position with freight differentials if I relocate my business to the country?" The Minister, in asserting that I had been doing nothing, went to the extent of drawing attention to the fact that when he assumed the portfolio he found an exercise bike in the Minister's office and from that construed that the previous Minister also had not enough to do. Why did he not say to the Parliament that the heavy impost of country freights will mean an even further marked decline in the level of investment and in the number of inquiries that come to his department? One of the most important features of the policy of the State government, regardless of its political colour, is to keep the momentum that it is able to gain in its decentralization policies.

I am bitterly disappointed that the Budget maintains funds at their existing level. I should have hoped that the new policies expounded by the Premier and his Minister for Decentralisation and Development would have been backed up with some hard cash. We have not seen it; I do not believe they intend to do any more about it. The Government has a part-time Minister and he is trying to turn his department once again into a part-time one.

I left the ministry just at the time of the establishment of the small business agency. The former Government was looking to this as giving a real guide and a real boost to the small businessmen of this State. We were not confining that activity to decentralized areas only: we were intending it to give assistance, encouragement and financial advice to the small businessman of the metropolitan area as well. What does one see with this new agency which I had considered could be one of the greatest success stories of New South Wales?

There is an allocation of a mere $250,000 to this agency. The salary of the officer in charge of the agency absorbs about $18,000, though I believe that he is worth much more. He has a staff whose salaries come from that allocation of $250,000. What remains is a hollow exhibition of support for the small businessmen in New South Wales. An airy-fairy mention is made by the Treasurer in his financial statement that the Government plans to introduce a government guaranteed loan scheme to help small businesses. The small businessmen with whom I have discussed problems over the past two and a half years would not get far with what remains of the $250,000. If that is the government guaranteed loan scheme, the Government will send small businesses to the wall—assisted by its colleagues in the former federal Government.

I said that the problem we face in decentralization of industry stems from those disastrous economic policies. I give as an example one town in New South Wales, Lithgow, which suffered an economic downturn following the closure of a number of coalmines. Lithgow suffered unemployment to the extent that it was declared a 100 per cent area for assistance from the country industries assistance fund. In most towns in the State industries received a loan up to only 60 per cent of the amount required. The local government authority contributed 30 per cent and the relocating firm 10 per cent. However, in Lithgow, because of the extent of unemployment. the full 100 per cent was lent. A large number of females in Lithgow were unemployed. One of the best places in which to put them to work was textile factories and employment of that nature. The department had a real success story there and I challenge anyone to deny it.

The day Prime Minister Whitlam announced the disastrous policy that he espoused of an across-the-board cut in tariffs—without consultation with anyone in the industry—I started to receive telephone calls and visits from every one of the textile industries that the department had assisted in Lithgow. Some of them closed, some cut production by half. The new honourable member for Blue Mountains will admit that Lithgow is now at a level of unemployment that is even worse than it was when the Liberal-Country party Government tried to help it through its decentralization fund. If this Government had been fair dinkum on this matter, it would not have stood by and watched a firm as strong as Bond's Industries—of Chesty Bond fame, one of the best-known advertising figures in this country--close its doors because of Labor Party policies.

In the time left to me I want to refer also to the allocation through the Minister for Decentralisation and Development to regional advisory councils and their subsidiary committees. The Minister has forecast some far-reaching changes to regional advisory councils. That did not come as a surprise to me, for I was responsible for drafting legislation to make many of these alterations. I thought this might have been an opportunity for the Minister to outline to Parliament—aside from press statements and the speeches that he made in carefully selected areas throughout the State—and through it the people who have access to the record of parliamentary debates in *Hansard,* what the Government intends. I had accepted the fact that the regional advisory councils as at present constituted were not serving the purpose that was intended. I had discussed with the councils, and particularly with local government bodies within the regions, the programme that we had in mind. We did not intend at any stage to usurp the rights of local government, either on a regional basis or a purely local basis.

The Local Government Association and the Shires Association reacted most strongly to the proposals announced by the Minister and that is why I thought he may have chosen to elaborate further on the sketchy statements that he has made. At the time of our discussions with them we received criticism from local government about proposed alterations to regional advisory councils. It was claimed that we were acting

at the request of the former federal Government and helping it to implement some urban and regional development policies that local government considered went against the best interests of local government. I was able to convince them that the proposed legislation to restructure regional councils would strengthen the local government input into those councils. We were proposing to give every local government council in a region a representative on the newly formed council.

Up to that date we had called them regional development councils. I note that the Minister is now calling them regional development corporations. If they were along the lines of the development corporations that were set up in the growth centres, I could be excused a wry smile, because time and again when I was the Minister responsible for the growth centres I had to listen to critics in the Labor Party accusing the Government of which I was a member of setting up these development corporations to take an overriding control of local government and the various State government departments in that area. I believe that the present Minister, obviously with the support of the Government, proposes to go further than that. It was inherent in the land commission legislation that machinery was required to allow of easy acquisition of land throughout the State. I was accused in this House by the Deputy Premier, when he piloted that legislation through, of not having the right to oppose it, because I was the Minister who legislated for the acquisition of land in the growth centres.

If honourable members care to examine those two bills they will find that the limitations in the growth centres legislation were much more stringent than they are in the Land Commission Act which passed through this House a fortnight ago. The growth centres legislation gave no right to go into areas all over the State and say, "We intend to acquire your land and develop it." Nor did it contain a provision that the Minister can take away from local government all the powers that it has been given under its own Act, which has been in existence for a long time.

I sound a note of warning to local government. I hope it examines closely this regional development programme. I hope the allocation to regional advisory councils does not mean that a complete change will be made in their structure to the detriment of local government. We were proposing to strengthen the councils. I had answered the request of councillors that they be given more activity and more power, if I may use that word, and I had explained that they could never expect administrative power but that we wanted to give them more power at the local level, more power to recommend and advise, and we promised them that their recommendations and advice would be considered carefully.

The proposal is a sketchy one. It smacks of the same old socialist philosophy, the same old Department of Urban and Regional Development programme that we had from Canberra, with the bureaucrats and the National Capital Development Commission, the Department of Urban and Regional Development and everything else. I read into the proposals that will be financed under this clause an exact structure on a State basis. I think that local government authorities are aware of it but I take the opportunity of reminding them again today.

This budget allocation must be greatly disappointing to industry. There is no hint of money for further promotion of industry, whether in the metropolis or the country. There is no word of encouragement, no suggestion that the Government wants to expand industry. Those words of the Premier in his rural policy speech are not backed up by hard cash. We are going back to the bad old days when the Labor Party in New South Wales merely mouthed the word decentralization and did nothing about it. I deplore this.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 12

[Minister for Services]

Mr BOYD (Byron) [12.21]: In this clause provision is made for an allocation of $47 million for school cleaning. Obviously this large amount of money could be put to good use to develop many things. Our modern community is philosophical about providing youth with many advantages that were not available in the past. I have no quarrel with this concept; it is excellent and every responsible person will agree with it. However, it is evident that an irresponsible attitude has developed among many school youngsters in relation to their personal responsibilities. Schoolchildren have been travelling to school by bus at government expense for a considerable time. Most honourable members will recall that this privilege was not available when they went to school; we had to get to school the best way we could. Some of us had to walk 3 or 4 miles a day each way. Anybody who rides on a school bus after schoolchildren have ridden on it must be disgusted at the mess in which it is left. The seats at the back of many buses have been deliberately defaced and the padding tom out and thrown all over the floor. This goes on with monotonous regularity. Obviously the cost of repairing the upholstery is high. But operators in the country say that at every Christmas school holiday period it is not unusual for them to spend $500 or $600 on the repair of damaged seats. This sort of thing indicates a sad lack of responsibility in our young people.

Mr Renshaw: What is the figure?

Mr BOYD: It is $47,044,000—a staggering amount for school cleaning. There may be some merit in attempting to reduce this expenditure by suggesting to schoolchildren that as part of their responsibity in life they make some contribution to the cleaning of their own classrooms. I say this advisedly. As a character training exercise, the children of today could accept responsibility for cleaning up the mess they frequently make, sometimes indiscriminately and without showing any concern or care. I do not know how much further we can go in pandering to the youth of our community. Young people are expected to become responsible citizens. School cleaning is one area in which the Government could embark upon the character training of young people, and at the same time cut down the enormous expenditure of $47,044,000 for one year. I concede that the cleaning service will be required to do some of the cleaning jobs that the children could not be expected to do. It would be no severe hardship for children at all levels, particularly at the secondary level, at the end of a day's school activities, to sweep out the classrooms on a roster system. This would instill into them a responsible attitude and also keep expenditure down. I commend this idea to the Treasurer, not only as a savings measure but also as character building training for our youth.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 13

[Minister for Lands]

Mr TAYLOR (Temora) [12.25]: I wish to make some comments on the allocation to the National Parks and Wildlife Fund. I invite attention to the administrative side. A number of national parks have been established throughout country areas. I do not think anybody has had anything but pleasure in their development. There are

problems in the western parks, with large areas, where no attempt has been made by the National Parks and Wildlife Service to maintain boundary fences for the protection of surrounding landholders or for protection of the parks from surrounding landholders. Some of these parks are vast areas of 30 000 or 40 000 acres. A number of complaints have been made to me. The National Parks and Wildlife Service has complained about landholders' stock roaming through parks and has threatened to impound them. But the service leaves it solely to the landholder to construct many miles of fencing. Everybody knows that in the bush every landholder has a responsibility to maintain his own fencing and protect his neighbour from the depredations of wandering stock.

Let us look at the other side of the coin. The national parks are a home for a great number of animals that are considered noxious by people living nearby. Rabbits and other pests are breeding up. Nothing much can be done about them by surrounding landholders. This is one area of the administration that should be carefully looked at. Nobody can blame landholders for giving the National Parks and Wildlife Service a bad name if the land surrounding the parks is being infested by noxious animals such as rabbits. It should be brought home to the service that when it takes over a property it must assume responsibility for maintaining the property in a manner that is reasonable within the local community.

Mr PICKARD (Hornsby) [12.28]: I bring to the attention of the Committee, and in particular the Treasurer, the fine work that is being done by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, which was set up under a previous government and was sponsored and developed very largely under the administration of the honourable member for Wollondilly. On occasions there have been difficulties about the enclosure of certain lands. This enclosure has deprived people of free access and free recreational movement through certain areas, particularly in my electorate. I speak of the old Brooklyn railway land. When the railways came forward with a proposal for the development of this land for housing and recreational purposes, the scouting movement and the girl guide movement, both of which had used sections of this area for camping and weekend bivouacs, particularly in the vicinity of the old dam, were gravely disturbed. The proposal also upset lovers of natural wildlife who sought recreation in this area, through some sections of which they used to be able to walk freely.

Now they are to be deprived of this enjoyment because this area is to be included in the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, which comes under the control of the National Parks and Wildlife Service. The service has done a tremendous amount of preservation work; it is an admirable service, which provides recreational opportunities for many people. I am thankful, for the sake of the people of Sydney, that in my electorate the National Parks and Wildlife Service has provided a number of reserves and primitive areas, including the Elouera Bushland National Park, the Marra Marra Creek Area and the Muogamarra State Park as well as the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park. We had hoped that this little area of 600 acres would have been administered by a separate body, so that the young people who in years gone by had come by train could continue to camp there at weekends and enjoy open recreation. Although I acknowledge the fine work done by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, I ask the Minister to state in reply that he will give consideration to handing over this area to another body so that young people will still be able to enjoy it in the way they have in the past. This would benefit young people throughout Sydney. They could go to this beautiful area in the knowledge that they would be able to enjoy open recreation there.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 14

[Minister for Public Works, Minister for Ports and Minister for Housing.]

Mr ARBLASTER (Mosman) [12.32]: Some matters covered by this clause give the Opposition concern. I wish to mention particularly a matter that relates to the Housing Commission of New South Wales, which is well known as a highly efficient organization. The commission does not own even a hammer; all its construction and maintenance works are carried out under the competitive tendering system. For instance, repairs are carried out by various people and organizations in the areas where Housing Commission properties are located. A plumber in an area might successfully tender for a three-year contract to repair Housing Commission properties there. What concerns the Opposition is the tendency to increase the day-labour staff of other departments, particularly in the building construction and maintenance branch of the Department of Public Works. This branch carries out repair work on schools and other Government buildings, by having carpenters, builders and so on in the areas doing most of the work.

The other day there was proof of the efficiency of the private sector; five tenders were received for the construction of government buildings; two were 10-unit aged persons buildings, and the balance were for ordinary houses to be built at places like Wagga Wagga, Tarnworth and Casino, as well as in the metropolitan area. I believe that there were eighteen tenders and the price submitted by the Department of Public Works placed it in seventeenth position. The combined lowest tenders were about $250,000 lower than the tenders from the Department of Public Works. This illustrates the efficiency of the private sector, which has lower overheads and is more efficiently organized to carry out the work. No one would say that the Housing Commission is inefficient. It has its repair and construction work done under the tendering system, and I ask why this cannot be extended to other repair work and other works that are carried out by the Government.

The previous Government decided to sell the State tileworks. The State Brickworks at Blacktown is reasonably efficient mainly because it has newer equipment and is better suited to the market in that area than the State Brickworks at Homebush. Reference to the accounts and the Auditor-General's report discloses that the percentage of debtors to sales at Homebush has been increasing significantly. Although sales increased last year, so did prices. I have no argument about the price structure rising, because the brickworks must sell in competition. In comparison, the Calsil brick company, a highly efficient organization, in the administrative sense, operates throughout Australia in the main areas, such as New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia, and its ratio of debtors to sales is significantly lower than the ratio at the Homebush works.

I should imagine that the Homebush works could become more efficient and would achieve more productivity if a large sum of money were spent on installing new equipment. I suggest that, to save taxpayers' money, the Government could consider closing these brickworks. The industrial site and the railway siding beside it could be sold and production of bricks could be concentrated at Blacktown. That could be done if the Government wants to continue the State Brickworks as an undertaking. A significant sum would be raised from the sale of the Homebush works and it would enable the Government to finance other work. The State Brickworks needs a large capital outlay, to enable it to re-equip with up-to-date machinery. Also, administrative procedures need to be streamlined, including the use of computers. For these reasons I believe that the Government should consider whether to continue to operate the Homebush plant or to sell the works, especially as it still has the newer, more efficient works at Blacktown.

I now wish to refer to the expense of delaying the development of Botany Bay. Honourable members are aware of the tremendous cost of the Government's failure to press ahead with the costruction of the works at Botany Bay. The private sector is affected also by the delay brought about by the environmental discussion. I am amazed that in this debate the House has heard nothing from the honourable member for Blue Mountains about the employment opportunities that are being lost at Lithgow. Enormous expansion of output could take place on the western coalfields, which are the most efficient in Australia. The figures for man-shift productivity at the Lithgow field are the highest in Australia. Also, the infrastructure needed to gear up for an expansion of the coal export market would be far less costly at Lithgow. Yet rumours are flying round that perhaps the Government will go thead with Botany Bay only as a container terminal and will not proceed with the coal loader.

It will be a disaster to this State, and indeed to Australia, if the Botany Bay coal loader is not built. Certainly its operation raises environment problems, but what about the environment problems of the people who live in Balmain where heavy trucks are still running up and down the streets? What about the cost to coal exporters and those in the coalfields whose business is being jeopardized by the Government's delay in this matter? The coal industry cannot expand if the Botany Bay development does not proceed. What about coal trucks operating from Lithgow through the Blue Mountains? If the coal loader is built at Botany Bay, it will not cost the Government a cent. The entire capital cost, including that of the infrastructure, will be met by the coal producers. The Opposition believes that the project must go ahead on economic grounds, and to provide employment opportunities. All coal brought to the area will come in covered railway waggons. It will be stored under cover and it will travel to the ships along covered conveyors. Anybody who has been to Point Hay in Queensland and has seen the millions of tons of coal lying at grass there waiting for shipment knows that even when there is a stiff sou'easter blowing, washing hanging on the lines in workers' backyards only 300 or 400 yards away is not affected by coal dust. There would be even less problem with coal dust at Botany Bay.

By delaying this project the Government is wasting the State's resources and is jeopardizing the expansion of its industries. The Government is thumbing its nose at the people of the Blue Mountains, and at the people of Lithgow, who are waiting for the Premier to honour his promise. Why not go ahead with the project and give these people an opportunity to expand business and employment? Why not let the people of Lithgow know that they have a future in that town and that there will not be a repetition of what happened under a former Labor government when the Minister for Local Government decided that Lithgow would be a valley of small factories? Why not ensure the economic security of the people of the Blue Mountains by taking coal trucks off the roads and letting the coal be carried by rail? The Opposition believes that the coal loader should be built at Botany Bay.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 15

[Minister for Local Government]

Mr FISHER: Mr Chairman——

Mr FLAHERTY (Granville), Government Whip [12.44]: I move:

That the question be now put (S.O. 175B).

The Committee divided.

Ayes, **47**

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

Noes, **47**

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

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Ayes, **47;** noes, **47.** The numbers being equal, I give my casting vote with the ayes and declare the question to be resolved in the affirmative.

[Interruption]

The CHAIRMAN: Order! It being after **12.30** p.m., the time specified in the notice given under Standing Order **175B** for the completion of the remaining stages in Committee, the report stage, and the adoption of report, the question now is, That clause 15 stand part of the bill.

Mr Cameron: On a point of order. I ask whether the long-established rule of when equality of votes occurs a casting vote should be exercised by the Chairman so as to permit further discussion to take place has now been put into suspension?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! It is the Chairman's prerogative to cast his vote in the manner he sees fit. I have done that and no further debate is permitted on the natter.

Question—That the clause stand—put.

The Committee divided.

Ayes, 48

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

Noes, 46

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

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Clause agreed to.

Clauses 16 to 41 agreed to.

Adoption of Report

Bill reported from Committee without amendment and report adopted.

Third Reading

Mr RENSHAW (Castlereagh), Treasurer [12.55]: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Sir ERIC WILLIS (Earlwood), Leader of the Oposition [12.56]: I rise to speak on the third reading of this Appropriation Bill only so as to protest against the extraordinary and almost unprecedented action——

Mr F. J. Walker: On a point of order. The third reading of a bill is the most narrow of all debates. It is not a vehicle for the Leader of the Opposition or any other honourable member to use to protest about anything. If the honourable member wishes to vote against the third reading of the bill he is entitled to do so but he is not entitled to make any sort of a speech, whether on the Budget or to lodge a protest, outside the limited bounds applicable at the third-reading stage.

Sir Eric Willis: On the point of order. This is typical of the attempts that have been made not only today but also on previous occasions by the leader of the House to stifle any form of criticism of the Government. The Attorney-General did not even wait until I had concluded my first sentence before he sought the protection of the Chair to avoid criticism of the Government. The Minister could not possibly have known what I intended to say or whether it would be within the confines of debate allowed at the third-reading stage.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am willing to allow the Leader of the Opposition to continue. I did not hear sufficient of his address to uphold the point of order. I remind the Leader of the Opposition that he is confined to the content and general principles of the bill. No deviations will be permitted.

Sir ERIC WILLIS: I was about to say that I would not have spoken at the third-reading stage except for the almost unprecedentend occurrences that have taken place here today. At least $3 billion worth of taxpayers' money has been guillotined through a debating period in this Chamber of about 3¼ hours, or at the rate of almost $1,000 million an hour. The Government does not want any discussion on the details of its administration, and that is why things have been done in this way. Though the debate on this Appropriation Bill has taken place over several weeks, the total time allowed for the debate in Committee—it used to be called the debate on the Estimates—has been about 3f hours. This period is quite insufficient for members to go into detail on many important matters.

Apart from that aspect, it would seem that today the Government has used its numbers to gag the debate and it has even seen fit to call upon the Chairman of Committees to do something that is contrary to all past practice, that is, to give his casting vote in favour of the gag. Every schoolboy knows that is just not done at any meeting. It is traditional that if there is equality of voting, the chairman shall cast his vote in the negative so as to permit discussion to continue.

This Government is coming out in its true colours; it does not want debate; it does not want criticism; it does not want to have to stand up and defend its administrative actions. All the Government wants to do is use a sledgehammer in this Parliament. It wants Parliament to be—if I might mix my metaphors—nothing more than a limp, weak rubber stamp for the Government's administrative decisions. As a result, the Government stands condemned by its own actions.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

[Mr Speaker left the chair at 1.3 *p.m. The House resumed at* 2.15 *p.m.*]

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

Mr SPEAKER: The question is, That grievances be noted.

BEDLAM POINT

Mr COLEMAN (Fuller) [2.15]: My grievance relates to the Parramatta River and the preservation of a 5-acre headland on the river. I ask that the Government purchase the headland to make it into a public park. I do so with confidence. I hope my confidence is not misplaced, because it is in accord with the wishes and arguments of the National Trust, as outlined in its publication, ***Parameters*** for ***the River.*** That report was presented and made public on the Parramatta River on board a vessel one morning. The Minister for Planning and Environment was so excited about it that he nearly fell overboard. He thought it was one of the greatest things that had ever happened. He told the public—the honourable member for Yaralla and the honourable member for Kirribilli were present at the time—what a great report it was and that it would influence his thinking about planning and environment and the regeneration of the Parramatta River. At page 49 of this report the National Trust specifies this particular headland, Bedlam Point. It does not speak generally. It draws attention specifically to Meggits site in Looking Glass Bay, which is Bedlam Point. The report reads:

> The market for such exclusive prime waterside land is limited and its alienation by domestic development cannot be justified in terms of rehousing a large population. This is expensive elitist planning to the public's loss.

I am not referring to only the general principle, but to this precise piece of land, the 5-acre Bedlam Point, as specified in the National Trust's report. Given the enthusiasm of the Minister for Planning and Environment for the report and the specific reference, I hope I shall receive a sympathetic hearing on the matter—though that has not been the case so far. I am sure that when the Minister realizes what is involved he will be more sympathetic. The National Trust has issued also a more detailed report on this precise point. It refers to the principles that it applies when considering any site on the river. There are five principles as follow: river banks to revert to their natural state; reservation of any private or governmental lands or vantage points on the riverside for public use as they become available; identification, of sites of special significance to the river; encouragement of the keeping of all structures from natural foreshores; and no further reclamation of mangrove and mud flats—natural vegetation to be given every chance to grow.

This proposed development is against all those principles for the regeneration of the river. The National Trust said:

> . . . if the site was to be developed as proposed, the natural features of the site would not be satisfactorily retained; Looking Glass Bay would not regenerate nor revert to its former state, but would be further alienated; the opportunity to acquire a significant site for foreshore reserve would be irretrievably lost; pressure would be created to "reclaim" the area of mangroves at the head and along the east of Looking Glass Bay and the remaining natural features of the bay would be eroded rather than restored.

I stress that I am not attempting to attack the owner of the land or the architects. The present owner has owned the land for a long time. It was zoned as industrial land, but rezoned to residential to see what sort of proposal might come forward. Most of the local people would prefer it to be residential rather than industrial, but everything

depends on the sort of residential development. The owners did what any owner might do in the circumstances, given the cost of the land and the taxes paid on it. They engaged good architects, Edwards, Madigan, Torzillo and Briggs. Mr Edwards is a former chairman of the Australian Institute of Urban Studies and Mr Briggs is a former president of the Royal Australian Planning Institute. The architects came up with something that they thought was good.

The fact is that the project would involve the alienation of one of the last remaining headlands on the Parramatta River. I am sure the Minister appreciates the fact that if the opportunity is lost to obtain this land, not only will the ideas of the National Trust be breached but also all the ideas that the Government has espoused for the saving of park lands and for the regeneration of the river will be jettisoned. I draw the Minister's attention to the fact that the former Government was well aware of these principles and of the urgency of these matters when it purchased Clarke's Point at Woolwich. That was similarly zoned and was owned by an industrialist who proposed to develop it residentially. The Government intervened and purchased that 8-acre site because headlands on the river that are still available are few.

I ask the Government to take the same course with Bedlam Point. By the former Government's move, riverside land at Putney, which was to have been developed by the Housing Commission of New South Wales, was saved. Whatever is said about the controversal Kelly's Bush proposal, at least it involved the preservation of foreshores for the public. The former Government set a good example and the least that can be expected of the new Government is that it follow the same pattern, especially in the light of the National Trust's report which specifies this particular headland. I am not in a position to say what it would cost to purchase the land. It might cost more or less than $1 million. I assume that the fund on which the Government would draw would be the County of Cumberland regional open space fund. This is one of the last headlands available for parkland on the Parramatta River. It represents a wonderful opportunity and if the Gavernment misses it, future generations will hold it responsible. Certainly the Government's espousal of the National Trust's proposals would be greeted with hollow laughing and profound disappointment.

I hope the Minister will not say that the former Government had the opportunity to buy this land. I have referred to its purchase of Clarke's Point and other sites. The Minister has not spoken to reporters directly on this matter. He has sent out messages, by passing them out under the door, and it seems that he has said that the former Government could have bought the land at Bedlam Point. The former Government did not have the opportunity to do so. The issue was then one between the owner of the land and Ryde council. The council objected to the owner's proposal and the matter went 'before the local government appeals tribunal, which came down on the side of the owner. The only way that the former Government was involved was when the land was rezoned from industrial to residential. The important thing to see then was the type of proposal that emerged for the land. As it happened, the proposal that came forward was unsatisfactory. The ball is now in the Government's court. It is not too late for the Minister. This is the golden opportunity. He will not be forgiven if he lets it pass.

Mr HAIGH (Maroubra), Minister Assisting the Premier [2.23]: I listened with a great deal of interest to the honourable member for Fuller praising the qualities of Bedlam Point and indicating that the responsibility for the acquisition of the headland at any time could have been the responsibility of only the present Government.

Mr Coleman: It is now.

Mr HAIGH: I shall make it clear to the honourable member for Fuller—he appreciates I am going to make it clear, for that is why he wants a second dip in the can—that the decision was made——

Mr Coleman: On 29th September.

Mr HAIGH: By the tribunal in October last year. The matter was determined with regard to the use to which Bedlam Point was to be put even earlier than that by the State Planning Authority. The honourable member made representations because he thought it was a good political bandwaggon, and for no other reason, to the former Minister for Planning and Environment, the Hon. Sir John Fuller. The Minister advised the honourable member that the Planning and Environment Commission had dealt with the question and it was likely to come before the appeals tribunal. The proposal that the Hon. Sir John Fuller approved as Minister was that, of the 5 acres at Bedlam Point, approximately 3.5 acres would be made available for town-house development —or residential flat buildings, if you like—that approximately 1.5 acres be retained for open space, and that——

Mr Coleman: Will the Government buy the land?

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HAIGH: ——and that there would be a foreshore area reserve. If the honourable member had been honest in making his representations, because he had behind him the strength and power of a Minister of the Cabinet he could have encouraged the Minister for Planning and Environment on the application that came to the State Planning Authority to zone the whole area as open space. He was not willing to do that. Let us talk about what this hypocrite did.

Mr Mason: You have the power now.

Mr HAIGH: The honourable member for Dubbo is a hypocrite too. He was a member of the same Government.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister sat in silence while the honourable member addressed the House. I think it only fair that Opposition members should be quiet while the Minister addresses the House.

Mr HAIGH: Let us look at the hypocrisy of this individual.

Mr Coleman: Will you buy the land?

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HAIGH: What he has done is use the good intentions and feelings of the people of his electorate for a political purpose, as a political vehicle. That is the lowest form of subterfuge that can be perpetrated on good people. That is what the honourable member for Fuller did.

Mr Coleman: Ryde council——

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

Mr Mutton: On a point of order. Mr Speaker, you ruled just a moment ago that the Minister should be heard in silence. I submit that when the honourable member for Fuller was on his feet he did not address the Minister in the same manner as the Minister is addressing him.

Mr Haigh: You were not here.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have no control over the way in which an honourable member addresses the House. The Minister is entitled to do so as he sees fit.

Mr Coleman: On a further point of order. I raised the question whether the Government would buy this headland. The Minister is trifling with the Chair and this House if he does not speak to that question. He will not speak to it.

Mr Sheahan: On the point of order. I submit that in this debate there is no obligation on any member of the Government to respond to any member of the Opposition or any other honourable member. Whether the Minister decides to act on any matter raised by the honourable member for Fuller is entirely a matter for him.

Mr Pickard: On the point of order. It seems to me that if the Minister, who has other means at his disposal to reply to questions, takes up the time of grievance day, he should answer the grievance that has been raised, if grievance day is to mean anything. Otherwise he is raising something irrelevant: he is not answering the grievance. He is taking up ten minutes of the House's time on his own grievance.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is entitled to reply to any grievance raised by any honourable member in the House. The way in which he chooses to reply is his own affair. He has mentioned a number of times the matter raised by the honourable member for Fuller. He has indicated why the issue should have been taken up and the land resumed by an earlier government. I think it is fair that he should make some reference to that. The Minister realizes that be is limited by time.

Mr HAIGH: There is a point of grievance in this matter. It is the grievance of the people who were misled by the actions of the previous Government, and the fact that that Government did not move to do what the honourable member for Fuller, who was a Minister in that Government, is now asking be done. I have made these statements so that the people of his electorate will know the subterfuge that he has been handing out to them. The Wran Government will do more to protect the heritage of this State and the areas that should be retained for public use than the previous Government did in its entire eleven years of office. I shall refer this matter to the Minister for Planning and Environment and draw to his attention the way in which it was handled by the previous Government. I shall ask the Minister to examine all aspects.

Mr Mason: With your support?

Mr HAIGH: It would be better than your support was on the last occasion.

Mr PETERSEN (Illawarra) [2.30]: I want to raise a matter concerning a development that has caused a great deal of concern on the South Coast, the proposed upgrading of the Jamberoo mountain pass road. Later I shall read to the House a letter forwarded to me by the Albion Park branch of the Australian Labor Party. This branch covers an area that is partly in my electorate and partly in the electorate of the honourable member for Wollondilly. The actual Jamberoo mountain pass road is in the electorate of the honourable member for Wollondilly. There are two reasons why the branch wants me to take up the matter.

First, it is no secret that this matter has the wholehearted support of the Liberal Party in Kiarna, which has complete control of Kiama council. That council enthusiastically supports the concept of the Jamberoo mountain pass road. Second, although we agree with protagonists of the road in their criticism of the existing Macquarie Pass road, the solution is not to upgrade the Jamberoo mountain pass road, which is nearly as bad as Macquarie Pass, but to get to work on the new Johnston Spur road, which

follows the ridge instead of climbing up the side of an unstable escarpment. This would be to the benefit of all the people of the South Coast. The letter from Albion Park branch of the Australian Labor Party reads:

> At the Meeting of this Branch held at Albion Park on 19th inst., the question of the sealing and upgrading of the Jamberoo Mountain Pass Road was discussed by the Members present and great concern was expressed by those Members in relation to this matter. In general, fears were held that the Jamberoo Mountain Road would become another high speed road for coal trucks, as it is well known that a large mining company does hold mining leases in respect of the coal reserves some short distance away and that the sealing and upgrading of this Road would be the first step leading to continuous coal haulage to a nearby coal loader. Secondly, it was felt that although the Road does warrant some improvement for the benefit of motorists who enjoy the natural surroundings of the area, the proposed major upgrading as proposed by the authorities was not warranted.
>
> The Branch has requested that you pursue the following resolution in respect of this Road:
>
> "This Branch of the Australian Labor Party opposes the upgrading of Jamberoo Mountain Road to a heavy traffic highway because of the historical significance of the Valley and Pass, and the aesthetic values of the existing road. Instead, this Branch recommends that the Minister undertakes to make a study to get the Johnston Spur Road established as a definite undertaking as a major highway, thereby preserving the Jamberoo Road as a rural and scenic Road."
>
> The resolution was carried unanimously and we would be pleased if you would act on this matter at the first opportunity.

The original decision by Kiama council to upgrade and realign the Jamberoo mountain pass road was made apparently twelve years ago. Since then only 3.2 kilometres have been completed. Stage 1 of about 2 kilometres—the easy part—cost $70,000 to upgrade and seal. Section 2, of 1.3 kilometres, part of the foot of the mountain, cost a further $310,000. The debate concerns the third section, a length of approximately 1.2 kilometres, which will take the road two-thirds of the way for a cost of $246,000 to be financed largely by the Department of Main Roads.

Conservationists claim that stage 2, which was completed in 1973, caused extensive damage to the natural environment. More than half of stage 3 goes through dense bushland, on a 30-degree inclined mountainside. At a public meeting on 22nd September the council's engineer, Mr R. Black, admitted that the estimated cost of $246,000 would allow only for a substandard finish to the road batters of the steep cuttings similar to the present unstable batter at the south end of the nearly completed stage 2 section. We have seen the effects of cutting into the side of an unstable pass on Macquarie Pass, Mt Ousley road and Bulli Pass, but apparently the Kiama council is so determined to go ahead that it intends to repeat the same mistakes. An independent civil engineer, Mr E. H. Rigby of Wollongong, has given an opinion dated 13th October, 1976, expressing doubt whether any geotechnical survey has been carried out, and if it were, a design of a much higher standard would be required.

Not only is the surface unstable; this is an area of 80-inch rainfall a year. At present nobody knows what will happen if the necessary excavations and removal of vegetation take place. It is estimated that even the planner's work will involve the removal of 400 or 500 trees, some of which are hundreds of years old. There is a need for sealing the existing gravel surface, but I believe that this could be done quite

effectively by sealing the road to its present alignment. This was done on the mountain road from Berry to Kangaroo Valley, and the result was quite satisfactory and the cost much less. Apparently this is not acceptable to the Department of Main Roads.

All sorts of crazy reasons are being advanced for this work. One of the silliest is that the present road is dangerous. That explanation was given by Alderman Noble, the deputy mayor of Kiama. He said it is dangerous, though no fatal accident has occurred on the road for at least twenty years. If improvement of any of the roads in the Jamberoo valley area is really necessary, why has the money not been spent on upgrading the eastern section of main road 264 between Kiama and Jamberoo, which carries twenty to thirty times the traffic using Jamberoo Pass? This brings me to the Labor movement's principal objection. The upgrading of the mountain pass road will encourage its use by heavy transports, perhaps even coal transports. What will happen when they reach the bottom of the pass? They will then have to travel over the old narrow roads. Will there be south of Wollongong the same destruction of rural and suburban roads as there has been by heavy transports north of Wollongong?

The local residents are in no doubt about how they feel on this issue. A public meeting of 150 people in the small township of Jamberoo on 22nd September made a vehement protest against Kiama council's decision. No fewer than 300 objections have been received to the plan, and the Illawarra regional advisory council strongly opposes the plans of the council and supports the Johnston Spur proposal. I am sorry that the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways cannot be in the House this afternoon because he is receiving a deputation, but I ask his colleague, the Minister for Health, to convey my representations to the Department of Main Roads. The Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways should consider whether it is wise to continue with the upgrading of the Jamberoo mountain pass road, repeating the mistakes that have been made with previous pass roads.

In our view, it is vital that the Johnston Spur road be proceeded with, and that the work be carried out so as to cause the minimum effect to the environment, and at the same time provide a stable road. The real need for this road is to improve the general access from the tablelands to the coast; or is it to funnel tourist traffic into the beachside caravan parks in the Kiama district, in which two prominent aldermen of the Kiama council have substantial financial interests? Is it to assist some multi-national company to transport minerals from its future tableland mines to coastal off-shore loaders? If any of these reasons is justifiable, should the road be built at the expense of destroying an historic mountain road of high scenic value? This is a matter that should be carefully considered. This roadwork could be the first step in the ultimate destruction of one of the finest pieces of rural scenery in Australia.

I am speaking in this grievance debate today to urge the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways to have another look at this proposal, and to see whether there is a better alternative that would not result in the destruction of natural beauty.

AUSTRALIAN JOCKEY CLUB

Mr WOTTON (Burrendong) [2.40]: I am concerned about many of the statements, especially in recent weeks, which I believe have brought great discredit and even shame upon this House and its members. I refer mainly to the series of wild, irresponsible and unsubstantiated attacks by the honourable member for Campbelltown upon the Australian Jockey Club and other sundry people. Vilification and character assassination and the honourable member for Campbelltown are not strangers to one

another. Freedom of speech and the absolute privilege that attaches to it in this Parliament is one of parliamentary democracy's most precious possessions, but with it comes a heavy responsibility. This privilege should not be abused, and there should not be slander and vilification under its cloak. To abuse the privilege is to bring Parliament into disrepute. That is exactly what the honourable member Campbelltown has done by his baseless accusations over a long period—more recently against the Australian Jockey Club, and only this week against the Bank of New South Wales and people associated with that great organization.

One of the worst and most unfortunate aspects is that the honourable member in his campaign—and that is what it is—has received wide front-page coverage in the press. I am delighted to see that the honourable member for Campbelltown has now come into the Chamber. His accusations have deceived wide publicity in at least the Sydney metropolitan papers, but replies have received only a small amount of space. Indeed, sometimes no space whatever has been given to statements refuting the honourable member's allegations.

Mr Mallam: I will deal with you in a moment.

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

Mr WOTTON: In some instances no space has been given to statements refuting his allegations and exposing them as utterly false. On 2nd September great publicity was given to charges made by the honourable member in a question directed to the Minister for Sport and Recreation during question time.

Mr Mallam: On a point of order. The honourable member for Burrendong is reading a brief that he has been given by someone else. Never during the time he has been a member of this House has he been able to make a speech without reading it.

Mr Wotton: On the point of order. These are copious notes that I have compiled myself.

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I wish to hear the honourable member for Burrendong on the point of order.

Mr Wotton: These are copious notes that I have drawn up myself so that I shall be able to put my arguments in proper sequence.

Mr SPEAKER: I ask the honourable member for Burrendong to continue. I am sure that he knows the rules.

Mr Stewart: On a further point of order. Standing order 151 is relevant here. I thought the honourable member for Burrendong was perhaps going to say something in defence of the Australian Jockey Club as he has the right to do. However, Standing Order 151 states:

> No Member shall use offensive or unbecoming words in reference to any Member of either House of Parliament or make imputations of improper motives or personal reflections on Members.

That is all the honourable member for Burrendong has done, and I believe he should be asked to address himself to the grievance he wishes to explain to the House. If he feels he has a grievance against an honourable member, he should express it by way of substantive motion. If he wishes to defend the Australian Jockey Club, he may use the time available to him in this debate.

Mr SPEAKER: So far the honourable member for Burrendong has referred to the honourable member for Campbelltown. He has referred also to the matters that the honourable member for Campbelltown has raised in past weeks. I uphold the point of order taken by the Minister for Health if the honourable member for Burrendong intends to continue to attack the honourable member for Campbelltown under the guise of his grievance debate. I am sure the honourable member is fully aware of the provisions of standing order 151 and the form of the House available to him if he wishes to pursue his objections to the actions of the honourable member for Campbelltown.

Mr WOTTON: It really concerns me when members enter this Chamber and, under the guise of parliamentary privilege, use this place to attack people without accepting the responsibility that goes with that privilege. If that cap fits the honourable member for Campbelltown, let him wear it. The whole point about the privilege that we enjoy is that responsibility goes with it. The honourable member for Campbelltown made charges and was fully reported in the press. However, the replies refuting what he said went unnoticed. During the last grievance debate the honourable member made wild charges that received maximum publicity but the subsequent complete denial of those allegations received minimum publicity. In a question directed to the Minister for Sport and Recreation by my colleague, the honourable member for Bligh——

Mr Mallam: On a point of order. The honourable member for Burrendong said there had been a complete denial of what I had said in this Parliament. That is untrue. There was no denial.

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! No point of order is involved. The honourable member for Burrendong takes full responsibility for what he is saying. If the honourable member for Campbelltown does not agree with him, he might care to seek the call.

Mr WOTTON: Mr Speaker, it concerns me that——

Mr O'Connell: On a point of order. Surely grievance day was not intended to be a forum for members of Parliament to attack other members. It was intended as an avenue by which honourable members could air grievances about things affecting their electorate. It enables members to air matters of concern before the Parliament. Surely that is not what the honourable member for Burrendong is doing. I submit that he is out of order and I ask that you rule accordingly.

Mr SPEAKER: The question before the chair is, That grievances be noted. It is in order for the honourable member for Burrendong to refute anything that has been raised previously. However, it is not in order for the honourable member to attack another honourable member about his personal conduct. Should the honourable member wish to attack the conduct of another member he should do so by taking the appropriate course of moving a substantive motion in order that full opportunity is given to the Parliament to hear the complaint and full opportunity is given to the member concerned to reply. Those principles have been the basis of long-established practice of the House of Commons and many references have been made to them over the years. I ask the honourable member for Burrendong to refrain from further attacks upon the honourable member for Campbelltown.

Mr WOTTON: This technique of mounting a campaign of vilification and slander preparatory to government action is one that will be sadly familiar to students of contemporary European history. I am well aware that I have no time left even partly to answer the untruths that the honourable members for Campbelltown, that guilty man, has uttered in this Parliament.

STATE SUPERANNUATION FUND

Mr CAHIU (Marrickville) [2.50]: I wish to raise a matter which has caused great concern to a constituent of mine, Mr Michael W. Jackson, who resides at No. 186 Corunna Road, Petersham.

Mr Mallam: The honourable member for Burrendong is a crook.

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Campbelltown to order for the second time; and I call the honourable member for Burrendong to order for the first time.

Mr Wotton: On a point of order. I take strong exception to the honourable member for Campbelltown calling me a crook and I ask that you direct him to withdraw and apologize.

Mr SPEAKER: As the honourable member for Burrendong has taken exception to the word crook I ask the honourable member for Campbelltown to withdraw it.

Mr Mallam: I withdraw it.

Mr CAHILL: The matter that is causing concern to my constituent is covered by the Superannuation Act of 1916. I use Mr Jackson's case as one incidental to the real problem.

[Interruption]

Mr Barraclough: On a point of order. Mr Speaker, I just overheard the honourable member for Campbelltown say, "Tell Blake Pelly I called him a crook, too".

Mr Mallam: That is a lie.

Mr Stewart: He did not say that.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Did the honourable member for Campbelltown use the words expressed by the honourable member for Bligh?

Mr Mallam: Mr Speaker, I did not use those words. The honourable member's hearing is bad. Obviously he needs a hearing aid.

Mr SPEAKER: 1 cannot ask the honourable member to withdraw.

Mr CAHILL: This matter affecting Mr Jackson is causing me some concern. Recently he was accepted as a permanent employee of the University of Sydney. He was required to submit himself for examination to ascertain whether he was eligible to join the State Superannuation Fund. Section 11A of the Superannuation Act provides that notwithstanding anything contained in that Act or any other Act every employee shall either before or as soon as practicable after the commencement of his employment submit himself to medical examination by the Government Medical Officer. That same section provides further that where the report of the Government Medical Officer indicates that such an employee is suffering from any physical or mental defect which is likely to affect his health or longevity or his capacity to continue in his employment, the board may refuse to accept such an employee as a contributor or alternatively it may accept the employee as a contributor for limited benefits. Another alternative is that the board may postpone his acceptance to a later date. Section 11C, which relates to the rights and obligations of contributors for limited

benefits, consists of fourteen lines. It starts with a capital letter and has no commas or full-stops until the end. So that honourable members might follow my point I shall read it:

> A contributor for limited benefits and the widow and children of such contributor and any pensioner who immediately before his retirement or retrenchment was such a contributor and the widow and children of such pensioner shall except where otherwise expressly provided or the context otherwise requires be entitled to the rights and be subject to the obligations of a contributor otherwise than for limited benefits and the widow and children of a contributor otherwise than for limited benefits and a pensioner who immediately before his retirement or retrenchment was a contributor otherwise than for limited benefits and the widow and children of a pensioner who immediately before his retirement or retrenchment was a contributor otherwise than for limited benefits, as the case may require.

Needless to say, my constituent was somewhat confused by that section and he took the matter up with the Superannuation Board. I am not in any way critical of that board, which administers the Act as it is written. My constituent is concerned that after medical examination he was found to be suffering from advanced myopia, which I understand is a form of bad eyesight. He was found to be eligible only for limited superanuation benefits. However, he has been required to pay full contributions into the fund. The State Superannuation Board pointed out to Mr Jackson that he would become eligible to receive only a reduced pension, the minimum being **50** per cent of full pension entitlement. Also, a proportionate amount is payable for each completed year of contribution, and where the retirement occurs at age **60,** or age **55** in the case of a female contributing to retire at that age, full pension is payable.

The second point is that if a male contributor for limited benefits dies before retirement his widow receives two-thirds of the breakdown pension entitlement at the date of death, not two-thirds of the full pension entitlement. Similarly, if a man in receipt of a reduced limited benefits breakdown pension dies, his widow receives two-thirds of that reduced pension. The contributor can, if he desires, submit himself to a further medical examination so that he can be reconsidered for full benefits. The point that I should like the Minister of Justice and Minister for Services to consider is that a man who has bad eyesight and can contribute for only limited benefits could die from a **heart** attack and the widow would become eligible for only a limited benefit pension. The cause of death or retirement need not be associated with the condition that limits the benefit. The Act should be amended to ensure that adequate consideration is given to people who have some physical or mental handicap. They should not be unduly penalized by the present harsh provisions of the Act.

Also, I ask the Minister to consider the wording of the Act. As I have indicated, although honourable members are experts in the drafting of legislation, for that is part of their job, many people would not have such a keen perception and would not be able to gain a clear understanding of sections of an Act like the ones I have read to the House. When the Minister is reviewing the State Superannuation Act I ask him to pay particular regard to the question of limited benefits. It is most unfair to ask a contributor to pay the full amount of contributions and to penalize him even though he may be retired on grounds other than those for which he has had the limit imposed.

Mr MULOCK (Penrith), Minister of Justice and Minister for Services [2.57]: The question of limited benefits is under review to ascertain whether the Act should be amended. I am not yet in a position to comment generally on the matter but shortly I expect to receive an appropriate recommendation from the State Superannuation Board.

STRIKE BY PRINTERS OF NEWSPAPERS

Mr N. D. WALKER (Miranda) [2.58]: I raised a matter in the House this morning but I was interrupted almost as soon as I began. I am thankful for the democratic system that exists in this Parliament which enables me to raise the matter again this afternoon. I shall establish that what I am saying is in the best interests of the community. The matter relates to an illegal strike by employees of John Fairfax and Sons Limited at Broadway. Members of the Printing and Kindred Industries Union have been on strike over the printing of newspapers there for some fifteen days. On Tuesday the full bench of the Industrial Commission of New South Wales recommended that the men should return to work. A conciliation commissioner had recommended earlier that they return to work.

I speak on behalf of some 1 100 newsagents in New South Wales and particularly on behalf of newsagents in the metropolitan area. For fifteen days newsagents have been collecting their own newspapers. At great cost each newsagent, or members of his family, has been going to the plant at Broadway and picking up the papers. Most newsagents have had to hire trucks to carry the loads of papers. They were hiring the trucks from Avis Rent-A-Car System Pty Limited and other firms. The newsagents met the hire charges. Newsagents supply an essential service to the community. I am sure all honourable members seek to keep up with what is happening by reading newspapers. I am convinced that many members of Parliament would not even know what was going on in this House if they did not read the daily papers.

The strike has cost the newsagents a considerable amount of money and a lot of lost time. They have had to pay for the truck hire and as a result have been selling newspapers at a loss. The newsagents are trying to protect businesses that they have built up over the years. It is generally believed that a newsagent's business is an easy one to run but it should not be overlooked that these people work long hours. It is most costly for a newsagent to wrap greaseproof paper round newspapers on a wet Sunday morning. The daily newspaper delivery service is one of the most reliable services still available to the citizens of New South Wales. Nowadays there is only one postal delivery a day and telegrams are not delivered on Saturday, but the newspaper delivery system continues at a high standard because of the co-operation of the newspaper companies and the newsagents. The agents are proud of this fact.

The members of the trade union concerned will not abide by the decision of three prominent judges of the highly respected Industrial Commission of New South Wales. The problem is that yesterday members of the union contacted Avis Rent-A-Car System Pty Limited and other firms from which the newsagents have been hiring trucks and informed them that if Avis or the other firms continued to hire trucks to the agents they would cut off essential services to them including the water supply. I have been a member of a trade union and have abided by its decisions but when a union attempts to run the learned judges of the Industrial Commission I query what is happening to our wonderful country. I do not want to dwell on this unpleasant matter, but I should like to inform the unions that the newsagents of New South Wales have no argument with the printers' union. All that the newsagents seek is to prevent the union from continuing with its unjustified, drastic action.

The newsagents do not want to be drawn into the argument; they merely want to protect their businesses. They want to be able to continue to provide the good service that they have given in the past to the public of New South Wales. The newsagents are assisted in providing early deliveries by the newspaper companies and by the actions of the unionists when they are at work. The newsagents want to be able to supply the public with papers at a reasonable time in a reasonable condition. They

want to be able to continue to employ the staff now engaged in the 1 100 newsagencies in New South Wales.

If the union continues to carry on as it is at present, there will be many more unemployed people in New South Wales and many newsagents will suffer tremendous financial hardship. I urge the union to leave the newagents out of the dispute. We have no dispute with the union. All we want to do is provide good service to the community and continue to be held in high repute as we have been over the years, and to supply the people of this State with morning and afternoon newspapers.

ART UNION PRIZE

Mr WADE (Newcastle) [3.6]: In this grievance session I wish to bring to the attention of the Minister for Services details of an art union conducted under the authority of his department. On 16th December, 1974, the Civilian Maimed and Limbless Association arranged for the drawing of art union No. 90 conducted with permit No. A44268 authorized by the Department of Services. Mr A Skerry of 1A Teramby Road, Hamilton, won the first prize with ticket No. 1997—the prize being a Mercedes 230 car. The registered number of the vehicle is HDV–648, in the name of Mr A. Skerry. The ticket was purchased in Mr Skerry's name with one of his company cheques—the firm is called Newcastle Butchers' Equipment--drawn on the Commonwealth Trading Bank, The Junction, Newcastle. Authority to purchase the ticket was given in his absence from his place of business by his former wife. That authority was in the name of Mr R. Skerry. All previous tickets in CMLA art unions had been purchased in this manner. When the CMLA seller telephoned, as she did in relation to each art union organized by that body, Mrs Skerry gave the necessary authorization for the ticket to be sent to Mr Skerry. The seller has verified this with a statutory declaration. Mrs Skerry was a joint signatory of the cheques as a director of the company, Mr Skerry being the managing director with a casting vote. The cheque procedure was the method used by both husband and wife to purchase personal, household or company effects.

On 16th December, 1974, when Mr Skerry won the Mercedes, Mrs Skerry confiscated the winning ticket and gave it to her solicitors, but she has not since taken any positive action in the matter. Later she left the family home and took with her the company car. Mr and Mrs Skerry have since been divorced, for reasons I will not mention. CMLA would not hand the car to Mr Skerry because, first, he did not have in his possession the winning ticket and, second, because his former wife claimed an interest in the car. Mr Skeny advised the CMLA that his company would not take any action against the association if the car was awarded to the rightful owner—Mr Skerry—and stated that any claim that Mrs Skerry may have to the car could be made only on behalf of the company and she did not possess this right. Ticket No. 1997, like other winning art union tickets, is not negotiable and has no value to anyone other than the owner—and in this case Mr Skerry is the owner.

Since Mr Skerry won the car officers or employees of the CMLA have altered Mr Skerry's authority slip for past and future tickets by inserting above Mr Skerry's name "and Mrs F" in a clumsy endeavour to make an investigator believe that the winning ticket and all previous tickets were purchased in both names. In fact, the tickets were always in the name of Mr A. Skerry only. This was indeed a devious method used by the CMLA.

The vehicle was registered in the name of Mr Skerry by the Mercedes agents, Yorkstar Motors of Sydney, and when the registration renewal fell due in December, 1975, Mr Skerry paid the Department of Motor Transport the renewal fee and he has

in his possession the registration papers and windscreen sticker. Mr Skerry's registered car No. HDV–648 was removed from the Yorkstar premises by the CMLA to an unknown location. He has not been advised where his car has been placed and his ownership rights have been denied to him by the CMLA.

When I previously threatened to ventilate this unsavoury matter before Parliament on behalf of my constituent, Mr Weny, the CMLA requested the Leader of the Opposition—now the Premier—to restrain me from mentioning it. However, my leader has taken no action and this is the first oportunity that I have had to bring this matter before the House, despite my many letters to the CMLA on Mr Skerry's behalf, without success. The injustice that has been done to Mr Skerry over a prolonged period, two years, should be terminated forthwith. I request the Minister for Services to withdraw all future permits to the CMLA for other art unions until such time as Mercedes HDV–648—which is now two years' old and depreciating—is handed over to its rightful owner, Mr A. Skeny. I have already spoken to the Minister about it a number of times but there seem to be some obstacles. I hope that these can be overcome and that the prize can be given to its rightful owner.

AVOCADO GROWERS FEDERATION

Mr BOYD (Byron) [3.12]: The matter I wish to bring up in this debate on grievance day concerns a fruit that is well known to members of this House, the avocado. The avocado growers of New South Wales have formed themselves into the Avocado Growers Federation for the express purpose of consolidating certain problems that exist in the industry and to deal collectively with them. Really the federation is an agricultural union. Its main concern has been to try to introduce some form of quality control within the industry so that when people purchase the fruit they will know it is good. This will build up confidence among the public, who recognize the avocado as a quality article. Another aim of the federation is to do something about controlling disease by co-operating with the Department of Agriculture and other interested departments. This will assist to stabilize the industry and people will invest in it with confidence.

One of the diseases that attack the avocado is root rot. During the past three years 50 per cent of trees grown in New South Wales have died from this disease. Another disease that attacks the plant is anthracnose. Work on both diseases has been done at the research station at Rydalmere, with some considerable effect. World opinion is that this research station is probably leading the rest of the world in nutrition and disease control in plants. It is anticipated that world recognition will be given to the station's work.

On 26th July this year 500 trays of avocadoes were imported into this country from California. They came in a shipment which, was experimental in the sense that it was intended to explore the Australian market. A further shipment of 750 trays entered the country on 4th August. Possibly some of them have been eaten in this House. It is fairly obvious to anyone who knows anything about avocadoes that some substandard fruit got onto our tables because of that shipment. On 25th August a further 220 trays were landed. They were condemned by the New South Wales Department of Agriculture as being unfit for human consumption and were accordingly dumped. On 21st October another consignment of 220 trays came in, were condemned and dumped. Dumping the fruit was effected by taking the shipment into a deserted rural area and burying it in the ground at some considerable depth. Anyone who has a knowledge of agriculture will appreciate that burying anything that is infected by disease does not get rid of the disease; it is still there, it is latent and can spread.

What concerns the growers more than anything else is the permit issued on 6th September, when, despite the previous experience, the Department of Agriculture authorized the importation of another 4 500 trays of this species of avocado. They have not yet arrived in Australia, and one can only hope that action will be taken by this Government to prevent their coming in. The two diseases that are of great concern to growers are black streak and sun Mister. Black streak is fairly prevalent where the Californian trees are grown and, although sun blister is already here, it is fairly well contained by the rigorous standards set by growers in selecting seed and controlling seedlings. If avocadoes are brought into this country, naturally the seeds are brought in too, and no doubt many well-intentioned people will plant them without realizing what they are doing. In this way the sun blister infection could be spread, at a time when the growers are working hard to control it.

Apart from the traditional growers of avocadoes, many of the banana growers, particularly in the Mullumbimby areas, who have had difficulty with the dieldrin-resistant banana weevil have gone into avocadoes as an alternative crop, having planted the trees and grown them to a certain stage. It would be tragic if this group of people, whc have already been in trouble with one crop, were to have their second crap wiped out by a disease brought into this country through lack of supervision and acknowledgement of the problem.

Many avocado growers are retired people, same of whom have come from Sydney. They have gone on to small areas as hobby farmers, apparently going into agriculture at last to satisfy their desire to grow something. Some are retired public servants who have invested considerable sums of money in the purchase of land and the planting of avocadoes. This is not a cheap experience, and many of them are risking their life's savings. I commend their endeavours. At the moment this is a serious matter for an industry that is well and truly established. It has grown to become a big industry, particularly on the north coast of New South Wales.

I am asking the Government, particularly the Minister for Decentralisation and Development and Minister for Primary Industries, to exercise the powers under the Plant Diseases Act to prevent any more of this type of fruit coming into the country, thus avoiding the risk to the industry. It might be contended that the permits are issued by the federal Government, but I recall that about two years ago when the Whitlam Government in Canberra agreed to import considerable quantities of bananas into this State the Minister for Agriculture at the time, the Hon. G. R. Crawford, took a strong stand and refused the entry of those bananas because of the possibility of the introduction of disease. He refused to issue permits under the Plant Diseases Act. I suggest that if the Minister for Primary Industries is conscientious about his duties, he will issue no more permits and will revoke the existing ones.

AUSTRALIAN JOCKEY CLUB

Mr MALLAM (Campbelltown) [3.20]: A while ago I listened to a rather vicious attack upon me by a wealthy grazier and member of the Australian Jockey Club, the honourable member for Burrendong. The list of members, which I have here, shows that he has been a member of the club since 1958. He has used the privilege of being a member of this Parliament to attack me in this Chamber. I have not been on a racecourse for seventeen years. I do not go to the races. Years ago I woke up to the fact that the committee out there runs things the way they were run in 1840—on a master-and-servant basis. Racing is supposed to be the sport of kings, but the Australian Jockey Club committee does not represent the people.

Any statements I have made here and any appeals that I have made to the Minister for Sport and Recreation have been correct. Indeed, I have had to wait for eleven years for a government to whom I can make these appeals in the interests of the ordinary person who supports racing. I want the rules changed. They are quite ridiculous. A man must be a privileged person before he can become a member of the Australian Jockey Club. He has to come from a wealthy family. I ask honourable members to look at the blue book I have here. They will not see listed any Labor man---only wealthy graziers. The chairman is Mr Carr, and the vice-chairman is Mr Blake Pelly; the treasurer is Dr Rowe. On the committee are such people as Sir John Austin and Mr Rofe. They are committeemen of the Australian Jockey Club, but the handicapper and the others are subject to their control. The Leader and Deputy Leader of the Country Party are members of the Australian Jockey Club. They are among the privileged few. The AJC committee controls the racing game, but members of the committee own racehorses.

I have been asking for an impartial set-up. Surely these wealthy members of the AJC—these wealthy graziers like the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Country Party and the honourable member for Burrendong, should have a sense of fairness. Surely they do not believe that the employees of the AJC should be under the control of the membership of the club. One can imagine the position if the handicapper does the wrong thing in regard to a horse owned by a member who is in charge of his employment. These men should not race horses. ***[Quorum formed]***

My grievance against the AJC is for the ordinary punters, the ordinary persons who support racing. They should get a fair go, but they do not get it. In Victoria the rules are quite different, and the prize money is considerably more. The conditions of the apprentice jockeys are considerably better. In that State they have even investigated doping. The honourable member for Peats mentioned a drug called divchlorvis, or DDVP as it is known. This can be fed to a racehorse the night before so that it runs dead the next day. This has been the subject of investigation here, I believe, but not a word has been said by the AJC about its investigations. One cannot get anything out of it about the matter. That is what I am complaining about.

Years ago I had photographs of committeemen helping to lift jockeys off horses. I have dozens of photographs of these men breaking the rules every day. If an ordinary person did that, he would be put off the course. These photographs were given to me by Mr Hopkins, whose relatives used to run the ***Newsletter.*** He was an ex-jockey. I have seen all these things. I appeal to the Minister. I know he is going to do something about the Australian Jockey Club. An ex-Premier of this State made himself a trustee, and now gets free grog, free tucker, and a free motor-car to the course and back for the rest of his life. He can entertain people at the expense of ordinary racegoers. He is there for life as a trustee.

These are the people in charge of this sport, which is the biggest business in the State. Of course, the flour miller from Bunvood, who is attempting to interject, would be quite happy, but this is the position with the AJC. I am pleased that the Minister for Sport and Recreation is going to do something about this private club that does not care about the people who invest money and train racehorses.

One must wait for years to get into the blue-blood book. One has to be born into the purple before one becomes a member of the AJC. The Minister should make it a condition that no member of that committee should own a racehorse. I should like to know whether he has extended the retiring age of committeemen beyond the age of 70 years. Apparently that is not true, and I am pleased to learn that. Both the Australian Jockey Club and the Sydney Turf Club have been unable

to keep the prize money they offer on a par with Melbourne race clubs, though they receive hundreds of thousands of dollars more than their southern counterparts from TAB revenue. Surely this points to incompetence on the part of Sydney race clubs.

With the rising costs involved in racing a horse, owners are continually up for more money. It now costs more than $100 a week merely to have a horse in training. That is more than $5,200 a year. The average race on a Saturday at Randwick offers prize money of only $4,500. I appeal to the Parliament and to the people who have a pecuniary interest in racing to do something about this. The honourable member for Burrendong used the privileges of this House in an attempt to denigrate me. I ask him to be fair dinkum. I ask also the Leader of the Country Party to be fair dinkum. He is a crook who is looking after only himself. Everybody knows that. The Minister for Primary Industries exposed him over the milk quota business.

Mr Singleton: On a point of order. The honourable member for Campbelltown is screaming on about a matter relating to the AJC but he has hardly mentioned it. He has been tediously repetitious. He has now launched into a tirade of abuse and attack upon my colleague, the Leader of the Country Party. I am puzzled to know what that has to do with the matter before the House. I invite you, Mr Speaker, to draw the honourable member's attention to the subject before the House.

Mr SPEAKER: No guidelines are set down for grievance day. The motion before the Chair is, That grievances be noted. At this stage I am adopting a lenient attitude, similar to that adopted by the late Sir Kevin Ellis on the adjournment debate. I hope honourable members will take a clear line in relation to matters they raise on grievance day and restrict them to matters of concern to themselves, their electorates or the community generally. With regard to what the honourable member for Campbelltown has said, I believe that people concerned with racing are as much a part of the industry as the Australian Jockey Club and AJC members themselves.

Mr MALLAM: I want to ensure that the ordinary person gets a fair deal. Racing is the biggest business in this State. The Minister has promised to help. I hope he does so quickly. Urgent action is needed, particularly when one sees that a member of this House and a member of the AJC committee has tried today to silence me from speaking out. The AJC would be in any racket if the result would be to silence people. It has already silenced a lot of racehorse owners by kicking them out. I am sorry that the Leader of the Country Party had to get the poor member from Clarence to defend him in this House.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr Singleton: On a point of order. I request that the honourable member for Campbelltown be directed to withdraw the words poor member.

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable member for Campbelltown has retired from the Chamber.

BROOKLYN FERRY SERVICE

Mr PICKARD (Hornsby) [3.30]: I wish to bring to the attention of the House details of a grave difficulty facing people in the Hornsby area and in particular the possible discontinuance of a ferry service which is the only means of transportation available to people living in the Brooklyn area. About two years ago this service, like many other ferry services, faced great difficulty. A young man took it over in the belief that by working long hours and by servicing his own craft he would be able to keep the service operating in the Hawkesbury area for the benefit of the people and,

incidentally, for the Government. This is an essential service. This young man loves the Hawkesbury system, an outdoor life and boats. He thought that he could bring all these loves together and at the same time offer a service to the community. However, with rising costs for petrol, oil, repairs and maintenance it has become impossible for this young man to continue the operation. He has reached a point where his ferry service will be discontinued unless assistance is forthcoming.

The residents who will be affected principally are not my constituents but those of another electorate. The gentleman who runs this service and the people who are employed in repairing the boats and providing goods and services to the passengers are within my electorate at Brooklyn, a small and beautiful village which has retained its natural idyllic setting. Many people visit the area for relaxation. With the discontinuance of this ferry service the people who would come to Brooklyn from Dangar Island, Croppy Point and other areas will not have access to the area and possibly will lose their only means of transportation. Should this happen it will have a serious effect upon the small business people in Brooklyn, most of whom are already struggling to survive.

Some time ago the people of this region made an approach both to the council and the Minister for Transport, and asked for a subsidy for this ferry, which is their only means of transport. The Minister told them Re was unable to do anything. He said that the problem affected also the electorate of Peats. He had pointed out that certain sections of the Local Government Act seemed to provide a means whereby the Hornsby shire council could arrange for a continuation of the ferry service. Subsequently approaches were made once more to that council and the Gosford shire council, but each council decided that it was unable to impose a surcharge upon the rate it had already set. In addition, the councils feared that if fixed rates were to be imposed on them, it would be impossible for them to accept further responsibilities in the ensuing year. A further approach has been made to the Minister for Transport but a reply has not yet been received.

It seems inconsistent that some means of public transport are subsidized but others are not. This ferry service is essential: it is the only one available. It offers a means of transportation and communication to people who live in a somewhat isolated area. In other areas subsidies have been arranged or alternative means of transport provided. In this instance no subsidy has been forthcoming. The people affected cannot understand why the Minister has not offered to provide a subsidy.

The service calls regularly at the Milson Island retention centre. Earlier there was a separate service to Milson Island and another service would pick up passengers for work from Dangar Island. Because of financial pressures the two services had to be amalgamated. After that was done apparently on one occasion two young ladies from Dangar Island took offence at the actions and words of one of the prisoners and reported it. They asked that some action be taken. The action decided upon by the Minister for Services was set out in a letter to me as follows:

> I am pleased to advise that the Department of Corrective Services will shortly be terminating its hire of the ferry from Hawkesbury River Pty Ltd and will resume the practice of using its own boats where necessary and possible.

This was an unfortunate further reduction in the services that had been carried on for many years for the Department of Corrective Services. I am glad that the Minister for Sport and Recreation is present in the House. He knows the fitness camp at Broken Bay. It adds to the boat services required, particularly at weekends and holiday times. Music camps and others are held there. The boat service has been useful to parents, particularly in the 2-week and l-week camps when parents visit their children

at the weekend. The owner has curtailed the service as much as possible but has reached the point where he will be in real trouble unless he receives some sort of help or subsidy from somebody.

It is appropriate to ask the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways to look at this matter. The Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Tourism, because of the related nature of the services, might be able to take it up with the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways and look for a possible way to retain this one remaining transport link. If the link is removed, not only will those people cease to have an immediate transport service but also the whole community and business life in the Brooklyn area will be affected. Brooklyn has many parks around it and is a beautiful and world-renowned recreation centre. It will not be easy to continue to maintain that reputation. To do so means keeping the boat service and collecting passengers who arrive by train to do their daily business in these places. Without the service, people who now come to work in Brooklyn or go to work via Brooklyn will not be able to do so unless they invest in a boat of their own to get across the water. In rough weather the Wobby beach people would find that very difficult. They would need a sizeable craft. This grievance could deserve the sympathetic consideration of the Ministers involved.

ANDREWS LABORATORIES PTY LIMITED

Mr BRERETON (Heffron) [3.40]: The matter I wish to raise relates to the friendly societies movement in New South Wales. I should like to bring to the attention of honourable members present the definition of friendly societies as found in the encyclopaedia. Originally friendly societies were established as mutual benefit associations. They were started in England during the 17th century with the object of giving some measure of financial security to working people. The first friendly society in this country was set up in New South Wales in 1843. Many honourable members have paid tribute to the fine work done by the friendly societies movement. Many amendments to legislation affecting their activities have been carried from time to time by the Parliament. I join with other honourable members who have paid tribute to the tremendous work done by the friendly societies movement over the years. I pay tribute to the dedication and service to the community of those people who have given their time, energy and effort in deliberations and activities on behalf of friendly societies. ***[Quorum formed.]***

Having paid tribute to the fine work done by friendly societies I want to raise in the House a matter that has caused me some concern. A group of friendly societies owns a company known as the Commonwealth Drug Company Pty Limited. Its major assets are freehold land and buildings, together with the shares in a trading company known as Andrews Laboratories Pty Limited. The freehold land and buildings are occupied by Andrews Laboratories Pty Limited, which operates as wholesale chemists and engages in the distribution of pharmaceutical and related products thxoughout New South Wales. It appears that Andrews Laboratories Pty Limited was set up initially to supply wholesale chemists' lines to those pharmacies owned and operated by the group of friendly societies that own the Commonwealth Drug Company Pty Limited. However Andrews Laboratories Pty Limited has long since expanded outside those parameters and now services the whole of the pharmacies in Sydney and some pharmacies in the country. An estimate of its turnover for 1975–76 would be $11 million. If the Registrar for Co-operative Societies were to look closely at the operation of Andrews Laboratories Pty Limited, he would find that privately owned pharmacies have been given preferential discounts in excess of those given to pharmacies owned and operated by friendly societies. That was not the intent of the Parliament when, in the past, it passed legislation dealing with friendly societies.

The formation of and capital subscription to Commonwealth Drug Company Pty Limited were in accord with the provisions of the Friendly Societies Act of 1912. The creation of a subsidiary by Commonwealth Drug Company Pty Limited gave that subsidiary, Andrews Laboratories Pty Limited, virtual access to friendly society members' funds through its parent company. The objective of friendly societies is to provide members with certain benefits out of funds earned from subscriptions and investment incomes, not from wholly-owned companies operating in the commercial market place. The formation of Commonwealth Drug Company Pty Limited by the group of friendly societies provided the subsidiary company, Andrews Laboratories Pty Limited, with virtual access to friendly society funds to provide premises and capital for its wholesaling operations.

These funds could have been put to more profitable use as it is only recently—from 1974 on—that reasonable profits have been earned. In fact, in 1974 when Andrews was still trading poorly, an outside approach was made to acquire the company and, without any price being mentioned, the Andrews directors—all friendly society representatives—rejected the possibility of sale. To reject an offer without talking about price was scarcely a demonstration of business acumen or in the best interests of friendly society members.

At the date of the last published accounts, 31st March, 1975, Andrews had borrowed $484,191 from Commonwealth Drug Company Pty Limited, and had sole occupancy of the property owned by that company. These are members' moneys tied up in a company—virtually a private one, but legally because of its friendly society ownership it has public status--that has operations far outside the investment parametres one would expect of friendly societies. During March, 1975, Andrews made a takeover bid to acquire the shares in an operating drug wholesaler, Ten Star Pharmaceuticals Pty Limited, for $85,133. After discussions, the offer was not accepted and within a fairly short time Ten Star went into liquidation. Should this offer have been successful it would hardly have been a prudent use of members' funds. My inquiires lead me to believe that the Registrar has never queried the friendly societies regarding their use of members' moneys in Andrews Laboratories Pty Limited. This company operates in a high-risk market where the company fallout rate is high.

The following pharmaceutical wholesalers have ceased operations in New South Wales in recent years as a consequence of liquidation or the incurring of heavy losses: Drug House of Australia Limited; F. H. Faulding Limited; Ten Star Pharmaceuticals Limited, trading as George Arnold; and Dalchem Wholesale Limited. If the Registrar were to look more closely at the activities of friendly societies particularly in their investments through subsidiary company arrangements, he would locate investments that have been made which were outside the intent of the Friendly Societies Act and the concepts of the friendly society movement.

As I said in my introductory remarks, I do not wish anything I have said today to be taken as a reflection on the fine work done by the many people connected with the friendy society movement. They give unstintingly of their time, efforts and energy; they have been responsible for building up the movement to what it is today. Although they have been given great concessions over a long period they are subject to controls applied by the Registrar of Co-operative Societies. He has the responsibility of ensuring that the operations of friendly societies are properly conducted. We in this Parliament have a right to know that he is looking closely at their activities to ensure that they are in the best interests of the members of the societies and the money they have subscribed.

Mr EINFELD (Waverley), Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Co-operative Societies [3.50]: I thank. the honourable member for Heffron for raising this matter. I know he is a supporter of the friendly society movement. He will remember that only recently this House passed a bill to bring the legislation controlling friendly societies up to date. I am satisfied that what the honourable member for Heffron has said is accurate. It is true that Commonwealth Drug Company Limited was set up in 1921 and all of its shareholders are friendly societies. It is true, also, that for a few years prior to 1975 the company traded adversely. The facts are that the original object was to establish a company that would provide drugs readily to friendly societies. Whether it in fact offers better prices to privately-owned pharmacies I am not sure. I suppose that would be dictated by market conditions, particularly having regard to the size of orders received.

The fact that Andrews Laboratories Pty Limited is a fully-owned subsidiary and that the proprietary company has acquired a subsidiary does not really materially affect the situation. The proportion of funds invested by friendly societies in this way is not great. The bill that went through this House recently placed a limit on the types of investments and the amounts that may be invested by friendly societies. The return on other investments by friendly societies is currently a little over 7 per cent. In earlier years it has been even less than 7 per cent. Such a low return on share investments is not significant because those shares are now returning 12 per cent. A dividend has been paid consistently. I understand that a bonus issue of one-for-five shares is to be made to shareholders, all of which are friendly societies.

Strictly speaking, what the honourable member for Heffron has said has some justification. I doubt very much whether shares are an appropriate investment for a friendly society. But having regard to the length of time since they were first acquired and the possible reduction in competition in the pharmaceutical drug field which would result if the company were liquidated, the *status* quo has not been disturbed. I assure the honourable member for Heffron and other honourable members that I shall bring the matter to the attention of the Registrar of Co-operative Societies to ascertain whether the shareholdings of these friendly societies in the drug company should be restricted or terminated altogether. I shall have the matter investigated as quickly as I can and I shall inform members the result of the inquiries.

CUMBERLAND COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

Mr MOORE (Gordon) [3.52]: The matter that I wish to raise concerns the admission to the Cumberland College of Health Sciences of a higher school certificate student. The daughter of the family concerned sat for the higher school certificate examination in 1975 and applied for admission to the college for the purpose of taking a course in physiotherapy. She applied also through the Metropolitan University Admission Centre for admission to a number of other tertiary-level courses. Admission to any of them is determined by the aggregate mark in the higher school certificate examination. This girl was omitted in the first offer period of the Cumberland college. As is customary, the college makes a series of offers. It stated that these offers would be made by telephone or telegram. The girl's address and telephone number were included on the application form. On the day the girl was to be notified that she was acceptable for the physiotherapy course the family telephone was out of order and, as a consequence, the college was unable to contact her. The college has stated that, in its opinion, its inability to contact her by telephone when it was out of order constituted an offer. Neither a letter nor a telegram were sent because of industrial problems at the Redfern Mail Exchange.

Simultaneously this girl received a second and a third offer from the Metropolitan Universities Admission Centre, which seems to give the lie to the suggestion that it was impossible to send her a letter or a telegram. Subsequently the family appealed against the decision. That appeal was refused on two grounds. The first reason given by the college was that many students could claim that they deserved a place in the course because telephone contacts could not be made with them over the period in which offers were to be made, and the higher school certificate aggregates of other students were greater than that of the girl in question. The point is that she made an active attempt to pursue her application despite the rather bureaucratic attitude of the college that it had made an offer to her.

The second reason they gave was that there was need, for administrative expediency, for great speed in their office system because they had to justify their academic staffing levels by the number of acceptances they had from students. I find it strange that the needs of students in this State, and the future supply of trained physiotherapists, can be governed by the desires and comments of members of a college who indulge in academic empire building. Surely the three questions that the family has raised should be answered. First, they request that the Minister's department give an undertaking that in future no fault will be imputed to people through mechanical or other failure to receive an offer from the college. Second, they want some measures taken to improve the system of the Cumberland College of Health Sciences, to bring it up to the level of efficiency of the Metropolitan Universities Admission Centre. Third, they want an assurance that in offers for places in the academic year **1977,** the students who suffered because of this inefficient system in use at the beginning of the **1976** academic year will not be penalized.

I wholeheartedly support the need for answers to these three questions. It is imperative that some assurance be given to students in the position of this young lady, or to students in a similar position, that they will not be penalized either because of failure of communications beyond their control, or the desire on the part of an academic institution to build up an academic empire, without regard for the future health needs of the people of New South Wales.

Mr BEDFORD (Fairfield), Minister for Education [3.58]: The honourable member for Gordon has raised an important matter, but it has nothing to do with my department. I do not say that in any sense of trying to pass the buck, but there is no way that the Minister for Education can issue instructions to these corporate colleges. Although they are creatures of this State, they function under a corporate status. The Cumberland College of Health Sciences is a corporate college of advanced education and, as such, is totally responsible for its own administration, including the admission of students to its courses. Consequently, the Minister has no responsibility over the college's admission policy.

The case to which the honourable member for Gordon has referred was brought to my notice, and there has been much correspondence about it. It would appear that in this case the student was included within the second and later round of offers made to students who had completed the higher school certificate examination at the end of 1975 and were seeking admission to the institution at the beginning of **1976.** The honourable member referred to the Metropolitan Universities Admission Centre. Its admission system is highly commendable; it is centralized under one organization. I am pleased to advise that the other tertiary institutions are looking at the possibility of working together under a similar system. This might well obviate the acknowledged problems that have arisen in this instance.

Having regard to the time available in making the second and third round offers before classes began, the college adopted the policy of contacting prospective students by telephone. It would appear that the home telephone of the student concerned was out of order at the time, and consequently the college did not communicate the offer to her. I feel that the college could have been remiss in not taking further action to communicate with the student, but I can only indicate that this is a personal view, and it is not a matter on which an instruction can be issued to a corporate college. On the other hand, the college was not to know that the telephone was out of order. I might mention, also, that the college's administration would undoubtedly be under extreme pressure at that time, as it was required to process something like 750 second round offers and later round offers in a short space of time.

The criticism that the college is involved in some way in academic empire building is a bit unfair. It is a time of the year when there is great pressure for decisions to be made and for administrative arrangements to be completed quickly. If it would appear that they are operating as empire builders, then the real Cecil Rhodes in this case is the Commonwealth Government, which demands the figures for full-time students before it will agree to pay the money that the colleges need to finance their operations.

I am advised that the student concerned has applied for admission in 1977 to the college on the basis of her 1975 higher school certificate examination results. I feel certain that the college will give sympathetic consideration to her application. Again, I can only say that it is my feeling and I cannot instruct the college to act in that way.

The honourable member for Gordon referred to a mechanical failure. I believe that the system of admission adopted by the Metropolitan Universities Admission Centre will be taken up to some extent by other tertiary institutions. I do not accept that the college's efficiency is affected by empire building, and I hope that there will not be a recurrence of this sort. Indeed, I am certain that the authorities at the college will make every effort to see that there is no recurrence. I thank the honourable member for bringing this matter to the attention of the House.

ADMINISTRATION OF RACING

Mr JONES (Waratah) [4.2]: My grievance relates to a matter that I have raised before, and was mentioned in a question that I asked in this House. It concerns possible restrictions on the number of horses in races. When I raised the matter previously a number of comments appeared in the daily papers. Apparently my comments came as a little bit of a shock to sportswriters. I believe that the time is now ripe for me to return to the subject and to explain the real issues.

In the Sydney Sun of 6th October an article appeared under the heading "Ridiculous says T. J." This article contained the comments of racehorse trainer Tommy Smith, and related to the suggestion that horse trainers be restricted to a number of runners they might have in one race. A comment was made that members of Parliament should stick to subjects about which they know something. It went further to comment on the question that I had asked in this House. It is on that basis that I make these further comments. Sportswriter Pat Farrell in his column "Farrell's Fling" said:

> Mr Jones also resurrected another ancient chestnut—bracketing of stable runners as a single entry when they clash in a race.
>
> While conceding Mr Jones' requests would impose unfair restriction on horse owners, Mr Booth gave them a remarkably courteous hearing.

He then referred to the Australian Jockey Club's proposal put forward in 1974 that was followed immediately by a mass meeting of horseowners at the Tulloch Lodge stable of T. J. Smith. There the owners affirmed their confidence in Mr Smith, and refused to transfer horses from his care to other stables. The article then went on to say:

> When their officials were asked to comment, interstate racing clubs, including the VRC, named the restriction among the most ridiculous they had known.
>
> And of course it was ridiculous—as ridiculous as it was for Mr Jones to raise the matter again yesterday.

This is another of the proposals of Pat Farrell and T. J. Smith, who are trying to take away the real sense of responsibility in this industry. The *Daily Mirror* of 8th October ran a story entitled "Race Clubs Takeover". It mentioned the Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Tourism and the fact that certain questions were asked of the Australian Jockey Club. The article went on in this way:

> The chairman of the AJC, Mr J. H. Carr, refused to comment today.
>
> But Mr Blake Pelly, vice-chairman of the AJC, said a government appointed racing commission would ruin horse racing in N.S.W.

Those comments referred further to the fact that this Minister and this Government did not know what they were talking about and suggested that they should leave these things alone. In *the Sunday Mirror* on 10th October, Pat Farrell said it was a sorry week for the AJC, and suggested that it was possible that the fall in attendances at the AJA spring meeting during the previous week was attributable to comments made by the Minister for Sport and Recreation and myself. That is a lot of nonsense. Pat Farrell said further:

> Even on Tuesday Mr Sam Jones, Labor MLA for Waratah, came up with the discovery that because Tomrny Smith and Bart Cummings each sometimes have up to eight horses in a race, the AJC should limit the number of runners any trainer should have in a single event.
>
> Mr Jones apparently forgot the AJC committee tried to do that very thing in February 1974, but was so howled down by owners, critics, members and the fair-minded public, it was forced to withdraw its directive.
>
> From time to time other Labor politicians have claimed it would be in the betting public's interest if four, rather than three, place dividends were paid by the TAB.

Though Mr T. J. Smith might know something about horse racing, or his side of horse racing, I too know something about the game and have taken an interest in it all my life. Mr Smith suggests that I do not know anything at all of the industry. The fact is that I know a fair bit about racing and it has cost me a lot of money to gain that Itnowledge. I represent those people who support the racing industry. If they withdraw their support the industry will collapse. They are the people who keep the industry going. 1 am not being personally critical of T. J. Smith or Bart Cummings. However, the facts reveal clearly that these people are one-sided in their views.

The turnover of the TAB, apart from the level of on-course betting, suggests that there is a real need to do something about this matter. I am concerned that Pat Farrell, a journalist, did not have the decency to telephone me and speak to me personally before writing his article. All he knows about what I had said came from what he read in a newspaper. I had said that the AJC had previously tried to do

something about this matter but when it came to making an announcement the AJC committeemen, the people who control the club, revoked the decision because of their connections with T. J. Smith.

A racing commission completely divorced from the industry should be established. Having asked a question in the House I commented to a number of newspaper reporters that there could be circumstances in which there was a need for the industry to have weight-for-age races carrying big prizes. That would allow more than two horses for each trainer to run. Something along that line should be done. I raise another point. These people deliberately go out of their way to mislead the punting public. On the day before Visit won the Toorak Handicap, Friday, 8th October, 1976, the Sun contained this comment:

> Unlike Kingston Rose, Visit faces the anti-clockwise bogy, and she didn't appear to cope with it too well at Flemington yesterday.

That was an indication to the punting public that Visit may not be able to handle the different direction in which races are run in Victoria. The suggestion was, therefore, that punters should not bet on Visit, and that Kingston Rose was a better proposition because it had raced previously in Victoria and knew how to handle anti-clockwise racing. Another point is that Tommy Smith uses hormones and oxygen on the horses he trains. Late in life my father used oxygen. His doctor told me that eventually my father had become addicted to oxygen. For him it was a drug. If it can become a drug for a human being it could also become a drug for a horse. Something should be done in respect of the use of oxygen in the racing industry. Hormones are administered to some mares. In effect they become sexually neutral. These are the sorts of things that the stewards of the Australian Jockey Club and the people who control racing should examine.

SUPERANNUATION ACT

Mr OSBORNE (Bathurst) [4.12]: I raise an anomaly related to the State Superannuation Act that has been brought to my attention by a constituent following the death of a wife and husband in tragic circumstances. The two people were killed at the one time. The husband was a contributor to the State Superannuation Fund. The solicitor for the estate contacted the fund and was told the following:

> Section 30 of the Superannuation Act, 1916, prescribes that on the death of a contributor, pension shall be paid to his widow. However, section 23B prescribes in subsection (4) that pension shall be payable in the case of the death of an employee from the day following the date of death of the employee.

The letter went on to say that it was regretted that in accordance with the provisions of the Act the estate was not entitled to any benefit from the fund. In that letter the solicitor was informed also that the board was currently seeking legal advice on the matter. A few days later another letter arrived pointing out that no pension was payable to the estate of the wife as she had died on the same day as her husband. In this case necessitous circumstances are not involved but I am bringing the matter to the attention of the Minister as a similar circumstance is sure to arise in the future. Unfortunately, double tragedies are happening all too often in motor-car accidents. Surviving members of a family could well be dependent on assistance from the superannuation fund, but as things stand they could be deprived of it.

Earlier today the Minister said that he would be reviewing the Act and some of the regulations under it. I ask the Minister to look into this anomaly. It seems that if a wife lives for a day or two after her husband dies that would make all the difference between a benefit becoming available to her dependants. In effect a lottery system is in force in relation to payments from the fund. That is unfair to contributors. I shall be happy to provide the Minister of Justice and Minister for Services with any further details he needs. The Minister may well agree with me that as many double tragedies occur as a consequence of motor-vehicle accidents, surviving children may suffer a grave disadvantage. The matter should be reviewed in their interests.

Mr DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order! It being fifteen minutes after 4 o'clock p.m., the debate is interrupted pursuant to Standing Order 122A.

Question—That grievances be noted—resolved in the affirmative.

BILLS RETURNED

The following bills were returned from the Legislative Council without amendment:

Public Works and Other Acts (Interest Rates) Amendment Bill
Restraints of Trade Bill

The following bill was returned from the Legislative Council with an amendment:

Local Government (Elections) Amendment Bill

JOINT COMMITTEE UPON DRUGS

Mr DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I report the receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:

Mr Speaker—

The Legislative Council having had under consideration the Legislative Assembly's Message of 4 November, 1976, concurs in the Resolution embodied therein relating to the Joint Committee upon Drugs.

Legislative Council Chamber,
Sydney, 4 November, 1976.

T. S. McKAY,
Deputy-President.

PRINTING COMMITTEE

Ninth Report

Mr Jones, as Chairman, brought up the Ninth Report from the Printing Committee.

LOAN FUND COMPANIES BILL

Introduction

Bill presented, pursuant to leave granted this day, and read a first time.

ALLOCATION OF TIME FOR DISCUSSION

Mr F. J. WALKER: On behalf of the Premier I give notice of business to be dealt with under Standing Order 175B: Energy Authority Bill, second reading; Committee and report stages; adoption of report; by 6 p.m., Tuesday, 9th November, 3976. Real Property (Amendment) Bill, second reading; Committee and report stages; adoption of report; by 8.30 p.m., Tuesday, 9th November, 1976. Conveyancing (Amendment) Bill, second reading; Committee and report stages; adoption of report; by 9.30 p.m., Tuesday, 9th November, 1976.

House adjourned, on motion by Mr F. J. Walker, at 4.17 p.m.

QUESTION UPON NOTICE

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

MUTUAL HOME LOAN FUNDS

Mr MOORE asked the Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Co-operative Societies—

Will his proposed legislation to control and regulate mutual home loan funds provide safeguards (a) for contributors in circumstances of hardship who are still in the process of paying-up their full share allocation, as well as to (b) persons who have completed the paying-up of their share allocation?

Answer—

I gave Notice on October 21, in the Assembly, that a Bill would be brought into the Parliament to regulate mutual loan funds. The legislation will be entitled The Loan Fund Companies Bill and I hope to introduce it within the next few days. Details of the Bill will then be available to Honourable Members.