

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 18 February, 1982

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

Mr Speaker offered the Prayer.

PETITIONS

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

Health Services, Wagga Wagga

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

That we support your efforts to improve and strengthen health care delivery to our community. We therefore wish to register our firm opposition to proposals contained in the ministerial task force report dated 31st December, 1981, as follows:

- (1) The proposals to close the Riverina regional office of the Health Commission in Wagga Wagga and the subsequent loss of forty-seven positions.
- (2) The apparent attempt to cut costs regardless of the effect on staff and the health services to the people of Wagga Wagga and Riverina region.
- (3) The illogical recommendation to relocate the administration of the regional health care services outside the Riverina region.

We therefore request that the following steps be taken:

- (1) The complete rejection of any proposal to move the Riverina regional offices of the Health Commission away from Wagga Wagga to another centre.
- (2) The examination of alternative ways of cutting costs with due regard to the community's needs for health service delivery and the social and economic well-being of Health Commission staff.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray that your honourable House will take those measures required to ensure that the Riverina regional office of the Health Commission remain in Wagga Wagga in order that the high standard of health care to Riverina regional communities is maintained.

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

Petition, lodged by Mr Schipp, received.

Road Courtesy

The Petition of certain concerned citizens of New South Wales, respectfully sheweth:

That New South Wales drivers are far too aggressive and show a lack of courtesy and patience. These bad characteristics contribute significantly to the shocking road toll.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray that the Government design and implement a long-term advertising campaign to educate the driving public on road manners and that questions on road courtesy be made compulsory for all licence tests.

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

Petition, lodged by Mr Smith, received.

Homosexual Laws

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

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

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

We therefore request that the following steps be taken:

- (1) The complete rejection of Mr Petersen's private member's bill to legalize sodomy (buggery) which would allow the legal promotion of this activity and public solicitation to take part in the unhealthy, unnatural, abnormal and immoral act of sodomy.
- (2) The establishment of a special department within the New South Wales Health Commission to:
 - (a) develop humane methods of helping persons to overcome or deal with homosexual tendencies through counselling, psychological and medical assistance, and
 - (b) conduct a vigorous campaign to combat the serious venereal disease epidemic particularly amongst practising male homosexuals (i.e., 73 per cent of all current venereal disease cases are homosexually transmitted).

- (3) The prohibition of any films, materials, books, such as “Young, Gay and Proud” or “Homosexual Kits” in State schools, which undermine the family and marriage by falsely presenting homosexual behaviour as a harmless valid alternative lifestyle and so divide our society in every public area of life into heterosexual and homosexual activity on the false basis of equality.

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

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

Petition, lodged by Mr Cameron on behalf of Mr Pickard, received.

Mater Misericordiae Hospital, Waratah

The Petition of the citizens of Newcastle and the Hunter Valley in New South Wales respectfully sheweth:

That the action of the State Government in its failure to fulfil a promise to build NEWMED 11 clinical science building at the Mater hospital, Waratah, which would have contained a sophisticated pathology department, a vital adjunct to the oncology cancer clinic, threatens the establishment of the promised cancer unit.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray that your honourable House:

- (1) will reconsider the decision to abandon the building of NEWMED 11 to contain the pathology department; and
- (2) include the building of the oncology cancer clinic in any further development at the Mater hospital, Waratah.

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

Petition, lodged by Mr Fisher, received.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Second Report

Mr Egan, as Chairman, brought up the Second Report, during the currency of the Forty-seventh Parliament, of the Public Accounts Committee.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Mr DOWD: My question without notice is addressed to the Premier and Minister for Mineral Resources. Since the management audit report of January 1977 has any further report been prepared showing the projected demand and capacity of the New South Wales electricity system? If not, why not? As the 1977 report does little more than establish the awareness of the Government in 1977 of the likelihood that the present power crisis would occur, will the Premier table the 1977 report so that the public and members of the Parliament may understand the present state of the electricity grid? If not, will the Premier inform the House of the Government's reason for not tabling the report?

Mr WRAN: I am not in a position to answer the first part of the question. I shall refer it and the second part of the question to the Minister for Energy in another place.

TRADE APPRENTICESHIPS FOR WOMEN

Mr NEILLY: I direct a question without notice to the Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Technology. Has the State Government been engaged in a campaign to encourage young women to take up apprenticeships in trades that previously were regarded as the domain of young men? If so, will the Minister inform the House of the success of its campaign?

Mr HILLS: I thank the honourable member for this question on a matter of considerable significance. Though the tremendous success of the apprenticeship campaign in this State has greatly contributed to providing opportunities for young men, until recently young women have grasped somewhat slowly similar opportunities available to them through apprenticeship. I am glad to announce that distinct changes have occurred. For example, by the end of January this year, with five more months to go to the end of the financial year, already the apprenticeship intake for young women has increased enormously, to 250 compared with 150 for all of last year and only 59 in 1977-78. The figures exclude hairdressing and other professions that are regarded as among the avocations often sought by young women.

It is interesting to note that women are now entering trades in which skilled people are in the greatest demand, that is, the metal, electrical and building trades. As at the end of January this year there were 50 female apprentices in the metal trades, a considerable increase on the 7 apprentices taken on in 1977-78. Last year there were 26. A similar picture is revealed in the electrical trades, with 52 young women being indentured so far this year, compared with 22 last year and only one in 1977-78. In the building industry the intake of women by the end of January was 61, compared with 35 last year and only one in 1977-78. Of the number for this year, 32 are in drafting, but several are in carpentry and joinery and in plumbing.

In addition to the intake of 250 women apprentices, I am pleased to report increases in the number of women apprentices in other trades, including that of *cordon bleu* chef. Although it is generally accepted that women should be cooks in the home, men have dominated as professional chefs. That situation is changing. In 1977-78, 35 women were undertaking apprenticeships as chefs. Today there are 91. Honourable members will recall that last year the apprentice of the year was Miss Monique de Vries, an apprentice chef at the Hilton hotel.

The success of the women-in-trades campaign is due to the Government's concentration of it in areas where there are shortages of male school leaver applicants and in places with large numbers of young unemployed women. In those areas the Government has taken its campaign into the school classroom. The local news media in many parts of the State, particularly the Hunter Valley, have been particularly public spirited in giving free time and space in the local press. In the Hunter Valley the Government has had magnificent co-operation from all the media—television, radio and press.

STATE FINANCES

Mr PUNCH: My question without notice is directed to the Treasurer. In view of the Premier's announcement that an urgent review of government operations is to take place only three months after the introduction of the Budget, will the Treasurer

inform the people of New South Wales of the seriousness of the State's financial position? Will he assure the House that any reductions in government operations will be carried out in a responsible manner and will not lead to similar catastrophic results as did the reduction of maintenance staff at Liddell power station last year?

Mr BOOTH: I point out to the Leader of the Country Party that the power industry will be exempt from the effects of the staff freeze announced last night. The staff freeze is in line with the financial policies that the Government has adopted since it came to office. Stated simply, the Government undertook to establish and maintain sound financial management. It has succeeded, and the Government is happy to put its record on the table. It is nonsense to refer to the Budget for this financial year as a complete sham. The Government took some tough measures to produce a near balanced Budget. It was determined to do everything possible to hold the line.

I shall not repeat what has been said about the cuts imposed by the Fraser Government and the way the new federalism document was torn to shreds. I remind honourable members of the miserly 9 per cent growth in the State's tax share this year. Last May the Commonwealth abandoned the personal income tax sharing arrangement, which meant an effective cut of 1.8 per cent in the share of personal income tax to the States, a reduction of more than \$100 million to this State alone. This year the Commonwealth Government cut the basic tax share entitlement to only 9 per cent. Compare that with the Commonwealth Budget forecast that inflation will rise by 10.75 per cent.

The Fraser Government has continued its discrimination against New South Wales by refusing to implement the recommendation of the Grants Commission. New South Wales received \$24.5 million instead of \$116 million, which it would have received had the new relativities formulated by the commission been adopted. The Commonwealth Government repudiated the hospital cost sharing arrangements, and that action cost New South Wales a further \$100 million this year. It severely cut this State's specific purposes grants, especially in regard to welfare housing. The reduction in absolute terms was approximately 8.5 per cent. Government and semi-government loan allocations have been pegged at last year's level, a cut in real terms of at least 10.5 per cent. Commonwealth payments to this State in 1981-82 will increase by only 6.3 per cent, almost 5 per cent below the predicted inflation rate. The Commonwealth Government has handed out a lot of bitter pills for the States to swallow. Despite these changes, the New South Wales Government was able to produce a near balanced budget.

Mr Dowd: It was a fraud.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BOOTH: At the last Premiers' Conference the Premier of this State warned what would follow the abandonment of wage indexation. His predictions have proved to be spot on. He warned the Commonwealth Government what would happen to the States. Every sector of the economy has been hard hit by wage increases and the State's Budget was foremost among those affected.

Mr Punch: Sweetheart deals.

Mr BOOTH: All of the increases came through the courts. Nurses, police, prison officers, engineers, tradesmen, and public servants generally have received increases well in excess of those forecast when the Budget was framed. Under the new tax sharing arrangement New South Wales is given no increase to help meet wage increases that occur during the budget year. The Commonwealth Government's shocking handling of the economy has affected stamp duty revenue to this State.

For some months the Government has been monitoring the position closely and has decided that stronger action will have to be taken to maintain the integrity of the Budget. Measures being taken are designed to keep the Budget on course. The Government will do whatever is necessary to maintain its record of sound financial management.

BUILDING INDUSTRY

Mr KNOWLES: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Roads. Is he aware of fraudulent approaches being made to licensed builders to have their names included in a register of preferred builders supposedly being compiled by the Builders Licensing Board for display in local council offices? If so, what action is being taken on the matter?

Mr WHELAN: I thank the honourable member for his question. This week officers from the Builders Licensing Board had their attention drawn to approaches being made to licensed builders by a person or persons—who claimed to be from the Builders Licensing Board—regarding the register to which the honourable member has referred. At this early stage the board has been unable to determine exactly how widespread this practice is. However, the Master Builders Association, which raised the issue following complaints from members of the Builders Licensing Board, is working closely with Builders Licensing Board officers in an endeavour to discover who is responsible.

The approaches referred to in the honourable member's question are being made by telephone. I am advised that the caller introduces himself as Ron Close or Brian Page from the Builders Licensing Board. The caller then informs the builder that the board is compiling a register of preferred builders and that because of his outstanding building record his name will be included on the register on payment of a fee. The fee quoted ranges between \$135 and \$150. I wish to make it clear that no such register is or will be compiled by the Builders Licensing Board. I warn builders that any such scheme is a fraud designed to line the pockets of the culprits involved. The matter has been reported to the police. I strongly urge any person who has any information or has received a telephone call from the alleged Mr Ron Close or Mr Brian Page to contact the police fraud squad immediately.

HOME LOANS

Mr DURICK: I direct my question to the Minister for Housing, Minister for Co-operative Societies and Minister Assisting the Premier. Has the Minister's attention been drawn to difficulties experienced by young people who have made arrangements with banks to take out first mortgage loans and subsequently approached the State Bank with the intention of taking advantage of the Government's low interest second mortgage scheme? Have some young borrowers returned to the bank where the arrangement has been made for the first mortgage loan, and learned that that loan was available only on condition that they took out a personal loan at an interest rate of 19 per cent or 20 per cent? Will the Minister agree that this virtually amounts to a sabotage of the Government's plan?

Mr SHEAHAN: The type of situation referred to by the honourable member for Lakemba has been drawn to my attention by a number of members. Also, complaints have been made by the State Bank regarding this practice. I shall take this opportunity to put the scheme in perspective. The Government sought to implement the supplementary home loan finance scheme without draining the housing budget and

the limited funds allocated for direct housing assistance. The Government made available funds to be used for the deposit gap to meet the financial demands in the community at affordable rates.

A number of reasons have been advanced for the slow takeoff of the scheme. It is significant that most of the applications for this type of assistance are from persons arranging housing finance with co-operative housing societies at concessional rates of interest. These applicants have been referred by the co-operative housing societies to the State Bank for top-up finance of a limited type to help them achieve their home ownership ambitions. This has meant that the limited amount of money available to those co-operative housing societies has spread more widely than would otherwise be the case. The Government was hoping that the banks and the permanent building societies would take the same attitude of spreading more widely the dwindling funds available for home finance by encouraging customers to seek anything up to the maximum amount available under the supplementary home finance scheme.

Recently I was interviewed about the slow take-off of this scheme and was greeted with the spectacle of officials of the banks' pressure group deriding the scheme as a political gimmick, a lot of nonsense and not worth a cracker—as the honourable member for Northcott said. However, as the honourable member for Lakemba suggested in his question, it seems not so much through ignorance on the part of banks and some permanent building societies that customers are not taking advantage of this finance, but simply deliberate sabotage.

I appeal to any citizens who have been told that the availability of their first mortgage finance is conditional upon them not using the Government's second mortgage scheme, to bring their complaints to the attention of the Government. They will be investigated. The Government does not want people to face the problem recounted by the honourable member for Lakemba, so that they are compelled to take a second mortgage from the bank or from some lending institution that is preferred by that particular bank or building society. They should be permitted to take it from the State Bank if they wish to do so. The purpose of the implementation of the scheme was not so that the State Bank could poach customers by encouraging them to take advantage of the second mortgage scheme even though they had obtained their first mortgage finance from another lending institution. At the time it was established, banks and building societies were assured repeatedly that that was not the intent of the scheme. It is important that banks and building societies should not force borrowers to take all their financial requirements from one source, or from another preferred source. That would reduce the number of available loans.

The Government's housing finance topping-up scheme is intended to enable more people to obtain housing loans, no matter what may be the source of the initial first mortgage. It is to be hoped that the attitudes adopted by banks and building societies to the obtaining of second mortgage finance by borrowers, which were referred to by the honourable member for Lakemba and made known to me and others by complaints from borrowers, will not continue in the future. As a direct result of the implementation of the supplementary housing finance scheme, permanent building societies in New South Wales have adopted some of the scheme's conditions for deferred repayment. That has made it much easier for people to obtain first mortgage finance at reasonable rates from building societies. But, if banks are not willing to face up to their social responsibilities in matters of housing finance, one cannot expect people to take up loans that are available through the supplementary housing finance scheme.

I thank the honourable member for Lakemba for raising this matter. If any other member has had complaints from constituents who have felt threatened with a financial boycott by banks or other lending institutions because they chose to obtain a second mortgage within the supplementary housing finance scheme, I ask that those complaints be brought to the Government's attention. The experiences of those people will be kept in mind by the Government when it reviews the supplementary housing finance scheme.

PROSECUTION OF LABOR PARTY MEMBERS

Mr ARBLASTER: My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Police and Minister for Services. Has it been brought to the Minister's attention that the administrative committee of the New South Wales branch of the Labor Party recently passed and minuted a resolution to bring pressure upon the Minister not to proceed with cases against six members of the Australian Labor Party, one of whom is the mayor of Marrickville, concerning branch stacking in Enmore? Have any representations been made to the Minister by Australian Labor Party members not to proceed with those cases? If they have, will the Minister identify the members? Will the Minister also guarantee total support for the police, who come within his administration, if pressure is brought to bear on them by Australian Labor Party members, directly or otherwise, to stop the proceedings?

Mr Wran: Why do they not investigate the Salomon affair?

Mr ANDERSON: The Premier and Minister for Mineral Resources took the words right out of my mouth. My attention has been drawn to a resolution carried by the administrative committee of the Australian Labor Party. I inform the House, particularly members of the Opposition who are not aware, that committal proceedings commenced last Monday. I do not think anything further needs to be said except to point out that I receive many representations from organizations, from legal practitioners and from members of Parliament, asking for the withdrawal of criminal proceedings. A number of the representations come from members of the Opposition.

SEX EDUCATION FILMS IN SCHOOLS

Mr WADE: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Education. Is the Minister aware of allegations by the Reverend the Hon. F. J. Nile that schoolchildren in New South Wales are about to have their privacy invaded by the release of sex education films in government schools? Will the Minister inform me, and the House, whether there is any truth in this allegation?

Mr MULOCK: I thank the honourable member for Newcastle for drawing attention to the statements which appeared last weekend. The statements made by the Reverend the Hon. F. J. Nile require close scrutiny. A number of statements made in the article, to which the honourable member has drawn attention, were quite mischievous. In my view they were aimed at denigrating government schools. By way of background, might I say that I do not believe the Reverend the Hon. F. J. Nile has any monopoly on morality.

Mr Cameron: He has got a little bit of it though.

Mr MULOCK: The honourable member for Northcott claims that he has a little bit of it too, but I have never seen any of it. The Reverend the Hon. F. J. Nile believes that those who do not share his views are in immediate need of protection, or salvation. I doubt whether he does anything to improve the moral climate of

New South Wales. He should be more conscientious in dealing with the truth in his capacity as a minister of religion, a member of Parliament and a journalist. I have viewed the series of films entitled "Let's Talk About It". The films were produced by Film Australia. The Department of Education co-operated in their production. I have not seen a series called "Growing Up". The Department of Education was not involved in the production of that series.

My view was that the series "Let's Talk About It" was sensitively and tastefully produced. Overall, across a wide spectrum of the New South Wales community, there has been a good reaction to this production. I say as a parent that on occasions during the period of development of my children I have attended films involving sex education. This production was far better than anything that I saw on those occasions. I point out also to the honourable member, to the House and to the community, that the children involved in the production of this film had the approval of their parents.

I come now to the objection of the Reverend the Hon. F. J. Nile that the showing of the film series is an invasion of privacy. Guidelines laid down by the Department of Education ensure that invasion of privacy does not occur. I ask honourable members and the public to take careful notice of them. The primary guidelines state that parents must be consulted and informed of the nature of the programme; that parents who are not fluent in English must receive special attention so that they are aware of exactly what is involved in a proposed programme which could include sex education; that it is up to parents, in consultation with teachers, to decide whether, or how, the material should be used. Written permission is essential before any child may attend. Children who do not receive written permission are to be given other educational programmes as an alternative. The Department of Education takes great pains to protect the privacy of children and parents.

The Reverend the Hon. F. J. Nile claimed that he appealed to me to withdraw permission for the films to be shown. That is also wrong. Permission has not been given by me or by the Director-General. The Reverend the Hon. F. J. Nile has made no effort to check the facts. He made no contact with me before the article appeared. No permission was given to show the films in government schools. The matter is at present under discussion. There is another aspect of this article to which I draw attention. I challenge the Reverend the Hon. F. J. Nile to substantiate his claim that similar films have been shown already to 5- and 6-year-old children in New South Wales schools without parental consent. I assure the Reverend the Hon. F. J. Nile, members of this House and the community that if I am given any specific information to support that statement I will vigorously pursue the matter.

TRUCK ACCIDENTS

Mr DEBUS: I direct a question to the Minister for Transport. Is the Minister aware that the incidence of traffic accidents involving large trucks is causing concern in the community, and in my electorate of Blue Mountains in particular? If so, has the Minister any proposal to reduce the incidence of truck accidents?

Mr COX: I am grateful to the honourable member for Blue Mountains. In the short period he has been a member of Parliament he has shown great interest in the subject of road safety, and has had a number of discussions with me about it. Though it is true that trucks are over represented in fatal traffic accidents, and that this is due to their size and weight, in fairness to truck drivers, I should add that they are not over represented in the total number of accidents. Notwithstanding that fact, the matter has been of such concern to the Government that it established mobile

mechanical inspection teams. The Department of Motor Transport now has five specialist groups carrying out spot checks of vehicle fleets at depots and of individual trucks at varying locations throughout the State. Unfortunately, inspectors have found that a large number of heavy vehicles are operating with major defects. Accordingly, I sought additional funding recently to increase the activities of the field inspection teams.

Statistics show that fatalities on the Great Western Highway outside of Sydney have dropped from ten in 1978 to six in 1981. Of course, that is six too many and I have asked that the Great Western Highway through the Blue Mountains be included in further checking programmes in the near future. I know that my colleague the Minister for Consumer Affairs and Roads is carrying out road improvement works on the Great Western Highway within the limit of resources available and traffic control facilities are being provided at particular trouble spots. The honourable member may be assured that the Government will continue to monitor the position closely. I shall ask my colleague the Minister for Police to step up traffic law enforcement in areas where speeding by truck drivers is creating additional dangers.

I know the honourable member is attending a special meeting of interested citizens in Katoomba on Monday next, 22nd February, to discuss road safety in the Blue Mountains. I have asked Mr Harry Camkin, the Director of the Traffic Authority of New South Wales, who now has the Traffic Accident Research Unit under his administration, to attend that meeting. Mr Camkin will report back to me and I shall certainly respond to any further initiatives that he proposes. I have arranged for a meeting of the ministerial road safety committee to take place on Wednesday, 24th February. Attending that meeting will be Mr Gavan McDonnell, the chairman of the New South Wales Road Freight Transport Industrial Council, the Australian Institute of Petroleum, the Long Distance Road Hauliers Association, the New South Wales Road Transport Association, the Transport Workers Union and the National Freight Forwarders Association, to discuss truck safety and what can be done to improve it.

WELFARE HOUSING

Mr J. H. BROWN: I direct a question without notice to the Minister for Housing, Minister for Co-operative Societies and Minister Assisting the Premier. Has the Commonwealth Government, over a number of years, made available to this State more than \$1,000 million at low interest rates for welfare housing? Has most of this money been advanced through the terminating building societies, now the Commonwealth Housing Societies? Are there some hundreds of millions of dollars still outstanding at interest rates as low as 5 per cent while money advanced in latter years has attracted an interest rate of some 7 per cent? Will the Minister have this interest rate of 5 per cent increased to 7 per cent in line with the current repayments of borrowers from the Commonwealth Housing Societies, and so make some millions of dollars more available to low income earners through the revolving funds?

Mr SHEAHAN: The matter to which the honourable member for Oxley invites attention is under active consideration by my department in consultation with the organization in which the honourable member plays a prominent part.

Dr Metherell: The Minister always has everything under active consideration.

Mr SHEAHAN: If Opposition members were a little more active, comment from them might be more intelligent. The honourable member for Oxley complimented the Commonwealth Government on the amount of money made available. He obviously did not hear this morning's broadcast of question time in Canberra. Had he

done so, he would have been aware of the attitude of the Commonwealth Government to the funding of housing programmes and to housing problems in the community. It is not true that most of the money that has come from the Commonwealth to the States over the years has been made available through the old terminating building societies. Traditionally, most of the Commonwealth finance has been made available to the Housing Commission for the development of accommodation for rent; money made available for home purchase assistance has generally been provided by terminating building societies.

I am not so sure that the honourable member will be pleased when he discovers the amount of money that will be available in revolving funds following the increase in interest rates. In view of the effect on established borrowers, the matter must be dealt with with some sensitivity. I am well aware of the position in respect of the loans made up to the middle of the 1970's that are still attracting a concessionary interest rate which does not move with the times. I hope that interest rates paid on loans will be more equitable so that additional finance will accrue to the revolving funds for the purposes mentioned by the honourable member.

AMUSEMENT PARLOURS

Mr MOCHALSKI: Is the Minister for Local Government and Minister for Lands aware that many people are concerned about the continuing proliferation of amusement parlours? Is existing legislation strong enough for councils to control the operation of pinball and other amusement parlours?

Mr GORDON: I congratulate the honourable member for Bankstown for the interest he has shown in raising this matter. Existing legislation is considered adequate to enable councils to control amusement parlours. Section 362 of the Local Government Act provides that councils may control and regulate premises used for public amusement and games. Section 363 empowers councils to control and regulate the conduct of people therein in the interests of public order and safety. Section 530 provides that any power to regulate shall be deemed as a power to license, prevent or prohibit. Councils are therefore able to license premises where pinball machines are available and to regulate the hours of operation, the number of machines, and attach any other appropriate conditions. If conditions of the licence are not complied with, councils may cancel or refuse to renew the licence. A number of councils in the Sydney metropolitan area have already drafted regulatory codes in order to control this type of amusement activity and most councils have expressed their satisfaction with the existing provisions.

DEPARTMENT OF ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr T. J. MOORE: I direct a question without notice to the Premier and Minister for Mineral Resources, in the absence of the Attorney-General, Minister of Justice and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. Is the Premier aware that Mr Bob Hunt, former election campaign manager for the Attorney-General and secretary of the Water and Sewerage Employees Union, who was appointed as chairman of the Privacy Committee by the Attorney-General, is soon to be appointed as Deputy Secretary of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs? When will Mr Hunt take up the appointment and will the Premier explain what hidden qualifications Mr Hunt might have for this position, as there are no readily obvious ones?

Mr WRAN: I am not aware of any of the matters referred to by the honourable member for Gordon. I shall refer the question to my colleague the Attorney-General, Minister of Justice and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. The one thing the honourable member for Gordon and Mr Hunt have in common is that they are both graduates of a university.

ROAD FUNDING

Mr FACE: Can the Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Roads give any further information he may have on the question I asked him on 10th February this year relating to the diversion of funds from the Newcastle-Sydney highway by the federal Government to other areas, as the extension of the Newcastle-Sydney highway is a most important project for the Hunter region of New South Wales?

Mr WHELAN: The honourable member for Charlestown asked me a similar question last week. Since then I have received a telex, which is more like an epistle, from the Hon. R. J. D. Hunt, the Commonwealth Minister for Transport. The telex is full of ambiguities, and I shall refer to some of them. The long penultimate paragraph of the telex reads:

I saw the need for effort at least to the extent of the 1980-81 level directed towards the upgrading of the Hume Highway by the progressive duplication of the carriageway and provision of town bypasses. Major works should also be continued between Sydney and Newcastle. If these works are continued on both the Sydney Albury and Sydney Newcastle national highways there will in fact be an increase in funds spent between Sydney and Newcastle in 1981-82 over 1980-81 of at least \$3.7M. There will not be a reduction as was the major theme in your reply to Mr Face.

I shall inform the House of some of the history relating to the proposal. I refer specifically to my criticism of the Commonwealth Minister's partiality in allocating 30 per cent of the national development road programme funds to a road within his own electorate. Early discussions at departmental officer level between the Department of Main Roads and the Commonwealth Department of Transport were to the effect that when the southwestern freeway was completed to Yanderra in December 1980, resources that had been allocated to that work would be transferred for use on the Sydney-Newcastle work. However, following a submission by the Department of Main Roads to the federal Government on the national roads programme, the Commonwealth Minister directed that a further sum should be allocated to work on the Hume Highway south of Sydney. The only funds available to the Department of Main Roads are those allocated to the construction of the freeway between Sydney and Newcastle. They are the only funds the department could allocate to the road about which the federal Minister is speaking.

In the telex to which I have referred the Commonwealth Minister said that this year there will be an increase of at least \$3.7 million in funds allocated to the Sydney-Newcastle and Sydney-Albury freeways over the sum spent in the previous year. I have doubts whether that will eventuate, for one ambiguous part of the telex reads, "If these works are continued on the same basis". The honourable member for Charlestown is entitled to be concerned as it is apparent that this State will not receive additional road funds. The Commonwealth Minister intends to direct that the funds previously intended for national highways north of Sydney—that is, for the Sydney-Newcastle freeway—be allocated to roadworks south of Sydney. Obviously the provision of additional funds for the Hume Highway south of Sydney

will be at the expense of the Sydney–Newcastle freeway. I have requested the department to investigate the implications of allocating further money to the Hume Highway at this late stage of the financial year, having regard to the fact that the work must be completed by contract.

I propose to expand the answer I gave the honourable member for Charlestown about the east-west route which was declared a national development route under the Roads Grants Act of 1981. That announcement was made by the Commonwealth Minister in a press release without me being given prior notice about it. The Commonwealth Minister has directed that \$1 million be spent on bitumen surfacing of a 29-kilometre section of road between Merah North and Burren Junction, and that \$500,000 be spent on a 67-kilometre stretch between Walgett and the Brewarrina shire boundary. The Commonwealth Government assessed this road as suitable for qualification as a national development road. Although the Department of Main Roads acknowledges that this is an important road, it does not regard it as of national importance as required by the Road Grants Act—in other words it does not qualify as a national development road.

The Department of Main Roads, in its application to the Commonwealth Government, submitted that part of trunk road 95—that is, the Mount Ousley Road—Main Road 259, the Burragorang Road, and part of trunk road 55—the Mudgee Road—were deserving of higher priority than the east-west road, which is in the north of the State. The east-west road is important but it is not of national importance. Probably two or three vehicles every hour would pass over the east-west road. No member of this House could even guess the number of vehicles that use the Mount Ousley road. Yet the Commonwealth Minister for Transport, by a stroke of his pen, has ordained that the east-west road is more important to the State than the Mount Ousley road. Obviously that Minister has never travelled over the Mount Ousley road, as you Mr Speaker, and I have done.

My priorities are clear: the Mount Ousley road should have a higher priority than the east-west road. The federal Minister's decree is contrary to the selection by the Department of Main Roads of priority roads as part of a national road scheme.

The people of Pilliga want the east-west road to go through that town as they are denied reasonable road access to the major centres. I do not resile for one moment from my assertion that the Commonwealth Minister is guilty of giving preferential treatment and of nepotism. The new east-west road that the Commonwealth Minister proposes will not be flood free. The first requirement of any national road is that it must be flood free. Naturally the people of Pilliga are upset, for the road that they seek to pass through their area would be flood free.

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Roads is capable of answering the question. He needs no assistance from the Deputy Leader of the Country Party.

Mr WHELAN: The interjection of the Deputy Leader of the Country Party is timely. Recently the residents of Pilliga, who are in his electorate, asked him to make representations to the Commonwealth Minister to have the road follow the route required by the Department of Main Roads. However, the Deputy Leader of the Country Party denied the people of Pilliga their rights; he sold them out. He does not deserve to represent those people in this House. I shall remind the Deputy Leader of the Country Party of some other things he said to those citizens.

[Interruption]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! If the Deputy Leader of the Country Party wishes to make a personal explanation, he would be aware of the way to go about it.

Mr WHELAN: When the people of Pilliga pleaded with the honourable member to have the road re-routed not through Hunt's territory but through their little town he told them at a meeting, which was about roads, that the New South Wales Government received \$2.5 billion. In fact, this Government would be lucky to receive \$250 million from the federal Government. I say to the honourable member for Charlestown that, notwithstanding the lengthy telex I received from the Commonwealth Minister for Transport—and it is full of ambiguities—I cannot give him a guarantee that the federal Government will continue to fund the Sydney–Newcastle freeway. However, I can assure him that I shall instruct the Department of Main Roads to emphasize the importance of the Sydney–Newcastle road at every meeting of departmental officers representing the Commonwealth and State governments.

POLICE ACADEMY

Mr BREWER: I direct my question without notice to the Minister for Police and Minister for Services. Is the Minister aware of a considerable number of rumours that a police academy would be established at the Goulburn campus of the Riverina College of Advanced Education? As those rumours are having a serious effect on those connected with the college and the Goulburn community, particularly following a number of recent occurrences at the college, will the Minister dispel—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Goulburn is asking for the confirmation of rumours. I rule the question out of order.

Mr BREWER: Mr Speaker, I am asking the Minister to dispel the rumours.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The question is based on rumours and is therefore out of order.

CENTRAL COAST HEALTH SERVICES

Mr O'CONNELL: I commend the Minister for Health for his endeavours to improve health services in the western suburbs. My question without notice to the Minister for Health relates to the Central Coast which has a low ratio of hospital beds per thousand of population and has the added disadvantage of having no alternative hospital accommodation within 50 kilometres. Will the Minister inform the House of the Government's plans to improve hospital, ambulance and health care services on the Central Coast?

Mr BRERETON: I am aware of the honourable member's concern for hospital and health facilities on the Central Coast. Recently much public attention has been focused on the Central Coast and its inadequacies. For instance, at the Wyong hospital only thirty beds out of fifty available beds are available for use. It is clear that the Central Coast *vis-à-vis* other areas of the State is at a disadvantage. That disadvantage is not as great as exists in the western suburbs of Sydney, the southwestern suburbs and the outer metropolitan area. However, it certainly is a problem for those who live on the Central Coast and one to which the Government will direct its attention. The needs of the Central Coast will receive every possible consideration in the review of health care services in New South Wales being undertaken by the Health Commission.

It should be understood clearly that improvements on the North Coast and Central Coast, as with improvements elsewhere in the State, can come only at the expense of existing aspects of health care. In the past expenditure on health services has increased at almost double the rate of inflation. As a result of the federal Government's negative growth policies finance is now limited strictly in accordance with inflation. That means that for the Central Coast to receive any benefit, facilities will have to be relocated. I assure the honourable member that the needs of the district will be given consideration as part of the commission's review.

STANDARD TIME (AMENDMENT) BILL

Introduction

Motion (by Mr Anderson) agreed to:

That leave be given to bring in a bill for an Act to amend the Standard Time Act, 1971, in its application to the period of summer time ending in 1982.

Bill presented and read a first time.

Declaration of Urgency

Mr ANDERSON (Penrith), Minister for Police and Minister for Services [11.26]: I declare that this bill is urgent.

Question—That the bill be considered an urgent bill—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 61

Mr Akister	Mr Flaherty	Mr Neilly
Mr Anderson	Mr Gabb	Mr O'Connell
Mr Aquilina	Mr Gordon	Mr Paciullo
Mr Bannon	Mr Haigh	Mr Page
Mr Beckroge	Mr Hatton	Mr Petersen
Mr Booth	Mr Hills	Mr Quinn
Mr Bowman	Mr Jackson	Mr Ramsay
Mr Brading	Mr Johnson	Mr Robb
Mr Brereton	Mr Jones	Mr Rogan
Mr Cahill	Mr Keane	Mr Sheahan
Mr Christie	Mr Knight	Mr A. G. Stewart
Mr Cleary	Mr Knott	Mr K. J. Stewart
Mr R. J. Clough	Mr Knowles	Mr Walsh
Mr Cox	Mr McCarthy	Mr Webster
Mrs Crosio	Mr McGowan	Mr Whelan
Mr Debus	Mr McIlwaine	Mr Wilde
Mr Degen	Mr Mack	Mr Wran
Mr Durick	Mr Mair	
Mr Egan	Mr Miller	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Face	Mr H. F. Moore	Mr Mochalski
Mr Ferguson	Mr Mulock	Mr Wade

Noes, 27

Mr Arblaster
Mr Armstrong
Mr Boyd
Mr Brewer
Mr J. H. Brown
Mr Cameron
Mr Caterson
Mr J. A. Clough
Mr Collins
Mr Dowd

Mr Duncan
Mr Fisher
Mrs Foot
Mr Greiner
Dr Metherell
Mr Murray
Mr Park
Mr Peacocke
Mr Punch
Mr Rozzoli

Mr Schipp
Mr Singleton
Mr Smith
Mr West
Mr Wotton

Tellers,
Mr Fischer
Mr T. J. Moore

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Second Reading

Mr ANDERSON (Penrith), Minister for Police and Minister for Services [11.34]: I move:

That this bill now be read a second time.

The purpose of this bill is to extend the present daylight saving period for one month, until the beginning of April. The normal daylight saving period, or summer time as it is correctly known, extends from the last Sunday in October until the first Sunday in the following March. The Government has decided that, in the interests of conserving electrical energy and reducing electricity peak demands and consumption in this State, the daylight saving period should be extended by one month for this current period only.

Data supplied by the Electricity Commission show that daylight saving results in a reduction in peak demands by up to 150 megawatts, which is equivalent to about 3 per cent of total electricity demand. It is anticipated that by extending the present period of daylight saving there will be a continuation of the reductions in peak demand already experienced. This State has experienced electrical energy supply difficulties, and it is the Government's view that a reduction in peak demands will have a beneficial effect by lessening requirements for peak power from the Snowy system, reducing transmission line losses and reducing the need for operation of gas turbine peaking plant, with other minor benefits as well.

The Government expects also that a further benefit of extending the present daylight saving period will be a reduction of a wide range of electrical loads, such as domestic lighting and heating, commercial and industrial lighting, air conditioning requirements, and, night sporting and entertainment events. I wish to emphasize that this bill refers to the present daylight saving period only, and has no effect upon the next summertime period, or any subsequent period. To this end the bill is self-extinguishing after 4th April, 1982. In the interests of energy conservation, I commend the bill.

Mr PUNCH (Gloucester), Leader of the Country Party [11.36]: I listened with interest while the Minister gave brief reasons for introducing this legislation. Unfortunately, he did not refer to the important point relating to why the Government has taken this decision. The Minister commenced by saying that the legislation would affect daylight saving this year only. Of course, we have had assurances before from the Premier, who seems to be breaking a promise every time he speaks in this House. We were assured by the Premier that death duties would be abolished; but he went back on his word. Perhaps the Minister for Police and Minister for Services will honour his promises. I hope he does. Time will tell. However, one cannot

be sure that the Government will not change its mind. Already the people of New South Wales have been fooled in that the Government has not fulfilled its promise to consult country people before altering daylight saving hours.

The Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Tourism is on record as saying he would consult before any decision was made to extend daylight saving. The Premier and the former Minister for Services are on record as saying, when the Government wanted support for its candidate in the Castlereagh by-election, "Yes, we are sympathetic to abolishing daylight saving and even sympathetic to creating zones. We will have an inquiry and see what we can do". They did nothing. After the by-election was over they forgot about their undertakings. I do not believe the Government has had an inquiry into daylight saving. If it has, it would have been a minor departmental inquiry. It has ignored those who have campaigned against daylight saving and has not conducted a thorough investigation before introducing this legislation.

At the outset I make it quite clear that the Country Party is opposed completely to an extension of daylight saving. I wish to explain to the House its reasons for opposing the bill. I am concerned about possible shortcomings of the legislation and problems it will create. The Government has failed to take proper action to provide sufficient electricity generation capacity, which seems to be the main reason for introducing the legislation. The Government has introduced this bill as a panic move, without proper consultation with the people who will be affected by it. Of course, we have become used to the Premier telling us almost daily during the past month that there is nothing wrong with the New South Wales electricity supply. The Premier led us to believe that with a little bit of luck there would not be a blackout this year. He did not state definitely that there would be no blackouts, but implied as much. He implied also that there would be no regulations relating to restricted use of electricity.

Now, while we are still in the warmer months of the year, and long before winter, the Government has suddenly panicked and introduced into the House legislation to extend daylight saving for another month. While this is being done the Premier is off on a slow boat to China. Everyone hopes there will be no blackouts or power restricts. Despite statements by the Premier and the Minister for Energy in another place that no problems should be encountered with the electricity supply, the Government overreacted and in a panic has introduced legislation to alter daylight saving provisions this year.

The Minister said that the Government's action will result in a 3 per cent saving in the consumption of electricity. Some say the saving will be 2 per cent; the news media say it will be 1 per cent. I do not believe that the saving will be as high as 3 per cent; it will be considerably less. A saving of 1 per cent or 3 per cent in March will not save the State in the peak periods later in the year. Major demand does not occur in March but in the colder months of April, May, June, and July. If blackouts occur, that will be the time.

[Interruption]

Mr PUNCH: The honourable member for Monaro would not understand this, but his constituents in the colder areas will be inconvenienced. The electors of Monaro will not forget that their representative in this Parliament does not care what they think. He will not consult them or seek their opinions. His attitude is that the Government will decide what is best for his constituents, that is, that the people of Sydney should have extra daylight saving at the expense of persons living in the country.

If the Government honestly believes that 1 per cent or 2 per cent saving of electricity consumption will prevent blackouts, why does it not have daylight saving throughout the winter months? Though the Government purports to be running the State it is not doing very well. Honourable members on the Government side of the House conveniently forget that the peak demand will come later in the year, not in March. Why should country people—and particularly country children, whom I shall mention later—be inconvenienced and be given no consideration by a dishonest government that is breaking an undertaking? If the Government sees fit it can extend daylight saving in Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong, and in some of the coastal belt east of the Great Dividing Range, but the Government forgets the undertakings it has given and the problems that will be created in the western part of the State.

One of the main reasons given for the extension of daylight saving is the conservation of power. How much benefit will be derived by conserving power in this period of low consumption? The necessity for the Government's action shows how precarious the State's power supply must be and how sadly mismanaged the State's generating system has been in recent years. It does not augur well for the provision of power in the future. I repeat, how can honourable members believe the Premier and Minister for Mineral Resources, who constantly maintains that power is plentiful but then claims that it is necessary to reduce consumption by extending daylight saving? What assurance do honourable members have that the Government, having arbitrarily extended daylight saving this year, will not make daylight saving a permanent feature.

The president of the Daylight Saving Committee has said: "This extension of daylight saving is marvellous. Our committee wanted the Government to introduce it. It will go on every year from now on." I do not know whether his word is any better than the Minister's or the Premier's. The Government's word and the Premier's word have been proved wrong so often in the past that I do not trust them. I do not trust the Minister's word. Last year honourable members heard in this House that there would be no blackouts or shortages. A week later every light in the city went out. Since then the Government has been saying that everything is all right. The State has been skimming through the summer—a period of low demand—with a minimum surplus.

Mr Akister: Why did not the Liberal Party–Country Party Government build power stations when it was in office?

Mr PUNCH: There were no blackouts when the coalition held office.

[*Interruption*]

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

Mr PUNCH: The Labor Party has been in office for almost six years. It is hopeless and incompetent, and if it cannot make plans in that period it should not blame the previous Government. Power stations were being planned long before the change of government and, as the former Minister said, planning of power stations is taking place all the time.

One of the most important features of the extension of daylight saving is the effect it will have on country children. They will suffer because of this legislation. School children in the remote areas must travel long distances by bus to reach school. In his constituency the honourable member for Broken Hill has many children who will be affected by an extension of daylight saving. They will not be happy with it.

Mr Beckroge: I agree with that.

Mr PUNCH: Those who live in the country agree, as does the honourable member for Broken Hill, that an extension of daylight saving will disadvantage and cause inconvenience to the children. This morning I received a telephone call from a family at Boomi, which is north of Moree. The call referred to children of 12 or 13 years of age who have to rise at 6 a.m. and leave home at 7 a.m. to attend school. The children leave school immediately classes finish and do not get home until 5.30 p.m. That is a long day for a child. At 5.30 p.m. under daylight saving conditions the sun is high and it is hot. In that weather children do not go to sleep early. The next morning the children are awakened by their parents at 6 a.m. to enable them to catch the school bus. While waiting for the bus they stand in the dark on a lonely country road. Do we want our children to do that? I do not want mine to have to do it.

[*Interruption*]

Mr PUNCH: The honourable member for Monaro is so stupid that he probably considers that is all right. The majority of parents in New South Wales would not want their children to have to go to school in these conditions. At present the sun rises in Boomi at 6.51 a.m. By the end of daylight saving it will rise at 7.13 a.m., twenty-two minutes later. The children will be standing in the dark even longer then because it is not light much before 7 o'clock in that area. By this measure the Government will cause inconvenience to children and parents. Country children will be disadvantaged and in danger. Some children in the area to which I have referred have to travel between 100 and 120 miles a day by bus. That is a long way for small children to travel. These children have to rise early and travel for twenty to thirty minutes to catch the school bus at 7.30 a.m., or even before that time.

I challenge the Minister to say what thought the Government gave to the children of western New South Wales before introducing this measure. What consultation has taken place with parents, parents and citizens' associations, or the anti-daylight saving campaigners who are familiar with these areas? Not only shall I ask the question, I shall also answer it. The Minister has not done anything at all. The Government has failed miserably to consider the needs of country children in New South Wales.

Mr Anderson: Do they have electricity? That is what the measure is about. The Leader of the Country Party should confine his remarks to the bill.

Mr PUNCH: I am talking about daylight saving and the needs of children. It would do the Minister the world of good to give some thought to people rather than get up on his high horse and preach self-righteous nonsense. He should give more thought to the disadvantage caused to children who have to stand on darkened country roads in the middle of the night. I will not tolerate such nonsense from the Minister or anyone else. A recent survey carried out by the *Land* newspaper showed that country people voted overwhelmingly against any extension of daylight saving. The vote was as high as 98 or 99 per cent against it. It is fair to say that these people had generally accepted daylight saving. Many people do not like it and many are inconvenienced. In a referendum the people of New South Wales voted for it, though country people voted strongly against daylight saving. It is true that the vote in the metropolitan area was strongly in favour of it, but it must be remembered that there are many more people in the metropolitan area than there are in the country. That vote was accepted, and daylight saving has worked quite well. However, there has never been any consultation about extension of daylight saving or an adequate explanation given for the Government's decision to extend it. The Government has not told the people why the extension is needed at this time.

Many industries will be affected by the extension. This morning I spoke with some people who live in western New South Wales. I was informed that they normally start shearing at 7.30, the regulation hour. At that time it is only just daylight in that area and as many of the sheds have no electricity, at that time of the morning it is still dark so with the extension of daylight saving it will be too dark to commence. To start work three-quarters of an hour earlier or an hour later will cause inconvenience. I accept, without reservation, that that is not as important as avoiding blackouts. My point is that there is an avenue by which the Government, if it were honest and did the right thing, would confer with people concerned and explain the situation to them and perhaps with zoning these problems could be overcome. The Government should acknowledge that it is in a bad mess and must conserve power in order to avoid blackouts. If that were done, people would probably understand and accept the position. Instead, the Premier claims that there is plenty of power. But, the Minister for Energy says that there is not.

Many industries will be affected by the measure, particularly the dairy industry. One of the worst features of the issue is that it is a breach of an undertaking given by the Government. I have mentioned the statement made by the Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Tourism. Honourable members will recall the statements of the Premier and the former Minister for Police and Minister for Services and the way they carried on in the Castlereagh by-election. The measure is a panic reaction by the Government. Yesterday when the measure was introduced one of my colleagues telephoned the Observatory and inquired about the times of sunsets and sunrises. People at the Observatory did not know about the proposed extension of daylight saving. They had recently prepared their tide charts and distributed them throughout New South Wales.

Mr Akister: With daylight saving the sun does not rise at a different time.

Mr PUNCH: The information is on the same chart. People will be misled. The Government might argue that if people are given a new chart everything will be all right. Expense will be incurred in putting out new charts and other information about daylight saving. People could be given a wrong chart and be misled. Recently a well-known bus proprietor in the electorate of my colleague the honourable member for Lismore sought information on this matter. The Department of Transport was telephoned and confirmed that the finishing time for daylight saving was 7th March. The caller asked whether he could go ahead and print a new schedule. The answer was in the affirmative and a new schedule was printed. The customers of this bus service which plies between Victoria and Queensland were forwarded new schedules. They will now have to be changed. What about the inconvenience that may be caused to people who do not receive the second schedule? The cost of the change will be considerable. New South Wales has a time difference with Queensland which causes problems. My colleague the honourable member for Byron could inform the House of the difficulties encountered because of the time differential in the Tweed and Coolangatta areas. Albury is on the border—

Mr Mair: The people of Albury prefer an extension of daylight saving to having blackouts.

Mr PUNCH: Will there be blackouts? The Premier should tell us. Will the Government's proposal for the addition of a 150 megawatt output avoid blackouts? Are we that close to the line? In the past the Country Party has given a firm undertaking that it will oppose any extension of daylight saving. It will continue that opposition. Country Party members are not convinced that the daylight saving extension this year will reduce the threat of blackouts or power restrictions. They are aware of the importance of avoiding blackouts. If the Government took the Parliament and the public

into its confidence the picture may be different. I am yet to be convinced—none of my colleagues is convinced—that the small amount of power that will be saved will outweigh the disadvantages caused to many people. The many disadvantages that will flow from the extension show the Government's lack of concern for country people. If the Government insists on retaining daylight saving, it should be applied only to the metropolitan area and not country areas.

The key issue is that if things are so bad the Government should say so. The Government's action is a sign of panic. The major peak periods are not catered for, and the Government will effect minimal savings with maximum disadvantages for country people, especially for country schoolchildren. The Country Party opposes the proposed legislation.

Mr ARBLASTER (Mosman) [11:59]: Doubtless the remarks made by the Minister in his second reading speech were purposely brief. This apparently innocuous bill will extend daylight saving for one month. As the Leader of the Country Party said honourable members are not discussing summer time and the extension of daylight saving. That has virtually nothing to do with the bill. This measure represents another chapter in the history of the Government's bungling of the State's electricity supply system. It is about the Government's cover ups last year. It did not tell the true story of the electricity supply in New South Wales. Honourable members are really debating the Government's dishonesty.

The Premier and Minister for Mineral Resources should be informing the people of New South Wales of the facts—that would be most unusual for him to do. He should inform the people about the power generating position in this State and what the position will be in the coming winter. Every citizen in the State would like to know about those matters. Little reasoning is given for the bill. The Government has known the true position for more than two months. Since last November it has been talking about daylight saving. In December last a newspaper article claimed that the Government was considering extending daylight saving. If the Government knew two months ago that it would be extending daylight saving, why is the House presented with a bill on the last day of sitting prior to the scheduled conclusion of daylight saving this year? The Parliament has been presented with an urgent bill that must be put through the House today.

No discussion has taken place with the Victorian Government. There cannot be any discussion now because the Victorian Parliament is not sitting. Sydney and Melbourne are the two largest commercial centres in this nation, and have the largest number of banking and stock exchange transactions. Timetables and travelling arrangements have been discussed but no real debate has taken place on the State's power supply. The Government has not informed the Victorian Government that New South Wales is in strife. Because of the Government's incompetence New South Wales does not have enough power to meet its needs. Victoria could help but it has not been asked to do so. Instead, the Government proposes to start up old power stations in an endeavour to help it overcome the power shortage.

I have no doubt that if the Government had approached Victoria for assistance it would have received it. The Victorian Government would have considered extending daylight saving, if it was so important—as has been suggested in this morning's *Sydney Morning Herald*—to save 150 megawatts. This State has an installed generating capacity of 8 236 megawatts. Yet the Government is introducing this measure to extend daylight saving for one month in order to save 150 megawatts and, in the process, it is willing to create all the problems that I have referred to. The electricity generating

industry in this State must be skating on thin ice if the Government has to go to all this trouble to save 150 megawatts in the first month of autumn when there is nowhere near peak demand. The people of this State are entitled to an honest statement from the Premier as to the true position. All we have had in the past have been misleading statements and lies. The people of New South Wales were told that there would be no blackouts; then they were told that the position was bad. Surely the people are entitled to know the true position. If we are dependent on 150 megawatts out of an installed generating capacity of 8 236 megawatts, we are really in a bad way. This morning's *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that the State's power supplies were threatened by the near collapse of Vales Point, our largest power station, on Tuesday afternoon. One worker said: "We got a hell of a scare. There was terrible panic as we realized that we were on the brink of a total shutdown. The station is in very shaky shape because of electrical faults that have led to the use of a standby switchboard for three months".

The Government must have really got a scare, if 150 megawatts is the safety margin we are depending on to keep the manufacturing and commercial enterprises of this State going. For that reason the Liberal Party will not oppose the passage of the bill. The Government has got us into this mess, and the responsibility for what happens in the future will rest with the Government.

There is a large question mark over why the Government delayed its announcement until yesterday. The Government should have been honest and announced as long ago as last December, or at least in January—even a fortnight ago—that daylight saving would be extended for one month. The Leader of the Country Party spoke of the inconvenience that would be caused to bus proprietors in Lismore who are in the process of publishing new timetables to coincide with the end of daylight saving. What about the inconvenience that will be caused by the consequent changes to airline timetables? What about bus timetables that are being changed in areas other than Lismore? The people are entitled to a fair go. Instead, the Government has left its announcement until the last possible moment, and that will cause considerable inconvenience to many country people. Like many of the Government's legislative actions, this measure will create problems.

The extension of daylight saving will cause inconvenience to people in country areas; it will create hardships for them and for many schoolchildren. The Leader of the Country Party emphasized the difficulties this measure will cause in western areas, particularly in the shearing industry. The honourable member for Monaro spoke about the sun rising and setting at definite times. However, shearers work in accordance with their award, and in the western areas it will be dark when they are due to start work. Shearers, rouseabouts, pressers and cooks do not come cheaply. They must be paid even if they cannot work. That is a matter that was not considered when the Government decided to extend daylight saving for one month. Moreover, it delayed the announcement until the last moment in order to cause the maximum amount of inconvenience.

Mr Anderson: Is electricity not connected to shearing sheds?

Mr ARBLASTER: I have news for the Minister. Some people do not have electric power in their shearing sheds. The old diesel motor is still in operation in many country areas. Many property-owners still rely on the old single-cylinder Lister diesel motor for power in their shearing sheds. Those small, reliable power units have been running for many years. There is no way that the people who are using them will throw them out and change over to electric power, particularly while this Government is in office. Let us hear no more of this nonsense from members on the

Government side who are not aware of what happens in the bush. Considerable inconvenience will be caused and great problems will occur because of the different times of operation of the commercial sectors in Melbourne and Sydney, where the largest stock exchanges in this country are situated, where the majority of Australia's banking transactions are conducted and where the greatest amount of activity in the travel industry takes place. Despite that, the Government has failed to approach the Victorian Government and seek its co-operation. I am certain that, although notice of the introduction of the bill was not given until yesterday, the Government was considering the extension of daylight saving in November and December last year. If members on the Government side ask why the Opposition questions the Government's motives and doubts its honesty, I refer them to some of the statements made by spokesmen on behalf of the Government. There has been mismanagement in power production. On 3rd April, 1979, when the 37½-hour week was introduced in the power industry—and that is one of the causes of problems in that industry—the Premier said, "It will mean increased productivity and no blackouts by the industry". The Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Technology, when Minister for Energy, said on 16th June, 1981:

There is no need for people to conserve at all. I regard it as a lunatic suggestion to implement power blackouts, putting industry and the public to great inconvenience for days on end so as to build up greater reserves. The truth is that the reserves are being built up now without any inconvenience to the public or industry at all.

The Premier and Minister for Minerals Resources said, on 13th June, 1981, that if the blackouts were unavoidable, the public was at least entitled to the maximum possible warning. We are certainly not getting the maximum possible warning now. On 24th September, 1979, the Premier told the Sixth South Pacific electoral convention:

We are determined to come to grips with two of the great challenges facing New South Wales and Australia in the 1980's, energy and the environment. Both those challenges have been central to our planning for both the budget and capital works programmes.

The Premier, in the same speech, said:

Perhaps the greatest thing New South Wales has going for it is abundant and relatively cheap electrical power.

It cannot be that abundant when the Government is now extending daylight saving for another month to save 150 megawatts. The Premier said in the same speech—and this must have been after lunch:

And what we want to do is to increase its availability to keep it as cheap as possible.

How can we trust the Labor Government in this State when statements such as that are made? The *Daily Mirror* issue of 31st August, 1977, had the following report:

Householders will probably pay less for their electricity because of the State Government's new involvement in coal exports. The Premier, Mr Wran, today promised to use part of the profits to subsidize power bills.

Was the Premier saying that costs would have risen by 70 per cent instead of 20 per cent if the coal had not been available for export? The report continued:

At the very worst this means consumers should pay no more for their electricity for at least the next ten years.

The Premier made that statement in 1977. On that basis there should have been no increase in electricity charges for the next ten years. The record of neglect

continues. At the Australian Labor Party State Conference on 12th June, 1980, the Premier said:

... the people of New South Wales will not have to pay massive subsidies for the operation, transport or pay other activities of these smelters.

The Premier was referring to the proposed aluminium smelters. He continued:

The electricity charges will cover all capital costs and all recurring costs of the Commission, and will be subject to regular indexed adjustment ... We are embarked on an increase of electricity generating capacity to provide a margin over the concentrated needs of the new smelter.

Despite those statements New South Wales is now scrimping and scraping to save 150 megawatts. The reason we do not accept the Government's statements at face value is that we do not trust it—and its track record justifies that distrust. If the State's generating system is such that we must put all our faith in saving 150 megawatts out of a potential and installed capacity of 8 236 megawatts, it is in a dicey position. For that reason I do not oppose the bill. We shall now see whether this legislation will help the Government to get us out of the mess it has got us into.

Mr ARMSTRONG (Lachlan) [12.16]: As a member of the National Country Party, I oppose the principle of summer time, and in particular this amending bill which seeks to extend summer time to 4th April. The decision taken by the New South Wales Labor Government to extend summer time in this way is unique. The Government of Tasmania extended the period of daylight saving by three weeks to 27th March. Obviously, New South Wales is out of kilter with the rest of Australia, and that must be so seeing that it is administered by this Government. The State is in a mess over its energy supply. This bill is further evidence that the Government cannot get its act together and be like the rest of Australia. I represent an electorate in the mid-west of New South Wales. It has been my privilege over the years to do business throughout most of Australia. I think I know New South Wales as well as any other member knows it. I know about the frosts and the cold weather that can be experienced at Glen Innes, Monaro, Adaminaby, or Inverell at the end of February, let alone in March or the first week in April.

The poll conducted by the *Land* newspaper four years ago and the 1976 referendum figures showed that the people of the tablelands and the slopes rejected the concept of daylight saving, and I have every reason to believe that they still reject it. As I came into the Chamber this morning two messages were handed to me. They requested me to telephone some constituents who are most concerned about the inconvenience caused to them by daylight saving, quite apart from any extension of the period. People in the western part of New South Wales—this goes right against what was said by the honourable member for Monaro—are disadvantaged by a twenty-five minute time difference in the rising of the sun compared with the situation in most other parts of the State. People in the far western areas have to rise twenty-five minutes earlier than those who live on the seaboard. Consequently they are considerably inconvenienced—far more so than people in the metropolitan areas—by daylight saving. There is probably no more emotive issue in the country than daylight saving. Research carried out since 1972 shows that the issue has never been clearcut. However, the vast majority of people in the western areas of New South Wales have objected to daylight saving.

My main objection to the extension of daylight saving is because of its effects on children—and they include the children of trade unionists, of members of the Australian Labor Party and of farmers—in fact, children throughout the community. Its effects will be felt most by mothers and throughout the education system.

I shall give the House an example concerning a family that lives at Vermont Hill, which is to the west of Condobolin. The father of that family telephoned my secretary this morning at Cowra at 8.40 a.m. He said that he has three children aged five, six and eleven and they rise at 5.55 a.m. and leave home at 6.30 a.m. The children are then driven by their mother twelve miles to meet the school bus. They then travel 120 kilometres to school at Condobolin. In the afternoon they reverse the exercise; they travel 120 kilometres back to the town nearest to their home and they are then drive a further twelve miles to their home, arriving at 6.00 p.m. During daylight saving they actually rise at 4.55 a.m. Can Government members imagine getting out of bed at that unearthly hour of the morning? That is a major indictment of the Government for its lack of sensitivity and commonsense. The Government talks of giving the children of this State a fair go in education. However, many children are suffering because of the Government's inability to provide a proper electricity supply.

Another objection to daylight saving comes from the shearing industry, about which I have a considerable amount of knowledge. That industry operates two systems. Shearers work under contract and are paid according to the number of sheep they shear each day. It is compulsory for them to be members of the Australian Workers Union. The Labor Government, the bastion of the trade union movement, is seeking by the bill to prevent some of its supporters, the shearers, getting to work to do their tally. If shearers do not work they do not get paid. Shed hands, cooks, pressers, classers and overseers receive payment by the day. To earn their pay they must carry out their tasks for forty hours a week over five days in a good and workmanlike manner, in accordance with the award provisions. This Government is a great stickler for awards. One cannot imagine shearers at Boorowa, Cowra, Forbes, Condobolin or Parkes trying to shear with the lights out. I foresee that during next winter many of us will have to have our evening meals and carry out a lot of our tasks without electric lights.

Mr Beckroge: Some people enjoy doing that.

Mr ARMSTRONG: Members on the Government benches must enjoy it, as they seem to work hard to achieve that situation. Daylight saving does not permit many country people to have access to television news and current affairs programmes in the mid-evening. Access to news is an important part of public education, and it is sponsored by the Department of Technical and Further Education and other bodies. Daylight saving causes the dislocation of travel timetables, particularly as some States do not adopt it. Interstate trade and commerce are severely affected by daylight saving.

Mr Beckroge: Some race meetings are affected by it.

Mr ARMSTRONG: Yes, race meetings are important to the Government. Unless the Government continues to receive revenue from TAB operations on racing, including interstate racing, and probably in the future from starting price betting, it will go broke. During the Castlereagh by-election campaign last year the Premier said that country people had a special case so far as daylight saving was concerned. He paid lip-service to the wishes of country people. The Premier has not bothered to be present here during this important debate. In November 1975, during an earlier debate on daylight saving, the Hon. J. B. Renshaw, a former member for Castlereagh and Premier and Treasurer, who was most respected in this Chamber, said:

All daylight saving does is rob the community of an hour's sleep. It makes no great contribution to the community as a whole.

The provisions of the bill are an attempt to cover up further the Government's inability to provide electricity for the people of New South Wales. It is a cover-up also for the failure of the 37½-hour week productivity experiment. The Government entered into a

sweetheart deal with workers in the electricity industry who have let down the Government, for they have not produced the power to keep New South Wales going. Without consultation with the people, employers, or the unions, the Government is seeking to save a miserable—and, I might say, the figure is questionable—2 per cent of electricity. I refer the House to the following comments on daylight saving made in 1972 by the Minister for Industrial Development and Minister for Decentralisation when in Opposition:

Most of the benefits claimed for daylight saving are illusory. I do not believe, for instance, that there is any significant saving in electricity consumption. In this connection I wish to mention to honourable members a report that appeared in the *Northern Star*, a country newspaper, on 28th March this year—

That was in 1972—

—of a meeting of the Northern Rivers County Council, a big electricity generating and distributing authority in the northeast corner of the State. The chief electrical engineer, Mr L. W. Marchant, who carried out a review of the statistics associated with the generation and purchase of electricity during the daylight saving period, was reported to have said:

Energy generated and produced changed only slightly when the normal growth expected under similar weather conditions was compared with previous years.

It was extremely difficult to predict the energy requirements over such a short period, but it appears there may have been only a very slight reduction in sales because of daylight saving.

Those comments demonstrate that in the past the Government did not have the support even of its own members. In October 1981 the Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Tourism said that there would be consultation with country people before any further impost was made upon them—another broken promise. I refer honourable members to the 1976 referendum on daylight saving, and particularly to the results from three country electorates. Although the Minister for Police and Minister for Services is in the safe seat of Penrith, he and others have sold down the drain their colleagues in country electorates. In 1976 in the electorate of Burrinjuck, 11 200 citizens voted against the introduction of daylight saving and 9 287 expressed their support for it. In the same referendum 13 357 citizens in the former electorate of Casino voted against daylight saving and 8 351 supported it. I have no doubt that at the next elections the Minister for Industrial Development and Minister for Decentralisation, who represents that area, will be rejected by the electorate. Further, some 11 970 citizens in the electorate of Murrumbidgee did not want daylight saving and 8 885 said that they did.

Labor members who represent city electorates have sold out their country colleagues. They are willing to sacrifice their mates in the bush. Apparently Labor representatives of the country electorates are regarded as expendable. The members of the Labor Party have adopted an unsympathetic and non-caring attitude about country people in New South Wales, and they stand condemned for it.

Dr METHERELL (Davidson) [12.28]: Unfortunately, I have to disagree with the honourable member for Lachlan on a number of grounds. Clearly the overwhelming majority of electors in New South Wales are in favour of daylight saving—indeed, a majority of electors favour an extension of daylight saving, and have done so for a number of years. They support daylight saving on a number of sound grounds. The reasons advanced by the Government for extending daylight saving are, on this

occasion, fairly insignificant in the minds of electors. Rather they favour an extension of daylight saving because of the better quality of life that it provides by way of extra recreation and leisure opportunities and a more satisfactory family life. As I know that the Government intends to gag the debate, I shall not elaborate further on that point.

I refer honourable members, and particularly my colleagues in the National Country Party, to a 1968 report of a select committee of the Legislative Council of the Tasmanian Parliament. That fine report sets out in detail the major advantages of daylight saving. It refers to the fact that, for energy conservation reasons, daylight saving operated throughout Australia during both world wars, with beneficial results. The energy crisis in New South Wales warrants some sort of emergency measures. The report found that road safety was improved by daylight saving as a driver may complete a long journey in daylight hours when driving conditions are more pleasant. The hazards created by poor light were found to be substantially reduced. The report referred also to the advantages mentioned by representatives of almost every sporting body in Tasmania. They supported the reintroduction of daylight saving on the basis that it would enhance recreational opportunities and the fitness of participants in sport and the general community.

The report stated that workers were encouraged by daylight saving because they could look forward to more opportunities for sport and recreation at the end of the day. It said, also, that the effect of daylight saving on workers was equivalent to extra holidays, but at no cost to the employer or the community. In addition, the report pointed to evidence of a falling standard of physical fitness in Australia and a need to counteract it. Daylight saving has made a contribution in that respect. Since the writing of that report daylight saving has made significant improvements in the physical fitness of the community. The Tasmanian report mentioned advantages for family life in that parents arrive home sooner after work. We are now in the era of the two-income family. Daylight saving enables both parents to enjoy more time with their children. Further—

Mr FLAHERTY (Granville), Government Whip [12.32]: I move:

That the question be now put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 57

Mr Akister
Mr Anderson
Mr Aquilina
Mr Bannon
Mr Beckroge
Mr Bowman
Mr Brading
Mr Brereton
Mr Cahill
Mr Cavalier
Mr Christie
Mr Cleary
Mr R. J. Clough
Mr Cox
Mrs Crosio

Mr Debus
Mr Degen
Mr Durick
Mr Face
Mr Ferguson
Mr Flaherty
Mr Gabb
Mr Gordon
Mr Haigh
Mr Hills
Mr Hunter
Mr Jackson
Mr Johnson
Mr Jones
Mr Keane

Mr Knight
Mr Knott
Mr Knowles
Mr McCarthy
Mr McGowan
Mr McIlwaine
Mr Mair
Mr Miller
Mr Neilly
Mr O'Connell
Mr Paciullo
Mr Page
Mr Petersen
Mr Quinn
Mr Ramsay

Mr Robb
Mr Rogan
Mr Sheahan
Mr A. G. Stewart
Mr K. J. Stewart

Mr Walsh
Mr Webster
Mr Whelan
Mr Wilde
Mr Wran

Tellers,

Mr Mochalski
Mr Wade

Noes, 29

Mr Arblaster
Mr Armstrong
Mr Boyd
Mr Brewer
Mr J. H. Brown
Mr Cameron
Mr Caterson
Mr J. A. Clough
Mr Collins
Mr Dowd

Mr Duncan
Mr Fisher
Mrs Foot
Mr Greiner
Mr Hatton
Mr Mack
Dr Metherell
Mr Murray
Mr Park
Mr Peacocke

Mr Punch
Mr Rozzoli
Mr Schipp
Mr Singleton
Mr Smith
Mr West
Mr Wotton
Tellers,
Mr Fischer
Mr T. J. Moore

Resolved in the affirmative.

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

Mr ANDERSON (Penrith), Minister for Police and Minister for Services [12.40], in reply: I shall be brief in my reply to the debate. First, I shall refer to the remarks of the honourable member for Lachlan about the enormous distances that school children in country areas are required to travel to and from school. The point he made was that as children will be, in effect, leaving earlier in the morning than would be the position if this amending legislation is not agreed to, they will be leaving for school in the dark and returning home in the dark. How absurd. As a result of the enactment of this amending legislation they will be getting home from school well before dark. The honourable member's argument on this aspect, like the rest of his arguments on the bill, is completely unsound.

Another of the honourable member's statements is that if the legislation is agreed to, New South Wales will be out of kilter with the other State governments on daylight saving. Queensland, of course, has never adopted daylight saving. But what about the position in South Australia, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory? I remind him that Tasmania decided months ago to extend daylight saving in that State to 27th March. What significant difference is there between what the Government of New South Wales proposes and the position in Tasmania? I agree with the honourable member that in one respect New South Wales is out of kilter with the other States: New South Wales, as usual, is leading the other States—in daylight saving, as it is in everything else.

No Opposition member who participated in the debate really understands the position about electricity generation. The honourable member for Mosman asked how the extension of daylight saving for a month will alleviate the peak demand in the middle of winter. That approach shows how little he knows about the use of Snowy power. Last week, I remind members, the Premier and Minister for Mineral Resources announced a number of measures aimed at conserving electricity.

Mr Punch: The 3-minute showers will fix us all right.

Mr ANDERSON: That shows the attitude of the Leader of the Country Party to the need for conserving power. As I said in my second reading speech, the extension of daylight saving will be for only four weeks. If the Government did not take that

action and something went wrong with the power system in that period, the first one to scream would be the Leader of the Country Party. He is totally devoid of knowledge of electricity distribution or power generation. The members of the Country Party who made some terrible misstatements about daylight saving would be well advised to look to the record to see who introduced daylight saving in New South Wales. It is high time for them to be fair dinkum with the people of New South Wales and learn something about electricity generation and power distribution. I remind the Leader of the Country Party again that the aim of the bill is to extend daylight saving for four weeks. It is not proposed to extend it for any other period. I thank the members who expressed support for the concept. I commend the bill to the House.

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

The House divided.

[In Division]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! To make it easier for the tellers in recording the division I ask honourable members to leave the crossbenches vacant for the time being. When it becomes evident on which side of the House the larger number of members is gathered I shall ask the members who are standing then to occupy the crossbenches. Their names will be recorded as being on the side on which they are standing.

Ayes, 73

Mr Akister
Mr Anderson
Mr Aquilina
Mr Arblaster
Mr Bannon
Mr Beckroge
Mr Bowman
Mr Brading
Mr Brereton
Mr Cahill
Mr Cameron
Mr Caterson
Mr Cavalier
Mr Christie
Mr Cleary
Mr J. A. Clough
Mr R. J. Clough
Mr Collins
Mr Cox
Mrs Crosio
Mr Debus
Mr Degen
Mr Dowd
Mr Durick
Mr Egan

Mr Face
Mr Ferguson
Mr Flaherty
Mrs Foot
Mr Gabb
Mr Gordon
Mr Greiner
Mr Haigh
Mr Hatton
Mr Hills
Mr Hunter
Mr Jackson
Mr Johnson
Mr Jones
Mr Keane
Mr Knight
Mr Knott
Mr Knowles
Mr McCarthy
Mr McGowan
Mr McIlwaine
Mr Mack
Mr Mair
Dr Metherell
Mr Miller

Mr T. J. Moore
Mr Neilly
Mr O'Connell
Mr Paciullo
Mr Page
Mr Petersen
Mr Quinn
Mr Ramsay
Mr Robb
Mr Rogan
Mr Rozzoli
Mr Schipp
Mr Sheahan
Mr Smith
Mr A. G. Stewart
Mr K. J. Stewart
Mr Walsh
Mr Webster
Mr Whelan
Mr Wilde
Mr Wran

Tellers,
Mr Mochalski
Mr Wade

Noes, 14

Mr Armstrong
Mr Boyd
Mr Brewer
Mr J. H. Brown
Mr Duncan

Mr Fisher
Mr Murray
Mr Park
Mr Peacocke
Mr Punch

Mr West
Mr Wotton
Tellers,
Mr Fischer
Mr Singleton

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

By leave, bill read a third time, on motion by Mr Anderson.

[Mr Speaker left the chair at 12.53 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

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

R. J. D. HUNT AND J. A. HUNT

Mr MURRAY (Barwon), Deputy Leader of the Country Party [2.15]: I rise in this grievance debate to raise a matter affecting two of my constituents, Ralph John Dunnet Hunt, who is registered with No. 3929 on the roll of the subdivision of Moree in the electorate of Barwon, and John Archibald Hunt, who is registered with No. 1295 on the roll of Wee Waa subdivision of the Barwon electorate. On Wednesday, 10th February, both these men were grossly defamed, lied about and viciously and maliciously attacked in this House by the Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Roads when he was answering a question asked of him by the honourable member for Charlestown. It was a vicious and cowardly personal attack under parliamentary privilege on two respected people who have served their district, State and nation well. It was an unwarranted attack based on a lie that the Minister delights in peddling and he has not even taken the care to check.

Apparently the Minister lacks the capacity to handle his portfolio. If he had that capacity he would not need to peddle statements of the type that he has made recently in the House. He has destroyed his credibility as Minister for Consumer Affairs, for he is supposed to be protecting the community from people who act as he has acted in this instance. In speaking as he has he has completely overturned his responsibility. The Minister said that on 10th July the federal Minister for Transport, the Hon. R. J. D. Hunt, had used his office as a Commonwealth Minister to confer a benefit on his brother. The Minister made similar allegations in this House today. On the first occasion he said:

If my brother owned a country property such as the one owned by the federal Minister's brother, through which a nationally planned development road goes, and I diverted funds to that road, honourable members opposite would not allow me to get off the hook.

I certainly do not intend to allow the Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Roads to get off the hook in this Parliament either, for what he said is a blatant lie. John Archibald Hunt lives at North Nowley, Burren Junction, and is on the Spring Ridge telephone exchange. He, like his brother, was born and bred in the area. He banks in Narrabri and shops in Wee Waa and Narrabri. Wee Waa is his home town. He is a past president of the Wee Waa show society. At present he is president of the Wee Waa Show and Racecourse Trust, chairman of the Pilliga pastures protection board and a person with active community interests in the Wee Waa district.

Ralph Hunt has served the district in a similar manner, on shire and state organizations and as the local federal member of Parliament. He is a man of great responsibility and integrity. He has proved himself, which is something that the Minister for Roads in this Parliament has yet to do.

Let me correct the mostly misleading statements made by the Minister. The nationally planned development road does not go through Mr Hunt's property. Mr John Hunt lives 48 kilometres from Wee Waa north-northwest of that town; he lives 37 kilometres east of Burren Junction and 65 kilometres northwest of Narrabri, at North Nowley. To get to Narrabri he travels east on shire road 45, then southeast on shire road 4, then east-southeast on main road 127. To get to Wee Waa he similarly travels east on shire road 45, south on shire road 46—commonly known as Doreen Lane—and east on main road 343, which he joins at Merah North. I might add, for the benefit of the Minister's knowledge, that main roads 343 and 127 have been bitumen surfaced to Merah North for at least six years to my knowledge.

To get to Burren Junction to the west John Hunt travels on shire road 45, southwest to shire road 198 and eventually joins main road 343 four miles east of Burren Junction. That is the only possible benefit—namely, when he travels to one town—he could possibly obtain from this development. There is no connection north west to Collarenebri, north to Moree or east to the Newell Highway. The Minister said that the federal Minister had diverted the road through his brother's property, but it is interesting to note that the nearest point, as the crow flies, from the Hunt property to this road is a distance of 17 kilometres, through which passes a nationally planned development road. No wonder our roads are in such bad shape when the Minister responsible cannot even locate them.

The Minister has used a lie, created by greed and perpetrated for his own personal, selfish, political ends. He should now unreservedly apologize for his statements. The Minister should do so in response to the letter he received from the Hon. R. J. D. Hunt earlier this week. The Minister could have made that apology this morning when he quoted from the letter, or he could have done so when he accused me this morning of not representing Pilliga. I was at the two meetings; the Minister was not. The Minister could have quoted correctly from statements made at those meetings. I suggest that the statements given to the Minister are so far out that he should obtain another informant. The figure I quoted, which I shall repeat, is that the New South Wales Government this year received \$2,052 million in untied grants from the Commonwealth.

Mr Whelan: Why does not the honourable member for Barwon talk about roads?

Mr MURRAY: The Government should put some of that money into the roads of this State. If the Minister were competent, he would know that the priorities of the east-west road were originally set by the shires of Narrabri, Walgett, Brewarrina and Bourke. Those shires made this road their number one priority for main road construction. In fact, the declaration of this road as an arterial road was recommended by the Department of Main Roads on 13th March, 1978, and approved by the federal Minister on 17th July, 1978.

The Minister is so paranoid about spending on country roads that he cut main road construction grants to the Narrabri shire this year. Probably he diverted those funds to another place of his choosing. The sum of \$33,000 overspent last year was debited and credited to the works in the department. The people of Narrabri will not get one cent for their roads from this Government. The Minister has acted petulantly and arrogantly in manipulating State funds. The Namoi Valley has greater production

than the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area and its main roads are not gravelled, let alone tar sealed. They are black soil roads, rural arterial roads, roads with the same classification as Pennant Hills Road or Windsor Road. On that basis the Minister seeks to cut off funds for the area. His refusal to support roads in the area is totally unreal. His actions show that he does not know the problems associated with country road funding in this State. If the Minister in his consumer affairs capacity were to discover that the public was being misled, no doubt he would take legal action against the offender. The Minister has made a fool of himself, the Department of Main Roads and the Department of Consumer Affairs. I call on him to apologize for his statements, which were totally untrue. He should get on with the job of providing roads for New South Wales.

Mr WHELAN (Ashfield), Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Roads [2.25]: I readily accept the apology of the Deputy Leader of the Country Party. Debate on the issues before the House has been going on for the past fortnight and it does not involve a relative of the federal Minister for Transport. He has nothing to do with the essential character of the point at issue, which is that in my view a Commonwealth Minister has exhibited a bias. He has given preferential treatment to his electorate and put aside the remainder of the people in the State. That is my point and the Deputy-Leader of the Country Party cannot deny it. One has to ask why a Commonwealth Minister would give such priority to the east-west road when for the past three years the Department of Main Roads has advocated the three roads I mentioned this morning at Burragorang, Mudgee and Mount Ousley. They have been given top priority by road experts in New South Wales. Yet we are faced with the personal direction of an overriding nature by the Commonwealth Minister for Transport who is in charge of roads and has allocated 30 per cent of national developmental road moneys to his own electorate. That is the essential point. He has indicated a degree of partiality, he has shown that he is biased towards his own electorate, and has indicated a degree of nepotism I never thought possible. I do not think it right for anyone to refer to the family of a member of Parliament. The Deputy Leader of the Country Party, however, has taken what I said out of context. I said that if I had put a road past my brother's place, I would be put over a barrel for it. Surely it is not being said that this unusual reallocation of developmental road moneys brought about by the Commonwealth Minister's own act is a normal governmental reaction. Of course it is not.

Let us look at the order of priorities. First, there has been bias and preference. Second, one must ask oneself whether if one were the Commonwealth Minister with responsibility for national roads one would build a national developmental road—a road that would be used by heavy trucks—in a growing area of the country. Would not a sensible minister for roads build in a flood-free area? Of course he would. That is the legitimate grievance of the people of Pilliga. I believe I was right in saying this morning that their representative had let them down. The people of Pilliga deserve better than second rate. Indeed, the people of New South Wales deserve to have \$1.5 million of their hard-fought money from the Commonwealth Government allocated to State roads.

As I said to the House this morning, one could not compare the volume of traffic that would travel on the east-west road with the volume of traffic that uses the Mount Ousley Road. I suggest that each hour ten trucks may use the east-west road. Though I have not checked on the figures, I would suggest that each hour at least 250 heavy vehicles or cars would use the Mount Ousley Road. Those simple facts demonstrate that the money that is now being spent on the east-west road, which is in the electorate of the federal Minister for Transport, should be re-allocated to where there is the demand. As I said also this morning, the Government, the Department of Main

Roads, and I regard the east-west road as important but not of national importance at this stage. I object strongly to the bias and the preference shown by the Commonwealth Minister.

[Interruption]

Mr DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable member for Coffs Harbour to order. If the honourable member wishes to speak during the grievance debate he should seek the call.

Mr WHELAN: Why does not the honourable member for Coffs Harbour ask the federal Minister for Transport for some money for the road that the honourable member wants at Coffs Harbour? The \$1.5 million that the federal Minister has allocated might have been made available for the benefit of the people of Coffs Harbour. The honourable member would know the federal Minister better than I. My knowledge of him is gained only from the letters that I receive from him. The federal Minister has exhibited a degree of preference and bias that I, in my capacity as Minister for Roads, would not be permitted to exhibit. I intend to take this matter a little further. *[Quorum formed.]* One must question the planning of the Commonwealth Department of Transport when it can in isolation select a road in the north of the State that is in the electorate of the federal Minister. How does the federal department expect the officers of the Department of Main Roads in New South Wales to plan on that basis? Does it expect that because I am the member for Ashfield and the Minister for Roads that the roads in Ashfield will be updated? My colleagues in the New South Wales Parliament would not permit me to do that.

The Deputy Leader of the Country Party should not talk about telling lies. When he said that the Commonwealth Government gives the State Government a lot of money, apparently he has not absorbed that since 1st October I have been saying that in 1980–1 New South Wales received from the Commonwealth Government for rural arterial roads less money than it received in 1974–75. I suggest that the Deputy Leader of the Country Party should tell the truth to the people of Pilliga; he should tell them that he has capitulated, that regrettably the road will not be flood-free and that they will probably have to wait until hell freezes over before their representative in the federal Parliament will look after them. Finally I say to the Deputy Leader of the Country Party that he should stop using the brother of the federal Minister for Transport as a shield.

SHORTLAND COUNTY COUNCIL—MATER MISERICORDIAE HOSPITAL, WARATAH

Mr FACE (Charlestown) [2.35]: The grievance I refer to is the actions of the Shortland County Council in implementing a capital contribution policy. The Master Builders Association in the Newcastle area, which cannot be described as a pro-Labor organization—though I do not say that it is anti-Labor—has made representations to me, which I shall refer this afternoon to the Minister for Energy and Minister for Water Resources. The association does not object to the council implementing its policy, and though it contends the charges are a little high, it is willing to pay for the service. The complaint arises from the manner in which the policy was implemented. The council introduced the scheme without warning. The county council chairman, Alderman Vic Bell, has said that the complaint is a lot of hogwash and that the proposal was a matter of common knowledge. To say the least, he is misleading people.

The Shortland County Council did not consult the community or the Master Builders Association. Members of that association construct most of the buildings in the Newcastle district. Those builders have tendered for jobs at prices that did not include the additional county council costs they will have to bear. For instance, Don McCloy and Son, Builders, are building at a centre called Jewelstown, which was located in part of my old electorate. That building company has to find another \$45,200 that it did not foresee. Had it known of the possibility of increased charges it would have made some allowance for it.

The county council was derelict in its duty. It made a decision on the matter, operative from 1st January. I was informed by the executive director of the Master Builders Association in Newcastle, Mr Steep, that on 14th January McCloy and Son were in contact with the county council, at which time they were not informed that a capital contribution proposal would be implemented. Before I became a member of the New South Wales Police Force and subsequently a member of Parliament, I was involved in the building industry for ten years and was involved in the compiling of tender documents. Most informed people would know that advanced warning is necessary before a proposal such as a capital contribution scheme is implemented. It was necessary that the county council inform the Master Builders Association, the Electrical Contractors Association and other organizations before making this move. As a result of the actions of the Shortland County Council no doubt several small businesses will be in financial difficulties. Certainly the council did not consult the public about its intentions, as it should have done.

I refer the House to a document that I have in my possession. The council issued a newsletter in the first quarter of 1982, but it contained not one mention of the new capital contribution policy. The council could have phased in that scheme over a period and thus given people an opportunity to become aware of it. This principle was applied with the introduction of a 37½-hour working week with co-operation of the many industries in the Newcastle area. Proposals such as this one can be coped with providing advance notice is given. The Newcastle Chamber of Commerce will raise this matter tomorrow at its meeting. I understand that many members of that chamber may be affected by the new scheme. The Shortland County Council contends that it is not imposing a new charge, but is merely doing something in a different way. Instead of including the charge in the general tariff it is transferring responsibility from consumers to developers. I repeat: the Master Builders Association would not complain if adequate warning had been given of the intention to implement the scheme over a period. I suggest that because of the restrictions the Government has placed on county councils, the Shortland County Council is seeking other ways to burden consumers.

The chairman of the Shortland County Council, Alderman Bell, might be described as a Labor rat. Usually, if a person scabs on his party he goes sour. His answer to the problem is, "We did not get \$12 million; we got only \$7 million in loan funds this year, so blame the Labor Government". No doubt he will say that I am weak-kneed because I come into this House and mention this matter under Parliamentary privilege. I suggest that Mr Bell and his county council are weak-kneed, for they took action that will adversely affect the people of Newcastle and the Hunter region.

The people have a right to be consulted and know where they are going, especially in a year of unprecedented costs. No less than 64 per cent of the development taking place in New South Wales is occurring in the Hunter region. Many organizations are assisting the development of the Hunter region. It is all very well for Mr Bell to say, as he did to Mr Steep, "You can come up to the council chambers

and read the minutes". That is absolutely laughable. When Mr Bell was placed in a corner it is alleged that he said, "Well, I am only a layman". If that is the attitude he adopts, he should not be the chairman of the Shortland County Council, which is supposed to be so efficient. I ask the Minister to examine the matter I have raised to try to resolve problems arising from actions of county councils, and require them to implement decisions over a period and in accordance with policies so that the community might absorb the cost of them.

The other matter that I wish to raise is directed to the Minister for Police and Minister for Services. It relates to a document circulating in my electorate and in other northern electorates. It is entitled *Kids and Cancer Action Committee—Newmed II*. On the front of that document are photographs of eight Labor Members of Parliament who represent electorates in the area. The photographs of me and the honourable member for Cessnock could have been obtained from the *Newcastle Herald*. I know that the *Newcastle Herald* is the only organization that has that photograph of me. I am not suggesting that that newspaper printed the document to which I have referred, but some person—perhaps an employee of the *Newcastle Herald*—supplied the photographs for that document.

The organization that distributed that document does not have the guts to put any authorization on it. The address of the printer is not shown. If I were to put out such a document during an election campaign, I would be liable for a breach of the laws. That organization has people stalking round in the middle of the night, hiding behind a false name and distributing documents in letterboxes. Members of Parliament must expect criticism. I know there is much emotional discussion about Newmed-II. I am not thinskin. I have been telephoned continually at my home in the middle of the night, my wife has been abused in the supermarket, and my secretary has been abused in my electorate office. One might say that that is par for the course, but it is certainly not reasonable or fair that my wife should be abused in a supermarket by someone referring to Newmed-II.

The persons who distribute the document should acquaint themselves with the facts. I believe the Olsen report will put to rest many argument about Newmed-II. I challenge the authors of the document to make known their identities so that those mentioned in it might have a chance to reply to the comments made. I have asked the Minister for Police and Minister for Services by telex to try to find out whether such an organization exists and whether any action might be taken against it. I lay the blame for criticism of members of Parliament on people such as Professor Leeder, who have been whipping up the Newmed-II issue out of all proportion, in most cases spreading half-truths as well as incorrect statements on matters relating to local members. He is devoid of moral worth. I repeat: honourable members of this House should not be thinskin. They have to accept criticism. However, their wives and families should not be the subject of that criticism, as has happened in this instance. Professor Leeder likes dishing it out but does not like taking it.

I repeat, those who printed and distributed this document should have the guts to come out from behind their veils of secrecy, stand up and be counted. They want debate on this matter, so let them come out into the open. It is improper for unidentified persons to distribute a document displaying photographs of eight members of Parliament. The content of the document is an example of how inefficient those people are, for they say that Miss Turner is the secretary of the cancer organization. I understand Miss Turner has not been the secretary of that organization for some time. How did they get it, anyway? The document asks people to write to members. The publishers should acquaint themselves with the facts. I have never seen such an example of people being misinformed. The Olsen report, released last week by the Minister for Health,

will lay to rest many criticisms related to medical matters in the Hunter region. I repeat for the third time, that these people should have the guts to reveal who they are, instead of stalking round in the night besmirching members of this House.

THE HILLS ELECTORATE SCHOOLS

Mr CATERSON (The Hills) [2.45]: I wish to raise a matter of vital importance to parents of children attending schools in my electorate. No doubt this matter ought to be of concern to every honourable member. I refer to the lack of school improvement and maintenance programmes of public schools and property. No money is being made available for the maintenance of schools unless the conditions pertaining at the schools affect the safety or health of the children who attend them. I am told by a number of parents and citizens organizations in my electorate, and by principals of schools, that because of lack of funds broken windows cannot be repaired or replaced. Recently when I attended a new high school in my electorate, which had demountable classrooms, I noticed that some fibro cladding was broken. I asked the principal why he did not have the fibro replaced. He told me that he was not permitted to seek maintenance for such matters as they did not affect the health and safety of children.

About the middle of last year the former Minister for Education notified me of proposed improvement programmes in seven schools in my electorate. He advised that grants totalling about \$46,000 had been made. I made a public announcement commending that Minister for his prompt action in making money available. At that time I said I hoped that that would be the start of adequate funds being made available to improve conditions in schools. Very little was done on those programmes and subsequently I was advised by a principal that, in the main, the grants had been withdrawn.

Those funds were to be used to improve staff accommodation and facilities at four schools—Castle Hill High School, Baulkham Hills High School, Model Farms High School and Castle Hill Public School. Work was to be done on staff room facilities. In two schools, Kellyville and Glenhaven, improvements were to be made to water services, and roof repairs were to be carried out at one of those schools. Carpet was to be supplied for some classrooms at the Baulkham Hills Central Public School. At another school, steps were to be repaired, and a high school was to have damaged roof louvres repaired. The grants ranged from about \$1,300 to almost \$14,000.

I was rather dismayed to note a couple of months after the announcement by the former Minister for Education that those grants had been withdrawn and the projects were not to proceed. However, I am pleased to be able to say that since then some of those jobs have been undertaken. Nevertheless, almost daily I am informed by parents and citizens organizations and principals of many schools that much maintenance work remains outstanding. Many items of damage or maintenance require urgent attention.

I have a list of about sixteen items that the Baulkham Hills High School has been pressing for through the metropolitan west regional office. They range from items such as the repair of sprinkler units for the sports oval to miscellaneous roof leaks—some quite serious. Partitions between two art rooms are in disrepair and the rooms cannot be separated for classes. Taps in the science laboratories leak. Blackout blinds are required for three rooms, though I note that this request has been turned down. A further request is for the extension of the water service to the front ground. More taps are needed to save having to use about 300 feet of hose to water the grounds. Other items are the construction of concrete surrounds adjacent to the

cricket nets; the erection of a gateway to an alley leading to Carver Crescent; provision of carpets in rooms such as staff rooms, which are entitled to have carpet. Also, a request was made for the provision of metal covers for canteen windows, which get the westerly sun; provision of extra security lights, which was approved two years ago; the tuning of a piano in the music room; heating for the gymnasium; repair of the bell near the industrial arts area. When a fire drill is held bells cannot be heard in that area.

Another request was for drainage round the home science block, which is in need of repair. The drainage is there but is leaking badly in a number of places. A number of other schools in my electorate are concerned about problems they have. Some time ago one of the demountable buildings at the Castle Hill Public School was leaking badly and difficulty was encountered in having it repaired. I said to the person who informed me of the problem, "Is it affecting the safety of children?" He said, "Yes, because it is leaking in the vicinity of the light switch". I said, "You had better get on to the regional office and tell them, because the safety of children is at stake. This is one job you will get done straight away". Two or three days later I rang the property officer of the regional western office and asked if the matter had been attended to. He said, "Yes, it has". I said, "What did you do?" He replied, "We turned the power off". The roof is still leaking, but the safety of the children has been taken care of—there is no power there to endanger them.

Castle Hill High School has requested that a number of matters be attended to, as have Crestwood Public School, Castle Hill Public School, Excelsior Public School, Glenhaven Public School, Baulkham Hills North Public School, Kellyville Public School and a number of other schools in my electorate. Time does not permit me to go through the list of outstanding maintenance work that has not been carried out. I mention in particular the working conditions of the home economics staff at Baulkham Hills High School. About five years ago it was decided that the teachers' common room should be improved. To do this there had to be a rearrangement of the home economics section. The original quote was about \$5,800. Approximately \$23,000 was made available and some work has been done but the home economic staff has had to suffer inconvenience. They had not been given what the plans showed they would be given. There is no proper storeroom and no staff facilities. This week I was presented with a publication entitled *Working Conditions Home Economics Staff at Baulkham Hills High School*. It reads:

It is now thirteen weeks since the members of the Home Economics staff discovered that due to a public work-Education Department blunder they would be without adequate storage space and amenities previously held when the extension to the common room was complete. Despite letters, meetings and phone calls our problem still exists and we have prepared this sheet for your information as an example of how staff can be seriously inconvenienced and scarce resources wasted.

The publication sets out other details. I shall pass a copy on to the Minister for Education. I do not blame this Minister for the situation that exists there. The publication contains also a number of photographs revealing the poor condition for storage of equipment in the home economics section at Baulkham Hills High School. One of the photographs shows the inside of the storeroom that was given to them. The publication states:

This is our existing storeroom door that was—that isn't. We watched for four days while it was cut out, and then for another two days while it was bricked up again. All this with the side benefits of no power and plenty of dust and noise. No heating, security, telephones, fixed cupboards . . .

The next photograph in the publication has this caption:

See these bricks—now you don't! These were on site to build our storeroom. The ones that didn't walk, have now been removed.

It is a pity that school children have to suffer and be put at risk as they are because the small amount of money needed to maintain schools has not been made available. I repeat; I do not blame the Minister. The problem existed before his appointment. I blame the Premier and the Treasurer, for they are not allocating sufficient funds for this work to be carried out.

RURAL LAND OWNERSHIP

Mr MOCHALSKI (Bankstown) [2.55]: I wish to speak on a matter of great concern to my constituents and to the people of New South Wales. I refer to foreign ownership and control of rural and agricultural land in this State. The matter is important because prime agricultural land has been bought up by nominee holdings of companies. The land is hard to replace; it takes a long time and much work to make land productive. It is a shame to see huge tracts of agricultural land falling into the control of people who do not even live in New South Wales. It is true that many west Germans and other foreign nationals have invested in this land and Australian farmers have become tenants on properties which formerly they owned.

I wrote to the Minister for Agriculture in another place and posed a few questions to him such as, "How much New South Wales's agricultural land is in overseas control? How much of our irrigation areas, as distinct from areas used for dry land farming, is under overseas control? I asked him to provide also details of the twenty largest overseas rural agricultural landholders and to identify their nationality and agricultural pursuits or involvement in primary industry. I requested the Minister to provide information of what funds are repatriated by these overseas domiciled rural landholders. The Minister's reply was to the effect that he was gravely concerned about what was happening but that it was a matter largely for the federal Government. He stated that though there were many examples that overseas investment might have a beneficial effect, this was an area of significant concern. The Minister wrote:

In the past years, over \$6 billion of foreign capital came into Australia. Much of this money was devoted to productive investments in job creating industries. However, several hundred million dollars of this foreign capital inflow was devoted to speculative investments in land—particularly prime agricultural land. In some parts of New South Wales—the Gwydir Valley for example—and land prices have risen by over 100 per cent in four years. The passing of Australian agricultural land into foreign hands has now reached the point where foreigners own an area of agricultural land greater than the area planted under wheat in Australia each year.

The Minister gave me an assurance that he will try to scrutinize closely all proposals for foreign investment in rural land and to press the Foreign Investment Review Board and the federal Government to ensure that the interests of the State, and particularly of agricultural industries, are fully safeguarded. However, he did say in answer to the specific questions I have asked and the matters I have referred to previously:

With regard to your specific questions, New South Wales is limited in the control it can exercise over foreign investment in rural/agricultural land as most of the control on foreign investment such as those which relate to capital inflow, exchange regulations, etc. are the province of the Federal Government.

The New South Wales policy on foreign investment is to encourage investment accompanied by migration and investment which brings constructive and tangible benefits to New South Wales in the technology area.

That is fine. The letter from the Minister continues:

In relation to your question regarding foreign ownership of rural land in New South Wales, currently neither the State nor the Commonwealth have any idea of the level of foreign ownership in any one of the particular states.

That is a shocking state of affairs. The letter continues:

It is because of this situation that I raised with my colleagues at Australian Agricultural Council, the issue of establishing a register of foreign landholdings in Australia. You may not know that in the United States of America, landholdings are required to be notified to the United States Secretary of Agriculture under the Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act, which was passed by the United States Congress in 1978.

We do not have similar legislation in this country, and the federal Government is not interested in hearing about it. The Minister goes on to say that a register should be kept in the national interests. In answer to my question about pricing, he says that he is not aware of how pricing is stipulated or maintained. They are areas on which there is no information. That is incredible. We are losing our rural and agricultural base. Already we have lost our manufacturing base and some other sectors of industry but nobody is doing anything about it.

The Minister, to his credit, gave me an assurance that all proposals will be scrutinized. However, until the federal Government changes the \$350,000 limit, below which purchases do not have to be scrutinized by either the federal Government or the State Government, millions of dollars will continue to flow into this country for the purchase of land. In that event, we shall become tenants in our own country and in our own State. It is about time we took a lead from the United States of America and some other countries and introduced a register so that at least we know who owns and holds these properties. If all those property-owners decided not to produce anything, we could not make them do it. Imagine the effect that would have on food prices in New South Wales. It would have a harmful effect on the prices that my constituents would have to pay for fruit and vegetables.

Mr Armstrong: We are likely to run out of water in our dams before that happens. We should be building more dams.

Mr MOCHALSKI: We would be running out of water in our dams by now if members of the Opposition had remained in government. I have brought these matters to the attention of the House as they are so important. I have put my feelings on record in the hope that someone will take some notice of the views I have expressed.

FLOOD PRONE LAND

Mr J. H. BROWN (Oxley) [3.4]: I raise a matter of extreme importance to my area and to many other parts of New South Wales. The Government's flood prone land policy is causing great hardship to many people. I realize that that policy is different from the flood plain management scheme that the Government is undertaking at present. In my area, particularly at Port Macquarie and Camden Haven, many people are being seriously affected because land that they bought in good faith some years

ago with a view to building on it and living there in their retirement, cannot now be built upon because of the Government's policy. I have received many letters about this matter. Some of the people concerned have sold their properties in Sydney and were in the process of moving to my area when this policy came into force. The week before last while I was consulting in Camden Haven I was interviewed by a couple who are now living in a caravan, hoping that the Government will change its policy and enable them to build on their block of land. Many difficulties are involved in these cases.

In the Camden Haven area one difficulty is caused by a scheme adopted by the Department of Public Works, which shows certain areas as being flood prone. It appears that the department has based its decisions on wrong information. While I was in Camden Haven on that occasion I went to an area designated by the department as flood prone. Some persons who were living there at the time of the flood advised me that there was a five feet difference in the level shown by the department and the actual flood level. I understand the department based its plan on what happened in the flood at Camden Haven in 1963. In some streets all the blocks are built on except three. The persons who own those three blocks cannot build on them for the land has been declared to be flood prone. A number of cases of this type call for the urgent attention of the Government. One issue is whether those persons who are not allowed to build on their land should be required to pay rates. This week I received a letter from a Mr Fletcher of Castlecrag, in the following terms:

I have received a rate notice for \$858.75 on this property and I am beginning to wonder what is the score with the Government . . .

If I cannot discharge into the sewer and cannot use the water, how can I be charged for these services? Have I any redress against the Council at all?

This is a real problem. If a person owns a block of land and the council is implementing a policy laid down by the Government as a result of which the landowner cannot build on his block, he should not be expected to pay water and sewerage rates on that land. This policy is affecting many areas, and I ask the Minister to have it clarified. Another issue concerns compensation for people whose land is affected by this policy. They bought the land and have paid rates on it. They are now unable to build on the land. Does the Government propose to allocate funds to buy back the land affected by this declaration that it is flood prone? What is the legal responsibility of councils in this matter? If a council approves the building of a home on a block of land and a flood occurs and affects that home, has the council any responsibility? These matters are causing concern to the owners of land in the areas to which I have referred.

Another matter of concern to me is that different policies are being adopted by local councils. Kempsey shire council will approve buildings on flood prone land. The council has records of the height of various floods and it has set a certain floor level. If people present plans complying with that level, the council will give them approval to build. In an adjoining local government area, the Hastings municipal council will give permission to build provided the owners sign an indemnity. Is such an indemnity worth the paper it is written on? Would the indemnity apply, or would the persons concerned have a claim against the council in the event of flood damage? I am trying to get these matters cleared up, for they are causing a great deal of hardship.

Another matter concerns a subdivision that is partly completed. Some of the blocks have been sold. The developer cannot now sell the blocks in the balance of the subdivision because the land has been declared flood prone. This subdivision involves

a small area. The owner invested money in it some time ago and subdivided it. He has got five blocks and wants to take action in respect of eight blocks. Since the declaration, none of the blocks is any good to him. I mention also the case of a young couple, John and Dale Young, who have obtained a barrister's opinion to the effect that they should be able to build on their block. However, the council has refused them permission to do so. They want to know why this residential subdivision was approved in the first place if it is now considered to be on flood prone land. In a letter to me they say:

Surely Council does not expect us to believe that our block only would suffer in the event of flooding and not those houses already established or currently under construction.

That young couple bought their block of land. They did not then have finance to enable them to build their home but they got it gradually. In the meantime the flood-prone policy affected the land. The Minister should examine whether the Government can relax the rigid policies imposed on the development of flood plain land. Controls have become a major worry in many parts of the State that are subject to flooding. The price of land outside the flood plains has become so expensive that many people cannot afford to buy. If local government is to achieve orderly progress, it must have the capacity to encourage all kinds of development. Certainly local government has the capacity to buy land and to meet the rigid guidelines set by the department. A recent Government report made it clear that in a few years the North Coast would have to cope with an extra 500 000 people. Therefore, a flexible policy must be adopted to assist local councils. Each region must be left to decide the dangers or otherwise of what is happening. The local representatives know the position in their areas. The honourable member for The Hills recently wrote to me about several of his constituents who are bewildered because land they own is said to have become suddenly useless. On the other hand, another large scheme involving extensions costing \$3 million is being allowed in an adjoining area. This has caused some serious concern. I hope that the Minister will give the House a full reply on the matters I have raised.

Mr FERGUSON (Merrylands), Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Works and Minister for Ports [3.11]: Arguments as to the extent of floods usually fall between the views of the estate agent in the district who is trying to sell the land and wishes to prove that the flood water height is only three inches and those of the local council experts who point to a flood water height of five feet. Therefore, conflicts of interest sometimes arise as to the height of floods. No doubt flood plains policy is causing serious inconvenience to a number of people. Fortunately, for a long time New South Wales has not experienced serious flooding. However, in times of flood great damage and disaster can occur if the situation is not closely watched. People who are affected by floods—indeed society as a whole—are concerned to alleviate the effects of natural disasters. In a period of only two years \$60 million of State resources went to flood relief. Therefore, flood prevention is a most important consideration for us all. Although the present policy is causing some problems, I am determined to relieve the position so far as possible. Large amounts of State money go to flood prevention and relief. People should not be permitted to build in places where structures may well add to flood damage and threaten the lives and property of people in times of crises.

During 1980 the Department of Public Works observed development to be taking place in the Port Macquarie area in a manner that could divert and concentrate floodwaters. Unfortunately, the council did not appear to appreciate the significance of the cumulative effect of the developments taking place in the area. Late in 1980, I wrote to the local council expressing my concern at the policy

it was following. By that time the council had gone the other way; it had reached the stage where it was reluctant to approve any more developments in these areas. Naturally this caused quite a stir in the district.

In May last year officers of the department met the council to outline and discuss policy. Advice was given on problems being encountered by the council. The department outlined the technical and financial assistance available from the Government. It was recommended that the council prepare an interim policy for the development of flood prone areas and suspected floodways. The council was told also that the department would carry out investigation to refine the assessments of the floodways given to the council. The council subsequently submitted an acceptable interim policy, which would freeze development in suspected floodways and further subdivision of flood prone land. At the same time fringe areas that were flood proofed were freed for development.

The department has released to the council the results of initial studies and mapping of the area. It is important to note that these have been subject to public review. Some local residents have disagreed with the results, even to the point of commissioning other consultants to refute the information. At present the department is reviewing the comments received from the public, and to resolve some differences, a further study has been commissioned. The investigation is expected to be completed by the end of this month. There will then be a further public meeting at which officers of the department will explain the findings and the future options. I regret the problems caused to individual landowners. However, responsible future action cannot reasonably be determined until all facts are to hand.

At present the freeze in various areas is inconveniencing the public. However, the department's policy is reasonable and will stand until the facts are ascertained. As the honourable member for Oxley has made clear, differences of opinion on flood levels are rife. That aspect also will be investigated. Fortunately, some areas have historical records going back a hundred years; in other areas such historical information is not available. It is not easy to ascertain the facts. I give the honourable member and the House the assurance that the Government has no wish to inhibit development on the North Coast or anywhere else in New South Wales. The Government will pay due regard to the amount of land that is made available for developments in this State. It considers that it is better for development to take place away from the flood plains so that unnecessary damage to life, limb or property does not take place.

CHILDREN'S TELEVISION PROGRAMMES

Mr DEBUS (Blue Mountains) [3.15]: I wish to take this opportunity to deal with the subject of children's television. This matter has been much in the news in recent days mainly because of the unbelievably heavy-handed attempt by the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal to prevent publication of the details of an advertising log that was apparently accidentally supplied by Channel 10 in Sydney to a current licence regulation hearing before that tribunal. The tribunal's extraordinary action—involving threats of gaol and massive fines—failed because it was defied by the group most interested in that advertising log—the New South Wales Parents and Citizens Federation and, after a good deal of pussy-footing and behind the scenes pressures on journalists, by the press. Thus, it was that hitherto secret information concerning television channel revenue has come into the public domain.

I have had the benefit of reading that document. I am concerned now only with part of the details of the document, however embarrassing it may happen to be to some broadcasters. I am much concerned with the substance of the submission

that the Parents and Citizens Federation made to the tribunal—that is, that commercial television is inflicting unnecessary advertising upon children. That is a matter of concern to every parent and teacher in New South Wales. After all, it is suggested in statistics that children watch an average of twenty-one hours a week television—and the television year is longer than the school year; it is the whole year. The prime time for children's television is from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. on weekdays. That is a period when advertisers can be sure they have a very large audience of children.

On 9th November 1981, to take an example, Channel 10 between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. showed forty-two advertisements with a total duration of twenty-four minutes. That is a fraction short of a quarter of prime children's time, not including station breaks. On several commercial channels—though I think this is not the case with Channel 10—a whole half-hour of children's time consists of a quiz show, which is itself an almost continuous advertisement for consumer items. Even leaving aside the quiz shows, that level of advertising is about twice the amount of advertising that would be allowed in similar circumstances in Britain, where more than half of television programmes are broadcast with no internal commercial break.

The intensity of the children's time advertising on Channel 10 was about the same as at other times of the day. The prices charged to advertisers were about one-tenth of the price of advertisements that appeared in the 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. time slot. Children's time brought in about 6 per cent of the channel's weekly revenue of \$1.3 million. Advertisements of thirty seconds duration in the 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. time slot sell in the range of \$100 to \$250 and in the 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. period in the range of \$1,000 to \$2,000. I remind honourable members that Channel 10 is thought generally to be the least lucrative of the State's commercial television stations. As the Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations suggested, it is most difficult to believe that that television station could not abandon advertising during children's time by giving up either that small amount of revenue or slightly increasing rates at other times. The quality of children's programmes that do trickle down between the advertisements, whether they purport to be educational or some other entertainment, is middling to bad. One must concede that the Broadcasting Tribunal has made a significant improvement by securing an hour of C classified programmes in children's time. There appears to be some hope that a children's television foundation may be formed to improve programme quality.

The news media reporting of the affair, and the Channel 10 advertising log, have failed to address themselves to the essential point of the federation's submissions to the licensed hearing. The issue that should be of concern to honourable members, as it is vital for all parents and children of this State, is the great reluctance of television stations to abandon advertising during children's programmes, despite what is now embarrassingly revealed, namely, that it does not generate much revenue. One has to understand the essential role of commercial television to understand this resistance. Television stations are not concerned principally with providing children with useful information or good entertainment; essentially they are about delivering children to advertisers. They are an integral part of the advertising industry. The advertising industry is in the business of creating consumers; it is not merely selling an individual consumer item but actually creating particular consumer habits.

I am willing to accept that some sort of advertising is essential to the economic system in which we live. I am not willing to accept that the techniques of advertising used on television—particularly during children's programmes—are necessary, let alone beneficial. The parents of New South Wales should not have to accept advertising that, in a real way, undermines their ability to bring up children according to the

values that the parents hold. I refer the House to a United States of America writer named Gerry Mander—he does come from California and not from Queensland. He said about television:

To the degree that advertising reaches us, occupying our time and thought, it keeps us vibrating within strict limits. If forty million people see a commercial for a car, then forty million people have a car commercial in their heads, all at the same time. This is bound to have a more beneficial effect on the commodity system than if, at that moment, all those people were thinking separate thoughts which, in some cases, might not be about commodities at all.

The advertisers dominating children's time on the Channel 10 log, including the morning time when children also watch television, are makers of toys and novelty products, fast food chains such as McDonald's and the Pizza Hut, and several fun parks in the west of Sydney. None of these products is in any sense necessary. Nevertheless, for long periods every day they are being pushed into children's minds by the most persuasive methods. To a most significant degree parents are unable to compete with the influence of television, especially because younger children are psychologically unable to make a discriminating judgment about an advertisement. Parents have to battle against the strongly suggested idea that having fun is going to McDonald's, or that it will be highly satisfying to the child to have a new throwaway toy bought for it. It is a frightening narrow view of the possibilities of enjoyment.

As television advertising occupies such a large part of a child's life, it acts to narrow the child's conception of the possibilities of enjoyment in life. As the Federation of Parents and Citizens' Associations has agreed, in somewhat less explicit language, almost all the advertising that is broadcast, especially for children and adolescents, appears to be based on non-rational persuasion—for example, on image identification. Mindless identification with a product is substituted for a rational judgment about it. For obvious reasons, the federal Government agreed to the abolition of cigarette advertising on television. Above all, cigarette advertising was promoting a dangerous and addictive product to young children. In one sense the children's advertising that I have described promotes addiction. Nobody would object to the notion of the odd trip to a fast food establishment. However, the effect of television advertising on children is to create a constant demand, a sort of loyalty to the fast food chain, and a demand for the new one-day cricket with which McDonald's is identified—a form of cricket made for television. Also it creates conflict between parent and child over money. Further, advertising techniques easily bring children to believe that a parent who will not supply the child's stimulated consumer demand is uncaring or boring.

It is true that our society is becoming more crassly materialistic and less concerned with non-commercial values. It is to the mass media that one must look as a major cause. Television is with us, and that is that. I commend the courses about mass media that are now being introduced into New South Wales schools, and I commend the attempts by the New South Wales Federation of Parents and Citizens' Associations to have advertising disallowed in children's television time—at least to leave children free from advertising manipulation at their time of the day. Every member of the House should support his local parents and citizens association in this endeavour.

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr CAMERON (Northcott) [3.25]: My grievance is that, as a people, we are not sufficiently positive. Of course, one must have a grievance to take part in a grievance day debate. Grievances are, in themselves, negative and not positive. Having

stated my grievance, I wish from this point forth to be entirely affirmative. The most positive man I have met is Dr Norman Vincent Peale, author of *The Power of Positive Thinking*, *Stay Alive All Your Life*, and a whole array of other great motivational books. The writings of Dr Peale have exerted a major influence for good in my own life. That is a quarter within which there has always been liberal scope for uplift and improvement.

Dr Peale has always been interested in foundation-fixing. Today I am interested in looking again at our economic foundation and our economic bedrock. I wish to reassert the view that I have been developing—that it is the mining industry that constitutes Australia's economic bedrock. I wish to advance briefly some affirmative propositions in support of a high public image for mining and more realistic and supportive attitudes to it from governments of all tiers and colours. One extract from Dr Peale's voluminous writings appeals to me particularly, perhaps because of its geological emphasis or its references to excavations that are so central to mining operations. It deals with foundation-fixing in Manhattan, where Dr Peale lives. The doctor said:

Down in the financial district, workmen were digging the excavation for a huge skyscraper—a sixty-storey bank building—when they came upon some quicksand. The engineers were amazed, because most of the island of Manhattan is solid rock. But there was this quicksand which, as everyone knows, is hardly the ideal foundation for anything, let alone a sixty-storey building.

They tried to pump it out. No good. They tried to fill it in. No use. They summoned a learned professor of geology and asked him hopefully how long it would take that quicksand to turn into sandstone. About a million years, he said. More or less. This discouraged the bank board. They passed a resolution that they could not wait a million years; their depositors wouldn't like it.

Then someone suggested calling an outfit known as a chemical soil solidification company. When a representative appeared, they asked how long it would take them to change the quicksand into sandstone. "Well," said the man, "we're rather busy this week. But we can take care of it next week, if that's all right with you." Which was, you might say, an improvement on the original offer.

And they got the job. They drove up some trucks loaded with sodium silicate and calcium chloride, and they dumped these chemicals into the quicksand, and it turned into a substance strong enough to hold up a mighty skyscraper—and there it stands today.

Mining is to our economy the true bedrock, as distinct from quicksand. I wish to state shortly the affirmative pro-mining propositions that I foreshadowed earlier. Already I have stressed elsewhere that Australia's mining industry makes more money for our country than all other industry and agriculture combined. Mining industry leader, Sir Russel Madigan, made some compelling points that have impressed me greatly. I wish to adopt them. He said that minerals are the steppingstones for the ascent of man. Mining and metallurgy are the architecture for the ascent of man. Our minerals are the *sine qua non* for the advancement of civilization—they are indispensable; a condition precedent.

The mineral industry itself is the very spearhead of man's development. Just as the spearhead is the instrument of penetration, breakthrough and advancement, it is noteworthy that it is made of metal. It is only as man has learned to use metals that he

has progressed. Tragically, our Australian Aborigines, the concern of all, never learned metal skills. Virtually every metal implement used by man, from the needle to the family car—an now to spacecraft as well—depends upon metals and, therefore, depends upon mining. Historically, we began with the weapon, the spear itself, as a means of defence. One needed metals to defend oneself from the animals. But, with the invention of the plough, the use of metals turned to a most positive instrument of peace.

As well, mining is one of the few true decentralizing forces, helping to mitigate the chronic overurbanization of our population. To mention some great centres of mining—Broken Hill, Lightning Ridge, Cobar, Lithgow and Wollongong—is enough to illustrate this point. It has been said that decentralization and diffusion are the characteristics of organic life, just as concentration is the characteristic of mechanism. It is in a dynamo, not in a tree, that power is to be found at a single point, source or centre; and a dynamo may be put out of action by a single blow of a hammer, though a tree dies only by inches.

Mining provides a vital opportunity for the concept of the little capitalists mentioned by the honourable member for Gladesville. Tragically, all too few Australians have availed themselves of the opportunity to invest in the great Australian mining companies, but those opportunities are there. I put it strongly that this is the most direct way for the ordinary Australian to obtain a true stake in Australia, a stake that involves an interest in the real earth of Australia itself, and that is a development that I should like to see grow and swell. As well, mining is one of the positives associated with the Australian identity and character, the essential good patriotism of the nation, for the pioneering, outdoors and adventuring connotations associated with mining are the best aspects of the Australian identity.

I put it as well that there is a strong moral foundation for mining, and if one wished to search for that moral foundation one would not find it better put anywhere than in the parable of the talents in the Sermon on the Mount. The *New English Bible* version speaks of three servants given, respectively, five bags, two bags and one bag of gold. The servant who left his bag of gold in the ground was the one who was censured. He was told he should have extracted it and put the money on deposit, so that it might earn interest. I put it strongly that mining is extracting valuable minerals from the earth of Australia, and putting them to work for Australia. Australia is enjoying the product.

GOSFORD COUNCIL

Mr MCGOWAN (Gosford) [3.35]: I call upon the Minister for Local Government and Minister for Lands to dismiss the Gosford city council and appoint an administrator. I do this for a number of reasons. The first is the council's consistent attacks on land zoned for conservation, in that the council is accepting, without test, alleged anomalies in Interim Development Order 122 and allowing one house a block on conservation land rather than maintaining the spirit of the interim development order by at least ensuring that the titles to the blocks are genuinely registered with the Registrar General, and in that council continues to plan for a garbage tip at Siletta Road, Nerang, on land zoned for conservation because it is a rainforest pocket.

A further reason for my call is the approval by council of building or development applications on land zoned open space acquisition—particularly at Forrester's Beach and Erina—because of supposed delays by government departments in acquisition. The next reason is the council's approval of extensions to a private airport

at Narara, despite the strong protests of residents and the fact that a great deal of land at Narara has been set down for future residential development; and council's approval of an illegal extractive industry at the site of that airport.

Another reason for my call is the council's consistent disregard for the future financial welfare of the ratepayers of Gosford city in that they act to assist owners and developers of land at Kincumber recently rezoned residential from having to pay contributions towards the road infrastructure and social amenities such as playing fields, sporting facilities and community halls; and that the contributions that they have sought from owners and developers for such matters as drainage, roads and sewerage are inadequate; and that they acted, until compelled to change, to relieve owners and developers from any charge for sewerage head works. Further to that, the council's disposal of council cars to councillors, or a councillor, has brought council's policies into dispute and raised serious questions in the minds of my constituents whether such disposals are not the subject of undue influence.

Yet another reason for my call is the behaviour of the mayor of Gosford city council, Alderman Leggett, who supplanted the town clerk, Mr Ben Pratt, and has, over a long period, acted as town clerk rather than mayor—or, previously, shire president. Another reason is that the council's freeze on dwellings, hotels and taverns in the coastal area of my electorate allegedly prejudice the draft regional environmental plan for the coastal area, despite the letter of 6th January, 1982, from the Department of Environment and Planning, allowing council to consider such matters in the normal way.

Further, councillors conspired to elect another alderman to a local businessmen's club so that council would have no quorum compelling ministerial intervention to allow the whole council to consider the matter. The aim was to ensure a majority for those who sought to circumvent council's code relating to the provision of parking. Yet another reason for my call is council's attempt to compel builders to undertake work to comply with an owner's building approval above and beyond the terms of the builder's contract with the owner; and council's selective implementation of building ordinances in that one owner or builder will be required to undertake certain conditions while others are not so required.

The Gosford city council has failed to explain adequately council policies to complainants; in some cases it has failed to make any explanation whatsoever. Further, the Gosford city council has failed to examine the efficiency and management structure of council's operations and to implement changes aimed at reducing management costs, thereby reducing costs and rates imposed on the ratepayers. My constituents have constantly requested me to do something about Gosford city council. I have made continual and detailed representations about these matters. My constituents have requested me to press to have the council dismissed and replaced by an administrator. I know that the honourable member for Peats has received similar requests from his constituents. I repeat: I call upon the Minister for Local Government and Minister for Lands to dismiss Gosford city council and appoint an administrator.

MR BARRY CASSELL

Mr BOYD (Byron) [3.42]: I wish to bring to the notice of the House a matter in the grievance debate on 12th November, 1981, concerning guidelines for the conduct of regional and industrial development boards throughout New South Wales. On that occasion I presented to the House and to the former Minister for Industrial Development and Minister for Decentralisation information that he said

he would examine and investigate. In fact, he went so far as to say that he would hand the investigation over to the Attorney-General. On 9th February the former Minister for Industrial Development and Minister for Decentralisation tabled in the House a report on the results of the investigations. In doing so, I consider that he clearly inferred that the matter had not been handled by the Attorney-General and that investigations had been limited and superficial. The report reveals that Mr Hanckel, director of the Department of Industrial Development, had interviewed Mr Barry Cassell. The investigation was to ask him about, and subsequently inform the House, some specific matters involving him. I am pleased that the report deals with some of these issues. However, other matters have not been touched upon. It is important that I read from the report, which was oversigned by the Minister. It is in these terms:

When industrial development boards were established in 1980 guidelines were provided for them, but these guidelines did not make explicit provisions for confidentiality nor for declaring interest. However, I have given consideration to reinforcing these aspects and explicit additions have been made as a means of protection for the community and for the board members themselves. I now have strengthened those guidelines.

That is positive action. The purpose of my raising the matter in the first place has been vindicated by those remarks and by the fact that the Minister has done something. However, I am worried by the lack of a full inquiry, as revealed by the report. I go so far as to say that the term whitewashing could be used quite fairly. The investigation had no depth. When I brought the matter to the House I did not have the benefit of a press statement that has subsequently been made by Mr Cassell. In that statement Mr Cassell brought out into the open many matters that were previously unknown to me. The press statement confirms the need for further investigation.

The report states that Mr Cassell agrees that he sought a commission of \$50,000 from a firm to represent its interests with government departments. He asked for a \$15,000 down payment on that commission with a \$35,000 payment on conclusion. But, what he did not say then, and I did not know this, was that Mr Cassell has said also that he writes ten such quotes each month. That is worthy of note and investigation. Mr Cassell is saying, in effect, that he has a cash flow of about \$500,000 a month. When multiplied by twelve, that amounts to \$6 million a year. It is incredible that a man holding public office in this State admits that on the letterheads of his company he was signing as the chairman of the Regional Industrial Development Board, apparently for the purpose of fostering the development of his business. Had the original investigation been an indepth inquiry many other things may have been discovered.

Mr Cassell has two companies registered in Canberra in his name. One is the Australian Business Consultants, the registered office of which has an address in a residential area of Canberra. The other company, Australian Business and Rural Consultants, also has an office with a suburban residential address. The letterheads of the company contain many anomalies. Mr Cassell is using these letterheads for his correspondence. One letterhead includes a telephone number but it is not the telephone number of the company concerned. The telephone number is that of an organization called a Day in the Life of the World. Neither the companies nor Mr Cassell are listed in the Canberra telephone directory. The telex number on the letterhead is not that of Mr Cassell; it is the telex number of the Cattlemen's Union. Surely it must be of concern that a man, on his own admission, can set himself up in this way to establish a cash flow of \$6 million, without the infrastructure to service that business. I have no doubt that the only worker in Mr Cassell's companies is Mr Cassell himself. On my information he does not maintain an office or an office girl.

How could the Government or any Minister in the Government accept Mr Cassell's statements as a reasonable explanation for his operations? When examined by Mr Hanckel, Mr Cassell clearly said: "Yes, I certainly signed those letters. I did it in error. It was a mistake. I had a lot of mail to sign that day". I assume that Mr Hanckel, the Minister and the Government accepted that as a reasonable excuse. Mr Cassell holds a high public appointment; his is a highly paid executive position. He receives payment of between \$175 and \$200 for a day's work for the Department of Decentralisation and Development. Surely Mr Cassell is above that sort of mistake. Surely he is sufficiently competent to satisfy himself that he is not making a mistake of that magnitude when signing a letter. Such an action would be comparable with my signing a letter suggesting that I was the Premier of New South Wales or the Governor-General or some other prominent citizen.

Further investigation is needed. The company structure of Mr Cassell has to be examined. This House ought to be informed about it. I call upon the Minister to do just that, to prove without any doubt that he is not carrying out a whitewash. Mr Cassell has said in a press statement, "Yes, I took a commission to help a Labor candidate in the last State election". One wonders—it ought to be clarified—whether he took a commission to help the Minister for Industrial Development and Minister for Decentralisation in the last State election. Perhaps only the Minister can answer that. If Mr Cassell did take a commission from the Minister to help him in the last State election, obviously the Minister is not the man to be investigating this matter. Caesar should not be asked to sit in judgment on Caesar or to investigate Caesar. That should be done by an independent authority. I suggest that we seek that independent authority as quickly as we can.

Mr Cassell is doing his usual war dance. He has threatened to issue a writ against me to prevent me from raising this matter in the House and having it investigated further. Well, I have news for Mr Cassell. He can issue a writ against me, but without doubt the matter will be investigated, for I believe that when there is evidence of corruption like this existing in the structure of government departments and semi-government departments, obviously the matter should be clarified as quickly as possible. I, for one, do not wish to be a party to it. Though the Minister has strengthened the guidelines, I note that he has not tabled them in the House. I suggest that he should do that. For too long has Mr Cassell had a charmed life. There are many other matters that he has been involved in though I shall not raise them in this House; but, anyone who lives in the area where he lives will know what I am talking about.

SALES TAX ON PET FOOD

Mr MCILWAINE (Ryde) [3.52]: I wish to raise an important matter that is causing widespread concern in my electorate, where up to 14 per cent of the population are pensioners. They are most concerned about the proposed imposition of sales tax on pet food. I hear a great deal that is said by the local federal member, Mr Ruddock, and I read what he writes in the local paper. He is constantly attacking the Parramatta city council or the State Government over housing commission projects, but we hear nothing at all from him in defence of the right to proper living standards of pensioners in the area. A number of pensioners have told me how important it is to them when living on their own to have the companionship and the feeling of warmth that they get from their pets, whether they be dogs or cats or other pets. Yet members of the

Liberal Party support a sales tax on pet foods. I have here a statement made by the Hon. Michael Baume, federal member for Macarthur, in an address to the Australian Packaging Council in October last. He said, presumably on behalf of the Minister:

Imposing a \$7 million a year sales tax bill on the Australian packaging industry is worth while if it leads to lower income taxes.

On the other hand we have the Liberal Government under Mr Fraser denying that there will be any tax cuts. The Hon. J. W. Howard, the federal Treasurer, another local federal member in the Ryde area, is saying that there will be no further tax cuts. One of the things I find extraordinary about Mr Baume's statement is that had it not been for the Budget's sales tax rises, real total consumption taxes would actually have fallen this year. What a crime, for consumption taxes—a tax on individuals—to have fallen. These are taxes on the necessities of life for pensioners. Mr Baume expressed concern that they might have fallen, there might have been some lesser imposition of them. Another statement by Mr Baume on that occasion was:

It is much better to cut income taxes instead of just allowing a steady erosion of indirect taxes to use up all the available funds.

He went on to say:

The new sales taxes have a much fairer impact on lower income groups than the falling consumer taxes that they are off-setting.

Mr Baume is the chairman of the federal Government's taxation subcommittee. It is clear to me that under the federal Constitution the Commonwealth Government has powers to deal with the peace, order and good government of the Commonwealth with respect to, under placitum (xxiii), invalid and old-age pensions and, under placitum (xxiiA), the provision of maternity allowances, widows' pensions, child endowment, unemployment, pharmaceutical, sickness and hospital benefits and the like. The point I am making is that it is quite clear that social security is a responsibility of the federal Government, and it is so as the result of an alteration to the Constitution in 1946. The honourable member for Gordon, who is a qualified lawyer, would have to admit that that is one of the few constitutional alterations that was overwhelmingly carried by the people at a referendum. The people of this nation have spoken clearly and declared that pensions and associated things are the responsibility of the federal Government. Yet Mr Ruddock, the federal member for Dundas, is completely silent on the matter of the proposed new sales taxes. He has received many representations from people about the imposition of sales tax, particularly on pet foods, but he has maintained complete silence. As a result of the imposition of sales tax on pet food by the federal Government, pensioners and elderly people will not be able to have support from their pets and will have to get rid of them. I shall quote from a nice letter that has come to my attention, written by the federal Minister Assisting the Treasurer to a constituent of mine who raised this matter with me. The Minister said:

The proposal to make pet food subject to sales tax was formulated during the deliberations preceding the Budget when it was decided to remove a number of anomalies and inconsistencies which had crept into the sales tax law.

That is most interesting. Later in the letter he went on with a whole range of things——

[Interruption]

Mr DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order!

Mr McILWAINE: The letter from which I quoted was written very carefully. It refers to various provisions and tells how the anomaly had been created and so on. It goes on to say:

The effect of the Budget proposal relating to pet food is to tax pet food for animals kept as domestic pets. Pet food purchased by persons for animals kept other than as domestic pets, e.g., guide dogs, and animals in refuges or boarding kennels, will continue to be exempt from sales tax.

It is a nice letter. One would feel convinced that the Minister was being tolerant and sympathetic to some sections of the community. He will exempt people who will have guide dogs, animals in refuges and the like. But when one carefully examines the provisions of the sales tax legislation one finds that there will be exemption for foods for farm animals such as cattle, sheep, pigs, horses, et cetera, and foodstuffs for these types of animals. The letter goes on to say that certain professional people—professional dog breeders, businessmen who have watchdogs, farmers who have working dogs, people who have greyhound dogs—will have exemption from sales tax but the poor pensioner who lives in my area will not have exemption for his pet. It is disgraceful and reprehensible that I have heard nothing from the local federal member, Mr Ruddock, decrying this additional tax on the people of his electorate and mine.

I ask the House to take note of this matter in the hope that the federal member, Mr Ruddock, will reconsider his attitude. He is forever asking State governments to take action on a number of issues. Now it is clear that the constitution regards pensioners as the responsibility of the federal Government, I ask him to support the people of the Ryde area in their demand to exempt pensioners from the proposed sales tax on pet food.

CRIMINAL PROSECUTIONS

Mr T. J. MOORE (Gordon) [4.0]: I wish to refer to the facts surrounding the failure of the Attorney-General to file a no-bill in the prosecution of an alleged murderer, Ronald David Simon, who was committed for trial in August 1981 for the murder of Michael Patrick O'Connor in Warrawong. A newspaper report of the circumstances of the alleged murder states:

At the committal hearing last August, police alleged Michael Patrick O'Connor, a wharf labourer, had gone to a house in Lee Street, Warrawong to see his estranged wife.

She was living at the house with her mother and her mother's *de-facto* husband, Ronald David Simon.

According to police, Simon alleged he had purchased a single-barrelled shotgun for protection after O'Connor had threatened to "come around one night and cut our throat".

Simon said he had intended to frighten O'Connor, who refused requests to leave the house.

I do not propose to address myself to the merits of the case, but simply the fact that Mr and Mrs O'Connor, Michael's parents, who readily admit that Michael was no saint, feel that they are denied justice because they are not told why charges found to be warranted to be placed before a jury have now been dropped, cloaked in secrecy, by the Attorney-General.

I am aware that Standing Order 55 permits the Parliament to send an address to the Governor commanding the tabling of these papers and giving the O'Connors the reasons for the dropping of the charges. However, for reasons that are politically

obvious, I, as a member of the Opposition, have no prospect of obtaining Government support for the tabling of those papers. An editorial in the *Daily Mirror*, on 21st January reads:

Some laws of State Parliament should be urgently reviewed following the unexplained acquittal of a man charged with murder.

Mr Walker was quite entitled to take this action, and the parents of the murder victim are quite entitled to know why he did this.

I concur in those sentiments. The conclusion that the editorial came to was:

All of us should agree with him and call for a change in the law that may end the tragic suffering he and his family are going through for no apparent reason.

If there is evidence that supported the order that a no-bill be filed—which I expect there is, for I accept the bona fides of the Attorney-General in this case—it is open to the Attorney-General to apply, for example, under section 47 of the Coroners Act, for an inquest into Michael O'Connor's death, to permit this additional evidence to be made public and to extinguish the grief and feeling of denial of justice that Michael O'Connor's parents rightly feel.

By way of contrast, I invite the attention of the House to a statement by Senator Durack, the Commonwealth Attorney-General, made on 15th January that the federal Government proposes to outline publicly the guidelines it uses for prosecutions under Commonwealth law. Senator Durack said it was important that Commonwealth officers should have clear guidelines before initiating prosecution proceedings and equally important for every citizen to be aware of them. "I do not believe that the policy guidelines will cover every possible situation", he said. "However, I hope that by making the prosecution public, people will better understand why these decisions are made". It is trite to say that for justice to be done it must be seen to be done. However trite that saying may be, it is true. Equally, when justice is not seen to be done it is not done particularly to the bereaved, who must live without knowing the reasons for overruling judicial decisions by a secret and unreviewable process.

There is an irony in the statements made by the Attorney-General in a letter to the *Daily Telegraph* dated 30th January, 1982, on the subject of the O'Connor no-bill. The Attorney-General, in his letter, states that the Crown has certain obligations to discharge in a trial and that, because on evidence and submissions made to him he was obviously not satisfied that that onus was capable of being discharged, he had directed that no-bill be filed. I do not disagree with that as a proposition under a system of legal construction and legal obligation in the criminal law. The problem is that members of a family who feel that a murder has been committed against one of their number are entitled to know why the person who has been committed to trial on a charge of committing that murder has been let off without having the issue tested before a jury. The fundamental question is whether there was sufficient material upon which a jury, properly instructed, would fail to convict the accused.

It is probable—assuming the Attorney-General's bona fides in this matter, as I do—that additional evidence was placed before the Attorney-General, demonstrating to him and Crown officers that it is unlikely that a jury, properly instructed, would convict Ronald Simon of the murder of Michael O'Connor. But Mr O'Connor's parents, knowing that committal proceedings have found that a prima facie case exists against Ronald Simon, have a right to know the nature of the additional evidence that caused a man, against whom a preliminary finding of murder was made, not to have to face a jury.

Equally, this case raises serious issues relating to the freedom of the press to report matters of trial and public concern in the legal system. At the time when the Attorney-General was saying, as he did in the *Daily Telegraph* on 16th February, that a possible tightening up of defamation laws will lead to a threat to the freedom of the press in this State, it is ironic that he seeks to hide behind the standing orders of this House without availing himself of the provisions of section 47 of the Coroners Act. Under that section he may apply to the Supreme Court for an inquest, as no inquest has been held into the death of Michael O'Connor. That inquest would bring the facts out into the open and such a hearing would protect the freedom of the press—a principle about which the Attorney-General so zealously trumpets on other occasions.

It is a pity that the no-bill procedures in the administration of justice in New South Wales are not handled more publicly. From time to time matters of political controversy relating to public personages occasionally arise with respect to no-bills. I do not allege that is the case with respect to the alleged murder of Michael O'Connor. However, it is open to the Attorney-General to apply for a coroner's inquest to allow the additional evidence, which I assume has properly been placed before him, to be brought out into the open so that the family of Michael O'Connor—those bereaved by his death and aggrieved by the fact that somebody against whom a prima facie case of murder has been found has not been brought to justice—may be given publicly the reasons for what has been done. Surely the family is entitled to know why a man who has admitted killing their son should not be tried so that all the issues may be tested before a court of criminal justice. As the Attorney-General by filing a no-bill has prevented that occurring, I consider that as a matter of justice he should permit an inquest to be held to permit the additional facts to be brought into the open.

SCHOOL BUS SERVICES—SMOKING IN TAXIS

Mrs CROSIO (Fairfield) [4.10]: I wish to raise two matters, the first being the use of private buses for transporting schoolchildren. Each year the Department of Education allocates a large sum to provide free bus transport for schoolchildren within my electorate. I refer particularly to transport to the St John's Park High School. Although that school is in the electorate of the honourable member for Cabramatta, of the 870 pupils that attend the school 790 live in the electorate of Fairfield. Two bus proprietors provide a service to that school. The buses of one proprietor pick up 80 children. The other proprietor supplies 8 buses and transports the other 790 students.

The Minister for Education is aware that I have received many deputations about private buses. The citizens in these western electorates are not as fortunate as those in other electorates where government bus services are available. Private buses serve these western areas. The bus proprietors are given a specific time at which to pick up the children to transport them to school and to take them home. They are paid on the basis of each bus pass issued to the children. The buses have been operating for the five years that the St John's Park High School has been open. The school comes out at 3.20 p.m., and most of the children should be home by 4.10 p.m. at the latest. Parents become distressed when children arrive home at 5.30 p.m. or 5.45 p.m. They are distressed also by some buses not arriving as expected. The result is that teachers cram students in by physical force, in an endeavour to get more of them into the buses. On occasions five and six students have sat on the seats in a row and two students have stood alongside them in the aisle. Although the students are not supposed to smoke, some do so, particularly those in year 10 and year 11. They may smoke in a bus that may be carrying ninety-eight students.

I ask the Minister for Education to investigate why one bus proprietor is not providing the extra four buses that he promised. Continually he has told representatives of the parents and citizens association, the principal of the school and numerous parents who have been to see him that the bus service is adequate and that the children are arriving home eventually. If a bus breaks down the children are told to leave it and to walk. Usually they have to walk along busy major highways. The proprietor is paid a substantial sum to convey children throughout the district. Parents expect that their children will be transported to and from school in a reasonable manner and in safety.

The next matter to which I wish to refer is smoking in private taxis. I hope that the Minister for Transport will take action in this area. Some years ago the Government passed legislation that prohibited passengers smoking on government buses, trains, ferries and hydrofoils. Yet people are still permitted to smoke in private buses. I draw attention to the distinction made between passengers travelling in government transport and those using private transport. The Government could have provided for smokers in trains by making available a specific carriage. Non-smokers travelling on public transport should not be harassed during short or long journeys by other people smoking, particularly if the non-smokers are adversely affected by it. Some passengers in private buses may suffer discomfort by other passengers smoking. There is no uniformity in the law. I have already raised this matter with the Minister for Transport and I know that he will give consideration to my representations.

A passenger in a taxi is permitted to smoke. I acknowledge that a person who hires a taxi should be able, within reason, to do what he wishes during his journey. Some taxis are permitted to multiple hire, unless passengers do not wish to travel to the one destination. The taxi driver cannot say to one passenger, "Please do not smoke in my taxi as I have another passenger in the back seat whom it affects". I express concern about the anomalies that exist in some of our laws, and I instance the inconsistency with the laws relating to smoking. If there is a law on smoking applicable to people travelling on government buses, the same law should be applicable to passengers in private buses. I ask that taxicabs be classified as private transport. Although at first there were some objections to smoking not being permitted on suburban trains, the people have accepted the restriction. I am sure that in the same way they would accept that smoking was not permitted on private buses.

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

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

BILL RETURNED

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

Standard Time (Amendment) Bill

PRINTING COMMITTEE

Fifth Report

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

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Mr BOOTH (Wallsend), Treasurer [4.16]: I move:

That the House at its rising this Day, do adjourn until Tuesday, 9 March, 1982.

Mr CAMERON (Northcott) [4.16]: The Opposition does not oppose the motion; it proposes to assist the Government in its difficulties. The blunt truth is that the Government has no legislative programme ready to come before the House. That has been evident through the sittings that have extended over the past two weeks. The Opposition's basic view is that the best thing that could be done is to allow the House to adjourn for a fortnight so that the Government can get its act in order, for it is completely out of order at the moment. There have been a number of instances of that. On 10th February the House had an early mark as there was simply no business with which it could proceed. The votes and proceedings paper make it abundantly clear that the House adjourned at six minutes after 9 o'clock. It adjourned then purely and simply because the Government had nothing to do.

On the next day, after question time the House should have dealt with legislation in the normal way during the morning. An extraordinary process was adopted to enable the motion of the honourable member for Gladesville, which dealt entirely with federal matters of no concern to this Parliament, to transcend the time normally set aside for legislation and be debated not only throughout the course of Thursday afternoon but also for part of Thursday morning. That motion sought to condemn another Parliament about matters such as increasing interest rates, rising medical costs, excessive charging by doctors, large-scale tax avoidance and the abandonment of wage and income tax indexation. None of those subjects was the concern of this Parliament. The charade proceeded. The clear situation is that the Government has called together the Parliament with nothing to put before it. Honourable members know that the purpose of the adjournment, after the Parliament has sat for the short period of six days, is to enable the Premier and Minister for Mineral Resources to go on some kind of junket to China. We have been informed that he will take an entourage of some eleven journalists. I say good luck to those persons who have been able to obtain some of the easy pickings that go with it.

Those matters have nothing to do with this Government and they have nothing to do with advancing the peace, order and good government of the premier State. Today honourable members received their first official notification in the House that the Government intends to introduce the Community Welfare Bill, but heaven knows when we will get round to debating it. It is absurd and incredible that this House should adjourn for two weeks. This is a great Parliament, and it ought to have ample opportunity to debate a number of important issues. The Government's chronic disorganization is such that it has no legislation to place before this House. In all the circumstances, the Opposition will oblige the Government by not opposing the motion; it will agree to the Government going on its way and trying to get its act together.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned, on motion by Mr Booth, at 4.22 p.m., until Tuesday, 9th March, 1982.

QUESTION UPON NOTICE

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

TRAIL BIKES AND MINIBIKES

Mr AQUILINA asked the Minister for Police and Minister for Services—

- (1) How many accidents involving death or serious bodily harm have occurred in the Sydney metropolitan area within the last three years through the unsupervised riding of trail bikes and minibikes?
- (2) What powers are presently available to the police for the apprehension of illegal riders on reserves and open space areas?
- (3) Is the Police Department presently reviewing the laws in relation to the riding of trail bikes?
- (4) Are such measures as the impounding of bikes of constant offenders being considered by the Police Department as a feasible deterrent?
- (5) Have representations been received from the western suburbs for the establishment of a police bike squad in the western area of Sydney, and are there any proposals by him to establish such a squad?

Answer—

- (1) The Police Department does not maintain statistics specifically relating to deaths or injuries associated with the riding of trail bikes and minibikes.

Fatalities and injuries occurring on public roads are recorded according to the class of vehicle involved, such as motor car, motor lorry, motor cycle, etc., and there is no separate classification for trail bikes or minibikes. A fatality involving a trail bike or minibike on property not being a public road is not, of course, regarded as a road death. However, it is reported to the Coroner as a death occurring as a result of an accident and is documented as such within the Coroner's Office.

- (2) The most common legislation used by police to deal with riders of trail bikes and minibikes is the Motor Traffic Act, 1909, the Motor Vehicles (Third Party Insurance) Act, 1942, and the Local Government Act, 1919. However, statutory powers are also available to police under the provisions of the National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974, Crown Lands Consolidation Act, 1913, Noise Control Act, 1975, Forestry Act, 1916, and the Speedway Racing (Public Safety) Act, 1957.

- (3) A working party, on which the Police Department is represented, is currently examining the report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Use of Off Road Vehicles conducted by the State Pollution Control Commission.

- (4) A number of possible proposals to help combat elements of the problem may arise out of the review referred to in (3).

- (5) Following the receipt of representations supporting the establishment of a trail bike squad in the western suburbs, two officers from the Police Trail Bike Squad were assigned to Blacktown to perform duties on a trial basis during portion of January 1982. Future action is currently being determined in the light of results achieved during the trial.
