Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 23 ***November, 1978***

Bill Returned—Petitions—Questions without Notice--Cognate Rating and Valuation Bills (third reading)—Cognate Forestry Bills (No. 2) (third reading)—Sessional Committees-Select Committee upon Liquor Trading—Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Amendment Bill (Int.)—Motor Traffic (Amendment) Bill (Int.)—Public Transport Commission (Financial Accommodation) Amendment Bill (Int.)—Road Maintenance (Contribution) Amendment Bill (Int.)—Electricity Development (Amendment) Bill (Int.)—Metric Conversion (Amendment) Bill (Int.)—Grievance Debate—Printing Committee (First Report)—Questions upon Notice.

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

Mr Speaker offered the Prayer.

BILL RETURNED

The following bill was returned from the Legislative Council without amendment:

Appropriation Bill (No. 2)

PETITION

The Clerk announced that the following petition had been lodged for presentation by the honourable member for Northcott:

Electric Omnibuses

The humble petition of the undersigned citizens of New South Wales respectfully sheweth that we, the undersigned, believe—

(1) That the Townobile electric bus, developed in New South Wales, constitutes a unique local solution to the problems of inner city public transportation.

(2) That the Townobile electric bus has demonstrated significant advantages over diesel-powered buses on the grounds of economy, environment and efficiency, and has attracted world-wide acclaim.

(3) That local production and use of Townobile electric buses would generate employment for New South Welshmen, both in their manufacture and in the coal industry, and would reduce our dependence upon increasingly scarce imported petroleum products.

(4) That use of noiseless, pollution-free Townobile electric buses would contribute substantially to the betterment of life within the city of Sydney.

We accordingly urge the Government to act quickly to ensure that the opportunity for local rather than overseas production of Townobile electric

buses is not lost, by placing forthwith an order for production of a trial batch of ten Townobiles.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray that your honourable House will add its voice to the growing support for Townobile electric buses and will encourage the placing of an order for a trial batch of such buses.

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

Petition received.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

FIRE BRIGADE SERVICES

Mr MASON: I address my question without notice to the Premier. In the interests of public safety, community concern and open government, will the Premier direct the Minister for Lands and Minister for Services to table the report of the inquiry into the fire brigade services of New South Wales?

Mr WRAN: No.

Mr Punch: So much for open government.

Mr Crabtree: You want to shelter under parliamentary privilege.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the Leader of the Country Party to order.

Mr Mason: So much for open government.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the Leader of the Opposition to order.

ELECTRICITY CHARGES

Mr BARNIER: Will the Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Technology and Minister for Energy inform me whether the bulk supply rates of the State Electricity Commission to operate from 1st January, 1979, will be increased by 5 per cent? Is the increase justified? What effect will this have on tariff charges by county councils throughout the State?

Mr HILLS: It is a fact that there will be an increase in bulk supply charges of electricity commencing from 1st January. Honourable members are probably aware that written into every agreement with all county councils is an automatic adjustment of the energy charge, depending upon increase in costs in the production of electricity. These automatic adjustments occur quarterly. The maximum demand charges have been reviewed by the Electricity Commission of New South Wales and the combined increases of maximum demand charge and energy charge will be of the order of 5 per cent. Honourable members will be aware also that with regard to the cost structure of county councils' operations, the bulk supply charges constitute about *52* per cent of their basic costs.

That does not necessarily mean that there will automatically be a 5 per cent increase in electricity retail tariffs charged by the various distributing authorities, whether they be county councils or municipal councils. Obviously, county councils and distributing authorities will have to take into account any increased costs that they may have to bear. I presume that at the time of the increase in bulk supply charges they will examine their own costs. I imagine that the all-up increase in electricity charges will be somewhere between 5 per cent and 6½ per cent, depending on the costs that they have to bear.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE STAFFING

Mr PUNCH: I direct my question without notice to the Minister for Agriculture. In view of the loss of confidence within the Department of Agriculture brought about by the deletion of a large number of staff positions, will the Minister advise me whether further staff reductions are to take place early next year? If so, will they apply only to members of the Public Service Association or to members of the Australian Workers Union as well? What arrangements are being made to offer truly comparable jobs to employees who will be affected—not positions in other departments in remote country towns?

Mr DAY: The Leader of the Country Party and members of his party lose no opportunity to create misapprehension in country areas about the future activities of the Department of Agriculture. I have pointed out to this House that since this Government came to office the staff of the department has been increased by more than a hundred. That is in stark contrast to what happened when the Liberal and Country parties ruled the State. In their last two years of office the staff of the department was reduced by two hundred.

For the information of the Leader of the Country Party let me tell him that there is no morale problem among the staff of the Department of Agriculture. Apparently he would like the Government to adopt the attitude that changes should never take place and that new initiatives should be funded at the same time as activities that have become less important are continued. That is probably best demonstrated by the attitude of the previous Liberal-Country party Government to the number of State government employees engaged in the dairy industry. The number of dairyfarmers declined dramatically during the period of office of that Government but the number of State government employees increased dramatically. The point was reached where there was one State government employee for every six dairy-farmers in the State.

That was an absolutely unbelievable situation. The present Government could not allow it to continue. There has been and will continue to be an appraisal of the jobs in various sections of the Department of Agriculture with a view to increased efficiency. There is no problem in the department in relation to staff morale or retrenchments. The Premier and I have given a guarantee that no one in the department will lose his job. Some will be asked to fill different roles, and that is proper. Indeed, when people are first employed by the department they give an undertaking that they will serve wherever they are called upon to do so. That practice will continue. There are no dismissals in the pipeline now and none is contemplated for the next twelve months. I emphasize again that while I administer the department its activities will be monitored continually with a view to ensuring maximum efficiency from its staff.

WATER RESOURCES ALLOCATIONS

Mr MAIR: I direct a question without notice to the Minister for Conservation and Minister for Water Resources. Recently in a debate in the House the Leader of the Opposition stated that $20 million had been allocated to New South Wales for dam construction and flood mitigation works under the national water resources programme. Is it a fact that $20 million is being disbursed among all the States in the Commonwealth and not allotted exclusively to New South Wales? If that is so, will the Minister advise the House of the amount coming to New South Wales from the federal Government under the national water resources programme for 1978–79?

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The question was addressed to the Minister for Conservation and Minister for Water Resources, and not to the honourable member for Wagga Wagga.

Mr GORDON: It is amazing that the Leader of the Opposition, who represents the country electorate of Dubbo, should have such a limited knowledge of what is happening under the national water resources programme in relation to allocations from the Commonwealth Government to New South Wales.

Mr Mason: The Minister did not submit his programme until 6th October.

Mr GORDON: I would be one of the best askers there ever was, but not the sort of asking that the Leader of the Opposition does. The federal Government is not as generous as the Leader of the Opposition would have honourable members believe in relation to the allocation of finance for projects under the national water resources programme, especially in relation to dam construction. At least, the federal Government has made it quite clear that it does not favour providing funds to New South Wales to construct dams, for it has continually rejected requests from the New South Wales Government for finance to assist in the construction of Windamere and Split Rock dams. Of eight dams listed in the national water resources programme in recent years only one has attracted the interest of the federal Government. The amount of $200 million that was mentioned by the Prime Minister is the amount to be provided to all the States over a period of five years. A little over $18 million has been allocated by the federal Government for the year 1978–79 but that encompasses all States of the Commonwealth. The Leader of the Opposition said that New South Wales would receive $20 million. Out of the amount I have mentioned New South Wales has been allocated the princely sum of $2.265 million.

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am giving honourable members on the Opposition benches a final warning.

Mr GORDON: That provides for $1 million for flood mitigation work in coastal valleys. Half of that sum has been allocated to the Department of Public Works. An amount of $1 million has been allocated to the Wakool–Tullakool salinity project; $250,000 has been allocated to flood mitigation plans in the main river valley system; and $15,000 has been allocated for the water hyacinth control programme in the north-west of the State. None of the money has been provided for dam construction. The Water Resources Commission of New South Wales has the grandiose amount of $1.6 million out of a total programme approaching $33 million to spend on all the projects that were submitted to the federal Government for the national water resources programme for 1978–79.

COASTAL EROSION

Mr SMITH: I address my question without notice to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Ports. Is the Minister aware of the statement made by Mr Sam Smith, engineer of the Gold Coast city council, at a recent seminar on coastal erosion held at Dee Why, in which he stated that properties on the Narrabeen beachfront were in imminent danger? Will the Minister take steps to accelerate the report being prepared by the Department of Public Works, which is still some five months away and is being anxiously awaited by the Warringah shire council and local progress associations?

Mr FERGUSON: I will have expedited the report to which the honourable member for Pittwater has referred. A bill designed to introduce a comprehensive coastal protection scheme has already been prepared and approved by Cabinet. What has happened previously in the Manly–Warringah area is that certain developments have been approved that should never have been allowed. Indeed, under the former Government this kind of thing occurred in many other areas throughout the State. For far too long councils have allowed, at the behest of developers, certain developments to be incorrectly approved. The bill I intend to introduce will ensure that in future such approvals are given only after proper coastal engineering investigations have been made. The result will be that no council will be able to allow the rorts that some developers have practised in the past.

SYDNEY AIRPORTS

Mr ANDERSON: I direct my question without notice to the Minister for Corrective Services representing in this House the Minister for Planning and Environment. Is the Minister aware that the MANS committee proposes to hold a briefing workshop for persons and groups interested in its study early in December? Is he also aware that the workshop will be held in Goulburn Street, Sydney? Will the Minister exert whatever pressure he can on the MANS committee to have one or more briefing workshops in the southwest zone and/or Penrith?

Mr HAIGH: It is true that early in December the MANS committee proposes to hold a briefing workshop for persons and groups interested in its study. It is true also that it is proposed that this study should be held in Goulburn Street, Sydney. I compliment the honourable member for Nepean upon his enthusiasm and zeal. The honourable member has made continual representation on behalf of his constituents and many people in nearby electorates. He has shown a great deal of concern about the recommendations contained in the MANS committee reports and the possible effect that some of them might have on the welfare of people living in his electorate and adjoining electorates. I know that the Minister for Planning and Environment has been concerned to see that as much information about this matter should be made available, and that free discussions should take place on the MANS committee reports, so that the public will be fully aware of the recommendations that have been made.

I undertake to take this matter up with the Minister for Planning and Environment. It is reasonable to assume that the MANS committee will respond to the honourable member's suggestion that briefing workshops should be held in the southwest zone or in Penrith. The great mass of the population of Sydney is centred in the southwest zone and in the Penrith area. They should be given as much opportunity as people living in the eastern suburbs or on the North Shore, who already have a greater opportunity to come to the central point for the purpose of attending workshops, receiving an appropriate briefing and being aware of the details contained in the reports of the MANS committee. Again, I congratulate the honourable member for Nepean for bringing this matter to my attention. I shall certainly discuss it with the Minister for Planning and Environment, who I am sure will show the same interest that I have exhibited.

MURRAY RIVER

Mr FISCHER: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Conservation and Minister for Water Resources. Is the Minister aware that recently the Deputy Premier of South Australia estimated that each year 800 000 tonnes of salt is deposited in that State by the Murray River? Has that resulted in increased devastation along the course of the river? Is the Minister also aware that the South

Australian and Commonwealth governments have agreed to enact complementary legislation to confer additional co-ordination and water-quality control powers upon the River Murray Commission? Is the Government of New South Wales opposed to this proposal? If not, when will a decision be made on this important matter?

Mr GORDON: It is true that the salinity of the Murray River increases as it flows from the Hume Weir towards the sea. The figure quoted by the honourable member for Sturt does not have much significance. Much more important is the volume of water that flows along the Murray River for that is what determines the level of salinity. The fact is that New South Wales discharges less salt into the Murray River than the other two States concerned—South Australia and Victoria. New South Wales is ahead of schedule in the desalination programme for the Murray River. It has already installed saline interceptor wells at Buronga in the Murray electorate. The honourable member for Murray has taken a keen interest in this project and has visited the wells. The honourable member for Sturt would have been advised to discuss the matter with her before raising this question. The New South Wales Government has started correction work at Tullakool. About twelve months ago while in Canberra I discussed the salinity problem of the Murray River with the Deputy Prime Minister. He said he would arrange for consultants to examine the proposals. In **1970** a plan was devised to reduce the salinity of the water in this river. The Deputy Prime Minister told me that if New South Wales proceeded with its project the Commonwealth would seriously consider granting a $-for-$ subsidy. That serious consideration took him about one minute. Soon afterwards he was relieved of his responsibility in this matter. New South Wales has not, and probably will not, receive recognition for the work it has done to reduce the level of salinity in the river.

The prime function of the River Murray Commission is to control the allocation of water to the three States. In **1973** the Prime Minister called a meeting of the three States with a view to expanding the commission's powers. Following correspondence between the Premiers of the three States and the Prime Minister agreement was reached on enlarging the commission's functions and powers. Since then the River Murray Commission has been exercising wider powers. Examples of what it has done under its expanded functions are the prevention of erosion of the banks of the Murray River and the desnagging of the river from the Hume Weir downstream to the Yarrawonga Weir near the junction of the Mulwala Canal. The Premier has signified this State's willingness to enact legislation complementary to that passed by the Commonwealth and the other States. Since agreement was reached in **1976** there has been no impediment to the River Murray Commission exercising increased functions and powers. The State of New South Wales is acutely conscious of the need for the commission to have powers to control not only water quantity but also water quality. Some time ago the Premier wrote to the Prime Minister about this matter. He is still awaiting a reply. Apparently when one writes to the Prime Minister of Australia one should not hold one's breath while awaiting a reply.

Mr Mason: When did the Premier write that letter?

Mr GORDON: It would be a few months ago, I suppose.

MOTOR VEHICLE REPAIR CHARGES

Mr R. J. CLOUGH: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Housing and Minister for Co-operative Societies. From time to time has the Minister received representations from me on the subject of overcharging for motor vehicle repairs? Have those representations resulted in refunds being made to many of my constituents? Will the Minister give consideration to introducing a form of compulsory repair contract on which the work required to be carried out will be listed and a price quoted?

Mr EINFELD: The residents of the electorate of Blue Mountains must have noticed a great improvement in the representation they have had since 1976, because the honourable member for Blue Mountains, since his election at that time, has shown a keen interest in consumer protection, and has consistently brought to my attention many cases of overcharging by the few dealers who, in almost every field of enterprise, set out to take advantage of people. It is perfectly true that the honourable member for Blue Mountains has brought to my notice many cases of overcharging for motor car repairs, and indeed for repairs of agricultural implements. It is true also that as a result of the activities of my department quite a number of his constitutents have received cash refunds from repairers who, after investigation by inspectors, have admitted that they were guilty of overcharging. Some States of the United States of America have been very active in this field. One State requires repairers to give their customers the used part that they say they have replaced to prove that they did replace it and that it is not serviceable.

My department is looking at the whole matter of motor car repairs. My energetic and capable colleague the Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Technology and Minister for Energy recently set up a committee of inquiry into smash repairs generally and motor car repairs in particular with a view to determining whether repairers ought to be licensed. The servicing industry is a source of great worry. Complaints received by my department about the servicing industry account for one-third of all complaints received by it. I believe that is attributable to the fact that domestic and mechanical repairers do not have to bc licensed. Any person can set up in business as a repairer of washing machines, refrigerators, television sets or radios. He does not have to be licensed. A person doing mechanical or smash repairs does not have to be licensed. The subject of licensing has frequently occupied the attention of meetings of ministers responsible for consumer affairs in all States and the Commonwealth. My brilliant colleague the Minister for Industrial Relatiom, Minister for Technology and Minister for Energy has received a report from a committee inquiring into the subject of licensing mechanical and smash repairers. I have been discussing that report with him. I assure the honourable member for Blue Mountains, other honourable members and the community that the Department of Consumer Affairs is looking closely at the repair industry in the hope that it can bring to it equity and reasonable conduct in matters of the sort that are brought to notice from time to time.

SYDNEY–HOBART YACHT RACE

Mr McDONALD: I direct a question without notice to the Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister far Tourism. Is the Sydney–Hobart yacht race regarded as one of the three blue-water classics in the world? Has the Victorian Government now agreed to match Golden Fleece Petroleum with a joint sponsorship totalling $100,000 for a yacht race to circle Tasmania, leaving Melbourne on 7th January? Does the Minister regard this action by the Victorian Government as an attempt to steal publicity and attention away from the famous Sydney–Hobart yacht race? If so would he indicate to the House what positive publicity and support the Government will give to the public promotion of the Sydney–Hobart yacht race to ensure that it maintains its national and international standing?

Mr BOOTH: It is a fact that in the next vacation Victoria intends to institute a new type of race that could have some effect on the Sydney–Hobart yacht race. Three weeks ago I met representatives of the yachting association who indicated to me their concern over the rivalry that could exist. They did not seek financial assistance from the Government, nor did I indicate at any stage that the Government was prepared to put money into the venture. They were informed that I would investigate ways and

means by which the Government may be able to encourage publicity for the Sydney–Hobart yacht race, which was what they were seeking. However, they were confident that this year's race would be the best in its history, as it is continuing to improve. There is no indication that they want money. The organization of the Sydney–Hobart race will ensure that it will match any rivalry extended by another State. Indications are that New South Wales is becoming pre-eminent in sport and recreation.

SYDNEY–NEWCASTLE RAILWAY ELECTRIFICATION

Mr O'CONNELL: I direct a question to the Minister for Transport. It has recently been stated in Gosford that the electrification of the railway to Newcastle will not be completed by 1980. As this time schedule for the completion of the work was an election promise by the Premier, will the Minister advise the House of the extent of the work already undertaken? Will the Minister assure the House that the work will be completed as announced?

Mr COX: It is true that during the recent election campaign the Premier announced major electrification programmes. One of the programmes was for the electrification of the line from Gosford to Newcastle, on which work has been proceeding. This financial year the programme will be speeded up. Discussions will take place between the Department of Public Works, the Electricity Commission and the Public Transport Commission concerning financing of this programme. I assure the House that every step will be taken to have that work completed in accordance with the programme.

HOTEL INDUSTRY

Mr PARK: I direct a question without notice to the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice. Is it a fact that 30 000 people are employed in the hotel industry in New South Wales and that the accommodation provided by hotels is vitally important to country towns, specially those where there are no motels? Is it a fact also that the Government will receive an additional $8 million to $9 million per annum in licence fees as a result of the increase in federal excise charges? Will the Government consider reducing liquor licence fees of 8 per cent on all purchases to relieve the burden on the industry? Will it further consider providing for quarterly licence fee payments in lieu of lump-sum annual payments in advance?

Mr WALKER: In answer to the first part of the honourable member's question, I do not know. In answer to the second part, yes. I shall refer the other parts to the Treasurer. who is concerned with those matters.

STATE THEATRE COMPANY

Mr CAVALIER: My question without notice is addressed to the Premier, Following the collapse of the Old Tote Theatre company, did the Premier last week convene a meeting of people interested in the theatre and the establishment of a new State theatre company? Who was invited to that meeting and what was the outcome of it?

Mr WRAN: The answer to the first part of the question is, yes. A seminar was convened and held on Monday of this week. It was attended by 200 men and women who were highly representative of all aspects of the theatre in New South Wales. It was chaired by the chairman of the cultural affairs advisory committee, Mr John Clark. Contributions were made in a formal way by Mr Justice McClelland, the chairman of the interim board, and by actors and actresses. All told it was a highly satisfactory exercise which will contribute greatly to the formation of a State theatre company.

I am indebted to the honourable member for Fuller for giving me the opportunity of saying that the most encouraging aspect of the formation of the new theatre company in New South Wales is the assurance from the Theatre Board of the Australia Council that it will not diminish the contribution or allocation by that council for drama in this State. In other words, the eclipse of the Old Tote does not mean that the financial support that has hitherto been forthcoming from the Australia Council will in any way be reduced.

I am also pleased to take the opportunity of expressing the Government's gratitude to other theatre companies, such as the Nimrod, the Ensemble Theatre and the Q Theatre for the way in which they have agreed to assemble a series of performances at the drama theatre of the Opera House while the new theatre company is in its formative stages. The Government is anxious that the New South Wales theatre company be established as quickly as practicable. However, we are determined that the views of the actors, actresses, directors, producers, writers, technicians and so on in the profession will be heard and given due weight. I am certain that the seminar which initiated this process on Monday will lead to the finest drama company in Australia.

POLYGRAPH LIE DETECTOR

Mr MADDISON: My question is directed to the Premier. Does the New South Wales police force use the polygraph or the psychological stress evaluator? Is the Premier aware of a growing interest in the potential use of the polygraph in the administration of justice? Has the Premier's attention been drawn to the Privacy Committee's background paper dealing with the privacy implications of the use of these lie-detecting devices? Has the Government formulated an attitude to the use of these devices in the administration of justice and generally in the business and commercial community and will it make its views known publicly and to the Privacy Committee?

Mr WRAN: The question put to me by the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai is very interesting. The Government is studying the implications of the Privacy Committee's report. For some time, I believe, law enforcement agencies have been concerned with oversea experience and suggestions of grave deficiencies in the use of lie detectors and in particular the grave invasion of privacy that may be involved in the use—or, even worse, the misuse--of such instruments. Heaven forbid that we should ever reach the point where politicians were given such a test. In response to the honourable member's question, lie detectors are not used by the New South Wales police force. There is no plan to introduce them. The whole question, since it was raised recently in the report to which the honourable member referred, is being studied, but I consider it highly improbable, in view of the dismal failure of such technological devices overseas, that they will be introduced in this State.

BLUE MOUNTAINS HIGH SCHOOLS

Mr R. J. CLOUGH: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Education. Is it a fact that several discussions have taken place between him and me on the siting of the next high school for the Blue Mountains. Is the Minister currently expecting a report on this subject from his officers? When does he expect that he will be able to tell me the site for the next high school?

Mr BEDFORD: It is true that there have been continuing discussions on the establishment of the next high school on the Blue Mountains. There is certainly a pressing need for it as, by all sorts of educational standards, Katoomba high school is overpopulated. Two sites have been proposed for the next high school in the Blue

Mountains, one in the Wentworth Falls area and the other in the Lawson area. Both sites have advantages and disadvantages, as has been determined by a number of committees that have considered the matter. For example, the site at Wentworth Falls is a lot more level than the site at Lawson, which has the advantage of being the demographic centre of the proposed school's population.

Architects of the Department of Public Works carried out an evaluation investigation to ascertain the most appropriate site for the new school. Following further representations by the honourable member for Blue Mountains, who has taken a distinct and keen interest in this subject, a firm of independent consultants were called in to give advice on the cost variations between the two sites. This particular firm of consultants furnished a report which was further evaluated. At the moment it is with the properties division of the Department of Education and with the architects division of the Department of Public Works. A couple of matters raised in the report had to be cleared up. Directly this is completed, which I would expect to be within the next week or so, we shall be in a position to advise the honourable member for Blue Mountains and his constituents on the most appropriate site for the next high school in the Blue Mountains.

MEDICAL FEES

Mr J. A. CLOUGH: I direct my question without notice to the Minister for Health. Is it a fact that in the present dispute involving country doctors unilateral action by the Minister in fixing fees is the most important aspect so far as the doctors are concerned? Are the Australian Medical Association and country doctors seeking the Minister's assurance that in future he will not act unilaterally but will consult with them before fixing fees for services rendered by doctors to patients in country hospitals and, in the event of no agreement being reached, he will refer the matter to arbitration for resolution?

Mr Wran: It has been submitted to arbitration before.

Mr J. A. CLOUGH: The Minister will answer the question. Is it a fact that if the Minister gave such an assurance the present impending confrontation would be avoided?

Mr K. J. STEWART: I am not sure whether this morning the honourable member for Eastwood is an emissary of the Australian Medical Association and whether he has been accredited to negotiate on their behalf to seek some sort of settlement of the dispute which that association has threatened will erupt on 1st December. There has been no unilateral action by me or by the Government. As I explained to the House last week, there was an agreement between the Health Commission of New South Wales, the hospital boards and all doctors who accepted positions as visiting medical officers, that the level of payment would be the amount available as refund under the national health insurance scheme.

That payment was 85 per cent, but on 1st July the federal Government, without any conference or communication with me, the Australian Medical Association or the people of Australia, unilaterally reduced it to 75 per cent. In accordance with the conditions of the agreement that doctors accepted when they became visiting medical officers in New South Wales hospitals, they were paid 75 per cent. However, on 1st November, without consulting me or any other State Minister for Health, the Australian Medical Association or the people of Australia, the federal Government unilaterally reduced the refund applicable under the National Health Act to 85 per cent for eligible pensioners, 75 per cent for disadvantaged persons and 40 per cent for uninsured

persons. Although we had been working under an agreement by which the doctors would receive an amount equal to the refund under the national health insurance scheme, all of a sudden we found we had three different amounts.

I make clear again the ministerial liaison committee that was established by the late W. F. Sheahan when Minister for Health meets monthly with the senior executive officers of the Australian Medical Association. Time is available at those meetings for discussion of all these matters. Having in mind that some doctors would be entitled to 85 per cent, some to 75 per cent and others to 40 per cent, and with a view to bringing into effect a flat across-the-board percentage, on 18th October I made, on behalf of the New South Wales Government to the Australian Medical Association, an offer of 75 per cent. The association rejected the offer out of hand.

Mr Einfeld: They are threatening to strike.

Mr K. J. STEWART: Yes, on 1st December. Not only did I make that offer, but also I offered them the 75 per cent for three years. I felt that the Australian Medical Association was no longer going to tie the percentage refund for modified fee for service to the Federal Government's national health scheme. The federal Government is chasing its tail so far as health schemes are concerned, and almost every morning one wakens to find an alteration to the scheme. The 75 per cent was decided by the officers of the health departments of each of the States in consultation with the federal Department of Health officers. They decided that all governments would offer the State branches of the Australian Medical Associrtion 75 per cent for the modified fee for service.

Having been empowered by Cabinet to do so, I have written to the president of the New South Wales branch of the AMA offering 75 per cent across-the-board for modified fee for service up to 30th June next, at which time it will be reviewed. If the AMA considers that I have acted unilaterally in any way, as I stated yesterday in answer to a question by the honourable member for Burrinjuck, I wish that somebody would have sympathy for me and other State Ministers for Health because of the unilateral decisions that are forced on us by the federal Government. Nobody, especially those in the health sphere, can give any assurance of any continuity with any agreements that have been reached. Notwithstanding that the new scheme came into operation only on the 1st of this month, nobody has any guarantee that after 30th June next year the present scheme will still operate.

I told the AMA that I am available for it to discuss the matter. I have to say on behalf of the Government that the Government is adamant that 75 per cent is a fair and reasonable fee to be paid as a modified fee for service to doctors working in country hospitals, especially when one acknowledges that up to October 1975 the doctors worked in the same area without accepting any fee whatsoever.

VALUATION OF LAND (RATING AND VALUATION) AMENDMENT BILL
LOCAL GOVERNMENT (RATING AND VALUATION) AMENDMENT BILL

Third Reading

Bills read a third time, on motion by Mr Walker on behalf of Mr Jensen.

FORESTRY (AMENDMENT) BILL (No. 2)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (FORESTRY) AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Third Reading

Bills read a third time together, on motion by Mr Walker on behalf of Mr Gordon.

SESSIONAL COMMITTEES

Library

Motion (by Mr Walker) agreed to:

(1) That the Library Committee for the present Session consist of the Speaker, Mr R. J. Clough, Mr Johnson, Mr Kearns, Mrs Meillon, Mr Park, Mr Pickard, Mr Rogan, Mr West and Mr Wilde, with authority and power to act jointly with the Library Committee of the Legislative Council in accordance with the Assembly's resolution of *26* November, 1968.

(2) That the Committee have leave to sit during the sittings of the House.

Printing

Motion (by Mr Walker) agreed to:

(1) That the Printing Committee for the present Session consist of Mr Cleary, Mr Face, Mr Fischer, Mr Johnstone, Mr Jones, Mr McGowan, Mr Maher, Mrs Meillon, Mr Park and Mr Smith, to whom are hereby referred all Papers (except such as the Standing Orders or the House direct shall be printed) which may be laid upon the Table of the House. It shall be the duty of such Committee to report from time to time which of the Papers referred to them ought, in their opinion, to be printed, and whether in full or in abstract; and it shall be in the power of the Committee to order such Papers, or abstracts thereof, to be prepared for press by the Clerk in attendance upon such Committee, and such Papers or abstracts shall be printed unless the House otherwise order.

(2) That the Clerk of the House shall cause to be printed, as a matter of course, all reports from the Printing Committee.

(3) That the Committee have leave to sit during the sittings of the House.

Standing Orders and Procedure

Motion (by Mr Walker) agreed to:

(1) That the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee be appointed to inquire into, and if considered advisable, make recommendations to the Legislative Assembly, respecting the standing orders, rules, usages, customs, practice and procedures of the Legislative Assembly.

(2) That such Committee consist of the Speaker, Mr Bruxner, Mr Cahill, Mr Brown, Mr Keane, Mr McDonald, Mr Maddison, Mr Ramsay, Mr Sheahan and the mover.

(3) That the Committee have leave to sit during the sittings or any adjournment of the House.

SELECT COMMITTEE UPON LIQUOR TRADING

Mr WALKER (Georges River), Attorney-General and Minister of Justice [11.25]: I move:

(1) That a select committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon whether the times during which, and the conditions under which liquor may be sold, supplied or consumed in accordance with any license, permit or other authority granted or issued pursuant to the provisions of the Liquor Act, 1912, should be extended or varied having regard to the interest of the community and any other relevant factors; and to make such recommendations as the committee sees fit.

(2) That such commitee consist of Mr Cleary, Mr Degen, Mr Fischer, Mrs Foot, Mr Hunter, Mr Maddison, Mr O'Connell, Mr Quinn and Mr Sheahan.

(3) That the committee have leave to sit during the sittings or any adjournment of the House, to adjourn from place to place, and to make visits of inspections within the State of New South Wales and within the other States and Territories of Australia.

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

Mr WALKER: Honourable members will be aware that the policy of this Government is, and always has been, to establish a parliamentary select committee to inquire into certain aspects of the Liquor Act. In fact, in 1974 when the government of the day proposed to introduce legislation to permit hotels to trade on Sunday, we opposed the measure on the basis that the Government had not given adequate and sufficient consideration to community attitudes and demands. At that time the Premier, who was then the Leader of the Opposition, stated that the Opposition would press for the establishment of a select committee to make inquiries in this regard.

When the bill was about to be introduced into Parliament the government of the day saw that a number of its members—twelve, I think—were not going to support the proposal and they were forced to resile from the course they had adopted. This Government has not resiled from the decision that was made in 1974, and as a result the motion for the establishment of a select committee is placed before this House. Although the terms of reference do not specifically mention Sunday trading it is quite obvious that this will be encompassed within the inquiry. The terms also recognize the demands of licensees and consumers alike for changes in general trading hours under the Liquor Act.

It is accepted, of course, that certain groups and individuals have strongly held views against liquor. I urge those groups and individuals to delay immediate adverse reaction to the establishment of the committee until they have given serious thought to what is being proposed. They should note that the terms of reference refer to "interest of the community and any other relevant factors". The inclusion of these words most assuredly means that those groups and individuals who oppose Sunday trading, or who in fact oppose any consumption of intoxicating liquor, will now be given the opportunity to present their views to the parliamentary select committee and eventually to have those views carefully considered by the Government.

Honourable members should also note that the terms of reference refer to "the conditions under which liquor may be sold, supplied or consumed . . .". This will give the committee power to consider the seemingly anomalous situations that now occur under the Liquor Act, such as those arising from bona fide traveller provisions and the multifarious purposes to which the concept of liquor with meals

are made to apply. Speculation and conjecture regarding liquor trading hours must be brought to an end. I am confident that this will be achieved by establishing the proposed committee and seeking from it an early report on its deliberations. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr MADDISON (Ku-ring-gai) [11.28]: It is well known that prior to the 1976 elections and even earlier the present Government promised that, on attaining government, it would set up a select committee to examine the Liquor Act. It is interesting that over the two and a half years since the Government came to office liquor trade associations have exerted continuing pressure on it to honour its promise. It is more significant, perhaps, that now that the Attorney-General has taken over the portfolio of Minister of Justice there is to be some action. I must say that it is strange to see the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice acting in a positive way. The former Minister of Justice—now the Minister for Mineral Resources and Development—had no success with Cabinet in having this committee appointed.

There is no doubt that the Opposition supports the appointment of the proposed select committee but—and there are several buts to that statement—as the Leader of the Opposition pointed out during debate earlier this week on the motion to appoint a select committee to inquire into Aboriginal matters, the Government is providing for six members of the Government to be on the committee as against three members from the Opposiiion. Quite clearly the Government is so impressed with the number of members it has in this place that it wants to use its numbers to oppress the Opposition on select committees. It is unbelievable that twice the number of Government members to the number of Opposition members should be on a select committee. As the Leader of the Opposition pointed out earlier this week, it has been traditional for there to be either six Government members to four Opposition members or five Government members to three Opposition members, but never for a six-to-three ratio. I emphasize that the Government's weight of numbers has been the significant factor in structuring the proposed committee.

It was most extraordinary to see a report in the *Sydney Morning Herald* to the effect that the honourable member for Wentworthville is to be the chairman of the committee. I should think it rather pre-emptive for either the honourable member for Wentworthville or the Attorney-General to inform the press that a certain member will chair a select committee not yet established. I had always understood that a chairman of a select committee was elected by the members of the particular committee. It is quite a departure to have the chairman virtually appointed by the Government. I do not know why the Government did not provide for the appointment in the motion. Why did not the Government include in the motion that the honourable member for Wentworthville be the chairman of the committee and make it a *fait accompli?*

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am sure the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai is able to make his contribution to the debate without the assistance of his colleagues.

Mr MADDISON: The Opposition is perturbed by the narrowness of the terms of reference. Really, the committee is being asked to look at the hours of trading provided under the Liquor Act and whether or not any changes should be made in the conditions that attach to licences, permits or other authorities provided for in the Liquor Act. The main objection and criticism of the Opposition to the terms of reference is that the committee is not to be required to look at the sociological consequences of various trading hours or conditions attaching to licences and permits. Generality is implied by the use of the words "having regard to the interests of the community".

Mr Sheahan: What about the words "any other relevant factors"?

Mr MADDISON: As a lawyer doubtless the honourable member for Burrinjuck can put forward a really grand explanation of the meaning of those words. I do not place a great deal of weight on them. I put to the House that the question of amending the Liquor Act has always raised great divisions in the community, even when minor amendments to the Act were being contemplated. The motion implies that the committee will be looking at trading hours and more particularly, as the Attorney-General said, at trading hours on Sundays. Undoubtedly that question has divided the community, is still dividing it and doubtless will continue to do so. It seems to me that if there is to be a proper review of the hours of trading or conditions attaching to liquor licences the first requirement is for the committee to look at the sociological effects of changing the hours of trading and conditions attaching to licences.

The Opposition believes, for example, that honourable members ought to know, and the committee ought to inquire into, what effect extended trading hours would have on the road toll. It should know also what effect extended hours of trading would have on industrial accidents. The House should know, further, the effect that extended hours of trading would have on absenteeism in industry and on the crime rate, the incidence of divorce, broken marriages, child delinquency, neglect of children, alcoholism and other illnesses, either physical or mental. In New South Wales we have never had an inquiry or investigation into the relationship between hours of trading and the provisions of the Liquor Act on the important social questions I have raised. It seems to the Opposition that unless some examination is made of those problems the public will not be properly informed in order to judge the recommendations that come forward from the proposed committee.

In the past on the many occasions when liquor trading hours and terms of trading have been under scrutiny no objective criteria, or criteria that are as close to objective as one could possibly find, have been discussed by the community. The Opposition is disappointed that the terms of reference have been drawn in a narrow and limited way. We had hoped that the terms of reference would enable the committee to look at the economic effects of various classes of liquor licences.

The Opposition considers that it is necessary to have an objective examination of the effect of price cutting in the liquor industry. Has it had any adverse effect on the public interest? Has it improved the accessibility of liquor to the public? Has the quality of liquor been maintained during the price cutting war? Will it continue to be maintained? If the quality of liquor declines as a consequence of price cutting will the public suffer? People might think they are getting a bargain when in fact they are being sold down the drain. What has been the economic feasibility of liquor licences during the time when price cutting has occurred?

All of these important questions should have been included in the committee's terms of reference so that a wide inquiry could be held into the many aspects of the liquor industry. Another important matter associated with the leisure industries is the structure of awards prescribing wages, hours of work and penalty rates. All these matters are causing great problems in the leisure industries and particularly in the liquor industry which is one of the most important of the leisure industries of New South Wales.

The Opposition is delighted that the honourable member for Vaucluse will be a member of the proposed select committee. I congratulate the honourable member on the views she put forward in her maiden speech in regard to permanent part-time employment. In economic terms the viability of liquor licences and extended

trading hours depends on the approach of governments and industrial tribunals to the award structures, including overtime and penalty rates. For that reason it would be appropriate that the terms of reference should specify that that matter must be examined. I am sorry that it may be difficult for the proposed select committee to make use of the valuable experience and background of the honourable member for Vaucluse on the question of how far we could accommodate changes in hotel trading hours or conditions of trade by making use of the concept of permanent part-time employment. The proposed select committee should be able to look at the question of how far state legislation needs to be varied having regard to the Commonwealth Trade Practices Act. The (committee should be able to inquire into whether the public is really being served by the restraints imposed by the Trade Practices Commission. I am not posing this question in a critical manner but I think that at least it should be examined.

There has been quite a deal of turbulence in the liquor industry. Some issues about hotel licensees and the Trade Practices Act have caused a great deal of difficulty, problems and expense. This aspect raises an important question which the proposed select committee should have the opportunity of examining. After inquiring into this matter, the committee could make recommendations in respect of changes in the law of this State which may have an effect on the Trade Practices Act. If the committee were not able to make recommendations that fell within the constitutional power of the State, it could at least recommend that the federal Government be advised that the liquor industry has special considerations which warrant a different approach from that adopted in respect of the sale of goods and services other than liquor. The proposed select committee should also have the opportunity to examine the structure of the licensing court, the procedures adopted under the Liquor Act and whether they are appropriate for the regulation of the liquor industry.

The structure of the Licensing Court in New South Wales has not been examined for decades. Queensland has a liquor commission that approaches the granting and control of licences in a different way from that adopted under the formal court structure in this State. One of the most important features of our system—and it has been criticized in many places—is the multiplicity of appeals that lie from a determination by the Licensing Court, to the Supreme Court, and beyond in some cases. It is a great pity that the Government has moved to set up a select committee in this area but will not give it a much wider charter so that it can look at the problems I have mentioned. As these problems affect the public interest, they certainly should be the subject of examination. The proposed select committee should have the opportunity to examine other important questions. Unfortunately, those terms of reference will restrict the select committee to a narrow exercise. Those terms of reference limit the committee to an inquiry whether trading hours should be varied and how many conditions should be attached to the various licences and permits. The committee will be unable to reach determinations about those questions unless it is able to look at the sociological effects of extended trading hours and the conditions that attach to licences issued under the Liquor Act. As the motion, unfortunately, goes only part of the way to meeting some of the criticisms I have made, I move the following amendment:

That the Motion be amended by leaving out paragraph (1) and inserting instead thereof:

"(1) That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon

Mr ***Maddison]***

(i) whether the times during which and the conditions under which liquor may be sold, supplied or consumed in accordance with any licence, permit or other authority granted or issued pursuant to the provisions of the Liquor Act, 1912, are significant factors in causing—

(a) accidents (both road and industrial);

(b) crime;

(c) divorce and broken homes;

(d) child delinquency and neglect;

(e) alcoholism and physical and mental illness.

(ii) whether having regard to findings under subparagraph (i), and the interest of the community, the times during which, and the conditions under which, liquor may be sold, supplied or consumed under the provisions of the Liquor Act, 1912, should be extended or varied and if so whether changes should be made to the award structure of wages, hours and penalty rates in the liquor industry.

(iii) to make such recommendations as the Committee sees fit.

The amendment I have proposed does not cover all the matters to which I have referred, such as the structure of the licensing court and certain aspects of the Trade Practices Act. It is a pity that it is unlikely that the Government will accept the amendment. I would much prefer the Government, if it has reservations about the proposed terms of reference, to adjourn the debate, examine the matter further and endeavour to come up with terms of reference that are more satisfactory and more comprehensive than those set out in the motion.

During the eleven years in which I was Minister of Justice, I was responsible for many amendments to the Liquor Act. The Attorney-General and Minister of Justice knows that during most of that time—at any rate in the period when he was a member of this House—not even a minor amendment was proposed to the Liquor Act which did not evoke a storm from both sides of the House. The Government will not solve anything by appointing a select committee and giving it these limited terms of reference; it will certainly not be able to persuade the public that changes should be made in this area. I believe that ultimately a referendum will have to be held about these questions. Unless a question is put to an informed public by way of a referendum a great deal of time will have been wasted. The Government will not get any changes off the ground on the findings of the select committee, particularly having regard to the limited view of the Attorney-General as to whether there should be Sunday trading in a more generalized way in hotels than there is at present. I urge the Government not to adopt a stubborn attitude and use its members to knock the amendment out of hand. If the Government has any reservations, I suggest that the debate be adjourned and the question examined to see whether more acceptable terms of reference can be framed.

Mr QUINN (Wentworthville) [11.51]: I had not intended to speak in this debate but unfortunately the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai brought my name into the discussion and attributed to me claims that I had not made. At no time have I stated publicly or otherwise that I was or would be the chairman of the proposed select committee.

Mr Mason: Who was responsible for the report in this morning's press?

Mr QUINN: Last evening I was approached by members of the press and informed that I was to be the chairman of this select committee. I was asked whether I would make a statement. My reply was that the committee had not yet been appointed by Parliament and when it was it would elect a chairman. I said that if I happened to be elected as chairman I would make a statement in that capacity. I was asked whether I would make known my private views on this matter. My reply was that I believed all members who might be appointed to the committee should go into it with an open mind. I said also the committee would be seeking as many submissions as possible from the public—both from those who supported extended trading hours and those who opposed them. I said that no doubt members of the committee would weigh up the evidence put before them and come down with a reasonable decision based upon that evidence. That was the end of my statement to the press. I reject any suggestion by the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai that I have usurped the decision of the committee on the election of its chairman.

Mr Mason: The decision has already been made.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr QUINN: The Leader of the Opposition is chattering away like a chimpanzee.

Mr Mason: The decision has been made. Why do you not admit it?

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr QUINN: The Leader of the Opposition is babbling away and suggesting that a decision has already been made that I am to be the chairman of this committee. If the honourable gentleman would like to lay a bet as to who will be chairman he will find some difficulty in getting set if he wants to back me. Nobody would be willing to take the odds against me.

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the Leader of the Opposition to desist from interjecting. He is not setting a good example to other members of this House.

Mr QUINN: The honourable member for Ku-ring-gai complained about the ratio of Government supporters to Opposition members on the committee. In the history of this Parliament it has been usual, when a select committee has been set up, for the Government to have a majority of members. That procedure was followed when several select committees were set up under the administration of the coalition Government of which the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai was a Minister. When the numbers on each side of this House were approximately equal and the committee being set up was to consist of nine members, as in this case, the Government supplied five members and the Opposition four members. Now, with two-thirds of the House occupying the Government benches and only one-third on the Opposition benches, the composition of this select committee is in proportion. Whether that is fair and reasonable in the eyes of the Opposition I do not know.

Mr Mason: It is ridiculous.

Mr QUINN: The Leader of the Opposition and the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai are not happy about it. At this stage I do not know who will be chairman of the committee. That will be determined by the committee, though I am sure I shall start favourite. The honourable member for Ku-ring-gai referred to social and industrial matters that should be considered, and he moved an amendment to have those issues incorporated in the committee's terms of reference. If the committee were to consider the industrial matters put forward by the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai it

would have to report to the Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Technology and Minister for Energy and not to the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice. Is the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai attempting to usurp the authority of the Industrial Commission of New South Wales? Is he trying to get Parliament to take over the functions of the Industrial Commission, arbitration commissioners and conciliation commissioners? Most of the matters put forward by the honourable member for consideration by the committee would fall within the existing jurisdiction of the Industrial Commission. Further, should the terms of reference be widened as suggested in the honourable member's amendment I doubt whether the committee could bring down a report during the three-year life of this Parliament.

Perhaps the Opposition wants the committee to be bogged down with matters that are really the function of some other authority. The Opposition might want to see the committee procrastinating so that the people would not have any idea whether there might be a change one way or another in the hours during which liquor might be sold. When the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai was Attorney-General and Minister of Justice many amendments were made to the Liquor Act. Already Sunday hotel trading is quite legal following an amendment that the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai, as the Minister responsible, introduced. Countless licences have been issued under section 51B of the Liquor Act.

Mr Maddison: I confess, if I have anything to confess, that that is right.

Mr QUINN: Did the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai as Minister take into consideration the possible effect on the road toll when he introduced that amendment to the Act in 1972? Did he take into consideration all those other matters about which he now complains? Did he ponder on the social questions and the industrial matters he raised today? Did he consider all, or for that matter any, of those matters when he recommended to Cabinet that Sunday trading should be permitted in hotels throughout New South Wales? The former Minister was then willing to go along with the proposal without bothering to have an inquiry into any of the matters he has raised today. However, his backbench colleagues refused to let him do it. Now the honourable member has moved far-reaching amendments to the terms of reference so that the committee will be bogged down in procedures and never make a report. I know that most members nominated for this committee—I hope all of them will attend committee meetings and receive and consider with an open mind the submissions from the public. I have no doubt that the committee will bring down a decision based upon the evidence put before it.

Mr PUNCH (Gloucester), Leader of the Country Party [12.0]: I comment on two aspects of the proposal to set up a select committee to inquire into liquor trading which concern me, my party and, I am sure, the Opposition as a whole. The first is representation on the committee, which is to have six Government supporters and three members of the Opposition. I noticed that when the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai referred to this matter the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice had a smug grin, as though to say, "Yes, the Government has the numbers and will do what it wants to do". Ever since I was elected to Parliament, and I am sure for a long time before that, the Government has had a majority on select committees, but not an overwhelming majority. I can recall select committees on which there were five Government supporters to four Opposition members, seven Government supporters to six Opposition members, and even six Government supporters to four Opposition members, but from the inquiries I have made there has never been such lopsided representation as that proposed for this select committee.

If there are to be nine committee members, and only three representatives of the Opposition, that will be flagrantly unfair and a display of unnecessary bias against the Liberal and Country parties. The Opposition is entitled to adequate representation, and should demand it so that the committee will work properly. If a select committee is to be dominated by Government supporters, the result will be a foregone conclusion. The Government members will do what they want to do and Opposition members will not have an adequate opportunity to inquire properly into the matters they are supposed to be investigating.

I lodge a strong protest against the proposed membership of the committee. I do not believe that it is in the interests of Parliament or of proper procedures to have so few Opposition members appointed to the select committee. I do not know whether the Government is trying to find jobs for the boys, and give them a few extra dollars to get them out of the way. I should like to think that that is not the reason for the proposal made here today, but one cannot help wondering about it when lopsided representation of this sort is proposed.

Mr R. J. Brown: The reason is that a six-to-three representation reflects the imbalance of the parties, and the Opposition's lack of competence.

Mr PUNCH: Suddenly we have a new expert on competence, the honourable member for Cessnock. He has not displayed much competence in the Hunter Valley.

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

Mr PUNCH: It does not become a new honourable member to talk about the competence of members on either side of the House. There are some members on both sides who have more competence than others, but all are trying to do a job. This little pipsqueak comes in here and in his first few days as a member criticizes the competence of those on this side of the House. That does him little credit.

The other point is that I am not opposed to the appointment of select committees or other forms of inquiry, which do a great deal of good work in respect of many matters. Select committees of various sorts are an integral part of the parliamentary process. However, I sound a warning, for it seems from what has happened so far in the short period this Parliament has been in session that there is to be a proliferation of committees. I remind honourary members of what happened in Canberra under a Labor Government and express the hope that New South Wales will not follow the precedent established there. The federal Labor Government appointed 157 Royal commissions, ordinary commissions and committees of inquiry of which I have a record here, and there were many more than that. Whenever the federal Government had a problem it pushed the matter over to a committee, fobbing off people and keeping them quiet in that way. I should say that the cost of such inquiries has run into tens of millions of dollars over the years. Committees can provide a government with valuable information on important subjects, but there is no need for us to go as far as the Labor Government went in Canberra. I sound a warning on that point and repeat my strong protest against the inadequate representation on the proposed committee of members of the Opposition.

Mr MOORE (Gordon) [12.5]: I comment on that part of the amendment moved by the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai dealing with the need to examine award structures covering wages, hours of work and penalty rates. It is time that the community took a look at the need to alter its traditional attitudes to hours of work and work operations. Indeed, I pay tribute to the Minister for Mineral Resources and Development for the comment he made when, as Minister of Justice, he opened the new courts of petty sessions at Gosford in the life of the last Parliament.

He said there was a need to examine and to abandon traditional attitudes to hours of work in order to meet the need to service the requirements of the general public. With respect to penalty rates I invite attention to a decision of the full bench of the South Australian Industrial Commission which in September this year said, apart from other things:

> We must say that, as a matter of basic concept, we regard contemporary trends towards seeking ever escalating penalty rates and premiums with considerable concern. It may well be argued that they are akin to a cancerous growth which, in the long term, could be counter-productive to the employment and economic well-being of employees generally—particularly as common sense suggests that they are likely steadily to render Australian industry less and less campetitive with that overseas; where such concepts have not developed, at least to the same extent or, in a number of instances, at all.

Commenting on that decision, the Adelaide Advertiser of 11th August this year said:

> The penalty rates problem is but another illustration of the truism which unions have so far been reluctant to face—that one man's pay rise can cost another his job. The problem itself and the potentially damaging consequences if there is not some change of heart about it, are obvious to all who are prepared to take an objective view. That is a depressing outlook at a time of serious unemployment, particularly among young people.
>
> What is required is a new approach to notions of what are "normal" working hours and an abandonment of the idea that any work done outside nine-to-five hours, from Monday to Friday, constitutes such a burden that it commands the right to same substantial pecuniary compensation. That is not to deny that jobs that involve constant night or weekend work may interfere to come extent with normal family life or social activity. But that is no justification for prohibitive penalty rates.
>
> Under present conditions there are probably many thousands of young unemployed people who would welcome jobs involving weekend work in, for example, restaurants or motels but who cannot get them because prospective employers are deterred by high penalty rates. In this situation everybody is a loser, including the public which is denied facilities that would otherwise be available. It is a problem that will persist until the Industrial Commission's message sinks in and attitudes change.

I am not advocating total abandonment of penalty rates where there is justification for them. What I am saying is that our inflexible attitudes to the traditional, normal working hours need to be examined and challenged. Perhaps that challenge can be rebuffed on legitimate, logical and social grounds as well as on industrial grounds. However, the challenge must be taken up. The matter must be examined. The unemployment rate among persons aged between 15 and 22 is 17 per cent, which is nearly three times the rate of unemployment among persons in other age groups, which is 6.2 per cent. That is why there is a need to look critically and impartially at the traditional attitudes to penalty rates with the object of discovering whether there is an overwhelming need to alter our working patterns with respect to part-time work, spans of hours of employment, the use of casual labour, and the disincentives to employers to abandon rigid, hidebound structures of employment.

The pre-selected chairman of the proposed select committeee spoke about the need for an open-minded examination of Sunday trading. I hope that he uses the same sort of open-mindedness when looking at this problem so that young people in the community can obtain jobs in an industry that would be willing and able to provide employment if the committee recommended appropriately concerning trading

hours, coupled with its recommendations in regard to the employment structure in the industry. It would be to the financial well-being of a union led by a member of the Labor party in another place if such flexibility were introduced. There would be more opportunities for recruitment into the industries employing members of the Federated Liquor and Allied Industries Employees Union of Australia in this State.

Question—That the words stand—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 62

Mr Akister	Mr Ferguson	Mr Mulock
Mr Anderson	Mr Flaherty	Mr O'Connell
Mr Bannon	Mr Gabb	Mr O'Neill
Mr Barnier	Mr Gordon	Mr Paciullo
Mr Bedford	Mr Haigh	Mr Petersen
Mr Booth	Mr Hatton	Mr Quinn
Mr Brereton	Mr Hills	Mr Ramsay
Mr Britt	Mr Hunter	Mr Robb
Mr R. J. Brown	Mr Jackson	Mr Ryan
Mr Cahill	Mr Jensen	Mr Sheahan
Mr Cavalier	Mr Johnson	Mr A. G. Stewart
Mr Cleary	Mr Johnstone	Mr K. J. Stewart
Mr R. J. Clough	Mr Jones	Mr Wade
Mr Cox	Mr Keane	Mr Walker
Mr Crabtree	Mr Kearns	Mr Webster
Mr Day	Mr Knott	Mr Whelan
Mr Degen	Mr McCarthy	Mr Wilde
Mr Durick	Mr McGowan	Mr Wran
Mr Egan	Mr McIlwaine	*Tellers,*
Mr Einfeld	Mr Mair	Mr Maher
Mr Face	Mr Mallam	Mr Rogan

Noes, 35

Mr Arblaster	Mr Fischer	Mr Osborne
Mr Barraclough	Mr Fisher	Mr Park
Mr Boyd	Mrs Foot	Mr Pickard
Mr Brewer	Mr Freudenstein	Mr Punch
Mr J. H. Brown	Mr Healey	Mr Schipp
Mr Bruxner	Mr McDonald	Mr Singleton
Mr Cameron	Mr Maddison	Mr Smith
Mr Caterson	Mr Mason	Mr Taylor
Mr J. A. Clough	Mrs Meillon	Mr West
Mr Cowan	Mr Moore	*Tellers,*
Mr Dowd	Mr Morris	Mr Rozzoli
Mr Duncan	Mr Murray	Mr Wotton

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Amendment negatived.

Mr WALKER (Georges River), Attorney-General and Minister of Justice [12.18], in reply: I thank those honourable members who took part in the debate. Their contributions were reasoned and rational. The honourable member for Ku-ring-gai probably has more experience of the Liquor Act than any other member in the House. In common with most Opposition members he had several queries and was upset about

the constitution of the committee. That debate has already proceeded and I can only reiterate the Government's position. In the past when the House has been closely constituted between Labor and Liberal-Country party members the committees would include five Government supporters and four members of the Opposition or a ratio of six to four. At the moment there are sixty-three Government members and thirty-five Opposition members. In fairness, proportionately the committee should be constituted six to three. That is the Government's attitude, which I shall develop when I refer to the contribution of the Leader of the Country Party.

So far as the chairmanship of the committtee is concerned, it is about time that Opposition members got out of cloud cuckooland and became realistic about State politics. They should begin to understand what it is all about and appreciate that it is a hard, cruel world. The honourable member for Wentworthville who has an outstanding record in this House and is the senior Government supporter on the committee, would be the obvious choice of Government members and no doubt that will be the position when the election of the chairman takes place. We have to be realistic about this and not go in for the sort of nonsense that has been uttered. Quite frankly, we could not get a better chairman, if the committee see fit to elect the honourable member for Wentworthville whose experience, balance and objectivity will be needed on a very trying sort of committee that will have a lot of pressure upon it.

The arguments of the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai about the narrowness of the exercise deserve comment. I concede that it is a narrower exercise than the one that he envisaged. His first argument, that there is no requirement to look at the sociological consequences, was emphasized in the amendment that was defeated a few minutes ago. In my view it is a lot of nonsense. Certainly it is legal nonsense. The terms of reference allow the committee to look at the community interest and almost any other matter that it considers relevant. In my view the community interest includes very much matters such as the road toll, industrial accidents, crime, the divorce rate, broken homes, neglect of children, alcoholism and other physical and mental illnesses arising from consumption of liquor. If that interpretation is not the view of the committee, I should be prepared immediately to seek an extension of the terms of reference to include the sort of matters that were set out in the amendment, but in my view it is not necessary. The terms of reference were deliberately designed in that way and the words community interest were designed to incorporate those very factors. I should be most disappointed if the committee did not look at this sort of argument, and I am quite sure it will.

The economic argument was an interesting one. I agree there is a need for review of the cost of licences as well as a need to look at the consequences of price-cutting wars and the other economic factors associated with the industry, just as there may well be a need to look at matters such as the Trade Practices Act, the licensing court structure and perhaps even industrial matters affecting especially the liquor industry. But that sort of review would be tremendously widespread and it would take at least two and possibly close to three years to complete. The Government's promise related to hours of trading and not to all these matters. I give an undertaking to the House that these matters will be considered. I shall be giving serious consideration to the particular form that the inquiry into them should take. I am new to this portfolio and I have yet to make a mature judgment as to the best way of dealing with this problem. I thank the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai for bringing these matters to my attention. I am quite sure that they need attention.

I am a little concerned about the suggestion that the Government should look into the question of industrial conditions generally. My view is that, if it is considered that matters such as penalty rates are of serious concern, the State should look at them

not in the narrow confines of the Liquor Act but in the wider confines of industrial laws generally. If this is the case I would be stepping outside my administration into that of the Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Technology and Minister for Energy where, in my view, the matter more properly resides.

The comments on the Trade Practices Act were intriguing. The honourable member for Ku-ring-gai seemed to imply that the Trade Practices Act places restraints on industry. That is totally wrong. The purpose of the Trade Practices Act was to lift all restraint on trade. The Act is designed to do just that, although I suppose those in industry who do not believe in free enterprise competition and impose restraints such as price-fixing and other agreements would not agree with what I say. The philosophy of the Trade Practices Act is very similar to the philosophy of the Liberal Party. It is designed to produce a free market so that the market mechanism operates in a way that will produce a fair price in normal competition. There are always arguments that a particular industry should be protected and that particular individuals in an industry should be given protection that the free enterprise system in its purest sense would not tolerate.

If the liquor industry has areas that deserve that sort of consideration, I should certainly be pleased to listen to representations and perhaps will agree that there are certain areas that deserve special protection. If that is the case I shall certainly communicate those views to the federal Government.

The amendment surprised me. In a way it rejects some of the arguments of the honourable member for Ku-ring-gai for it is much narrower than the scope of the inquiry that he sought. I do not want to take any petty points about this, but obviously there are other points of view within his party about how wide the inquiry should be.

The Leader of the Country Party reiterated the views about representation. I point out to him the attitude of his hero, mentor and soulmate, Joh Bjelke-Petersen in Queensland. Joh's view is that while every other State in Australia—except Tasmania to a small extent—sends equal numbers of Opposition and Government members to the Constitutional Convention, he has ten Liberal–Country party members and two Opposition members. The basis of that Country Party policy is the proportion of members in the Queensland House. That situation has not changed significantly although at the last election the Labor Party in Queensland increased its numbers in the House. That rule applies across the board in Queensland under the Country Party Government, so it is hypocritical for the Leader of the Country Party to come here and say that sort of thing.

He is wrong when he says that there have never been proportions like six to three before. I understand there have--certainly a long time ago. There is no point in developing that. The Government takes that view at the moment and that is the view which will prevail in this Chamber, for Parliament is supreme and what the Parliament decides will occur. In this Chamber there has never before been occasion to move the furniture to allow all the Government members to sit on the right-hand side of the Chair. That is an extraordinary circumstance and it must be taken into consideration. We are all individual members of Parliament. We may have party affiliations but we all have the right to participate in committees. If the additional Government members are not given additional positions on this committee they will not serve on a committee for many years. It is only fair that their points of view be aired as well as those of members of the Liberal and Country parties.

Mr Walker]

The honourable member for Gordon raised the matter of penalty rates and proselytized for a while. I simply repeat what I said before, that I believe this is a matter that is deserving of general consideration within the portfolio of the Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Technology and Minister for Energy and it would be wrong narrowly to confine it to this particular area of the liquor industry.

Motion agreed to.

MOTOR VEHICLES (THIRD PARTY INSURANCE) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

Mr COX (Auburn), Minister for Transport [12.29]: I move:

That leave be given to bring in a bill for an Act to amend section 7 of the Motor Vehicles (Third Party Insurance) Act, 1942, with respect to the penalty for offences relating to the use of uninsured motor vehicles.

In seeking leave to introduce the Motor Traffic (Amendment) Bill I shall mention that one of the proposals is to amend that Act so that the offence under the Motor Vehicles (Third Party Insurance) Act of driving an uninsured motor vehicle and other prescribed offences under that Act can be included in the traffic infringement notice scheme. The Motor Traffic Act provides, in effect, that no offence in respect of which a penalty of imprisonment may be imposed under that Act or the Metropolitan Traffic Act shall be included in the traffic infringement notice scheme.

It is considered that this same principle should be observed in connection with the proposal to bring into the infringement notice scheme prescribed offences under the Motor Vehicles (Third Party Insurance) Act. In the latter Act, the penalty for driving an uninsured motor vehicle is a maximum of $200 and/or twelve months imprisonment. The purpose of this cognate bill with the Motor Traffic (Amendment) Bill is to provide for the deletion of the punishment of imprisonment from the penalty for the particular offence and to offset this by increasing the maximum monetary penalty from $200 to $500. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr ARBLASTER (Mosman) [12.30]: The Opposition supports the introduction of the bill.

Motion agreed to.

Bill presented and read a first time.

MOTOR TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) BILL

Introduction

Mr COX (Auburn), Minister for Transport [12.31]: I move:

That leave be given to bring in a bill for an Act to amend the Motor Traffic Act, 1909, with respect to procedures relating to penalty notices and for other purposes.

Briefly, the amendments proposed are designed to enable action to be taken for recovery of penalties under the infringement notice scheme for parking offences in circumstances where no action lies at present; to provide for the offence of drive an uninsured motor vehicle and other prescribed offences under the Motor Vehicles (Third Party Insurance) Act and regulations to be dealt with under the traffic infringement notice scheme; to put beyond doubt the powers of the Commissioner for Motor Transport to impose conditions when granting registration of motor vehicles; and to exempt the driver

of an ambulance or fire engine from the need to observe the speed limits in certain circumstances. In addition, the opportunity has been taken to include certain minor amendments to the Act as the result of statute law revision.

With regard to the first of the proposals mentioned, namely, the recovery of parking penalties, the position has obtained for some years whereby in certain circumstances it has not been possible to recover penalties properly imposed for offences relating to parking because of what, in effect, have been technicalities in the law. Penalties have been evaded in cases where a vehicle parked illegally is not registered in the name of a natural person or a corporate body, such as when registered in the name of a partnership or an unincorporated firm or organization. Another instance is where the registered owner of a vehicle disposes of it but transfer of the registration to the new owner has not been completed. A further case is where an offence is committed after the registration of a vehicle has expired. The action proposed will close these loopholes.

The extension of the offences which may be dealt with under the infringement notice scheme to include prescribed offences under the Motor Vehicles (Third Party Insurance) Act and regulations will enable the offence of driving an uninsured vehicle to be so prescribed. Some thousands of such offences are detected each year and the ability to deal with these by way of infringement notice will reduce substantially the workload of the courts. Another of the matters covered in the bill provides for extension of the regulation-making powers set down in the Motor Traffic Act. In this case, the object is to enable a regulation to be made which will provide for the registration of a motor vehicle to be granted, subject to conditions about its transfer or use as may be specified in the certificate of registration for the vehicle.

The final amendment of any significance is for the purpose of extending the circumstances under which drivers of fire brigade and ambulance vehicles are exempted from the speed limits imposed under the Act. The present provisions of the legislation cover journeys to a fire or accident and it is proposed to include journeys to deal with other types of emergencies. I will deal with the proposals in detail at the second reading stage. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr ARBLASTER (Mosman) [12.34]: I hope that the Government will provide for the genuine loss of infringement notices. Honourable members will be aware of many instances of infringement notices being taken from the windscreen of a car or blowing away. This happened to me about three months ago. The first advice that one has infringed and should have paid a fine is the receipt of advice that the authorities were proceeding by way of summons. When a fine has not been paid or no correspondence has been entered into, prior to proceeding by way of summons a registered letter or similar communication should be sent to the person concerned to give him a chance to make representations. Honourable members will be aware also of the many excuses that persons submit to the Commissioner of Police to avoid being fined. I am sure that a bestselling book could be written of these excuses.

There are genuine cases. Although it was a stupid thing to do, a constituent of mine received a notice of infringement and forwarded a cash sum in payment, which was never received or, if received, it went astray. My constituent received next a letter saying that the matter had gone to court — not that it would be going to court — and that the owner of the vehicle was fined $30. Although he admits it was stupid of him to send the cash he did not know that it was not received. The first intimation he had that it had not been received was a letter saying not that it would be taken before a magistrate but that it had been before a magistrate and a fine imposed.

In parking areas at shopping centres and similar places where a time limit on parking is imposed, a notice of a parking infringement placed on the windscreen of the vehicle may be removed. How it is removed is not a matter of concern at this particular time. There are many genuine instances of a person not knowing that he has infringed. In fairness to those people, I hope that the bill tidies up that position. Only a small percentage of recipients of infringement notices would be involved. I recognize that a small percentage of persons will play on the fact that they know they will receive another notice. Although I shall look at the bill in detail, I was concerned to hear the Minister say that there will be an extension of the department's powers to regulate rather than an extension of legislative powers. The Opposition looks forward to reading the details in the bill and hearing the Minister's second reading speech.

Mr COX (Auburn), Minister for Transport [12.38], in reply: Most of the matters raised by the honourable member for Mosman refer to the administration of the infringement scheme, which rests with the Police Department, which is under the jurisdiction of the Premier. Most honourable members have brought to their notice motor traffic infringement cases that cause them a deal of concern. I have had cases where, after the persons have been to court and fines imposed, I have put the relevant details before the Minister of Justice, who has then taken appropriate action. The bill does not tidy up—to use the honourable member's expression—some of the problems that exist with this scheme. I shall be pleased to write to the Premier's Department to ask it to bring the honourable member's views to the notice of the appropriate authorities.

Motion agreed to.

Bill presented and read a first time.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT COMMISSION (FINANCIAL ACCOMMODATION) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

Mr COX (Auburn), Minister for Transport [12.40]: I move:

> That leave be given to bring in a bill for an Act to amend the Public Transport Commission Act, 1972, with respect to the obtaining of financial accommodation by the Public Transport Commission of New South Wales, and to validate certain matters.

The bill seeks to authorize the Public Transport Commission to borrow money or obtain advances or other financial accommodation in addition to its existing methods of raising money and for such accommodation to be Government guaranteed. In particular, the commission wishes to be able to enter into deferred payment contracts with companies for the manufacture and supply of capital equipment for the commission's use. It is also proposed to take the opportunity to formally validate arrangements to obtain financial accommodation from the Government Insurance Office for a contract recently entered into by the commission with Comeng for the supply of fifty double-deck suburban rail carriages.

I emphasise that the major part of the commission's works programme will continue to be financed from traditional sources, such as annual loan appropriations, semigovernmental borrowings and the railways renewals fund. The House will recall that earlier this year legislation was passed to give the Electricity Commission similar powers to those now proposed for the Public Transport Commission. The proposed

amendment to the Public Transport Commission Act will be based on the same lines as those contained in the Electricity Commission (Financial Accommodation) Amendment Act. I shall elaborate on the measure in more detail at the second reading stage. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr ARBLASTER (Mosman) [12.42]: The Opposition does not object to the introduction of this measure.

Motion agreed to.

Bill presented and read a first time.

ROAD MAINTENANCE (CONTRIBUTION) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

Mr COX (Auburn), Minister for Transport [12.43]: I move:

> That leave be given to bring in a bill for an Act to amend the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act, 1958, with respect to the recovery of road maintenance contributions imposed under corresponding laws of certain other States.

The Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act requires the owner of every vehicle having a load capacity in excess of 4.1 tonnes to pay charges for the maintenance of public streets in this State. The charges are payable whether the vehicle is being used for either an interstate or an intrastate journey. The Act also imposes a liability on directors of companies to meet these obligations where the body corporate has failed to do so. All the mainland States have similar legislation which has been held by the High Court to be constitutionally valid.

As a consequence of a decision by the High Court that the provisions about the liability of directors cannot, in most cases, be enforced against an interstate director of a company registered outside New South Wales, a large number of persons operating trucks subject to road maintenance charges in New South Wales have registered straw companies, usually in South Australia. These are companies with a nominal capital and no worthwhile assets whose directors have no connection with the operation of the trucks, which are usually under lease or hire purchase. These straw companies are not paying road maintenance charges and, although convictions and court orders for the payment of outstanding charges can be obtained, they cannot be enforced because the companies have no assets, and proof of a link between the directors and the operation of the trucks cannot be obtained. This has resulted in a serious decline in the amount of charges being collected for the use of New South Wales roads by vehicles registered in other States.

The same problem has arisen in other Australian States and, following discussions by the Australian Transport Advisory Council, which comprises the Commonwealth and State ministers for transport, and by the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General, it has been agreed that the only practical way to deal with the situation is that reciprocal legislation be enacted in all States and territories. This legislation is to provide for enforcement by a State or territory, against a company director resident in that State or territory, of a fine or order for the payment of road maintenance charges imposed by an interstate court against the company.

Legislation along the lines of this bill has recently been enacted in Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia, and South Australia has recently introduced reciprocal legislation. The bill is necessary not only to protect the revenue of the State,

but also to ensure that the law applies equitably to everyone engaged in interstate road transport and that the honest operator should not be disadvantaged by the operations of the straw company operator.

It is a fact that an inquiry into the road freight industry in New South Wales has recently been set up to examine, among other things, whether there is some practical and acceptable alternative to the present method of imposing a charge on the owners of heavy vehicles for the maintenance of this State's public streets. Nevertheless, it is the view of the Government that action should be taken to amend the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act to close the straw company loophole. The bill provides accordingly. I shall deal with this matter in more detail at the second reading stage, and seek support for the motion.

Mr ARBLASTER (Mosman) [12.45]: I listened with great interest to the Minister's introductory speech. He mentioned that South Australia recently introduced legislation of this type, but my information is that it will not be introduced until early in 1979. No matter how watertight our legislation might be, it will be useless unless South Australia introduces mirror legislation. We all know about straw companies set up in Naracoorte in South Australia, and the cost of those companies to the Government of New South Wales. We know also about the cost to truck drivers in filling in the necessary forms. The indirect cost of collecting a tax is enormous. It is high from the point of view of this Government as well as the Department of Main Roads, mainly because the cost of collecting the tax and policing the legislation is borne by that department. It does not come out of the money that is collected. The Opposition is concerned about the direct and indirect costs.

The Minister mentioned that law-abiding truck owners and operators were paying the amounts that are avoided by others. At the trucking station in Seymour, Victoria, which is similar to the one at Marulan, 60 per cent of the heavy trucks passing through are registered in South Australia. That means a tremendous loss of revenue to this State. If we can keep it at $19 million and spread it across the board it would be better than doubling that amount by closing all the loopholes.

Unless reciprocal legislation is introduced in South Australia, our measure will be absolutely useless. The South Australian Government has said over many years that it will not introduce this type of legislation. In fact, the South Australian Minister has said that it is impossible to devise legislation that is watertight against straw companies. I know that the Minister in this State is acting through ATAC to ensure that the legislation of other States is watertight. The Opposition looks forward to studying the terms of the bill.

Motion agreed to.

Bill presented and read a first time.

ELECTRICITY DEVELOPMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL

Introduction

Mr HILLS (Phillip), Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Technology and Minister for Energy [12.49]: I move:

> That leave be given to bring in a bill for an Act to amend the Electricity Development Act, 1945.

The bill deals with amendments to the principal Act under six schedules, relating to the following matters. Schedule 1 deals with electrical safety generally, and in particular the control over electrical appliances and equipment sold or hired to the public. Schedule 2 provides for the registration of electrical contractors and licensing of

electrical mechanics. Schedule 3 covers penalties; schedule 4, miscellaneous matters; schedule 5, statute law revision; and schedule 6, savings, transitional and other provisions.

At present the Act contains provisions to safeguard the public against hazards that may arise from the use of dangerous electrical appliances and installations. However, these powers have, at times, proved inadequate to deal with certain situations, and the amendments contained in schedule 1 will define and enlarge the powers of the Electricity Authority of New South Wales in this direction and, particularly, in relation to the sale or hire of dangerous articles.

Schedule 2 amends the Act in relation to the control of electrical contractors and electrical mechanics. Such controls have been in existence for many years in this State but have recently been under review with two objectives, first, to eliminate certain administrative weaknesses in the existing legislation and, second, to facilitate the reciprocal acceptance of the various qualifications of electrical workers from other States. The proposals will introduce a new scheme for the registration of electrical contractors and the licensing of electrical mechanics; the latter being licensed in three grades covering varying degrees of scope and responsibility. The licensing classification of electrical mechanic is being used instead of the traditional New South Wales classification of electrician to achieve uniformity of terminology with other States. These amendments to the Act will be complemented by new regulations, covering administrative details, which will supersede the existing licensing regulations.

Schedule 3 will revise certain penalties for offences against the principal Act and the regulations; these penalties were fixed in 1963. Schedule 4 deals with several miscellaneous matters, the more important of which cover amendments to enable the appointment of a member of the Electricity Authority of New South Wales to act in place of the chairman or deputy chairman of the authority when absent from duty; provide that a member or employee of an electricity supply authority shall not be personally liable in respect to acts, and so on, bona fide done for the purpose of executing the Act. Similar protection already exists in respect to electricity authority members and officers, and provides that prosecution for an offence against the Act or the regulations may be instituted at any time within two years of the offence. Present provisions apply a time limit of six months. Schedule 5 deals entirely with minor editorial or revision matters and schedule 6 deals with a number of minor matters that I shall cover at the second reading stage. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr SCHIPP (Wagga Wagga) [12.53]: The Opposition does not oppose leave to introduce the bill, though the Minister's brief explanation of the measure went further than I had been led to believe it would. The Minister emphasized the reciprocal arrangements for licensed electricians. That was my expectation but a number of other matters dealing with registration and electrical safety were mentioned by the Minister. Those matters bear closer scrutiny than was anticipated by the Opposition originally because they cover a sweeping range of matters dealing with the administrative details. The Opposition commends the introduction of reciprocity of qualification between the States. This matter cropped up in my electorate in a case where a plumber who qualified in New South Wales experienced trouble becoming registered as a plumber in South Australia. The Opposition looks forward to receiving the bill and will give it close attention.

Motion agreed to.

Bill presented and read a first time.

METRIC CONVERSION (AMENDMENT) BILL

Introduction

Mr HILLS (Phillip), Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Technology and Minister for Energy [12.53]: I move:

> That leave be given to bring in a bill for an Act to make corrections to the Metric Conversion Act, 1978.

The purpose of the bill is to amend the Metric Conversion Act, 1978, to correct a defect in the commencement clause concerning the reference to sections of the Act. These corrections are slight and of a purely clerical nature and I shall give more details at the second reading stage.

Mr SCHIPP (Wagga Wagga) [12.54]: The Opposition does not oppose leave to introduce the bill. It sounds as though a rather minor amendment to the Act is intended. That is how the matter was explained to me earlier. Any mention of the word metric seems to raise a good deal of comment from honourable members on both sides of the House. If the debate could be widened to include that subject, doubtless some interesting contributions would be made. It seems to me—and I think a number of people in the community agree with me—that metrication is not all that good and is not as good as many people would have us believe. America has changed its mind about going metric. The problems that lie ahead have been realized in that country. I do not think that people in Australia have come to grips yet with the real problems. It will be found that the cost to the community will be enormous. Redundancy will occur and machinery will become obsolete. The attendant costs are enormous.

The other day honourable members heard of problems associated with self-serve petrol bowsers, which are spinning at more than four times the speed for which they were designed to work. This causes the machines to wear out more quickly. Also, it is necessary to become familiar with the metric terminology; not many people know the metric language yet. However, the amending bill will not touch on those matters. It seems that not much trouble will be encountered with the bill when it comes forward.

Motion agreed to.

Bill presented and read a first time.

[Mr Speaker left the chair at 12.57 *p.m. The House resumed at* 2.15*p.m.*]

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

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

ROYAL NEWCASTLE HOSPITAL

Mr WADE (Newcastle) [2.15]: I invite the attention of the Minister for Health to the recent adverse publicity concerning the equipment, staffing, wards and general facilities of the Royal Newcastle Hospital. I made an inspection of the hospital in company with the regional director and general superintendent and I saw a large number of facilities for myself. At that time and in subsequent representations made to me the various problems of the hospital were pointed out, as indeed they were pointed out to the Health Commission by the recent delegation.

Mr Mason: On a point of order. Mr Speaker, I draw your attention to the fact that there is no Minister in the House. I appreciate that a strict interpretation of the standing orders would be that it is essential only at certain times that a Minister be present. However, it is a longstanding tradition followed by all parliaments under the Westminster system that while business is being conducted a Minister shall be present.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition has made his point and he is now attempting to debate it. He has drawn my attention to the fact that it is traditional for a Minister to be present while business is being dealt with. I agree with him. As a matter of fact, it would assist the Chair if a Minister were present in case certain happenings occurred. For that reason I am sorry that no Minister is present, but I believe a Minister will be present shortly.

Mr WADE: May I point out to the House that whereas the Royal Newcastle Hospital's original role was that of a community hospital, over later years, while still trying to maintain this role, an increasing number of special units have been developed at the hospital for the purpose of improving the standards of patient care. These units—an intensive care unit, the renal unit, and the diabetic stabilization centre—have been much appreciated and are making a significant contribution towards the high standard of care of patients at Royal Newcastle Hospital. However, the hospital is in great need of additional facilities and more staff to continue to function as a major hospital—more particularly as a teaching hospital with the advent of students from the newly established faculty of medicine at the University of Newcastle.

Some facilities needed particularly and immediately are for investigation on cardiology. At present considerable numbers of quite ill patients are transported to Sydney so that these investigations may be carried out. Needless to say, this is expensive when done by ambulance transport and the patients are put to considerable inconvenience and indeed, at times, risk in having to make such a long journey by road in this way. It is not considered that the proposal to hitch an additional carriage on to the Newcastle flyer down in the morning and back in the evening would significantly improve the situation, although it would probably be a much less expensive trip. It is unreasonable to expect patients who are seriously ill to make this journey.

I understand that the hospital has had great difficulty in fllling a position of cardiologist, due largely to the fact that the hospital lacks the necessary equipment and can give no undertaking that it will become available for the adequate investigation of these patients. I understand that although an initial committee set up by the Health Commission to look at the development of cardiology investigation services throughout the State recommended these facilities for Newcastle, the matter was referred to another committee which came up with an opinion at variance to the first committee's. I strongly urge that the hospital be informed as soon as possible that the Minister and the commission have approved in principle the setting up of such a committee to consider the establishment of this facility at the hospital as soon as possible. This is essential if the hospital and the medical school are to maintain credibility as training institutions.

At this stage I should like to mention the equipment in the X-ray department and also the need for establishment of other similar departments within the hospital. Some fourteen months ago a report was made by the commission's senior advisors in X-ray and diagnostic imaging equipment on the need for a computerized axial tomography scanner and ultrasound facilities. The hospital has accepted this report. To a very substantial extent it can be implemented within the hospital in the buildings that are available at present. I urge that this report be accepted in principle by the Health Commission. At this stage there is no indication to the hospital of the commission's attitude towards this excellent report.

The hospital realizes that some of the developments proposed will have to wait until the refurbishing programme is instituted, of which I shall say more later. The important thing is that these additional inquiries should be set up quickly so that patients at the Royal Newcastle Hospital may have a satisfactory standard of investigation and treatment. It should be pointed out that a CAT scanner would prove a service for patients in Newcastle and in the region to the north and north-west of Newcastle. I understand that a machine for head only examinations is being installed privately, but this in no way detracts from the need to have a machine at the Royal Newcastle Hospital. A privately installed machine will not be available for emergency examinations after hours, and in any event it is most unsatisfactory that seriously ill patients should have to be taken some distance to such a machine for this type of examination.

The hospital has made a request to the Health Commission that the refurbishing of the X-ray department be made a special project. I stress that equipment supplied to the Royal Newcastle Hospital should be at least of the same standard as that supplied to major Sydney hospitals. There have been numerous complaints both from the Royal Newcastle Hospital and other hospitals in the region that the standard of equipment supplied, even if it meets the official specifications of the Department of Public Works is not of sufficiently high quality. Better equipment lasts much longer and breakdowns are less frequent. In these times of financial stringency, emergency servicing from Sydney is most expensive and is money that is being unnecessarily spent for the sake of cheaper equipment.

In the very near future the hospital should be allowed to established a unit for renal transplants. The Hunter Valley has a disproportionately high number of patients with renal failure, about half of which are due to the ingestion of excessive amounts of A.P.C. powders. A disproportionate number of patients in the area are requiring either transplants or long-term maintenance on dialysis. We are confident that a greatly increased number of donor kidneys can be obtained once the transplant programme starts. It has always been shown to be the case that permission for kidneys to be obtained for donor purposes can be obtained far more readily if the kidneys are to be used locally. In order to prevent the present services from being swamped, it is essential that a transplant programme be started as soon as possible.

Another major matter of concern is that several of the buildings at the hospital are so old. The north wing was built about 1912 or a year or two afterwards, and the York wing about fifteen years later. This wing houses old pavilion-type wards with completely inadequate accommodation for bathroom and toilet and nursing service procedures. The operating theatres are of old design and are inadequate in number. Although it is appreciated that the Minister has made statements on occasions that an amount of approximately $20 million will be spent on Royal Newcastle Hospital, it is important that a firm commitment be made on when this can be done. I am informed that the hospital will have a proposition to put to the commission about the refurbishing programme and such extensions are considered necessary to continue viability of a hospital of this size on this site.

I urge the Minister to give urgent consideration to fixing a time programme for this work to be done. There is a need for it to continue on after the completion of the clinical sciences block. The refurbishing and extension programme should be continued until the work is completed. The need is pressing. It has been looked at on a number of occasions over the past ten or twelve years and there has been widespread acknowledgment of the need. It is high time that a firm decision was taken on when this need will be met.

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

COMPULSORY VOTING

Mr CAMERON (Northcott) [2.25]: There was a great deal of pure wisdom in that venerable sage Lao-Tsze, mentor of Confucius, who offered parliamentarians like ourselves this advice: Govern a great State as you would cook a small fish. Don't overdo it. A discerning Frenchman voiced the same thought when he said, To govern better, we must govern less. Let the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Housing and Minister for Co-operative Societies, popularly known as the minister for over-government, please take note. However, in this first grievance debate subsequent to the day of misjudgment—subsequent, that is, to the recent election day—it is a different facet of this problem of over-government to which I now refer. At that election, electors in their thousands and tens of thousands failed to vote. They expressed their opinion by staying at home. That, in my view, is an option that ought perfectly legally to be open to them. We know that, in fact, virtually none of those who breached the duty cast willy-nilly upon them to vote will be prosecuted. The State finds it just too inconvenient and too expensive to pursue them.

Now, we Australians have not done ourselves a favour by insisting on compelled votes rather than voluntary ones. However good or bad a political system is, some who live under it will usually have that deplorable don't-know, couldn't-care-less approach. The form of fancied runners at Randwick may grab them, but certainly not that of lack-lustre performers here in Macquarie Street or in Canberra. And their own performance at the polls, when dragooned there against their will, has sometimes been identified, not with any thoroughbred, but with a lower quadruped, the donkey. There can be no doubt that thoughtless donkey-voting patterns down or up the paper by compelled voters do nothing to upgrade the quality of the franchise.

In short, we have the worst of all possible worlds. It is neither one thing nor the other, neither fish nor fowl. Voting cannot be said to be voluntary because it purports to be compulsory. But it cannot truly be described as compulsory because it is not in fact compelled. I fully support that stream of wisdom which says, let the vote be voluntary, as it always was and still is in all the other great democracies of the free world. In that way we ensure that everyone has the right to vote. We protect the quality of the franchise by looking *de facto* only for the votes of those from all corners of the political spectrum who are concerned enough, interested enough, informed enough and dutiful enough to want to vote, even if it is at some inconvenience.

On the other hand, I can appreciate the opposed argument which looks not to quality but to mass, to volume, to numbers, arguing that voting is a civic duty analgous to paying rates, compulsory education or compulsory military service, and that it is important to get every voter's opinion, even if he has none. But our existing system has the virtue of neither approach. Some, without sufficient interest or capacity to lodge an informed vote, nonetheless vote because they are afraid of the consequences of not doing so, but others similarly placed just do not vote because they either do not know or care, or realize that they will never be prosecuted anyway.

In fact, we have compulsory voting not at all as the result of any conscious, thoughtful decision to reject the wisdom of Great Britain, the cradle of parliamentary government, or of the United States of America, its foremost modern exponent, or of Canada, or of nearby New Zealand, which has achieved a 90 per cent turnout on a voluntary basis. We have been harnessed with compulsory voting largely because of mischance, for the worst possible reason of sheer expediency. Compulsory voting was, I am sorry to confess, first introduced to Australia by the Denham Liberal Government of Queensland in time for the 1915 election. That introduction has been described as "the last desperate attempt of a government on the skids to save itself'. In the outcome,

the attempt misfired. That first compulsory-vote election brought the Ryan Labor Government to power, and it remained there for many years. This Labor triumph made compulsory voting very topical within the Labor Party, and it was accordingly incorporated in the party's platform at the 1915 federal conference. It has remained Labor Party policy ever since.

In 1924, in the aftermath of a poor turnout at the 1922 federal elections, a Nationalist senator initiated a private member's bill providing for compulsory voting. Very wishfully he assured the Senate that subsequent to the passing of his bill there would be a wonderful improvement in the political knowledge of the people. Labor members were naturally committed to support his bill although some expressed reservations, preferring to rely on the magnificent spirit of some Labor voters who so valued their voluntary vote that they had walked 30 miles or more to exercise it. The ruling Bruce–Page Government did not oppose the bill. The reasons were predominantly ones of expediency. Compulsory voting would relieve the parties of the responsibility of "dragging people to the polls". Candidates, it was thought, were being put to too much trouble to induce voters to record their votes.

Also by 1924 the increasingly common motor car was an object of insatiable public interest. Whether an apathetic voter would or would not go to the polls often depended upon whether he was offered an interesting Stutz or a Hudson to transport him there, in which case he would go, or whether he was offered only a lowly Whippet, Erskine or Overland, in which case he might not go, depending on how many times that year he had a ride in a car of any sort. It was all becoming too much trouble to the professionals. Hence they opted not for the wisdom of the great parliamentary paragons to which I have already referred, but rather for the more questionable approach now favoured by Chile, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Paraguay, Peru, Zaire and random others. The senator's bill was passed through all stages in eighty-six minutes in the Senate and fifty-two minutes in the House of Representatives without amendment or division in either House.

When four years later a similar proposal came before this Assembly embodied in a much more comprehensive Parliamentary Electorates and Elections (Amendment) Bill the matter was barely mentioned at all, members' attention being focussed fiercely on other proposals governing the relative voting strengths of metropolitan as against rural constituencies. Does it all sound drably predictable and familiar? In this State compulsory voting came to us not to the roll of drums, but with a muted whimper; not as a conscious decision taken on principle, but by the default of those who ought to have valued more highly the best voluntarist traditions of our parliamentary heritage. It is true that the hard-core communist countries enforced compulsory voting—without, of course, any choice of parties—but I do not think we should borrow from their example. We have all heard of the electoral commissar who went shamefaced into the office of the secretary-general of the Russian Communist Party and stammered out, "Mr Secretary-General, I'm afraid we won't be able to hold the elections tomorrow as announced." "In Lenin's name, why not?', he was asked. "Because we've lost the results!"

I join in this grievance debate very positively, for I am not by nature a man of grievance but a man of thankfulness. Focussing upon hopes and aspirations for the future, I say only that we should strive where we can to be voluntarists rather than creatures of compulsion. In some areas, of course, the choice is not open. We cannot choose not to pay taxes. We cannot choose our parents; they are imposed upon us. I was lucky myself, but I feel for my own brood, who are saddled with me. But in areas where choice between voluntarism and compulsion is feasible, such as with voting, let us exert our ourselves belatedy to restore the voluntary alternative. Our children will thank us if we succeed.

ELECTORATE OF WOLLONDILLY

Mr KNOTT (Wollondilly) [2.35]: It is a great honour for me to represent Wollondilly in this Parliament and I seek the indulgence of the House to thank all those who made that possible. Primarily, I thank my wife Marie, my son Peter, my campaign manager Bill Carey, and his wife Margaret, Kevin Whalan, who managed my press releases, and all those Labor Party supporters who worked incessantly to gain the necessary financial and political support and manned every booth to capture finally what only a short five years ago was considered to be a blue ribbon Liberal Party seat, impossible for Labor to win.

I thank all Labor Party branches that drained their finances to help. I thank the federal electoral councillors of the electorates of Macarthur and Cunningham and all their stalwarts. I express my appreciation to all the trade unions that came to my aid in my time of need, and especially do I thank Brian Phipps and the magnificent miners of Huntley colliery. Overnight those men raised $4,000 to double the campaign funds when they heard we were in financial difficulty. They were the final factor contributing to Labor's win in Wollondilly. It makes me proud to be a part of the Labor Party. What they did should be recorded.

Words can never express my gratitude to my colleague, George Petersen, the honourable member for Illawarra, to Mr Speaker, the honourable member for Corrimal, to Rex Jackson, the Minister for Youth and Community Services and member for Heathcote, and to Eric Ramsay, the honourable member for Wollongong. To them I express my heartfelt thanks. The part that the Premier, Neville Wran, played in the campaign is conceded by all and the undoubted esteem in which he is held in this State is evident from the empty benches opposite. At the rate the Liberal Party changes leaders everyone will have his turn by the end of this Parliament. There will be some reluctance to take the job because every deposed leader's seat seems to finish up with the Labor Party. The Premier visited Wollondilly three times during the last Parliament. He visited it once more on 17th November and will visit it again early in the new year. His popularity and accessibility are well known and I am honoured to have his leadership and his friendship. I look forward to a long parliamentary association.

To Michael Baume, the federal member for Macarthur, I extend my thanks and hope they do not amputate his body, otherwise his foot will always be in his mouth. He was the renowned advocate of the Mal-function federal Budget and threw out challenges everywhere to debate it. However, when the seat of Wollondilly was won for Labor he went immediately into reverse, claiming it was the federal Budget that gave me victory.

The State Labor Government can be proud of the work done during the last Parliament by the Minister for Planning and Environment and the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council, the Hon. Paul Landa. The fact that he has been given control over national parks and wildlife speaks well for the esteem in which he is held by the Premier and by all honourable members on this side of the House. Let me list a few of the accomplishments of this dedicated Minister in my electorate alone: purchase of the Minnamurra Headland; prevention of sandmining on the Minnamurra River; promised purchase of Bombo Headland for parkland recreation and public usage; introduction of the Heritage Act; and allotment of $15,000 for an inquiry into the preservation of Berrima as an historic village.

The need for planning and protection of the environment, including the protection of national parks and wildlife in an area such as Wollondilly, is of major importance. Evidence of the past rape of the countryside by the greedy is everywhere. Forests of red cedar have completely disappeared; rainforests have been ravaged; rivers, beaches and sand dunes have been despoiled; and gaping holes appear all over

the area where quarrying and mining interests have caused havoc and left the results of their avarice to posterity. Genocide has taken place, and tribes and settlements of Aborigines have been completely annihilated.

Wollondilly is undoubtedly the electorate with the most scenic and varied areas in the State. Its potential for tourism is virtually unlimited. With its southern boundary the expansive Shoalhaven River, from Shoalhaven Heads the electorate offers magnificent beaches, coastline, rivers and estuaries as far north as Minnamurra. Kiama was one of the first settlements on the Australian mainland. With its historic stone fences and rural background and quaint village environment at Jamberoo, it needs the protection of such a ministry as planning and environment. Along the escarpment is Cambewarra Mountain with its panoramic views, the highest lookout on the coastline. Within my electorate are rainforests where the black gang-gang parrot, the king parrot, the wongo pidgeon and the lyre bird are still to be seen. The Minnamurra reserve and falls are renowned throughout the State.

Progressing through the electorate of Wollondilly, one passes through Kangaroo Valley with its historic suspension bridge. The Tullowa Dam water scheme and pondage will not only supply water for the coastal area, but also will supplement Warragamba catchment and Sydney's water supply. It will have a capacity to generate 28 megawatts of hydro-electric power. One proceeds to Fitzroy Falls and on to the tablelands with its potato-growing and some of the richest and most fertile dairy lands in Australia. The beautiful old properties around Moss Vale and Bowral and the unique towns from Moss Vale to Picton need the environmental protection of such a ministry and such a Minister as the Hon. Paul Landa.

Historic Berrima needs no commendation—it speaks for itself. Paul Landa has added his voice to its praise. The electorate extends to the west through mountainous and spectacular country to within some 8 miles of Katoomba. I commend its care to the Minister for Planning and Environment and I offer him my strongest support. I am proud to be part of a government that produces Ministers of his calibre. I thank him for his support during my election campaign and for the confidence he had in me. He and the honourable member for Illawarra were the two members of Parliament who were confident that I could win Wollondilly: I am glad I could justify their confidence.

It might seem somewhat incongruous that I should be making these remarks in a grievance debate. I have no grievance whatever with the splendid job done by the Hon. Paul Landa. He has shown himself keenly responsive to all demands placed on him by Labor Party branches or groups in the electorate, including councils for the protection of the environment. My grievance is over past neglect of the environment and the torpedoing of the programmes initiated by the Whitlam Labor Government from 1972 to 1975. I urge the Minister for Youth and Community Services to convey to the Minister for Planning and Environment my appreciation and utmost respect for him for what he has done in preserving Minnamurra River, Minnamurra Headland, Bombo Headland and the village of Berrima. I commend him for his initiative in introducing the Heritage Act and welcome his administrative control over our national parks and wildlife. The future is in good hands.

Mr JACKSON (Heathcote), Minister for Youth and Community Services [2.41]: I want to take a few minutes to extend my congratulations and those of the Parliamentary Labor Party to the honourable member for Wollondilly on his contribution to this debate, his maiden speech here, and on his success at the recent general elections. If ever a candidate was subjected to unjust vilification, it was the honourable member for Wollondilly during his election campaign. I was pleased today when he congratulated the federal member who was responsible for that violent and vicious attack upon him during that campaign.

Mr Pickard: On a point of order. As I understand it, no grievance was noted——

Mr Jackson: Yes, there was a grievance noted.

Mr Pickard: The honourable member for Wollondilly said that he had no grievance. If no grievance was noted, what is the Minister answering?

Mr Jackson: On the point of order. The honourable member for Wollondilly noted a grievance. He noted the neglect of the Wollondilly electorate by its previous representative, and he availed himself of the opportunity to say what has been done by this Government and its Ministers since 1976, which resulted in the people of Wollondilly placing confidence in the Labor Party and in him as their candidate at the last elections. He has used this debate to bring to the notice of the Parliament his concern about the neglect of the Wollondilly electorate by the previous local member and the parties that were responsible for the administration of the State between 1965 and 1976.

Mr DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The standing orders provide that a Minister may reply to all matters raised during a grievance debate. The Minister is doing that now. No point of order is involved.

Mr JACKSON: I had intended to contain myself, but I shall go a little further now because mention has been made of the federal member for Macarthur, who had the audacity to talk in the federal Parliament about a physical affliction of my colleague the honourable member for Wollondilly. If the only crime the honourable member for Wollondilly commits is being an invalid pensioner, I am sure he can be a proud man. This Government and I deprecate the snide and vicious attack made under the protection of parliamentary privilege upon this great Australian who has served his country and served the people in a public capacity—something that the federal member for Macarthur had never done before he entered the federal Parliament not long ago. He has never submitted himself for local government representation. With all the physical ability and mental capacity that the federal member for Macarthur claims to have, and with all his financial resources, we have never seen him giving up his time to serve in a voluntary capacity in local government or any other field. It was a most cowardly and vicious attack that he made upon the honourable member for Wollondilly. He seems to have support from the Opposition Whip and the honourable member for Hornsby, who are attempting to interject. They should be ashamed of themselves.

Mr Caterson: You are making a cowardly attack.

Mr JACKSON: I am not making a cowardly attack. I am drawing the attention of the House to the fact that during the election campaign referred to by the honourable member for Wollondilly the federal member for Macarthur had the audacity to say that this man was not a fit and proper person to seek the support of the people of Wollondilly. The people put paid to those remarks and that cowardly attack by the federal member for Macarthur. They elected this man who will do a magnificent job in this Parliament in representing the people of Wollondilly—a job that was not done by his predecessor and others that represented the electorate before him.

In my twenty-three years in this Parliament I have never witnessed a more vicious or cowardly attack upon a person who is now the honourable member for Wollondilly and who has proudly represented the people of his area on the Kiama council. He has done a magnificent job and as a representative in local government and the people of that area gave him an all-time record vote in his electorate in a State election. As the honourable member has asked me to do it, I shall convey to the Minister for Planning and Environment his appreciation of what has been done in the electorate of Wollondilly by the Minister in the two and a half years he has held his

portfolio. I assure the honourable member that the Minister for Planning and Environment will continue to act responsibly in preserving the environment and will give due recognition to the representations that have already been made to him by the honourable member. The Minister will be pleased that the honourable member for Wollondilly has observed that standards are being maintained. All Ministers of this Government will be happy to pay heed to representations made by the honourable member and his advice and suggestions for the betterment of his electorate. I congratulate the honourable member for Wollondilly on his magnificent maiden speech and on the mark that he has already made in this Parliament and the role that he will play in the government of this State.

BAKING INDUSTRY

Mr DUNCAN (Lismore) [2.44]: I have already congratulated the new members who were successful at the last elections. Now I sincerely offer my congratulations to the honourable member for Wollondilly on his maiden speech. He has indicated that he has no grievance with the Wran Government, but I am sure that as time goes on he will want things done in his electorate and he will be using this form of debate to achieve that purpose in the not too distant future.

I rise in this grievance debate on a matter concerning the baking industry in country New South Wales. I first raised this matter in October 1977 by way of a question to the Minister for Industrial Relations when he was also Minister for Mines and Minister for Energy. I spoke of the unfair competition that existed in the northern rivers area of New South Wales because of the activities of a Queensland based bakery. It had purchased a bakery business in Brunswick Heads to be used as an outlet for bread manufactured on the Gold Coast. Bread was delivered to the bakery by a semitrailer. Under the Health Act doubtless that would contravene the health regulations. At the same time, it was delivering bread to areas throughout the northern rivers before the prescribed starting time of 7 a.m. It was also offering incentives to shopkeepers, which represented unfair competition to bakeries in the area, and as a result a number of bakeries went to the wall.

The Minister indicated that he was aware of the problem and it was being investigated. Indeed, his final words in reply to my question were, "I assure the honourable member that the Government is giving serious consideration to this matter". Although thirteen months have elapsed, nothing has been done to relieve the situation. I do not wish to speak particularly about that Queensland bakery. It is responsible for only one of the problems caused throughout the rural areas of the State by big baking monopolies that are trading unfairly against small bakeries. Unless the Government takes action soon, small country bakeries will disappear and the baking industry in country districts will fall into the hands of the bakery monopolies.

The figures show the effect on the small country bakeries. There are now 110 fewer country bakeries in New South Wales than there were three years ago. That must be of concern to all honourable members because with the closure of a small country bakery not only are employment opportunities lessened but also the economy of each country town where a bakery closes is adversely affected. I am sure that the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Housing and Minister for Co-operative Societies will agree that if the baking industry falls completely into the hands of the bakery monopolies the consumer will be the loser.

I call upon the Government to take action in two respects. First, I should like the law which prohibits deliveries of bread by manufacturers before 7 a.m. to be enforced. If that were done much of the unfair competition would be stopped immediately. If a Gold Coast baker who is taking bread about 100 miles to Lismore

and other towns on the North Coast before 7 a.m. were obliged to adhere to the laws of this State, he would not be able to compete unfairly. The large, mechanised bakeries are offering incentives to people handling bread and are competing unfairly with small bakers.

A second step should be taken, and I am sure the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Housing and Minister for Co-operative Societies will agree with it. Zoning should be introduced to preserve and protect the rights of the small baker. Basically what the industry is seeking is orderly marketing, which will have the result of protecting and preserving people's rights. I understand that last year the Bread Industry Advisory Council made a recommendation to the Government on zoning. I feel that I must criticize the Government for not acting on that recommendation and for procrastinating on this important matter. I know it can be said that zoning might take away the choice of consumers because some breads will not be available to them, but I understand that the recommendation did not envisage that sort of situation. It was felt that by means of a franchise system the baker or bakery business in a particular town could handle the product manufactured outside the area if people indicated that they wanted to exercise their right of choice for particular breads.

In the short term the closing of country bakeries affects employment in the towns affected, but the effect on the consumer is even worse. He will be the loser because during floods roads are cut at times and it then becomes humanly impossible to supply the local people with bread. I suggest that when these bakeries are taken over by the bread monopolies that control the manufacture and delivery of bread, they may well not continue to maintain the quality of bread or range of bread types. Again, the people in rural areas of this State will be the losers. It is with that thought in mind that I ask the Government to act quickly, first to enforce the law and, second, to introduce bread zoning.

Mr EINFELD (Waverley), Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Housing and Minister for Co-operative Societies [2.54]: When I heard the melodious voice of the honourable member for Lismore on the loudspeaker in my room I hastened to the Chamber. He usually talks commonsense and a lot of what he said today is both reasonable and sensible and a useful contribution to this debate. The Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Technology and Minister for Energy, with his usual foresight, has had this matter under consideration for a considerable time. More than a year ago I assured country bakers at a meeting held at the Hilton Hotel that bread zoning would be introduced in New South Wales. Unfortunately, it is not quite as simple to introduce as one would think. I hasten to inform the honourable member for Lismore—indeed all honourable members—that the introduction of legislation to bring bread zoning into effect in New South Wales is imminent. The Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Technology and Minister for Energy, with his customary attention to his responsibilities, will, I hope, introduce the enabling legislation in the not too distant future. It is true that in the past two years a number of small country bakers have gone out of business. It would be wrong to blame this situation entirely on the actions of big baking organizations in New South Wales and interstate, who have taken their bread—and consequently competition—into many country towns. However, this type of activity has had a big influence on the situation.

Multinational bakers and national bakers operating in the capital cities in this State, particularly in Sydney and Newcastle and some based in Wollongong, have been regularly visiting small towns, cutting prices, giving bigger discounts—which is illegal—and rushing in to deliver bread to shops at an early hour. From time to time these large organizations have given shops a greater variety of bread. As a result they have provided intense competition for small bakers, many of whom have been forced to dismiss employees, some to close down and others to carry on with the help of

their family. In that way the trade has become intensely competitive. As I have said, in many areas where national bakeries and multinational bakeries are operating, many small bakeries have had to close down. Others have been forced to give special consideration to large clubs, to indulge in the illegal practice of accepting returns of unsold loaves, and other practices. I agree that this has been to the detriment of many local residents. I am delighted that the honourable member for Lismore, a member of the Country Party, is honestly and genuinely interested in his constituents and people who live in nearby areas, who, as a result of this sort of activity, have lost the services of the small local baker.

The honourable member for Lismore brought this matter to the attention of Parliament about twelve months ago. The bread committee that is constituted under the Bread Act, which is administered by the Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Energy and Minister for Technology, has placed on the agenda of items for discussion by that body the question of bread zoning. To some extent that involves the protection of small bakers. The bread committee, which consists of representatives of bakers, bread manufacturers and consumers, has brought down recommendations in support of zoning. The trouble is that a legal question has been raised about this aspect. A prominent lawyer has advised that section 92 of the Constitution might preclude the introduction of zoning. As a result, a long delay has occurred. To be fair, the bread manufacturers associations expressed some support for zoning. The union representatives completely support the idea, as do the consumer representatives on the committee.

As I have said, a delay has occurred in obtaining legal opinions for submission to the commissioner and the committee. The Minister has put before Cabinet the question of zoning. That question will soon be resolved, I hope before the House rises for the Christmas recess. I hope, also, that legislation will soon be introduced. It will not come too early for me. The introduction of bread zoning will be to the benefit of consumers, particularly for those who live in country areas. It should benefit also the people who have lost jobs in bakeries. Zoning will benefit families who have operated bakeries for many years, some of them for two or three generations. The honourable member for Lismore has raised an important matter that affects many people. The Government is entirely dedicated to the protection of country people. It wants to ensure that they will be able to buy fresh bread from decent, honourable people. I am sure that people associated with this industry throughout New South Wales will be protected by the proposed legislation.

WALSH GROUP OF COMPANIES

Mr PETERSEN (Illawarra) [2.58]: I rise this afternoon to draw the attention of the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice to an unsatisfactory situation concerning the estate of a man who died on 20th January, 1976. By the terms of his will dated 5th May, 1966, his son is sole executor of the estate, which has gross assets of $127,271 and net assets of $106,995. In what I have to say I am quoting only from public documents that are available at the probate office and the Corporate Affairs Commission. Records of the probate office show that probate was applied for on 1st November, 1978, and granted on 2nd November, 1978. The deceased was Mr George McCahon Sinclair. His son Ian McCahon Sinclair, the federal Minister for Primary Industry, is the sole executor and sole beneficiary.

Mr Ian Sinclair has repeatedly stated that after his father's death he inaugurated investigations into the affairs of two funeral companies, Allan Walsh (Hornsby) Pty Limited and Allan Walsh Pty Limited, of which Mr George Sinclair was auditor and Mr Ian Sinclair was a director. Returns lodged at the Corporate Affairs Commission in September 1977 disclosed total losses by misappropriation from these

companies of $265,031. Mr Ian Sinclair has been strangely coy about dates, times and places. It would be interesting to know exactly when he did advise the Corporate Affairs Commission and what documents he produced to it.

There are two possible motives for his concern about the losses by misappropriation and the state of the books. The first is that in mid-1976 the Minister for Consumer Affairs initiated an inquiry by the New South Wales Prices Commission into the affairs of the funeral industry. Was it a case of getting in just before the State investigators moved in? The second motive is revealed by the fact that amended returns to the Corporate Affairs Commission lodged on 22nd September, 1977, for Allan Walsh (Hornsby) Pty Limited and Allan Walsh Pty Limited showed provision for losses by misappropriation for tax purposes in the year ended 30th June, 1977, as $91,356 and $33,886 respectively.

Is it not possible that the whole process of investigation was inaugurated by the federal Minister for Primary Industry as a tax lurk? Note that the total amount written off for tax purposes, $125,222, is of the same order as the net amount bequeathed to Mr Sinclair—that is $106,995. Note also the statement of Mr Creighton-Walsh, who is a one-fifth shareholder in Allan Wash Investments Pty Limited and has what amounts to a one-third investment in both funeral companies. On the Mike Willesee show on 15th August, 1977, he said that he considered the person responsible for the misappropriation to be Mr George M. Sinclair. There must be a strong suspicion that Mr Ian Sinclair has achieved the impossible of having his cake and eating it too. Undoubtedly he has benefited directly by having allowed as a tax deduction money misappropriated from the two companies. He has a 70 per cent share in Sinclair Pastoral Company which, through the holding company Reliance Investments Limited, has a one-third share in the two funeral companies.

However, if Mr Sinclair's father embezzled the money, should not the assets in his father's estate be realized and paid back into company funds and offset against the amount claimed as a tax deduction? It is clear that Mr Sinclair has established a new dimension in financial responsibility. If you are having difficulties in realizing the full profitability of companies in which you have an interest, you wait until somebody dies, blame it on the deceased, claim it as a tax deduction and then benefit from the deceased's estate. It is all done legally—or is it? And the only people who suffer are the people of Australia who have lost the tax revenue, while the other shareholders and you gain the benefit of tax rebates—if the other shareholders can be persuaded to keep quiet for fear that if the full scandal were revealed they would lose what they have managed to achieve through a decision of the Commissioner of Taxation to compensate them for the money you have swindled off them.

The question might well be asked why it took so long to apply for probate—two years and nine months from the date of death. Death duty payable on the estate amounts to $17,820. In addition, there is a penalty of 8 per cent per annum payable on death duty unpaid more than six months from the date of death. The estate has, therefore, as nearly as I can estimate, incurred a penalty of $3,322. Why did it take so long to apply for probate? Did Mr Ian Sinclair finally apply for probate on 1st November, 1978, because on 24th October, 1978, and 25th October, 1978, the Prime Minister had referred to him as executor of his father's estate when the Prime Minister himself knew that legally he was not the executor until probate was granted?

On 14th November I spoke in this Parliament and, because I was relying on out-of-date information, stated in error that probate had not been granted. I apologize to the House for doing so and for inadvertently misleading the House. However, I find it exceeding strange that although Mr Sinclair's secretary was at this House and in the office of the Leader of the Country Party at about 8.30 on the following

morning, Mr Sinclair has not bothered to refute my error and instead has concentrated on other matters concerning the affairs of the funeral companies after his father's death. Is it because he wants us to concentrate on what happened after 1976 and to forget what happened before then?

For example, on the returns for the companies Allan Walsh (Mornsby) Pty Limited and Allan Walsh Pty Limited and all the other family companies for the year 1975 lodged on 12th April, 1976, there are genuine signatures by Ian M. Sinclair as director and forged signatures as auditor by George M. Sinclair, who died on 20th January, 1976. In the same returns for these six companies for the years 1972 and 1973 there is a genuine signature by George M. Sinclair and forged signatures of Ian M. Sinclair. I have no doubt that Mr Finnane, the investigator appointed by the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, is looking into these points, which is why Prime Minister Fraser and Mr Ian Sinclair have called for Mr Finnane's dismissal. It is not my intention to traverse the investigation into the affairs of these six companies. What I am concerned about is morality—the hypocrisy of ruling class morality——

Mr Punch: On a point of order. This Thursday afternoon is given over to a grievance debate, in which honourable members may speak on matters that concern them, their electorates, or the administration of the Government. I fail to see how the honourable member for Illawarra can turn the grievance debate into a smear session, as he is doing. I ask for your ruling on the matter.

Mr Petersen: This is not a point of order.

Mr Punch: I am addressing the Deputy-Speaker.

Mr Peterson: You are talking out my time.

Mr Punch: I am not. I am raising a valid point. Perhaps I should have raised it before.

Mr Petersen: You are trying to protect crooks.

Mr Punch: I do not think the honourable member can talk about protecting crooks. He is trying to judge something that has not happened, and at a time when inquiries are being made. He is trying to achieve a political trial of the question. He should stick to his seat. My point of order is that it is inappropriate, indeed that it is wrong, for an honourable member to turn this grievance debate into a smear session, particularly when the honourable member admits that he gave the House wrong information when he last spoke on this subject.

Mr DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order! I have listened intently and patiently to the points made by the Leader of the Country Party. No point of order is involved. On previous occasions Mr Speaker Kelly has said that honourable members may raise in the grievance debate matters that affect them personally, that affect their electorate, or that affect the public generally. At this stage the honourable member for Illawarra is completely in order. He is raising a matter that he considers to be of public importance.

Mr PETERSEN: We have here what is, even to a non-lawyer like myself, clearly a *prima facie* case of a leading Country Party Cabinet Minister engaging in the most questionable behaviour when, in companies of which he has been a director, and the only director to sign all company returns for the past decade, there has been misappropriation and forgery, and when $125,222 of the amount misappropriated has

been allowed as a taxation deduction, possibly with the help of the former federal Treasurer, Mr Lynch, whose own business dealings are notorious. Under section 174 of the Crimes Act a company director is liable to a penalty if he fails to act honestly.

Mr Punch: Mr Sinclair has been judged on information provided by the New South Wales Attorney-General and Minister of Justice.

Mr DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Punch: It was information leaked by the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice.

Mr PETERSEN: Mr Sinclair belongs to the same party as the honourable member for Lismore, who said in this House on 5th September, 1978:

> It is time that parliamentarians, regardless of which side of the House they sit on, were willing to stand up and be counted, to say whether they are on the side of the police who are pursuing law and order . . . I stand four square beside those who are providing law and order.

The nauseating hypocrisy of statements such as these are sickening indeed.

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

Mr WALKER (Georges River), Attorney-General and Minister of Justice [3.8]: The only advice I can give the honourable member for Illawarra is the advice that I have given to our federal colleagues in recent days. I have appointed a special investigator under the Companies Act, Mr Michael Finnane, a barrister, a man of unquestionable integrity and competence in this area.

Mr Punch: So much so that he is leaking stuff all over the place.

Mr WALKER: I repeat, he is a barrister of unquestionable integrity and competence in this area.

Mr Barraclough: And a member of the Labor Party.

Mr WALKER: He is a man who has the confidence of one of the most senior figures in the Liberal Party.

Mr Punch: He is a man who is leaking confidential documents.

Mr DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order! I call the Leader of the Country Party to order for the third time and inform him that if he seeks the call to raise a matter in this debate, he will get it.

Mr WALKER: I am advised by Mr Finnane that it will be some months before he is in a position to report to me. He has not been helped in his attempt to conduct his inquiries in accordance with his duty under the law by the sort of publicity that has been given to the matter in the federal Parliament and in the media. I would hope that he is allowed to get on with his job quietly and in the public interest. Mr Finnane will report to me in some months' time, and when his report is to hand I shall give it the consideration it deserves. I do not propose to make any public comments on the matter until I have received the report.

On the question of probate, if there were events connected with that estate that constituted fraud or misappropriation, legal avenues are open to anyone who was defrauded or whose money was misappropriated to seek a return of the money. Taxation fraud is a matter for the Commissioner of Taxation and the responsible federal Minister. If the honourable member for Illawarra has any allegations to

make regarding a taxation fraud or taxation evasion, he should send them to the appropriate federal Minister, though I have serious doubts whether that Minister has acted responsibly in this particular case.

HORNSBY DISTRICT HOSPITAL

Mr PICKARD (Hornsby) [3.14]: My grievance concerns the wish of the Hornsby District Hospital to build an accident and emergency unit. It is attempting to do this by its own efforts, by using its own funds to remodel part of the hospital in order to provide this necessary facility for the travelling public, particularly those who are moving between the central districts of the State, the city, the Central Coast and the northern district. Hornsby hospital is the only hospital between Gosford and North Sydney that offers such a service. The present accident and emergency unit was built in 1941 and in that year and for a few years thereafter it treated approximately 800 casualties. Over the years the number treated has risen and last year 50 000 people were treated in the facilities that were built in 1941.

In 1975, at the request of the Health Commission, a master plan for redevelopment of the hospital was prepared and adopted by the Health Commission. The first stage of the redevelopment included a new accident and emergency unit on the Palmerston frontage between the maternity unit and the old ambulance station. In February 1976 a sketch plan had been developed for the new unit and meetings were held between representatives of the Health Commission, the hospital and myself. In July of that year agreement on the plans was reached with the commission and they were placed before the Health Commission for inclusion in the loan works programme. In September 1977 the commission decided that it could not provide funds for the project. The hospital board reluctantly decided that it would have to raise funds locally for the accident and emergency unit and trauma ward to which I have referred. An undertaking was sought from the hospital and given in writing to the Health Commission that the hospital accepted the fact of non-contribution by the commission, but that the hospital would nevertheless follow the usual procedures for approval of plans, et cetera, and would prove its ability to finance the project.

In December 1977 final plans and specifications were completed, with commission approval, at a cost of $60,000 to the hospital for architects' and consultants' fees. These plans and specifications were submitted to the commission with a request to commence construction at the cost of the hospital and from funds raised locally. In the same month the commission asked the Department of Public Works to examine the plans for future development of the hospital. That department then repudiated the master plan that had been approved in 1975 and recommended two alternative sites for the accident and emergency unit. Both were unacceptable to the hospital and out of keeping with the overall development plan previously submitted. By this time the hospital had expended $60,000 to get the plans ready on the basis of a development scheme-that had been approved.

Since that time the hospital board and the people who have raised the money locally have been engaged in almost constant discussions with representatives of the Health Commission in an effort to go ahead with the project. They have drawn up a number of plans at the request of the commission in an endeavour to secure approval to spend funds raised locally. It would appear that because of the rejection by the Department of Public Works of the plan that was approved by the Health Commission after consultation with the board and myself, we are unable to proceed with the project even on the basis that we would pay for the work ourselves.

In October this year approval in principle was given by the architects branch of the commission to convert the James and Wallace wards into an accident and emergency unit and observation ward, and Rofe ward into a physiotherapy department and to build a modern 90-bed ward block to replace these old open wards. The cost of these works will be approximately $1.5 million, which the board is to raise in its own area. Today I heard the honourable member for Newcastle talking about a proposed $20 million scheme for his area. It is probably most necessary and I do not deprecate the use of funds in his area. But I am speaking of a hospital that has been asked to make sure that it can pay for the total project itself, and even when it has given that undertaking and already spent $60,000 on plans its application is rejected—not by the Health Commission in the first place but by the Department of Public Works, after two years of negotiations to achieve agreement with the commission on the redevelopment plan.

What sort of tomfoolery is this? It is imposing real restrictions on the rights of people in their own area who have raised the money to spend it on themselves. That is not the end of the story. They are now faced with demands that they present further plans, not only for the alterations that I have described, to cost an additional $20,000. The first lot cost $60,000. They are up for $80,000 and they have not yet obtained permission to spend their own money. The situation now is that the hospital board, after going through all the trials in 1975 and having its plans accepted in 1976, is being asked to submit a new master plan to the Health Commission. It is told that the plans will not work and it should submit a new master plan to provide for progressive development for the hospital in half a dozen stages over a period of thirty years. The commission has given no assurance of funds for any part of the work and at this stage it is not willing to provide funds to carry out the further planning, even though $80,000 will have been spent on plans to show what buildings can go where.

We are awaiting the permission of the Health Commission to expend our own funds to build the accident and emergency unit. I believe the hospital board and the people of my area have been most patient. They have a record in this field second to none in the State. The Health Commission and the Minister for Health know the high regard in which this hospital is held for its efficiency in handling its business affairs and the way in which it delivers high quality care at low cost. The Minister knows also that the hospital is renowned throughout Australia as representing an area in which the community still believes it has a responsibility to put its money behind the local hospital. It has done that since the establishment of the hospital. We have a good case and I plead with the Minister, no matter whether the cause of the delay in getting this project under way is in the Department of Public Works or in his own department, to take action so that work can begin on the construction of the new accident and emergency unit without delay.

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

SPORTING GROUNDS FOR SCHOOLS

Mr WHELAN (Ashfield) [3.24]: The problem of sporting facilities for school children that confronts the electorate of Ashfield was emphasized recently when I received a letter from the sportsmaster and the principal of the Ashfield Boys High School. The letter dealt with two important matters, one of which is the cost of the schools' lease fees for sporting grounds within the Ashfield electorate and elsewhere and the other is the grave difficulties experienced in obtaining open space playground areas for the children attending the school. The problem, unfortunately, is symptomatic of the problems confronting schools in the inner city area. The letter, dated 31st October,

from Mr Burgess, the sportsmaster at the Ashfield Boys High School, and Mr Lembit, the principal of that school, emphasizes the school's financial problem. I shall read a few important paragraphs of the letter.

> Undoubtedly you are aware of the lack of playing fields available to Ashfield Boys' High School within your own Municipality. This is made worse because Pratten Park is not available to the school on Wednesday afternoon . . .

Pratten Park is really the only acknowledged sporting field in my electorate and it serves a large population. The letter continues:

> Hence, Ashfield Boys' High students are forced to travel by train and by bus to the Concord Municipality, where the school uses St Luke's Park, Queen Elizabeth Park, Goddard Park, Rothwell Park, Edwards Park and Greenlees Park. The students and teachers do not mind the travelling as it affords the boys an opportunity to participate in outdoor sport . . .

The suggestion that having to travel by bus is an outdoor activity emphasizes that the State Government, the federal Government and local councils have been to blame for not providing in years gone by more parkland and recreational areas. The letter goes on:

> However, the cost of these grounds for hire on a Wednesday is becoming forbidding. The charge on the use of these playing areas for this year alone was $606.00.

The first proposal that I should like the Minister at the table to submit to the Minister for Education is that children who attend schools and participate in sporting events should be granted the use of sporting fields free of charge. Local councils should be directed to make them available at no charge. Most children reside within the municipality where their schools are situated. Ashfield Boys' High School has children from Concord, Burwood, Strathfield and other local areas. The council should be directed to make playing fields available free of charge because they are used by the children of residents—in other words, ratepayers—of the municipality. That is the first point that I should like the Minister for Education to consider, with a view to alleviating that direct charge on parents and schools. Obviously, parents make only a small contribution—it might be only 20c or 30c a week. The letter from which I have read highlights the problems that confront my electorate.

I congratulate the Minister for Planning and Environment on what he has already done for my electorate. He has directed the purchase of a disused brick pit in Ashbury which will provide passive recreational space, as distinct from active recreational space, for my constituents. I congratulate also the Ashfield Municipal Council for its co-operation in joining with the State Government in the purchase of land in Gower Street, Summer Hill, to provide much-needed breathing space for the people. They face some grave problems, which were highlighted by surveys undertaken by the Department of Planning and Environment in August 1976. The technical bulletin of August 1976 published by the department has this to say of Ashfield:

> Although geographically part of the Inner Suburbs, Ashfield's recent growth patterns make it more similar to some of the Intermediate Suburbs. Its population declined until 1960, since when nearly 4000 flats have been constructed. Although the area has an old age structure, an increase of almost 6% in the major reproductive ages between 1961 and 1971 shows a tendency towards rejuvenation.

That exacerbates the problem. More senior citizens have moved out and now thousands of young families are moving into the electorate, witness the increased number of play groups, kindergartens and enrolments in schools. The problem is

further highlighted by the recent census of the federal Government which showed Ashfield as having one of the highest growth populations, as distinct from existing populations. The problem will arise in Marrickville and other suburbs in the inner city area. I am sure the Minister at the table is aware of the problems confronting inner city areas generally. They deserve serious consideration. Park areas in the inner city area can be enlarged by purchasing houses or derelict factories. A major difficulty is involved in the purchase of houses because people must be rehoused. Their use and enjoyment of their properties are interfered with and they are denied the occupation of a house in which they may have resided for many years. That course should be followed only as a last resort. Another method is to build up existing parks with adjacent land, or perhaps improving facilities that already exist. As I have already mentioned, the department has purchased the Ashbury brick pit.

On the border of my electorate in the electorate of Burwood the Government has made a wonderful purchase of 17½ acres of additional recreational land. That will provide some relief. The population density of the Ashfield municipality is 55 persons for each hectare of land. In 1972 in the municipality there were 7 585 persons per playing field. No later statistics are available but the average for the whole of the city region is a mere 2 500. The figure for Ashfield was almost 300 per cent higher than the average for the whole of the city region.

Some solution must be found. The Minister for Planning and Environment has commenced a scheme in the inner city area for the greening of Sydney. I urge him to institute a special study of inner city electorates, particularly Ashfield, which is the worst affected by the absence of open space for both passive and active recreation. The study should be commenced as a matter of urgency. The finance needed could perhaps come from local councils. If the Government because of the lack of manpower is not able to commence these studies, funds should be granted to local councils. Their planners could prepare a scheme for the next twenty years for open space recreational areas in the whole of the inner city area.

This problem does not affect one specific council but all councils. Grants should be made for the acquisition of open space, whether it be for active or passive recreation. Every honourable member wants to achieve all he can for his electorate and I have mentioned the electorate of Ashfield as a typical case. For many years it has had too little open space. The fact that it has 300 per cent less open space than the average electorate in Sydney is an indictment on past federal and State governments and local authorities. Grants from the State Government to local authorities should be increased, especially for areas where the problem is acute, as it is in the electorate of Ashfield.

MAIN ROAD 268 AT TARAGO

Mr BREWER (Goulburn) [3.34]: I want to bring to the notice of this House the treatment that has been meted out to the Mulwaree shire in regard to main and trunk road grants. The council has been treated rather shabbily. It is not only I who say that but also the residents of the Goulburn district. They feel strongly about what has happened over the allocation of funds for main road 268 between Tarago and the Pylara turnoff, which serves the Woodland mine. Going back to January 1978, the Mulwaree shire council sought a deputation with the Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways to discuss with him the possibility of a special grant for the development of this road because of its special nature. The road will enable the mining company to transport millions of tons of ore from its mine.

Last January the Minister refused to meet a council deputation about this matter. When the recent elections were imminent a number of Labor candidates appeared to be provided with information that was not available to the elected representatives of the people. In my electorate the Labor candidate was busy grandstanding for the Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Technology and Minister for Energy, and also the Minister for Transport, arranging a special meeting with the Woodlawn mine and the local people to discuss the financing of this road. All this was done without my knowledge, although I had made a number of representations following public meetings and approaches by the local council. At a meeting that took place on 12th July the Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Technology and Minister for Energy, in the presence of the Minister for Transport, gave me, shire representatives and the local protest group a good hearing. I remember the Minister for Transport saying that he would do what he could after he had been told that the $400,000 required for this road was beyond the resources of the council's normal road grants programme.

I have a record of that meeting at which I recall the Minister for Transport saying that he could see no difficulty in providing the finance for that road. He added that as the Budget was being framed and both he and the Government had certain obligations to fulfil, he could not give the council an answer for a week. During the discussions advice was sought from the council whether the engineering and planning preparations had been done. The Minister asked the council whether it could carry out the development of main road 268, which would serve the Woodlawn mine, in addition to meeting its normal commitments. The shire president and the engineer expressed the view that if it were required to do so the work could go to tender almost immediately. Time went on and as the elections drew near I became more concerned about the matter. My concern was understandable because although the Minister said on 12th July that an answer would be given in about a week, almost nine weeks went by. Finally, on 15th September the Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Technology and Minister for Energy came to Tarago and told the local press that a special grant of $450,000 would be made for the work. I emphasize that this was to be a special grant.

On 25th September, when the elections were not far off, the council was informed by letter from the Minister that he had approved a special grant to be made for the development of main road 268 to serve the Woodlawn mine. On 19th October council received a letter from the divisional engineer at Goulburn setting out the details of the funding, and again advising that it was to be a special grant. On 9th November I received details of the normal main road and trunk road reconstruction grants showing that the council had been allocated $450,000, the sum that had already been made available by way of a special grant. I propose to relate again how that grant came about. Negotiations were carried out between the company and the Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Technology and Minister for Energy in respect of an advance payment of royalties to the Government. This would be advanced through Treasury for the Department of Main Roads to finance work on that road.

Like the Mulwaree shire council, I should like to know what has happened to the council's main road and trunk road grant which comes out of funds provided by way of the agreement between the federal Government and the State Government. The finance provided has been on the basis of an interest-free loan from the Woodlawn mining company. I should like the Minister to admit that this money was allocated as a special grant on the understanding that the Mulwaree shire council would do the work outside its normal road works programme, separate from its normal main road and trunk road allocation. The council gave this undertaking. Tenders have been called for the reconstruction of the section of the road to which I have referred. The result of all this is that council's plant and work force, which would normally be used on its

main roads programme, will now be idle. There is no way that the council can go back because the work on this road has already gone to tender. The matter is important not only because of the facts I have stated but also because a once-only operation is involved.

I should like to know whether this situation had any influence on the council's allocation under its ordinary main road and trunk road grant, which was held up until after the elections. This matter went on almost until the elections. The Government would have lost face if it had been announced that this $450,000 was to come out of the council's ordinary grant rather than from the special grant promised by the Minister and the Government. If the Government wants to honour some of the promises that it made before the elections, it ought to attend to this one. The Government has made other promises about providing funds for certain works in the Goulburn electorate. It made those promises in an attempt to purchase votes. Probably some of those promises were made in the ordinary course of events, but I believe this one was made for political purposes.

The Mulwaree shire council and the citizens of Tarago will suffer if the reconstruction of this road is done by the use of funds from the normal main road and trunk road allocation. If the road is developed with the use of council funds, other roads in the area will suffer, perhaps for another ten years. The Government's integrity will suffer if it plays about with funds in this way. I should like to know where the funds have gone that normally would have been made available to the council over and above this $450,000 in the; form of an interest-free advance by the company. This money will be used on a road that will carry the company's ore. It must be remembered that the extraction of the ore will bring a great deal of revenue to the Government and be of benefit to the local community.

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

RAYMOND JOHN GILMORE

Mr R. J. CLOUGH (Blue Mountains) [3.44]: I bring to the attention of the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice the case of Raymond John Gilmore, who is serving a gaol sentence for making threatening phone calls and for two bombing incidents in the Campbelltown district. Representations were made on his behalf by his father and mother, who are constituents of mine. I wish to put some of the facts before the House. Raymond John Gilmore has had two trials. After his first trial he was given a retrial and was sentenced following the retrial. Because of the sense of frustration and helplessness apparent in the material given to me, I am bringing this matter forward hoping that the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice will call for all the documents on the subject and have the matter re-examined.

Mr Gilmore has stated that he was released from gaol at the conclusion of the lower court hearing and was free to do as he pleased for two years and three months. He did not have to sign anything or report to anyone for all that time. He went to the far north of Queensland and could have taken the opportunity to avoid appearing in court, but he went to court on each occasion that his matter was mentioned, and finally for the first trial—for the reason, as he says, that "through it all I was certain that the people who mattered would realize the stupidity of the whole set-up". He goes on to say:

> After being found guilty I still fought by appealing, got bail again after five months—had felt the shock and dismay of being found guilty and sentenced to years in prison for something I wasn't responsible for.

Still free on bail for eight or nine months after that trial, he travelled round the country while the hearing of the appeal was pending. He went to his retrial with faith that the evidence to be given in his defence would prove his innocence beyond doubt. Yet he is still in gaol today.

Some of the facts of the case concern me. I do not criticize the police, nor do I suggest that the police have been entirely blameless in this matter, but I must refer to an assertion in a document given to me by Mr Gilmore that when he was required to leave Campbelltown police station to go to court the police would not give him all his clothes or even a comb for his hair. They made him go to court dishevelled and bare-footed, past television cameras. Surely a person in those circumstances is entitled to preserve his dignity as a human being. Mr Gilmore goes on to claim that this was a deliberate attempt to make him look something that he really was not.

The basis of the whole case was the use of explcsives. Mr Gilmore states that an army dog trainer with a dog searched his house and the surrounding sheds and land but found nothing in the way of explosives. Police divers searched the dams in the area and found nothing. He says that the next day the trainer with the dog came back to the same area and there, right in the middle of the biggest clearing, in a relatively small blackberry bush the army trainer, not the dog, spotted a roughly wrapped parcel that, to use Mr Gilmore's words, "even had some explosive fuse hanging out just to make sure it wouldn't be overlooked as a screwed up piece of paper blown in by the wind". It concerns me that nothing was found on the first search.

Mr Gilmore makes much comment on the fact that he unknowingly signed a record of interview, that he was refused legal assistance, and that in attempting to obtain asistance he ran from the police station and was pursued by the police. He claims that he was assaulted and beaten by the police. He gives the number of a constable who was involved. I do not intend to refer to that number or to mention the names of police contained in the statements given to me. However, I shall give the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice a copy of all the papers I have so that he can acquaint himself with the details.

Mr Gilmore states that he was assaulted by the police, handcuffed, and taken back to the same room where he had spent most of the day. As he was entering the room a police officer had hold of the back of his neck, and as the officer pulled him into the room the right side of his head about his right eye smashed into the door and started bleeding. He says the handcuffs were too tight and they were biting into him. He says further that the police refused to loosen the handcuffs for him. When he asked them to do so they kept saying that he had almost cost a young policeman his job. That was the policeman who was in charge of Mr Gilmore when he made the attempt to obtain legal aid. Mr Gilmore has supplied me with a copy of an affidavit by a senior lecturer in English who gave his opinion on the tapes used during the trial. I find the information in the affidavit disconcerting. Further, Mr Gilmore has supplied me with a number of character references.

My purpose in bringing this matter to notice this afternoon is to do what I can to assist Raymond Gilmore's parents. I ask the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice to call for the papers on both trials, and in particular to inquire whether the foreman in the jury at the first trial said to Mr Gilmore before the jury had reached its verdict, "You are facing a long term of imprisonment, speak up." It concerns me that a citizen could have been arrested and treated in the way this man claims he was treated. He was put on trial twice, and was sent to gaol for something he might not have done. Every effort should be made to determine whether this man was

involved in any of the incidents referred to. I believe that if he had been found guilty of a crime he committed, he would not be persisting with his protestations of innocence and seeking, through his father, to enlist the aid of his State member of Parliament. In asking the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice to call for the papers in the case, I offer to give him copies of the papers that have been given to me. I look forward to discussing the matter with the Minister.

Mr WALKER (Georges River), Attorney-General and Minister of Justice [3.52]: I shall do as the honourable member asks and look at the papers with a view to ascertaining whether there might possibly have been a miscarriage of justice.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Mr BARRACLOUGH (Bligh) [3.52]: My plea on behalf of the people of New South Wales relates to law and order. In Central Court of Petty Sessions a few hours ago John Anthony McCulloch, 28, was charged with three armed hold-ups of banks. Shots were fired by McCulloch inside the banks——

Mr Walker: On a point of order. If, as the honourable member for Bligh says, the matter to which he is referring was before a court only three hours ago, it must be sub *judice*.

Mr DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order! The opening remarks of the honourable member for Bligh did cause me concern. I was about to interrupt him, for it would appear that the matter to which he refers is sub *judice*.

Mr BARRACLOUGH: I shall be guided by your ruling. Let us look at the record of this Mr McCulloch.

Mr DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order! I have ruled that the matter concerning Mr McCulloch is at present *sub judice*. The honourable member for Bligh should discontinue his remarks about that gentleman.

Mr BARRACLOUGH: Some seven years ago a criminal was sentenced to fifteen years' gaol for armed hold-up. A non-parole period of seven years was set. After seven years he was released and, in the words of a senior New South Wales police officer, has been knocking off banks ever since. My grievance today is not with the Minister for Corrective Services. I know he has had a pretty hard week. The gaols are overcrowded, prison officers are disgruntled, and there have been the usual daily escapes. Who can blame the officers of the gaols at Parramatta and Long Bay for refusing to accept more prisoners from other gaols? Who can blame the prison officers at Grafton who, I understand, are contemplating going on strike next Tuesday? I told the Minister last week that he had 500 prisoners at Parramatta gaol, which was designed to accommodate 250 prisoners, but only some 90 prison officers to supervise them.

No wonder the prison officers of New South Wales do not want to accept any more prisoners. My grievance stretches beyond the Minister's shameful mismanagement of the State's prison system; it is a grievance directed at the entire Government, the Dad's Army Government, its leader the Premier, and his parliamentary law officers who continue to turn a blind eye to the inadequacies and loopholes in the State's judicial system. More and more this Government makes it plain that it is in the business of going in to bat for the criminal and to hell with the community, the police and the prison officers.

A policeman's life is not a happy one in New South Wales. The police officer is often defeated before he sets out to combat the State's escalating crime. In trying to effect an arrest he has no law on his side to permit him to hold a suspect even for a few hours while necessary inquiries are made. There is such a law in South Australia. Why not here? In Victoria the police have their own helicopter. The New South Wales police have requested their Minister, the Premier, for a helicopter but their request has been refused and it does not look as though they are going to get one. All this Government will spend on law enforcement is a lousy 7c or 8c a day per capita—less than the cost of a newspaper. Crime does pay in New South Wales because the fruits of crime exceed the penalties imposed on the criminal. This is the era of the career criminal. Yet members of the Government, like the bunch of rank amateurs they are, continue to treat the judicial system and the gaols in this fashion.

Armed robbery has increased by about 1000 per cent in twenty years. At least 50 per cent of armed robberies in this State are drug-related. As of a few minutes ago there have been in New South Wales this year 620 armed robberies, 106 of them on banks. The police are expecting the number to reach 900 by the end of the year. Escalation! Last year there were 430 armed robberies, of which 61 were on banks. The armed holdup squad in Sydney has been increased by only two officers. Escalation! In 1970 there were 184 armed robberies, 40 of them on banks.

In Victoria, as the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice would know, a bail measure recently introduced has helped to stop the escalation of crime in that State. The Attorney-General and Minister of Justice says he will legislate on bail here, but only today a senior police officer told me that if the bill goes through in its present form New South Wales criminals will be able to commit crime in droves. Let this Government increase the number of judges and improve remand sections in our gaols so that defence lawyers cannot seek the release of their clients on bail on the basis that there is inadequate accommodation for them. Let this Government pass legislation to effectthorough investigation of persons acting as sureties for bail. Let it take the pressure off the parole board, which recommends the release of prisoners because the gaols are hopelessly overcrowded.

Let the Premier reopen Katingal and assure the House that Bathurst gaol will be ready for full normal use in February, as promised. Let the Government bring in majority jury verdicts. Jurors are only human and can make irrational decisions. Some of them have preconceived ideas. It has been known that some have been nobbled. Let the Government introduce statutory provisions to serve as a guide to all tribunals that have to consider the question of bail. Let the Premier and his Attorney-General and Minister of Justice—both of whom have been continually grandstanding on judicial matters and generally—act now to ensure that the price of crime exceeds the fruits of crime in New South Wales. Let them put a stop once and for all to the pandering to those in our society who choose to break the law daily at the expense of law-abiding citizens.

Mr WALKER (Georges River), Attorney-General and Minister of Justice [4.0]: The honourable member for Bligh holds the record for delivering the most unmitigated lot of tripe I have heard this week. One of the problems of members of the Opposition, and one of the reasons why they are in opposition in such small numbers, is their shocking record in the field of law and order. They are great people for talking about law and order but they have been very poor performers in that field. Let us consider some areas of their performance when they were in government for eleven years. I shall begin with white-collar crime. They spent all their time covering up and protecting white-collar criminals. They failed to prosecute. They failed to change the

laws. They hid away on dusty shelves, lest their friends in the Liberal Party who were named in those reports should be embarrassed, the reports of inspectors under the Companies Act. There was only one major prosecution in eleven years of white-collar crime. Our record in the past six months is eleven major prosecutions and many more likely to occur in the near future, so it can be seen by the public that we are serious about applying that area of the law.

I come next to armed robbery. Recently I have caused appeals to be made in six cases to the Court of Criminal Appeal against sentences given to armed robbers. There were no such appeals in the eleven years of Liberal-Country party governments. They were soft on armed robbers. They were tossed out of office because of their weakness. The soft underbelly of Liberal-Country party governments, the corruptness within those parties and their ineptness and incompetence led to that situation.

There is a guilt complex within the Liberal Party over drugs. Don Mackay, who disappeared and is probably dead, constantly brought to the notice of councils of the Liberal Party complaints about corruption in his particular area. One complaint he made was about certain growers of marihuana in his district who were fined $250 for growing several acres of it. He argued that surely the penalty was inadequate. Inadequate it was, for the penalty put into the law for that particular offence by this Labor Government is now twenty-five years hard labour. A Liberal-Country party government decided that $250 was adequate. Why? Because its members are soft. They were too lenient on criminals. The people of New South Wales judged them for what they were and threw them out of office.

While the Liberal–Country party Attorneys-General were in power they were no-bill happy. They were constantly no-billing cases against criminals in this State. The rate of no-billing has been substantially reduced under the present Government. It is now less than half what it was. For eleven years the law on bail in New South Wales was in a most unsatisfactory state. People were constantly committing offences while on bail. Obviously the system was wrong. The public knew it was wrong but the soft, weak Liberal–Country party governments did nothing about it. They did not even start any research into the matter. When I took over the portfolio of Attorney-General I asked to be shown the files on research on bail and I was told there were none. The former Government had not even considered the matter. In spite of constant complaints from the public and the police nothing was done about it. Within the next week or so I shall produce a monumental bill dealing with bail. It is a tough, hard bill that will reduce the number of crimes committed by people on bail. Of course, the Opposition will want to knock it. Already we have heard a phoney story about some policeman, doubtless drunk over lunch.

Mr Barraclough: On a point of order. The Attorney-General and Minister of Justice has just referred to a policeman being drunk over lunch. On behalf of apy police officer I regard that as offensive and ask for its withdrawal.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr WALKER: The bill has been considered by some of the leading legal and judicial brains of this State and approved as a document worthy of presentation to the Parliament. As I shall bring it before the Parliament I do not want to predicate the discussion on that matter. In eleven years of Liberal-Country party governments how many gaols were built to relieve the overcrowding that exists in our prison system? Not one major gaol. No wonder there is chaos in the prison system. One gaol that was burnt down was not replaced. The Minister of Justice of the day covered up the crime and corruption that was going on in the gaols. This was another example of

going soft on crime and corruption. It is an inherent weakness in these men who believe they were born to rule. That is why they have been tossed out of office and why they are present in this Parliament in such sparse numbers.

The former Government was so soft and weak in the field of law and order that I got into Parliament on that very issue. In 1970, the Liberals in the Georges River by-election raised law and order as the only issue. The people of Georges River judged them and there was a 13.5 per cent swing against them. The people knew they were phonies and liars; they knew of their corrupt record. That is why they have been tossed out of office. That is also why no one would believe the unmitigated tripe served up this afternoon by the honourable member for Bligh.

PARKING FOR DISABLED PERSONS

Mr **MAHER** (Drummoyne) [4.6]: I rise to bring before the House a problem that is of great concern to me. I refer to the difficulty of disabled people when trying to park their cars in the city of Sydney and in some of the major shopping centres. Several disabled persons in my electorate have complained to me about the lack of parking facilities in Sydney. The aim of any sensitive government in a democracy is to assist disabled people to carry on a normal life and not to deprive them, simply because they have a disability, of the opportunities that are available to other citizens. Many of these people drive their cars to work because they are unable to travel on public transport, but in the city of Sydney there is insufficient provision for them to park.

Apparently the test in Sydney is that a disabled person can park at a parking meter for an unlimited period if the meter indicates that an ordinary vehicle may stand there for more than thirty minutes. Unfortunately, there are few of those positions. They are usually on the outskirts of the city proper and far from the central business district. This defeats the whole purpose of a disabled person's parking rights because he cannot walk great distances. **A** paraplegic cannot be expected to park on the other side of town and walk through Hyde Park to transact business at a city bank, or visit a government department or an insurance company. Several of my constituents have raised this problem with me.

I know that the Minister for Transport will consider this matter sympathetically. It is something on which there should be thorough research. In other countries, notably in Great Britain, the plight of the disabled is handled with consideration. The Govern. ment there ensures that the disabled people are borne in mind not only in the design of buildings, doorhandles, fittings and fixtures, but particularly in relation to parking so that a disabled person who is not able to walk to a centre can drive there and park nearby.

Many of the parking spots in the central business district of Sydney permit only a stay of fifteen or twenty minutes. **A** disabled person is debarred from parking at those points for any longer than other motorists. If he does, even if he displays his disabled drivers notice on his windscreen, he may find on his return an infringement notice under the windscreen wiper blade. Disabled people cannot move about quickly. They have trouble getting in and out of lifts, through doors and negotiating escalators. They should be given more consideration than they now receive.

The federal Government gives some slight assistance to the disabled by way of sales tax concessions on the purchase of new motor vehicles. That is an incentive to the disabled to remain mobile, to hold down a job and to be useful members of the work force, or perhaps even to conduct businesses. I have noted that in Great Britain,

where great concern is shown for the disabled, the Government is moving away from the notion of giving them cars. The British Government used to give three-wheeled motorized vehicles to disabled persons to keep them mobile. I noticed in a recent British handbook that the Government now grants a disability allowance of £7 a week to severely disabled people. It was felt that a disabled person who could not control a motorized vehicle would be better off with a cash allowance. That money can be spent on hiring a car, taking a taxi or, if the disabled person wishes, on purchasing a vehicle.

I put it to the Minister that consideration should be given to equating the disabled with members of the consular corps who have the right to park anywhere at any time in any zone or in any parking area. Disabled people have complained that most parking spots in the city of Sydney are designated as loading zones. If a person is fortunate enough to have a station waggon, he can park it at a loading zone. I suggest a trial period of six months during which disabled people are given the same parking rights in this great city as members of the consular corps. I know that disabled people would not abuse this privilege. They should be given a chance to prove that they can park their vehicles without obstructing traffic in the main arteries.

This society must be a caring society. The Government is pledged to examine all of the procedures, regulations and customs that were inherited from the previous Government and I know that the Minister for Transport will have this matter sympathetically examined. Society should not be just for the fit and healthy; it must be also for those who unfortunately have been stricken with a disability and are able to travel from place to place only by car. It should be possible for them to park their cars near the place where they want to engage in some activity or transact business. The disabled would gladly trade their existing parking priviliges for the right to park near the spot where they want to transact their business.

I put it strongly to the Minister that there should be a trial period during which disabled people have similar rights to those who are fortunate enough to drive vehicles bearing consular corps number plates. I know that when my remarks are transmitted to the Minister he will inquire into the matter. The Commissioner for Motor Transport has told me that under the 1963 Vienna Convention of Consular Relations members of the consular corps are not responsible to the judicial or administrative authorities of the state in respect of acts performed in the exercise of diplomatic or consular functions. Nevertheless, I am sure that the consular corps exercises a certain amount of scrutiny and supervision over parking by its members. I know they act with restraint. If the Minister for Transport grants disabled people this right, I am sure they will not abuse it.

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

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

PRINTING COMMITTEE

First Report

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

House adjourned, on motion by Mr K. J. Stewart, at 4.16 p.m.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

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

ACCESS TO BUILDINGS BY DISABLED PERSONS

Mr MOORE asked the Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Ports—

(1) Does Australian Standard Design Code **1428 —1977** establish design rules for access by disabled or handicapped persons to new buildings?

(2) What consideration is taken of this code by the department when designing, letting tenders for design or letting tenders for buildings being constructed for the New South Wales Government?

(3) Is consideration of these rules mandatory in designing new buildings?

(4) If not, will it be made so?

Answer—

(1) Yes.

(2) It is the policy of the Department of Public Works to work to the requirements of the code during the design stage of all new public buildings.

The Honourable Member, indeed all Honourable Members will be interested to know that the Government Architect recently won a design award for an architectural work having a high level of merit, with some special suitability for use by disabled people. The award, for Kelso High School, was made by the Australian Council for Rehabilitation of Disabled, in association with the N.S.W. Chapter of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects.

(3) Not at the present time.

(4) I understand that the Building Regulations Advisory Committee has the question under consideration and plans to place a recommendation before my colleague the Minister for Local Government in the near future.

MOTORAIL SERVICES

Mr MOORE asked the Minister for Transport—

(1) Has a review been undertaken of the refusal by the Public Transport Commission to introduce special wagons on motorail trains to convey camper-vans, recreational and other non-standard roofline vehicles?

(2) If not, why not?

(3) If so, what was the result of such review?

Answer—

(1) No.

(2) There have been insufficient inquiries to warrant a cost benefit analysis being carried out by the Public Transport Commission to establish if the introduction of special wagons on the motorail trains to convey campervans and other non-standard roofline vehicles would be an economically viable proposition.

The Commission considers it would not be prudent to undertake costly major developments, necessitating substantial capital expenditure until it was satisfied that the demand existed for the carriage of this type of vehicle.

The existing motor-carrying wagon accommodates eight vehicles in two tiers.

Other non-standard roofline vehicles would require the use of a special well type wagon to keep the loading within the structural gauge and the very design of such a wagon would probably preclude it from accommodating sufficient vehicles to make it a viable proposition.

It is assumed from the little demand for accommodation of this type of vehicle that owners preferred to take the units by road so that they may stop where they please at places en route.

(3) Not applicable.

PEDESTRIAN CROSSING SUPERVISORS

Mr MOORE asked the Premier—

(1) How many schools in the Sydney metropolitan area have had allocated civilian pedestrian crossing supervisors?

(2) How many schools are on a waiting list for such supervisors?

(3) Is each such school accorded a priority?

(4) What schools within the electorate of Gordon are on that list?

(5) Have schools in that electorate applied for inclusion in the list and been rejected?

(6) What is the priority of each school within that electorate?

Answer—

(1) 89 locations servicing **95** schools in the Sydney Metropolitan Area are supervised by civilian pedestrian crossing supervisors.

(2) 144 throughout the State.

(3) Yes.

(4) Gordon Primary School and Lindfield Demonstration School.

(5) The Commissioner of Police has informed me that all schools in the electorate of Gordon were canvassed in conjunction with a general survey of all schools throughout the State and those schools not appearing on the priority list have been rejected.

(6) The present priority positions are:

Gordon Primary School	76
Lindfield Demonstration School	89

PEDESTRIAN CROSSING SUPERVISORS

Mr MOORE asked the Premier—

(1) Has the need for civilian pedestrian crossing supervisors at Lindfield demonstration school and Gordon public school been investigated?

(2) What priority has been accorded to these applications?

(3) When are such appointments likely?

Answer—

(1) Yes, as part of a survey of marked footcrossings in close proximity to schools throughout the State.

(2) The present priority positions are:

Lindfield Demonstration School	89
Gordon Public School	**76**

(3) In view of the State's financial position it could be some time before the appointment of supervisors to these crossings can be considered.

HAYMARKET ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE

Mr WEST asked the Premier—

As a result of the Government's intention to build an entertainment centre on the existing Paddy's Market in the Haymarket, what site has been selected to continue as a similar Paddy's Market for the inner city area?

Answer—

Plans for the redevelopment of the Haymarket area provide for the relocation of the operations of Paddy's Market in the former Markets 1 and **2** areas. The markets have already begun operating on the new site.

PEDESTRIAN CROSSING SUPERVISOR FOR HABERFIELD

Mr MAHER asked the Premier—

(1) Will a civilian crossing supervisor be allocated during the current financial year to St Joan of Arc Primary School, Haberfield?

(2) Will he ensure that the supervisor employed is conversant in English and Italian?

Answer—

(1) The appointment of a civilian supervisor to the pedestrian crossing near the St Joan of Arc Primary School, Haberfield, has been included in a priority list but in view of the State's financial position it could be some time before the appointment can be considered.

(2) The Commissioner of Police has informed me that when an appointment is made every effort will be made to appoint a suitable person with multi-lingual qualifications.

PEDESTRIAN CROSSING SUPERVISOR FOR ABBOTSFORD

Mr **MAHER** asked the **Premier—**

Is a civilian crossing supervisor to be provided on schooldays at Great North Road outside Abbotsford Public School?

Answer—

The appointment of a Civilian Supervisor for the pedestrian crossing at Great North Road outside Abbotsford Public School has been included in a priority list but in view of the State's financial position it could be some time before the appointment can be considered.