

ground. When an allocation of funds is made for a hospital it would be better if the money could be placed into a trust account until the work has been completed but our finances cannot be arranged in that way.

Last year the Federal Government had a surplus of £61,000,000. Some of that money should have been utilised for building hospitals such as the one mentioned by the hon. member, who obviously believes that the project suggested by him is essential. An economic policy that permits such a surplus is bad finance and bad business for the country. In a country like Australia we should be able to mortgage some of our assets for the betterment of the people. That is my view and I do not care who knows it. I understand that increased accommodation will be available at Inverell, that a maternity block is nearing completion and that a new nurses' home is to be constructed there. However, I should like to see Inverell have a hospital similar to the one at Glen Innes. I have not been to Inverell to examine the situation but my opinion is that the hospital at Glen Innes should have been constructed at Inverell. I may be wrong but it would appear that Inverell, which has fourteen doctors practising in the town, must be a more important centre than Glen Innes.

Mr. CRAWFORD: It has much more closely settled country around it.

Mr. SHEAHAN: The area about Inverell has been thrown open to closer settlement. A sumptuous hospital has been built at Glen Innes. In my opinion, it should have been constructed at Inverell. I know that hospital accommodation will soon be provided at Inverell for about eighty-one patients. I wish that I could give the hon. member a more favourable answer, but I can do no more than is within my power. I regret that I cannot make a promise, but I do not wish to be placed in the position of giving a promise that I cannot fulfil. I would much sooner say "No" to an hon. member than say "Yes" and fail to do anything. The answer must be "No".

Finances are restricted. I do not know everything that is likely to happen. The threat of war over the Suez Canal dispute

is a factor to be taken into consideration. Hon. members may find that inflation will cease to-morrow and that money will flow readily. Then the men and materials will not be available to do the work. How that situation arises I do not know. Ever since I have been in Parliament I have given this matter serious consideration. The more I have studied this financial jugglery the less I know about it, and the less it seems to accord with common sense. If money can be raised for the purposes of war surely it can be obtained for hospitals and decent schools for future generations. I am sorry that I cannot promise the hon. member that he will have a hospital at Inverell comparable with that at Glen Innes. If I could say that to him I should say it to other hon. members and to the people in some of the towns in my own electorate.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned at 10.28 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 5 September, 1956.

Gaming and Betting (Poker Machines) Bill
(second reading).

The ACTING PRESIDENT took the chair at 4.30 p.m.

The opening Prayer was read.

GAMING AND BETTING (POKER MACHINES) BILL.

SECOND READING.

Debate resumed (from 4th September, *vide* page 2046) on motion by the Hon. R. R. Downing:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Major the Hon. H. P. FITZSIMONS [4.32]: At the adjournment of the debate last evening I was speaking of the illegal preparation of alcoholic liquor by many units throughout New Guinea during World War II and had pointed out the vast difference between the drinking of alcoholic liquor in New Guinea, where it

was virtually uncontrolled, with the consumption of liquor in army units on the mainland, including Darwin, where rigid supervision was exercised over the men's canteen, the sergeants' and the officers' messes. On the mainland control rendered alcoholic liquor a social amenity instead of a menace, as it was in New Guinea. My attitude towards poker machines is based on my experience of uncontrolled drinking in New Guinea by members of the armed forces.

Over the past quarter of a century governments have permitted the use of poker machines in clubs until, almost by tacit consent, they have become part and parcel of club life. It would at this stage be difficult to deal with the problem in the manner that it has been dealt with in other States. Poker machines must either be banned entirely, thus putting New South Wales on all fours with the other States, or controlled and registered, as is proposed in the bill. I disagree with the Government's proposals because, to my mind, the bill does not really effect its purported intention. If the proposal were to be implemented fairly and equitably, obviously no flat rate of taxation, which penalises smaller clubs, should be imposed. The Government has acted on impulse and in haste to overcome a difficult political situation. If it had taken more time to consider the matter a more equitable measure would have been devised, discriminating between clubs with small and large memberships and with the number of machines in each club. Moreover, it would have been able to enforce some control over the hours and days on which these machines might be used.

The bill, in its present form, is adding to the legalised forms of gambling in this State—flat racing, trotting, greyhound racing and the State lottery. Now we are to have Lady Luck in the form of poker machines. If a new form of gambling, garbed with the authority of legality, is to be set up, at least the authorising legislation should be equitable and have some relation to the practice of other forms of gaming permitted in the State. The Government should have taken the plunge and set up a gaming control board. If the

money is to be directed towards charity in the form of the Hospitals Fund, the board could consist of the Minister, as chairman, an officer of the Auditor-General's Department and an officer of the Hospitals Commission, whose duties would be to supervise the administration of the proposals contained in the bill.

The measure contains a number of objectionable features. First, clubs are not required to have separate banking accounts for membership subscriptions and, in the case of clubs with a liquor licence, for profits from the sale of liquor. A board of control, such as the Greyhound Racing Control Board, would be able to enforce the opening of trust accounts by clubs for these separate forms of income, including poker machine profits. One of my colleagues had something to say about honorariums paid to club officers and asked whether this practice would place clubs outside the ambit of the bill. I think that matter warrants some consideration by hon. members with legal experience. Any loophole should be closed. Under the bill the Minister is to be the sole arbiter on whether a poker machine is being acquired by a club on reasonable terms. The Colonial Secretary in another place is a friend of mine of many years' standing. All hon. members know the vicissitudes of parliamentary life. A Colonial Secretary to-day may not even be a member of Parliament to-morrow.

The Hon. A. A. ALAM: Such is politics!

Major the Hon. H. P. FITZSIMONS: Exactly. My remarks are no reflection upon the present Colonial Secretary, who administers his portfolio equitably and has a vast experience as a Cabinet Minister. However, at some time in the future another person without his capacity and tolerance might occupy the portfolio. This House is setting up machinery to enable clubs to acquire equipment on reasonable terms. The poorer clubs are to have their fate determined by ministerial decision. It would be much better for the Government to leave these decisions to the Licensing Court where clubs could have their claims determined by a competent magistrate trained in such matters. This would have

taken from the Minister the responsibility of making these decisions. After all, Ministers come and go and vary in calibre. If this measure is to become part and parcel of our social life, let us see that it starts on the right foot. I shall not pursue this matter further. At the beginning of my remarks I said that I regarded the measure as inevitable, for the Government, following the action of the United Licensed Victuallers' Association, had to do something about the problem. It has done something that in my opinion most Governments might have been forced to do by a practice that has grown up over a quarter of a century. However, I dislike the method that the Government has adopted. I repeat that it has taken advantage of the grave difficulties that will face all licensed non-proprietary clubs, has seized its opportunity and said "The Government will now correct your difficulties but, while doing so, will cash in on the position."

The Hon. G. H. SUTHERLAND [4.43]: I have listened with rapt attention to the various contributions of hon. members to the debate. In the main most hon. members opposite were at sea with their facts. I was born on the waterfront. Brigadier the Hon. T. A. J. Playfair should be able to recall the incidents about which I shall speak. In the early days prior to the advent of the Royal Australian Navy, the Imperial Navy looked after the sea lanes to Australia. Their ships occasionally put into Sydney. Men from the *Eurylis*, the *Karracutta* and the *Powerful* foregathered in hotels that were aptly named the Sailor's Welcome, the Navy Brigade, the Hit or Miss, the Sailor's Return and the Ocean Wave. All these hotels had poker machines, which the Imperial sailors pooled their resources to play. Most machines were sent broke. Like thieves in the night, one by one they were removed from the hotels. No one else played them; only these jolly English sailors. It is to their credit that they sent ten machines in ten hotels broke. I recall also that one could make a bet at Harry Sterling's or Archie Thompson's in King-street, City. One could walk into these shops and see the odds on a board. John Norton in *Truth* made unkind

allegations about shareholders of proprietary clubs, and pointed out that the Australian Jockey Club was suffering by the non-attendance by people at race tracks. The Carruthers Government agreed that this practice was wrong and introduced gaming and betting legislation, which made it legal to bet only inside a fence. Other governments introduced amending legislation that made it possible to bet on the totalisator inside a racecourse.

Then another government was responsible for introducing the lotteries into this State, and this has been done also in other States. The Hon. A. D. Bridges paraded here like a sick medicine man telling hon. members what would happen if poker machines were legalised. He went to the extent of saying "What is illegal will now be made legal". However, this has been done throughout history. If one delves back a couple of centuries into a history book one finds reference to the dastardly occupation of body snatching from churchyards, graveyards and cemeteries in England. Porters who were supposed to look after those who had died were selling the bodies to the medical profession. The government of the day in its wisdom decided to legalise the sale of dead bodies to the medical profession so that its members could use them to improve their knowledge. There is nothing wrong with legalising something that may perhaps be illegal.

Hon. members were told also by the Hon. A. D. Bridges that poker machines would encourage embezzlement, that they were wife starvers and that they would deprive children of their sustenance. I am not a gambling man, as I commented to one of my colleagues when I was about to make my speech. The average man, according to his economic standing in the community, goes into a club with anything between £1 and £5 in his pocket. He makes his own decision about how much he will spend. Therefore, his money is spent either at the shrine of the goddess of chance or at the shrine of Bacchus. I prefer the shrine of the goddess of chance to that of Bacchus, because one is not so sick the next day. Though I have only recently been elected to this Chamber, when listening to some

hon. members opposite my mind strayed through the corridors of time to the days of Cromwell and to the restoration of the monarchy of England. The people were in merry mood and cheered lustily. London was a blaze of colour. From the house-tops was proclaimed "The ale houses will be open; the maypole will be danced; there will be joyous days in England again".

Do what we will, we cannot prevent our people from having a little "flutter" whether it is on the horses, on poker machines or on some other form of gambling. It seems to be part of humanity, and nothing hon. members can do will stop it. I take this view as a law abiding citizen, one who has much respect for the law. If a law cannot be policed, it should be repealed or amended so that people will respect it. I commend the Government on having introduced this measure, which will not cause any harm, but will bring under the control of the proper authority something that it has been impossible to police. Even if the strength of the police force were doubled it would not be able to police the use of these machines. I have seen them used in a small country town where the police were vigilant and tried to have them banned. I have seen them in a cellar to which one could gain access only by giving the correct password.

The Hon. J. A. WEIR: How did the hon. member gain admission?

The Hon. G. H. SUTHERLAND: I claimed that I was an investigator. We, as legislators, should help people to obey the law. When a law cannot be administered it is better to introduce legislation to provide some measure of control. According to I support the bill.

The Hon. F. M. HEWITT [4.50]: Though I enjoyed the speech of the Hon. G. H. Sutherland and liked its humour, I was not convinced by it. I belong to two clubs where poker machines are used in vast numbers, and occasionally I have played them, with the usual result. It is one thing to make legal matters that the public is more or less taking into its own hands when the law cannot be enforced, but it

is different to legalise methods of gambling and to make them easy of access. By this measure the Government is taking a vested interest in another form of gambling. My objection to poker machines and the way in which they are used is that they are always associated with alcoholic liquor. Many people, who in their sober senses would not spend money that they could not afford to lose, when they have consumed liquor with their friends will on some occasions gamble far more than they can afford.

If clubs cannot exist without the aid of returns from gambling, I fail to understand why the Government should legalise gambling for their benefit. I disagree with the view of my colleague, the Hon. H. S. Henley. A person should pay whatever is necessary to belong to a club and should not depend for his membership on subsidies from his fellow members, which is what happens in clubs in which poker machines are installed. The fact that this measure will make gambling easy and associated with it is an unlimited supply of liquor renders it unacceptable. The Government should have enforced the law rather than legalised poker machines.

The Hon. D. COCHRANE [4.53]: I shall endeavour to be as brief as possible and not indulge in repetition of what has already been said. I found it difficult to follow the remarks of Major the Hon. H. P. FitzSimons. He seemed to be having a bit each way. However, I compliment the Hon. A. D. Bridges and the Hon. Richard Thompson on their contributions to the debate. They expressed their points of view clearly, and all hon. members respect them. The Hon. H. S. Henley made a contribution, the standard of which is seldom heard in this Chamber. He knew what he was talking about, and I commend him for having put before the House illuminating facts and figures regarding the 62,000 members of the bowling fraternity of this State. All governments have been responsible for the growth of the poker-machine menace or habit. I am pleased that the Hon. G. H. Sutherland corrected a note I had made when he said that they were introduced before I became a member of this House, which was thirty years ago. No political capital can be

made out of the action of the Government in legalising something that has been in operation for half a century.

The Government has been forced to introduce the bill—and any other government would have had to do the same—because of the growth of club life, which has resulted entirely from the actions of the breweries and liquor interests. They have been interested only in selling beer and other commodities and have made no provision for the development of communal life. Hotels in this State are not community centres as they are in other parts of the world. They are only beer houses—businesses that sell liquor. They provide no amenities. The Municipality of Marrickville, which has a population of about 100,000 people, has many hotels, but I am doubtful whether one of them provides accommodation or meals for travellers or local residents. The service from hotels is so bad that in 1944 some of the men working in industry and commerce approached me as mayor of the municipality and asked whether it would be possible to establish some meal service for the working people in Marrickville. The only place where a meal was provided was Sargents, and hon. members know how monotonous Sargents' pies can get. Not one hotel in the district provided a midday or evening meal. In 1939 one of the most modern hotels in this State, costing about £100,000, was opened with a great flourish; but the hotel provided neither accommodation nor meals.

I called a meeting of the representatives of industrial and commercial firms, and the result was the formation of the Marrickville Businessmen's Club. It provided morning teas, midday meals, afternoon teas, evening meals and suppers. Poker machines were introduced into the club, and it is flourishing and meets a need in that industrial area where businessmen and other members can enjoy comfortable amenities with their friends. It has fixed assets of between £30,000 and £40,000. It proposes to make £12,000 worth of extensions immediately. It has raised thousands of pounds for local charities. On one night alone it raised £750 for the local hospital.

The Hon. D. Cochrane.]

Admittedly it was raised by poker machines and other gambling devices, but the provision of the money has become a "must" in that municipality, because of the requirements of boys' clubs, girls' clubs, day nurseries, kindergartens, hospitals and other local bodies. That club is always to the fore. Another organisation under its auspices is doing good work on an anonymous basis. In 1940 the Marrickville district had two bowling clubs, an Anzac club and one R.S.L. club. To-day it has three bowling clubs and two more are proposed, making a total of five; three R.S.L. clubs, an Anzac club, a golf club, a businessmen's club and a tennis club. Those clubs have grown because the people of the district want such places for their own enjoyment and the entertainment of guests. They are doing an excellent job. I do not know whether the Hon. A. D. Bridges made this suggestion merely for the purpose of comparison, but he said that possibly in the future prostitution, abortion and so on will be taxed. In some countries such things have been considered, but no hon. member here would tolerate the idea for a moment.

The Hon. A. D. BRIDGES: Prostitution was licensed in Queensland.

The Hon. D. COCHRANE: It was, and in South Australia. Too much political use has been made of this word "prostitution". On Friday, 24th August, a cartoon appeared in the *Sydney Daily Telegraph*. I suppose most hon. members have seen it. It depicts two females standing at a street corner and I take it from the cartoon that they are of doubtful moral character. The caption is, "First it's poker machines and then land tax and then hire-purchase tax. I suppose us girls will be next." Offhand, that cartoon might be thought to be slightly humorous, but it is as low a form of yellow journalism as it is possible to imagine. When one of Sydney's leading morning newspapers uses prostitutes to express a point of view to the public of this city it is getting pretty low. It is getting down to the lowest depths of political scavenging to which it is possible to stoop. It is wallowing at the bottom of the cesspit.

I suggest, even if there is any humour at all in that cartoon, that it is out of context and out of perspective. It could have been presented in such a way that it had some significance. If the perverted publisher of this puerile press, Packer, would refrain from this sort of tripe, this country would be in a better position. My suggestion for the cartoon would have been that instead of showing two females of doubtful morals, it would have pictured two males in the same category—and had it put some names on them it would have made a much better case. Hon. members know to whom I am referring. If anyone has any doubt, McNulty is one. So much for the trouble a dirty, filthy rag of this calibre would make when it stoops to these depths merely to make political capital out of any subject.

I have one objection to the bill. I agree with it in principle but disagree entirely with the method of applying the tax. I understand that a subsequent measure will make provision for the tax, but in my opinion it does not matter whether it is £x for a 6d., £y for a 1s. and £z for a 2s. machine. The proposal is that each machine will have the same tax imposed on it in every club in the State, with the exception of new clubs, which will pay tax at a reduced rate. I shall propose an altogether different principle for levying the tax. Sporting clubs, such as bowling clubs, golf clubs, hockey clubs, croquet clubs, many R.S.L. clubs and clubs of other types, are not in the same fortunate position as the large city social clubs. I am not disagreeing with the establishment and development of clubs like the Masonic Club, Tattersall's, the Leagues Club, the Catholic Club, or any other purely social club. The taxing method that I have in mind would apply equally fairly to a club with a membership of 5,000 persons and from twelve to fifteen machines and a smaller club, say, a bowling club, with 300 members. One is a city social club and the other a small local club. Despite the difference in numbers of members, each has, for a reason that I will explain in a moment, the same number of machines. The city club is open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily; regulars come in, day in and day out; and its members are playing the poker machines

for seven days a week. On the other hand, the bowling club, which operates mainly on Saturday and Sunday, has to provide the same number of machines to cope with the rush of business at week-ends.

These clubs with as few as 300 members, operating at the week-ends and possibly on Wednesday afternoons or for a couple of hours on one or two nights a week, when they are poorly attended because mostly they are working men's clubs, will pay exactly the same tax for their machines as will the larger clubs with 5,000 members and the same number of machines. The method of application of this tax that has been announced is wrong. It is little use saying that something is wrong without suggesting an alternative, and this is my solution to the problem: the amount of revenue estimated to be derived from this form of taxation is £600,000 or £800,000—the figure does not matter. If the total membership of non-proprietary clubs in this State were ascertained and all clubs were levied in proportion to their membership sums that would return the total tax, a more satisfactory result would be achieved. If a club had 300 members and £1 *per capita* of club membership was fixed as the figure for the State, that club would pay £300 a year. A club with 5,000 members would pay £5,000 a year. The big clubs could afford such sums because they enjoy financial stability. I understand that one large club makes something like £92,000 a year profit out of poker machines, yet it will, under the present proposal, pay only the same amount of tax as the Marrickville Bowling Club.

The Hon. A. D. BRIDGES: Would the hon. member's method of assessing the tax have no regard to whether the machine is a 6d. one or a 2s. one?

The Hon. D. COCHRANE: A certain tax is proposed for the 6d. machine and another for the 1s. machine and yet another for the 2s. machine.

The Hon. A. D. BRIDGES: The hon. member's suggestion is that membership alone would determine the tax, regardless of the coin placed in the machine?

Colonel the Hon. H. J. R. CLAYTON: That would lead to difficulties.

The Hon. D. COCHRANE: Why should it? A club with 300 members would be taxed on a membership basis; a club with 3,000 members would be taxed proportionately more.

The Hon. A. D. BRIDGES: Would there be a different rate for machines of different denominations?

The Hon. D. COCHRANE: No. The tax should be levied, not on the machines, but on the number of members. It would be a simple matter to examine the club register at the end of each year to ascertain the number of financial members and levy the tax accordingly.

The Hon. A. D. BRIDGES: It would make things easier for the Auditor-General.

The Hon. D. COCHRANE: Yes. It would be easier for everyone concerned, especially the smaller clubs, which do their rush business on Saturday afternoons. They have batteries of machines to accommodate their members, but under the present proposal they will not be able to afford to keep them all. They will have to dispose of some machines, which will not only inconvenience members but also reduce club revenue.

The Hon. A. D. BRIDGES: Does the hon. member suggest that a club of 3,000 members with fifteen 6d. poker machines should pay the same as a club of 3,000 members with fifteen machines of 1s. denomination?

The Hon. D. COCHRANE: The denomination of the machine is immaterial.

The Hon. A. D. BRIDGES: The larger the denomination, the greater the turnover and profit.

The Hon. D. COCHRANE: I am a member of eight clubs and my experience is that 6d. machines are more or less out of date. The sixpence has lost its value.

The Hon. A. D. BRIDGES: The Coogee club has only 6d. machines.

The Hon. D. COCHRANE: That is so. A club with only 6d. machines must be financially stable. A tax according to

membership is much more equitable than one on machines. It would permit a club where members congregate in large numbers at a given time each week to provide an adequate number of machines to meet their needs, without its having to pay as much tax as other clubs who use the same number of machines for ten hours a day on seven days a week.

The Hon. E. L. SOMMERLAD [5.15]: I am glad that the Hon. H. S. Henley dealt with the bill in a non-party spirit because I hope that, although I hold an opposite view, I shall be given credit for speaking with sincerity and conviction. I sympathise with the Government in the problem with which it was confronted. It was bound to meet criticism, whatever it did. The Government should never have been placed in the position of having to decide whether to license the machines or to ban them. It is wrong that for thirty years the law has been made to look a fool. A law on the statute book has not been enforced, and every Government in the past thirty-odd years must accept its share of blame for the present state of affairs whereby the sudden banning of all poker machines would hurt somebody. The bill must be examined on its merits. No government would want to encourage what it considered to be a social evil. The Hon. J. M. Con-cannon said that one must be realistic and accept the fact that gambling is well established in this country. I agree with him, but I am realistic enough to know that although gambling cannot be wiped out by Act of Parliament, excessive gambling is the cause of many serious crimes, as the records of the courts will show.

Gambling is also responsible for countless domestic tragedies; some have been aired in this House and in another place, but a great many never see the light of day. I know that for many people gambling has an irresistible fascination and is detrimental to them and to their dependants. Gambling is a social evil that no Government can afford to ignore. Governments have recognised the need to control it, and have enacted such legislation as the Gaming and Betting Act and the Lotteries and

Art Unions Act. Though everyone will probably concede that gambling should not be encouraged, some may suggest that the Government should at least tolerate it. I believe that a Government's solemn responsibility is actively to discourage gambling by every means in its power.

The Hon. G. B. RYGATE: Does the hon. member think that poker machines should be banned completely?

The Hon. E. L. SOMMERLAD: I admit the existence in the community of a set of circumstances that cannot be ignored. My point is that a government should not merely tolerate gambling but instead should actively discourage it. A government can do this effectively because it has power to increase or decrease the opportunities and the facilities for gambling.

The Hon. G. B. RYGATE: Would the hon. member ban poker machines from his club?

The Hon. E. L. SOMMERLAD: Yes, I would.

The Hon. G. B. RYGATE: Would he ban the playing of housie-housie in church activities?

The Hon. E. L. SOMMERLAD: Yes. I endeavour to be consistent. Already enough facilities for gambling, in the form of horse-racing, the State lottery and so on, exist in the community. I doubt the assertion of the Hon. R. A. King that the majority of people want poker machines to stay in clubs. But even if that were so, the argument that the Government should therefore give the people what they want requires a reply. Let me draw an analogy. Lord Northcliffe, the British press magnate who set out to establish the mass circulation type of newspaper, said, "I intend to give the people what they want to read rather than what they ought to read." That was the principle on which he worked and from it has arisen a type of newspaper, known as the yellow press, which caters for low public taste. In this debate some comments have been made about the press of this city. Without specifically referring to any newspaper, all hon. members will agree that one section of the press in this country brings no credit upon

that great institution and does no good to the community. A newspaper has a solemn responsibility to do more than cater for what its readers might want and merely print the news and features that will win larger circulations.

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Order! I draw the hon. member's attention to the fact that reference to newspapers must be related to matters under discussion.

The Hon. E. L. SOMMERLAD: The conclusion to be drawn from my analogy is that just as a newspaper proprietor ought to accept a responsibility that is not solely in his own interests, a government should do likewise. If it does not do so it must be likened to the man who was puffing along behind a crowd, calling out "Wait for me, I am your leader." Our need to-day above everything else is for the highest standards of leadership and we should demand this from the Government, the press, the church, the industrial movement and from business.

The Government has a higher interest to serve than bowing to the wishes of the people or to sectional interests. Of course, pressure has been brought to bear on the Government by clubs that want this legislation. The Government owes a higher responsibility to the community; if community interest requires it to take action, even though that action may be unpopular in some quarters, it should not hesitate to take it. It is not in the public interest for the Government to provide further incentives to gambling and to provide additional opportunities for fools to be parted from their money and so bring hardship on their families. It has been said, and I agree with the view, that the majority know how to control their spending and gamble within their means; that only a minority abuse the opportunities afforded them to gamble on poker machines.

The Hon. A. A. ALAM: Well said! One cannot condemn the majority for the actions of a minority of 1 or 2 per cent. of the population.

The Hon. E. L. SOMMERLAD: I appreciate the interjection of the hon. member. However, is it not true also that most of

our laws are framed to cover the minority who abuse the decencies of life? Ninety per cent. of the population do not infringe the criminal law or other legislation that has been passed to cope with the minority who do not observe the decencies and whose abuse of a privilege spoils it for everyone else. A speed limit of 30 miles an hour has been proclaimed in built-up areas. Ninety per cent. of drivers control their cars safely and courteously. There is no need to introduce a regulation requiring these people to observe certain restrictions on the ground that in its absence their actions may endanger the community. Only the 10 per cent. minority have to be restricted and all others are therefore called upon to exercise self-restraint for the sake of the few. Those who are unable to control their betting instincts, have not the same degree of self-control as the majority. As a result they bring hardship on their families. These people often spend unwisely or beyond their means, and hence the majority should be called to practise self-restraint for their sake.

Another principle that I want to mention has already been referred to—a government should not profit from a social evil. If it does so it soon has a vested interest in something that is basically and morally wrong. Figures recently published have shown that the Government is earning revenue to the tune of £1,500,000 a year from a betting tax, £1,000,000 a year from totalisator tax and £4,500,000 a year from the State lottery. The Government is now introducing in respect of the use of poker machines legislation designed to return about £1,000,000 per annum. The effect of all this legislation is to give the Government an interest in gambling that it cannot afford to abandon. Its income depends so largely upon the various forms of gambling that it could not afford to jettison its interest—even if it wanted to! I was pleased to hear some hon. members say that there should be no thought of poker machines' being licensed for use in hotels. I have no doubt that the Government has no intention of doing this. However, suppose that in a year or two the Government is confronted with further financial difficulties and that it can see

The Hon. E. L. Sommerlad.]

how it may be able to obtain another couple of million pounds by licensing the use of poker machines in hotels. I am sure that it would be tempted to permit the installation of these machines in hotels to gain further revenue.

The Hon. J. M. CONCANNON: Did the hon. member say that hotels are in financial difficulties?

The Hon. E. L. SOMMERLAD: Indeed I did not. What I said was that should a government in a few years find itself in further financial difficulties it might well be tempted to turn to yet another source of additional revenue. The same might be said about legalising S.P. betting. A government, finding itself obtaining between £5,000,000 and £8,000,000 of its income from various forms of gambling may, instead of discouraging gambling because of its bad social effect, encourage it so as to boost its own revenue. This would be wrong in principle and should be avoided. The Government should not try to make money out of something that is basically wrong. It should discourage such action so that it will avoid reaching a point from which it can no longer afford to retreat. Though the Hon. R. A. King intimated that a return to the mid-Victorian, strait-laced era is not wanted and social thinking has advanced since those days, it is pertinent to remind hon. members that Great Britain and the British Commonwealth of Nations owe their strength to the inherent character of their people. There is grave danger that a gradual extension of gambling, drinking and other social evils, of which everyone now takes a much more tolerant view than in days gone by, will have its effect on individual character and eventually on national character. As a result the nation may suffer seriously. Therefore, it is the duty of any government to discourage all forms of gambling, instead of providing incentives.

The Hon. G. B. RYGATE [5.29]: I did not intend to speak in this debate, but after listening to the arguments of hon. members opposite, I came to the conclusion that most of them were actuated by a hypocritical sense of justice. I exclude the contributions of the Hon. A. D. Bridges and

the Hon. Richard Thompson. To them I offer my sincere congratulations on a clear and sincere exposition of the cause that they espouse. I must say that other hon. members opposite spoke with their tongues in their cheeks and in a hypocritical fashion. Imagine the Hon. F. M. Hewitt saying that he does not agree with the use of poker machines! He did not claim that he had taken any action in his clubs to ban them. He is willing to accept the amenities derived mainly from the proceeds of poker machines, therefore he condones the playing of these machines.

The Hon. F. M. HEWITT: I said that I would ban them.

The Hon. G. B. RYGATE: The hon. member did not say that he had taken any action to ban them in his clubs, therefore I suggest that he condones them; there is no other explanation for his attitude. He is anxious to fraternise with the members of his clubs who play these machines and to enjoy the amenities that they provide, thus condoning a moral wrong.

The Hon. F. M. HEWITT: Nonsense!

The Hon. G. B. RYGATE: If that is not hypocrisy, I do not know what is. I congratulate the Hon. H. S. Henley who expressed an opinion that—

Colonel the Hon. H. J. R. CLAYTON: Suited that of the hon. member.

The Hon. G. B. RYGATE: Not at all. I explain immediately to Colonel the Hon. H. J. R. Clayton that I am not a member of any club. If he wants to know the reason, it is that I do not think that any club should have a membership fee of more than 10s. Simply because I can pay five guineas or ten guineas, I should not have the privilege of going to a club on Sunday morning, when the hotels are closed, to drink and play poker machines, when the ordinary man in the street is denied these privileges. I am not a member of any club and hon. members cannot accuse me of being partisan in my views. The Hon. H. S. Henley made factual statements that cannot be denied, and I congratulate him for his honesty and conscientiousness. The

same cannot be said of Major the Hon. H. P. FitzSimons. He seemed to want two shillings each way; he wanted the clubs, he wanted the machines so that he, his wife and his family could enjoy the amenities provided by the clubs, but also he wanted the clubs to be deprived of a considerable portion of their revenue that they now receive from poker machines, which, for the past thirty years or more, have been unauthorised, but agreed to by Labor and non-Labor governments. Practice has made them a part of our society, and no government has taken action to prohibit them. Whether or not we like it they are a benefit to non-proprietary clubs because the money derived from them enables clubs to provide amenities, not for me, because I do not belong to a club, but to those who do.

The Hon. E. E. WARREN: Their membership fee will soon be down to 10s., and then the hon. member can become a member.

The Hon. G. B. RYGATE: I hope the day will soon come when hon. members opposite and the financial magnates they represent will appreciate that the "slave", the man in the street, is as much an integral a part of the community as they are. Poker machines have become legal by practice extending over thirty years. If one says that they have not, one might just as well say that the British Commonwealth of Nations has no right to interfere in the Suez Canal dispute. Precedent has established that the canal is an international waterway. Precedent has established also that poker machines are accepted. For goodness sake put a stop to the crying, carping criticism and the hypocrisy that has been heard from hon. members opposite. They all belong to clubs, in which poker machines are played.

Colonel the Hon. H. J. R. CLAYTON: How does the hon. member know that I belong to a club in which they are played?

The Hon. G. B. RYGATE: I exclude the hon. member. If poker machines are morally wrong, those hon. members who belong to clubs should show that they are

moralists of the highest degree by objecting to the use of machines in their clubs. Then, and only then, will I support their arguments.

The Hon. A. E. ARMSTRONG [5.37]: I have listened to the debate with much interest. It has been conducted on a keen, non-party level, and hon. members on both sides of the House have learnt quite a lot about each other. Many and varied opinions have been expressed, and the House is richer for having heard them. Every hon. member who speaks on this measure should make his own position clear, and I intend to do so. I am not very interested in gambling, but I put a few shillings in poker machines, and I occasionally bet a few pounds on the horses, but I should not be worried if I did not gamble. However, many members of the community do wish to indulge in gambling, and they have a perfect right to do so. They are at liberty to do as they like with their own money, and the Government should not try to control them any more than is necessary. They should be allowed to put as much of their own money as they wish into poker machines and on the horses. However, hon. members must respect the views of other citizens. As many hon. members have done, I congratulate the Hon. A. D. Bridges and the Hon. Richard Thompson upon their excellent speeches. They advanced the views of a responsible and important section of the community. All hon. members will agree that they expressed their views with sincerity and clarity.

I congratulate also the Attorney-General upon his second-reading speech. Unfortunately, I was not in the Chamber when he made it, but I have since read it. It was clear-cut and to the point. If I understand him aright, he said that he was not particularly interested in debating the moral issues of the bill, and that he would not cross swords with those hon. members who did discuss them. I agree whole-heartedly with his attitude. Hon. members have heard sufficient during this debate to make them realise that if the moral issues of the bill are to be debated we will be here for weeks, because all hon. members have different views, to which they are entitled, on that aspect of this debate.

The Government regards this as a money-raising measure. It needs finance urgently and must raise more taxation so that it can meet its obligations. We should not be too hard on the United Licensed Victuallers' Association; it brought this matter into the light of day at a time most propitious for the Government. If the United Licensed Victuallers' Association had not raised the matter the Government might have found it awkward, in view of the opinions expressed by the Hon. Richard Thompson and the Hon. A. D. Bridges, to have brought this matter into the open. Therefore, it should be thankful to the United Licensed Victuallers' Association. Some hon. members have spoken highly of clubs; in many instances justifiably. However, I travel this State widely but have never been able to get accommodation at a country club. I am not holding a brief for badly-run country hotels but if drinking in clubs is encouraged, especially in country towns, it will be found that accommodation instead of improving will deteriorate.

The Hon. A. A. ALAM: The clubs should have bedrooms.

The Hon. A. E. ARMSTRONG: If the Government intends to encourage clubs to undercut the price of beer it must see that adequate accommodation is provided for the travelling public. On the other hand I support clubs strongly and congratulate them on the fine amenities that they have made available to their members. I know of some clubs that commenced operation in a tin shed but with the aid of poker machines are rapidly graduating beyond that stage. It should be remembered by each club official and member that his club was formed to cater for the cultural, social and athletic life of the community and not as a gambling and drinking rendezvous.

Two years ago some other persons and I contributed money to enable a workers' club to be opened at Goulburn. It started modestly, in a small hall, and is now ready to acquire new premises. At first there was some trouble with the licensing authorities as a bar had not been provided, but that difficulty was overcome after a talk to the police who usually are most helpful. I

should now like to make two points in relation to this measure. I do not think either of them has yet been mentioned by hon. members. I do not want to be accused of speaking with my tongue in my cheek because I mean what I am about to say. This bill is completely undemocratic. Why should the man in the street be prevented from playing poker machines? Why should the Hon. H. S. Henley luxuriate in the Manly Bowling Club while the ordinary shearer at Wilcannia has to travel 50 miles to play a poker machine? If these machines are to be legalised, and we are considering not moral issues but merely a source of fund raising, they should be available to all. If they are so made available the Government should strike a much higher rate of tax on the use of poker machines than it proposes to levy on those used in non-proprietary clubs.

Machines could be installed in such places as the Lottery Office and could be used by government departments to help balance the budget. The Commissioner for Railways, I am sure, would be happy to instal them on railway platforms. I understand that trains run late occasionally. If so, these machines would serve a twofold purpose; while the travellers were waiting for the train to arrive they could be improving the government revenue by playing poker machines. The Government should consider these submissions seriously. The Government is not concerned with the rights and wrongs of the situation but only with the possibilities of increasing badly-needed revenue. The bill should prove a wider cover for these "budget balancers" as we will soon be calling them. I fail to see any difference between raising £5,000 and £5,000,000; the moral issue is the same. A few citizens may not approve of these machines and restrain themselves from playing them but no doubt they will salve their consciences with the amenities provided by them. The people of New South Wales would be able to travel in better railway carriages and enjoy magnificent hospitals through the wider use of poker machines. The Government should follow the glorious lead that has been set by the clubs and so benefit both its revenue and the general public.

The Hon. C. J. CAHILL [5.47]: A point has been overlooked in the discussion on this bill. Hon. members have been told that the playing of poker machine is an established practice and appreciate the difficulty with which the Government is faced. Few people have given thought to the underlying cause for the introduction of this bill. It can be traced to the pressure groups which, in their desire to popularise the clubs for their own good, overstepped the mark. Had the clubs not desired to cripple hotels the present situation would not have arisen. If my information is correct, what happened is this: in some of the large industrial areas rather slick "operators" became associated with clubs and to popularise their sales and improve their jobs they decided that it would be good policy, using poker machines as a backstop, to cut liquor prices so that drinkers would be deceived into the belief that there was some advantage to be gained by patronising one drinking place rather than another. On a Saturday night in clubs throughout the country, members bring along their wives and friends to enjoy a social evening together. They are encouraged to do so by the fact that beer will be 1d. or 1½d. a glass cheaper than it is in the nearby hotel; but they forget that at the end of the evening, far from saving money, they have spent £2 or £3 on the poker machine.

The Hon. R. S. JACKSON: They have enough left to buy headache powders next day.

The Hon. C. J. CAHILL: They can buy those at the club also. Reference has been made to club profits. I know of a club in a poor, working class area that has been in operation for only ten months. It has 1,000 members and already its poker machine profit is £29,000! The matter has attracted the attention of responsible ministers of religion and I have a newspaper statement by a reputable local minister who asks how many pairs of children's shoes and trousers have not been purchased because £29,000 has been spent on the poker machines. On any Sunday, which is the big day, one may see a line of parked cars extending 50 yards on either side of the entrance to that club.

I understand that a prominent club on the western line with a membership of less than 2,000 records an annual profit from its poker machines of £30,000. The members of that club are mainly railway workers.

I see no danger in the sporting clubs to which the Hon. H. S. Henley has referred. Any person who joins such an organisation knows that he has to buy his tennis racquet, set of bowls, golf clubs or whatever equipment is necessary, and his interest is in playing sport. The danger is in the mushroom clubs which cater for persons who were mere schoolboys and schoolgirls at the end of World War II. An examination of the activities of these clubs would disclose many examples of how young people on holidays in pleasure resorts have spent their fortnight's pay in two or three days on the poker machines and have had to curtail their holidays and return to work. Unfortunately poker machines are big business in New South Wales. Men travel throughout the State selling them to clubs and other organisations. I suppose that in the Rotary Club, of which I am a proud member, a new classification of poker machine manufacturer and distributor will have to be opened. To-day, charities find difficulty in raising money by bazaars and other old-fashioned methods. The modern idea is a barbecue, which people attend at dusk on a summer's evening and grill their steak over an open fire. These days the poker machine bobs up at barbecues and even the organisers of tennis parties borrow machines for the occasion.

I admit the machines have been allowed to operate for almost forty years but I regret that no proper control is exercised over them. I recall a public servant who belonged to the same club as I did attending a committee meeting and urging that the club's poker machines should be abolished because the younger members of the club were likely to lose money on them. The rest of the committee rejected his suggestion! I appreciate the difficulties confronting the Government in dealing with this matter. I agree with the Hon. A. E. Armstrong that, setting aside moral considerations, the Government should get as much money as possible from poker

machines. A man should not have to pay money to lose money. The Government should own all poker machines, which should be installed on railway stations and even in the Parliamentary Refreshment Room. The profits from the machines would then come to the State. I emphasise the danger in those clubs that I have termed mushroom clubs. When I was a child the local billiard saloon was not a very salubrious place. The type of person who used to operate those saloons has found his way to-day into these mushroom clubs. The respectable and honourable president of one club was so dissatisfied with the quality of the staff employed by the club that he took the poker machines home to his place in a wheelbarrow for safe custody.

The Hon. R. S. JACKSON: That is fantastic.

The Hon. C. J. CAHILL: It may be, but it is true. The incoming president did not do this and later, to avoid a scandal, he put in £400 of his own money to club funds. One of the club employees had been mixing his own money with the profits from the poker machine. The members of another club tell me that their secretary always counts the money from the poker machines when the door to his room is closed. I have doubts that all money put into poker machines by club members is properly accounted for. The bill provides no safeguards against the risk of money being stolen from these machines. The measure should provide that all poker machines are owned and supervised by the Government. Everyone would then be better off.

The Hon. R. S. JACKSON [5.59]: I should not have spoken in the debate but for the remarks of the Hon. C. J. Cahill, who has criticised mushroom clubs. What are they but workers' clubs? I am astounded to hear a Labor man speak in such disparaging terms of these clubs. I belong to a bowling club, 90 per cent. of whose members are workers living in a working class area. They enjoy the amenities provided by their club, and it is unfortunate if its existence interferes with business activities in the backblocks of the State.

The Hon. C. J. Cahill.]

If people, because of their gambling activities, cannot afford to buy pills or clothes that is their lookout. No one asks men to go into clubs and play poker machines. If someone wants to play tennis, bowls or ping-pong at a club, he is entitled to do so; he is not asked to play a poker machine. It is hypocritical and just so much rot to say that legalising the use of poker machines in clubs will be detrimental to those who visit their premises. No one demands that people who go to Randwick racecourse shall bet on the races. The same may be said of people who attend dog meetings and trotting carnivals. If they want to watch sport for sport's sake they are just as entitled to attend as the individual who goes along to bet on the results of the races. I have heard of many owners of racehorses who do not bet on the races in which their horses are entered.

Do hon. members say that because someone goes to a racecourse and loses his week's wages betting on the results of the races, everyone may not be able to afford pills or other necessities? Many people have been declared bankrupt as a result of their legal betting on racecourses. I shall not weary the House with all my views on this matter. Hon. members should realise that gambling is a national characteristic of Australians. I have known men to bet on which of two flies would take off first from a wall. Most Australians will gamble on anything. During wars they have gambled with their lives as well as at two-up. If poker machines enable clubs to improve their service to an extent that causes the breweries or other vested interests to complain that people are receiving in clubs a better service than is provided in hotels, why should we worry? Hon. members heard the Hon. F. M. Hewitt a moment ago say that most clubs do not provide accommodation for their members. I suggest that he should visit the New South Wales Leagues' Club, where accommodation is provided.

The Hon. F. M. HEWITT: That club would not give anyone a bed.

The Hon. R. S. JACKSON: It has beds for its members. Some hon. members who represent country districts are able to get accommodation at this "club"; and there are no poker machines here! I am so bold as to say that, if poker machines were introduced into this building, many of those who have voiced opposition to this measure would put 2s. into a machine on the sly. I am sure that not too many hon. members who have opposed this measure would not put money into a poker machine if one were placed near the bar or in the billiard room. I can almost hear one of them saying, "I've seen John Brown put a fiver in that machine; I'll give 2s. a go to see if I can strike the jackpot". All reasonable hon. members know that these machines should be legalised, for they have been in use for many years. I can see present a couple of my colleagues with whom I have dined at the Royal Automobile Club. I do not recall their voicing opposition to poker machines; nor do I recall any other hon. member making a fuss about poker machines being used in that club.

The Hon. F. M. HEWITT: The hon. member would not know about it.

The Hon. R. S. JACKSON: Yes, I would; I have been in there. I did not hear anyone object to the machines until the brewers took up the matter. When brewery interests are concerned about anything, my concern disappears. Everyone in the community recalls the beer swill that was common prior to the introduction of legislation that extended the hours of drinking to 10 p.m. It was a disgrace to see a man forcing his way into a pub, emerging later with a middy or a schooner in each hand. Men were required to do this after a hard day's work—something that many members of this Chamber have never done! Now that these men have clubs in which they can drink comfortably on the same level as their bosses and others in affluent circumstances, complaints are made about poker machines. This has been done because these machines have been responsible for improving the services provided by clubs. I commend the Government for

having introduced this bill. I hope that hon. members will not hear too many more hypocritical statements about it before it becomes law.

The Hon. E. E. WARREN [6.6]: I did not intend to speak in this debate, but having heard the contributions of the Hon. G. B. Rygate and the Hon. R. S. Jackson, I felt that I should like to tell hon. members why I oppose this measure, which is designed to legalise the use of poker machines in non-proprietary clubs. I was rather surprised at the smooth passage that the bill had in another place. The remarks of hon. members on this side of the Chamber have not been hypocritical. For an hon. member to oppose a measure does not mean that he is a hypocrite. If someone said to me, "Do you play poker machines?" I should reply, "Yes, I played one to-day." However, it is not proper to tax gambling and lend support to extending a social evil. The Government was on a sticky pitch with its policy on poker machines. I should have been rather pleased had the Government introduced legislation to legalise the use of these machines for a certain period, but had not introduced a tax on their use. The taxpayers should bear any burden that may flow from this legislation.

I have said before, and I repeat, that this is a House of review. At times reference is made to an "Opposition" in this Chamber. I do not want to be included in that category. The Hon. G. B. Rygate referred to some remarks of the Hon. F. M. Hewitt. How does the Hon. G. B. Rygate know that the Hon. F. M. Hewitt has not objected to poker machines? Recently I attended a general meeting of one of the large sporting clubs of this city. I told those present that I opposed increasing the number of poker machines in the club and that the club's budget should be balanced not merely from the proceeds of the machines. I have heard of a club on the South Coast that has a yearly income of about £90,000 from its poker machines. Several clubs in this city have as few as five 2s. machines and two 1s. machines and boast that in six months they have obtained more than £40,000 from them. At the

general meeting of a club to which I belong I advised the committee that I would support the legalising of poker machines, provided no tax were imposed on their use. It is all very well for some people to say that these machines should help to support the clubs, but the point may well be reached where a club, for its income, will depend completely on the proceeds from poker machines.

Hon. members have asked what the difference is between poker machines and the Australian "national game" of two-up. The answer is simple. Two-up is a game of skill, but no one would assert that playing a poker machine requires skill. Any hon. member who was present, as I was, after the evacuation of Gallipoli would have seen the biggest two-up schools that have ever been conducted.

The Hon. C. A. DALTON: Does the hon. member call two-up a game of skill?

The Hon. E. E. WARREN: Yes. If the hon. member could toss heads seven times, he would admit that it requires skill—and that is done many times. I am not speaking of double-headed pennies, either. The Government should be wary about the method it adopts for controlling poker machines. In Las Vegas and Reno, which I have visited, poker machines have got out of bounds. They can be played in the toilets, in doctors' reception rooms, and in fruit and butchers' shops. Care must be taken to protect our young people. If machines are to be allowed in clubs they should be placed out of reach of players under the age of 21. The Government should consider restricting the use of the machines to this extent.

I extend to the Government the advice that I gave to the sporting body that I have mentioned; it should avoid becoming dependent on poker machines. The statement of the Hon. H. S. Henley that poker machines pay a fixed percentage of prizes is all very well, but I have seen at a charitable function a poker machine on which there was no chance of striking the jackpot. Of course, it had been adjusted accordingly. I agree with the Hon. H. S. Henley that the

machines cannot be adjusted by club officials, but they can be "rigged" by the technicians from the factory. No matter what the denomination of the machine, if a club wants it to pay more prizes, all it has to do is take out a "9" and substitute a jack; if it wants the machine to pay fewer prizes, the reverse procedure can be adopted. I would support the bill if the licence tax were removed. It is not good for any Government to be dependent upon revenue from gambling machines.

The Hon. C. E. BEGG [6.15]: A number of hon. members who have spoken in this debate have regarded it as closely connected with moral principles, and it is rather surprising that on the subject of morals the views of the members of this Chamber should be so diametrically opposed. This illustrates that morals are a personal matter and vary according to the individual. Therefore, it would be unwise to decide the merits of this type of measure purely on the test of morality. I do not want my remarks to be taken as preaching or moralising; nor do I want hon. members to think I am hypocritical and that I would not have a game of two-up with the boys or put a couple of shillings in a poker machine occasionally. I have done both these things. I admit that I have enjoyed a game of two-up. It is the fairest gambling game that we Australians play. I mention this not as a confession but because I do not want to be regarded as a hypocrite.

A far wider principle is involved in this debate: whether this much-lauded characteristic of Australians, that we are born gamblers, should be encouraged by the Government. I should have thought that, instead of saying, "We are a wonderful gambling race", we ought in all humility to shut up about it. It is nothing to be proud of. Australians spend £65 2s. a head of population per annum on gambling. In the United Kingdom, in Australian currency, the figure is £13 8s. Do hon. members think that the wealth and the might of England and the beauty of the English way of life have been built up by a race of gamblers? Do they think that we in this country can

afford to continue having more lotteries each day, when not one person who is engaged in gambling in any of its forms contributes one jot to the benefit of the community.

The Hon. J. A. WEIR: Does not horse-racing and the breeding of horses?

The Hon. C. E. BEGG: The breeding of horses does not improve this country one scrap. It is rot to say that it does.

The Hon. J. A. WEIR: What about the breeding of thoroughbreds?

The Hon. C. E. BEGG: I have heard that argument before. Some members of the Country party who are interested in racing say that it improves the breeding of horses, but what are horses used for except to feed to the lions at the zoo and to round up stock? A thoroughbred is not needed to round up sheep. Last week-end I was riding a little shaggy-back pony to round up stock; I had no need for an Ajax or a Bernborough. To suggest that the ordinary type of horse that is used in the country is a derivative of thoroughbred stock is so much eyewash.

The Hon. G. B. RYGADE: That is not so. Thoroughbreds are used.

The Hon. C. E. BEGG: I spent my youth on a large property in north-western New South Wales and rode all types of horse from ponies to bush brumbies. I used to round up stock in all types of country, and I have never yet seen a racehorse used for that purpose. This argument has been trotted out time and again, but it cuts no ice with me, and it never will convince me. The day of the racehorse has gone. I am charged with the responsibility of bringing up a young family; I do not want to be hypocritical or prudish, but I certainly will not encourage them to follow race-horses. I have seen in the law courts too much wretchedness and unhappiness that have resulted from racing and other forms of gambling. I am not moralising; I am stating a fact. Are we proud that Australians spend £65 per annum *per capita* on gambling as opposed to the staunch English people's £A13?

I enter this debate to point out that some people in the community think the responsibility of government is not to encourage gambling but to tell Australians it is about time they stopped spending millions of pounds and millions of man-hours a year on this form of entertainment. The responsibility of government, at all events in Liberal philosophy, is to create an environment in which people can grow happy and prosperous. Such an environment will never be created by the introduction of more and more gambling facilities. Easy money has no virtue; I have never found any myself. I have worked hard for any money I have got, and most people who get anywhere in this life achieve their goal not by gambling but by hard work. When the Government tells the community it is not interested in conducting more lotteries and vying with Tasmania, an advance will have been made.

As I see this measure, it is the thin edge of the wedge. Poker machines will be legalised in clubs. Originally one lottery was drawn every fortnight but to-day, as someone boasted, there are two a day. I venture to say that after legalising poker machines in non-proprietary clubs, with a little encouragement and a little more tax coming to the Government to help balance the budget, the gates will be thrown open in ten years' time. I am expressing a personal view. I do not speak in any sense of hypocrisy or smugness but I say that we cannot afford to go on day after day making Australians known throughout the world as a race of gamblers.

West Germany is using its resources, time and energy to national benefit; the people are not spending their time breeding racehorses, walking greyhound dogs around the streets or investing in lotteries. Although the Germans are a conservative, hard-working people, I hold no brief for them because my father was killed in the first world war, but I admire their courage and the way they are rebuilding their country. One would be living in a fool's paradise who boasted of "playing" with the national economy.

The Hon. C. E. Begg.]

The Hon. E. C. O'DEA: What a lovely place this would be if anyone heeded the hon. member.

The Hon. C. E. BEGG: Does the Hon. E. C. O'Dea consider that the only forms of culture, pleasure and entertainment are to be found in playing poker machines?

The Hon. H. D. AHERN [6.25]: Having listened to the debate, I should like to contribute one or two points not previously raised in connection with this bill as a taxation measure. I am opposed to the principle of the measure. I am not at all concerned about the operation of poker machines. I do not believe governments are solely responsible for morals, as some hon. members said they should be. Governments have other responsibilities. My simple submission, therefore, is that this legislation is a tax on co-operative activity. It has been argued that clubs are places where people associate for advantages gained from joint action, and therefore, this bill imposes a tax on a co-operative effort. I shall forgo some of my objections to the legislation if the Minister assures the House that co-operatives will be taxed. I object to the principle of obtaining revenue by imposing a tax on gambling. There is no real difference between a tax on gambling on a racehorse and a tax on working a poker machine. Both are undesirable ways of getting money to run a country. The Government should levy State income tax and take responsibility for collecting the money it spends.

Debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.28 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 5 September, 1956.

Questions without Notice—The Budget (Third Day's Debate)—Adjournment (Dust Nuisance: Drummoyne Electorate).

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at 2.30 p.m.

The opening Prayer was read.