

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 30 August, 1978

Petitions—Questions without Notice—General Loan Account Appropriation Bill (Urgency, Suspension of Standing Orders and second reading)—Adjournment (Housing Commission Accommodation)—Questions upon Notice.

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

PETITIONS

The Acting-Clerk announced that the following petitions had been lodged for presentation:

Homosexual Acts

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

That we support your efforts to strengthen our family and community life. We therefore wish to register our firm opposition to any changes in our State laws which would legalize and/or encourage the following activities:

- (1) Adoption of children by homosexual or lesbian partners. Such adoptions would be a denial of the basic human right of the child to have the love of a male father and female mother.
- (2) Acts of sodomy in private or public. (NOTE: "sodomy" is the unnatural and anti-Christian act of anal (anus) copulation between male persons often described in the media as "homosexual acts" and in the law as "buggery"). Legalization or decriminalization of these so-called "victimless crimes" would imply community approval and acceptance of these unnatural acts, and may encourage public solicitation of adults and particularly children in leisure and recreational areas as well as schools and other educational institutions.

We therefore request that the following steps be taken:

- (1) The deletion of Section 59 of the Anti-Discrimination Bill now before State Parliament, which deals with homosexuality. Section 59 is in direct conflict with existing State laws which clearly define homosexual acts as unlawful conduct, and could enforce the acceptance of homosexuality in the Army, Navy, Air Force, the education system, Police force, etc.
- (2) The deletion of the first clause of the Dowd Notice of Motion, 20th October, 1976, Number 22, which would in effect lead to the legalization of sodomy.

(3) Establish a special department within the New South Wales Health Commission to:

- (a) Develop humane **methods** of helping persons to overcome or deal with **homosexual** tendencies through counselling, psychological and medical assistance, and
- (b) Conduct a vigorous campaign to combat the serious V.D. epidemic particularly amongst practising male homosexuals. (i.e. 70 per cent of all current V.D. cases.)

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray that your honourable House will take no measures that would undermine marriage, child-care or the family which is the basic unit of our society.

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

Petition, lodged by Mr **Cameron**, received.

Drug Usage

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

That we support your efforts to strengthen our family and community life particularly by increased penalties for "drug pushers" and distributors. We, however, wish to register our firm opposition to any legal changes which would increase or encourage the distribution or availability of so-called "soft" drugs, such as marihuana. We believe such drugs to be harmful to the physical and psychological health of the individual and therefore to the interest of the community of which such individual is part. Although there is current controversy concerning the question of such harm it appears to us quite foolish to legalize and encourage the use of such drugs unless or until it be shown that such drugs are in fact harmless.

Any efforts to legalize the distribution or usage of such drugs will have the following results:

- (1) Encourage and inculcate a social acceptability towards such drugs.
- (2) Increase the volume of usage of such drugs in schools and the community by present users and by "drug pushers" through the proposed 1 oz. of legal possession.
- (3) Extend the usage of such drugs to persons who would previously have abstained because of the legal sanctions.
- (4) Put pressure upon Parliament to establish and license import, manufacture **and/or** distribution of such drugs, that is, to regulate another industry contrary to the best interest of the individual and society.
- (5) There would be the probable temptation to use such drugs as another source of State revenue.

We urge the Government to increase the medical and counselling facilities for the assistance of drug users and to expand existing drug referral centres and clinics. We have general confidence in the existing law and its sympathetic implementation by the police and courts.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray that your honourable House will firstly take no measures that could extend the major social problem

of drug usage and secondly will oblige those who are promoting marihuana and/or similar drugs to prove without doubt that such drugs are harmless before any legalization of use is introduced.

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

Petition, lodged by Mr Cameron, received

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) Alcohol is a contributing factor in a large proportion of road accidents causing many fatalities and maimings and more facilities for week-end drinking will inevitably add to the problem.
- (3) The high incidence of alcoholism among young people is causing much concern.

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 any other place where sale of liquor is permitted.
- (2) If however it is intended to submit legislation to the House, this should not be done until the people of New South Wales be given the democratic right of vote by referendum on this important issue.

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

Petitions, lodged by Mr Stewart and Mr West, received.

Quality of Education

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

That because there is much concern in the community over the failure of modern education at primary and secondary levels to meet the expectations of many parents, teachers, lecturers, professors, employers and students.

That because there is considerable doubt as to the content and standards, philosophy and moral values of new courses or projects, such as M.A.C.O.S. ("Man—a Course of Study"—ex U.S.A.); "People of the Western Desert" (Aust.); and S.E.M.P. ("Social Education Materials Project"—Aust.) and in view of the fact that M.A.C.O.S. and S.E.M.P. have been withdrawn from Queensland schools.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray that the Parliament of New South Wales will:

- (1) Immediately suspend Courses and Projects such as "M.A.C.O.S.", "People of the Western Desert" and "S.E.M.P." from all New South Wales primary and secondary schools and Teachers' Colleges, and

conduct an independent public inquiry into their suitability and conformity with the provisions of the New South Wales Education Act.

- (2) Enforce the following guidelines in relation to all text books, courses, projects, etc., used in State schools and institutions:
 - (a) They should encourage loyalty and respect for God, Queen and Country, our Federal and State Constitutions and observance of the laws of the land.
 - (b) They should recognize the importance of marriage, family life, motherhood and fatherhood, as well as the privacy of the family and the individual student.
 - (c) They should avoid profanity, indecency and any encouragement of racial hatred, anti-semitism, sedition or violent revolution, against our Australian democratic parliamentary institutions.
 - (d) They should provide for studies in history and geography (rather than sociology) and show the importance of the Judeo-Christian ethic as our natural Australian heritage.
 - (e) They should teach the 3 R's, that is, the skills of reading, writing and arithmetic, so that all children receive an effective basic education for their future responsibilities.
- (3) Implement a system of public preview and approval of all text books, novels, courses and projects with reasonable access for all parents and citizens before they are approved for use in schools in accordance with an approved core curriculum.
- (4) Introduce a more meaningful system of testing and assessing of educational results so as to provide a more equal opportunity for all students in New South Wales.

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

Petitions, lodged by Mr Cameron, Mr Hatton, Mr Hunter and Mr Kearns, received.

Dental Clinics for Wollongong

The Petition of the Wollongong Unemployed Peoples Movement respectfully sheweth:

That people in receipt of unemployment benefit and other pension in the City of Greater Wollongong and the Illawarra Region have no local access to means tested dental treatment and are subjected to many months wait for treatment at the Dental Hospital in Sydney.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray that your honourable House will provide hospital dental clinics in this City in recognition of its place as a major industrial centre and commensurate with the services provided in the City of Newcastle.

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

Petition, lodged by Mr Ramsay, received.

Prison for **Parklea**

The Petition of certain residents in the electorates of Blacktown, The Hills, Hawkesbury and adjacent electorates respectfully sheweth:

That they are in opposition to the erection of a maximum security prison or other penal institution at Parklea or thereabouts, as such will adversely affect the interests of the community in the aforesaid and adjacent areas.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray that your honourable House will rescind the proposal.

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

Petition, lodged by Mr Rozzoli, received.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

ROBERT CHARLES BAKER

Mr COLEMAN: My question without notice is directed to the Premier. Did a young man named Robert Charles Baker die in Royal Newcastle Hospital on 25th July, 1978? Did he die of an overdose of heroin? Will the Premier advise the House—if not now, as soon as possible—what police action was taken to investigate this death and what charges, if any, resulted from those investigations?

Mr WRAN: The facts asserted by the Leader of the Opposition are not within my knowledge nor are any of the matters consequential upon the facts asserted in the question. I shall raise the matter with the Commissioner of Police and in due course advise the House in terms of a response to the question as framed.

MANUFACTURING INVESTMENT

Mr SHEAHAN: Yesterday did the Premier in response to a question by the Leader of the Opposition about the statements made by the Premier at the Chamber of Manufactures dinner last week tell the House that the survey by the federal Department of Industry and Commerce shows that investment and commitment to investment in New South Wales is beyond that in all other States, except Western Australia? Will the Premier give the House details of the investments referred to in this survey?

Mr WRAN: Yesterday I was asked a question by the Leader of the Opposition about a statement made by me at the Chamber of Manufactures dinner last week. It was suggested that the statement was misleading. In fairness to the House, I think it proper that I should repeat what I said at that dinner and then, in response to the honourable gentleman's question, reply to that part of it which relates to the level of investment in New South Wales. At the dinner I said—and I quote from my speech:

It has been particularly gratifying to see in the recent survey of new industry projects published by the Commonwealth Department of Industry and Commerce that projects listed for New South Wales reach a total capital investment of more than \$1,400 million which was matched by only one other State—Western Australia.

That statement is correct. The figures I quoted at the dinner of the Chamber of Manufactures of New South Wales, and have quoted for some weeks since they were cited in the federal department's bulletin, refer to firm and committed projects.

A comparison of those firm projects shows a high level of activity in New South Wales. I do not know whether the Leader of the Opposition or his staff are incapable of reading a survey or a table, or whether they are being deliberately dishonest in the way in which they seek to bring facts to the House, but I refer honourable members and the public first to the Journal of Industry and Commerce of March 1978 where the statistics referred to are published. Also, there is another journal, the veracity of which honourable members opposite might accept almost as gospel. The Australian Director, the journal of the Institute of Directors in Australia, Volume 8, No. 4, August, 1978, republished the survey. That supports to the hilt what I said at the dinner of the Chamber of Manufacturers of New South Wales and shows the misleading and mischievous nature of the statistics produced by the Leader of the Opposition yesterday.

That survey is available to every honourable member. Indeed, I think what we should do, with all the talk about an election being in the air, is get a copy of this to each member of the Opposition in order that they might stop knocking New South Wales for a change and try to restore a bit of confidence. The Opposition has not got much left after the federal Budget. That is not our document—it comes from the famous Fraser Government. There is a whole page of new investment in New South Wales. Victoria rates a measly half page, as do Queensland and Western Australia. Almost half of the investment in Western Australia is taken up by the Alwest alumina refinery at Darling Range. South Australia receives one-third of a page and poor old Tasmania gets much less.

The simple fact of the matter is that the survey shows the value of investment in New South Wales as more than \$1,400 million. There was one error in the survey which gave the Total oil refinery at Matraville as a \$10 million investment. But Mr L. Mackay-Cruise, administrative director of Total Refineries (Aust.) Limited, in another journal, the accuracy of which can never be doubted by the Opposition, especially by the Leader of the Opposition—the Bulletin—in the issue of 6th June, 1978, pointed out that there had been an error as the current cost of the Matraville refinery expansion project was not \$10 million but \$130 million to \$140 million.

I shall give a comparison of the real figures. The figure for New South Wales was \$1,428 million. For Victoria the figure was \$917 million. The figure for Queensland was \$1,167 million. For South Australia it was \$121 million. For Western Australia it was \$1,455 million. The figure for Tasmania was \$72 million. The statement that the value of firm mining and manufacturing investment in New South Wales is matched by only one other State is correct. Much closer examination of the survey shows the strength of the economy of New South Wales. This State has more projects and a far wider range of industries than any other State. That shows that the economy of New South Wales is progressing on many fronts and is less likely to be affected by disruption to one project or industry.

The survey shows that New South Wales has thirty-seven major projects; Queensland and Western Australia each have fourteen and Victoria thirteen. New South Wales is not so dependent on the success of any one project, but Western Australia has 45 per cent of its current major investments tied up in one project, and Queensland's largest project represents 25 per cent of its total current investment. The largest project in New South Wales provides only 9 per cent of the State's total investment commitment. New South Wales has a far larger number of smaller investment—in the \$10 million to \$50 million range—than the other States. These projects will naturally be completed more quickly than the single project costing \$650 million in Western Australia. Contrary to the claim of the Leader of the Opposition, the rate of new investment in the next few years will be far higher in New South Wales than in any other State.

Mr Wran]

The survey, which has been the subject of discussion in the past couple of days, refers to projects worth more than \$5 million. It discloses that it is also relevant that much of the lower-level manufacturing investment—that is, investment less than \$5 million—occurs in the two major States, and that this type of project is not covered by the present survey. Surveys carried out by the New South Wales Department of Decentralisation and Development record the fact that several hundred smaller investment projects are under way, and that they are worth between \$100,000 and \$5 million.

The statement by the Leader of the Opposition is wrong on all counts. First, he misquoted my statement to the Chamber of Manufactures. Second, my statement was not misleading; it was based on a survey prepared by the Commonwealth Department of Industry and Commerce. Third, New South Wales has a high value of firm and committed projects. Fourth, the rate of New South Wales industry will be far higher than in the other States in terms of dollar investment. Each year New South Wales is doing particularly well. I deplore the fact that the Leader of the Opposition and so many other members of the Opposition are so eager to misinterpret the survey of the Department of Industry and Commerce in an attempt to run down New South Wales.

MAIN ROAD 268 AT TARAGO

Mr BREWER: I address my question without notice to the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways. Following a meeting between the Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Mines and Minister for Energy, the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways, the Mulwaree shire council, the manager of Woodlawn Mining Company, the Tarago citizens' action group and myself at Tarago on 12th July, did he give an undertaking to the Mulwaree shire council that he was favourably disposed towards providing funds to reconstruct Main Road 268 between Tarago and the Woodlawn Mine turn-off? Did he also state that it would be necessary to submit the case to Treasury so that funds could be allocated within the budgetary procedures, and that he would advise me of the outcome within a week or so? Did the Woodlawn Mining Company make an offer which required consideration by the Treasury? As eight weeks have now elapsed since that undertaking was given, can the Minister make the necessary finance available to Mulwaree shire council immediately so that it can get on with the reconstruction of this road before the cartage of ore commences in October, which would greatly increase the prospect of fatal accidents occurring?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Because of the length of the honourable member's question, I suggest that he recast it and ask it again later in question time.

PETROL PRICE INCREASE

Mr FLAHERTY: I direct my question without notice to the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways. Is the Minister aware that the Commonwealth Government will net in excess of \$676 million in revenue this year as a result of the petrol price increase announced recently in the federal Budget? Can the Minister inform me and the House how much revenue will be collected from New South Wales motorists? as a result of the petrol price increase, and what proportion of these funds will be returned to the State for vital roadworks?

Mr COX: It is true that the federal Government in its recent Budget increased the price of petrol by 3.5c a litre or 16c a gallon. This price increase will result in the federal Government receiving an additional \$676 million in revenue from motorists throughout Australia in the current financial year, \$250 million of that sum coming

from New South Wales. The federal Government's latest impost is not in the form of a fuel tax. It is a general revenue item. Accordingly not one cent of this massive increase in charges will come back to the States by way of road grants. It is a shabby manoeuvre by the federal Government, which has once again attacked motorists not only in New South Wales but throughout Australia. Last financial year the New South Wales Government allocated **\$272** million for roads needs but received only **\$153** million from the federal Government. Less than **40** per cent of revenue collected by way of fuel tax is returned to New South Wales. The average motorist in this State pays \$2 a week or approximately **\$100** a year in petrol tax. That amount, together with sales tax and other federal taxes, reduces ~~the~~ taxation returned to New South Wales motorists to less than **25** per cent. That is a disgraceful situation for Australia's most populous State. It is intolerable that the federal Government should rake in an extra **\$676** million in a full year yet can manage only a **6.9** per cent increase in road funds. Last night the Treasurer announced that the New South Wales Government will spend **\$465** million on road works in this State. That represents an increase of more than **16** per cent over last year's commitment. However, New South Wales will receive a paltry **\$164.4** million from the federal Government for these works. That does not take into account funds for road purposes received from such government instrumentalities as the Housing Commission and the Forestry Commission, which would increase the expenditure by **\$30** million, bringing it to **\$495** million.

I am grateful to the honourable member for Granville for giving me the opportunity to point out to the House the real position with regard to road funding in this State. It is deplorable that the federal Government can rake in from New South Wales motorists an extra **\$250** million but not provide one additional cent towards the road needs of New South Wales. Rural areas of this State are urgently in need of funds for vital road works. Although a massive injection of road funds is required to assist in the development of the State, the federal Government has thrown greater responsibility on the New South Wales Government. The Wran Government can honestly say that its allocation of loan funds for roads this year is a clear indication of its determination to get on with the job of providing proper roads throughout the State.

OXLEY HIGHWAY

Mr WOTTON: I direct a question without notice to the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways. Is the Minister aware that the Oxley Highway between Mullaley and Tarnworth is recognized as the most dangerous section of the Newell Highway and Oxley Highway, from Victoria and South Australia through New South Wales to Queensland? Further, is the Minister aware that since October, **1976**, the Mooki River bridge at Gunnedah has been the scene of at least nineteen accidents, including fatalities? In view of these facts and in the light of repeated representations I have made to have this road upgraded, will the Minister give an undertaking that the priority of the section of road from Mullaley to Carroll will be reassessed, and that work on this section will include replacing the Mooki River bridge deathtrap at Gunnedah with a modern structure?

Mr COX: The honourable member for Burrendong has raised a number of important issues concerning his electorate and specifically the Oxley Highway, which he considers should receive early attention. I shall certainly give the matter my consideration, but I suggest that the honourable member for Burrendong might assist the New South Wales Government by making the necessary approach to the federal Government to increase the allocation of road funds to this State.

HOUSING FUNDS

Mr CAHILL: I ask the Premier a question without notice. Are there still large numbers of applicants waiting for Housing Commission accommodation? Will the Premier advise me and the House whether there has been any cutback in Housing Commission funds, and what the Government's policies are in relation to housing in this State?

Mr Fischer: Why ask the Premier? Why not ask the Minister of Justice and Minister for Housing?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Sturt to order.

Mr WRAN: The regrettable fact is that a large number of people are in need of welfare housing not only in New South Wales, but also throughout Australia. An even more regrettable fact is that their hopes of getting a home of their own received a severe setback in the federal Budget. The simple fact is that the State Government has not cut back on funds for housing. It should have been obvious to anybody who listened to the speech delivered yesterday by the State Treasurer on the Government's capital works programme, that this year New South Wales has taken the unusual step of providing \$10 million of its own loan funds in an attempt to offset cuts in Commonwealth payments for housing. It was difficult to find even \$10 million when the Commonwealth Government did not increase the loan funds available to New South Wales above the \$463 million received last year.

Reduced spending on housing in the State's capital works programme is due entirely to cuts in federal funds. Last year the federal Government provided \$128 million for this purpose. This year it has cut the amount to \$104 million. In real terms, the federal Government has reduced funds for housing in New South Wales by 26 per cent. In order that there can be no argument about that assertion or those facts or any gloss put upon them, I say that they can be checked by referring either to the Treasurer's Loan Speech at page 28 of the printed document or at page 168 of paper No. 7 of the 1978–79 federal Budget.

That is not the only federal blow at housing. The amount allocated by the Commonwealth Government for the home savings grant scheme has been cut by 42 per cent from last year's figure of \$35 million. Also, the income tax deduction for home loan interest is to be abolished on 31st October this year. The federal Government has only partially compensated for these cuts by new rules covering savings banks. These banks can now lend up to 65 per cent of their funds for housing compared with 55 per cent previously.

Mr McDonald: That is an improvement.

Mr WRAN: Now the honourable member for Kirribilli is an expert on housing.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr WRAN: Two criticisms of this move are, first, that the extra funds for housing will become available very slowly and, second, the new rules for savings banks mean that the banks will buy fewer securities of State semi-government authorities. The Commonwealth's generosity will therefore be paid for by the States themselves. In this climate of concern over the serious setback to welfare housing I think it worthwhile to remind honourable members of the measures to stimulate housing taken by the New South Wales Government in the past two years. In March, 1977, \$12.5 million of a \$32 million special employment programme allocation was reserved for housing.

Mr Doyle: That is chicken feed.

Mr WRAN: It might be chicken feed in Vacluse, but not at Villawood.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Vacluse to order.

Mr WRAN: Of that amount, terminating building societies received \$7.5 million, and the Housing Commission received \$5 million. In the 1977–78 Budget \$15 million was allocated for housing, \$10 million of which was for loans made through terminating building societies, and \$5 million for use by the Housing Commission. Then there was an actual reduction of interest rates. In November, 1977, the New South Wales Government acted promptly to reduce maximum credit union interest rates, and interest rates on loans by the New South Wales Superannuation Board, as well as interest rates charged by terminating building societies and permanent building societies. A further useful measure was the deferred payment of stamp duty by first homebuyers. More than 50000 homebuyers have taken advantage of this scheme since its introduction two years ago.

In response to the pertinent question asked by the honourable member for Marrickville I should like to say something about the present state of the housing industry in Australia, and particularly in New South Wales. The New South Wales housing industry is doing better than its counterpart in other States. The number of new dwellings approved in New South Wales in the year to June, 1978, was 2.5 per cent higher than in the previous year. By contrast, the number of new dwellings approved in other States fell by 12.4 per cent in the same period. Dwelling approvals are the best indication of the outlook for the building industry. Despite this comparatively good performance by the housing industry in New South Wales compared with the rest of Australia, no one would deny that the building industry is depressed. In 1977–78 the number of new dwellings commenced in New South Wales fell by 7.5 per cent. However, the dwellings commenced in the other States fell by 19 per cent. Comparatively, therefore, the building industry is doing better in New South Wales than it is in the other States.

Lest any false gloss be put upon the facts to which I have referred, they can be checked in the following publications of the Australian Bureau of Statistics: Building Statistics for the June quarter, 1978, reference No. 8703.0, and the number of dwellings in New South Wales for the June quarter, 1978, reference No. 8705.1. To summarize, the reduction in funds for housing in New South Wales is due entirely to federal cutbacks. The New South Wales Government has provided some of its own loan funds partially to close the gap. The New South Wales building industry is doing better than it is in the other States and its better performance establishes the success of the New South Wales Government's measures to help the building industry.

MAIN ROAD 268 AT TARAGO

Mr BREWER: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways. I ask the Minister whether it has been at least eight weeks since a deputation from the Mulwaree shire council, the Woodlawn Mining Company, some citizens of Tarago and I conferred with the Minister for Mines and Minister for Industrial Relations and yourself regarding main road 268? Did you state you would give me an answer in respect of this road within a week or so? When can the organizations referred to expect an answer from you with regard to the reconstruction of this road and finance for its reconstruction?

Mr COX: In reply to the honourable member for Goulburn, it is true that I indicated to the honourable member that I would give him a reply in relation to finance for main road 268 at Tarago. The matter has been before the Treasurer, who has

been fairly busy with the Loan Estimates and in preparing the Budget. I assure the honourable member that within a fortnight I shall announce a decision on this most important matter.

RECREATION PROJECTS IN WESTERN SUBURBS

Mr WILDE: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Tourism. Has the Minister's attention been drawn to a recent statement in the *Sydney Morning Herald* by the honourable member for Hawkesbury that the Government was not willing to place any of its major recreation projects in the western suburbs? Will the Minister say whether this allegation is correct? How much money has the Government allocated for major recreation projects in the western suburbs? Are any additional substantial projects of that sort under consideration?

Mr BOOTH: I can understand the concern of the honourable member for Parramatta when such a statement is made by a member of the Opposition in relation to government expenditure in the western suburbs. Knowing his keen interest in sport I can understand how upset he must be. He represents an electorate that is doing well in the sporting arena, especially in recent weeks in rugby league. It is characteristic of the honourable member for Hawkesbury—I notice that he is not in the Chamber and has not been during question time—to make a statement in relation to sporting facilities in the western suburbs of the city. I shall intimate in some detail amounts of money that have been spent in the western suburbs since this Government came to office a little over two years ago. In that period over \$1 million has been spent on sporting and recreational facilities in the western suburbs.

More than sixteen major projects have received assistance and our efforts in the area of sport and recreation in the western suburbs have been nothing short of outstanding, particularly when compared with the previous Government's record. It is also important to remember that the New South Wales Government has had to bear the brunt of the cost of improving sporting facilities because of the lack of federal Government assistance. We are providing further capital assistance to sporting organizations because no money is available from the federal Government for that purpose. The responsibility has fallen on to the New South Wales Government, which is providing money. In the past financial year the Wran Government provided \$2.25 million by way of unemployment relief. That was the first time that any government had provided money for unemployment relief through a sporting and recreation fund. The money was used astutely and wisely. It was matched dollar for dollar by sporting organizations and local councils. Thus by the expenditure \$2.25 million we got \$4.56 million worth of work in New South Wales.

To give some indication of the attitude of the New South Wales Government towards sport and recreation in the State generally, but particularly in the western suburbs area, the Government provided \$160,000 for a community recreation centre at Villawood, \$50,000 for a community sporting complex at Moorebank, \$150,000 for a netball complex at Lidcombe, \$150,000 for a velodrome for cycling, \$360,000 for Liverpool sport and recreation complex over a three-year period, \$150,000 for the Bankstown brickpits, which was a joint project between the council, the Department of Education and the Department of Sport and Recreation, and \$95,000 to the Bankstown council. Those are only half a dozen or so of the major contributions that this Government has made to sport and recreation.

Mr Caterson: But none for The Hills or Hawkesbury.

Mr BOOTH: There is more to come. The reason why the honourable member for Hawkesbury suggested that the western suburbs have been neglected is that he has become accustomed to being associated with governments which did just that. The former Government neglected the western suburbs and he thinks that this Government is continuing that policy. It is not. It is spending the money where it is needed. Most of the outer western suburbs were sadly neglected by the former Government and the present federal Government. The honourable member for Parramatta asked what this Government is doing. It has a policy of developing and building State headquarters for as many sporting organizations as possible. It has provided headquarters for athletics and netball. It is providing a grant to the Canterbury ice rink. It is doing the same for gliding and as many other sports as possible. In negotiations through the honourable member for Parramatta with the Parramatta city council it is investigating the possibility of providing State headquarters for hockey in the Parramatta area. It will be co-operating with the Parramatta council on this project because at present hockey does not have the necessary facilities for the holding of championships, both State and country. The Government is also involved with the Penrith council, working with the Minister of Justice and Minister for Housing, to provide within the next few weeks facilities for rowing on the Nepean River that will be used by international teams in preparation for the international rowing championships to be held later in New Zealand.

The Government is also providing a major loan and grant to enlarge the Condell Park basketball stadium in the Bankstown area. It has been alleged that the Government is neglecting sport and recreation in the outer western suburbs. Through the honourable member for Campbelltown, who works very hard in relation to sporting matters, the Government is finalizing a combined project between the Department of Sport and Recreation, the Campbelltown council and Lever & Kitchen in the provision of a major netball complex in the Campbelltown area. This will be the first time that a private enterprise organization has joined with the Government and local government in such a project. So do not let honourable members opposite run away with the idea that money has not been spent by this Government in the western suburbs on sport and recreation. Finally, to ram home to the Opposition just what is happening in that area, I point out that recently the Bankstown and District Trotting Society received \$275,000 through the racecourse development fund for improvements to trotting in the Bankstown area. I could go on, but I think that is enough to give the lie to what the honourable member for Hawkesbury said.

CONCESSIONS TO TIMBER INDUSTRY

Mr HATTON: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Decentralisation and Development and Minister for Primary Industries. Did the Minister make a joint statement with the Premier that approved decentralization tax concessions would apply to sawmilling where processing or manufacturing is involved? As flooring, weatherboards, veneer peeling, mouldings, kiln drying and chemical treating are some of the processes that are not eligible at the moment, will the Minister take steps to extend payroll tax concessions to timber processing to assist established timber industries and encourage others to establish in areas such as the South Coast?

Mr DAY: Just prior to the last elections I did give a joint undertaking, with the Premier, to the timber industry, the terms of which I think were along the lines indicated by the honourable member for South Coast. The statement said that decentralization tax concessions would apply to sawmilling where processing or manufacturing was involved and that extension to pure sawmilling activities would have to be examined further. That undertaking has been honoured to a very large extent.

Some anomalies exist, as indicated by the honourable member for South Coast, and they are being closely examined. I want to make it clear that the payroll tax exemptions introduced by the Government were not designed as a tax relief or unemployment relief scheme in themselves. They were intended as an incentive for industries to decentralize. Therefore, the emphasis was on non-indigenous industries, that is, industries that do not occur naturally, and industries that operate at some disadvantage compared to city competitors. Accordingly, emphasis has been on manufacturing and processing. If the basis of it were to be broadened to, say, pure sawmilling activities, such as the sawing of logs, the chipping of logs, or the peeling of logs for veneer, it would be extended to other areas, such as abattoirs, dairy factories, mines and cement works, which would cost the Government \$12 million a year. In the present economic climate and bearing in mind the assistance given to this State by the national Government, that is quite out of the question.

Industries that are eligible include the manufacture of plywood, joinery and other wood products, which represent a big section of the processing of timber. The Government and I realize that the industry has suffered a bad period which stems largely from federal housing policies. Only a few minutes ago the Premier indicated clearly the tremendous effect that federal policies have had on housing and, as a direct flow-on, on the sawmilling industry. He indicated clearly also the amount of funds that this State has allocated in an effort to assist the building industry and, of course, the flow-on to the timber industry. The additional funds provided in the last two budgets have assisted markedly, as have the stamp duty exemptions and other concessions. When the Government introduced payroll tax incentives in this State—for the first time ever, I might say—it undertook to review them constantly. I know that the Treasurer has endeavoured to do that since their introduction and I have no doubt that he will continue to do so. Whether it has been possible to do something this year I suppose we shall know shortly, but I assure the honourable member for South Coast that the Government and I are most sympathetic to the idea of extending as many benefits as possible to the timber industry, and we shall continue to bend every effort towards that end.

CHILD ABUSE

Mr KEANE: I address a question without notice to the Minister for Youth and Community Services. Is it a fact that last year this Parliament passed legislation in an effort to assist with the problem of child abuse? Will the Minister inform the House whether the programmes implemented as a result of this legislation are now having the desired effect on this serious social problem?

Mr JACKSON: It is a fact that in 1977 amendments were effected by this Parliament to the Child Welfare Act to provide for the compulsory reporting by the medical fraternity of suspected cases of child abuse. The Act is now known as the child abuse legislation. Since the proclamation of the amending legislation on 1st July, 1977, my department has received notification of 889 cases of serious child abuse. When one compares that figure with the 164 cases of child abuse reported in the calendar year 1975 and 180 cases in 1976 one has the indication that for many years prior to this legislation there was a most serious social problem that had gone undetected. Proper counselling, assistance and other measures to overcome this problem were not in existence in New South Wales.

The honourable member for Woronora, who asked the question, has been active for many years in the community in which he resides in the Sutherland shire and in the whole South Coast district with welfare work such as the provision of activities for and development and education of young children. He has the honour of being the life governor of the Sutherland Shire Police Boys' Club. As a councillor for many

years of the Sutherland council, he was responsible for that local government authority employing a youth worker and a social worker. Also he played a major role in that council subsidizing the community organizations that are involved in promoting youth activity and caring for young people. He was one of the people responsible for a voluntary community organization called Cross Roads, from which Liberal supporters on the Sutherland council have withdrawn the subsidy.

Mr N. D. Walker: Who pays the wages out there?

Mr JACKSON: In the past couple of days the honourable member for Miranda has become most vocal. He must be looking at the electoral percentages published in the newspapers. I think he has missed the boat and he had better start packing his port. Although he has been conspicuous by his silence and absence over a long number of years, we started to hear from him yesterday and again today. As I said, it is quite obvious that he realizes he has missed the boat. It is funny that the honourable member for Miranda should talk about political opponents on the Sutherland council. Though he is one who has over the years vitriolically opposed politics in local government, at the last two local government elections we saw him out supporting the endorsed Liberal candidates who were contesting the Sutherland shire council elections. He was doing this because he was directed to do it. This is the conduct of a member of this great democratic party, with its freedom of speech, action and choice. When the big surveys are being conducted the honourable member for Miranda, in an effort to save his seat, is out supporting the endorsed Liberal candidates for the Sutherland shire.

As a result of this Parliament's endorsement of its child abuse legislation, the Government established a child life protection unit to deal with cases of child abuse. I am pleased to advise the honourable member for Woronora and the House that after twelve months' operation the child life protection unit at Burwood has proved to be one of the greatest innovations in this field in Australia. New South Wales is the only State that has positive legislation to deal with this most serious social problem. Even the Commonwealth does not have it. The unit, which provides a 24-hour service, is staffed by fourteen specialist social workers, an occupational therapist, a community nurse, house parents, a training officer and clerical and other domestic staff. Though this highly successful unit has been established for only twelve months, its achievements are enviable. So successful have the staff and the unit's operations been that representatives of child welfare departments in other States come to New South Wales to observe their success. As recently as last week I saw in the press that the Queensland Government intends to introduce legislation modelled on that in New South Wales. We are most proud of the unit. Week by week there is increasing evidence of child abuse. From 1st July this year until last Friday 143 serious cases of child abuse were reported to my department.

I pay tribute to the medical fraternity. When the legislation was envisaged there was some conflict between me as the Minister and my department, and the Australian Medical Association. Agreement was reached after consultation. The New South Wales branch of the Australian Medical Association has honoured that agreement and it is co-operating with us to the full. Only recently that association in its gazette publicized that one of its members did not report a case of serious child abuse. That gazette drew the attention of 9 000 members of the medical profession in this State to the fact that they have a responsibility to the young people who suffer as a result of child abuse and to the community generally. One of the great features of the legislation, of which the honourable member for Woronora has a knowledge, is that it protects against legal action for defamation and malicious prosecution and similar actions not only members of the medical fraternity who report suspected cases of child abuse but also every section of the community that bona fide believes there is a case of child abuse and reports it.

Provision exists to encourage people—not only those in the medical fraternity—to report cases of child abuse to the department. The intent of the legislation was to assist the family unit to overcome the problem of child abuse. Contrary to what the Opposition said when a public statement was made that the Government proposed to introduce the legislation, the emphasis is not on prosecution. It is interesting to note that of the 889 cases of child abuse reported last year only two prosecutions followed and they were for serious cases. That clearly confirms the real purpose of the legislation.

I congratulate the honourable member for Woronora on his interest in this important legislation and for what he has done in this field. I congratulate him also on the part he played as a member of the community, long before his elevation to the Sutherland council or to the Parliament, in community welfare work. I compliment him on the work he has done for youth and for various youth organizations in the Sutherland shire.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The time for questions has expired. I shall now go through the business paper—

Mr Cameron: One Liberal Party question—

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

Mr Coleman: One question in four—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the Leader of the Opposition to order. I shall now go through the business paper for the placing and disposal of business.

GENERAL LOAN ACCOUNT APPROPRIATION BILL

Suspension of Standing Orders

Mr F. J. WALKER (Georges River), Attorney-General [3.6]: I seek the leave of the House to move a motion to suspend standing orders to permit the General Loan Account Appropriation Bill to be now read a second time.

Mr Mason: Leave is not granted.

Urgency

Mr F. J. WALKER (Georges River), Attorney-General [3.8]: I move:

That it is a matter of urgent necessity that the General Loan Account Appropriation Bill be now read a second time.

Mr COLEMAN (Fuller), Leader of the Opposition [3.9]: The Opposition must oppose the motion. One is used to the contempt with which the Government treats the Parliament but this important speech was delivered only yesterday. It covers the widest possible range of government activity. Over the years, at least a week and sometimes longer has been allowed for the close consideration of the speech that the proper functioning of the Parliament requires. It is contemptuous to the Parliament to ask, without good and proper reason, that this bill be now debated. On that point of principle the Opposition completely opposes the motion.

Question of urgency put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 49

Mr Akister
Mr Bannon
Mr Barnier
Mr Bedford
Mr Booth
Mr Brereton
Mr Cahill
Mr Cleary
Mr R. J. Clough
Mr Cox
Mr Crabtree
Mr Day
Mr Durick
Mr Einfeld
Mr Face
Mr Ferguson
Mr Flaherty

Mr Gabb
Mr Gordon
Mr Haigh
Mr Hatton
Mr Hills
Mr Hunter
Mr Jackson
Mr Jensen
Mr Johnson
Mr Johnstone
Mr Keane
Mr Kearns
Mr McGowan
Mr Maher
Mr Mallam
Mr Mulock
Mr Paciullo

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

Tellers,
Mr Degen
Mr O'Connell

Noes, 43

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

Mr Fisher
Mr Freudenstein
Mr Griffith
Mr Healey
Mr Jackett
Mr Leitch
Mr Lewis
Mr McDonald
Mr McGinty
Mr Mackie
Mr Maddison
Mr Mason
Mrs Meillon
Mr Murray
Mr Mutton

Mr Osborne
Mr Park
Mr Pickard
Mr Rofo
Mr Rozzoli
Mr Schipp
Mr Singleton
Mr Taylor
Mr Viney
Mr N. D. Walker
Mr Wotton

Tellers,
Mr Moore
Mr West

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Motion of urgency agreed to.

Suspension of Standing Orders

Mr F. J. WALKER (Georges River), Attorney-General [3.12]: I move:

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would preclude the General Loan Account Appropriation Bill being now read a second time.

In doing so, I should like to remind the Opposition of what it did when it was in office in 1973. At that time Premier Askin delivered the Loan Estimates Speech and then prorogued Parliament before the Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for **Mines** and Minister for Energy, who was then Leader of the Opposition, could even **speak**. Now members of the Opposition have the hide and the hypocrisy to get up in this House and complain.

Mr Coleman: We did not suppress question time.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The remark made by the Leader of the Opposition is a reflection on the Chair. The Speaker has full control of question time. I think the suggestion was made previously by a member of the Opposition that only one member of the Opposition had got the call. He should be careful how he adds up the numbers. It is the prerogative of the Speaker alone to decide which members he will call and in what order. That ruling was given by a more eminent Speaker than myself, the late Sir Kevin Ellis.

Mr F. J. WALKER: The Leader of the Opposition now says that he is not prepared to debate the bill at this time. Although he told a press conference yesterday afternoon that he was ready to debate the bill, he now says he is not prepared to do so. The fact is that what we see on the Opposition benches today are desperate men who are grasping desperately at every possible straw to try to score some cheap political points. No wonder they are desperate men. One cannot help feeling sorry for them. We all know why they are carrying on in this ridiculous, unparliamentary way. The Leader of the Opposition is not only narked about question time; he is narked about the result of a poll published in a newspaper yesterday. That poll was taken in his own electorate and it showed a swing to Labor of 14 per cent. In fact it indicated that Labor would win the seat by between 6 000 and 7 000 votes. No wonder he is a desperate man who will say anything and smear anybody. He fears that he is going to lose his seat. But that is not the only thing. The latest Gallup poll published in the newspapers shows that the Premier has the approval of 72 per cent of the people.

Mr Fischer: On a point of order. The motion before the House has nothing to do with Gallup polls published in the news media. I submit that the Attorney-General is not complying with the standing orders, and I ask that he be directed to return to the question before the Chair.

Mr SPEAKER: If the Attorney-General had not been replying to interjections from the Opposition, he would have finished his address on this matter. I am sure the Attorney-General knows the rules of debate and that he should come back to the matter before the Chair.

Mr F. J. WALKER: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I was pointing out to the House why this phoney opposition is being put up to what is a perfectly reasonable and traditional occurrence in this House, that is, the moving of urgency to bring on a money bill. After all, we are dealing with one of the most important pieces of legislation that ever comes before the House —

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Vaucluse to order.

Mr Doyle: On a point of order. Mr Speaker, with the greatest respect and having regard to your own sense of fairness and your knowledge of your learned predecessors' rulings in respect of provocation —

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will come to the point of order.

Mr Doyle: I am suggesting that the Opposition is being provoked into retaliation and that you are being unduly harsh on members of the Opposition.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member is now reflecting on the Chair. I ask him to resume his seat. There is no point of order.

Mr F. J. WALKER: I do not know why the honourable member for Vacluse is getting upset. He will not be here after the next elections.

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Vacluse to order.

Mr F. J. WALKER: I should not be suprised if the Liberal Party candidate to succeed the honourable member for Vacluse wins that seat at the next elections. But one thing is certain: the honourable member for Burwood will not be here after the next elections.

Mr Pickard: On a point of order. Mr Speaker, I draw to your attention the statement you made a few minutes ago when giving a ruling, that the noise coming from the Opposition benches prevented the Attorney-General from concluding his remarks. Now the Attorney-General appears to be referring to all the Opposition seats in order to introduce bogus material into this debate and you have not yet directed that he return to the question before the Chair.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Again the undertone of the remarks of the honourable member is a reflection on the Chair. I am sure the **Attorney-General** is aware that he has moved, That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would preclude the General Loan Account Appropriation Bill being now read a second time. I ask that he address himself to that question.

Mr F. J. WALKER: It is imperative that the House be given the opportunity to debate the Loan Estimates so that the people of New South Wales **can see** the wonderful economic package that the Government is putting before them. After the electors are aware of what has gone on in this debate, instead of 63 per cent of the people of New South Wales indicating that they will vote **Labor** and less than 30 per cent saying that they will vote for the Liberal and Country parties, I am sure that almost 68 per cent—and it may be more than that—will vote for the Government. This is already the most popular Government in the history of the State. The people will have the opportunity to examine the Loan Estimates and appreciate what the Government is doing in these difficult economic times. Dwpite the vicious cutbacks by the federal Government, this Government has managed to produce a good economic package. As a result of good sound management, the Government has given the people of New South Wales something worth while. That is why the Opposition does not want to debate the bill. This must be the first time in the history of any Australian Parliament that an Opposition has opposed a motion to deal with a money bill—a budgetary bill. It is a terrible shame that the Opposition should say, "We do not want to debate the bill because we are terrified that if we do so the Labor vote will go from 63 per cent to a higher figure." I submit that the motion should be carried unanimously.

Mr COLEMAN (Fuller), Leader of the Opposition [3.20]: I doubt that I have ever heard a more contemptible speech in this Parliament. Perhaps if I were to scan *Hansard* I might find something but on the spur of the moment I cannot recall anything. One of the few sensible sentences that the Attorney-General uttered was, "This is an important bill." Of course, it is an important bill: it is the General Loan Account Appropriation Bill. It is a matter that should be dealt with responsibly, **seriously and** critically. To do that takes a certain amount of time in examination aad preparation. We are all in this Parliament to advance the public interest.

The Attorney-General offered no reason for the suspension of standing orders. He spent most of his address making his familiar gibes about who will and who will not be here in the next Parliament. What difference does it make? Under this Government members of Parliament cannot ask questions at question time. If the Leader of

the House wants to talk about something important, he should talk about **rottenness** and corruption. Obviously this **Labor** Government is scared of the questions that the Opposition will put to it. It is terrified that it will be exposed. **Government** supporters have disgraced the Parliament. Because the Opposition has questions that it wants to put to Ministers to bring out the disgrace that those Ministers are bringing upon this Parliament, the Government uses up question time in the way that it has done today. That is a contemptible action. Whatever might have been said about the former Government, it did not suppress question time in the way this Government has done.

The Attorney-General did not touch upon the real issue, which is that time is needed to examine this most important bill. Time is normally allowed for **this**. The example that the Attorney-General gave is irrelevant to what is happening today. Normally, in order to prepare for this debate and carry out a thorough examination of the bill at least a week and perhaps ten days or even a fortnight is allowed. The Attorney-General has disgraced this Parliament many times. Throughout the length and breadth of the State he is known as **Potplant** Walker for his attitude towards the legalizing of marihuana. In fact, he is known also as Hogwash Walker for his ridiculous attacks upon the private enterprise system. I do not know what he will be called after today's performance. His speech did not touch the issue that is most important and concerns every member of this **Chamber**, indeed, every member of the Parliament. The Government should allow proper debate on such an important measure that affects the welfare of the people. The Attorney-General made a contemptible speech. The Opposition opposes everything that he said.

Mr BRUXNER (Tenterfield), Deputy Leader of the Country Party [3.23]: I join with the Leader of the Opposition in protesting strongly against this motion to suspend standing orders. The standing orders did not permit me to speak against the motion of urgency which the House has carried. Yesterday a similar motion was moved. The Opposition did not oppose it and assented to the Treasurer's introducing the Loan Estimates. The Attorney-General has accused the Opposition of breaking tradition and trying to block the introduction of a money bill. That is not so. Yesterday the Opposition readily agreed to the Treasurer presenting the Loan Estimates. The Attorney-General, who is so self-righteous in defending his actions today, would be aware that copies of the Treasurer's Loan Speech, not available to honourable members until the speech had been concluded, were distributed to the press before the Attorney-General had completed speaking to his motion of urgency. The House had not even voted on that motion, let alone agreed to the suspension of the standing orders of this House, before those copies of that speech were distributed to the press.

Mr F. J. Walker: The honourable member is attacking the staff. He should be ashamed of himself.

Mr BRUXNER: I am not attacking the staff. The Attorney-General is responsible for giving the staff copies of the Treasurer's speech to distribute. The staff concerned were members of the Attorney-General's staff and the Premier's staff, not the parliamentary staff. We all know that speeches of this nature are printed in advance. This has been the system for many years. However, it has been the practice of this House that printed copies of a speech are not made available until the speech has been delivered.

When the Attorney-General assumed office and became leader of the House I remembered clearly his criticism of former governments in their management of the affairs of the House. He promised an improvement. To give the Minister his due—I think I said this in a previous debate—I thought he would do so. On a former occasion I said in this House that ever since I came here I have never been able to

understand why we cannot have a much more ordered programme of **business** of the House and why we cannot receive in advance what would be virtually an annual **calendar** which, with the slight exception of an odd day's change here and there, should be adhered to. The parliamentary programme could be out in advance. I thought the Attorney-General had agreed to that. He made great play of saying that at the adjournment each Thursday he would give honourable members a resume of what was to happen during the next week. For a little while that occurred but gradually, as his mantle of power started to weigh more heavily upon his shoulders, he began to turn the Parliament into a political forum to the advantage of the Government.

Government supporters may laugh. They may be riding very high at the moment but that will not always be the case. Every government is entitled to the majority of its numbers to enable the passage of its legislation, and through those same numbers it is entitled to arrange the order of business of the House. No one would deny that, whether the majority be one or fifty. But no government by weight of its numbers is entitled to prostitute the time-honoured practice and usages of this Parliament passed down to us by the British Parliament.

Mr F. J. Walker: What about what happened in 1973?

Mr BRUXNER: The events of 1973 are not being debated here today. The Attorney-General and his colleagues in opposition on that **occasion** opposed the coalition Government's action just as vigorously as I am opposing this motion today. What I complain about is that everything that is happening in this Parliament appears to be **contrived**. The Government would have us believe that it wants to timetable its legislation to suit the timetable of its election. But there will not be an election. We have heard the Premier's assurance, given on a number of occasions, that he can see no possible reason why his Government should not run its full term. Therefore, there is absolutely no hurry to complete the debate on the Loan Estimates. Also, there is no hurry to introduce the Financial Statement in the form of the Budget.

Should the Government insist that there is a hurry to do these things I remind it that we have been debating the Address in Reply into the third week of the session. That is the only other item of business under the Government's name on the business paper. I do not think there would have been any complaint from the Opposition had the Government wanted to complete that debate, continue with other legislative business and deal with the Loan Estimates in proper order. Yesterday the Opposition allowed the Government to interrupt the Address-in-Reply debate. The Treasurer delivered his speech and the House returned to the Address-in-Reply debate. I presume that now the Government intends to ask the House to agree to a burst on the Loan Estimates for some time this afternoon and then it will push that aside and bring on again the Address-in-Reply debate.

It is high time the Attorney-General carried out the promise that he made. He said that the coalition parties could not run the business of the House properly. I was tempted to agree with him. When the coalition Government was in office on many occasions I thought the business of the House could have been ordered better. The Attorney-General ought to pursue the proper practices of the House and certainly he should ensure that members' rights are not interfered with. I oppose most vigorously the motion to suspend standing orders.

Question—That standing orders be suspended—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 49

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

Noes, 43

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

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Motion for suspension of standing orders agreed to.

Second Reading

Debate resumed (from 29th August, *vide* page 694) on motion by Mr Renshaw:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr MADDISON (Ku-ring-gai) [3.35]: We have just witnessed a style of government that we have come to expect from the Labor Party in this State and in other places. It reminds me very much of the dictatorial attitude that was part and parcel of the Whitlam Government, which on many occasions used the authority of numbers to beat down the voice of opposition and, indeed, the voice of the people. The veneer of respectability that this Government seeks to project to the public is starting to wear thin.

The performance here this afternoon by the Labor Government of New South Wales was a disgrace. In the past honourable members on both sides of the House could expect an adjournment of at least a week after the Treasurer had made his second-reading speech on the General Loan Account Appropriation Bill. The Treasurer knows that that has been the tradition, and that it has been honoured closely in the observance rather than the breach.

We have today a debate on a public works programme that is said to be an all-time high, a record, for this State, involving the expenditure of some \$2,000 million. Yet the members of the Opposition are required to analyse the Treasurer's speech and the Loan Estimates in a period of twenty-four hours and come up with applause or constructive criticism. We on this side of the House have been denied an opportunity of gaining a full understanding of what the Treasurer has in mind or of the Government's economic policy for the next twelve months. In the speech that I made on the General Loan Account Appropriation Bill last year, I complained that it is ridiculous to look at a capital works programme in isolation from the general budget. Yet the Government is asking honourable members to do that again today. On this occasion we are once more denied the benefit of being able to peruse the Auditor-General's report, which must be presented to Parliament by 30th September each year. Although that report deals with revenue matters, it has a great deal to say about the General Loan Account. We know, for example, from the Auditor-General's report last year that as at 30th June, 1977, the General Loan Account was in overdraft. What do we know about it today? Nothing. We are without the Auditor-General's report and do not know how the capital works programme fits in with the general revenue budget. We are in the dark—and that is a phrase I used last year when debating the same bill.

This case should be taken to the Anti-Discrimination Board, because the Opposition is certainly being discriminated against in this House by the Government, which is treating it dictatorially and shabbily. We have listened to a Loan Speech lauding the economic achievements, so-called, of the State Government and castigating the federal Government. That is par for the course. For the past two years Ministers here have used the Fraser Government as a convenient whipping boy and a ready scapegoat, behind which they hope to hide their own deficiencies. The people of Australia weighed the Whitlam Labor Government in the balance and found it wanting. The people of New South Wales, despite all the opinion polls, will, when the crunch comes, weigh the Wran Government in the same balance, and the pollsters, and pundits and the psephologists may well find that political prediction is a very inexact discipline indeed. If the kind of performance of the Government here today is made known, the public will weigh the scales down very much against the style of government now being perpetrated on the community by the Wran Government. No doubt the poll results published in today's *Sydney Morning Herald* make good reading for the Government. It would be foolish to deny that. They make thoughtful reading for members on this side of the House. It would be equally foolish to deny that.

The poll question that interested me was about the party which is more likely to be honest in government. Less than half those interviewed chose the Labor Party but, at that, more chose the Labor Party than chose the Liberal–Country parties. I absolutely believe that this represents a failure in communication on our part, and a failure to ram home to the electorate just what lies behind that genteel facade of moderate, co-operative, neo-middle class mores so well projected by the Premier. I saw that coming through in the Attorney-General's remarks a few moments ago when this House was discussing urgency.

Mr Caterson: He is a phoney.

Mr Maddison]

Mr MADDISON: That is perfectly true, he is a phoney. He pretends to be something that he is not. Indeed, the Premier is not so well projected by some of his Ministers, with their interest in indoor pot plants or determination to interfere in the workings of the coal industry. When the Ministers are left alone they certainly smear the Premier's facade. On page 5 of the printed Loan Speech, I read, as I knew I would, even before hearing the speech presented in this House yesterday:

The New South Wales Government's attitude to capital works' spending is in stark contrast to that of the federal Government.

The New South Wales Government has consistently argued that public sector capital investment provides a controlled stimulus to the economy, particularly the private sector, without adding to inflation.

The Government's determination to maintain the real level of capital expenditure allows us to continue our support for the large section of the private sector which heavily depends on public sector capital spending and the employment it provides.

Are these mere words or is this really underlying the philosophy of the Labor Party? One could be forgiven for thinking that the Labor Party believes in the workings of a free enterprise society, supports the actions of those who live or perish by the results of their own endeavours, and applauds those who do not look to government for subsidies, handouts, regulation and control. What utter hypocrisy. Premier Wran publicly dissociated himself from his federal leader in the 1976 State election when he made that famous statement that likened Mr Whitlam to lead in the saddlebags. Mr Hayden is more acceptable, for he too has that veneer of sweet reasonableness so dear to the Premier's acute sense of public relations. Hayden and Wran were quite a team at the recent anti-budget rally, though the veneer cracked in the aftermath at the stock exchange. Wran and Whitlam, Wran and Hayden—they all belong to the one Australian Labor Party. I emphasize that the New South Wales Labor Party and the Australian Labor Party are one and indivisible, however much the Premier would like to keep his distance at times of his own choosing.

The Premier, being a good Labor man, is bound by the rulings of the Australian Labor Party's biennial conference. Did the New South Wales delegates to the latest conference in Perth, in 1977, agree to support for the private sector and encouragement of the private sector? Listening to the Loan Speech, with its soothing syrup for the private sector, I became more than ever convinced that we on this side must concentrate our efforts, as never before, to inform the people that the placebo of this State Government's pronouncements is inevitably accompanied by the bitter medicine of any Labor party's true intent, which was spelled out clearly for all to see at the Perth conference in 1977. I shall quote the main provisions of Labor's economic planning policy, which ultimately binds the New South Wales Labor Government and provides a stark contrast to the soporific statement of this Loan Speech. They are:

A Labor Government will intervene where necessary to reach national objectives.

Instruments available include consultation, regulation, public-private sector competition, joint public-private sector ownership, government procurement and nationalization.

Labor would use planning as a deliberate tool of economic and social policy. Governments are elected to take responsibility for achieving aims and resolving problems, not to sit back and wait for an imperfect market to do the job for them.

I have looked through the proposals in the Loan Speech with its forecasts of millions spent here and millions spent there. I use the word forecasts advisedly. We have seen from the last two budgets that they cannot be regarded as promises, unless one regards them as pie in the sky, pie crust promises, made to be broken. In its last period in office the Labor Party, prior to elections, used public works programmes for deliberate political purposes. They were blatant promises for public works that were never started in what were regarded as sensitive electorates for the Labor Party. Some works were started, then slowed down and never completed.

When we came to office in 1965 a mass of public works was in various stages of disarray and had been used as political gimmicks right across the State of New South Wales. The Labor Party's past works programmes have been strewn with good intentions. This public works programme has every indication of being dressed up for a premature election. I shall give two examples, which are briefly referred to in the Loan Speech, that are designed to catch the eye. I refer, first, to the entertainment centre at the Haymarket. Let me make it clear that the Liberal Party supports the construction of an entertainment centre of the kind that has been spoken of now for some months. The Treasurer in his speech said:

Special arrangements are presently being negotiated with private firms for the construction of the entertainment centre in the Haymarket.

In the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 8th June this year was a report headed "Wran hopeful on entertainment centre". I might say that it was in May when the Premier first started to talk about an entertainment centre. He might have made some statements earlier than that, but in my recollection it was about May when it came to the public notice. The *Sydney Morning Herald* report stated:

Work was likely to start in a few weeks on an entertainment and convention centre for Sydney, the Premier, Mr Wran, said last night.

He said it would be built at Haymarket.

A proposal by the entrepreneur Mr Harry M. Miller to have a centre built and operated by the State Government at Kings Cross "was never on," Mr Wran said.

"I think I can now positively say that Haymarket will be the area where the entertainment centre will be built."

The centre, with a capacity of 12 000 for concerts and 3 500 for conventions, has been approved by the State Government at a cost of up to \$40 million.

He said Cabinet was likely to discuss the centre plan soon. Private entrepreneurs would probably lease the centre when it was finished.

On 25th July a further report appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* under the heading "Top priority to building City concert venue—Wran". The report said:

The State Government is giving top priority to the construction of the new Sydney entertainment centre at Haymarket, the Premier, Mr Wran, said yesterday. The work was due to begin in a few months.

Over a month the period had enlarged from a few weeks to a few months. Now the Loan Speech contains a further reference to this matter. I assume this comment in the Loan Speech means that the Government is considering the commitment of capital funds to the project. In its editorial of 24th August the *Sydney Morning Herald* said "Financing details are vague". They certainly are vague. Why cannot the Government come clean? Who are the private firms with whom the Government is having negotiations? How many of them are there? What are the arrangements

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that the Government is proposing with the private firms? Is the Government proposing to make public its precise proposal and to invite tenders so as to get the best value for money? Why has the Haymarket site been chosen? It is certainly an awkward site from the aspect of public transport, and it is situated in a part of Sydney that is not noted for its ready road access. It is certainly remote—and I use that word deliberately—from Central railway station and the Town Hall railway station, especially if people are expected to trek there in wet and cold weather.

It is interesting to note also that associated with the scheme, as it has now apparently been formalized, there is to be an extensive car park, which will encourage people to use their cars. I should have thought that would have been contrary to the Government's expressways policy and its concern about the conservation of energy. Apparently the Government has abandoned the convention centre. To me this is a promise that looks good, but can the people have any confidence that it will be completed? If so, at what price? What studies have been done of the cost of this entertainment centre? What are the projections about its profitability when it is in operation? We need a great deal more information about whether this centre is to go ahead this year, next year or indeed ever. How realistic is the proposed funding and the centre's profitability?

Another item in the Loan Speech relates to capital moneys that have been set aside for prisons. The Loan Speech says that \$6 million is to be set aside this year to give effect to recommendations made by the Royal commission into the Department of Corrective Services. I note that a new maximum security gaol is proposed for Parklea. This has received considerable publicity over recent days, indeed, there was a demonstration about it outside this Parliament yesterday. The Labor Party in office is different from the Labor Party in opposition. When I was Minister of Justice the present Minister of Justice asked what were my reasons for foisting a maximum security gaol on the people of Emu Plains against their will. When after the destruction of the Bathurst gaol it was proposed to build a maximum security gaol at Emu Plains, there was a community uprising against the proposal. However, unlike the present Minister for Services and Minister Assisting the Premier, I went to Emu Plains to a public meeting to hear what the citizens had to say. I decided, because of the overwhelming rejection of the proposal by the people of that community, that the Government would not go ahead with it. I ask the present Minister responsible for prisons for his reasons for foisting a maximum security gaol on the people of Parklea against their will.

Mr Wilde: What about Silverwater?

Mr MADDISON: The plans to build a maximum security prison at Silverwater were completed at the time we left office in 1976. The present Government has had over two years in which to construct a maximum security prison there, but nothing whatever has been done about it. I simply say that \$6 million is a paltry sum indeed to set aside to accommodate the works that are set out in the Loan Speech. I do not propose to read them, but they appear on pages 16 and 17 of the Loan Speech that the Treasurer made yesterday. The allocation includes funds for a maximum security gaol at Parklea. That is another indication of the dictatorial style of the Government that is emerging so far as community interests and the environment of the community are concerned.

Those two matters—the entertainment centre and prisons—are indications of a dressing-up for a particular purpose, namely, an election, and to secure some popular appeal from the community. However, twelve months from now these proposals will be found to have been completely phoney, and the works will not have been achieved. Nowhere in the Loan Speech is there any assurance that the

works programme proposed will be overwhelmingly entrusted to the private sector. I know that it contains diffused statements concerning the provision of a controlled stimulus to the private sector, but those statements are in stark contrast with the policy adopted by the New South Wales and other delegates to the Labor Party's governing body which met in conference last year in Perth.

That is why I believe that in the public opinion poll the answer to the question about honesty in government is based on a false assumption that there is little real difference between the Liberal Party and the Labor Party. It is sometimes thought that one is a little left of centre and the other a little to the right of centre, with a great deal of common ground in the middle. Nothing could be further from the truth, except perhaps this Government's sham, insincere and indeed hypocritical public concern for the welfare of the private sector. That is why I said earlier that our failure is a failure of communication. When we seek the reasons for this failure we should look to ourselves, but perhaps we can also look to the media and ask whether investigatory reporting has become secondary to instant replay. The Liberal Party and the Labor Party sit on different sides in this Chamber. The philosophical division is as absolute as the physical.

Whether we have time enough to get this message clearly to the people of New South Wales is a matter known only to the Premier. Almost daily we read speculation in the press about the date of the next election. This speculation could be dispelled by a simple yes or no from the Premier. Is this the man who is quoted as saying in September 1977 that "If Mr Fraser gave half as much thought to the economy as he gives to his electoral timetable, Australia might be further along the road to recovery"? That is what he said, and that is really the sign of a hypocrite in the current situation of our not knowing precisely what he and his Government have in mind for a general election.

The Loan Speech has a close relationship to the economy, an inescapable aspect of which is the capacity of companies, large and small, to show a profit rather than a loss. I emphasize that a profit should be regarded as a most desirable end for any enterprise. Indeed, on a government level the Treasury makes much of being able to maintain the stimulus to the New South Wales economy and says that, despite cuts, it has only been by the tightest financial control of resources that the Government has been able to achieve a modest increase in the total capital programme in real terms. That statement appeared in the Loan Speech. But when the Labor Party has stated its views on the private sector over the years, it has shown an obsession for the redistribution, and not the creation of wealth, despite the fact that in the ultimate the public sector and all government services are dependent on the creativity and the profitability of the private sector. When in opposition a Labor member said:

Speaking as a person, as a socialist, I would find it immoral to buy a share in a private company that is going to exploit labour. Whenever a company is going to make a profit then it is exploiting labour.

That was said publicly by Mr Tom Uren, a member of the same party as the Premier and his colleagues. That a properly agreed contract, public or private sector, is binding is one of the pillars of a great society. No doubt contracts will be signed for the public works referred to in the Loan Speech. They have to be.

Let me quote what resulted from a unanimous vote at the Perth conference in 1977 which was attended by delegates from the Australian Labor Party, New South Wales branch: "Labor will repudiate any commitment of a non-Labor Government to the mining, processing or export of Australia's uranium." In moving the motion Clyde

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Holding, Victorian delegate and former Labor Opposition Leader in that State, said: "Any company that wants to enter contracts for the mining or export of uranium does so from today at its own peril." What can apply to uranium today can apply to coal or any other mineral tomorrow. It is the principle that is abhorrent to the Liberal Party, whether in Government or in Opposition, that a legal contract can be repudiated at whim for political purposes. Honesty in Government? How many of those 1004 citizens who were asked those questions in that recent poll answered with a real background of knowledge? Before I leave this aspect of the Loan Speech, with its concern for the private sector, let me refer to one more section of that party of centralism, the Western Australian branch of the Australian Labor Party. I quote from *The Australian* of 28th August, 1978:

The party has endorsed a new economic policy which puts far reaching restrictions on private sector activities.

Key information about private companies' turnover, investments, employment, profits, exports and imports business and sources of finance would also be compulsorily made available to the State Government.

That is what I mean by the true colour of the Australian Labor Party. Members on this side of the House are well aware of the traps behind the soporifics of the Government's approach to the economy of this State. It must be our prime task to share this knowledge with the people of New South Wales. Last year, when speaking during the debate on the General Loan Account Appropriation Bill I said:

If a capital works programme is centred on the use of the private sector to fulfil it, this is one way in which confidence can be generated. All this confidence will disappear if the business community is subjected to threats in other respects.

That statement is as true today as it was last October. That we have been constrained in just evaluation of the Government's capital works programme by its premature presentation is even truer today than it was last October. Is it to the media that we must look to discover the reasons behind its premature presentation? Apparently the Government intends to push its appropriation for \$2,000 million through this House in one day. In such short time there cannot possibly be adequate debate of what is involved in the loan appropriation having regard to the period that has elapsed since the Opposition had access to the Treasurer's Loan Speech and the details of the loan programme. We are told by the press that the election is to be on 7th October as the Premier has kept that day free of all engagements, unlike 14th October when his diary is full. We are also told by the press that the Budget will be presented and Parliament prorogued all in the same week and that, willy-nilly, we will proceed to the hustings. That we are told by the press, not by the Premier, is a measure of the contempt for the democratic process inherent in this Government's approach.

There is much to be said in favour of the due forms and customs of the Westminster system of parliamentary government but apparently it would not be said by this Labor Government. So little real information is available to members today that to take part in meaningful debate on so vital a matter as the State's capital works programme is a very real problem. Honesty in Government? I say, with absolute sincerity, that the premature presentation of this programme gives the lie direct to the answer to that poll question—which party is likely to be more honest in government. There is a basic dishonesty in presenting to this House at this time the Government's capital works programme, in this sequence and with no time allowed to the Opposition for dissection and evaluation. A premature debate has been forced upon members and, if we are to believe the election programme so confidently set forth in the press, a premature election will be forced upon the people of this State.

Mr WILDE (Parramatta) [4.4]: It is a great pleasure for me to speak in support of this bill. I congratulate the Treasurer on once again bringing down such an excellent loan programme for the people of New South Wales. I listened carefully to the speech of the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai in an endeavour to ascertain exactly the aspects of this loan presentation with which he finds fault, and I was quite amazed by his few references to the matters contained in the Treasurer's Loan Speech. Few of the honourable member's comments related to the content of it. Most of his remarks may be described as puerile discussion of political matters unrelated to the matters under discussion.

Mr Maddison: How much notice did the honourable member get of the Treasurer's speech?

Mr WILDE: I had exactly the same amount of notice as other honourable members had of it. Unlike the honourable member, I paid attention when the speech was being delivered. I listened to some of it in my room and the balance of it in this Chamber. I was able to hear it at first hand, as were members of the press. It was noticeable that the press had no difficulty in preparing and publishing a reasoned analysis of the speech in a short time. If the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai found that he did not have time to listen to the speech or read it and analyse it, he could have taken advantage of the publications that were available which gave reasoned and expert comment on it. That would have allowed him to make a better contribution to the debate than he treated members to a few moments ago.

About the only comments that the honourable member made on the Loan Estimates related to minor aspects of the proposed very substantial expenditure of \$2,000 million. He spoke at great length on an entertainment and convention centre at the Haymarket, which received only passing reference from the Treasurer. I am sure that all honourable members recognize the establishment of this centre as a great idea. The honourable member for Ku-ring-gai did not even criticize the proposal; his only point was that a specific amount is not allocated for that undertaking. Honourable members are aware that such items cannot be costed precisely. That will come later. A broad sum is provided in the loan programme for matters such as that. The only other matter that the honourable member spoke about was the proposed Parklea gaol. He seemed to think that some credit should flow to him for listening to the people who objected to the siting of a gaol at Emu Plains and then deciding to locate one at Silverwater. But he did not go to Silverwater and interview residents in the vicinity of the proposed site and ask them what they thought of the proposal. Because the proposed gaol was in an electorate represented by a member of a different political party, the former Government went blandly ahead and decided to locate it there. That proved to be a planning travesty.

The honourable member claimed credit for the fact that plans for the construction of the gaol at Silverwater were ready in 1976. He should be ashamed to admit it. The report of Mr Justice Nagle, who conducted the Royal commission into prisons, demonstrated conclusively that it was just as well that work did not proceed on the Silverwater complex. The Royal commissioner said that the proposed construction would be inadequate, that the plans were laughable. I understand that they provided for a cell block to be located against the perimeter wall of the gaol. Prisoners seeking to escape would merely climb to the roof and jump over the wall. Similarly, anyone wishing to aid the escape of a prisoner had merely to breach the external wall to obtain access to the gaol buildings. This is the type of planning for which the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai took credit. Fortunately the Government did not proceed with that hasty proposal. It allowed the Royal commission to furnish a considered report on the State's gaol system and it has decided to proceed with

the construction of a new gaol at Parklea. Unlike some of my colleagues who have electorates in close proximity to the Parklea site, I do not view the proposal with the same degree of concern as they do.

For some time Liberal Party supporters in the Parramatta area have been campaigning against the Silverwater gaol and extensions to the Parramatta gaol, which once again were proposed by the former Government. When the Liberal Party and the Country Party were in government their supporters considered that it was quite all right to provide or extend gaols in that area. It was a different matter when they left office. Liberal Party supporters in Parramatta led the argument against the extension of the present facilities. That argument is contrary to the proposals of the former Liberal-Country party Government. I am pleased that the accommodation for the proposed gaol at Parklea will eliminate the need for the Silverwater gaol and extensions to the Parramatta gaol, a decision that will relieve many of my constituents of anxiety. From that point of view I welcome the proposal.

I note that the matters to which I have referred are the only aspects on which the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai spoke in any detail. I congratulate the Treasurer on finding the resources to provide for such a wide-ranging programme for the benefit of all sections of the community. He has done this in spite of the stringencies imposed upon him by the federal Government. Again there has been a cutback in real terms in federal funding. This year the State will receive from federal sources \$1,301 million, only \$2 million more than last year. In real terms it represents a cut of about \$100 million. For the first time in twenty-five years the federal Government has not increased the State's general loan allocations, which are the prime source of revenue for the Government's capital works.

Drastic cuts have been made also in federal funding for specific purposes. One of the most heartless is the \$24 million cut for welfare housing. Most honourable members would receive frequent representations from constituents who are unable to afford exorbitant rents. It is heartbreaking to have to tell them that the Government, through the Housing Commission of New South Wales, is unable to provide alternative accommodation for them, and their names will have to go on a waiting list for three or four years. This cutback in federal funding is completely heartless and shows that there has been no regard for the difficulties facing needy people. The federal Government cutback in funds has created the problems of the building industry throughout Australia. The State Government has not the funds to meet the shortfall. I am pleased that the Government has done the best it could in the circumstances. Unfortunately, as a result of the heartless attitude of the federal Government, which I deplore, there will be a continuing shortage of welfare housing in New South Wales.

The Government has tried to make up the cutback in federal finance by using the funds and accumulated reserves of such semi-government bodies as the Metropolitan Water Sewerage and Drainage Board, the Hunter District Water Board, the Maritime Services Board, the Public Transport Commission and the Hospitals Commission, without denuding these authorities of their funds. Once again the Treasurer has examined their resources to ensure that wherever funds are available they will be utilized in the best possible way to alleviate unemployment in New South Wales. Unfortunately the Government is not receiving any assistance from the Australian Government.

I applaud particularly the allocation made for main roads in New South Wales. In 1978-79 the total funds available to the Department of Main Roads will be \$465 million, an increase of \$64 million or 16 per cent over last year's expenditure. This increase in funds for main roads will be achieved without real help from the federal

Government. In the three years since **1975-76** the State's contribution to road construction in New South Wales will have risen by over **70** per cent and the federal contribution by only **26** per cent. I know that the Government presented a strong case for additional federal road funds. The fact that the federal Government will receive each year an additional **\$250** million from New South Wales motorists, who will pay the increased crude oil levy, lends further strength to our case for additional federal payments for roads.

Four years ago the federal Government financed **45** per cent of the State Government's road expenditure. Now it provides only **36** per cent of the funds. Although the federal Government is the chief recipient of petrol taxes levied on New South Wales motorists, that Government is not returning to them an equitable share. An ever-increasing percentage of funds derived from the motoring public of Australia is paid into general revenue instead of being allocated to the States so that they may carry out the road improvements that are so badly needed. In this context again I congratulate the Treasurer on being able to allocate such a substantially bigger amount for road works. It demonstrates the high priority that the Government attaches to improving our main roads system.

I wish to refer particularly to the specific allocations for roads in the western suburbs of Sydney. The Parramatta bypass road between Pennant Hills Road and Windsor Road is a much needed extension of the Parramatta bypass system. In my local government capacity I recall the opening some twelve years ago of the bridge over the Parramatta River at Aston Street. In the following ten years when the former Government was in office approximately one mile only of that bypass road was constructed. In the two years that this Government has been in office that road has been more than doubled in length and its effective use made possible. Last November I had the pleasure of switching on the traffic lights at Pennant Hills Road to mark the extension of the bypass road from Aston Street, Rosehill, through to Pennant Hills Road. Provision has been made for its further extension to the Windsor Road. The former Government had not planned to complete the work until **1982**.

More important, the next stage of the project, the North Parramatta bypass road from Windsor Road to the Old Windsor Road will be constructed. The former Government made no provision for that work to be carried out in the foreseeable future. When one inquired of the Department of Main Roads and former Ministers for Highways one was always told that that project was in the never-never; they did not know when it would be completed. Although it is a relatively short section of country road, it is most important as it provides better access to Parramatta, and indeed to Sydney, from the already large and still developing suburbs to the north and northwest of Parramatta. I welcome the fact that the Treasurer has allocated sufficient funds for this project and has raised its priority dramatically. I note also that funds will be made available for the construction of the western freeway between Concord and Granville and between Parramatta and May's Hill. Although these sections of freeway have been under construction during the past decade or more, little work has been carried out on them.

A few bridges were built at various points along the route of the freeway but no roads were built to link them up. When driving down Parramatta Road one could see on the left the bridges that have been built from time to time across Silverwater Road and at other locations, but no roads led to them. A few months ago the Leader of the Opposition and some of his party received some publicity on a television news programme. They were shown in a helicopter flying over the route of the roadway and

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criticizing the Government for not completing this work. They inferred that the former Government was on the verge of doing so. Nothing could be further from the truth. The bridges have been completed for many years but no substantial plant or equipment has since been put to work there. Only minimum maintenance was carried out.

It is pleasing to learn that the Government has resolved to carry out the construction of the section of western freeway between Concord and Granville and between Parramatta and May's Hill. The former Government had that work on the never-never plan also. People whose properties were affected or were renting properties that had been acquired by the Department of Main Roads were told that they would not be required to vacate those properties in the foreseeable future. The department did not have any specific intention of constructing the road. This work was always said to be programmed for at least five years hence. I applaud the fact that that section of the western freeway is to be constructed. It is regrettable that the area between Granville and Church Street, Parramatta, is not included. I realize that the reason is that little progress has been made on the acquisition of properties for that section of the western freeway. It is a vital link. Though it is only three-quarters of a mile long it is right in the middle of the western freeway and that freeway will not function efficiently until that essential link has been completed. Obviously it will take a considerable time to acquire those properties and to carry out the work.

The widening of the Great Western Highway to four lanes between St Mary's and Kingswood is included in the major works to be undertaken. I welcome that proposal for it will give convenient access to the major shopping centre at Parramatta. I welcome also the proposal to reconstruct Windsor Road to four lanes between Baulkham Hills and Kellyville. When completed it too will improve access to Parramatta and the surrounding areas. The extension of Silverwater Road to Stewart Street, Eastwood, will prove of great benefit in dissipating the traffic that at present often goes through Parramatta because of the inadequate road system around the outskirts of the city. The upgrading of major secondary roads to provide a continuous link between Liverpool and Parramatta is welcome as that will also improve access to Parramatta.

The attention given to the western suburbs, to which I have referred, particularly in the allocation I have mentioned, is in striking contrast with the policy followed by the former Government. Little expenditure was seen in the western suburbs in a period of more than a decade. My experience in Parramatta is quite explicit in that regard. Plenty of promises were made but little expenditure followed. I am pleased to say that the trend has now been reversed. That has not been done to the absolute exclusion of other areas because substantial improvements for other areas are included in the figures. Considerable expenditure will be made in the southern and southwestern suburbs of Sydney, in the eastern suburbs, in the northern suburbs and also in the Newcastle and Wollongong areas. Substantial expenditure will be made in the country areas of the State. In fact a well-balanced and carefully thought out programme has been brought down for the improvement of the main roads throughout New South Wales. I congratulate the Treasurer and the Minister who was responsible for designing the plan of expenditure.

I welcome the fact that additional capital is to be spent on improving rolling stock and the railways. The former Government sadly neglected railway lines in the western part of the metropolitan area. As members know, the tracks became unsafe. Trains were also allowed to deteriorate to a deplorable degree. It is interesting to note that an additional 96 double-deck suburban carriages are to be purchased, to bring to 216 the number of new carriages introduced since July 1976. That will be greatly appreciated by railway commuters. So will the fact that the track is to be upgraded. An amount of \$35 million has been allocated for that purpose.

Quadruplication of suburban lines will be continued between Strathfield and Epping and between Seven Hills and St Mary's. That is an essential part of improving the timetables of the western line. At this stage funds have not been included for quadruplication of the lines between Granville and Parramatta. I realize that that work will be on a future work programme and I hope that next year funds will be provided for a start on it. I hope that within the next five years the programme will be completed, as the Minister has promised.

I welcome the fact that expenditure is to be maintained on the Westmead hospital. The provision of \$48 million for this major health facility located in my electorate is probably the major single item of expenditure in the Loan Estimates. The health programme for the western suburbs was sadly neglected by the former Government, as it was in many other areas. What is officially known as the Parramatta hospitals—the Westmead centre—was started only as a consequence of the determination of the Whitlam Government to have a start made on the project. Despite the fact that supposedly it had been planned for more than six years the State Government claimed that it was not able to make a start on it. In 1972 the Whitlam Government allocated \$4 million for the Westmead scheme but the New South Wales Government was unable to take up that allocation.

The Hon. E. G. Whitlam said that if the New South Wales Liberal—Country party Government was not willing to go ahead with the construction of the hospital he would take over this project. That threat induced the former State Government to start work on the hospital. Had there not been a change of government in this State, as a consequence of the change in the federal Government and funds no longer being directed to specific purposes, a scaling down would have occurred in the work programme for the Westmead hospital. I am delighted that the Government has maintained work at Westmead and has increased the rate of expenditure on the hospital. At present it is allocating almost \$1 million a week for this work. Westmead hospital is scheduled to open early in November and I am sure that all honourable members would be delighted to be present when the Premier officially opens it. The fact that the Government has allocated a substantial sum for the provision of health facilities in my area is an indication of the concern that members of the Australian Labor Party, in federal and State spheres, hold for people in the outer western suburbs of Sydney.

I have already dealt with comments made by the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai about the proposed prison at Parklea and I reiterate that pressure would now be taken off Parramatta gaol resulting from the decision of the previous Government to expand that prison. I welcome the fact that substantial funds are being provided for improvements to Parramatta gaol. That work will add to the security of that institution. The Minister for Services and Minister Assisting the Premier advised me some time ago that consideration was being given to this work. I am pleased that funds are being provided for the construction of a new gateway and reception area at Parramatta gaol. These improvements will facilitate the transport of prisoners to and from the gaol and will assist people who wish to visit prisoners there. I understand that the new gateway will be built at the western perimeter of the gaol. The present entrance is at the eastern side of the gaol, on a secondary road. The result is that a certain amount of congestion is caused to traffic using that road. The new gateway, to be constructed at the back of the gaol, will be much more convenient and will result in greater security when prisoners are being transported to and from the gaol.

I welcome the provision of \$23 million for capital works concerned with state forests. During the past couple of years, I have taken the opportunity of inspecting a number of these forests. I take this opportunity of congratulating the Forestry

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Commission on the excellent work it is doing in the management of state forests, both from the commercial point of view and in attracting tourists. Our forest resources have been neglected for many years. The former Government and governments before it were guilty of neglecting the forests of this State. It is pleasing to note that this Government has taken action to help rectify the present deficiencies.

I congratulate the Treasurer on providing funds for the growth centres at **Albury-Wodonga** and Bathurst-Orange. The Liberal-Country parties have always paid lip service to the principle of decentralization. They are terrified that the development of rural centres might weaken their already tenuous hold on some country electorates. The federal Government has adopted the same reasoning. This year it provided only \$5 million for the Albury-Wodonga growth centre, the same sum as it provided last year and a smaller sum than it provided in each of the previous two years. This year, the New South Wales Government, through the Department of Decentralisation and Development and various instrumentalities, will spend \$22 million in the Albury-Wodonga growth centre area. This year the Bathurst-Orange growth centre will receive nothing from the federal Government. Last year it received only \$1.5 million from that source. Contrast that with this Government's expenditure of \$13.5 million on the Bathurst-Orange growth centre. That demonstrates the Government's commitment to the rural **sector**.

Mr FREUDENSTEIN (Young) [4.34]: The debate on the Loan Estimates is far more important than the debate on the Budget. The Budget merely reflects the growth in the public service and the day-to-day running of the public services. This year we can expect to see a massive growth in the State public service. Hence, we will see a continuing drag on the taxpayers of this State. Alternatively, services will be run far less efficiently than one would expect. The Loan Estimates set a pattern of spending on capital works throughout the State. I am concerned at the way the Loan Estimates have been rushed into the House and the lack of opportunity honourable members have had of examining them. One wonders what the Government has to hide.

I cannot help but reflect on the Khemlani affair. Already we have seen signs of the Attorney-General, the Premier and the Treasurer acting like Mr Whitlam, Mr Connor and others at the time of the Khemlani affair. Honourable members are being given a short time to debate the proposed expenditure of about \$2,000 million—a similar figure to the sum sought by Mr Connor and others at the time of the Khemlani affair. Honourable members are debating the expenditure of money that will eventually have to be repaid over the next thirty years or more. This money must have an influence on the State's Budget for many years into the future. Money will also be taken away from the normal funds that are available to the Treasury for use in the running of this State for many years in the future.

Honourable members should be given more time to consider the proposed expenditure. They should certainly be given more time to assess the changes in the Government's attitude, where the growth in capital works will occur and which way the Government is going. This year there is to be an increase of 8.5 per cent in the capital works programme. For the first time in our history the Government's expenditure will reach the \$2,000 million mark. The Treasurer has referred to this as a small increase. Again, shades of Connor and Whitlam, and the spend-spend syndrome, never thinking of the time when the money will have to be repaid. The increase in the sum to be spent on public works is large. However, I am concerned—and **all** other members of the Country Party are concerned—about how this money will be **spent**.

At a time when most Australians hope for a return to some stability in the Australian economy, the Government has committed the State to huge spending. Loans have to be serviced and ultimately repaid. Australia is expected to have a nil growth in population. We should ask ourselves, if we are to spend the massive sums that the Treasurer seems to wish us to spend in the future, who is to repay that money? The Treasurer speaks, with sorrow and gloom, about a mere 8.5 per cent increase in expenditure. We should be thankful that the increase was not greater. Page 4 of the Treasurer's Loan Speech contains an ambiguous statement. It states that this year funds made available to this State by the federal Government are only \$2 million more than last year. Following the tradition of the Fraser Government, we are getting away from the tied loans system by which the federal Government dictates the way the money will be spent.

The Treasurer then detailed a list indicating where cuts had been made. The fact is that increases of a major nature were made. Further, greater licence has been given to the States in the way in which they might be expended. They are not cuts but approvals for States to raise their own funds for expenditure on capital works, without being dictated to by the Government in Canberra. That part of the Treasurer's speech was completely misleading. Indeed, it was not factual.

It is significant that less emphasis is placed upon education, hospital construction and housing. With my humble knowledge of finance matters, I contend that these are not areas in which cuts should be made at this time. I have always regarded the building industry as the barometer of employment. If the Government were to concentrate on giving a boost to the building industry, employment would automatically receive a boost. Unfortunately, the building industry has slumped to an extremely low level. The situation in the building industry is a vital factor in the unemployment problem. Major increases are to be made in allocations to roads, transport and prisons.

I have no quibble at all about expenditure on roads. Roads are by far the most pressing of problems in country areas of New South Wales. Any increase in funds for roads gives something back to the poor old tax-ridden motorist. The New South Wales Government has increased charges on motorists by way of regulation. Over the past few years charges that motorists have had to meet have risen astronomically. Increased allocations to roadworks give the motorist some little measure of return for what he is required to pay out. It costs the average country motorist \$4,000 a year to keep a car on the road. Approximately \$1,000 of that goes to the Government in taxes and to insurance companies. It is, therefore, timely that this increase is announced.

One of the most staggering features of the Treasurer's speech was that the major part of the expenditure on roads is to be directed to metropolitan areas of Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong. The Treasurer referred specifically to the western suburbs of Sydney, the southern and south-western suburbs of Sydney, the eastern suburbs of Sydney and the northern suburbs of Sydney. He referred also to work to be done in the Newcastle area and the Wollongong area. He included a little bit in his speech about country areas but when one studies what he said one learns that he was referring only to some little bridges on the Castlereagh Highway and the Sturt Highway, at a cost of probably between \$350,000 and \$400,000.

Heavy expenditure will be involved in acquiring land for developing metropolitan roads but only minor works are to be carried out in country areas. The bulk of the expenditure is reckoned not in terms of miles but rather in terms of dollars and cents spent on acquisitions. Money is being taken from country motorists and

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poured into road development in the metropolitan areas. Once again, country people have been given a raw deal. From the Treasurer's speech many people would have thought that the New South Wales Government was finding an extra \$167 million. That is not so.

The real position is that of the total \$465 million available to the Department of Main Roads the motorists, through motor vehicle taxation and road maintenance charges, will provide \$220 million or just on half. The federal Government will provide \$167 million. The State Government will have to find only a piddling \$40 million. Despite this we have heard great play about the Treasurer being able to lift the expenditure on main roads to \$465 million, \$64 million more than last year and representing an increase of 16 per cent. In fact, the Treasurer has taken money out of the motorists' pockets and put it with the allocation from the federal Government to make up the major part of the allocation. The New South Wales Government has contributed only a miserable \$40 million. That \$40 million does not compare favourably with the motorists' contribution of \$220 million. The Treasurer should hang his head in shame.

The Government intends to weigh in \$207 million for the Public Transport Commission. It is intended to purchase ninety-six new double-deck suburban train carriages. That is sending good money after bad money. Each of those ninety-six new double-deck suburban train carriages will cost the New South Wales taxpayers about \$1 million a year just to keep them running. Is that good economy? I notice with pleasure that an additional 118 new coal waggons are to be purchased. Regrettably, no new wheat waggons are to be purchased. I hope that later this year we shall see a tremendous wheat harvest. If so, there could be an acute shortage of wheat waggons.

The Government placed particular emphasis on prisons. Had the Premier **not** shot from the hip and closed Katingal gaol he would not have to spend \$6 million on a new prison complex. The Government could have put into effect plans that the coalition parties had already approved to construct a maximum security prison at Silverwater. This would not have upset the people of Parklea. Additionally, prisoners would be confined and would not be running round the countryside willy-nilly as they are under the administration of the Minister for Services and Minister Assisting the Premier.

I do not quibble at the fact that the emphasis has been taken off education. Earlier I indicated that there had been a significant falling off in the birthrate. New schools should be built only where they are required in new areas. I am particularly concerned that proper thought should be given to the location of new schools. Greater effort must be made towards establishing new schools in country areas. The Treasurer's speech does not reveal that country areas will get a fair share of new schools.

The Treasurer's Loan Speech was concerned with the bricks and mortar of the education system, and although my electorate will share in that, I am more interested in the quality of education. More attention should be paid to improving the quality of teacher training with a view to improving the education available to our children. Education must undergo a broad-based revival. The community is entitled to more than it is receiving from the education system, and the revival must be based on a return to the essential principles in all education, namely, the development of children's ability to interpret, to express themselves both in writing and orally, and to reason. I do not like the expression the three R's, but it conveys the sort of thing I have in mind. Above all, let us go back to teaching children moral, ethical responsibility, and the adoption of simple behaviour patterns.

The impetus for reform can come only from a government direction to educationists through the adoption of broad-based education measures. I suggest that they should be, first, the restoration of a basic core of subjects in **primary schools**; second, the widening of that core and concentration on it in the junior high school classes; third, reintroduction of the school certificate, with a major section of it depending on an external examination; fourth, greater concentration on career advising and career orientation courses in classes up to school **certificate** level; fifth, greater emphasis on technical education at tertiary level, with more subsidies, more assistance to individual students, and more travelling allowances for country students; and sixth, **a** marked lift in *per* capita grants to non-government schools.

The Treasurer may take pride in his allocations to rural areas, but I cannot see why he should do so. Much was written in the press this morning about the 11 per cent increase in the allocation for the Grain Elevators Board, which has been given \$15 million this financial year. One would be led to think that the Treasurer himself had gone out and earned the money that he is giving the **wheat**-farmers of New South Wales to enable them to build grain storages. That is not so. Every cent of thg \$15 million will be paid back by the sweat of the brow of the wheatgrowers, and the provision made in the Loan Estimates will cost them **one**-quarter of the value of their crops in freight and storage charges. It is time the Treasurer came out from behind this great I-give-you screen of his.

If the Treasurer wishes to give the wheatgrowers of New South Wales some assistance, he should wipe off part of the debt of the Grain Elevators Board. I believe that should be done in the interests of the wheatgrowers. Instead, the Government has increased freight charges. Freights have gone up 16 per cent since the **Labor** Party came to office, and they will probably go higher. If the Treasurer reduced the debt of the Grain Elevators Board, the Government could lower the freight that has to be paid to bring wheat to Sydney where it is made into flour to go into the bellies of the hungry, unfortunate people of the metropolitan areas.

I am pleased to note that the Government is continuing a programme that I began when I was Minister for Energy following an investigation of a ten-year scheme to meet the needs of this State in power generation. The Government is obviously following my programme faithfully. I am pleased that the allocation to the Electricity Commission is \$211 million, which is an increase of 24 per cent over last year. However, \$70 million of that \$211 million will come out of the pockets of the electricity consumers. They are lucky in that respect: the Treasurer took back from them \$98 million last year. In two years the consumers of electricity in this State will have paid for a power house that will last for thirty years. Is that good business? An economic project like a power generation unit with a life of about thirty years should be paid for over, say, twenty years, and the consumers of electricity should not be called on suddenly to find a massive \$70 million in one year and \$90 million in the following year. The Loan Estimates show that the revenue will come from electricity sales. Therefore, the consumer has to put his hand in his pocket. The sum of \$81 million will be found in accordance with the commission's established financing policy. The commission's established financing policy involves going to a lending institution or a bank and saying, "Give us \$81 million. The consumer will pay it **back**". **So**, the poor old consumer will be paying out \$151 million. The fact is that the Treasurer has not found any money for electricity generation; he is just making a fuss to attract the attention of the press. An amount of **\$92** million will be spent at **Eraring** power station.

That is a pretty gloomy picture, but even then I find that some of the money is not accounted for. The Treasurer says that \$81 million is to be found by the commission through its established borrowing practice and **\$70** million is to be found

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from revenue. That is \$151 million, but the allocation is \$211 million. One must go to the appendices to the Loan Speech to find out how much of that will come from State funds. The answer is that nothing will come from that source. Where is the money to come from? I believe that the programme is quite good, but we should not think the consumer is not paying for it. He is.

The lousy Treasurer—they call him the country Treasurer—has refused the county councils in rural areas assistance to the extent of about \$2 million in meeting claims for fire damage. The South-west Slopes County Council and the county councils in the Macquarie and Central West districts had fires last year, and judgments are still being given in favour of persons whose properties were damaged in those fires. One judgment will involve the South-west County Council in a payment of \$1.6 million, and that will necessitate an increase in power costs of 7 per cent, or the imposition of a levy of \$250 on each consumer connection. Insufficient insurance, true, but no company would carry the required insurance risk to that extent.

The Treasurer should use the bulk-rate charge provisions to enable that money to be paid to the county councils to relieve each consumer of the obligation to pay \$250. The Treasurer, with his usual disregard of country people, is repeating the pattern that he showed when he was last in government by tearing massive sums from the expenditure programmes for rural areas and redirecting them to the metropolitan areas. No wonder the city press thinks the Treasurer is magnificent. He looks after city people very well indeed and makes a pretence of looking after his country electorate by visiting it occasionally and putting forward ideas without backing them with funds.

At this stage I cannot ignore the coal industry, in view of the paltry reference on page 24 of the Treasurer's speech to that great industry and the completion of the coal loader at Port Kembla. I say without fear of contradiction that, despite the dead hand of **Labor** over the past two and a half years, the potential, the resources and the spirit of the great coal industry could swiftly revive the economic future of this State. It is a real tragedy that this industry, with its great potential, is being held down by the Minister for Planning and Environment and raped in turn by the Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Mines and Minister for Energy, the Treasurer and the Premier. Let me draw attention to the three disastrous areas of operation and the lack of action by the Government on mining.

Paramount, of course, is the failure of the Government to rationalize the coal loading and transport system, and then there is the surcharge of \$10 a tonne imposed on the western and southern coal producers to ship their coal from Newcastle. Let me tell the people of Lithgow that their local member will go on proving to be the most costly investment that they have made. He will prove much more expensive when they find out the full cost—when they lose valuable **oversea** contracts for coal because Queensland will grab them, as that State can produce coal much more cheaply. The loading of coal from the western and southern coalfields costs \$1.10 a tonne more because the Government made a mistake. It purposely refused to go ahead with planning to complete the coal loader, and the people of this State, who always have to pay for mistakes by governments, will continue to pay for a long time because of this tardiness in the development of coal-loading facilities and the upgrading of transport facilities. In addition, the coal industry has suffered another blow: **\$23,000** million worth of coal has been frozen in the southern coalfields.

Mr Petersen: That is not true and you know it.

Mr FREUDENSTEIN: You have let down the miners in your electorate who have been coming to us for assistance.

Mr Petersen: The miners in my electorate support this.

Mr FREUDENSTEIN: It is rather strange that those whom the honourable member for Illawarra is traditionally supposed to help have been so badly let down. It is an indictment of the Government and must prove to be the greatest detractor for investors in the coal industry in this State that the mining industry, which provides millions of dollars of State funds and employment for thousands, is dismissed in the Treasurer's speech in a mere sentence relating to a coal loader at Port Kembla.

This whole document points up the failure by the Government to recognize the major role to be played by private enterprise, particularly the coalmining industry. It has been given no encouragement and has been knocked from pillar to post. The Government's sorry record is a pulling away from the free enterprise system of contracts and contractors to do work in the public field and a tremendous growth in the day labour force of the Department of Public Works. There is no slower way to do a job than to have the day labour force of the department do it,

I wish that I had time to analyse this document fully. As I said earlier, the speed with which the Attorney-General and others brought it forward for debate in the House indicates to me that somewhere in it is a Khemlani, and that over on the Government side are the Connors and Whitlams.

Mr MAHER (Drummoyne) [5.4]: I am delighted to have an opportunity to comment on the Treasurer's Loan Speech delivered in the House last night. First, with other speakers, I congratulate him on a marvellous speech in such difficult times. I am aware that since World War II the federal Government has held the economic reins of this country and that, despite nearly half a million people being out of work, it is pursuing a policy of cutting back on public works. It is exactly the same type of policy that was pursued during the great depression, which caused such lasting damage throughout this nation, as I am sure all honourable members are seeing again today.

The Treasurer has stated that capital expenditure in the State is to rise by 8½ per cent. It is a great credit to him that he has been able to present a loans speech that maintains expenditure on capital works at nearly the inflation rate. The Treasurer has detailed some of the really tragic areas where the federal Government has cut spending, particularly for specific purposes. The first item he mentioned was the \$24 million cut in welfare housing. It is an absolute tragedy that the federal Government, which talks about upholding the family, helping the poor, the unemployed and the low income earner, should cut the funds for capital works for welfare housing. Every honourable member must constantly see constituents who are desperately in need of welfare housing, such as Housing Commission accommodation, and aged persons' accommodation, and every honourable member must be touched by the problems of these people—the deserted wives, elderly people and, perhaps, married couples who have been able to pay rent but now as pensioners find themselves unable to pay rent and must leave their homes. They all have to be housed by some sort of State or church instrumentality. Yet the federal Government, which knows of the long waiting lists for Housing Commission and welfare accommodation, cuts the grant for welfare housing for this State by \$24 million.

The Treasurer highlighted the fact that the federal Government has abolished the hospital building grant and cut by more than half community health grants. This also is a tragedy. This programme of community health facilities that we see around us in marvellous centres such as the Ella community centre in my own electorate, may have to be closed down because of the cuts in funding. The federal Government has struck at the pre-school kindergarten system, the funds for which have been cut by half. This has occurred at a time when the areas that were not so vocal were starting to be given pre-school kindergartens. The initial funding went to those areas

where the people were more organized, where there were more vocal elements in the community who made submissions and were able to get pre-school kindergartens. Now the areas that missed out in the first rush of funding have been coming forward, and departments such as the Department of Youth and Community Services were identifying these areas of great need—migrant areas and others. They were in the process of applying for and obtaining these facilities; but now the cut has come in these areas of greatest need, where children arrive at school unable to speak English. These are the areas that will lose out because of the federal cuts in pre-school kindergarten funding.

The other matter on which I want to speak is the 33 per cent cut in the school dental scheme. It is well known how little aid there is for children in our electorates under the school dental scheme. Two and a half years ago, under the previous Government, I asked the Minister by way of a question upon notice when the school dental service had visited primary schools at Concord and Mortlake in my electorate. To the shame of the previous Government, the answer was that it had never visited these two schools. That was over a period of eleven years. In both of these areas a number of the children are from low income families and there is a high percentage of migrant families sending children to the schools. Yet the school dental service had never come to that area over that period. The low income families have to make do with the services offered at the Dental Hospital, which are very worth while but some distance away.

The school dental system is vital, because people are under the misapprehension, now that fluoride is being added to the drinking water, that the teeth of their children are in good condition. This is not so. I am told that many children do not drink water; they drink everything else but water. So dentists are finding that the teeth of children are not improving as much as was hoped. It is tragic that the federal Government, ensconced in Canberra, can decide to cut the school dental scheme by a third at a time when the need for it is becoming greater, when children are staying at school longer and a greater proportion of children in the community are receiving education in the schools and pre-schools.

The first part of the Treasurer's speech dealt with the construction of the western freeway, which everyone knows now ends at Concord and will be slotted into the Parramatta Road at that point. The Treasurer, the Government and the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways are to be congratulated on this freeway coming from Parramatta, certainly from Granville at this stage, and avoiding the busy sections of Parramatta Road before uniting with it at Concord. This is where the expressway was always to end. Under the previous Government the Department of Main Roads would not buy a cottage or property in the path of the western freeway in my electorate. I am sure other honourable members also had this experience. No matter how extenuating the circumstances, the department at the direction of the government of the day would not purchase any properties. Although the route of the now abandoned expressway through Concord East, Canada Bay, Five Dock and Haberfield threatened hundreds of homes, barely fifty or sixty were owned by the Department of Main Roads. No matter how I pleaded with the department, not one property in that area was purchased. That is where the expressway was to end. In the Treasurer's Loan Speech we see that he has authorized funding to go ahead and complete that part of the expressway from Concord to Granville.

We read in publications of the National Roads and Motorists' Association that that organization is pressing for the expressways to be built. It is anxious to have these suburbs cut in two and whole communities divided, without any regard for the local people, without any regard for the amount of fossil fuel that is available. That organization is totally unrepresentative of the motoring public because only a minute

fraction of its membership votes in its elections. It proposes that whole suburbs be cut in two and that the Government of the day should press ahead with this programme that was really abandoned many years ago. Although honourable members opposite talk about what they would do about freeways, they know that when in government their policy was to end the western freeway at Concord and bring it on to Parramatta Road there. They know also that when they were in office the Department of Main Roads would not buy any properties or make any plans to proceed east beyond Concord.

The other part of the public transport segment of the Treasurer's speech that really appealed to me was the notation that the Government proposes to purchase two additional ferries for the Sydney inner harbour fleet. This is very good news for honourable members who represent electorates adjoining Sydney Harbour and the Parramatta River. The previous Government talked loud and long about what it would do for ferries. It commissioned reports and brought out reports. It had tours on ferries up and down the harbour, but nothing was done. When the previous Government ran a trial with a ferry service from Abbotsford Point to Circular Quay the whole programme failed, mainly because of the use of old ferries which broke down. People waiting on the wharves would suddenly find that no ferry was coming. There was no adequate replacement when a ferry broke down. Passengers and potential passengers soon dwindled away. The service was not promoted. No timetable details were displayed at Abbotsford or Circular Quay. Patrons using the ferries complained that when they handed over their money they were not even given a ticket. At Circular Quay a blackboard carried the written message "Ferry cancelled" or "Ferry running". This was the attitude of the previous Government, but now we have a government that is pledged to improve the ferry services.

The Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways was recently in my electorate at a public seminar on public transport that I convened. He saw the enthusiasm of the residents of Drummoyne. Over 200 of them turned up at the seminar. The Minister saw their enthusiasm for a ferry service from Drummoyne, Abbotsford, Chiswick, Mortlake and Cabarita. These people want ferries to take them to the city to go to work and to come home again on the natural highway that we have through our great city, stretching from the harbour heads to Parramatta. As I have said, fossil fuels will eventually run out and we will be obliged to travel on the harbour, the original highway running through the city.

I hope the two ferries to be provided will be used to provide a regular and viable service to places such as Abbotsford. All the suburbs in my electorate and all other electorates round the harbour are being redeveloped. We are witnessing a large increase in population, particularly in areas on the harbour foreshores. These are choice areas where people want to live in home units with a harbour view. Many who have moved to these areas are without cars. They include widows, young married couples, spinsters and retired people. Regular ferry services would be extremely popular in many of these areas. The previous Government allowed ferry services on the upper harbour and Parramatta River to fade away and totally deteriorate. I congratulate the Treasurer on this proposal to purchase two more ferries. I trust that they will have a shallow draught so that they can call at places in Hen and Chicken Bay and other locations in that part of the Parramatta River. I believe ferry services in this city will grow if they are properly promoted and maintained.

In the Loan Speech the point is made that an additional 215 modern buses are being purchased for the Public Transport Commission's fleet. When Labor came to government in this State 550 of the commission's buses were more than twenty-five years old. This is why the bus service in this city has been appalling until now. This Government has caused the injection of 415 new buses into the public transport fleet. Any bus that is twenty-five years old should have been pensioned off years

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ago. The main complaints are that services are cancelled, buses break down and buses are so old that they jump along so that passengers are thrown out of their seats. It is a tribute to the mechanics and engineers in the depots that they are able to keep the buses on the road.

The previous Government let the bus fleet run down. It ignored the needs of public transport. It had the quaint idea that urban expressways can be constructed through crowded cities with large populations, such as Sydney, and at the same time the city can have a viable public transport system. The previous Government failed on both counts. It did not try to push either policy; it did not build expressways and it did not maintain the public transport system. It cut out weekend bus services and even eliminated bus stops. It cut out ferry services and let the trains run down. The former Government brought public transport to a sorry state. Patronage was falling off. It was on this very issue that it was thrown out of government. To the credit of the present enlightened Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways, the State will soon have over 400 new buses in service.

The sorriest part of the Treasurer's Loan Speech is the segment dealing with capital works for the Health Commission, and the federal Government's tragic record of funding community health services. There is to be no expansion. It is the same in respect of kindergartens. They are now in areas where people are articulate and have formed pressure groups and groups of activists. These were the areas that jumped in, or perhaps they were just areas where someone had a good idea. Now these facilities are needed in areas where people are of ethnic origin or are poor and lack local community aid services. These are the areas that are hoping to get something, but many of them will now suffer because of the federal Government's cutback.

I have mentioned the school dental scheme. The Government is allocating \$2.3 million to the scheme. One would hope that this will improve the service. That money is for capital works and it is unlikely to represent more than a few dental clinics in scattered areas. What are children of large families or families with a low income and children of the unemployed to do about dental care? Some people are covered by one of the insurance schemes that cover dental expenses, but most families will go without adequate dental attention. It is a tragedy today that in a wealthy community and a rich country many children—the children of the poor—go without adequate dental care. It is a tragedy that we shall never forget. It absolutely condemns the federal Government and its attitude towards the needs of the community. This House deplores it.

In education the Government has maintained an heroic stand in relation to capital works. It has allocated money for eleven new primary schools and two secondary schools, as well as for alterations and additions to primary and secondary schools. Money has been allocated for technical colleges at Granville and in other parts of New South Wales. Honourable members know the state that the previous Government allowed technical education to get into and the dilapidated condition of Sydney Technical College. They are aware of the condition of the west Sydney college near my own electorate. These colleges should be upgraded so that they can be used to retrain people who are out of work and help in vocational and pre-apprenticeship training. Tens of thousands of young people who are leaving our schools are worrying whether they will get a job or an apprenticeship. The Government should be congratulated for keeping up the funding of technical colleges.

The other area that I want to touch on is housing. The sum of \$104 million has been allocated by the federal Government for welfare housing this financial year. That is \$24 million less than last year. In real terms, this is a cut in welfare housing of about 20 per cent. This shows more clearly than anything else what I have said this afternoon about the total lack of compassion of the federal Government—for the poor, the family and the aged. I am thankful that in my area a small Housing Commission project has just been completed, for I am sure that although many of my subdivisions have no Housing Commission accommodation there is little hope now that anyone in need of it will be able to obtain suitable accommodation near where he lives. This will drive the Housing Commission out to the cheapest land on the fringe of the city.

People who require welfare housing—perhaps old people who have lived in an inner city suburb, who are involved in local organizations, local churches, and have a local doctor—will have to be rehoused in suburbs on the fringe of the metropolitan area, where they will know no one. When this happens, their lives are uprooted and all of their connections are broken. This is a tragedy. With its reduced budget the Housing Commission will have to respond in some way. It cannot try to rehouse aged people in accommodation near where they have always lived. It was supposed to be one of the canons of the commission that if a person grew up and lived in a certain area, he should not be moved from that area and rehoused somewhere else. It is impossible for old people, for example, to establish new connections and to make new friends if they are rehoused in a suburb a long way from the home in which they have lived all their lives.

As honourable members are aware, some people have been allocated Housing Commission accommodation in a suburb that they have never heard of. One lady said to me, “**Where** is Bass Hill?” She had never heard of it. All her life she had lived in Haberfield, where all her friends lived. She was allocated a commission unit in Bass Hill. Thank God, she is happy and well represented there by a very good member of this Parliament. I have seen her several times with her children, who live in Haberfield. Some people are allocated to suburbs a long way from **Campbell-**town, let alone from Sydney. They do not know where they are going and they are most distressed. They are distressed also if they are sent into the tower blocks of Waterloo, although there is a good local member there, too. People should be allocated accommodation near the area in which they have always resided. Unfortunately, the reduction in the allocation to the Housing Commission will induce the commission to spread its funds as thinly as it can and there will be a proliferation of aged persons' dwellings in areas where they can be constructed cheaply on the fringe of the city. That is a total waste of funds as well as a tragedy.

Moving through the Treasurer's speech one comes to public works allocations. I do not wish to deal with this subject at any length. I congratulate the Department of Public Works on the marvellous job that it has done on properties such as Richmond Villa, Elizabeth Bay House and the Old Mint building. The department is demonstrating great expertise in its work. I wanted to refer to the Planning and Environment Commission's allocation of capital works. A sum of \$1 million, which is to be raised by borrowings, has been allocated to the heritage conservation fund for acquisition and preservation of historic buildings and sites. This allocation is the first following the passing of the Heritage Act, which was the work of this Government. The Minister, I am sure, will be delighted that he now has \$1 million to spend on preserving historic buildings and sites, and even some ancient Aboriginal sites throughout the State that comprise our heritage. I know that he has received applications from people in many electorates seeking funds for restoration work and the preservation of such buildings.

Mr Maher]

It is beyond the resources of many private owners, schools, institutions and nursing homes to restore, preserve or repaint buildings. The cost of first-class work is prohibitive and beyond many charities. I know that the funds allocated will be used by the Minister for Planning and Environment, through his department, to preserve the buildings that are worthy of preservation. I noted with pleasure also the amount allocated to the Minister for acquiring sites for parks close to the city. I congratulate him on the work he has done, in co-operation with local government, in acquiring harbourside sites at Chiswick, which is in my electorate. I know of the work done by the mayor of Drummoyne, Alderman John Murray, and the town clerk, Ron Blackadder, in negotiating with the Minister and his department to acquire part of the Parkes Development property at Chiswick. Similar acquisitions were made of waterfront areas in Balmain and other places round the harbour. The State should assist with the purchase of these harbourside sites because small local government areas should not be burdened with the cost of acquiring harbourside recreation areas that will benefit the whole of Sydney.

In 1976, shortly after the Government came to office, the council at Concord showed Mortlake Point to the Minister for Planning and Environment and to me. This is a small area of land jutting out into the Parramatta River. The Minister asked the council why, if it was a problem, it should not buy it. That council issues barely 8 000 assessments each year. It is impossible for local government bodies of that size to buy the areas that are so essential to the State for use as recreation areas. Harbourside land should be purchased and retained for the future. The Minister for Planning and Environment, through the Planning and Environment Commission, is pursuing a most enlightened policy of assisting local government from the allocation made to him. I know that sometimes that commission is contributing \$3 or \$4 for every \$1 raised by a local government body so that it may purchase parklands along the harbour foreshores.

I congratulate the Minister on what he has done in my electorate. I emphasise that he must continue his policies. In many suburbs, such as Drummoyne and Abbotsford, developers have moved in, made an enormous profit and private gain, but have not provided recreation areas. I refer particularly to the area east of Victoria Road, Drummoyne, where there are no such facilities, such as parks where mothers who live in highrise apartment blocks could take their children for a walk. The allocation of funds for capital works will enable the Planning and Environment Commission to establish parks in harbourside areas where there is a total dearth of this amenity. It is a policy of which the Government can be proud. The previous Government did not even think of it.

I made many representations to a former Minister of Lands to have the Sydney Harbour National Park extended up the Parramatta River. That Minister laughed at the idea, saying that the Sydney Harbour National Park had nothing to do with the Parramatta River. The plan was for that national park to provide recreation areas at Nielsen Park and other parts frequented by people living east of the harbour bridge, but with no facilities to be provided for the western end of Sydney harbour which has the greatest population, particularly of lower income earners. The former Minister for Lands could have purchased for \$200,000 a 2-acre site at the foot of Lyons Road, Drummoyne, for inclusion in the Sydney Harbour National Park. Although there are no facilities there, that Minister declined to purchase the land. I am certainly pursuing this matter with the Minister for Lands, and I know my representations will receive a far more sympathetic hearing than was given by the former Minister. The policy of the former Government was to ignore both the cities and the country areas. Their policy on environment, transport and housing led to them being thrown out of office by the citizens of New South Wales.

The only other matter I wish to touch on under the heading of planning and environment is the allocation of \$700,000 to the State Pollution Control Commission. I hope that much of this money will be used to overcome the problems in the Parramatta River valley caused by odours, offensive smells, and emissions from factories and unknown sources. These problems plague the area, and I trust that part of the allocated money will be used to overcome them. The State Pollution Control Commission has a mobile van that checks on the origin of offensive odours and smells. This testing equipment should be duplicated, or monitoring stations established to locate the source of offensive smells and foul odours. I conclude my remarks by again congratulating the Treasurer on bringing before the House a most outstanding loans programme in most difficult times.

Mr PICKARD (Hornsby) [5.34]: The Government has brought before the House a loans policy and programme without giving the House sufficient time to consider the allocation of \$2,000 million or to investigate and to weigh the various allocations against previous allocations. This is detrimental to the value and the role of Parliament as a watchdog. The whole Parliament should act as stewards of a government's activities, and unless both Houses of the Parliament have an opportunity to consider and investigate these matters thoroughly, it is impossible for the Parliament to discharge its responsibilities to the people of New South Wales.

I roundly condemn the Attorney-General for the cavalier fashion in which he stated why the House should proceed to consider these matters now. I roundly condemn him also for the manner in which he addressed the House and toyed with it during the course of his speech. He did nothing for his office, to enhance the standing of the Parliament or to enable it to discharge its right and proper functions. I note that the Treasurer said during the course of his Loan Speech that the Government has been unable to offset all the severe cuts in federal spending. He said also that there has been a steady improvement in community services. He might have said that there has been a steady improvement in only some community services, because I shall show that in education there has been no improvement.

An improvement in funding has occurred only if one takes how much the Government allocated last year and compares it with the amount given this year. But the allocation should be compared with the amount allocated in the last year in which the Liberal-Country party Government held office—and that was not so long ago. The honourable member for Monaro is mumbling away. He should listen and then try to stand up for his constituents and see that they get education buildings. He should do that instead of complying meekly with the dictates of his own Government and allowing it to put false statements abroad, while at the same time depriving people in his electorate at Cooma and other places of the school buildings they need. The honourable member mumbles something, but I am afraid that without an interpreter I would not know what he said.

A statement on page 5 of the Loan Speech declares, "Modest improvements are also planned in education." By what standard is the improvement measured? If one takes the allocations last year, one finds that it is probably the worst allocation to education in four or five years. In dollars one could say that an improvement has been made this year, but one would have to go back to the last year in office of the former Government and make a comparison with the total amount it spent on education. Never once has the Government allocated funds to the same degree that the former Government did in its last year in office. If one is talking about improvements, one has to state the standard of measurement. That is not done anywhere here. No improvement in education has been made in terms of the final budget of the former Government.

Another part of the Loan Speech declares, "We have allocated record amounts to capital works". That is an absolute lie. Certainly in education it is not a record amount; it is a measly amount. In fact, the Government has filched \$95 million compared with the last effort of the former Government. No record amount for capital works for the education building programme has been allocated. That is a damn and palpable lie and ought to be given short shrift. No real increase has been made in the level of capital expenditure on education. Again, that is a palpable lie, if one tries to make the statement hold true for every area of the Loan Estimates.

The Liberal—Country party Government in its 1975–76 loan allocations devoted \$205 million to education. That should be seen against a background of a reduction of more than \$20 million in capital funding from the federal Government in the budget of **Hayden** and **Whitlam** for school building programmes. Despite that, the former State Government raised its allocation to school buildings to a record high level of \$205 million. The record of the former Government in relation to the number of buildings and schools built should be viewed in the light of the fact that there **was** not only a cut-back of \$20 million by the **Hayden** budget but also the highest rate of **inflation** in the Commonwealth prevailed, as well as the highest interest levels for years and years. Against that background, record amounts of **money** were made available for education and technical and further education building programmes.

I draw attention to this statement made in the first few pages of the Loan Speech—"While allocating record amounts —"—I have questioned that—"to capital works coupled with a budget policy of holding and reducing State taxes." The only State tax that I know of that has been reduced is death duties. That was done only after a rather dubious practice was followed in the House of bringing forward a bill in two schedules, one of which was aimed at eliminating the possibility of an inheritance altogether. When the Government was given the opportunity to remove death duties, as had been done in one other State and that other States were about to do, it did not take the opportunity. I do not acknowledge that a real deduction in taxes has come about in all other fields. Increases have occurred in payroll tax, though apparently the mumbler from Monaro does not read the budget papers.

Mr Hills: On a point of order. I draw attention to the fact that the honourable member for Hornsby is not speaking about the Loan Estimates. He is dealing with the Budget. Payroll tax and associated matters are not involved in the matter before the Chair. Though the honourable member for Hornsby has attempted to castigate the honourable member for Monaro, he obviously does not understand what the debate is about.

Mr Pickard: On the point of order. When in the budget speech the Treasurer raised the question of reducing taxes, he was not ruled out of order. If the Treasurer was permitted to speak on the capacity of the Government to reduce taxes, I also should have the right to discuss taxes.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The point of order concerns references to matters that would probably be better discussed in the budget debate. The honourable member for Hornsby did incorrectly refer to the Loan Speech as the budget speech. However, the honourable member for Hornsby should confine himself to the remarks of the Treasurer and of any other honourable member who has spoken in the debate. If, as the honourable member says, reference was made to tax reductions, I would be willing to allow him some latitude in that regard.

Mr PICKARD: I am referring to a statement in the Loan Speech. If I wrongly called it the loans budget, I apologize to the House. I was referring to the Loan Speech, in which the Treasurer spoke about reducing and holding down taxes, I asked

what taxes had been reduced. The only one I know of—and that was done under pressure and tardily—was death duties. Decreases in charges have occurred, but they are not direct taxes. One has to look at the whole question of the double tax lie about which honourable members have heard so much. Doubtless we shall hear about it again. I suppose that is holding taxes down, but not reducing them when other States are. That it is not creating double taxation; it is holding taxes. If the Government reduced taxes, as it claims it has done, it would be following what other States have done, and would give deserved relief to the people of New South Wales. In respect of the Government's allocation of loan funds to the education building programme, I bring to the attention of the House the reduced contribution to the total amount over the years by the State.

In 1975–76 this State contributed 96 per cent of the \$205 million allocated for education buildings, and in the 1976–77 financial year it contributed 93 per cent of the money allocated to these buildings. In the 1977–78 financial year New South Wales contributed a miserable 91 per cent to the total sum allocated for education buildings. In the current financial year the State has allocated only 89 per cent of the total amount. An examination of the last three loan allocations discloses that there has been a reduction of 7 per cent in the State's contribution to the total amount allocated for this purpose. Moreover, there has been a decreasing amount provided for education in terms of real funds. In his Loan Speech the Treasurer said that real levels of capital expenditure have been maintained, but I propose to examine the record in this respect.

In the last full year in which the former Government was in office it allocated \$205 million to education, but in 1976–77 the allocation totalled only \$180 million. Allowing for adjustments in the consumer price index and the effects of inflation, the allocation last year should have totalled \$233 million in order to maintain the real level of funding. In the last financial year education in this State was deprived of about \$53 million. The Government reduced its allocation to education in 1977–78 to \$179 million. If this Government had followed the same basis used by the former Government, the allocation should have been \$263 million last year. As a result education in this State was deprived of the sum of \$84 million. The loan allocation this year provides for \$189 million to be spent on education. The Government pats itself on the back and says that it will increase by 10 per cent its spending on capital works for education, but it does not say anything about how it has deprived education in this State by lowering the level of expenditure in the previous two years. Also, the Government has nothing to say about the effect that its policies have had on our schoolchildren.

The Government talks about an increased expenditure of \$15 million on demountable buildings, but nothing is said about building solid brick buildings. The Government intends to go back to the old demountable programme it had when it was last in office. It intends to reduce the quality of our school buildings by providing schoolchildren with makeshift facilities. There is a desperate need for good quality schools to be built in this State. In the past two and a half years school buildings in New South Wales have been deprived of \$232 million. Though the Government has turned its back on the children and the taxpayers of this State, it has the audacity to claim that it has maintained the real level of spending on education buildings. The Government's claim is false and the public ought to know it.

The Government is more interested in public transport than in giving the children of this State a fair go. The Minister for Education is not strong enough. Maybe he was running away to other places and was not there when the allocation were decided. It may be that he left the matter in the charge of the would-be minister—the honourable member for Gosford, who seems to take a delight in parading round as the chairman of

Mr Pickard]

some committee. He should get his chalk ready for he will not be here after the next election. The Government included in the Treasurer's Loan Speech a photograph of the Terrigal primary school which was opened and put into use in the last year in which the former Government was in office. Apparently the Government's building programme is so bad that it could not produce a photograph of even one school building built during the past two and a half years. Doubtless it could have shown photographs of a number of demountable school buildings, but that is about all. The Government gave the Teachers' Federation the impression that it was a leader in education. I hope that the Federation of Parents and Citizens' Associations, the Teachers' Federation and the media take note of the Government's lack of performance in education. They should note that the Government has robbed the schoolchildren of this State of almost \$250 million worth of school buildings.

I propose now to look at the Government's education building programme, which is set out in the Treasurer's Loan Speech. The Government claims that eleven primary schools and two secondary schools will be built in the current financial year. In its last three years the former Government built fourteen primary schools and seventeen high schools. In his Loan Speech the Treasurer referred to the three years in which this Government has been in office. He said that in three years thirty-three primary schools and nine secondary schools will have been built—a total of forty-two schools. I propose now to tell the House what the former Government did in this area in the last three years that it was in office. In 1974 twenty-three schools were built; sixteen schools were built in 1975 and thirty-one schools were built in 1976—a total of seventy schools. The former Government built almost twice as many schools as this Government has built in the same period.

The Treasurer said that major additions and alterations are to be undertaken in nineteen primary schools and six high schools in the current financial year. Big deal. In the last year of the former Government's term of office major alterations and additions were carried out to eighty-nine primary schools and seventy-four secondary schools. The Government boasts that this year major works will be carried out to twenty-five schools. In the former Government's last year in office 163 new major works were carried out. Moreover, thirty-two multi-purpose centres, thirty-nine libraries for primary schools and twenty-three libraries for secondary schools were built. Further, it carried out a \$5.5 million programme for special schools. Government supporters should examine that performance and compare it with the present position.

On top of all that, a build-now, pay-later programme was introduced by the former honourable member for Earlwood following advice and recommendations by the honourable member for Nepean, who followed the idea through. In one year six new schools and six new major additions to existing schools were carried out under that scheme. This Government has refused to go on with that programme, although it talks about how the building industry needs help. It says that the private sector should be helped through the building industry. The Government should enter into a programme in which industry carries the cost for a specified time without the Department of Education being charged interest. In this way the work force could be got moving on the construction of school buildings. Where is this great adventurous government? It has got about as much adventure and about as much capacity to understand the needs of a school building programme as Tom Thumb. After the dinner adjournment I propose to deal with technical and further education. The federal Government provided \$20 million of the \$30 million that the Government has been trumpeting about in this field.

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

Mr PICKARD: A total of 232 million has not been allocated in loan funds for school buildings. That is equivalent to about 100 schools that have not been built in this State. That is the poor record of the Wran Government. In conclusion I should like to say again that I believe it was a travesty of the working of this Parliament for the Attorney-General, who recently ran off to Coffs Harbour to plot and plan the overthrow of his leader, to abuse the processes of this House in the same way that he has abused privileges in the past.

It is time that the Government determined to allow this House of Parliament to function as a true democratic place of debate working on behalf of the people of New South Wales. Members should be permitted to look honestly, squarely and in-depth into the Government's record and put an audit upon the standard of government to which they have been subjected. The presentation of this bill at such short notice is without precedent in the history of this Parliament. No matter what the Attorney-General says, he cannot cover up the fact that what he has done today has been despicable in the first degree.

Mr DEGEN (Balmain) [7.32]: I join with all members of Parliament in what is probably the final session of the Forty-fifth Parliament in congratulating the Treasurer on bringing forward such a well-received document in support of his Loan Speech. The Loan Speech was well received particularly in this morning's press. I do not know who wrote the Sydney Morning *Herald* editorial today, but certainly it was laudatory in its praise of the Treasurer. The Treasurer was confronted with major obstacles particularly with the severe austerity measures applied by the Government in Canberra. The federal Government has shown callous disregard for the rights of the ordinary citizen.

The Treasurer, referring to the funds available to the State, gave some examples of severe cuts in real terms. He said that the federal Government had made a cut of \$24 million in welfare housing, had abolished hospital building grants and had cut by more than half the community health grants and funds for pre-schools. What the Treasurer said points to a little bit of the Prime Minister's "Life was not meant to be easy" philosophy. If the New South Wales Treasurer's Loan Speech is any indication of what is going on throughout Australia, the Treasurers of the other States are in for a hard time, too. We have all learned that under Prime Minister Fraser life is not meant to be easy.

Already the pundits in this morning's press have written of the confidence that the Treasurer's Loan Speech has brought to the State. Earlier today the honourable member for Burrinjuck asked the Premier a question about increased business confidence in this State. The Premier, in giving chapter and verse, replied that New South Wales is attracting the confidence of overseas investors, particularly for major projects. One of the first cutbacks that the State Government has been compelled to implement will affect this grand old institution, the mother of Parliaments in Australia. No doubt there will be some rather fit parliamentarians for some time to come as they continue to climb up and down the stairs to the parliamentary carpark levels. If the Government is to give the lead and encourage the business community it must put its own house in order. Irrespective of when the contract for the new building was signed or what it contains, the Government must give the lead to the business community.

No doubt many people with some degree of financial expertise are asking, how long can the Government continue to call on its reserves, particularly in the light of federal cut-backs such as the \$24 million reduction in the funding for welfare housing? The New South Wales Government is doing its best for the citizens of this State within the fiscal constraints imposed by the federal Government. The time must come when the well into which the Government is dipping will dry up.

Members of the Opposition in this House should speak to their federal counterparts in Canberra and alert them to the harsh realities of federal policies. This may offer some difficulty as members of the Liberal Party and Country Party in this State are not on good terms with their federal colleagues. The Treasurer's Loan Speech has highlighted clearly the inadequacies of the federal Government. The Opposition will have to face up to this fact at the next elections. The federal Budget is not a document upon which the coalition parties could fight an election.

The Treasurer referred to unemployment. The State Government through its initiative and enterprise is doing its best to reduce unemployment in New South Wales. Because of the inactivity of the federal Government in the shipbuilding and ship repair industry the largest employer of labour in my electorate, Cockatoo Docks and Engineering Company Proprietary Limited, has recently dismissed 200 workers. That is most unfortunate particularly for those persons who have become ciphers in the unemployment statistics. These dismissals were due largely to the inactivity of the federal Government in relation to the shipbuilding and repair industry.

The federal Budget made no provision for an increase in funds for shipbuilding and ship repair in New South Wales. In contrast with the attitude of the federal Government the New South Wales Government, on its own initiative, has promoted the State dockyard at Newcastle. On several occasions I have raised in this Parliament the matter of shipbuilding and ship repair facilities. The Government has made available the old Balmain powerhouse to be used as a major laying-up site. The Wran Government has continued to develop the shipbuilding and repair industry despite the lack of interest shown by Canberra.

The Opposition has gone to great pains to suggest that the Government has not followed high ideals in regard to the funds made available to the Department of Main Roads. This year main roads will receive an increase of \$64 million representing a 16 per cent rise in funding compared with last year. I am pleased that the Government has discontinued planning and work on a number of expressways. The north-western freeway was designed to dissect my inner city electorate. By abandoning that expressway project the Government has made a good decision, despite the National Roads and Motorists' Association survey reports. The Treasurer in his Loan Speech gave a comprehensive list of roadworks to be undertaken. The whole of the State will be well served by these proposals. Country members, in particular those members with cities in their electorate, will agree that their areas have been favourably dealt with by the Treasurer.

Perhaps what I am about to say may be construed by some people as support for socialism: I believe that what does not benefit my electorate specifically will be of benefit to it generally. The federal Government has imposed a savage increase on the price of petrol. Just four years ago the Commonwealth funded 45 per cent of the State Government's road expenditure. This year it will fund only 36 per cent of expenditure on roads. The Commonwealth has made a significant reduction of 9 per cent at a time when it should be increasing the allocation. The federal Government has not looked carefully at the need to develop our roads system.

That is an indication of the federal Government's callous disregard for the wishes of the electorate. At least the allocation by the State Government to the Department of Main Roads will be 16 per cent more than last year's expenditure. I shall not mention specifically the expressways that are to be built. I know that to do so would not be within the order of leave, but I must confess my pleasure that none is to be built in the electorate of Balmain.

The Treasurer announced in his impressive speech that an amount of \$207 million will be allocated to the Public Transport Commission for new equipment, track upgrading and the general improvement of facilities. That is \$17 million or 9 per cent more than last year, which is interesting in view of the recent speculation about when the next election might be held. The Treasurer said that with capital expenditure of this sort, the Government is well on target in pursuit of its objective to spend \$1,000 million in its five-year public transport upgrading programme. Public opinion polls suggest that the outcome of the State election is a foregone conclusion, and I have no doubt that the next task to confront the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways will be to plan his second five-year programme. Clearly, it will have public acceptance in view of his impressive performance in the transport portfolio.

I notice a reference in the Treasurer's Loan Speech to the provision of two additional ferries for the Sydney inner harbour fleet. Representing a maritime suburb, I sincerely hope that the Government is able to increase the ferry services provided for my constituents, and to begin new services. I support the honourable member for Drummoyne in his suggestion that the Government could well examine ways of exploiting the Parramatta River to better advantage than the previous Government did. The honourable gentleman has my wholehearted concurrence in that proposal.

Mr Schipp: Have you made any representations to the Minister on that matter during the time the Labor Party has been in office?

Mr DEGEN: Yes. The Government will add 215 modern buses to the Public Transport Commission's fleet under the special leasing arrangements. I trust that my electorate will receive its share of the benefits that will flow from those additions to the fleet, as will the metropolitan area at large. The federal Government's decision to reduce funding for health services disturbs me, particularly in view of the effect the decision has on cutting back the activities of the Women's Health Centre at Leichhardt.

Mr Caterson: It should be cut back.

Mr DEGEN: The honourable member for The Hills has his opinion; I certainly have ~~mine~~. He would have understood my point of view had he been present when I was conducting interviews at Leichhardt Town Hall and met a group of migrant women, 90 per cent of whom could not speak English, complaining bitterly through an interpreter about the effect of the federal Government's reduction in funds for health. I say that the Women's Health Centre at Leichhardt has been doing a good job, and that the federal Government should hang its head in shame over what it has done to that centre.

Mr Caterson: The honourable member should look at what they put out.

Mr DEGEN: The centre does a good job so far as I am concerned. I am willing to face an election on that issue. The honourable member for Hornsby delivered a diatribe about the allocation for education in the Loan Estimates this year compared with last year. The facts are that there is a 10 per cent increase in the amount to be made available for capital works on schools and technical colleges this year. The Government is willing to face an election on its record in that respect. I share the concern of all Government supporters, whether they represent inner city electorate or other parts of the State, that there is to be a 25 per cent reduction in the allocation by the federal Government for welfare housing. This poses a great social and psychological question, particularly in the inner city suburbs where land prices are too high for the Housing Commission, which has to look farther afield for land for welfare housing. A great many of my constituents are entitled to welfare housing, but they can draw no comfort from the cutback by the federal Government.

I would say that 90 per cent of those who approach me for assistance in getting welfare housing want to live in the inner city area. The Government, as its first priority—and I concede this—must acquire as much land as possible if it is to reduce the waiting list in any practical manner, and in the light of community standards and modern planning concepts. However, in looking to the outer metropolitan area for such land, the Government is denying the inner city suburbs large-scale welfare housing, even though it is most needed in those parts of Sydney. The federal Government should be more mindful of its social obligation to provide enough money for welfare housing in the inner city as well as elsewhere.

When the Housing Commission provides accommodation for my constituents, they invariably say to me, "I am leaving the area and going to such-and-such a place", which, clearly, to them is like travelling on a rocket ship to the dark side of the moon. They do not know the place to which they must go, and they do not wish to go there. Movement away from their familiar environment causes social dislocation, particularly for the elderly who have spent what is virtually a lifetime in the inner city. The cutback by the federal Government will have the effect of moving the centre of the city closer to either Wollongong or Newcastle.

If the Commonwealth were anxious to bring about an economic resurgence, the first thing it would do would be to stimulate the building industry, as any sound government with half a mind to fiscal recovery would do. As the New South Wales Treasurer correctly points out, private enterprise is not encouraged to play its rightful role in building homes when the federal Government reduces the allocation for welfare housing by 25 per cent over the amount set aside last year. I am sure that the State Government, with its humanitarian outlook, will address itself to that problem.

The extent to which the Treasurer devoted himself to the subject of prisons is a recognition of the wonderful work done by the Royal Commission on Prisons, by Mr Justice Nagle, and of public acceptance of his report. This year the Government will increase expenditure on prisons by more than 70 per cent over the allocation in the previous year. That is something the public would expect the Government to do in view of recent gaol disturbances and the findings of the Royal commission. Labor Party philosophy on this matter is reflected in the increased allocation for child welfare buildings, which is almost 30 per cent more than last year's expenditure. The Minister for Youth and Community Services, who is one of the most successful Ministers in the Wran Government, is to be commended for having his way in Cabinet and getting such an increase, which I wholeheartedly support.

There is to be an allocation this financial year of \$15 million to the Grain Elevators Board. One of these days I might surprise members of the Country Party by speaking on the subject of wheat. I am reminded each day as I travel into the city that I have more wheat in my electorate than the Country Party members collectively have in theirs. The employees of the Grain Elevators Board at Glebe Island do a good job and they will be pleased to hear that the Government supports their activities by increasing the allocation to their employer.

Interestingly, the State Government is continuing its commitment to decentralization through the growth centres, even though the Commonwealth Government has virtually abandoned them and is merely paying lip service to the concept. Recently I visited Bathurst–Orange and Albury–Wodonga with the responsible Minister and some of my parliamentary colleagues. I place on record my appreciation of the sterling work being done by the officers concerned with the development of both growth centres, particularly in view of the difficult conditions under which they are operating, thrust upon them by the reticence of the federal Government to meet its undertakings in

respect of growth centres. Country Party members should be horrified by the federal Government's decision to allocate only \$5 million this financial year to Albury–Wodonga, which is the same as last year's allocation, and considerably below the allocations of the two previous years.

It is pleasing to note that in this financial year the Government, through its instrumentalities, proposes to spend \$22 million on the Albury–Wodonga development. This year Bathurst–Orange is to receive an increase of \$4 million. I believe in the concept of decentralization because it gives people the opportunity to move into an area that has all the social structures at hand and is carefully planned. It is unfortunate that some decentralization in the form of large-scale housing developments have not been so well planned.

Reference is made on page 24 of the Loan Speech to the Government's involvement in coal exports. Recently I asked a question in this House about the transportation of coal. There has been great conjecture over whether coal should be shipped from Port Kembla, Port Waratah, Botany Bay or whatever. A matter of major importance for the Government to bear in mind is the fact that the Electricity Commission of New South Wales has joined with a major Japanese consortium in exporting coal to Japan. Australian seamen and the maritime unions are involved in a dispute with the Utah company in Queensland over the transport of coal. The company is being aided and abetted by the Queensland Government which, at the behest of the federal Government, is refusing to allow ships to be manned by Australian crews. I direct this remark particularly at members of the Country Party: if it is good enough for Australians to mine the coal and load it, surely it should be good enough for Australians to crew the ships that convey the coal.

I have been informed in discussions with the maritime unions that the difference in pay received by an Australian seaman and a Japanese seaman is of such little consequence that there would be minimal difference in the cost of exporting coal. I ask members of the Liberal–Country parties to use their good offices with their colleagues in Canberra to ensure that coal will be transported in Australian ships crewed by Australian seamen. It is distressing to see the number of ships laid up in the ports of Sydney and Newcastle. Surely they could be put to gainful use, thus making a contribution towards alleviating unemployment in the maritime industry.

On page 25 of the Loan Speech under the heading "Planning and Environment" I note that the Government has set about a programme of allocating \$2 million for the purchase of land in the inner city area. In response to a question I asked, I have learned that a site in Fitzroy Avenue, Balmain, has been chosen by the Government for a redevelopment scheme. Another area in my constituency in White Street, Leichhardt, is to be acquired also for redevelopment. That the proposal has been well received by the people in that area indicates this Government's willingness to involve itself in the purchase of open space. The various demands on the Government to acquire land in the inner city area for redevelopment are quite awesome. Several proposals are before the Minister to purchase land within my electorate. It is said that \$2 million is not enough for the purpose and that someone must determine an order of priorities for redevelopment.

In January this year the Premier listed the inner city councils that have contributed to the Cumberland development fund since its inception twenty years ago and how that money had been spent. It indicated that little of the money had been spent in the inner city area. This Government has corrected the imbalance and it is now being warmly applauded by the people who live in these areas. But the problem is, how is the money to be spent. The federal Government has displayed a miserable attitude in the provision of funds for this much-needed community development.

Mr Degen]

The Treasurer states at page 26 of his Loan Speech that negotiations are proceeding with private firms for the construction of an entertainment centre in the Haymarket. Surely there can be no disputation over the need for such a centre. Irrespective of whether it is established in the Haymarket or west of Sydney, no one would argue about the concept. It is depressing to recall that large numbers of people have paid considerable sums of money to attend concerts but have viewed performances under what could be best described as adverse conditions. This fact is well recognized by the Government and its intention to effect an improvement will be appreciated by the community at large.

I congratulate the Treasurer and Treasury officials on the splendid job they have done with the limited funds placed at their disposal by the federal Government. I urge honourable members opposite to face up to the fact that the Prime Minister is abandoning them, just as the people of New South Wales will do at election time.

Mr PARK (Tamworth) [7.58]: Like the honourable member for Young, I too wonder why the Government was in such haste to debate the Loan Estimates. I can only conclude that it did not want the Opposition to debate the capital works programme for too long or that it did not want the Opposition to research the Loan Speech too deeply. The Treasurer in his Loan Speech went to some lengths to criticize the federal Government. He referred to the severe financial restraints imposed by that Government. The honourable member for Balmain mentioned that life was not meant to be easy under the Rt Hon. Malcolm Fraser. I remind him that the Prime Minister inherited a situation that certainly was not easy to resolve. At present the federal Government is, and has been for some time, struggling to contain a massive deficit which, as I said, it inherited. At the same time the State governments are financially well off and are able to bring down balanced or near balanced budgets. When the previous Government went out of office it left behind it a credit balance of some \$21 million, which certainly made life easy for the incoming Government. Because of that situation I believe that the State should be willing to pick up the tab where it can, for example, in areas like housing.

At the same time all State governments and the federal Government have a responsibility to live within their means. They are no different from the employer or manager in private enterprise who has to do exactly the same thing. With this philosophy in mind we must realize that governments cannot do all the things that people would like them to do. I agree with the honourable member for Young who emphasized the urgent need to increase activity in the building of houses. That would engage more builders and employ more people in order suitably to house more families. New South Wales is a very large State and by the standards of other parts of the world it has only a few people. We have about 10 000 kilometres of railway as well as many thousands of kilometres of roads to maintain. Both railways and roads are absolutely vital to the people of New South Wales, particularly the country people and their industries. They are vital also to the economy of this State. I shall talk about those two matters later.

In analysing the reaction of the people of Australia and this State to the policy of the federal Government in relation to the economy, I remind honourable members first of the reaction from the stock exchanges of Australia, where we have seen a considerable upturn in the value of shares traded. Second, I remind honourable members of last week's bond issue when \$765 million was invested in a few days—the most successful bond issue since federation. Approximately two-thirds of that money was contributed from sources other than banks. This indicates two things: first, general confidence in the economy and in the economic future of this country and,

second, anticipation of a reduction in interest rates. The object of the federal Government is to reduce the rate of inflation to between 5 and 6 per cent and, when that has been achieved, to set about reducing substantially both interest rates and taxation.

Finally on this matter I remind honourable members that inflation more than anything else has caused hardship to people generally and to country people and primary producers in particular. Inflation has pushed up costs sharply and primary producers have had to meet those costs in the past few years when the returns received by them were comparatively at an all time low. I know that there has been frequent reference to what happened between 1972 and 1975. Perhaps the Government wants the people of New South Wales to forget those years. But the fact remains that during that time unemployment, inflation, interest rates and industrial unrest went up by three times or more and the State is still suffering from what happened in that period.

In spite of the restrictions on funds from federal sources to which the Treasurer referred in his Loan Speech, he was able to announce an increase in the capital works programme of 8.5 per cent, to more than \$2,000 million. The main roads fund was increased by \$64 million to \$465 million, representing an increase of 16 per cent. That fund could have been further increased by careful pruning generally, by a greater allocation than \$40 million from loan funds and by greater borrowing than \$38 million. Roads are absolutely vital to the people of New South Wales, particularly to country people and their industries. I do not believe that a fair share was given to the country in the Loan Estimates. The funds that are to be devoted to country areas are not commensurate with the needs in those areas.

During last winter, in the northwest of this State—which is probably the most productive part of it as far as primary industries are concerned—there was virtual chaos as a result of unseasonable long and heavy rains. Schoolchildren were not able to get to school. Tourists could not get out of the area. People were not able to go to town to transact their business. On the black soil plains it is urgently necessary to gravel sheet large sections of the main arteries and to tar the sections that can be tarred and are used by greater volumes of traffic. The major road arteries of the State are carrying increasing volumes of traffic. They have to carry much heavier vehicles and loads as a result of the extensive use of **semitrailers**. Many of the tarred strips on roads are too narrow. When heavy vehicles have to get off the edges they simply break them away.

I want to mention trunk road 63 which runs from Tamworth to **Yetman** on the Queensland border. On 20th October, 1977, I attended a deputation to the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways when a joint submission was presented to him from all the councils concerned with that trunk road. They are **Tamworth** city, **Parry**, **Manilla**, **Barraba**, **Bingara**, **Yallaroi** and **Ashford** shires. Trunk road 63 is used as an alternative route from Queensland to the south. It carries a lot of wool, particularly to the new freight centre at Tamworth. It carries also a lot of asbestos from the mine at Barraba. The councils concerned believe there is an urgent need to upgrade sections of that important road.

The Minister criticized Barraba shire council for not giving priority to it in its current allocations for main and trunk roads. I point out that Barraba shire is committed in 1978–79 to complete two works with the construction funds when they become available: first, a bridge and associated works on main road 360 and, second, main road 132 which leads to the asbestos mine. Both these works are half finished and logically they must be completed. I trust that the allocation that will shortly be announced following the Loan Speech will be at least \$106,000 which will enable those two works to be completed. The council met this week and decided that, if any money

Mr Park]

is left over, the shire will spend it on trunk road 63. It decided also that in 1979–80 it will devote all its funds to trunk road 63, provided that the Minister can see fit to allocate funds to carry out the most urgent work south of Barraba in accordance with the submission I mentioned. Shortly I shall be writing to the Minister along those lines.

The Treasurer announced that \$207 million had been allocated to the Public Transport Commission, an increase of \$17 million or 9 per cent. Here also the Government could have allocated more funds along the lines that I mentioned in respect of the main roads fund. I say that because I believe that the rail system in New South Wales is absolutely vital. The only way in which wheat can be moved is by rail. The honourable member for Balmain mentioned the amount of wheat that passes through his electorate. He mentioned also that \$15 million had been allocated to the Grain Elevators Board. That is commendable, and I am glad he mentioned it for it reminds me that from 1965 to 1968 in the first term of the previous Government the capacity of the Grain Elevators Board was doubled. That was a tremendous effort, making up for many years of neglect by the previous Labor administration. Gradually some success in getting wool back on to rail is being achieved. The Public Transport Commission is giving a better service now from the woolshed to the store at competitive rates. I should like to see even more efforts made in this direction. The result would be that wool would get back where it should be—largely on rail.

I want to refer briefly to country passengers on the railway relative to the cost of air travel, which will continue to increase, and the running cost of a motor vehicle. I shall speak particularly about the northern line to Glen Innes, for that is a line that I know. There is an urgent need to acquire modern, air-conditioned carriages with some sort of aircraft-type seats. Sleeping carriages should be dispensed with altogether. This State cannot afford to have equipment like sleeping carriages. They are too heavy to pull and they can be used only at night. If the carriages that I have referred to could be introduced on that line they could be run up from Sydney during the day, then turned round and used again at night. In that way this expensive equipment would be used twenty-four hours a day.

Mr Petersen: I would rather sleep in a sleeping compartment than in an aircraft seat.

Mr PARK: I prefer to travel the other way, for when I reach the end of my journey I am fully dressed. All I have to do is wake up and walk out. People would be prepared to accept that if they had that sort of carriage. I suggest to the Minister that when this occurs the best of the old carriages be retained for use in peak times such as school holidays when there is a much higher demand than normally. At present in school holidays there are times when the Public Transport Commission is unable to meet demand, and that is unsatisfactory. On the other hand, I would not expect the commission to buy new carriages and use them for only a short period each year.

I should like to mention the need that exists to utilize fully the rail system because of the way in which it is related to the coming energy crisis in the eighties and nineties in Australia. First, the Government should be looking at electrifying more and more sections of the rail system. Second, it should be trying to encourage people to use rail as opposed to road transport. In 1975, 70 per cent of Australia's fuel requirements was being produced locally. That was the best situation since oil was found in this country, but the supply and demand gap is widening considerably and by 1990, if the demand increases at its present rate, unless we find more oil, Australia will be producing only about 16 per cent of its needs. I know that the federal Government has been criticized for increasing the price of fuel but its attitude

is that the proposed prices are realistic in world terms. When those increases occur we shall still be using the second-cheapest fuel in the world after the United States of America.

I note that \$30 million has been allocated to technical and further education, representing an increase of \$6.5 million. Of that sum, \$20 million has been provided by the federal Government. Its grant to New South Wales this year represented an increase of 23 per cent. I commend that increase. More emphasis must be placed on technical and further education. A shortage of skilled tradesmen and craftsmen is developing. There is no doubt in my mind that when young people leave school, if they are trained in a craft or a skill they are much better fitted to gain employment. It must be borne in mind that unemployment in New South Wales at 30th June last was 144 100. Funds this year will be mostly devoted to the further development of a number of technical colleges in New South Wales, including the one at Tamworth with which I am well acquainted. There are almost 3 000 students at Tamworth technical college and the number is increasing each year. As it is virtually bursting at the seams, this further development will be welcomed.

I hope that the Government will soon be able to announce the development of community colleges in this State. It was the policy of the previous Government to develop community colleges in country New South Wales. Prior to the last State elections it had decided that two such colleges would be established. One was to be in the New England region, with the main base at Tamworth, and the other in the Orana region, with the main base at Dubbo. In June, 1976, I introduced a deputation from the Tamworth city council to the Minister for Education. The Minister said at that time that he accepted and agreed with the policy of the previous Government in relation to community colleges. I have no doubt that the Minister was genuine, but I somehow feel that so far he has been unable to convince Cabinet. I hope that he is able to do so soon and that at least these two colleges will be commenced. Their development will greatly assist in the training of our young people in a wide range of skills and faculties up to the level of a UG2 course and in some cases including the first year of a degree course where transfer arrangements can be entered into with universities.

I wish to mention also the housing programme, which I touched on earlier. In 1977 the Premier allocated a total sum of \$30 million for project housing. Ostensibly this was to assist employment. As none of that money came to my electorate of Tamworth, I approached the Premier and asked why that electorate had not shared in any of this substantial allocation of public money. The Premier said that as the level of unemployment in Tamworth was not as high as in some other areas, the money had been allocated to areas where unemployment was the highest. Although unemployment in the Tamworth area may have been a little less than in other districts, it was not much less and was still a serious problem. It was unfair to allocate a large amount of public funds to certain areas, perhaps for political purposes, although I do not know that. Most of the money found its way into the metropolitan areas and a lesser amount into country areas.

This year \$17.5 million has been allocated for project homes. Recently the Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Co-operative Societies announced the allocation of \$4 million to terminating building societies. Because of the rules and stringent requirements for the awarding of that money most of it found its way into the metropolitan areas. I am not blaming the Minister; I am not blaming anyone as I do not know where the blame lies. However, I know where the responsibility lies: fairly and squarely on the Government's shoulders. It is not fair to allocate part of the housing revolving fund, which is public money, other than right across the State.

Mr Park

Recently I spoke to the Minister about this matter. He wrote me a letter. We might be able to rectify the position. It is unfair that most of this money has gone to metropolitan areas.

Funds for soil conservation have been increased by 15 per cent. One must bear in mind that the soil is part of our heritage that must be looked after. Further funds could have been allocated to soil conservation and I ask that the Government consider increasing the allocation in the future. Funds have been made available also for the further development of a number of agricultural research stations, including the station at **Tamworth**. That is an important matter also.

In the area of water conservation I wish to mention briefly that the Chaffey Dam at Tamworth is well on the way to completion. The Water Resources Commission, which will foot most of the bill for that work, will contribute about \$21 million to it. Last Saturday the Minister for Conservation and Minister for Water Resources told a meeting at **Manilla** that it would be two to three years before Split Rock Dam could be started. That work is needed to provide a better flow of waters along the Namoi River valley. The Government's policy—and the Opposition's policy—is for Windamere Dam to be No. 1 priority. I hope that within two to three years a start will be made on Split Rock Dam. I notice that this year only \$600,000 has been allocated to Windamere Dam. To date a total of \$7.8 million has been expended on that dam, most of it by the former Government. As the estimated cost to complete that work is \$33.3 million, the Government has a long way to go.

Mr PETERSEN (**Illawarra**) [8.26]: I congratulate the Treasurer on his magnificent Loan Speech. It is a clear indication that the Government has applied its **financial** policies with imagination to make the most of a difficult situation. Also it is a clear indication that quite often the Government is making bricks without straw. There is no doubt about the source of funds available to the Government. This was revealed clearly in the Treasurer's Loan Speech when he said that this year the total funds available to the State from federally controlled sources will be \$1,301 million, only \$2 million more than last year. When one allows for inflation this represents a cut of \$100 million in real terms. [Quorum formed.]

It is significant that the honourable member for Young when addressing the House spoke in favour of abolishing the system of tied grants that were inaugurated by the **Whitlam** Government. In my electorate the abolition of tied grants has caused immense financial difficulties with the dental training scheme and hospital construction and in overcoming the **backlog** of sewerage works. Of course the Country Party is not in favour of tied grants. That party is not in favour of overall planning. The one principle that unites members of the Country Party is that they are totally unprincipled in their policies. Each member of the Country Party has but one principle: he wants the maximum amount of public funds spent in his electorate, irrespective of whether this benefits the country as a whole. Consequently overall planning is totally foreign to the nature of Country Party members. It required the **Whitlam** Government in Canberra from 1972 to 1975 to have a federal government take responsibility for such essential services as the school dental scheme and the construction of hospitals.

Mr Wilde: **Westmead Hospital**.

Mr PETERSEN: As the honourable member for Parramatta mentions, **Westmead Hospital**.

Mr Akister: Also pre-schools.

Mr PETERSEN: Yes, pre-schools. People in my electorate have reason to know about the school dental scheme. When it was inaugurated by the **Whitlam** Government in 1973 the federal Government paid all capital costs and 90 per cent of

the recurrent costs. The States committed their resources to the institution of the scheme, which was necessary. Despite the fact that the Menzies Government had been in office throughout what might have been the greatest period of prosperity of Australian capitalism, from 1949 to 1972, it did nothing whatever to institute any welfare scheme over all and it did nothing about the fact that the Australian people have probably the worst dental health in the world. Obviously, if something is to be done about the problem one has to start with the children. Three dental schools were established in New South Wales, one at Westmead, another at Miranda and the third at Shellharbour.

As the Shellharbour school was the last to be established, when the Commonwealth Government went back to its policy of federalism, which meant making the State pay 50 per cent of the recurrent costs and 50 per cent of capital costs, difficulty was experienced in making those sums available from State finances. The result was that the Shellharbour training school in my electorate, which had just put through its first-year course, was not in a financial position to enrol another first-year course. The school is used now only to about half capacity for the training of the second-year course only. Consequently not enough trainees are being turned out of the school. The broad concept of the Whitlam Government of taking dental training to all children, so that they might learn dental hygiene, and so to do something about the poor state of teeth in Australia, looks like going by the board. Some children will derive benefit from the scheme but the great majority will not. It will limp along but be far from the grandiose concept envisaged by the Whitlam Government. That is happening at the same time as all sorts of concessions are being given to the oil companies. The honourable member for Tamworth pointed out that funds are being diverted to ensure that the oil companies make record profits.

The same applies to hospital construction. It must be said to the great credit of the Whitlam Government that it inaugurated the principle that the Commonwealth should supply capital funds for hospital construction. As a result of that decision and following the initiative of this Labor Government when it assumed office in New South Wales in May 1976 it was decided to go ahead with three hospitals—Mount Druitt, Gosford and Shellharbour. Had it not been for Labor winning office in 1976 I am quite certain that the old policy would have continued. Westmead Hospital would have been starved of funds. Work on the three hospitals in vital developing areas would have not gone ahead. The old principle that people had been used to for years, of seeing hospitals built on the North Shore where the medical profession wanted them, rather than in the western suburbs and in industrial areas where the workers live, would have been continued. It appears that the position is now being reversed.

A perusal of the Treasurer's speech discloses that Commonwealth funds supplied for health purposes had shrunk from \$41.5 million in 1976–77 to \$20.3 million in 1977–78, and to a miserable \$2.9 million in 1978–79. I am sure other honourable members share with the honourable member for Parramatta pride in the fact that Westmead Hospital has been built in the centre of the Sydney metropolitan area—at Parramatta in the western suburbs. Had it not been for the Labor Government in New South Wales and the initiatives of the Whitlam Government from 1972 to 1975, Westmead Hospital would still be under construction.

I pay tribute to the Minister for Health for the initiatives that he has taken to ensure that construction of hospitals at Shellharbour, Mount Druitt and Gosford is going ahead. Real problems have been encountered but I note from the Treasurer's speech that borrowings of \$20 million will be obtained by the Health Commission of New South Wales under the State authorities borrowing programme. One reason why honourable members opposite should hang their heads in shame is that the Treasurer has been obliged to confess that, even with these measures, the Government has been

Mr Petersen]

unable to maintain the desired momentum in the programme because of the federal Government's ideology about abolishing tied grants and its responsibility for hospital services. Utmost difficulty is being experienced in having hospitals built where they should be built—where the workers need them—rather than where the friends of the federal Government want hospitals built.

The honourable member for Parramatta said quite truthfully that Westmead Hospital would not have been built but for the Whitlam Government and the initiative displayed by this State Government. It makes me angry when the local capitalist press in Wollongong, having been rather silent during the terms of office of Liberal Party governments, suddenly comes out with great public campaigns. Headlines have appeared in the *Illawarra Mercury* to the effect that the people are being screwed. The Labor Government of this State is blamed for the cutbacks in a number of essential services. The fact is that the Government has not been able to find funds for those services because of the reversal of policy by the Fraser Government in Canberra.

I am pleased to note that construction of both the northern suburbs distributor from Gwynneville to Towradgi Road and the extension of the southern freeway in the vicinity of Dapto, to meet Princes Highway at Mount Brown, will go ahead. Widening of Mount Ousley Road to four lanes from the southern tollway to the southern freeway will also proceed. Unfortunately, because of the deplorable state of public transport in the area, these major roads are vital and must be built. I pay tribute to my colleagues, the honourable member for Wollongong and to you, Mr Speaker, as the honourable member for Corrimal, for the fact that we three members in the area have not fallen for the trap that has been set in front of us to fight one another to have money spent on one road at the expense of the others. I am pleased to see that the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways is going ahead with the building of all three roads.

It might be a good idea to have another look at the road from the coast to the tablelands via Macquarie Pass. To put the matter bluntly, Macquarie Pass was obviously built as a result of a political decision made at the end of the last century. The pass, which was built on the side of the escarpment, slides down to the coastal plain with monotonous regularity. A number of people have suggested that a road be built across an area known as Johnson's Spur. I understand that it is a matter of argument between technicians whether Johnson's Spur is sufficiently stable to provide a connection from the southern areas of Wollongong, Shellharbour and Kiama to the tablelands. It is certain that a road in that location could not be worse than Macquarie Pass, which is cut with monotonous regularity, causing many traffic delays.

I confess that I feel a great deal of envy about parts of the Government's announced policy on public transport. The Illawarra region has the worst public transport service in New South Wales—in fact, it is virtually non-existent. What we are paying for is the neglect over many years of our rail system—the link between the suburbs round Wollongong and the Port Kembla industrial area and the link between Wollongong and Sydney. The rail system was neglected because of the concept advanced just after World War II that private motor vehicles would solve all our transport problems. That concept has proved false because we have had to build expressways and freeways to accommodate our road vehicles. However, those expressways and freeways have not been adequate to get workers to their jobs and people from their homes to the shops. Nor have they been able to link up the area between Helensburgh and Kiama.

Just when it seemed that the previous Labor Government and the former coalition Government were recognizing the need for public transport in my area, a crazy decision was made. The former Liberal—Country party Government decided

that to win the electorate represented by the honourable member for Waverley, now the Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Co-operative Societies, it would complete the eastern suburbs railway. In terms of funding, the eastern suburbs railway has been a bottomless pit. I wish that the money spent on that project had been used to provide a decent public transport system in the Illawarra region. The eastern suburbs railway is an example of a political decision taken without any regard to the profitability of the project.

It is bad enough having a poor train service on the coastal plain; in addition we have what must be termed a rotten privately-owned bus service. I appreciate that any government would be loath to establish a decent public bus service in the Illawarra region. I have not seen the latest figures showing the loss sustained by the public bus service at Newcastle, which is a comparable area, but I understand it is about \$3 million a year. No government would willingly set out to lose that sum each year. Strangely enough, the private bus services in my area manage to pay. One hears people in other areas complaining about having to use buses that are twenty-five years old and the fact that buses of that age are no good. A number of buses operated in the Wollongong area by private owners would be twenty-five years old.

Mr N. D. Walker: What are you going to do about it?

Mr PETERSEN: That is a good question. If one-tenth of the money spent on the eastern suburbs railway were spent on bus transport in the Illawarra region, we would have a decent service. My appeal is that consideration be given to an integrated system of public transport. As a result of action taken by this Government in the past two years an enormous improvement has taken place in rail services in the Wollongong area. One has only to talk to workers who travel by train to the Port Kembla steelworks to find out what the Government is doing to improve rail services in the area. I ask that consideration be given to the inauguration of a public bus service to integrate with the existing rail service. Such a service would benefit a great number of workers in the Illawarra region.

It is good to note that included in the expenditure of \$207 million on public transport 118 new coal trucks are to be acquired, bringing the total number of these trucks to 644. The former Government did nothing about providing enough coal trucks because it was in the pocket of the road transport lobby. It is good to see the Government doing everything it can in this area despite the present extremely difficult situation. Soon after this Government came to office the Granville train disaster occurred. The Government then had to spend a great deal of money on making the railways safe; they were definitely not safe at the time the Government came to office. I am pleased that the Government is inaugurating a better rail service on the South Coast and getting coal trucks off the roads.

I have just returned from an overseas trip. I found only two places—Eire and Libya—where the public transport system was worse than it is in the Wollongong area. Public transport in Eire is bad, largely because it is a poor country that depends upon agriculture. Libya, a developing country, made the same mistake that we made: it depended upon private motor transport instead of establishing a good public transport system. The main road in Tripoli is named after a national hero who was hanged by the Italians in 1931 at the age of 73. This man had taken a leading part in an eight-year war against the Italians. I am convinced that his descendants still drive up and down the same road as he did. What happened in Tripoli is certainly not my idea of efficiency. When one rides on the public transport systems in many German and Danish cities, one can only be ashamed of the poor public transport system here in Sydney—and one must be doubly ashamed of the position in the Wollongong—Shellharbour region.

I congratulate the Government on the job it is doing in respect of sewerage, despite the federal Government's cancelling the backlog sewerage scheme inaugurated by the **Whitlam** Government. What happens all too often is that when parliamentarians are elected they do not worry about other people's sewerage problems. Inevitably, on their salaries they can afford to live in areas where they pull a chain as a matter of course. I can remember the days when I was first married and lived in an unsewered suburb of Brisbane. I lived in that suburb for eight years and then moved away from it about six months before the sewer was connected. I moved to what was then a new suburb—Unanderra—in the Wollongong area and spent another six years there before the sewer was connected. I must say that I got extremely tired of having to use the thunderbox in the backyard.

I am pleased that the Prime Minister from 1972 to 1975, the Hon. **Gough Whitlam**, brought up a young family in exactly the same circumstances. He was convinced of the need to make sure that sewerage was provided in every area. It is absolutely incredible to think that Australia, the wealthiest country in the world in terms of natural resources, with a high *per capita* income, cannot proceed with a 100 per cent main line sewerage scheme. The former federal Government had to take a political decision to institute the backlog sewerage scheme. It is indicative of the arrogance and elitism of Fraser and his ilk that they cancelled the backlog sewerage scheme because, they said, they could see no need for it.

Until about ten years ago the whole of the Shellharbour municipality in my electorate was unsewered. In order to obtain a sewerage system the council had to sign an agreement with the Metropolitan Water Sewerage and Drainage Board to provide half of the \$9 million cost of the scheme and to meet losses incurred in maintaining the scheme. Costs escalated to \$19 million and consequently the council is in the red. It has to meet \$500,000 in interest payments each year and pay for the cost of maintaining the service. The position is completely intolerable. Rates in the Shellharbour municipality are 50 per cent higher than those in the neighbouring Wollongong area. It is hoped that before long the whole of the Wollongong—Shellharbour region will be sewered. When that is achieved no further development will be permitted unless a main line sewer is available or provided. That is what the **Whitlam Labor Government** in Canberra was aiming for.

I am glad to see that the Government is fair dinkum over the construction of the new prison buildings. Nevertheless, I have some reservations. The Government is following the report of the Royal commission presided over by that great and good: man, Mr Justice Nagle. It is typical of the Opposition in this House that the only two references made during the Address-in-Reply debate about Mr Justice Nagle's report were made by the honourable member for **Burwood**, who called it boring, and the honourable member for Bathurst, who told me that warders were human beings, too, when in 1971 I exposed the bashings that had taken place in Bathurst gaol in October 1970.

Mr Boyd: The honourable member incited riots at Bathurst.

Mr PETERSEN: That is a lie. You know it is a filthy lie. It is typical of the nonsense that comes from the honourable member for Byron and I make this point specifically. I am glad to have that lie perpetrated by the honourable member for Byron. I am glad he says it openly to my face. It has been said behind my back all too often. It is a lie. I find it incredible in a situation where warders and employees of the Department of Corrective Services are on strike that members of the Liberal Party and the Country Party, whose normal stand when workers go on strike is to pretend that a Bolshevik revolution is just around the corner, **should** support those actions which give rise to situations such as that occurring at Long Bay last week,

Honourable members opposite are **guilty**. They have caused the problems in the prisons. It is about time they admitted their contribution to what has happened in prisons over the past few years.

Were it not that the report by his Honour Mr Justice Nagle was so good in so many other respects, particularly with regard to the opening up of communications within the prison system, I should be somewhat reluctant to support the construction of another prison. When new prisons are built a sort of **Parkinson's** law comes into force and all the cells are kept occupied.

Mr **Coleman**: So you would support the construction of a new prison at **Parklea**.

Mr **PETERSEN**: I would not support the demagoguery of the Leader of the Opposition when he was in charge of prisons. His administration resulted in the construction of a contemptible dungeon and the Leader of the Opposition knows that his plans for **Silverwater** were not in any way adequate. He knows that they would not have catered for the number of prisoners sent there. I congratulate the Treasurer for the contribution he has made in bringing forward a successful loans estimate from the slender resources available to the State. He has done his best to present a programme of which we can all be proud. The Treasurer's programme indicates that **Labor** stands for the people and the needs of the **working** people, despite the elitism of Prime Minister Fraser and the hypocrisy of members of the Liberal Party and Country Party who have consistently shown no concern for the **working** people.

Mr **ARBLASTER** (Mosman) [8.56]: It is easy for a member of the Opposition to follow a speech by the honourable member for Illawarra. The member of the Opposition is able to point up the difference between the two sides of the House. In one case we have a self-confessed communist speaking on behalf of the Government and, in the other case, a moderate putting forward steady policies. At the **beginning** of his contribution to this debate, the honourable member for Illawarra expressed his principles. He referred to total control and total planning, just like the shadow Treasurer in Canberra who, when speaking on behalf of the federal **Labor** Party, said he believed in the primary redistribution of resources and wealth. He went on to say that he meant by that the distribution of wealth prior to its going into **the** wage-earners' pockets. In this way a socialist government would make decisions on how to spend money and the individual would have no say at all. That is a basic difference between the **Labor** Government in this House and the Liberal-Country party Opposition.

The Treasurer throughout his speech told the same old story. Similarly, we heard the same record played by the honourable member for Illawarra. Repeatedly the Treasurer blamed the federal Government for alleged shortage of funds. He used the federal Government as his excuse and made it the whipping boy for his failings. Both the Premier and the Treasurer know that in years gone by, and particularly in the past couple of years, New South Wales has received an enormous increase in the amount of untied funds made available by the Commonwealth. From the past three federal budgets New South Wales has received 54 per cent of its funds untied and has had the opportunity to make its own decisions on how to spend that money. The **Labor** Government in New South Wales has determined its own priorities for this expenditure.

We know why this happened. The State Government berates the federal Government, but what do the figures show? The fact is that the federal Government in its last three budgets has increased untied grants to the State by 54 per cent. Even though last year the total deficit of all the States combined was \$21.8 million on an expenditure of \$11,532 million, and the federal Government's deficit was \$3,300 million on an expenditure of \$26,802 million, New South Wales wants the Common-

wealth to continue the irresponsible spending of the **Whitlam Labor** Government. Theirs is the **Oliver Twist** approach, "Please, sir, may I have more?", with no question of accepting responsibility for how the money is raised or spent. In 1974 the **Whitlam Labor** Government budgeted for a deficit of \$550 million. Nine months later the deficit had grown to \$2,500 million. In addition, the inflation rate had risen to nearly 18 per cent, and unemployment was increasing. Despite that history, members of the **Labor** Party still believe that their economic tactics are right. They have another think coming. The **Fraser** Government is reducing the rate of inflation, and is giving the States responsibility for deciding how the money will be spent. That attitude is in contrast with the **Labor** Government view that you can take money out of the pockets of the people all the time and spend it as you wish.

The Treasurer said that the State is short of loan funds, and earlier the Premier said that New South Wales would try to borrow overseas. When **borrowing** overseas, a little thing called confidence must be taken into account—the confidence of the lender in the borrower. When the Premier was last in America he was talking to potential lenders about borrowing at an interest rate two to three points higher than the **general** market rates at that time. Lender confidence is not inspired by decisions of the sort made by the Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Mines and Minister for Energy, when he confiscated the assets of Coal and Allied Industries Limited. The other night I told this House that potential investors and buyers in the coal industry were taking their money to Queensland, and possibly to **South Africa**, rather than investing it in New South Wales. A Cabinet Minister said that we should let them go to those places. His words are recorded in *Hansard*. "Let them go to Queensland," he said. That comment discloses the true attitude of the Government. One can understand the reaction of investors.

What do overseas investors think about us when the Premier attends a meeting in Town Hall Square and incites those who are present? What do they think of a Premier who uses a well-known gesture of the rebel—the raised hand—and as a result the rabble storms the stock exchange? If the Premier and the Treasurer are able to borrow money overseas for capital works, the State will have to pay a high penalty rate of interest on it.

The Government cries poor mouth. What was the history of the **Labor** Party in office until 1965? For some time the present Treasurer was Treasurer and later Premier and Treasurer in that Government, but at no stage did he or his party take up the full allocation of loan funds to which they were entitled from the Commonwealth. Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia accepted the whole of their entitlement, but New South Wales chose not to do so. It preferred to let the railways and other public undertakings run down. It is **Labor** Party philosophy not to accept the whole of the loan funds made available by the Commonwealth.

The Treasurer made few points in his speech other than those concerned with whingeing and carping. On the matter of a shortage of funds he said that for the first time in twenty-five years the federal Government had made no increase in this State's general loan allocation. As I said before, the fact is that the New South Wales Government has been given a lot more by the Commonwealth in untied funds and is able to make its own decisions about how it will spend them. That is in contrast to what happened under the Whitlam Government when the Commonwealth gave this State directions on how to spend every penny.

How much of the Treasurer's Loan Speech can honourable members believe? For example, it contains a statement that is something like part of the continuing story of "Blue Hills", episode 563: the Government will "add two new ferries to the Sydney

inner harbour fleet". This is the third time that that statement has appeared in a Loan Speech presented by the present Government. It is about the fifteenth attempt by the Government to get a headline on the matter. We have yet to see the ferries. The statement will probably appear in next year's Loan Speech, as did many of the promises of the Labor Government up to 1965. When a Liberal-Country party Government was elected it was faced with a history of unfinished work. One promised dam had been under construction for twenty-two years. There were promises, but no performance.

The Government has made provision for 118 new coal waggons. There is no reference to an upgrading of the Illawarra line to carry coal to Port Kembla. There is no mention of upgrading the line from Moss Vale to Unanderra. An interdepartmental committee found that an expenditure of \$30 million to enable that line to take increased traffic would not overcome its basic instability. A sum of \$30 million was virtually thrown down the drain.

The environmental impact study of the proposed Port Kembla coal loader, which was made available recently, found that the Illawarra line is carrying a maximum of eight coal trains a day, one way. The average is six coal trains a day, one way. By 1981 at the conclusion of stage 1 of the Port Kembla coal loader the average will rise from six to sixteen coal trains a day, one way. That means that thirty-two coal trains a day will use the Illawarra line each day. This demonstrates the deliberate lies by the Premier, by the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Ports, and by the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways during the Earlwood by-election campaign when they said there would be no additional coal traffic on the Illawarra line. They are contradicted by an environmental impact study by an independent firm of engineers, MacDonald Wagner & Priddle Pty Limited, the results of which were issued in July 1978. That study contains a straightout statement that the number of coal trains going down the Illawarra line in 1981 will be 16 a day, one way. I say that the Premier has knowingly misled the people. For him that is par for the course.

What would the honourable members for Rockdale, Kogarah, Hurstville and Georges River say about this increased traffic? In the Treasurer's speech there was no mention of the rail line from Maldon to Port Kembla. A lot has been said about that, but facts are that the Government intends to use the Illawarra line as the main coal transport line from the western and south-western coalfields. The environmental impact statement gives the lie to the Premier's suggestion that there will be no increases. I come now to the allocation of funds for coal ports. A sum of \$40 million will be spent on capital works by the Maritime Services Board. The Loan Speech also states that a start will be made on the Port Kembla coal loader and on upgrading the Balmain coal loader. This shows a complete failure by the Government to understand the coal industry in this State. It contains what is probably a deliberate statement that the Government will go so far and no further, and probably wants the investment capital to go to Queensland. It also demonstrates the failure of the Government adequately to plan for the future potential of the coalmining industry in this State.

The environmental impact statement, which was prepared by an independent firm, states that the average potential export in 1985 will be 44 million tonnes a year, in 1990 66 million tonnes, in 1995 79 million tonnes, and in 2000 91 million tonnes a year. The Premier said that the Government has assisted the coal industry in this State by the provision of export facilities. However, coal loading facilities in Queensland and South Africa are capable of handling vessels up to 150 000 tonnes. The capacity of the ports of New South Wales in 1985 will increase to 45 million tonnes, allowing for the full capacity of Port Kembla, Balmain and Newcastle. Port Kembla will have a capacity of 12 million to 15 million tonnes; Balmain a capacity

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of 4.5 million tonnes, and Newcastle a potential practical loading rate of 25 million tonnes a year. Taking the maximum at Port Kembla at 15 million tonnes, the total capacity of New South Wales ports will increase to 40 million tonnes; **Balmain** will increase to 4.5 million tonnes, increasing this total to 45 million tonnes a year. With the potential export of 44 million tonnes in 1985, growing in that five year span to 66 million tonnes, there will be an increase of 50 per cent, for which no planning has been done. It is well recognized that coal is the only major natural resource industry in New South Wales, the State with the largest coal production rate in Australia, and, until 1972-73, the largest exporting State. At that time it was surpassed by Queensland, with its enormous open cut coke and coal mines.

The coal industry offers the best prospect of expansion of any industry in New South Wales over the next ten years. The benefit will be in capital investments, export income, decentralisation, additional government income, direct and indirect employment and creation of other service industries. This is the future that this Government wishes to throw away. Its attitude and failure to plan is sending private enterprise capital to Queensland and South Africa. This failure is emphasized by the fact that the Government did not know for twelve months that there was a ship repair facility in Port Kembla which had to be relocated. The fact that the Government now has to find \$12 million to relocate that facility is not mentioned in the Loan Speech.

I shall now examine the allocation made for the water board. There has been talk of irresponsible planning in the coal exporting industry and a failure to plan for the future. The Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Ports admitted in this House that he gave a direction to the water board to employ more day labour staff. At the same time he admitted that the board had advised him that such action would cause a considerable rise in cost. He was then aware of the statement by the chief planning officer of the Housing Commission that the water board's estimate of costs, based on their own experience, was between 180 per cent and 470 per cent higher than the cost of the work if carried out by a private contractor. That is the way this Government attacks a problem. The Minister gave as a reason that, following his direction, the water board employed a much greater number of light duty workers. The taxpayers and the ratepayers must pay for this. The Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Ports would be aware that because of that direction the cost of these works to the ratepayer has increased by up to 470 per cent. He would also be aware that in 1965, with day labour staff, the **Keepit** Dam had been under construction for twenty-two years. The Minister responsible for water conservation at that time, the Hon. Jack **Beale**, said: "This has to stop. We shall get contractors in to finish it." It was then finished within a short period.

I shall give an example of the difference between estimated costs employing day labour and actual costs using contractors. On a water board project in an outer western suburbs development the board's estimate of the cost of water reticulation was \$35,700. The actual cost of the work done by contract was \$15,100. The board's estimate of cost of sewerage reticulation was \$115,100. The actual cost of the work done by contract was \$41,000. The board's estimates were based on the use of day labour. The Minister said—these are not my words—"We employ a lot of people in the water board with bad backs. We will not sack them". The Government would be better off paying them not to work and having the work done by contract. In the example I have given the actual cost of the work done by contract was about one-third of the board's estimated cost using day labour.

What does this mean to Mr and Mrs Smith, a newly-married young couple purchasing land? Members of the Government shed crocodile tears over young people buying land, but if the water board had carried out the work using day labour an additional \$2,010 would have been paid for each block of land in the development.

The actual contract cost was \$771, a saving of \$1,239 on each block. Yet in the face of these facts the Minister continues with his direction to employ more day labour staff. Earlier this evening the honourable member for Young said that costs are rising in this State because of the enormous increase in the use of day labour by Government instrumentalities.

Yesterday we were given the Loan Speech and the Loan Estimates. We were supposed to peruse them, know all about an estimated expenditure of \$2,000 million, and come into the House and debate the proposals. One can look quickly through these documents and pick holes in the Government's proposals. We have heard about the two new ferries in the same document for three years in a row. That is not a bad record. But the people of this State are waking up to the two-timing and the deliberate lying statements of Ministers on the other side of the House. During the Earlwood by-election campaign they said that no additional coal trains will run on the Illawarra line, but in an official document that has just been released we read that that line will carry not twelve trains a day but thirty-two. Yet the Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Mines and Minister for Energy, the Premier, the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Ports and the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways say there will be no additional coal traffic on the Illawarra line.

The Loan Speech and the Loan Estimates contain not one word about how much will be spent on upgrading the Illawarra line. They contain nothing about the furphy about the line from Maldon to Port Kembla. The Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways knows that that line cannot be built and will not be built for it is not an economic proposition to build it. We have been told that an amount of money will be spent on the line from Moss Vale to Unanderra. We do not know how much, for it is not in this document, and we do not know when it will start. But we do know that the interdepartmental report states that the expenditure of \$30 million will not overcome the basic instability of the line. When one goes through the Loan Speech one finds promises and promises but no performance. We shall not see the promises become realities.

Mr SHEAHAN (Burrinjuck) [9.26]: I followed with interest but confusion the contribution to this debate by the honourable member for Mosman. I had the advantage during his speech of sitting next to my colleague the honourable member for Blue Mountains, who was able to contradict sentence after sentence what the honourable member said about the coal industry. His only other contribution to the debate was to express his opposition—and presumably that of the Opposition—to the day labour force being employed by the Department of Public Works.

At the commencement of my remarks on this measure I wish to comment on the contributions of the most senior and most junior members of the Parliament—the Treasurer and the honourable member for Earlwood. At the conclusion of his speech the Treasurer said that the programme he had announced was one of which the Government is proud. Indeed the Government is proud of the Treasurer for being able to introduce such a programme at this time of financial stringency. The Treasurer, who is the most senior member of our party in the Parliament and the most senior member of the Parliament, must be contrasted with the honourable member for **Earlwood** who moved the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply and is **the baby of** this House. The honourable member for **Earlwood** made a superb contribution to that debate in his first few hours in the House and I take this opportunity, seeing I have not yet spoken in the Address-in-Reply debate, to extend my congratulations to him and to couple them with congratulations to the Treasurer **on** the important loan programme that he announced in the House yesterday.

An old story told about the late Sir Michael **Bruxner** and the late Billy Sheahan placed the Garden of Eden in my electorate, which used to be known as the **Yass** electorate. If honourable members have seen the advertisements for Mountain Maid products on city and country television programmes recently they will have some idea of the fine nature of the countryside in my electorate and its importance to the economic fabric of this State and nation. I take more than the normal interest in the loan programme and appreciate the opportunity of speaking on it. During the Address-in-Reply debate and on other occasions—for example, in answering a question recently—the Minister for Decentralisation and Development and Minister for Primary Industries and other spokesmen for the Government have enumerated the achievements of this Government in rural areas. This can be contrasted, as the Minister has done in his contribution to the Address-in-Reply debate, with the effect of the recent **Commonwealth Budget** on rural areas.

I am pleased that the Treasurer placed great importance on the rural sector of our society. For example, on page 19 of his Loan Speech he mentioned allocations for grain storage, loans for farm improvement through the Rural Bank, agricultural services, forestry, water and soil conservation and expenditures in growth centres. He also gave details of the Grain Elevators Board programme, which concerns three centres of importance to my electorate—Wallendbeen, Junee and Temora. He went on to speak of \$8 million being provided to the Rural Bank for on-lending to primary producers for various forms of farm improvement, representing an increase of \$500,000 on last year's allocation.

The Treasurer claims also, and I think it is a just claim, that this will make a significant contribution to farm productivity. That is of interest to me, and I think it is of interest to country members wherever they come from. I cannot let this opportunity pass without mentioning briefly the contribution of the Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Co-operative Societies in a matter of importance to country areas, notably, the inclusion of farmers within the framework of the consumer protection legislation of this State.

In the limited time available to me I want to traverse briefly some of the allocations made in the bill referred to by the Treasurer in his speech as printed. I am pleased to see that a large allocation is being made to the Department of Lands. I wish to mention briefly the relevance of the allocations shown as items 19 to 22 in the General Loan Account Appropriation Bill. I refer members in particular to the item covering public reserves and improvements to them, and also to item 21, which refers to the National Parks and Wildlife Service, I emphasize the need for eradication from parks such as the Kosciusko national park of animal and plant pests. Noxious weeds and noxious animals have been a great problem to landholders in the vicinity of Kosciusko national park and other national parks. They have been the subject of a hefty increase in the allocations that have been made over recent years. Also, the Minister for Tourism benefits greatly from the allocation made to him in item 45. This money is for the promotion of tourist attractions in country areas. I commend to honourable members item 1, the allocation for the Health Commission, which will enable something constructive to be done to alleviate the drug problem.

The honourable member for Mosman, in what I might call euphemistically his contribution to the debate, expressed great opposition to the use by the Department of Public Works of day labour and also in programmes undertaken by the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Ports. Page 18 of the Loan Speech and items 30 and 37 of the bill contain references to government buildings and water and sewerage schemes. The allocation of \$35 million for the provision of water and sewerage schemes is most welcome. In his short time in office the

Minister has made substantial improvements by being receptive to deputations regarding the provision of a water scheme for Gundagai and the Harden shire and a sewerage system for Cootamundra.

Item 41 as shown in the bill gives the Minister for Education the opportunity to honour in the future, as he has in the recent past, commitments that he made to provide important facilities for education in country areas. Not the least of those requiring action have been those for the Burrinjuck electorate. I welcome this allocation because it will give the opportunity to develop the Berinba primary school and the Andalini special purposes school in the same grounds, to develop the Tumut high school and to carry on with necessary redevelopment of some of the old schools within the electorate, especially those that in recent years have celebrated their centenary. Other welcome allocations are for teacher housing and technical education. I hope that it may involve also the construction of a new technical college at Cootamundra.

I want to make particular reference to the allocations to the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways. First I refer to the rolling stock programme which is dealt with in item 9 of the bill and at page 10 of the Treasurer's Loan Speech. Details are given of certain assets of the people of New South Wales—assets purchased from resources of those people. I urge the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways to be most careful about the future operation of the 421-series diesel-electric locomotives. Many fires in recent years have been traced to sparks from these locomotives while on the main southern line. The honourable member for Albury is aware of the areas in his electorate and in adjoining electorates that have been substantially burnt by fires caused by sparks from the 421-series locomotives. If he had the opportunity to contribute to this debate at this stage I am sure he would join with me in urging the Minister to take some action about this matter.

Section 145 of the Railways (Amendment) Act that was introduced in 1955 limited to \$4000 the amount of compensation that may be claimed from the Public Transport Commission in respect of fire damage. That amount of compensation is now quite inadequate. Even if a person had his property burnt out every year and successfully gained the maximum compensation, it would be substantially less than the damage. Although I have tremendous sympathy for people who express great concern about the Granville train disaster, people involved in that tragedy had the opportunity to claim under the Workers' Compensation Act or otherwise against the Public Transport Commission by proving negligence on the part of the commission in the operation of the train on that day. In respect of claims for fire damage under section 145 there has been no change to the relevant legislation since its introduction. On checking this matter recently I found that members opposite, who were in opposition then in this House, voted against the introduction of the limit, yet between 1965 and 1976 while in government they did nothing about the matter. The honourable member for Young, at the opening of the electricity conference by the Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Mines and Minister for Energy in Queanbeyan long ago, said that there should be no limit on the amount of damages that could be recovered from the railways and, by definition, it should be recovered from all the statutory authorities involved in dangerous pursuits. I agree with his view, but he and his colleagues did nothing when in government to remedy the situation. In those circumstances it is a difficult situation to come to grips with their approach to a matter like this.

I want to mention also the position in respect of freight rates and fares. We have the record of the Country Party-dominated Government in Canberra and the former Country Party-dominated Government in New South Wales. The record speaks for itself—a fuel tax, support of double income tax, and a Boree Creek motion to the National Country Party conference which would add 200 per cent to the fares paid

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by the average country rail passenger. Motor vehicle transfer fees increased by 300 per cent in December, 1975. Rail freights were increased by 10 per cent on 1st September, 1974, by 5 per cent on 11th May, 1975 and by a further 15 per cent on 19th October, 1975. In thirteen months there was an increase of 30 per cent in rail freights in New South Wales.

Members opposite, particularly those from the wheatgrowing areas such as that represented by the honourable member for Barwon, rightly complain about the freight increases, but they were silent when their Government increased freights by 30 per cent in 13 months. Compare that with this Government's record—a 7 per cent increase on 1st October, 1976, when the inflation rate in New South Wales was 12 per cent, and an 8 per cent increase on 1st October, 1977, when inflation was running at 13.4 per cent. Because of the co-operation of this Government with the federal Government at that time the second freight rate increase was held back for five months. Over two and a half years of government there were only those two small increases. That record compares favourably with the performance of the previous Country Party-dominated Government.

The Leader of the Country Party and his spokesmen in country areas, including the unknown secret weapon who is their endorsed candidate to stand against me at the next elections, perpetrate the consistent lie that the Government will increase freight rates for country rail users and decrease fares for city commuters. We all know that the Labor Government decreased by 20 per cent the passenger fares paid by country commuters. In this way we generated increased patronage of railway services, including in country areas, and this brought in more revenue. I wish to refer to road finance simply to comment that the Hume Highway quite properly received some significant mention in the Treasurer's Loan Speech. My electorate includes all but 3 miles of what has become known as the horror stretch of the Hume Highway from Gunning to Tarcutta. The Department of Main Roads is carrying out many works in that area. As recently as today the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways reaffirmed in the House that there would be record spending in this financial year on roads. The bill provides for a special allocation of \$40 million under the loan programme for road expenditure.

One must welcome the inquiry commenced by the Government into the road freight system. Even the honourable member for Wakehurst, whose interjections or speeches in the Parliament one cannot understand, would have to accept that this inquiry is long overdue. This inquiry leads me to mention the question of road safety. One has to realize that a future government will have to bite the bullet on the road safety issue. It will have to look beyond permitting a person of 17 years of age to seek a driving licence, and deciding when they are 80 that they should have a medical examination by a doctor of their choice to establish their fitness to drive a motor vehicle. It ill behoves the honourable member for Kirribilli to make such a song and dance about the claims made following the Granville train disaster. Also, it ill behoves honourable members opposite, such as the honourable member for Bligh, to make a song and dance about the unfortunate Penrith footballer John Farragher. One would think from their remarks that the people injured in that train smash and the injured footballer were the only people in the country's history to be admitted to hospital as a result of an injury caused through no fault of their own. Many people are in the same position and they are required to take court action.

I turn now to the allocation for the portfolio of the Minister for Mines and Minister for Energy. Comments were made recently outside the House and also during the Address-in-Reply debate about the reserves that the Electricity Commission has been able to accumulate for various commendable purposes. Reference was made also to claims for damage caused by bushfires in several areas of New South Wales. The

South-west Slopes County Council was mentioned in the course of a rather extraordinary contribution to the debate by the honourable member for Goulburn. Although the figures are different, a similar story may be told about other county councils with respect to the operation of their electricity distribution responsibilities. In January 1975 a major bushfire occurred in the Rugby district. It spread to many properties resulting in claims amounting to millions of dollars being brought against the South-west Slopes County Council. At the time of the fire that council had \$250,000 insurance cover.

At Christmas of 1972 an extensive bushfire started in the Nanangroe area between Gundagai and Yass. That bushfire burnt through an extensive area of my electorate. At the time I was in practice as a solicitor. I did practise as a solicitor for some time, which is more than can be said by the Leader of the Opposition. In the course of my practice I acted for landholders who suffered damage as a result of that bushfire. Shortly after the fire I served on the Tumut River County Council claims amounting to almost \$1 million. Notwithstanding the experience of the Tumut River County Council, nearly two years later the South-west Slopes County Council, which faced claims amounting to almost \$3 million, had not increased its insurance cover above \$250,000. That council approached the Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Mines and Minister for Energy, the Minister for Local Government and the Treasurer seeking some contribution to meet the damages bill, which has virtually been settled at a figure of some \$1.7 million. No intimation has yet been given of the source of the funds on which the Government is supposed to draw to pay this claim on behalf of the South-west Slopes County Council. The council is willing to sit by and be dismissed for not honouring its obligation. There has been only some airy-fairy reference to all the money that the Electricity Commission has salted away,

The Treasurer referred to the capital expenditure by the Electricity Commission. He mentioned also the need to borrow funds overseas for the Eraring power station. If the Electricity Commission is suggested as the only possible source of funds to meet damages claims of the type brought against the South-west Slopes County Council, how can it be said that the Government can afford to pay those damages claims out of its existing sources of funds? I repeat, the Electricity Commission has to apply for permission to borrow overseas to carry out its own operations and for expansion of activities. Obviously there must be a special fund—a revolving fund of some type may be possible—so that councils that take the maximum amount of insurance of approximately \$1 million will have access to that fund to meet any excess claims. Legislation along these lines is currently being contemplated by the Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Mines and Minister for Energy. Those who live in areas that are prone to fire damage because there are power lines in contact with naturally growing scrub or trees should be pleased to learn about this proposal.

If councils such as the South-west Slopes County Council borrow money at commercial rates to meet the whole of the damages, costs and interest for the claims made against it, two-thirds of those amounts will be paid outside the county district. The tariffs of citizens within the county district will be increased by approximately 7 per cent. The Treasurer will have to decide whether that increase is an intolerable burden in the light of the tariff structures throughout the State. The Treasurer may decide to afford some Government assistance on the basis of an undertaking that he has given. These important issues face the Parliament and they must be considered in conjunction with the loan programme. One is speaking about money that some people claim is salted away by the Government. It is asserted that it could be used to satisfy these liabilities that are claimed to be beyond the resources of local government bodies.

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I commend also the allocations to the Minister for Conservation and Minister for Water Resources. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the officers of the Forestry Commission for their efforts within the Tumut forestry district, which embraces a large part of my electorate and part of the electorate of the honourable member for **Albury**. I am pleased to observe an allocation of \$15 million for various expenses incurred during the course of the Forestry Commission's operations, including road building.

During the Address-in-Reply debate the honourable member for South Coast raised the issue of the aggregation of timber quotas as a result of the take-over of various companies. The three large timber milling operators in the Tumut district work in close co-operation with the Forestry Commission. It is important that the commission tailor its programme of planting and harvesting to meet existing and future demands of the developing industries in the area. Although some of the examples cited by the honourable member for South Coast are awry, the fact is that if one company takes over its neighbour, it acquires the quota and there is nothing the Government can do about it. It is an extraordinary situation. It would seem to me that when an amount of \$15 million is allocated in the loan programme for the Forestry Commission of New South Wales, the commission should be considering the possibility of becoming involved in the sawmilling industry. I think that the Minister for Conservation and Minister for Water Resources has such a proposal under consideration, subject to funding. It is to be hoped that it receives the support of all honourable members opposite.

In the limited time remaining to me I wish to make some observations regarding the general strategy of the loan programme and the Government's activity in respect of financial matters and economic management. I shall refer also to the credibility of honourable members opposite who in contributions to this debate, to the Address-in-Reply debate and in other spheres of activity in the Parliament have criticized the Government for the way it has acted. I have made references to the basic inaccuracies—in other words the lying nature—of the comments made about the freight rate structure and the fare structure. Other comments have been made, particularly by spokesmen for the Country Party, about the project within the responsibility of the Minister for Conservation and Minister for Water Resources relating to repairs to the valve house at Burrinjuck Dam. If one looks at *Hansard* of earlier this year and late last year one will see that this matter was the subject of a heated exchange between the Minister and the honourable member for Oxley.

The people in my electorate and in the electorates of Murrumbidgee, Wagga Wagga and Sturt, and others who are affected in some degree should know the true story about the repairs and the allocation made towards effecting the repairs. They should know that the Government, eighteen months after the event, commissioned the necessary purchases to effect the repairs. The dam is one of the most important dams in New South Wales, though it is one of the oldest. According to one of the senior engineers of the Water Resources Commission, if the dam had to be built now it would be built three times as big as it is. In his view it is the best dam site in the world. In September, 1974, the dam was crippled by flood damage. There was an eighteen months delivery period on equipment necessary to repair the damage. The former Government did nothing about that, but the honourable member for **Oxley** and the honourable member for Sturt now want to tell lies to the Parliament and to the people outside, who should have a careful look at the position.

In general terms on the General Loan Account Appropriation Bill I shall refer to comments made in the House last night by the honourable member for Sturt who uttered his usual furphy. I cannot understand the comment but he has frequently said that he believes in one vote, one equal value of representation. I cannot quite

understand what one equal value of representation is—if some objective criterion is to be accepted as the measure. How can it be judged that there is equal value of representation short of deciding that one member individually, in his performance, is equal to another? How can it be decided except on the basis of equal enrolment of electors eligible to vote for one seat, country or city. The honourable member for Sturt called on country Labor Party members to say where they stood on the issue.

If that honourable member reads the Hansard report of the debate of 1st June, 1977, on the Legislative Council reform bill, he will see what I, as a country Labor Party member said about one vote, one value. What I said was adopted by the people of New South Wales not on one occasion but at least twice. The people adopted the viewpoint at the federal referendum of 1974 and at the recent referendum on the reform of the Legislative Council. Let there be no more humbug about this. Let the honourable member for Sturt and others——

Mr Pickard: What about the Loan Estimates?

Mr SHEAHAN: The honourable member for Hornsby should not ask about the Loan Estimates. It is interesting to note that honourable members opposite, including the honourable member for Sturt, support the type of situation that exists in Queensland where a party that obtained 27 per cent of the vote won 35 seats; a party that obtained 25 per cent of the votes got 24 seats; and the Labor Party, with 43 per cent of the votes, got the fewest seats—23. Let us have enough of that talk——

Mr Pickard: On a point of order. I draw to your attention, Mr Speaker, that the honourable member for Burrinjuck is not speaking to the question before the House. He is speaking to some other totally unrelated issue. I ask you to draw his attention to that and to bring him back to the Loan Speech.

Mr Sheahan: On the point of order. I have need of only one more sentence to link up the comments I have made.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Burrinjuck has strayed far away from the bill. Doubtless in the limited time he has available he will link his remarks to the bill.

Mr SHEAHAN: I have need to refer only to the Loan Estimates. I draw attention to the Loan Estimates for the 1977–78 financial year in which total expenditure was \$1,800 million representing an average of \$360 a head for every man, woman and child in New South Wales. In the country areas the average expenditure was \$400, a difference of \$40. That \$40 represents 10 per cent of \$400. Let us have our 10 per cent tolerance in expenditure in the areas of need and not in the area of electoral enrolment.

Mr COLEMAN (Fuller), Leader of the Opposition [9.56]: In assessing the General Loan Account Appropriation Bill in any detail one has to judge it by the extent to which it will contribute, in this period in the history of New South Wales, to restoring the economy of the State. It has to be judged in that way, especially in this House, in the light of the misleading and false statements that the Premier has been making repeatedly—he repeated them again in the House today—concerning the amount of new investment coming into the State. I shall give figures, including some of which the Premier is probably unaware. He cannot even interpret the figures he has. The figures give some indication of the bad state of the economy under the Wran Labor Government in New South Wales.

It is clear that the State, under the Wran Labor Government, is going through the sort of experience that Australia as a whole went through under the Whitlam Government. New South Wales is in the same sort of mess as Australia was in at

that time. The other States are going ahead, restoring prosperity and attracting migrants away from New South Wales. Let us start with that fundamental problem. Let us get that clear because it is against that background that one must judge the bill. Today the Premier repeated this absurd, false claim that New South Wales was leading all States except Western Australia in attracting new investment. I wish that were true but I ask honourable members to listen for a moment while I explain some facts. If it were true, it would be great news and there would not be migration from the State, declining retail sales, declining motor car sales and so on.

If it were true, New South Wales would have a much more prosperous economy. But, it is not true. It is false and the Premier knows that it is fake. He knows that under his Government, New South Wales has the worst record of all the States in attracting investment. That is the situation honourable members are examining now, in debating the General Loan Account Appropriation Bill. The other States are attracting between 60 per cent and 560 per cent more new investment per head than is New South Wales. The figure of \$1,400 million quoted by the Premier to the Chamber of Manufactures of New South Wales last week referred to new investment in manufacturing projects over the next three years. If the Premier has difficulty in reading, I refer him to the March 1978 *Journal of Industry and Commerce*, volume 1, page 3. The important thing is that the New South Wales figure of \$1,400 million compares with \$1,700 million in Victoria, \$1,500 million in Queensland and \$2,200 million in Western Australia.

This State's \$1,400 million investment compares poorly with the \$2,200 million investment in Western Australia. When one looks at the position in terms of *per capita* investment one gets some idea of the parlous state we are in under this Government and how one should judge the Loan Estimates. In New South Wales the *per capita* investment is \$285, in Victoria it is \$454, in Queensland \$710, in South Australia \$793, in Tasmania \$860, and in Western Australia \$1,880. Compare the *per capita* investment of \$285 in New South Wales with the figure of \$1,880 in Western Australia. If the message and warning need further clarification, the figures show that the investment in Victoria is 60 per cent higher than in New South Wales, in Queensland it is 150 per cent more, in South Australia it is 178 per cent more, in Tasmania it is 200 per cent more, and it is 560 per cent more in Western Australia.

That is the sort of situation that the Opposition is concerned about. It is the sort of situation that is leading to the decline of jobs in New South Wales and is the basic fact about the poor economy that this State is suffering under this socialist Government. Moreover, it is comparable with the state of the economy of Australia under the Whitlam Government. The survey the Premier referred to shows that under this Government the great State of New South Wales can attract only 17 per cent of new investment in Australia—and this State has traditionally attracted 40 per cent of the new investment. Even more recent figures prepared by the Department of Industry and Commerce only two weeks ago show that manufacturing investment in New South Wales has slumped from 17 per cent of the total Australian investment to an all-time low of 13 per cent.

New South Wales ranks fourth behind Western Australia, Victoria and Queensland. On a *per capita* basis New South Wales has the lowest investment level of any State in Australia. Even Tasmania—and honourable members might recall that earlier today the Premier referred to that State as poor little Tasmania—has a *per capita* investment that is 300 per cent greater than that of New South Wales. The figures I have just given are in respect of manufacturing industry only.

Mr Mulock: Who gave you those figures?

Mr COLEMAN: The Minister of Justice and Minister for Housing should not make jokes about this. I am **talking** about unemployment and the future of our community. It ill behoves the Minister to make stupid remarks about this sort of thing. The same survey prepared by the Commonwealth Department of Industry and Commerce—and the Premier can get his **staff** to look up the figures tomorrow because I believe they have not done that yet—was completed two weeks ago. It showed that total investment in New South Wales—that is manufacturing investment plus **mining** investment—is a poor fourth to Western Australia, Queensland and Victoria.

Mr F. J. Walker: You will get a good run tomorrow.

Mr COLEMAN: I am **talking** about jobs and the future of this State. You should **not**—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition **will** address his remarks to the Chair.

Mr COLEMAN: **Taking** mining and manufacturing together, New South Wales has only **10.7** per cent of the nation's new investment. That is a terrible state of ~~affairs~~; it is a terrible piece of information for the community as far as our economy is concerned. The Premier has tried to brush aside the facts. One cannot do anything about any problem unless one faces up to it. The Premier has spoken about **knocking**, but this has absolutely nothing to do with knocking. These figures are presented to the House so that honourable members can be aware of the facts and know what is wrong in the community. I have presented these figures so that we can go about doing something in a realistic way.

It is totally irresponsible for the Premier or anyone else in the **Labor** Party to ignore the facts when so many people in New South Wales are searching for jobs. Jobs cannot be created while investors prefer other States such **as** Queensland and Victoria. Is it any wonder that industry is leaving New South Wales for **Queesland**? Only last week we witnessed an example of the Wran Government's official investment policy. The Minister for Conservation and Minister for Water Resources—the short-term member for Murrumbidgee—referred to industry leaving the State for Queensland and said, "Let them go to Queensland." That attitude reflects the thinking of the New South Wales Government. Its actions confirm it. The Minister need not have said, let them go; it had already started to happen. The Government's policy had already been implemented. In fact, the Government's own report on the State's economy refers to migration out of the State in these terms:

. . . probably the highest out migration since the Victorian gold rushes in the middle of the last century decimated the population of New South Wales.

People are getting out of New South Wales.

Mr F. J. Walker: And you know who they are.

Mr COLEMAN: Yes, they are young people looking for jobs.

Mr F. J. Walker: No, they are Liberal Party members looking for a leader.

Mr COLEMAN: They are old people who do not want to stay in New South Wales and pay harsh taxes. They are young people who are looking for jobs. They are investors who have no confidence in this Government. The Government has admitted that more people are moving out of the State than since the gold rushes in Victoria in the middle of the last century. That report confirms the facts and demonstrates that the Government's policies are not working. Investment in New South Wales has fallen far behind that in other States. Two years ago housing

commencements were running at 9 000 a quarter. This year they have dropped to 8 000, the lowest since World War II.

Mr Mulock: New South Wales has a higher trend in new housing than any other State in the Commonwealth.

Mr COLEMAN: That is not so. In the same period home unit commencements have fallen from 1 900 to 1 300 a quarter, representing a decline of 32 per cent. Work done on commercial buildings has fallen 17 per cent or \$120 million from the March quarter in 1976 to the corresponding quarter this year. In real terms retail sales have fallen by 9 per cent or \$145 million in the past two years. That is the worst performance in any mainland State. Motor vehicle registrations have fallen by 7 000 units in the same period. Since this Government came to office the number of unemployed persons in New South Wales has risen by 30 per cent to 131 000. That is, from 4.6 per cent to 6.1 per cent of the work force.

Population growth in New South Wales is at its lowest level since the gold rushes of the 1850's. All the indicators reveal an economy with major structural problems. The problems are becoming worse; they are not getting better. It is against that background that we must examine the Treasurer's Loan Speech. What contribution will the General Loan Account Appropriation Bill make to economic recovery? The Treasurer in his speech placed great emphasis on severe cutbacks in loan funds to New South Wales. He said that all blame for reduced capital work in this State must rest with the federal Government. However, the figures do not bear him out. Total general payments by the Commonwealth have been increased by 7.7 per cent. That is a real increase as by the middle of 1979 inflation will have dropped to about 5 per cent.

Mr Renshaw: I hope you are right.

Mr COLEMAN: Of course, and we all hope that is right. The Opposition applauds the Fraser Government's great success story in its battle against inflation, reducing it from 18 per cent to 5 per cent.

Total Commonwealth general purpose and specific purpose grants to New South Wales have been increased by 5.7 per cent. Specific purpose capital grants for roads also have been increased by 5.7 per cent, and pensioner housing capital grants have risen by 40 per cent. So the real value of total Commonwealth assistance will be maintained despite inflation. So much for this Government's false and misleading claim that the New South Wales loan programme must suffer as a result of the Commonwealth's austerity. The fact is that this Government, in the tradition of former State Labor governments, has displayed a petty-cash mentality. It has shown no foresight whatsoever. It has made no provision to create jobs for the rising number of unemployed. Last year, in the Loan Estimates debate, the Treasurer said: "My programme will give a much needed stimulus to new employment, particularly in the manufacturing, building and construction industries."

Mr Akister: Hear! hear!

Mr COLEMAN: The honourable member for Monaro says, hear, hear. If that was the Treasurer's object, it was a complete failure. In this Government's term of office 22 000 jobs have been lost from manufacturing industry, 8 000 jobs have been lost from the construction industry and 8 000 have disappeared from the rural and tertiary sectors. Why did the Premier fail to put a job-creation programme before the Loan Council several weeks ago? The answer is that he did not have one. When the Prime Minister invited State Premiers to make supplementary submissions on infrastructure development, the Premier of New South Wales had virtually nothing

to say. He could think of only two projects. He asked for \$100 million for the Port Kembla and Balmain coal loaders, and \$195 million for the Eraring electricity project. That was all. He obviously did not know of one other project in New South Wales to create jobs and revive the economy. He asked for only \$295 million, compared with requests of \$985 million from Victoria, and \$660 million from Western Australia. Instead of maligning the Commonwealth Government for reducing loan funds--- which have not been reduced in real terms at all---this Government might look to its own economic management, which was shown in Canberra to be bereft of long-term development plans.

Before condemning the size of loan funds to New South Wales, the Government should first come up with some plans for which loan funds might be used. This is the third successive Loan Speech that has promised to give the New South Wales economy a much-needed boost. However, for the last two years, and again in these Loan Estimates, the Government has failed to give stimulus to the right areas. Once again it has failed to seize an excellent opportunity to stimulate the private sector and hasten an investment-led recovery. There is no indication from the Loan Speech that the Government is directing its capital works programme towards areas that will create more jobs. The Treasurer himself said yesterday, "A number of Government building projects have been deferred. We have reduced the allocations of the Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority and the Department of Lands."

In other words, what the Treasurer is saying is that even more jobs will be lost from the construction industry in the next twelve months. Is it not enough that 8 000 jobs have already disappeared from construction in the last two years? Another 2 000 or 3 000 will go this year, not so much from public construction authorities like the Department of Public Works, but from the private sector---the private builders, electricians, plumbers, painters, labourers and others who work on a contract basis. That is just the beginning of increased unemployment and the beginning of further job destruction. For every school or hospital or other public construction project, jobs are created in private manufacturing industry and the tertiary sector.

Mr F. J. Walker: The Liberal Party is against spending money in the public sector.

Mr COLEMAN: No, we are in favour of stimulating the private sector in the way I suggest. It is by that multiplier effect that public works programmes stimulate the economy, and that is the test by which we must judge the public works programme---

Mr F. J. Walker: That is what we say.

Mr COLEMAN: But you are not putting the money into that area. It stimulates the economy by increasing production and creating new jobs in the private sector, which accounts for three out of four jobs in the work force. But these Loan Estimates will reduce spending on building projects. They are a blueprint for a further loss of jobs and further economic recession. Jobs lost in the construction industry will rise from the present number of 8 000, and jobs lost from manufacturing industry will rise from the present number of 22 000 jobs that have disappeared in the past two years. Nor are the reductions confined to those areas mentioned by the Treasurer.

I shall now examine the allocation for education. Three years ago the Liberal-Country party Government allocated \$205 million for the education building programme. In the first year under the Labor Government that figure was slashed by \$25 million; last year it was reduced by \$26 million, and in these Loan Estimates it is cut by \$16 million. After three successive loan speeches this Government is still spending \$16 million less on education than in our last year of office.

Pitiful as that record **may** be, it is only the beginning of the story. After allowing for **inflation** in the last three years, it becomes clear that this Government has spent \$232 million less on education construction than the levels of funding achieved by the Liberal-Country party Government. In its first year of office it spent \$53 million less on education than the amount needed to maintain our level of funding. In its second year it shortchanged education by a further \$84 million. **And** this year the shortfall has grown to \$95 million. Altogether this is a massive reduction in real terms of \$232 million, a reduction equivalent to 100 new schools in New South Wales. That is why in just one year of Liberal-Country party Government construction began on 17 new high schools, but in three years **this** Government **has** announced construction of only 9 new high schools.

Not only has the funding of education construction fallen by \$232 million under this Government; the State's share of the education capital works programme has also fallen. In our last year of office the State Government paid for **96** per cent of the education vote, but since then the **Fraser** Government has increased Commonwealth contributions to technical and further education by \$11.5 million, allowing this Government to contribute less and less to the total education building programme. From the level of 96 per cent achieved by the last Liberal-Country party Government, the State's share has fallen to 89 per cent in the present Loan Estimates. In other words, in addition to reducing the education vote by \$232 million in **real** terms, this Government has deprived technical and further education of \$14.3 million in State funds.

We are pleased to note that funding has been increased for the road works programme. However, \$35 million—more than half of the increase—has come from higher motor vehicle charges. Private vehicle registrations have risen by 25 per cent and commercial vehicle charges have risen even more. **Once** again we find this Government's petty-cash mentality coming to the fore. Instead of borrowing road construction funds under the special infrastructure loans programme established by the federal Government, this Government resorts to higher State charges, which are **inflationary**, reduce disposable incomes and therefore impede economic recovery. Instead of borrowing substantial sums now to complete essential road works as soon as possible, road construction programmes are being extended for absurd lengths of time.

In Wyong, for example, nineteen construction projects are under way at a total cost of only \$6.3 million. But at present rates of funding it will take forty-five years to complete them, despite the urgent need for roads in an area where population is growing by $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent each year. Similarly, the freeway programme has come to grief because the Premier refused to make an appropriate submission under the infrastructure loans programme. The same can be said of the \$17 million increase in capital funds for the P.T.C. There can be no doubt that this increase is needed to provide more rolling stock, but it must be borne in mind that ultimately half the amount will be met from consolidated revenue, thus depriving the public of other urgently needed services paid out of tax revenue. This is yet another example of the Premier's ineptitude as a Loan Council negotiator—he is known throughout the country as the most inept negotiator that the Loan Council has ever seen—because in this matter, **as in so many** others, he failed to make any request for special infrastructure assistance.

The Treasurer told us that twenty diesel-electric locomotives are to be purchased out of the Public Transport Commission's capital funds. I understand that these new trains will have a capacity of only 1 300 tonnes. In other words, at a time when coal is our major export earner, when heavy duty trains are urgently required to carry increased loads of coal, when Queensland has coal trains four times larger than

ours in New South Wales, the Government is purchasing mini-trains. Its answer to the coal freight problem, which was described so well by the honourable member for Mosman, is rather like sending a mini-bus to evacuate the Sydney Cricket Ground.

Now let me turn to the health allocation, which has been reduced by \$8 million or 15 per cent in real terms. Once again the Premier seeks to blame the federal Government, this time for having reduced specific purpose payments to the States. Once again his claim is a distortion of the truth. The fact is that although tied grants have been reduced in accordance with the State's wishes, untied general grants have been increased. In other words, the Premier now has greater freedom in spending the Commonwealth allocations than in any previous year. So the reduction in health spending is directly attributable to this Government's order of priorities. As with education, this Government creates the impression that it spends the maximum possible amount on the sick and the needy; but when the Loan Estimates are analysed it is clear that using its own freedom of choice and its own priorities, it chooses to spend the money elsewhere. The same can be said with respect to water and sewerage. Funds have been cut by 30 per cent in real terms at a time when 10 per cent of the population is still without sewerage. I wish the honourable member for Monaro would not interject. I cannot understand a word he is saying.

Mr Akister: Tell us about the national sewerage backlog.

Mr COLEMAN: Why don't you get an interpreter. Then I will know what you are saying.

Mr Mulock: That is discrimination.

Mr COLEMAN: You report me to the board. The meagre funds that have been allocated for this purpose, as with so many other purposes, are largely being drawn from heavy raids on the reserves of the Sydney Water Board, the Electricity Commission, the Maritime Services Board and individual hospital boards. The inevitable result is that these authorities will be forced to borrow heavily to meet their capital works programmes, which can lead only to higher interest rates, higher loan repayments and higher charges to consumers. I hope the Minister of Justice and Minister for Housing understands that.

Mr Mulock: I understand what you said this time. You will say something different next time.

Mr COLEMAN: It is a telling indication of this Government's attitude to law enforcement, in which the Minister of Justice has a nominal interest, that the increase in police capital works is a mere 6 per cent, whereas the appropriation for prison construction is a massive 70 per cent, and a large part of that is to go into the infamous Parklea prison. I can assure the House and the people of Parklea that that project will not go ahead, for one of the first decisions of the next Liberal-Country party Government will be to cancel it. At a time when crime is rapidly increasing, when the public is more reliant on an efficient police force than ever before, the Treasurer in his Loan Speech told us that new public works will be undertaken and all other work has been held to the minimum level.

Mr Mulock: That is not so.

Mr COLEMAN: I am quoting from the Treasurer's Loan Speech: "No new works will be undertaken . . . and all other work has been held to the minimum level" So even though facilities for the police force will deteriorate and crime will increase still further, the public is to be consoled by the knowledge that there will

be more prisons. In particular, they are expected to be consoled by the idea of **Parklea** being built to accommodate the increased number of criminals. The Treasurer also said, and I quote again:

Further industrial expansion in this State will depend heavily on successful development of our coal resources and coal-fired power stations.

That is one thing the Treasurer said that I agree with. I do not believe the Opposition could agree more. For two years we have been going to a lot of trouble to convince this Government of the great importance of the coal industry. Of course the development of our coal reserves is crucial to the industrial expansion of New South Wales. But how hollow is the Treasurer's statement in view of this Government's coal mining policy. It scrapped the Botany Bay coal loader and then did nothing for two years to provide a replacement.

The Government also cut the margin on export coal by increasing freight and port charges. It drastically reduced the availability of high grade, low volatile coking coal by sterilizing up to one third of the State's reserves. As demonstrated by the minister for sterilization, the honourable member for Merrylands, it has discouraged investment in the coal industry by refusing security of tenure to mining companies. That is some record for a government that acknowledges, in the Treasurer's words, the need to develop the State's coal reserves. Like so many other statements from this Government, it is nothing more than cant and hypocrisy. Then there is the \$150 million to go to the Botany Bay development project, every cent of which is to be raised by the Maritime Services Board. Why was not that project urged upon the federal Government as a project worthy of special infrastructure assistance? Why did not the Premier mention it to the Loans Council? The fact is that he did not even bother to ask for special loan allocations, and consequently the State is left to raise every dollar by its own means.

The Premier's complete failure to represent the interests of New South Wales means that other projects, such as the beach protection and improvement scheme, and the need for development of the fishing and tourist industries, the need for improved minor ports and craft centres, the need for foreshore improvements in tidal rivers, and the need for completion of the Chipping Norton Lake Scheme, all of which urgently require capital funds from the Maritime Services Board, have been ignored. The overall picture presented by these Loan Estimates is one of continuing economic mismanagement. In the few cases where capital works have been increased this Government has too often been left to pick up the tab by raiding statutory fund reserves or by clumsily borrowing through semi-government authorities at interest rates higher than Loan Council terms. But in most areas of government activity building programmes will be deferred or slowed down, stimulus will not be given to the economy and even more jobs will be lost in New South Wales and more people will emigrate from this State.

This Government obviously has no forward plans for major construction projects. By comparison with other States it had virtually nothing to submit in response to the federal Government's offer of special assistance for infrastructure development. By its own choice this Government has cut back capital spending in education, health, water, sewerage and public works. For this alone it deserves the strongest censure for failing to offer a better deal to the people of New South Wales. The bill fails to adopt the principles and methods for economic recovery that have constantly been urged by the Opposition. It offers no incentive for capital investment which is needed to create new jobs and absorb the unemployed.

Under this sort of programme we look like continuing for just a little longer the policies that have put New South Wales into the **parlous** condition that it is in today, which is making it the sick State of Australia, and reminding everyone of us of the sort of condition that Australia was in under the infamous, long-to-be-remembered **Whitlam** socialist Government. The Wran Government is the clone of the **Whitlam** Government. Mr Wran is Mr Whitlam's clone. The Treasurer's Loan Speech is a further landmark in the Wran **Labor** Government's economic incompetence.

Debate adjourned on motion by Mr **Hatton**.

ADJOURNMENT

Housing Commission Accommodation

Mr **MULOCK** (Penrith), Minister of Justice and Minister for Housing [10.30]:

I move:

That this House do now adjourn.

Mr **BRERETON** (Heffron) [10.30]: I wish to bring to the attention of the House a matter of some considerable concern to a great number of my constituents in the electorate of Heffron. It concerns the difficulties which confront a number of persons in obtaining Housing Commission accommodation, particularly pensioners who are eligible for this accommodation. Many pensioners are not eligible in most instances to apply to be listed by the Housing Commission until they have turned 65 years of age and have actually started to receive a social security benefit. I acknowledge the great difficulties the Government has as a result of the savage federal Government cutbacks in funding about which honourable members have heard so much during the course of the debate on the General Loan Account Appropriation Bill. I acknowledge also that the total allocation for welfare housing provided by the federal Government this year is \$24 million less than last year. In real terms the federal Government has cut its contribution for welfare housing by some 25 per cent. Notwithstanding this background, there are some inequities in the present system of allocating housing commission dwellings to aged persons.

Mr **Cameron**: On a point of order. Over the years the House has been most careful to decide the particular matters that a member may raise on adjournment while the Address-in-Reply debate is current. On occasions the House has permitted an honourable member to speak on the adjournment notwithstanding that he has previously taken part in the Address-in-Reply debate. However, it has always been in the circumstance where the matter has arisen subsequent to his speech during the Address-in-Reply debate and dealt with new matters that were not available for the honourable member to raise in the course of that debate. I submit that everything the honourable member for Heffron is now raising constitutes longstanding matters that he could have easily raised during the course of his Address-in-Reply speech. In effect he is now simply making a second Address-in-Reply speech and it is not a matter that has arisen subsequent to that speech.

Mr **Brereton**: On the point of order. What the honourable member for Northcott said is in some respects correct. However, this afternoon some statistics came to my attention, which I intend to present to the House. I am sure they will be of great interest to all honourable members.

Mr **Pickard**: Further on the point of order. Although the statistics mentioned by the honourable member for Heffron may be interesting to honourable members, as I understand your previous rulings, Mr Speaker, a matter raised on the adjournment

by an honourable member should be of an urgent nature, of particular concern to his electorate, and a human issue that has arisen only in the past twenty-four hours. Any honourable member may refer to statistics, but if he could have raised the matter without these statistics during the course of the Address-in-Reply debate, I submit that it is improper to give him an extension of his contribution to that debate. The honourable member for Heffron contributed last night to the Address-in-Reply debate when he could have raised this issue. Now, if he has a few more statistics to add to the issue, which he may or may not have raised last night, according to his whim, I submit that you, Mr Speaker, should rule that he is out of order.

Mr Einfeld: Further on the point of order. I submit that the honourable member for Hornsby has not raised valid points. The fact is that this afternoon the honourable member for Heffron received figures referring to the waiting list for Housing Commission accommodation. These changed the whole complexion of the difficulties of people in his area waiting for Housing Commission accommodation. The reverend gentleman for Hornsby is wrong in his statements. He seeks to hide his ignorance of the standing orders by sermonizing. The honourable member for Heffron is seeking to raise a new matter that has arisen since he spoke during the Address-in-Reply debate. I submit, also, that he has a longstanding right to raise on the adjournment a matter that affects his electorate, knowledge of which he gained only late this afternoon.

Mr SPEAKER: I am guided by the ruling that a member on speaking on the adjournment is permitted to discuss any one matter of local or general interest. He may deal with that matter in the manner he sees fit, subject only to the normal rules of debate, including the *sub judice* rule and the rule against duplicating a current debate. The honourable member for Northcott has suggested that the honourable member for Heffron could have raised this matter during his contribution to the Address-in-Reply debate. The honourable member for Heffron now submits that he has some further material. Therefore, it is quite in order for him to bring that extra material before the House.

Mr BRERETON: It is obvious that the Opposition does not want to hear about a situation that grew up during the years the former Government was in office. I propose to state the facts concerning waiting time for persons seeking aged persons' accommodation from the Housing Commission. The waiting times vary from area to area, but in my electorate they are the longest of any in the Sydney metropolitan area. If a person is willing to accept an elderly single person's unit at East Hills the waiting time is two years. To secure such a unit at present his application would have had to be lodged prior to August 1976. The waiting time for one of these units at Liverpool is two years and one month. At present a successful applicant would have had to lodge his application before July 1976.

A person securing an elderly single person's unit in the outer western suburbs would have had to lodge his application before June 1976—that is, a waiting time of two years and two months. To be eligible for one of these units at Parramatta the applicant would have had to lodge his application prior to April 1976—a waiting time of two years and four months. The waiting time in the eastern suburbs is much longer. At present the Housing Commission is dealing with applications that were lodged prior to July 1974—a waiting time of four years and one month. The position is even worse in my own electorate, which the Housing Commission classes as an inner city area. To be eligible for an inner city high rise unit, in the tower block at Waterloo, an applicant would have had to lodge an application prior to January 1974—that is, a waiting time of four years and seven months. The position is even worse for walk-up elderly single person's units in the inner city area, for the waiting time is five years and one month.

The Housing Commission should ensure that there is some degree of equality for people seeking accommodation. It is unreasonable for people in my electorate, who want to continue to live there, to wait five years and one month for a walk-up unit and four years and seven months for high-rise accommodation.

In practical terms a person cannot get on the waiting list for an elderly single person's unit until he is 65. A person who is willing to live at Liverpool, Parramatta or one of the outer western suburbs has a minimum waiting time of two years. This means that he would be aged 67 when he was offered that accommodation. Such a person would be faced with the burden of moving himself from the community in which he may have lived for many years. He would have to leave his friends and his social activities at the age of 67 years. A person—even one suffering extreme hardship—now has to wait four years and seven months before he is offered an elderly single person's unit in a high rise building in the inner city area. If an elderly person applies for one of these units as soon as he is eligible to do so, he would be 69 years and seven months before getting the accommodation. However, members of the Opposition know that is not what happens in practice. Often people wait up to nine months before lodging their applications with the Housing Commission. Some of my constituents are in dire straits. The situation is equally as serious for people seeking elderly person's double accommodation. Time does not permit me to deal with the matter in detail. I raise this as a matter of great concern, because in recent weeks a number of my constituents have advised me that they have been told that they should accept accommodation in the western suburbs if they do not wish to wait years for accommodation elsewhere. I request the Minister to do all within his power to ensure that my constituents and people in surrounding areas are not discriminated against.

Mr MULOCK (Penrith), Minister of Justice and Minister for Housing [10.40], in reply: The honourable member for Heffron has raised this important matter with me on previous occasions. I share his concern about the upset that occurs when people who have lived all their lives in an inner city area are forced to spend their twilight years in an age-unit on one of the fringe areas of Sydney. The problem centres on the cost of acquiring land in the inner city at a time when there has been no increase in funding from the federal authorities. This year there has been a cut in real terms of 25 per cent in housing funds.

The Housing Commission is having grave difficulty in handling its numerous activities. I have arranged to meet with the commission on Friday week to discuss particularly the question of constructing age-unit blocks in the inner city areas. The commission, in a tight financial situation, must aim for the maximum number of units to accommodate the maximum number of persons. The commission has faced a great dilemma in producing the maximum number of dwelling blocks at a time when capital funding has been reduced. For three years there were no increases in federal funding for housing. Last year there was an increase of only 3.8 per cent. This year there is a cut in real terms of 25 per cent.

The honourable member for Heffron has quite properly brought this matter to the notice of the House. It has been the subject of discussion between my ministerial office and the Housing Commission. Prior to my learning that the honourable member for Heffron intended to raise this matter tonight I had made arrangements to meet with the commission on Friday week to discuss this vexed problem of how in a limited monetary situation, and with a desire to provide the most units for the most number of people, we might meet the needs of persons who would prefer to live in areas where land is a significant factor in the total cost of development. I will

review the whole situation. It is necessary to ensure that people who have lived all their lives close to the heart of the city should have the opportunity to live in those areas in the evening of their lives.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned at 10.44 p.m.

QUESTIONS WON NOTICE

The following questions upon notice and answers were circulated in *Questions and Answers* this day.

TRAFFIC CONTROL SIGNALS FOR LINDFIELD

Mr MOORE asked the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways—

- (1) Has the installation of traffic signals at the intersection of **Havilah** and **Lindfield** Avenues, Lindfield, been included or considered for inclusion on any traffic signals' programme?
- (2) Will he investigate the need for traffic signals at that intersection?

Answer—

The Hon. Member will **recall** having asked this Question previously. My reply, which is still applicable, indicated that the site is not one where signals are required at the present time.

ACQUISITION OF LAND

Mr MOORE asked the Premier—

- (1) What area and what value of land was acquired by what department or **instrumentalities** under his control for what purposes in **1976** and **1977**?
- (2) If no such statistics are recorded, why not?

Answer—

(1) Departments and **Instrumentalities** within the Premier's administration acquired land for public purposes, as follows:

(a) 1976

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Area</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
	sq metres	\$	
Police Department	.. *24 886.05	15,200	5 residential sites.
	*38 142.42	82,120	11 Police Station sites.
	hectares	\$	
Public Servant Housing Authority of N.S.W.	1,058	620,500	15 residential properties for public servant housing.

(b) 1977

	sq metres	\$	
Police Department ..	*2 464.27	22,894	4 residential sites.
	*9 506. 7	14,572	5 Police Station sites/Radio sites.
	hectares	\$	
Public Servant Housing Authority of N.S.W.	0.973	543,450	13 residential properties for public servant housing.

* acquired by the Department of Public Works on behalf of the Police Department.

(2) Not applicable. See **(1)** above.

WOLLONGONG NORTHERN SUBURBS DISTRIBUTOR

Mr **COLEMAN** asked the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways—

(1) Was the sum of \$200,000 stated in a letter to the member for Corrimal of 29 October, 1976, to have been allocated in the financial year 1976–77 for expenditure on the Northern Suburbs Distributor in Wollongong, expended during that year?

(2) If so, what are the details of the works on which the sum **was** expended?

Answer—

This matter was raised with me by the local members for Heathcote and Corrimal and I advised them of the position on 20th July, last. I have also informed the Leader of the Opposition in writing of the present position.

WOLLONGONG NORTHERN SUBURBS DISTRIBUTOR

Mr **COLEMAN** asked the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways—

When will the proposed bridge on the Prince's Highway across the Northern Suburbs Distributor at the North Wollongong interchange, mentioned by him in a letter to the member for Corrimal, dated 29 October, 1976, be commenced?

Answer—

This matter was raised with me by the local members for Heathcote and Corrimal and I advised them of the position on 20th July, last. I have also informed the Leader of the Opposition in writing of the present position.

ROSEVILLE REZONING

Mr **MOORE** asked the Minister for Local Government—

(1) What is the existing zoning of these properties and what **rezoning** has been requested by Ku-ring-gai Municipal Council?

(2) What answer and on what date did the Department of Local Government give to this request?

(3) What reasons have been given for this decision?

(4) Is further consideration being given to this matter?

Answer—

As the Hon. Member will be aware, two questions (Nos 969 and 971) worded in similar terms to the above were answered in Parliament on the 9th and 14th February, 1978, respectively.

For the Hon. Member's information there have been no further developments and the information conveyed in Parliament in February remains unchanged.

TRAFFIC SIGNALS FOR CONCORD

Mr MAHER asked the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways—

Will traffic control signals be installed during the present financial year at the intersection of Majors Bay Road and Wellbank Street, Concord?

Answer—

The Hon. Member will recall that I wrote to him on 16th August, 1978, concerning this matter and advised that the site is recognized as one where signals are desirable and that it will be included in a programme as soon as funds permit.

CHISWICK AND RUSSELL LEA BUS SERVICES

Mr MAHER asked the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways—

(1) What delays are being experienced by city-bound buses from Chiswick and Russell Lea at the intersection of Lyons and Victoria Roads, Drummoyne, during morning peak hours?

(2) Will the traffic control signals at the intersection be altered to allow more city-bound traffic to turn right from Lyons Road?

(3) What would be the cost of the alteration?

Answer—

On 30th June, 1978, in reply to a similar question asked last session, a letter was forwarded to the Hon. Member in the following terms:

"The Public Transport Commission now reports that, generally, city-bound buses from Chiswick and Russell Lea are not unduly delayed at the intersection of Lyons and Victoria Roads, Drummoyne, during the morning peak hours.

An alteration of the traffic control signals at this intersection to allow more city-bound traffic to turn right from Lyons Road is not favoured as this could only be achieved by a reduction in the time available to the major movement in Victoria Road and this, I am sure you will agree, would be undesirable. As you are probably aware, the opposing right turn from Lyons Road (East) has already been banned during morning peak periods to improve traffic flow."

TRAFFIC SIGNALS FOR DRUMMOYNE

Mr MAHER **asked** the Minister for Transport and Minister for **Highways**—

- (1) Was a schoolchild recently knocked down by a motor vehicle in Tranmere Street, Drummoyne, outside St Mark's School?
- (2) When will pedestrian traffic control signals be installed in that street?

Answer—

On 29th June, 1978, in reply to a similar question asked last session, a letter was forwarded to the Hon. Member in the following terms:

"Following a child being slightly injured in the vicinity of St Mark's School, the Drummoyne Council Traffic Committee undertook to examine the accident site to determine whether warning signs, parking restrictions and the like are required.

I have asked that any improvements found necessary be implemented without delay."
