THIRTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—SECOND PERIOD

Governor-General

His Excellency the Honourable William George Hayden, Companion of the Order of Australia, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia.

House of Representatives Officeholders

Speaker—The Honourable Leo Boyce McLeay

Chairman of Committees—Mr Ronald Frederick Edwards

Deputy Chairman of Committees—Mr David Bruce Cowan,
Hon. James Donald Mathieson Dobie, Mr Stephen Cairfield Dubois, Mr Collin Hollis,
Mr Henry Alfred Jenkins, Hon. Michael John Randal MacKellar,
Mr Garry Barr Nehl, Hon. Gordon Glen Denton Scholes,
Mr Leslie James Scott and Mrs Kathryn Jean Sullivan

Leader of the House—The Honourable Kim Christian Beazley

Leader of the Opposition—Dr John Robert Hewson

Deputy Leader of the Opposition—Mr Peter Keaston Reith

Manager of Opposition Business—The Honourable Wallace Clyde Fife

House of Representatives Party Leaders

Leader of the Australian Labor Party—The Honourable
Robert James Lee Hawke, AC

Deputy Leader of the Australian Labor Party—The Honourable
Paul John Keating

Leader of the Liberal Party of Australia—Dr John Robert Hewson

Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party of Australia—Mr Peter Keaston Reith

Leader of the National Party of Australia—Mr Timothy Andrew Fischer

Deputy Leader of the National Party of Australia—Mr Bruce Lloyd
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<td>Aldred, Kenneth James</td>
<td>Deakin, Vic.</td>
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<td>Anders, John Duncan</td>
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<td>Andrew, John Neil</td>
<td>Wakefield, SA</td>
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<td>Atkinson, Rodney</td>
<td>Isaacs, Vic.</td>
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<td>Alexander Bailey</td>
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<td>Baldwin, Hon. Peter</td>
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<td>Beazley, Hon. Kim</td>
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<td>Wilson, Hon. Ian Sturt, SA</td>
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<td>Bonython Cameron Page, NSW</td>
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<td>Woodridge, Dr Michael Richard Lewis</td>
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<td>Wright, Keith Webb Capricornia, Qld</td>
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**PARTY ABBREVIATIONS**

ALP—Australian Labor Party; LP—Liberal Party of Australia; NP—National Party of Australia; Ind.—Independent
Fourth Hawke Ministry

• Prime Minister
  The Honourable Robert James Lee Hawke, AC  
The Honourable Paul John Keating

• Deputy Prime Minister, Treasurer, and Minister assisting the Prime Minister for Commonwealth-State Relations

• Leader of the Government in the Senate and Minister for Industry, Technology and Commerce

• Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade

• Minister for Finance

• Attorney-General

• Minister for Employment, Education and Training

• Minister for Transport and Communications, Vice-President of the Executive Council and Leader of the House

• Minister for Primary Industries and Energy

• Minister for Community Services and Health and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Social Justice

• Minister for Trade Negotiations, Minister Assisting the Minister for Industry, Technology and Commerce and Minister Assisting the Minister for Primary Industries and Energy

• Minister for Social Security

• Minister for Defence and Manager of Government Business in the Senate

• Minister for Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Multicultural Affairs

• Minister for the Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territories

• Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Public Service Matters

• Minister for Administrative Services

• Minister for Justice and Consumer Affairs

• Minister for Aged, Family and Health Services

• Minister for Veterans’ Affairs

• Minister for Land Transport

• Minister for the Arts, Tourism and Territories

• Minister for Higher Education and Employment Services

• Minister for Small Business and Customs

• Minister for Defence Science and Personnel

• Minister for Shipping and Aviation Support and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Northern Australia

• Minister for Science and Technology, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Science and Minister Assisting the Treasurer

• Minister for Local Government and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Status of Women

• Minister for Resources

• Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

• Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister

• Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer

• Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Social Security

• Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Transport and Communications

• Minister in the Cabinet

Senator the Honourable John Norman Button

Senator the Honourable Gareth John Evans, QC

The Honourable Ralph Willis

The Honourable Michael John Duffy

The Honourable John Sydney Dawkins

The Honourable Kim Christian Beazley

The Honourable John Charles Kerin

The Honourable Brian Leslie Howe

The Honourable Neal Blewett

Senator The Honourable Graham Frederick Richardson

Senator the Honourable Robert Francis Ray

The Honourable Gerard Leslie Hand

The Honourable Roslyn Joan Kelly

Senator the Honourable Peter Francis Salmon Cook

Senator the Honourable Nick Bolkus

Senator the Honourable Michael Carter Tate

The Honourable Peter Richard Staples

The Honourable Benjamin Charles Humphreys

The Honourable Robert James Brown

The Honourable David William Simmons.

The Honourable Peter Jeremy Baldwin

The Honourable David Peter Beddall

The Honourable Gordon Neil Bilney

Senator the Honourable Robert Lindsay Collins

The Honourable Simon Findlay Crean

The Honourable Wendy Frances Fatin

The Honourable Alan Gordon Griffiths

The Honourable Robert Edward Tickner

The Honourable Ross Vincent Free

Senator the Honourable Robert Francis McMullan

The Honourable Con Sciacca

The Honourable Warren Edward Snowdon
THE COMMITTEES OF THE SESSION

FIRST SESSION: SECOND PERIOD

STANDING COMMITTEES

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS—Mr Kerr (Chairman), Mr Anderson, Mr Gibson, Mr Lavarch, Mr Nugent, Mr Riggall, Mr Sawford, Mr L. J. Scott, Mr Snowdon, Dr Wooldridge. (Mr Gayler and Mr Webster to serve on committee during consideration of inquiry into support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities.)

COMMUNITY AFFAIRS—Mr Jenkins (Chairman), Mrs Bailey, Dr Catley, Mr Cowan, Mrs Crosio, Mr Elliott, Mrs Gallus, Mr Goodluck, Mr Jakobsen, Mr Johns, Mr Walker, Mr Wilson.

EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING—Mr Price (Chairman), Mr Anderson, Mr Atkinson, Mr Bevis, Mr Bradford, Mr Charles, Ms Crawford, Mr Gibson, Mrs Jakobsen, Mr Jones, Mr Sawford, Mr B. C. Scott.

ENVIRONMENT, RECREATION AND THE ARTS—Ms McHugh (Chairman), Dr Charlesworth, Mrs Darling, Mr Dobie, Mr Dubois, Mr R. F. Edwards, Mr P. S. Fisher, Mrs Gallus, Mr Gear, Mr Jenkins, Mr Newell, Mr Truss, Mr Webster.

FINANCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION—Mr Martin (Chairman), Mr Andrew, Mr Beale, Mr Braithwaite. Dr Charlesworth, Mr Courtice, Mr Downer, Mr Dubois, Mr R. F. Edwards, Mr Elliott, Mr Gear, Mr Hall, Mr Wilson.

HOUSE—The Speaker, Mr Hollis, Mr Lloyd, Mr MacKellar, Mr Martin, Mr Nehl, Mr Price, Mrs Sullivan.

INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY—Mr Lee (Chairman), Mr Campbell, Mr Cobb, Mr Ferguson, Mr Ford, Mr Gibson, Mr Grace, Mr Jenkins, Mr Jones, Mr McArthur, Mr Nugent, Mr Reid, Mr L. J. Scott.

LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS—Mr Lavarch (Chairman), Mr N. A. Brown, Mr Cadman, Dr Charlesworth, Mr Costello, Mr Kerr, Mr Martin, Mr Melham, Mr Scholes, Mr Sinclair, Mr Smith, Mr Wright.

LIBRARY—The Speaker, Mrs Bailey, Mr Fitzgibbon, Mr Hollis, Mr Jones, Mr Ronaldson, Mr Truss.

LONG TERM STRATEGIES—Mr Jones (Chairman), Mr Atkinson, Mr Bevis, Mr Bradford, Mr Broadbent, Dr Catley, Mr Dobie, Mr Ferguson, Mr Johns, Mr A. A. Morris, Mr Nehl, Mr O’Neill, Mr Snow.

MEMBERS’ INTEREST—Mr Dubois (Chairman), Mr Connolly, Mr Cowan, Mr Lindsay, Mr L. J. Scott, Mr O’Neill, Mr Ruddock.

PRIVILEGES—Mr Gear (Chairman), Mr N. A. Brown, Mr Costello, Mrs Crosio, Mr Johns, Mr Lavarch, Mr McGauran, Mr Snow, Mr Snowdon.

PROCEDURE—Mr Scholes (Chairman), Mr R. F. Edwards, Mr Grace, Mr Hollis, Mr Rocher, Mr Shack, Mr Truss, Mr Walker.

PUBLICATIONS—Mr Gorman (Chairman), Dr H. R. Edwards, Mr Filing, Mr P. S. Fisher, Mr Fitzgibbon, Mr Gear, Mr Gibson.

SELECTION—Mr R. F. Edwards (Chairman), Mr Andrew, Mr Burr, Mr Gear, Mr Grace, Mr Halverson, Mr Hicks, Mr Hollis, Mr Kerr, Mr Langmore, Mr Nehl.

TRANSPORT, COMMUNICATIONS AND INFRASTRUCTURE—Mr P. F. Morris (Chairman), Mr Anderson, Mr Cadman, Mr Cameron, Mr Campbell, Mr Elliott, Mr Gorman, Mr Hawker, Mr Hollis, Mr Lee, Mr Mack, Mr L. J. Scott, Mr H. F. Woods.

JOINT STATUTORY COMMITTEES

AUSTRALIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE ORGANIZATION—Mr Wright (Presiding Member), Mr Duncan, Mr Langmore, Mr McGauran, Senator Cootes, Senator MacGovern, Senator Zakharov.

BROADCASTING OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS—The Speaker, the President, Mrs Darling, Mr R. F. Edwards, Mr Hicks, Mr Jull, Mr Price, Senator Coates, Senator Vanstone.

NATIONAL CRIME AUTHORITY—Mr Lindsay (Chairman), Mr Filing, Mr McGauran, Mr Melham, Mr O’Keefe, Mr Sinclair, Senator Crighton-Browne, Senator Jones, Senator Loosley, Senator Reynolds, Senator Spindler, Senator Vanstone.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS—Mr Punch (Chairman), Mr Aldred, Mrs Crosio, Mr Fitzgibbon, Mr Kerr, Mr Langmore, Mr Nehl, Mr Punch, Mr L. J. Scott, Mr Shack, Mr Somi, Senator Bishop, Senator Giles, Senator Leesley, Senator Reynolds, Senator Schacht, Senator Watson.

PUBLIC WORKS—Mr Hollis (Chairman), Mr Cameron, Mr Gorman, Mr O’Neill, Mr B. C. Scott, Mr Taylor, Senator Burns, Senator Calvert, Senator Devereux.
JOINT COMMITTEES

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY—Mr Langmore (Chairman), Mr Elliott, Mr Moore, Mr Scholes, Mr Sharp, Senator Aulich, Senator Bell, Senator Devlin, Senator Parer, Senator Reid, Senator West.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE—Senator Schacht (Chairman), Mr Bevis, Mr Connolly, Mr Dubois, Dr H. R. Edwards, Mr Ferguson, Mr Fitzgibbon, Mr Halverson, Mr Hicks, Mr Hollis Mr Langmore, Mr Lee, Mr Lindsay, Mr MacKellar, Mr Moore, Mr Punch, Mr L. J. Scott, Mr Sinclair, Mr Taylor, Dr Theophanous, Senator Beahan, Senator Brownhill, Senator Chapman, Senator Childs, Senator Crighton-Browne, Senator Jones, Senator MacGibbon, Senator Maguire, Senator McLean, Senator Vallentine.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEES

ELECTORAL MATTERS—Mr Brereton (Chairman), Dr Catley, Mr Cobb, Mr Melham, Mr Miles, Senator Beahan, Senator Bell, Senator Faulkner, Senator Harradine, Senator Kemp, Senator Kernot, Senator Short.

MIGRATION REGULATIONS—Dr Theophanous (Chairman), Mr Burr, Dr Catley, Mr Holding, Mr Ruddock, Mr Sinclair, Mr Wilson, Senator Cooney, Senator McKiernan, Senator Olsen, Senator Spindler.
PARLIAMENTARY DEPARTMENTS

SENATE

Clerk of the Senate—H. Evans
Deputy Clerk of the Senate—A. Lynch
Clerk Assistant (Table)—M. Cornwall
Clerk Assistant (Management)—J. Vander Wyk
Clerk Assistant (Procedure)—C. J. C. Elliott
Clerk Assistant (Committees)—P. O'Keefe
Usher of the Black Rod—R. Alison

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Clerk of the House—A. R. Browning
Deputy Clerk of the House—L. M. Barlin
First Clerk Assistant—I. C. Harris
Clerk Assistant (Procedure)—I. C. Cochran
Clerk Assistant (Committees)—B. C. Wright
Clerk Assistant (Table)—J. W. Pender
Clerk Assistant (Administration)—M. W. Salkeld
Serjeant-at-Arms—P. Bergin

PARLIAMENTARY REPORTING STAFF

Principal Parliamentary Reporter—J. W. Templeton
Chief Hansard Reporter—B. A. Harris
Acting Assistant Chief Reporter (House of Representatives)—M. A. R. McGregor
Acting Assistant Chief Reporter (Senate)—K. B. Ryder

LIBRARY

Parliamentary Librarian—H. de S. C. MacLean

JOINT HOUSE

Secretary—M. W. Bolton
Mr SPEAKER (Hon. Leo McLeay) took the chair at 2 p.m., and read prayers.

TELEVISION REPLAYS OF PROCEEDINGS

Mr SPEAKER—Before I call the Prime Minister on ministerial arrangements I wish to respond to a question that was asked of me last week by the honourable member for La Trobe. On 19 September and again on 7 November the honourable member for La Trobe asked me whether it would be possible for members to have access to television replays of the House's proceedings. After considering the issue I have instituted the following arrangements on a trial basis. The Sound and Vision Office will be authorised to rebroadcast on the House monitoring system a contribution by a member to the proceedings of the House, following a request by that member. This will be subject to the following guidelines: a member will only be able to request to see a statement or a speech made by himself or herself; the service will be provided on the clear understanding that I have instructed the Sound and Vision Office that the maintenance of its broadcasting, House monitoring and other responsibilities, such as division bells, will take absolute priority at all times over such requests; replays will be provided only of the current day's sitting or the sitting day immediately preceding it, provided these sitting days are in the same week; the service will not be available for Question Time; and all requests must be made through the office of the Serjeant-at-Arms.

MINISTERIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Mr HAWKE (Wills—Prime Minister)—I inform the House that the Minister for Trade Negotiations, Dr Blewett, is overseas attending the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade round. He will return to Australia on 29 December. Questions which would normally be addressed to Dr Blewett should be directed to the Attorney-General, Mr Duffy. The Minister for Resources, Mr Griffiths, is also overseas on Government business. He will return to Australia on 18 December. Questions normally addressed to Mr Griffiths should be directed to the portfolio Minister, Mr Kerin.

HAWKE GOVERNMENT

Want of Confidence Motion

Dr HEWSON (Wentworth—Leader of the Opposition) (2.03)—by leave—I move:

That this House expresses its want of confidence in the Prime Minister, the Treasurer and the Government for their economic incompetence which, contrary to their assurances, has resulted in the Australian economy going into recession.

I recognise that the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) has planned to make today a very significant statement in relation to the situation in the Persian Gulf. I do not want to downplay the significance of that matter; however, on behalf of the Australian people I have moved that no confidence motion in the Prime Minister, in his Treasurer (Mr Keating) and in the Government because they have deliberately engineered the worst economic crisis this country has seen since the Second World War. Secondly, they have deliberately and repeatedly misled the Australian people about where we are and where we are going. Thirdly, they have deliberately inflicted massive pain and hardship on average Australians to the benefit of a few of their mates.

The main question in the minds of the people of Australia at the present time is how the Prime Minister and the Treasurer
could have been so surprised last week by the news that our economy is in recession. The people of Australia have known for months that our economy is in recession. Indeed, during the election campaign I visited the Prime Minister's electorate of Wills to open the campaign for the Liberal candidate. On the way to Coburg I noticed and remarked on the extensive number of 'To Let' signs, 'For Sale' signs, empty shops and failed businesses. It confirmed to me at that time, back in March, that Australia was heading for a recession. The writing was clearly on the wall that long ago and in the Prime Minister's own electorate.

I put it to the Prime Minister that he should have listened to his constituents because they certainly voted with their feet during that election campaign, when there was a 10½ per cent primary vote swing against the Prime Minister. That was a very clear message. It was three points higher than the average Victorian swing against the ALP. Of course, in terms of a two-party preferred vote, there was an 8.1 per cent swing against the Prime Minister compared to a 2.1 per cent average for safe Labor seats in Victoria.

It is well worth knowing that John Delacretaz, the man that took the Prime Minister to preferences, is a feather duster salesman. The signs were clearly there back in March of this year, but what was the Prime Minister doing in March? On 21 March, just three days before the election, the Prime Minister was speaking to the National Press Club, where he said:

There is no need to fear a recession in any sense.

On 28 February this year he said:

We won't have a scorched earth policy, we won't destroy business activity, we won't destroy employment, we will do all this gradually.

On 1 March he said that a soft landing 'is not only feasible, it's going to happen'.

On 2 May:

Where's this 'technically a recession' stuff come from? What is the authority of this technical recession nonsense? You either have a recession or you don't and the place doesn't look like we're having a recession.

On 1 August:

It's a slow down.

On 4 October he said:

It's a marked slow down . . .

Finally, last week the evidence came in that we did not have a soft landing; indeed we had a crash landing, recording the largest contraction in the Australian economy since the September quarter of 1975 and the worst two consecutive falls since 1972 and already more than the total fall in the 1982-83 recession. What did the Treasurer say? At long last, he admitted last Thursday that he had been wrong all along when he said:

The accounts do show that Australia is in a recession. The most important thing about that is that this is a recession that Australia had to have.

By last Sunday, finally the Prime Minister's rhetoric had changed when he said:
I would just be misleading the Australian people if I said: well we are right at the bottom now.

Last night, finally the Treasurer himself started to admit the gravity of the situation when he said:

The downturn in the first half might be more pronounced . . . the upturn will be around the middle of 1991.

So the Prime Minister and the Treasurer have been dragged screaming to the reality of a hard landing. The thing that disturbs most Australians—Australian families, for example—is that they want to know whether they will be able to afford a house and a roof over the heads of their children. Workers want to know whether they will be soon joining the Hawke unemployment queues. Already 160,000 have been thrown out of work, with the prospect of 10 per cent unemployment or more. Migrants are saying that this is not the country they came to. Young couples are delaying having children because of the severity of the economic circumstances. Christmas is normally a joyful time but this year the prospect is for a very bleak 1991. Elderly people, who are often those with the greatest pride in their country, are despairing of what the future now holds for their grandchildren. The family farm is under threat; indeed, in 50 years time people may look back on this time as the generation in which it was no longer possible to pass the family farm from the father and mother to the children. Unless policies are changed dramatically, it might also be true that we will look back in 50 years time and see that this was the generation in which the dreams of every Australian family owning its own home were shattered.

I get a bit of heat from time to time about a painting I have on the wall of my office depicting the damage that the Treasurer has done to the livelihood of average Australians, sucking their very livelihood away through high interest rates. It is there as a monument to what the Treasurer and the Prime Minister have inflicted on the people of Australia. What are the parents of school leavers going to tell their children this week about their prospects for employment next week, next month or next year?

All Australians in the groups I have mentioned know that what the Prime Minister has been doing has failed. The Government has failed, its policies have failed and the Prime Minister personally has failed. The big question on the minds of most Australians today is what changes the Prime Minister should make and what changes he will make. The first change all Australians want him to make is to get rid of the fellow behind him—the Treasurer. If the Prime Minister listens hard enough to those behind him on his back bench they will tell him to do exactly the same thing.

In my reply to the Budget Speech in August I urged the Prime Minister to get out of Canberra and talk to small business people, old people and migrants and see the impact of his Government's policies. He should have listened. If he is worried, as has been his wont in the past, to face people directly, he can look at some of the frightened faces of those behind him and ask them about their frightening stories of hardship in their electorates as people have lost their businesses, homes and savings.

People cannot understand how the Prime Minister could so deliberately mislead people for so long about the state of our economy and spend all his time blaming other people. He has blamed just about everyone—the banks, Iraq, Europe, business people, Nobby Clark, farmers, floods, archbishops—anybody but himself. But the Australian people are not stupid; they blame the Prime Minister, and they are right.

The Prime Minister has recently adopted something of a more public profile. I ask him a question which I think he should turn his mind to: if 17½ million people are marching together, how is it that only two, the Prime Minister and the Treasurer, think they are the only ones who are marching in step? The whole of this country is going backwards in the most difficult circumstances we have seen since the Second World War.
The Treasurer is laughing. He is the man with no credibility whatsoever. He has deliberately and knowingly misled the people of Australia for the best part of the last 15 months. He should talk to those behind him. This is entirely his product. This is a home-grown recession which has now left us in an extremely vulnerable position in terms of the rest of the world because we have gone into recession ahead of the rest of the world. Other countries are now sliding down; they will pull our export markets down further, they will pull our commodity prices down further and they will worsen our situation in the course of 1991.

On top of that, this is the first time in any recession that the Prime Minister can remember where asset price deflation and debt deflation have been a significant feature of a recession. It will be the first time that he will be able to remember because we have to go back to 1930 or 1890 in order to find a comparable experience. I am not saying that it will be as bad as 1930, but the features of asset price and debt deflation are there. The big spin-off is the significant impact that is having on the banking system and the fact that the banks are now contracting credit over and above the Government’s high interest rates.

It is also a time when we have widespread State financial mismanagement compounding the problem. We have the worst rural crisis since the 1930s, with not just wool and wheat but a whole range of horticultural products going into a dive. We have the uncertainty of the Middle East and the prospect or possibility of war. We have the potential failure of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, currently in its final stages in Brussels. Of course, we have a host of policy decisions continuing to bite, like the Government’s tax policy changes in relation to the corporate sector, which will come home to roost in the middle of this month. So we are now in the worst recession since the Second World War for all those reasons and a host of others.

The people of Australia cannot understand why the Government will not act—will not face up to reality and do what has got to be done in this country. The people cannot understand why the Prime Minister and the Treasurer have locked themselves so much behind a wall of deals, compromises, commitments and special interests so that they can no longer take the essential decisions required to turn this country around. The people cannot understand how, when things went wrong, the Government put interest rates up and, when they went wrong again, put them up again; and how, when things went wrong again, it put them up one more time. Then, just for good measure, when things started to go badly again, the Government put them up again—and again and again, to the point where the livelihoods of people were driven in the direction of the scorched earth that the Prime Minister and the Treasurer so visibly and publicly feared.

The Prime Minister and the Treasurer have inflicted this hardship on the people of Australia. They have sold out the people of Australia for a few mates—Bill Kelty, old wharfies, a few airline, bank and Kodak executives, a few ethnic leaders, and a few deals here and there. The Prime Minister and the Treasurer are unable to take the decisions desperately needed to turn this country around. They have shown no vision, no direction and no capacity for leadership in what is our worst crisis in 30 or 40 years.

Honourable members do not need me to tell them why. We can look at Richard Farmer, for example, the fellow that the Prime Minister pulls in every time to help him win elections. He said recently:

If you looked at Labor’s policy speech in this election, you’ll find no clues as to what it will do, because that was a policy speech entirely research written. Virtually every line in the speech was a line from the party’s pollsters . . .

Similarly, Senator Peter Walsh endorsed the same sentiment when he said:

If you looked at Labor’s policy speech in this election, you’ll find no clues as to what it will do, because that was a policy speech entirely research written. Virtually every line in the speech was a line from the party’s pollsters . . .

This is an entirely poll-driven Government doing deals to survive, rather than
governing in the best interests of the people of Australia.

We can look at what the Government has done since the last election to determine how it has had no sense of direction, how it has bounced from one issue to another as the issues have emerged, rather than having any clear-cut view on how to turn this country around. The Government has blocked the injection of foreign capital into the television industry at a time when that industry desperately needs that capital for restructuring. The Government blocked the Australia and New Zealand Banking Group-National Mutual merger on the basis that it would have an adverse effect on competition, then it approves the sale of the State Bank of Victoria to the Commonwealth Bank, which will have an even more significant effect.

The Government has used the Prices Surveillance Authority for short term political ends, artificially holding down the consumer price index in a way that is quite inconsistent, for example, with the medium term interests of the oil industry in this country. It has bashed the banks and told them to lower their margins at the very time that they have to boost their margins if they are actually going to be able to implement the Government’s monetary policies in the future. If the Government keeps going, it will precipitate a banking crisis because of the attitude that the Government has taken to those institutions.

The Government has done another wage-tax deal without any capacity to demonstrate how it will lower inflation, without doing anything about medium term inflationary forces; and the Government has paid for it by another significant easing of fiscal policy. Fiscal policy is now significantly eased. The Government is swinging from a public sector surplus of 1½ per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) a year or so ago to the prospect of at least a one per cent deficit, maybe more, in the course of this financial year. It has bailed out the States; it has bailed out the State Bank of Victoria with a deal it did with the Commonwealth Bank; it has bailed out the Victorian railways with the National Rail Freight Corporation deal that it pushed through the Special Premiers Conference.

The Government has no concept of how to introduce competition into telecommunications. It has no idea of how to deregulate the domestic airline industry—it does not give aircraft anywhere to land or terminals for them to park at because it will not build a third runway in Sydney. It has used Coronation Hill to buy the ethnic vote. And so I could go on—dozens and dozens of examples of how the Government has been quite misdirected. If one goes back over the years, one sees all the decisions the Government has backed off: consumption tax, the fiscal expansions of 1983-84, where it compounded the problem, the MX missile fiasco, the Kodak deal, a host of wage deals, bank deals—never governing in the best interests of the people of Australia.

Mr Speaker, against that background and against the recognition that indeed we have a very genuine and deep-seated crisis in this country, the Opposition has been trying to play the only responsible role that can be played in these circumstances: to offer bipartisan support to this Government to put in place the policies that are required to turn this country around.

It is a very genuine offer on our part—a very genuine offer where we will put through this Parliament, and publicly support elsewhere, those policies that need to be put in place. If the Government goes down the route of genuine enterprise bargaining, we will be there all the way. If the Government goes down the route of full privatisation, we will be there all the way. In fact the only decision we have backed off on is where the Government tried to break the law—breach the existing contracts, I should say—in relation to the pipeline.

If the Government goes down the route of genuinely cleaning up the waterfront, we will be there to back it. If the Government goes down the route of genuinely cutting government expenditure, we will be there to back it. If the Government goes down the route of genuinely restruc-
turing our tax system and introducing a genuine broad-based goods and services tax and significantly lower personal tax, we will be there to back it.

I put it to you, Mr Speaker, that there has never been a period when the Opposition has been prepared to come out publicly and offer bipartisan support for genuine policy reform—reform that this Government has not been able to put in place because it is so hogtied by a host of deals that have always been directed to the best interests of a few, and in most cases a few of its mates, rather than the best interests of the people of Australia.

The Prime Minister came into government in 1983 on the platform of consensus, of bringing this country together. The Prime Minister has never had a better chance in the eight years—nearly eight years—that he has been there to do that than now because what better time will he have when the Opposition is prepared to stand there and offer him support, when business leaders will come in behind us, when ethnic leaders will come in behind us, when community leaders will come in behind us, when State Premiers will come in behind us so that collectively we can actually take the difficult structural decisions that this country so desperately needs in order to trade its way out of the very difficult circumstances in which it presently finds itself?

It is a very genuine offer. The Prime Minister may make light of it if he likes but it is on his head. It is on his head because the people of Australia are sick and tired of the Prime Minister not governing in their best interests. It is about time that he did, and he will never have a better opportunity than now, today, to publicly commit himself to do precisely that.

So, Mr Speaker, it is against that background that I have had to move this motion of no confidence in the Prime Minister, in the Treasurer and in their government. They have deliberately engineered the worst recession since the Second World War. They have deliberately and repeatedly misled Australians about where they are and where they are going, and they have deliberately inflicted massive pain and hardship on average Australians to the benefit of a few of their mates, and they will continue to do that as long as they stay locked behind those walls of compromise, those commitments, those deals.

Mr SPEAKER—Is the motion seconded?

Mr Reith—I second the motion and reserve my right to speak.

Mr HAWKE (Wills—Prime Minister) (2.24)—The Leader of the Opposition (Dr Hewson) in launching this attack made some projections about what would happen to unemployment by next year. He said we would reach 10 per cent figures and he did this in the context of referring to these deals, ‘these sordid deals’, that I and the Treasurer (Mr Keating) do with our mates, Bill Kelty in particular.

I wonder whether I could remind the Leader of the Opposition of what he said when he could speak objectively on these matters. I ask the Leader of the Opposition to listen to what he had to say, to what was his description of this approach that we had of negotiating wage arrangements with the Australian Council of Trade Unions, when he could speak with an honest voice and when he was not here as Leader of the Opposition. Mr Speaker, I remind you of what he had to say in October 1984.

Opposition members—Ha, ha!

Mr SPEAKER—Order!

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr SPEAKER—Order! Honourable members on my left will cease interjecting.

Mr HAWKE—They can make all the noise they like. This is what Professor Hewson had to say then about the concept of the accord:

The Liberals really need to recognise the wages area as their Achilles heel and to come up with an alternative. At the risk of being accused of heresy, might I suggest that it may be desirable for them to accept the concept of an accord-type agreement.

There you have it. That is the professor of economics speaking. Today it is a sor-
did deal, 'going in there with your mates'. But when the Leader of the Opposition was an objective professor of economics, he told the Liberal Party that that is what it ought to do. Of course, by the beginning of this year, when he had the responsibilities of being Leader of the Opposition thrust upon him, he had a different view.

In the election campaign this year, he made some more growth predictions, and I would now like to look at them in the light of his observations about these 'dirty deals' that have been done by the Government with the trade union movement. This is what he had to say on 21 February this year:

Accord mark 6 announced today will lead to higher inflation and higher interest rates. It will increase the likelihood of a major collapse of the Australian dollar.

We may be able to test the genuineness and the reliability of the predictions that the Leader of the Opposition makes today about unemployment by looking at those predictions which he made in February of this year—higher inflation, higher interest rates and the likelihood of a major collapse of the Australian dollar. The Leader of the Opposition was wrong, and abysmally wrong, on each of those three counts. Inflation has fallen from 8.5 per cent to 6 per cent, official interest rates have fallen by a further three percentage points, and the Australian dollar has traded from US$76c to US$77c and is marginally lower against the trade weighted index. In regard to every one of those predictions that the Leader of the Opposition made in February of this year about the accord mark 6, he has been proved abysmally wrong. That is why the people of Australia will today take no account of the predictions he makes at this time.

There may be a new man leading the Opposition, but he is still playing the same old Tory tune. It is the tune that was developed by the honourable member for Bennelong (Mr Howard) and picked up by the honourable member for Kooyong (Mr Peacock), the tune that they framed, 'The times will suit me'. Whenever these things which are necessary to correct fundamental problems in the Australian economy occur, the Opposition latches onto these hardships and says, 'The times will suit me'. We just have to scratch the paint off one of these new leaders and we get the same old tune.

Let us go back to first principles. Until we all recognise in this country the serious and structural problems which face the Australian economy, we will not be able to get the right framework for sustainable growth into the future. The Government and the Party that I lead are the first government and the first political party to recognise and to respond to that fundamental fact about the challenges facing this economy.

In that sense, 1983 was a fundamental turning point in the history of this country. It marked the start—and this has been recognised by commentators across the spectrum—of real, fundamental and permanent reform to get this country set for the next century. It marked the advent of a government that was on about the necessary policies—certainly not the easy policies and not the comfortable policies but the necessary policies—to make sure that Australia can survive and flourish into the future.

Let me briefly refer to the Government's achievement in that context. We have had massive employment growth. The Leader of the Opposition comes into this chamber and talks about the prospect of unemployment. I simply make the point that under the courageous policies of this Government we have had a rate of employment growth five times faster than was achieved by the Opposition in its seven years in government, and twice as fast as the rest of the world. We have had controlled, equitable wages growth. We have had a more efficient economy with more productive workplaces, more export oriented production, aiming to get this country to transform itself into one which is a competitive world-class economy, and to get itself more fully enmeshed, as I put it, into the dynamic Asia-Pacific region.

The Government has also achieved an infinitely fairer society which has been created through the long overdue reform of taxation. It was to the eternal discredit of this country that when this Govern-
ment came to office in 1983, it inherited a taxation system which was, at one and the same time, amongst the most inefficient and most inequitable in the world, one where it was a matter of choice as to whether the rich paid their tax at all. But not only have we made a fairer society by having a fairer tax system; we have also had a radical change in the welfare system in this country, leading to better targeting of resources, so that we do not pay pensions to millionaires but target the resources of this country to those who need them.

We have a more disciplined and more efficient public sector, showing unprecedented financial responsibility and restraint. We are developing a clever country in which intellectual skills are prized and where they are harnessed to the broader needs of the community. We have done these things at a time of having economic growth twice as fast as the Opposition achieved in seven years of office. But at the same time that we had that rate of growth we also had a proper concern for the environment of this country so that we would ensure that not only today would people enjoy a decent environment but also that we would pass on a decent environment to the next generation and the generation after that.

All this has been done within a framework of sustainable, long term economic growth. It will be acknowledged that there is no one single measure that can be used to judge this progress that we have made towards the achievement of these goals. But I mention these 11 matters and ask any objective observer to take into account the progress under each of these 11 headings: the figures on employment growth to which I have referred; the reduction in inflation from the double digit inflation that we inherited, down to an underlying rate which is now the lowest since the beginning of 1971; the Budget surplus—four successive years. The Opposition, in all the period that it had control of this country, never once got a Budget surplus. We have got it four years in a row.

Fourthly, I go to the question of tariff reform. The Opposition was long on rhetoric on tariff reform, but it was committed to building up those high tariff walls under the influence of the rural rump. If any party should have been concerned with getting tariffs down, it was the Opposition, but it did the opposite; it built them up. We are the party which has brought in tariff reform. I refer to the increases in the level of manufactured exports, a 24 per cent increase in manufactured exports in this last year. I refer to industrial harmony. All the Opposition was about was creating industrial confrontation. Under my Government, compared with the period when the Opposition was in government, industrial disputes have been reduced by 60 per cent. The Opposition could not come within a bull’s roar of bringing about that degree of industrial harmony.

In respect of wage restraint, the Opposition went out of office in large measure because it had no wages policy. Wages blew out by 17 per cent. Under this Government there has been controlled, restrained wages growth, something which the business community recognises and applauds. I have referred to the area of tax reforms, and we know what has happened there. I have referred to the spread of superannuation. When this Government came to office, superannuation was the preserve of the wealthy, white-collared few. Now, superannuation, under a dedicated and committed government, is the legitimate expectation of the entire Australian work force, of all working men and all working women.

I refer to school retention rates. In seven years of office the Opposition increased the school retention rate by a miserable 2 per cent. We have doubled the school retention rate. In the area of science spending we have transformed the situation. Those are the things that we have done in the areas of fundamental importance for the future of this country.

The Opposition sat on a two-airline system for the whole of its period in office. We have brought the two-airline system to an end so that we will have real competition. The Opposition sat on an uncompetitive telecommunications industry. That is the context of those 7½ years of
achievement in which I want to put these latest figures concerning the recession.

The national accounts confirm what we understood was happening, anyway—that is, that people in the community are hurting and unemployment is rising. It is important to understand, firstly, that in a sensible, rational way—without the Opposition's manufactured hysteria—we do have a recession; that is not disputed. But we do not have the devastation which the Opposition produced when it lost control of the Australian economy at the beginning of the 1980s.

The truth is this: unemployment will not reach double digits. If today we had the participation rate which the Opposition had when it went out of office, instead of the historically high participation rates that we have today, the unemployment rate would be 3 per cent. Inflation will not reach double digits as it did when the Opposition was in office. In fact, inflation is falling sharply.

It is important to understand, secondly, that this is a phase that will pass. The tax cuts will be coming in in January; interest rates are already down five percentage points; and we will have a rebuilding in the stock cycle. The housing revival is already under way. It is important to understand that when the recovery phase does come, it will have strengthened Australia's overall economic capacity because we now have firm foundations through a lowered inflation rate which is built in through the accord with the trade union movement.

I was asked to accept the blame for the recession. We accept the responsibility for the economic policies that have been necessary to deal with the challenges before us. We have had the courage to make the hard decisions. Where the Opposition caved in on the assets test, we did not. Where the Opposition caved in on the pilots dispute, we did not. We had the courage to go to the last election with high interest rates without artificial mortgage relief.

At no point has this Opposition had the courage to stand up and say, 'We will support these tough decisions'. The Leader of the Opposition has taken the politically opportunist line every single time. Whether it is in regard to the assets test—he knew where he stood with the assets test—or the pilots dispute, he never had any guts. The Leader of the Opposition caved in when he came to his first little hurdle. He could not jump over that hurdle. When he went to the party room on the question of the assets testing of family allowances, he rolled over; he was done.

Mr Speaker, let me give you some idea of how this Leader of the Opposition will give the policies that he is saying he is prepared to give. Last Friday, at a door-stop conference, he would not comment on either interest rates or the Budget surplus. When he was asked about interest rates, he replied:

That is not a judgement for me to make.

On the Budget surplus he said:

You can't hold me to what we would do precisely on the surplus.

Let me refer to the quality of the last press conference. This is the transcript of what happened on 15 November:

Jrnlst: . . . do you think there should be more horizontal equity?

Hewson: I'm not going to express a policy view.

Jrnlst: Do you or your party have a definition of welfare?

Hewson: Well, you know, I'm not going to give you a definition of welfare either.

Jrnlst: What about a definition of the family, Dr Hewson? Do unmarried mothers count?

Hewson: That's a very important question, Sam.

Jrnlst: What's the answer?

Hewson: I'm not going to make policy on the run.

The Leader of the Opposition was hopeless as an adviser when he brought the
worst recession in 50 years and he is a fraud now.

Mr REITH (Flinders) (2.40)—Mr Speaker—

Government members interjecting—

Mr SPEAKER—Order! Members on my right will come to order!

Mr REITH—It says much of the performance of the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke)—and much of his back bench—that, when we raise one of the most significant parliamentary motions that can be raised, when we put before this Parliament a matter of very great significance to the people who are losing their jobs as a result of his deliberate policy to induce a recession, we have a typical response and a typical finish from the Prime Minister. Instead of the Prime Minister talking about what he might do to exercise responsibly the office that he holds and talking about the solutions to this country's problems, he thinks it is smart, he thinks it is clever, as most of his team think it is clever, to tip a bucket on the Opposition. I say to him that for years and years members of the Government have lowered the standard of debate in this Parliament, and it is evidence of the vacuum and the policy inactivity on their side when it does come to their addressing Australia's basic and structural problems. I am saddened by the fact that nowhere in the Prime Minister's speech did he talk about the solutions that ought to be implemented to fix this country's problems.

The fact is that the Prime Minister, his Government and his Treasurer (Mr Keating) have set about deliberately to introduce a recession. He is destroying brick by brick the basic industrial infrastructure that makes this country tick. His Treasurer is truly the Mr Recession of Australian politics. He is the Whelan the Wrecker of Australian industry and the Australian economy. I say to the Treasurer it says much also about the standards of parliamentary debate and public debate generally in this country that there have been few calls for his resignation as a result of his incompetence. Let me call today for his resignation—he ought to do the right thing—and I call for it on behalf of those people who are going to have to sell their homes this year, those people who are going to be thrown onto the unemployment scrap heap.

If the Treasurer does not believe the backbenchers who talk to him in the corridors, let us leave the economics and the numbers to one side and let me recount for him the occurrence of the lady who came to my office last week and said, 'Mr Reith, my husband is a plasterer, and 18 months ago we bought a home for $200,000. We put all the equity—

Mr Fitzgibbon—Oh!

Mr REITH—No, the honourable member can listen to what has got to be said. She bought a home for $200,000. They put their life savings of $100,000 into it. They thought they had planned financially in a sensible way—and on what she gave me, I think they had. He is now unable to find work and unable to service his loan. They are forced into the position of selling their house on a housing market where sales are few and far between. I say to the Treasurer that when he stands to speak, he should tell me what he would say to that lady if she were in his office next week. Then there is the backhoe operator I met in Sydney the other day who had four or five machines. He said to me, 'Mr Reith, what can I do in the future?' That is the issue; that is the question that ought to be addressed by the Treasurer when he responds.

The fact is that never before in the history of this Federation have we had a government which has deliberately engineered a recession in this way—and the Treasurer has the cheek to say that he does not want to be compared to the honourable member for Bennelong (Mr Howard). In fact, on that issue he is right, because there is no comparison. There is no drought that this country is facing; there is no world recession as of today—sure, the world is going into a recession, but Australia is leading the way—and we have not had a wages explosion engineered by his mates in the trade union movement. He surely is one of the world's
greatest treasurers. He has engineered this recession very much off his own bat.

If we are concerned about where this economy is going in the next 12 months, let us look at what Syntec said in the Business Review Weekly of 23 November 1990:

It is now into what is going to be the most significant period of negative growth since 1982-83.

Further, it said:

. . . the unique feature of this particular Australian cycle. It is occurring well ahead of the downswing likely to come in our global framework. This is a reverse of the norm; we usually follow the international cycle.

This time we have managed to get ourselves out in front with a recession largely of our own making.

Australians are right to be angry that this Government has deliberately refused to admit that its policy was to induce a recession. It is only now that we have an admission of recession that we might at least make a start on the many things that ought to be done and that will over a period turn this economy around.

One of the reasons for the Treasurer's failure to admit the economic problems that he has engineered and that need to be solved is the fact that he goes through a process of self-delusion—and, I must say, much of it encouraged and supported by some of his friends in the gallery.

Let us look at some of the basic elements of this economy. The Treasurer will get up and say in respect of the current account that it is all the fault of some previous government. That is a load of nonsense. It is self-delusion for the Treasurer to think that he can blame all on previous governments. If we go back to October 1972, the current account surplus in that month was $93m. Indeed, for the whole of 1972-73 the current account was in surplus to the tune of $754m. The Treasurer cannot blame today's current account problems on 30 years of coalition governments. There had been 23 years—a long time; basically a quarter of a century—of coalition governments by September-October 1972 yet there was a current account surplus.

By the end of this term those opposite will have been in office for 13 out of the last 20 years. The truth is that the problems that we have today by and large are all of the Treasurer's own making; by and large he is responsible for them.

Let us take a second example. The Treasurer loves to talk about profit share. This is a classic. What he says to the Australian worker is, 'What we have done through our economic policy is that we have built up the profit share. That gives employers the incentive to invest. That will put factories and equipment in, which will give us import replacements and boost our export effort'. The worker has to suffer a decline in living standards as a result of his pumping up the profit share. But, if we take the figures on profit share and take out interest, we find that we have not had the profit share explosion that the Treasurer has claimed repeatedly in the last six or 12 months. If one takes profit share after interest—I put out these figures months ago and we have never had a decent response from the Treasurer; today is his chance—the results in the second half of the 1980s bear no comparison with the second half of the 1970s and early 1980s.

Let us take another example of fiscal policy—one of the Treasurer's favourite claims; another area of self-delusion. He loves to compare himself with the great Sir Robert Menzies back in the 1950s. We find the Treasurer saying that in the next couple of years the Government will have got Commonwealth spending back to what it was in the 1950s. That is just absolute nonsense. The truth is that the Government would need to cut expenditure by about $20 billion of Commonwealth owned purpose expenditure before it could possibly make that claim. Why does the Treasurer not stand and give us a detailed response to that very clear figure? I know that he has had his Treasury people working back and forth over the figures, checking the details, as he does with most of these press releases. Instead of giving us a bucketing and coming on with all the personal abuse, he ought to face up to a few facts. That is a simple fact; he loves to run that myth. I challenge
him, after I have finished, to stand and give us a detailed response on that.

The Treasurer talks about productivity. This is a classic; let him answer this. He came out of a meeting with the National Farmers Federation the other day and, in response to a question, said:

... factor productivity is really at or above the OECD average.

That is just nonsense. That is simply not true. I refer the Treasurer to the Industry Commission, which has been looking at the question of productivity. The 1989-90 annual report of the Commission states:

Australia's productivity growth rates have not been impressive compared with other countries particularly in the decade since 1979.

It went on to say:

Australia's productivity growth rates have not been impressive compared with other countries, particularly in the decade since 1979...

I could go on and on. The truth is that the Treasurer's claims about productivity simply are not true. That is one of the basic problems that we have in this country. We need to have a sense of urgency about improving our levels of productivity. There is much that can be done to improve productivity in this country. While the Treasurer continues to say what a good record we have in respect of productivity, it will be more difficult for us to gather the political constituency for the real change that would make a difference in respect of productivity.

We heard an extraordinary claim from the Treasurer the other day when he said that high interest rates are behind us. That is nonsense. High interest rates are not behind us. We do not need to be economists to know a simple fact like that. The Treasurer should speak to that lady who spoke to me the other day about selling her home next year because of his high interest rate policy. Or he should talk to the backhoe operator from Sydney who will have to flog his backhoes, if anybody will buy them, just to keep himself afloat. The Treasurer reckons that high interest rates are behind us. He should look at Potter Warburg Asset Management Ltd's release of comparative analyses of Australian interest rates on long term bonds and those of other Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, and I will give a copy to him if he does not have one already. High interest rates are not behind us; under the Treasurer's policies high interest rates are still in front of us. It is nonsense for him to go on claiming that high interest rates are behind us when clearly they are not.

Wherever we look this Government has been running a process of self-delusion. Until it realises the impact of its policies we will see a continuing policy of destruction of the Australian economy. It is true that many of the problems that we have are obvious. We really need a set of solutions. It is true, as the Prime Minister said, that there is no single solution. I agree with him. The fact is that there are a lot of solutions which we as a nation have before us, levers that we could be pulling. The Treasurer is keen on talking about pulling the economic levers. There are many levers which we could be pulling which would really make a difference.

Today the Treasurer and the Prime Minister should have announced a mini-Budget. Within that mini-Budget they should have started with a realistic assessment of Australia's economic problems, and hopefully a new Treasurer—let us see whether we can ditch this one—should stop blaming everybody else, including the banks, for the woeful state of the Australian economy.

Some of the changes that I would urge upon this Government, and for which it has our support if it were to adopt them, certainly relate to tax. We need to boost our export performance against our import performance. We have an Australian wholesale sales tax system where we actually penalise people who export. We ought to abolish the tax on exports. That is our policy and the Government ought to adopt it. We have a crazy situation. The Government has a Buy Australian campaign. Yet in some cases the Australian wholesale sales tax system—the Prime Minister ought to listen to this—actually imposes an advantage on the imported product against the Australian manufactured product. That is nonsense. The Government ought to abolish the whole-
sale sales tax system. That is part and parcel of the tax policy that we suggest and offer to the Government. It would have our bipartisan support if it did that.

In respect of wages policy and industrial relations policy, we ought to get away from this nonsense of the accord. I thought it said much about the Treasurer recently when he got lucky with the latest quarterly inflation figure. He said that if the figure had been twice as bad, if it had been closer to market expectations, he would not have done the deal for the step-down which he has done for 1 January. In other words, if our inflation problem was a lot worse, he would not have employed the remedy which he now puts before us as a great example of his economic wizardry.

The truth is that it says a lot about the Australian economic management in respect of wages policy that we start 1990 with members of the Government still of the view that indexation is a fair and reasonable component in a wage deal. It is not. It is one of the reasons that we have comparative figures to the OECD. The Treasurer should not give me his figures about comparisons with the OECD. They are phoney, as are many of the other figures and statistics that he likes to put forward.

We still have a high inflation record in this country. We need to reduce inflation, and we need to do it in a sustained way. We ought to scrap the accord, we ought to scrap the system of indexation, and we ought to give real independence to the Reserve Bank.

A want of confidence motion in the Government is not moved lightly. We moved it because this Government has deliberately induced a recession. Many Australians are rightly and properly angry that this Government’s only solution to Australia’s economic problems is to induce a recession. There is a better way. There is a way forward where we have better wages policy, where we use fiscal policy to reduce interest rates, where we see real competition in shipping and the waterfront to improve the supply side performance of this economy.

I urge honourable members to seriously consider this motion. It is an important one and it is says much about the economic incompetence of this Government that this Treasurer should induce a recession in the way that he has.

Mr KEATING (Blaxland—Treasurer) (2.55) This is no more than an opportunist effort by the Opposition. The speech by the Leader of the Opposition (Dr Hewson) lacked gravity and any genuine sentiments. His charge was that we deliberately engineered a crisis. Then he said that for a few mates we have engineered a crisis. A crisis is a condition naturally, by implication, beyond control. This is not a condition beyond control; it is a condition in fact engineered by the Government. The current account was going out backwards. We had stress on the wage system and inflation. It is the very essence of leadership that we created the conditions to deal with it, that is, the growing debt, the pressure on wages and inflation rising.

These are the factors which count in terms of the claim that this is not a crisis but a condition which is within the Government’s control. Inflation is coming down. We have a chance to break the back of inflation for the first time in 20 years. The current account is coming down. Today it was 30 per cent below where it was a year ago. Interest rates are declining. We have already got bills at 12.5 per cent. Investment is still running above the average of the last 25 years. We have a high profit share; low real unit labour costs; a large structural Budget surplus; and a competitive exchange rate. These are hardly the conditions which one would say amount to a crisis. Inflation is coming back; the current account is at 30 per cent below where it was; interest rates are decelerating; investment is still running above the average of the last 25 years. We have a high profit share; low real unit labour costs, a structural Budget surplus, and a competitive exchange rate. Contrast that with the crisis that the Leader of the Opposition was involved in with Treasurer Howard: inflation rising and out of control; unemployment rising and out of control at 11 per cent; profits
smashed to pieces; business confidence totally smashed and nothing to repair it; a huge structural Budget deficit; and an uncompetitive exchange rate. That is what he had. That was a crisis. Who did he leave the crisis to? Us. He left it to us to try to do something about it.

He has the temerity to talk about a condition that he knows had to be induced in this economy. For two years up to the last election he was saying that I had doctored interest rates, that interest rates were not high enough, that we were not using interest rates properly. What he is saying now is disingenuous, after those utterances for two years, saying that the economy was not being dealt with properly by monetary policy and that we had politicised the Reserve Bank. All of this came from a person who was the chief adviser to a Treasurer who had inflation out of control, unemployment out of control, profits smashed to pieces, a Budget deficit and an uncompetitive exchange rate.

In the light of everything we have—decelerating inflation, interest rates coming back, a current account 30 per cent below what it was, investment running higher than for the last quarter of a century, a high profit share, a structural Budget surplus and a competitive exchange rate—the Leader of the Opposition has the gall to say that this is a crisis out of control. He does not understand.

Of course, he does understand; that is why I said his speech was opportunist. It was an opportunist speech because he knows that the current account was unsustainable, that that sort of pressure on wages and inflation was not a goer, and that is why the Government had to do something about it.

While the Leader of the Opposition was regaling us with the woes of people, instead of referring to those structural qualities which the Government has, while he was crying crocodile tears about the public, his shadow Treasurer is saying, ‘We would scrap the accord and the $12 would go with it.’ In other words, the Opposition would scrap the accord and the $12 wage increase in May goes with it. After all the crocodile tears the Leader of the Opposition was crying a few minutes ago about the pain—he was talking about the plasterer—the Opposition would knock $12 a week off him come May and scrap the accord.

Then the shadow Treasurer said that we ought to cut out the unemployment benefit after nine months. This question was asked: ‘What, at a time of increasing unemployment?’ He said, ‘We ought to be operating in an economy which is much more efficient’. This is the great bleeding heart telling us about the difficult social problems, saying, ‘Of course, I disagree with it. I absolutely disagree with it—that we would abolish unemployment benefits after nine months’. The heartless stupidity of him! A few moments ago he was telling us about the problems in the economy. He spoke on interest rates at that thing he laughingly called a press conference. They pressed him; there was one question after another. They said, ‘But which side would you come down?’ Then they said, ‘A marginal reduction now, before Christmas? Are you saying no to that?’ The shadow Treasurer said, ‘In the end I come to the view that yes, if you loosen off on monetary policy without fiscal changes, then you will end up with higher interest rates’. That is, he will not loosen interest rates; he will not loosen policy.

Mr Reith—you agree with that.

The Speaker—Order! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Keating—He is saying, ‘Isn’t it dreadful’, but he has scrapped the $12, he would put people on the dole without any support after nine months and he would not drop interest rates, anyway. He has been telling us how dreadful it all is and how it is a crisis beyond our control when he knows that all those key factors are within our control and he knows we are the people saying, ‘We will give people a $12 wage increase plus tax cuts’. Of course, the tax cuts are looking after our mates—the Australian public whom the Opposition is viciously aligned and arraigned against and whom it does not want the tax cuts to be given to. They are not going to Bill Kelty. The $5.5 billion
in 1989 did not go to W.J. Kelty; it went to the Australian people—as these tax cuts will go to the Australian people, the same people who will get the $12 and the same people who are now getting the interest rate relief on their mortgages.

The Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) reminds me that on 31 January this year the Leader of the Opposition said that the Governor of the Reserve Bank of Australia should hang his head in shame for easing monetary policy after the December quarter inflation result. He claimed we eased policy too soon. That was true. The Opposition now says, ‘Isn’t it shocking that we had a recession’, but back in January it was blackguarding the Reserve Bank Governor and saying that he should hang his head in shame for easing policy on the back of the December quarter result.

The Leader of the Opposition talks about the painting of me in his office. He is like Dorian Gray without a picture. There is no picture to absorb his sins; they will go right on his face. That long, pointed, haggard look will just compound itself as he tries all the opportunist tricks to try to benefit from the discomfort of the public and to score off the Government.

Dr Hewson—That is nonsense.

Mr SPEAKER—Order! The Leader of the Opposition will cease interjecting.

Mr KEATING—The Leader of the Opposition should not worry about the picture of me in his office; what he could do with—like Dorian Gray—is a picture on his back wall or in the cupboard somewhere which could age and show all the cynicism and malice on his face, just as it showed on the picture of Dorian Gray.

On top of that, we were told that the Opposition would ease fiscal policy. One thing about being a Liberal—it must be a thing when people sign the application form—is that people have to have a hide like Jessie the elephant. The Leader of the Opposition was rolled in his party room on a $27m fiscal measure. He has turned over an $800m set of Budget measures. Any relaxation in fiscal policy in this country has come principally from the Leader of the Opposition and his gutlessness.

Mr Tim Fischer—Wrong again.

Mr KEATING—He gets up to regale us about a weakening of fiscal policy that he has engineered in the Senate. That really is hypocrisy of the first order. But, not embarrassed, he said, ‘No, there has been an easing of fiscal policy’. He never said, ‘I am responsible for about half of it and the rest of it is going in tax cuts’.

Dr Hewson—That is nonsense.

Mr KEATING—What does the Leader of the Opposition mean by saying, ‘It is nonsense’? He is opposing the measures. That is the point about people like him. He is never prepared to stand up for the things he does. Then he talks about bipartisanship. As one of my colleagues said, ‘Why would he not want to join us in reform?’ We are the only ones that ever did any of it. Why would he not be bipartisan in the reform process of the greatest reforming government since the war? Why would he not want to be in it? His has been a life of disappointment. The honourable member for Bennelong (Mr Howard) was rolled perpetually in the previous Government’s terrible neanderthal Cabinet of farmers and rural obscurantists who beat every decent measure that was ever proposed. After the Leader of the Opposition was comprehensively rolled in his party room for $27m on a measure he supported, he enjoined us to rely upon the Opposition’s strength in bipartisanship. Brother, we do not need you!

Of course, the Leader of the Opposition wants us to restructure the tax system. Dr Hewson said, ‘Well, we join you in that; you can rely on us’. What—rely on the Opposition to eliminate the capital gains tax, to hand back billions of unrealised capital gains to one or 2 per cent of the public; to impose a flat rate tax so that the poor carry the burden of public services and spending; to impose a consumption tax which would ram the inflation rate back to high double digits; and, with the burden of the adjustments again falling on the poor, to dole out marginal rate
cuts at the top end of the incomes system? Is that the sort of stuff the Opposition is talking about in restructuring the tax system? The Opposition never had the wit to remove the double tax on dividends. It was quite happy to be belting companies with 78c in the dollar and with having a 60 per cent marginal rate on incomes above $35,000. The Opposition was quite happy to see people ramping the system with their cars, credit cards, meals and entertainment. The Opposition was not into any of that, but thinks that we should join it in restructuring the tax system; join with it in reform.

Oh dear God! Joining with the Opposition in reform! The Leader of the Opposition said, 'Prime Minister, it will be on your head if you turn back'. With all the mock genuineness that he could summon, he delivered that pathetic line—which of course nearly broke up the rest of us on this side. This is from a group that has never known what is the right thing to do. This is the difference between the Opposition and this Government. We know what is right and best, and we do it. We have slowed the economy down and made Australians more secure in the long term, with a better inflation rate and the current account and debt under control. The essence of leadership is doing what is right and best and not about doing what is cowardly and hopeless, which is what the Opposition did in the past.

We then had the contribution from our friend here, the doyen of the local police court, the honourable member for Flinders (Mr Reith). He made one big point. He said, 'I have been claiming that we would have outlays at the level of the 1950s', and he challenged me to refer to this in my reply.

Mr Reith—And others.

Mr KEATING—And others. I will do the proper thing, which I have done for him three times, which is to explain to him the discretionary decisions of business to borrow and the interest rates after tax, which is basically the pre-tax level of profits. But no, this is a concept which has gone straight over the shoulder.

The Forward Estimates from the Department of Finance are for 1990-91, 23.5 per cent of outlays; for 1991-92, 22.6 per cent; for 1992-93, 22 per cent; for 1993-94, 21.6 per cent. If we turn up the table, the compendium that goes back to the 1950s, these are the levels of the 1950s: 1953-54, 22 per cent; 1954-55, 21.5 per cent; 1955-56, 21.7 per cent; 1956-57, 20.9 per cent; 1957-58, 21.7 per cent; and 1958-59, 21.7 per cent. In other words, we are heading for exactly 21.6 per cent—at or below the average of the 1950s. If the honourable member for Flinders is talking about ons and offs and the Telecoms of this world, these are all adjusted for those changes.

So the fact is that the honourable member for Flinders is even wrong about that. The honourable member for Flinders does not even understand that he is wrong about it. This is nothing but an opportunist motion from the Leader of the Opposition, poorly put and poorly executed, which basically tries to build mock indignation around a case which he knows is basically fallacious. I move:

That the question be now put.

Question put.

The House divided.

(Mr Speaker—Hon. Leo McLeay)

Ayes 68

Noes 62

Majority 6
The motion (Dr Hewson's) be agreed to.

AYES

Burr, M. A.
Burd, P. J.
Cadman, A. G.
Caldwell, J. J.
Carlton, J. D.
Chaney, F. M.
Charles, R. E.
Cobb, M. R.
Costello, P. H.
Cowen, D. R.
Dobie, J. D. M.
Downer, A. J. G.
Edwards, Harry
Fife, W. C.
Filing, P. A.
Fitcher, Tim
Fisher, Peter

NOES

Hall, Steele
Halverson, R. G.
Hawker, D. P. M.
Hawker, R. P.
Hicks, N. J. (Teller)
Howard, J. W.
Jull, D. P.
Kemp, D. A.
Lloyd, B.
McArthur, F. S.
McGauran, P. J.
MacKellar, M. J. R.
McLaughlan, I. M.
Mack, E. C.
Moore, J. C.
Nugent, P. E.
Peacock, A. S.
Prosser, G. D.
Reid, N. B.
Reith, P. K.
Riggall, J. P.
Rocher, A. C.
Ronaldson, M. J. C.
Ruddock, P. M.
Scott, Bruce
Shack, P. D.
Sharp, J. R.
Sinclaire, I. McC.
Smith, W. L.
Somyay, A. M.
Sullivan, K. J.
Truss, W. E.
Tuckey, C. W.
Webster, A. P.
Wilson, J. B. C.
Woods, Bob
Woodbridge, M. R. L.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

The House divided.

(A Mr Speaker—Hon. Leo McLeay)

AYES

61

N O E S

Cameron, E. C.
Connelly, D. M.
Goodluck, B. J.
Nohl, G. B.
Atkinson, R. A.
Miles, C. G.
Ford, F. A.
Taylor, W. L.

NOES

Baldwin, P. J.
Beasley, K. C.
Beddall, D. P.
Bilney, G. N.
Brett, L. J.
Brown, Robert
Campbell, G.
Cailey, R.
Charlesworth, R. L.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

The House divided.

(Mr Speaker—Hon. Leo McLeay)

AYES

Aldred, K. J.
Anderson, J. N.
Andrew, J. N. (Teller)
Bailey, F. E.
Beale, J. H.
Bradford, J. W.
Braithwaite, R. A.
Broadbent, R. E.
Brown, N. A.

NOES

Baldwin, P. J.
Beasley, K. C.
Beddall, D. P.
Bilney, G. N.
Brett, L. J.
Brown, Robert
Campbell, G.
Cailey, R.
Charlesworth, R. L.

Answer to the question:

Mr Hawke—I ask that questions be placed on notice.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Mr Hawke—Pursuant to section 9B of the Public Service Act 1922, I present the annual report of the Department of the Parliamentary Library for 1989-90.
AUDITOR-GENERAL’S REPORTS

Mr SPEAKER—I present the following Auditor-General’s reports for 1990-91: Nos 12, 13, and 14.

Motion (by Mr Beazley)—by leave—agreed to:
(1) That the House, in accordance with the provisions of the Parliamentary Papers Act 1908, authorises the publication of the Auditor-General’s audit reports Nos 12, 13 and 14 of 1990-91;
(2) That the reports be printed;
(3) That report No. 12 be referred to the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and report No. 13 be referred to the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

Mr BEAZLEY (Swan—Leader of the House)—Papers are tabled as listed in the schedule circulated to honourable members earlier today. Details of the papers will be recorded in Hansard and the Votes and Proceedings.

The schedule read as follows—


Australian Film Commission—Annual Report 1989-90 including the Auditor-General’s report—section 63M(3) of the Audit Act 1901 and section 44 of the Australian Film Commission Act 1975.


Kidman Springs/Jasper Gorge Land Claim—Report by the Aboriginal Land Commissioner to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and to the Administrator of the Northern Territory.

Mataranka Area Land Claim—Report by the Aboriginal Land Commissioner to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and to the Administrator of the Northern Territory.


Joint Select Committee on Video Material—Government response.


Department of the Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territories—Annual Report 1989-90—including the Auditor-General's report—section 25 of the Public Service Act 1922.


ROYAL COMMISSION INTO ABOGIRAL DEATHS IN CUSTODY

Reports

Motion (by Mr Beazley)—by leave—agreed to:

That this House, in accordance with the provisions of the Parliamentary Papers Act 1908, authorises the publication of the reports of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody—the inquiries into the deaths of Paul Lawrence Kearney, Patrick Thomas Booth, Donald Chatunalgi, Edward Stanley West, Michael Leslie James Gollan, James Archibald Moore, Harrison Barney Day, Arthur David Alan Moffat and Joyce Thelma Egan.

LAW REFORM COMMISSION

Report No. 48

Motion (by Mr Beazley) proposed:

That the House take note of the paper.

Debate (on motion by Mr Fife) adjourned.

OPERATION OF THE BANKRUPTCY ACT 1966

Attorney-General's Report

Motion (by Mr Beazley) proposed:

That the House take note of the paper.

Debate (on motion by Mr Fife) adjourned.
WHEAT RESEARCH COUNCIL
Annual Report
Motion (by Mr Beazley) proposed:
That the House take note of the paper.
Debate (on motion by Mr Fife) adjourned.

AUSTRALIA AND THE WORLD BANK
Annual Report
Motion (by Mr Beazley) proposed:
That the House take note of the paper.
Debate (on motion by Mr Fife) adjourned.

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY AGREEMENTS ACT
Annual Report
Motion (by Mr Beazley) proposed:
That the House take note of the paper.
Debate (on motion by Mr Fife) adjourned.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE ACT 1989
Report
Motion (by Mr Beazley) proposed:
That the House take note of the paper.
Debate (on motion by Mr Fife) adjourned.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION
Mr TUCKEY (O'Connor)—Mr Speaker, I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Mr SPEAKER—Does the honourable member claim to have been misrepresented?

Mr TUCKEY—I do.

Mr SPEAKER—The honourable member may proceed.

Mr TUCKEY—As recorded in the Daily Hansard of 14 November 1990, at page 4015, the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) in response to my interjection referred to me as 'one of the great scandalmongers of all time'. The word 'scandalmonger' means a person who engages in 'activity which reflects upon the reputation of others without substantiation', which is entirely different from the responsibility of honourable members to raise serious matters of substance in this Parliament which might include the activities of other honourable members. I reject the Prime Minister's inference and, in defence of my actions from time to time in this Parliament, which are in line with my parliamentary responsibilities, I seek leave to table the following documents—

Mr SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member has explained where he has been misrepresented. He should now—

Mr TUCKEY—On a point of order, Mr Speaker: am I not to table the documents which relate to the matters that I have raised from time to time, including such matters as the Boulevard affair and Coomel—

Mr SPEAKER—Is leave granted? Leave is not granted. The honourable member will resume his seat.

Mr TUCKEY—Then I call upon the Prime Minister to withdraw his slur.

Mr SPEAKER—I warn the honourable member for O'Connor that he should resume his seat now.

Mr Fife—Mr Speaker, I raise a point of order. The honourable member for O'Connor asks that the Prime Minister withdraw the inference that he was making.

Mr SPEAKER—Order! I call on the next item, the televising of proceedings.

TELEVISING OF PROCEEDINGS
Motion (by Mr Beazley)—by leave—proposed:
That this House authorises:
(1) the Speaker to make arrangements for the television recording by the Parliamentary Sound and Vision Office of the statement by the Prime Minister on the situation in the Persian Gulf, and the reply by the Leader of the Opposition; and
(2) the use by any television station of any part of the recorded proceedings in subsequent news, current affairs and documentary programs in accordance with the guidelines approved by the Presiding Officers.

Mr FIFE (Hume—Manager of Opposition Business) (3.32)—Mr Speaker, the Opposition will not, of course, oppose this motion but I remind you and the House that it is more than 12 months since the
Opposition called on the Government to enable the televising of the proceedings of this Parliament. I seek from the Leader of the House (Mr Beazley) an indication as to when the Government will so move. In the life of this Parliament, the Leader of the Opposition (Dr Hewson) has made it clear to the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) that we will cooperate in this regard. We believe that all parliamentary proceedings should be available for televising, not just selected parts of the program that suit the convenience of the Government.

So, whilst we will not oppose this motion as moved by the Leader of the House, I seek from him an assurance that the House of Representatives will be televised from the commencement of the next session in February next year.

Mr BEAZLEY (Swan—Leader of the House) (3.33)—in reply—The issue of televising Parliament is being considered in the context of responding to the Opposition’s reply to our recommendations on change in parliamentary procedures, which include consideration of the issue of televising the House. We have not yet finalised that process. When we have, we will then respond to that in due course.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

MIDDLE EAST
Ministerial Statement

Mr HAWKE (Wills—Prime Minister)—by leave—I wish to inform the House, and the people of Australia, of the Government’s views on developments in the Gulf crisis and of the Government’s policies in response to those developments.

Honourable members will know that on 29 November the Security Council of the United Nations passed an extremely grave resolution. That resolution is momentous, and in some respects it is quite unprecedented. Resolution 678 authorises member states of the United Nations, from 15 January 1991, to use all necessary means to uphold and implement the Security Council’s previous resolutions on the Gulf crisis. Essentially, those previous resolutions call on Iraq to withdraw unconditionally from Kuwait, and to release all hostages. The resolution also requests all states to provide appropriate support for actions taken under the resolution.

The words ‘all necessary means’ carry a clear meaning in this resolution: they encompass the use of armed force to compel compliance with the Security Council’s resolutions. The United Nations has often authorised the deployment of military forces to prevent conflict; but only once before has it authorised the use of armed force to compel compliance with its resolutions—in Korea, 40 years ago. Korea is in that respect a precedent for the action which the Security Council has now taken. But in other respects, and in very important respects, this resolution is quite unprecedented.

Never before has such a grave and momentous resolution been so broadly supported. Honourable members will know that the resolution was carried by a vote of 12 to 2, with one abstention. They may not realise that the resolution was actually sponsored by six members of the Council, including not just the United States and Britain but also the Soviet Union, France, Canada and Romania.

The fact that both superpowers were prepared, with four other nations, to sponsor this resolution shows in the most concrete terms that the nations of the world are overwhelmingly united in their condemnation of Iraq’s aggression and in their determination to do whatever it takes—to use all necessary means—to make sure that Iraq’s aggression is not allowed to stand.

In a century marked by terrible wars, uneasy peace and international distrust, this sort of response to armed aggression has proved an elusive dream. Now it is a reality.

Resolution 678 offers the best prospect of a just and peaceful resolution of the crisis. In passing resolution 678 the Security Council is not seeking war. On the contrary, the resolution, while explicitly contemplating the use of force if necessary, is founded on the hope that a clear statement of that preparedness will in fact avoid war.
President Bush wrote to me, in a letter I received over the weekend on his decision to seek high level talks with the Iraqis:

I know of your hope—which I share—that military force be used only as a last resort.

Resolution 678 is seeking to show Iraq's leaders, just as clearly as possible, that they must withdraw from Kuwait and release the hostages. The Security Council has given Iraq's leaders, in the words of the resolution, 'one final opportunity, as a pause of goodwill, to do so.'

This resolution is a stark signal, but Iraq's leaders have shown that no softer signal will move them. They have ignored statements from around the world condemning their actions, and they have ignored the concrete expression of that condemnation in the mandatory and comprehensive economic sanctions imposed by the United Nations.

Those sanctions have been very widely complied with, and effectively enforced. Many countries, like Australia, have paid heavily in lost earnings, and many, including Australia, have contributed to enforcing the sanctions. Nothing could be more effective than these sanctions in persuading Iraq to get out of Kuwait, except the threat of armed force. This Government has never ruled out the possibility that armed force may need to be used as a last resort to resolve the Gulf crisis. The question is whether now is the right time to contemplate this further and graver step.

Should the sanctions not be given longer to work? To answer that we have to clarify how the sanctions have been intended to work. Has their aim been to starve Iraqi people into submission, or has it been to show Iraqi leaders that the world would not accept their incorporation of Kuwait? The answer is plain. The aim of the sanctions has been to prove to Iraq, both through the seriousness of the action itself and through the great sacrifices which the sanctions have imposed already on both Iraq and its former trading partners, that the world would not accept Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

Starving Iraq's people into submission was not the UN's aim in imposing sanctions. That was implicit in the decision to allow exceptions in cases of humanitarian need. Nor do I believe that further economic hardship for Iraq's people is likely to change the minds of Iraq's leaders. Sanctions can be very powerful instruments of persuasion—as they have been in South Africa—but they cannot force the hand of a dictatorial leadership which is willing to ignore the interests of its people.

I am myself surprised and deeply disappointed that Iraq's leadership should have proven itself so resistant to the message of sanctions; surprised because no rational reading of Iraq's self-interest by its leaders should have allowed them to ignore the message the sanctions sent.

The sanctions have succeeded for over three months in virtually stopping all Iraq's trade with the rest of the world. Yet they have not succeeded in persuading Iraq's leaders to withdraw from Kuwait, nor to show the least sign of reconsidering their disastrous position. Meanwhile the economic impact of the Gulf crisis is causing damage to fragile developing-country economies around the world, and the difficulty and uncertainty of relying on sanctions alone to resolve the crisis is becoming all too apparent.

We believe that it is therefore timely to send an even clearer signal—the clearest and strongest signal that can be sent—that Iraq must leave Kuwait. We believe the resolution must improve whatever prospects there are that Iraq will withdraw. We believe that this resolution offers the best prospect that war can be avoided.

Since resolution 678 was passed, Iraq's apparent willingness to consider President Bush's offer of talks, to be held strictly within the framework of the United Nations resolutions on the Gulf crisis, shows that already Iraq may be reassessing its position in the light of that resolution. But we recognise that the power of resolution 678 depends on the acceptance by United Nations members that in the last resort it may be necessary to compel Iraq
to comply with the United Nations’ resolution by force of arms. Otherwise it is empty; something that Iraq can shrug off; something that would fail to compel Iraq’s leaders to address the terrible consequences of a refusal to withdraw; a missed opportunity to drive home the benefits for them and for their country of making a choice for peace.

The gravity of the situation makes it important to restate the reasons we believe that Iraq’s actions must be reversed, even to the point of using armed force, and why we believe that important Australian interests are at stake.

Iraq’s seizure of Kuwait was an act of pure aggression, motivated solely by the desire of Iraq’s leaders to increase their territory, their wealth and their power. I would ask anyone who is inclined to credit Saddam Hussein’s claims of a wider mission on behalf of the Arab people to explain the incorporation of Kuwait as the nineteenth province of Iraq. I would ask them to explain the plundering of Kuwaiti property and the persecution of its residents. And I would ask them to explain away the testimony before the Security Council last week by people who have fled from Kuwait. Even allowing for the exaggeration common in such circumstances, this testimony was indeed shocking.

As well, Australia has been deeply concerned by the consequences for the Middle East as a whole if Iraq’s aggression was allowed to stand. Who could doubt that, having swallowed Kuwait, a stronger Iraq would not then turn on its other neighbours? Who will explain how Iraq could then be prevented from establishing an hegemony over the entire region; an hegemony backed not only by chemical weapons, but sooner or later by nuclear weapons as well? And who could doubt the brutality of that hegemony?

These are not scaremongering speculations. They are serious assessments of the regional consequences of allowing Iraq’s aggression to stand. They carry with them the terrible question: were we to turn a blind eye now, what still greater crisis, with what still greater stakes, would we have to act to resolve in the future, at what still greater cost? These are crucial issues. They relate to the fate of vast numbers of our fellow human beings. But these humanitarian concerns do not stand alone. They stand alongside, and reinforce, important Australian interests which are deeply engaged in the Gulf.

First, Australia has a direct and immediate interest in the peace and prosperity of the Middle East. It is an important market for our products and an important source of imports. Australia needs the Gulf’s oil, and our trading partners elsewhere in the world need the Gulf’s oil. So stability in the Gulf is important to all Australians.

But most important of all, standing higher than all the factors I have mentioned, Australia has an interest in the establishment and maintenance of an international order based on the charter of the United Nations. This has been from the outset, and remains, the Government’s guiding principle in this crisis. Our highest priority is to uphold the principles of the United Nations: that international disputes must not be settled by force; that national borders must be respected; and that aggressors must not be permitted to prevail.

Those principles were enshrined in the United Nations charter by the generation who saw the world slide into chaos in the 1930s and who strove in 1945 to build an international order which would stop that happening again. With the end of the Cold War the need to rebuild that order is urgent. Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait proves the urgency of that need, and provides the first test of our ability to meet it. With the momentous changes—changes so much for the better—in the world political scene over the past few years the world community has a tremendous opportunity to achieve a more secure and a more just ordering of international relations; to try again to give effect to the principles to which the founders of the United Nations aspired.

The re-establishment of that order engages our direct interests as well as our sense of right and wrong. The security and prosperity of middle powers like Aus-
Australia will in the years ahead depend directly on the strength of the United Nations' principles. The strength of those principles in the years ahead depends absolutely on the support we give them today. To put it bluntly: if we or our neighbours were subject to aggression in the future, we would want, and we may need, the support of the United Nations. It is in our interests to support the United Nations today. That support must include our recognition that the United Nations should be willing to defend its principles with armed force if necessary.

It is a trite thing to say, but it is a right thing to say—war is a terrible thing. Some people will find it paradoxical that the United Nations, as an organisation devoted to peace, should contemplate war. But that tragic paradox has to be accepted. It can be necessary to be prepared to fight, and in fact to fight, in order to secure peace in the future.

That necessity was recognised by the United Nations at its outset, and is inherent in its nature. No-one knew the horrors of war better than the generation who built the United Nations. Dr Evatt, who as Australia's Foreign Minister played a leading role in establishing the United Nations, said in this House of Representatives in 1945 that if economic or diplomatic sanctions 'are deemed inappropriate to the situation or prove ineffective, the Security Council may take any military action necessary to suppress the aggressor'.

We would all fervently hope for a peaceful resolution. But if we rule out the use of force against a regime which has already used it, we have given up seeking a resolution at all. The international community would have simply acquiesced in Iraq's aggression.

For all of these reasons, the Government unreservedly supports the United Nations Security Council resolution 678. Our support for the resolution imposes on us an obligation to respond to the request in its third paragraph for all nations to provide appropriate support for actions taken under the resolution. I emphasise that the resolution not only authorises all necessary means; it explicitly requests that member states provide support.

Members will be aware that the Government has provided support for the sanctions imposed earlier by the Security Council by deploying a task force of three ships of the Royal Australian Navy—two frigates and a supply ship—to help enforce the embargo against Iraq. Our ships have been performing that task with great distinction and have played a major role in the multinational effort. They have brought credit to themselves and to their country.

The passage of resolution 678 clearly requires us to consider whether we should extend the operational role of our task force to allow it to prepare for, and if necessary to participate in, operations envisaged by the resolution. In the light of the direct Australian interests which are engaged in the crisis, and in the light of our support for the specific measures contained in the resolution, this Government believes that Australia should take this course.

I therefore inform the House that Australia is prepared to make our naval task force available to serve with allied forces in operations authorised by resolution 678, should that become necessary. Accordingly, if conflict occurs of a kind which is contemplated and authorised by the resolution, our ships would be available to participate in action with the allied fleet in the Gulf, where they would be in a position to make an important contribution to its air defence capabilities.

The Government will now authorise the Australian Defence Force (ADF) to deploy ships of our task force from the Gulf of Oman into the Persian Gulf to exercise and operate with allied naval forces in preparation for that role. The ADF will also now participate in allied military planning. These steps need to be taken now because they are essential to ensuring that our ships are fully prepared to operate as safely and effectively as possible should conflict erupt. They do not formally commit Australian forces to any
action; ADF units will remain at all times under Australian national command.

Our ships will operate principally with ships of the United States, Britain and Canada, under United States operational control. This is normal under such circumstances and will contribute both to the effectiveness and to the safety of our ships and men. Under these command arrangements, the roles and missions of our ships would be specified by the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) in conformity with Government decisions. The task force commander would be responsible for ensuring that specific tasks assigned to Australian ships conform to these specified roles and missions, and he would be required to refer any disagreements back to the CDF and the Government for decision. In all circumstances Australia will retain priority over the assignment of our ships.

As well as maintaining the task force of three ships, the Government will send another two medical teams—totaling some 20 people—to join the two already serving on hospital ships in the Gulf. It is not proposed to make any other contribution of naval, air or ground forces.

Australia's naval task force will be maintained at the present level of two combat ships and a supply ship. The frigates HMAS Darwin and HMAS Adelaide will leave the Gulf region to return to Australia in the next day or two, after being replaced by the frigate HMAS Sydney and the destroyer HMAS Brisbane. This is a significant commitment which is proportionate to the interests we have at stake and to our national resources. It is also a practical commitment. Our ships are in the area and they are trained and equipped for this task. We are confident that they will be properly prepared for the role they may have to play.

Should conflict break out, naval forces in the Gulf could face a serious threat, particularly from Iraqi aircraft. The role of our ships will be to help defend against that threat. It will be a hazardous role. The decision I am announcing today is therefore a very serious one. I have consulted the Leader of the Opposition on it.

In taking that decision I am fully conscious of the difficult task we are asking our navy to perform. We recognise the great contribution they are making to Australia and to world peace.

I know there will be some who will ask why we should contribute in the Gulf when others do not. The essential answer to this is: what others do or do not do does not obviate our responsibility to judge for ourselves what is right, and what is in our interests, and to act accordingly. We also need to recognise that not only should we contribute but, unlike many others, we can contribute; we have a relevant capability to contribute.

I know there will also be some who cavil at the leading role being played in the Gulf by the United States. They will suspect that other nations which participate will only be serving American interests. That view is profoundly mistaken. The United States is certainly playing a leading role, as we would expect from a nation as wealthy and powerful as the United States. Indeed, we would be disappointed if the United States did not play such a leading role. But the United States' role has been clearly at one in this case with the wider interests of the international community, as demonstrated by the support for resolution 678 in the Security Council.

There are even those who have purported to base their assessment of the Gulf situation on the presumption of moral equivalence between the United States and Iraqi positions. If such views were to be taken seriously, it would reflect very poorly on the standard of our public debate. Let there be no ambiguity here, no mindless muddying of the waters. If it comes to conflict, the international community will not be the aggressor. The United States and the other allies will not be the aggressor. The aggressor is the nation that took, occupied and annexed Kuwait in August.

The Australian Labor Party comes to this issue with a lot of history. For much of its 100 years the Australian Labor Party has struggled to ensure that Australia's armed forces are not used to fight other
people's wars. In the 1930s that led Labor to turn its back on aggression, as so many others did in so many parts of the world.

But Labor learnt the lesson of that mistake, and did more than its share to correct it. Dr Evatt recognised not only that aggression must be resisted, wherever it occurs, and by armed force if need be, but also that all nations must be prepared to contribute to that task. As he said in 1945:

> It must be made crystal clear that the nations seeking representation in the world organisation must be prepared to contribute their share of physical force to restrain the action of proved aggressors.

Since its establishment, Labor has been committed to strengthening the United Nations as the arbiter of a better world order. That is still our goal, more so than ever, as the passing of the Cold War brings the goal closer to our grasp. And we recognise the obligations which those aspirations impose on us as a nation.

Confident as I am of the importance of Australia's interests and the correctness of our approach, I cannot—and do not—deny that the decisions we are taking are onerous indeed. Should it come to conflict, Australians may be involved in combat for the first time in nearly 20 years—albeit in very different circumstances. This is a heavy responsibility, but I and my Government will not shirk the exercise of that responsibility.

Before closing, it is important to restate what I have stressed before. The Australian Government and people have no ill will to the people of Iraq, and we wish them no harm. For their sake as much as for the rest of the world I earnestly hope that peace will prevail. If Iraq has genuine grievances they can be heard in recognised international forums, but not until Iraq has complied with the United Nations' resolutions.

Let me turn lastly to the issue which has been most constantly in our thoughts throughout this crisis: the situation of Australians, and of other foreign nationals, held in Iraq and Kuwait against their will.

We have all heard in the last 24 hours of suggestions—including from Iraq's Ambassador in Australia—that Australian hostages may soon be released. Of course, we hope that is true. We say to Iraq, as we have said continually over recent months: let them all go.

Like all Australians—whatever we may think of Iraq's propaganda lottery being played out in Baghdad—I hope that as many of our people as possible may find their freedom through it. But I recognise, as most Australians do, that that lottery is entirely arbitrary. There is no way to guarantee the freedom of all our people, except perhaps by surrendering our policy and our national interests entirely to the hostage taker. Most Australians understand that, including many of our people held in Iraq, as I know through correspondence with me. It does them very great credit that they do understand that.

The only way to ensure the release of all our hostages is to resolve the crisis. And the only way to resolve the crisis is to press Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait. That is what resolution 678 is intended to achieve, and that is what our support for resolution 678 is intended to achieve. We believe it is our best chance.

We see in resolution 678 our best chance to get all the hostages home, to get Iraq out of Kuwait, to bring stability to the Middle East, and to take a vital step towards establishing a new world order in which nations like Australia can live in peace. That is why we have supported it by word, and that is why we will support it by deed.

We see in resolution 678 the tragic necessity to confront aggression, if necessary with armed force. And we see in resolution 678 the hope that, through international cooperation, would-be aggressors will in future be deterred before they begin.

Mr Speaker, I finish on a practical note. In the light of the situation in the Gulf, and particularly of the timetable implied by resolution 678, I have decided that I should not at this time plan to be away from Australia in January 1991. I have therefore decided that I will at this point
defer my plans to travel to Europe at that time as had been planned.

One purpose of that visit had been to allow me to pursue Australia’s interests in the Uruguay Round, if the Round is not concluded this year. I will, of course, remain committed to and active in pursuing these interests, including by travelling for direct talks at a different time if that is required. I present the following paper:

Statement to Parliament by the Prime Minister on the Gulf Crisis—Tuesday, 4 December 1990. 

Motion (by Mr Beazley) proposed:  
That the House take note of the paper.

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders

Motion (by Mr Beazley)—by leave—agreed to:

That so much of the standing and sessional orders be suspended as would prevent the Leader of the Opposition speaking for a period not exceeding 37 minutes.

Dr HEWSON (Wentworth—Leader of the Opposition) (4.07)—Two weeks ago the Cold War in Europe formally ended. The countries of eastern and western Europe signed the Charter of Paris and closed an era in their history. That event gave some substance to all the recent talk of a new kind of internationalism, one that is less confrontational, less hierarchical and less dangerous than that of the recent past. The ending of the Cold War in Europe also gave people a sense of optimism about their future. The Cold War was, above all, a battle of ideas—a battle between Western democratic liberalism and communist centralisation, between respect for individual liberty and contempt for it, between a recognition of the sovereign rights of independent states and the denial of such rights.

The outcome of the Cold War is now a new Europe, a Europe in which the hope of economic progress is firmly linked with the idea of political freedom. But the optimism that has surrounded the end of the Cold War in Europe has been short lived. A new theatre of confrontation and high risk has emerged. Saddam Hussein’s blatant aggression against Kuwait, his detention of thousands of hostages and his refusal to yield to international pressure to deny him his ill-gotten gains, have led the world to the brink of a major war in the Middle East. The United States Secretary of State, James Baker, put it well recently when, in describing the cause of the crisis, he said:

A dangerous man has committed a blatant act of aggression in a vital region at a critical moment in history.

Since the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait four months ago the Opposition’s response has been consistent and clear. We see this crisis as one of the gravest tests of the international community since 1945. We believe that the United States and the United Nations Security Council moved with great speed to impose sanctions on Iraq to enforce the will of the international community.

We have, of course, a deep concern about the fate of Australian hostages, we have an interest in upholding important standards of international law and in helping to ensure minimal standards of acceptable international conduct, and we have a national economy that is highly vulnerable to a flattening of world activity as a result of rising oil prices. Above all, we are committed as an Opposition to building a united national position on this issue. We have taken a consistent view that there is too much at stake in terms of Australian interests and Australian lives for petty political point scoring.

We have maintained throughout that we support appropriate international action—military, economic and other—to ensure that United Nations (UN) economic sanctions against Iraq are effective. We were quick to support the Government’s economic sanctions against Iraq. We also joined with the Government in its action to implement UN trade sanctions on Iraq and Kuwait. We have supported the Government’s continuing efforts to free our hostages held by Iraq.
without compromising important points of principle; namely, we are opposed to Iraq's actions in Kuwait; we do not bargain for hostages; and we call for the release of all hostages. Furthermore, very early in the crisis we called for the Government not to act passively in defence of Australian interests, and we therefore supported the Government's decision on 10 August to commit Royal Australian Navy (RAN) vessels to the Gulf in support of UN economic sanctions.

Despite our commitment to building a unified national position, we have not been uncritical of the Government's handling of this issue. We believe that on specific aspects criticism has been called for. First, we were critical of the Government's failure to consult with the Opposition prior to its original decision to deploy Australian defence forces to the Gulf. There have been subsequent indications from the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Senator Gareth Evans) that such consultations with the Opposition may not be appropriate. But I am pleased to advise that the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) did give me prior warning of most of the most recent change in the role of our Navy in the Gulf which he announced today. I welcome the Prime Minister's action in doing so. I believe that consultations of this kind are essential if an effective bipartisan approach is to have any prospect of success.

Second, we were critical of the element of confusion and doubt which was created following the Government's original announcement of the Australian naval deployment. We believe that the Australian Parliament and people deserve to have as much information as possible made available to them consistent with genuine national security considerations. The Opposition did not believe that in the early stages the Government was as open as it should have been about the details of our Navy's involvement in the enforcement of economic sanctions. We welcome the fact that over recent days the Government's approach to important decision making about Australia's role in the Gulf has been more open, more forthcoming and hopefully, as a result, less open to misinterpretation.

But let me emphasise that despite these justifiable concerns about the Government's handling of this issue in the past and its judgment on important details, the Opposition has supported the Government's basic decisions to impose economic sanctions and to deploy Australian ships in support of an international task force.

To date, the international response to this crisis has been overwhelmingly supportive of the rights of sovereignty and the rule of law in international affairs. There have been 12 UN Security Council resolutions on issues ranging from the illegality of Iraq's actions to its liability for them. The latest resolution passed last week gives Kuwait a clear deadline, after which the use of all necessary means to uphold and implement all previous resolutions will be authorised. Military forces from over 27 countries have been deployed to defend Iraq's neighbours from further aggression and to implement UN resolutions. The international community has spelt out a clear three-way process to a peaceful resolution of the crisis: the complete unconditional Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait; the restoration of Kuwait's legitimate government; and the release of all hostages.

What has been Saddam Hussein's response to this international opposition to his actions in Kuwait? He continues to reject the warning of the United Nations. He continues to entrench Iraq in Kuwait. He continues to manipulate the fate of Australian and other hostages in a cruel game of bargaining over people's lives and freedom. There is only one way to convince Saddam Hussein that he has no alternative to withdrawal from Kuwait, and that is to intensify all the pressures currently being brought to bear on him, including diplomatic, economic and military pressures.

Sometimes the indication of an unmistakable intention to use force is the best means of ensuring that such force is not used. The time has come to give that tactic a chance to work in the current
crisis. We hope that the current planning for offensive action does not need to be implemented. We hope that Saddam Hussein will come to his senses and that the principles laid down by the United Nations will be respected. But, equally, we believe that these objectives will only be achieved if the pressure on Saddam Hussein is maintained and if the intentions of the international community are made unmistakably clear.

It is in that context that the Opposition supports the decision concerning the role of the Royal Australian Navy ships in the Gulf which the Prime Minister announced in the House today. It is a decision which is consistent with the view which both the Government and the Opposition have expressed about the significance of the Gulf crisis and Australia’s interests in its outcome. Our support for the Government’s decision is based on a thorough and careful analysis of the issues it raises.

The shadow Cabinet had the benefit yesterday of an extended briefing from the Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral Hudson, and other senior officers. We are grateful to Admiral Hudson for his assistance and appreciate the speed with which the Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence (Senator Robert Ray) responded positively to our request.

Last night I wrote to the Prime Minister to convey the Opposition’s in principle support for his decisions to broaden the geographic deployment and operational role of our Navy ships. I also indicated the Opposition’s support for the Government’s decision to send additional Defence Force medical teams to the Persian Gulf. In indicating our general support, however, I advised him that we expected his statement today to be clear and wide ranging. I did so against the background of the confusion and uncertainty which his original announcement of the RAN deployment in August had created.

Specifically, I requested the Prime Minister to clarify the following issues to the maximum extent possible consistent with our national security requirements and the safety of our Defence Force personnel in the Gulf. Those issues included: the strategic objective to which our forces will be contributing; the general tactical role which our forces will be performing; the circumstances in which the Government would consider an increase in the size of the Australian naval deployment; the practical chain of command for our ships in a battle situation; the command structure for the RAN ships compared to that under which other allied ships will operate; the level of political control which the Australian Government will retain over the RAN’s actions in an offensive situation; the limits, if any, that will exist on the RAN’s operational involvement; and the conditions of service that will apply for our defence personnel involved, both regular and reserves.

The Prime Minister’s statement today addresses some of the central issues, and we welcome that. The statement honestly addresses the dangers into which our ships may well now be placed. It does not disguise the fact that there is a good deal of open-ended commitment about the geographic area in which our ships will be deployed and about the operational role which they will perform should hostilities occur. The statement makes a coherent effort at explaining the command arrangements under which our ships will operate in the future. All these aspects of this statement are welcome, and we believe that they stand in contrast to the way in which the original RAN deployment was announced by the Government.

There will be those who will be critical of the level of US operational command over our ships. Let me make it clear that the Opposition believes that such a command structure is, in the circumstances, appropriate and the best guarantee of the safety of our personnel. Let me also state quite clearly that we on this side of the House understand the constraints under which the Prime Minister and the Cabinet operate on these issues. The Australian Government has frequently emphasised the need for a unified international opposition to Iraq’s actions. It is correct in doing so. But it has difficulties with its own constituent elements in achieving such unity.
On 6 November the parliamentary left wing of the Australian Labor Party expressed its views clearly on the Gulf crisis. It made a number of telling statements. It said that the US Administration’s position constituted bold, simple positions which provided no scope for negotiations, no ladder for Saddam Hussein to climb down. It expressed its concern that there was a worrying lack of clarity in US regional policy aims, which sit most uneasily with the huge build-up towards war. It also added that a negotiated settlement of the Gulf crisis is closely linked to a withdrawal of Israel from occupied Arab territories. But it is not just the 31 members of the parliamentary left wing that the Prime Minister has somehow to accommodate. The Centre Left has apparently made it quite plain that the price of its support for the Cabinet’s most recent decision on the Gulf crisis is an undertaking that it will not increase the size of Australia’s military contribution at any time in the future. That would seem to be the significance of this sentence on page 7 of the Prime Minister’s statement:

It is not proposed to make any other contribution of naval, air or ground forces.

The Opposition agrees that an increased Australian military contribution, over and above that announced today, is not currently warranted. But we are concerned that the Government’s capacity to respond to changing strategic circumstances may have been strictly limited. In this House on 21 August this year, the Prime Minister rightly described the current situation in the Persian Gulf as:

...one of the gravest international crises since the Second World War...it has challenged us to define the way in which the world community will cooperate in the years ahead.

He has also described Australia’s interests in the crisis as real and important. The Prime Minister was correct in these assessments but the significance he attaches to this crisis sits rather oddly with the compromises he now seems prepared to deny himself the flexibility he should have in terms of the level of Australian involvement to meet changing circumstances in the Gulf.

I believe that the Prime Minister should clearly state—and that is why I have raised it—the extent to which his policy response in the future is circumscribed by the internal processes of gaining support within his own Party. One of the striking facts of Australia’s military involvement in this crisis is the limitation on our options as a result of the state of our defence resources. There are, for example, some disturbing longer term implications in the fact that the Government has at its disposal only four appropriately equipped vessels to send to the Gulf for the operations currently being envisaged.

It is time for our defence policy to confront the consequences of these limitations in terms of protecting our international interests and providing a reasonable range of options. It is also time to look closely at the failure of the international community to anticipate the invasion of Kuwait. The failure is arguably one of the most serious intelligence oversights since Pearl Harbour. All the evidence was there. All that was lacking was the inclination to interpret the evidence in a way that ascribed the motive of ruthless territorial ambition to Saddam Hussein. That intelligence failure at an international level is one which needs to be closely reviewed and rectified.

The Opposition’s support for the decision announced by the Prime Minister today is given in the clear view that what may well lie ahead is a long, drawn out struggle in the Persian Gulf—one that is characterised by threat and counter-threat, deadlines and partial compromises, negotiation and intrigue. It will be a test of will and statesmanship. Above all, it will test the durability of the new coalition of interests that has developed in the post-Cold War environment.

In supporting the Prime Minister in the decision he has announced today, I want to make one point very clear. I have em-
phasised today the importance which the Opposition attaches to the international community making it unmistakably clear to Saddam Hussein that it is prepared to use force to ensure that the principles of the various UN resolutions are respected. We on this side of the House are deeply disturbed at the prospect of Saddam Hussein playing games to buy time for himself and to dilute the international consensus which authorises the use of force if he fails to act in accordance with UN resolutions.

Saddam has played games with the hostages. He has played games with various envoys. He must not be allowed, by playing similar games, to prevent the international community from resolving this crisis and denying him the ill-gotten gains of his aggression. The consequences for the international community in the post-Cold War era and for regional security in the Middle East would be disastrous if Saddam Hussein is allowed to drag this crisis out for as long as he can, and if he is allowed to secure gains for himself through the unwillingness of the international community to hold its line and maintain its unity.

If that happens, the threat posed by Iraq to its neighbours will increase. The very difficult and costly task of forging a new basis for regional security based on the common interests of the Arab states and Western support would need to be attempted. The pressures on Israel to agree to a Palestinian settlement would grow appreciably and the justifiable sense of threat which Israel perceives could become more acute. The splits which this crisis has already caused in the Arab League could widen and become even more bitter, and the role of Iran and Syria could assume increasing importance in ways that may not contribute to long term regional security.

No-one in his right mind wants a war at any time. The prospect of war in the Middle East, with all its potential for escalation, is a particularly appalling one. No Australians like to see their young people being sent into harm’s way far from home. But my point today is that, unless the prospect of international force being used against Saddam Hussein is made an inevitable reality for him, this crisis runs the risk of becoming a long, drawn out affair. If it does, then Saddam Hussein stands to gain more out of the crisis than most now believe he can.

So, in indicating the Opposition’s support for the Prime Minister’s decision today, we want to emphasise the importance of the international community meaning what it says on this issue. We want to urge the Australian Government to make that point as forcefully as it can at an international level. Only if the international community makes it clear that it means what it says will lives be saved, suffering be minimised and the principles of order and justice in international affairs be upheld. Henry Kissinger recently emphasised the importance of this point when he wrote:

It is to be hoped that (the US Administration) can find a way that avoids both a military strategy of total destructiveness and a diplomatic strategy committed to amassing UN resolutions . . . But whatever our destination, we must arrive at it by design rather than as captives of circumstance.

Australia too must not become a captive of circumstance. We must keep a clear eye on the very real national interests here at stake. We must reinforce at the highest international levels our view that the best prospect for ensuring that UN principles are respected is not to allow Saddam Hussein to set either the agenda or the timetable whereby this crisis is resolved.

The Opposition’s support for a unified national position in this crisis is a consistent and deliberate one. We would prefer that our Defence Force were not deployed in such a dangerous theatre of operation. But we know that to do less would be to ignore the very real Australian interests that are at stake in the outcome. In saying that, I know full well that the people who live most directly with the consequences of our decisions here today are the men and women of our Defence Force and their families. In carrying out its new responsibilities in the Persian Gulf, our Defence Force is acting in its finest traditions. It has the full support of the
Opposition and our full confidence in its capabilities. To those Defence Force personnel and their families, we wish success and a safe return.

Mr BILNEY (Kingston—Minister for Defence Science and Personnel) (4.28)—It is true, as previous speakers in this debate have said, that at this moment we stand at a watershed in history—at a moment when great decisions need to be taken in pursuit of great principles and great causes. It is a great pity, it seems to me, that at this moment we cannot find our responses to those events on the basis of complete bipartisanship free of cheap shots and cavilling from the Opposition.

I was encouraged when we first debated this matter in the House by the support of the mainstream political parties here for the course that was taken when first we dispatched our naval forces to the Gulf. I was extremely encouraged when, on the occasion of their sailing from Sydney Harbour on, I think it was, 14 August, all members of the main political parties were present at that farewell. I would certainly hope that that attitude can continue in respect of further speakers in this debate from all sides, and I firmly believe it will.

The Leader of the Opposition (Dr Hewson) in his remarks referred to what he regarded, as he said, as confusion about the commitment. He said that there had not been a proper statement of strategic objectives, of the tactical role of our naval forces, of what would happen in the event of the escalation of the conflict; that there had been no clarity about the chain of command or the command structure; that the political control aspects had not been referred to. He also referred to confusion about limits on operational involvement and confusion about conditions of service.

The Leader of the Opposition did say that a number of these aspects had been cleared up in the statement of the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke), as indeed some of them have. It is also the case that some other aspects—conditions of service, to take one example—have been completely cleared up before. I want to deal with some of those aspects later on in my remarks.

I regard it as quite wrong for the Leader of the Opposition to say that in our original announcement of the dispatch of the naval forces and the ships there was no statement of objectives. At that time, the objective was made very clear. It was to uphold the sanctions which had been voted for by the United Nations (UN) Security Council in resolution 661. The operational role of our ships was specified as being to identify ships which were attempting to run the embargo imposed by the UN sanctions, to contact them, to interrogate them and to warn them. That is a job which they have done exceptionally well. Indeed, well over 2,000 ships have been intercepted by our forces in that way. A good number of them have been stopped and boarded, and a smaller number of them have been searched in order to carry out the sanctions. It is a job which they have done extremely well.

The Leader of the Opposition also spoke at some length, in what I thought was another unfortunate reference, about the internal processes of the Australian Labor Party, a party which has always taken very seriously any decision to commit the forces of this country to a war or to a potentially warlike situation. I believe that it is only proper that those matters be debated within any political party which wants to reflect the many strands of opinion in Australia.

But I did not notice any dissenters from this side of the House speaking in this debate. I did not notice any dissenters from the stance that was taken and which is reflected in the Prime Minister's statement. I do not think that there will be dissent of that kind, because in the end there is broad community support in this country for the commitment that we have undertaken. It has not been undertaken mindlessly. It is a measured, significant and appropriate response to the situation that we face. It is proportionate both to our national resources and to the situation which might potentially arise in the Gulf. I reject the cavilling which has gone on on the opposite side.

As I said, we are at a watershed in history where the principles of the United Nations are very much at stake. We have
a decision to make as to whether those principles will be upheld, whether the United Nations Charter will become the basis of international law or whether, as has unfortunately happened for most of the last 50 years, it will be honoured more in the breach than in the observance.

I just want to run through the extent to which the operation has been a United Nations operation from the very beginning. The canard is sometimes put about that the Australian contribution to the multinational force in the Gulf was made hastily and without UN sanction. I point out that on 2 August the UN Security Council passed resolution 660, which demanded the withdrawal of Iraqi troops and the opening of negotiations between the two countries and that on 6 August in resolution 661 the Security Council imposed comprehensive mandatory sanctions against Iraq unless it complied with UN sanction. I point out that on 2 August the UN Security Council passed resolution 660, which demanded the withdrawal of Iraqi troops and the opening of negotiations between the two countries and that on 6 August in resolution 661 the Security Council imposed comprehensive mandatory sanctions against Iraq unless it complied with UN sanction. I point out that on 2 August the UN Security Council passed resolution 660, which demanded the withdrawal of Iraqi troops and the opening of negotiations between the two countries and that on 6 August in resolution 661 the Security Council imposed comprehensive mandatory sanctions against Iraq unless it complied with UN sanction. I point out that on 2 August the UN Security Council passed resolution 660, which demanded the withdrawal of Iraqi troops and the opening of negotiations between the two countries and that on 6 August in resolution 661 the Security Council imposed comprehensive mandatory sanctions against Iraq unless it complied with UN sanction.

For the benefit of the House, it is perhaps worth recalling that there have now been some 12 resolutions on this subject. I have described the first three. I will now go on to the other resolutions. On 18 August, resolution 664 was passed by a unanimous vote, whereby the Security Council demanded that Iraq allow foreign nationals to leave Iraq and Kuwait and rescind its order to close diplomatic missions in Kuwait. On 25 August, resolution 665 was passed, whereby the Council permitted member states to use limited naval force in the Gulf to ensure compliance with economic sanctions by calling on them to use measures commensurate to the specific circumstances to halt maritime shipping in order to inspect cargoes. The vote was 13 to 0.

On 13 September, resolution 666 was passed, whereby the Council approved shipment of food to Iraq and Kuwait in case of humanitarian need, but only if it was distributed through the United Nations and similar bodies. On 16 September, resolution 667 was passed by a unanimous vote, whereby the Council condemned raids by Iraqi troops on French and other diplomatic missions in occupied Kuwait.

Again, there was a unanimous vote on resolution 669 on 24 September, whereby the Council passed a procedural measure entrusting its sanctions committee with evaluating and reporting back to the Council recommendations on assistance from countries suffering economically from the trade embargo. On 25 September, resolution 670 was passed, whereby the Council prohibited all air traffic with Iraq and occupied Kuwait except in certain circumstances.

On 29 October, resolution 674 was passed, whereby the Council asked states to document evidence of financial losses and human rights violations resulting from the invasion. On November 28, resolution 677 was passed, whereby the Council asked the UN Secretary General to safeguard a smuggled copy of Kuwait's population register in order to foil attempts by Iraq to repopulate the emirate with Iraqis. This was another unanimous vote.

Finally, leading up to the event which has occasioned this debate, resolution 678 was passed, whereby if Iraq does not comply by 15 January 1991 with previous Council resolutions calling for Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait, nations are authorised to use all necessary means to ensure compliance with the resolutions.

So from the beginning this has been a United Nations operation. It has been driven by the principles of the Charter. It has been driven by a degree of consideration in the Security Council which is quite unprecedented. It has been driven by a unanimity of view amongst nations, both within the confines of the United Nations and so far as practical contributions of forces are concerned, which is again unprecedented. All in all, there is no case for saying that this action has been taken unilaterally, hastily or without giving Iraq every chance to comply with
the sanctions and the strictures which have been suggested.

It is very much in Australia's interest that we support that Charter basis for international law. As a small country, we have a greater interest in establishing and maintaining an international order based on the UN Charter than have larger countries, which are more able to look after themselves. In my view, it is criminal not to seize that chance now that we have it. We now have the chance to reaffirm in the most explicit way, in a way which sets an example for the future, that international disputes must not be settled by force. The passage of UN Security Council resolution 678 obliges us to take action of that kind.

Our contribution of giving the three ships a new role in the situation which is now foreseen and of doubling our medical team is an appropriate one. The job of the ships in the Gulf of Oman is now effectively at an end, because the number of ships which are trying to run the blockade has dwindled to nothing. I said before that HMAS Darwin and HMAS Adelaide had carried out a magnificent job in that regard, ably supported by HMAS Success. I am certain that when HMAS Brisbane and HMAS Sydney arrive in the Gulf, as they do, I believe, today, and when HMAS Westralia replaces HMAS Success early in the new year, they will do a similar job. Lastly, as the question of conditions of service was raised—

Mr Tim Fischer—I am not saying this time; it was last time.

Mr BILNEY—I want to reaffirm that the conditions of service for the Middle East deployment—as the Leader of the National Party points out to me across the table—are exactly the same as for the previous deployment. I have been speaking to the Minister of Defence (Senator Robert Ray) about his recent visit to the ships in the Gulf and to our other deployments there. He has assured me that those conditions have been very well accepted amongst people on the ships. Indeed, I was privileged the other day to go to a ceremony in Adelaide where a sailor who is on one of the ships in the Gulf—via his father, who is a constituent of mine—bought the first block of land in a housing development in my electorate with savings from the allowances that he received in the Gulf. It is good to see those allowances being put to such a useful purpose.

I now refer to the medical teams. I regard these as a very adequate contribution. It is insufficiently noticed that our medical teams will contain a considerable number of reservists, including particularly those medical specialists who will be operating as surgeons on the ships. I was privileged the other evening at a dinner of the Australian Army Medical Corps in Adelaide, which I had better tell honourable members, in a moment of patriotism and parochialism, supplies about half of the AAMC, to meet a number of those people who will be going to deployment in the Gulf and to say that their morale, in anticipating this deployment, is as high as one would expect.

In conclusion, I repeat that it would be nice to see a continuation of the bipartisanship, which has characterised Australia's political support for our Gulf deployment, from future speakers in this debate. I can assure the House that from this side our support of those men and women—there are eight women who will be deployed on the Westralia when she leaves—remains unswerving, as does our support for the families who suffer at home when their loved ones are away on those ships, and will continue. We all hope that the resolute action which we and other nations have taken in this crisis will lead not to war but to a recognition by Iraq that the path of peace is the way to settle this dispute. It is on that note that I support the motion.

Mr TIM FISCHER (Farrer—Leader of the National Party of Australia) (4.32)—In the 90-year history of this Parliament, there have been few occasions when the Parliament has had to consider the commitment of Australian defence forces to an operational circumstance overseas and, indeed, to potential warfare and potential loss of life. This is a decision not lightly made. It is one of the utmost gravity. It is in this context that I highlight that there are no cheap shots. The Leader of
the Opposition (Dr Hewson) gave forth on behalf of the Liberal and National Parties a very comprehensive response to the statement of the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) and signified our support of the decision made by the Government.

Our decision to extend bipartisan support is a capable and correct decision. It reflects the ramifications arising out of the horrific invasion of tiny Kuwait by Iraq and the horrific circumstances arising which have to be addressed by the Western world. They cannot be ignored by the Western world and they should evoke the bipartisan support of the Labor Party, the Liberal Party and the National Party.

On behalf of my colleagues in the parliamentary National Party, I reiterate our support for the most recent decision by the Government following the passage of resolution 678 at the United Nations last week. I made the point at the time that, with the passage of that resolution, there were new circumstances pertaining that would require the Cabinet to look at and evaluate the role of the Navy and the potential role or otherwise of other contingents from the Australian defence forces. This has now happened and is manifested in and reflected by the statements today of the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and the Minister for Defence Science and Personnel (Mr Bilney).

In passing, I remind the House that it was not always so that Australian defence forces overseas enjoyed the support of both sides of the House. It is a much happier circumstance that not only do they enjoy the support of both sides of the House. I believe that they enjoy fully the support of the vast majority of Australian people as they go about their assigned duties, as they are, in a competent, comprehensive way. I commend the professionalism of the Navy and all those currently in the Middle East, and those heading to the Middle East as part of the Australian contingent to the multinational forces now ranged against the Butcher of Baghdad, against Iraq, for quite proper reasons.

It is important to reflect that, whilst we focus on the three key ships, there are others involved. I would like to track through those. As was mentioned earlier in the debate, there is the HMAS Darwin and HMAS Adelaide, which are currently returning from the Middle East. They are about to sail off-station in the area of the Gulf that was assigned to them. They are due to arrive in Australia just before Christmas. Equally, HMAS Brisbane and HMAS Sydney, which I had the privilege of visiting the week before they sailed from Sydney, are in the process of taking up their operational station in the Gulf. That is a new area now, flowing from the decision by the Government and the Cabinet today.

On HMAS Brisbane there are not only Navy personnel but also Army personnel. I choose not to give the exact figures; obviously the Navy predominates on the HMAS Brisbane. That is as it should be. There are also Army personnel on the HMAS Brisbane. Equally on the HMAS Sydney there are in addition to the large numbers of Navy personnel, Army and Royal Australian Air Force personnel. On HMAS Success, which has been carrying out in professional way re-supply activities of a quite comprehensive nature, there are Army personnel in addition to the large numbers of Navy personnel. I salute the service they are giving, are about to give, and have given in carrying out their duties.

In addition, there is an existing medical team involving mainly Navy, but also one Army personnel, on the USNS Comfort, which is located in the Gulf. I want to dwell on those for a moment because that medical team has been at work already in emergency situations in very difficult circumstances with quite large numbers of injured sailors following fire and other events which have already occurred in the course of the contingent’s activity in the Middle East. I salute their service.

I know that, in part, they feel a little neglected as the main focus is on the contingent of three Australian ships, but they are equally important in their role on the USNS Comfort. I particularly go out of my way in this debate in the House
to commend their work and their contribution which will now be added to by the additional team, referred to by the Prime Minister and the Minister, which will take up duty next month in the Middle East. I believe they are fulfilling an essential role and have already had their experience and professionalism tested in real life circumstances; they came through with flying colours.

There are other personnel throughout the Middle East, pursuant to the contingent, including those who have arrived in the Middle East as part of exchange units—liaison officers, support elements and the like. This includes Army and Air Force personnel in much, much smaller numbers but, more particularly, Navy personnel who are currently doing service on behalf of Australia and the free world with regard to all that has unfolded in the Middle East.

In commending the professionalism of those in the Gulf, I note that they will be away from their families over the Christmas period and will continue to be at their task without hesitation. I also commend the Minister for Defence Science and Personnel in his reaffirmation that entitlements, allotments and allowances are in fact the same for HMAS Brisbane and HMAS Sydney and others joining the effort as they were at the outset. Having been asked by some sailors to ascertain whether that is so, I approached the Minister. He affirmed to me, and he has affirmed it again in the House, that this is the case. That is certainly good news, and it is as it should be.

On a broader note, I believe that we should also commend the United States President, George Bush, and the United States Administration on what they have facilitated in a circumstance which was extremely difficult. The easy option was always to extend the embargo indefinitely, to allow matters to drift on and to play into the hands of Saddam Hussein by that process. But no; the United States, acting properly and capably, particularly with regard to the United Nations, set about the task of bringing forward, in a responsible way, resolutions to address all that is involved in the Middle East. That culminated in last week’s resolution 678, which was in fact sponsored by no fewer than six countries. It is interesting to note that they were the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, France, Canada, and Romania—under its new administration.

We now know that embargoes and sanctions as such would not have, in themselves, been effective in liberating Kuwait. Indeed, the Iraqis have been effectively toughing out the circumstance and, with varying degrees of success, they have carried on with their annexation of Kuwait and a number of other horrific activities.

I place on record some of the specific evidence given to Amnesty International in relation to what the Iraqis have been doing in Kuwait. I quote:

An anonymous Kuwaiti man recently interviewed on US television by telephone from Kuwait City said the torture, murder and destruction of his country was accelerating.

“If you’re in Kuwait and you’re Kuwaiti, you’re at risk all the time. You have only the freedom to breathe. I saw some people (tortured). They tie their arms up and they dump them in the swimming pool until almost they pass out, and then they take them out, they give them all kinds of electrical shocks.”

I turn to another piece of evidence given to and verified by Amnesty International. I again quote from an excellent article in the Sunday Herald which I read as I flew back to Canberra from completing a number of economic evaluation tours on Sunday night, and which brought home to me the gravity of the circumstance and the extent of the rape of Kuwait. I have since checked and I now bring to the House’s attention some further anecdotal and verified comment on what is happening in Kuwait. I quote:

Staying at home is no safeguard. Neighbourhood searches are common. Soldiers broke into the home of one young couple late one night to interrogate the husband. They threw the couple’s one-year-old child on the floor and an officer put his boot on to the child’s head, pressing down harder as he questioned the husband about his job at a hospital.

“The soldiers took my husband with them. Four days later, the soldiers returned with my husband practically unrecognisable, even to me as his wife. There, before my mother and father-in-law, our
neighbours and me, his wife, my husband was shot dead", the woman said in an account presented on her behalf to the UN.

Those two examples show why it is necessary that we take the action that is now being taken. They highlight the shallow approach of some of the peace groups and the position of the Australian Democrats who keep on calling for extensions of the embargo on the never-never basis which, I say again, plays into President Hussein's hands and does not address the type of activity that has been happening in Kuwait under the Iraqi occupying force.

I also commend Mrs Thatcher, the former Prime Minister of Great Britain, who put the 'great' back into Great Britain—and I take this opportunity to salute her service to her country and the world—in the role she played as this crisis unfolded and in helping to bring about the attitude of the Soviet Union, especially, in respect of the United Nations process.

As the Leader of the Opposition has said, this is one of the gravest tests of the international community since 1945. The world is watching whilst this crisis is resolved. It will certainly affect the nature of international relations and the security of independent states for years to come. That is why Australia cannot do nothing and why it is correct, in the world's interests and in Australia's strategic and economic interests, to respond, and to respond in a manifestly correct way.

Saddam Hussein has had cause to use poisonous gas on his own people, so we now know what we are up against. He has had cause to execute some of his closest colleagues in the most horrific circumstances, and of course his use of hostages as human shields is totally unacceptable. I signify our support for the decision made by the Government.

The trade sanctions circumstance is correct but, equally, the Government indicated that no one sector would bear the burden of those trade sanctions. I point out, for example, that the Rice Marketing Board and the Australian Wheat Board to date have totally borne an horrific cost arising from those trade sanctions. I reiterate the need for interim compensation to be considered in the context of all of the quite complex arrangements existing, for example, between the Wheat Board and the Government and between the Rice Marketing Board and the like, with regard to the trade sanctions question.

Finally, as the festive season approaches, our thoughts are with the families of the Navy personnel, the Australian Army personnel, the Royal Australian Air Force personnel and all other personnel currently in the Middle East, including the medical team on the USNS Comfort.

Our thoughts are also with the families of the hostages—people being held against their will in Kuwait and Iraq and who, in their own horrific circumstances, have been denied basic human rights. It has added greatly to the burden of their families in Australia. We support the commitment that has been extended.

I further signify that I will seek to visit the Middle East and the Australian contingent over Christmas, not so much as the Federal Leader of the National Party of Australia, but as a member of this Parliament, on the basis that this Parliament, on the basis that this Parliament has, in effect, in line with the Government's decision, sent those ships to the Middle East. Someone should at least make the effort to turn up at the awkward time of Christmas, and also to see the conditions first-hand.

I wish our contingent well. I believe that the Government has made a correct decision and it is time that there was a total reversal of the rape of Kuwait by the Butcher of Baghdad.

Debate (on motion by Dr Catley) adjourned.

GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC POLICIES

Discussion of Matter of Public Importance

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. M.J.R. MacKellar)—Mr Speaker has received a letter from the Leader of the Opposition (Dr Hewson) proposing that a definite matter of public importance be submitted to the House for discussion, namely:

The economic incompetence of the Government which, contrary to their assurances, has
resulted in the Australian economy going into recession.

I call upon those members who approve of the proposed discussion to rise in their places.

More than the number of members required by the Standing Orders having risen in their places—

Motion (by Mr Free) put:

That the business of the day be called on.

The bells having been rung and an incident having occurred in the chamber—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. M. J. R. MacKellar)—Order! I suggest that the House do adjourn until the ringing of the bells.

Sitting suspended from 5.03 to 5.18 p.m.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. M. J. R. MacKellar)—Order! The question is that the business of the day be called on.

In division—

Mr Tim Fischer—Mr Deputy Speaker, I raise a point of order. I point out that, during the recent interruption of the proceedings of the House, the television screen service remained focused on the House as a whole for some of the period, and so on the very unfortunate incident and the member involved. I ask that you seek to clarify at an early point of time that that cannot be utilised by other media in terms of the current existing guidelines.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER—I will certainly take that up with the Speaker.

(Mr Deputy Speaker—Hon. M. J. R. MacKellar)

Ayes ............... 65

Noes ................ 59

Majority ........... 6

AYES

Edwards, Ronald
Elliot, R. P.
Fatin, W. F.
Ferguson, L. D. T.
Fitzgibbon, E. J.
Free, R. V.
Gayler, J.
Gear, G. (Teller)
Gibson, G. D.
Gorman, R. N. J.
Grace, E. L. (Teller)
Hand, G. L.
Holding, A. C.
Hollic, C.
Howe, B. L.
Hull, R. J.
Humphreys, B. C.
Jakobson, C. A.
Jenkins, H. A.
Johns, O. T.
Jones, Barry
Keating, P. J.
Kelly, R. J.
Kerin, J. C.
Kerr, D. J.
Lavarch, M. H.
Lee, M. J.
Lindsay, E. J.
McHugh, J.
Mack, E. C.
Martin, S. P.
Melham, D.
Morris, Allan
Morris, Peter
Newell, N. J.
O’Keefe, N. P.
Price, I. R. S.
Punch, G. F.
Scholes, G. G. D.
Scott, John
Scott, Les
Simmons, D. W.
Snow, J. H.
Snowdon, W. E.
Staples, P. R.
Theophanous, A. C.
Tickner, R. E.
Walker, F. J.
Woods, Harry
Wright, K. W.

NOES

Dobie, J. D. M.
Downer, A. J. G.
Edwards, Harry
Fife, W. C.
Filing, P. A.
Fischer, Tim
Fisher, Peter
Gallus, C. A.
Hall, Steve
Halverson, R. G.
Hawker, D. P. M.
Hewson, J. R.
Ricks, N. J. (Teller)
Howard, J. W.
Jull, D. F.
Kemp, D. A.
Lloyd, B.
McArthur, F. S.
McGauran, P. J.
McLachlan, I. M.
Meare, J. C.
Nehl, G. B.
Nugent, P. E.
Peacock, A. S.
Prosser, G. D.
Reid, N. B.
Reith, P. K.
Rigall, J. P.
Rocher, A. C.
Rondaidson, M. J. C.
Ruddock, P. M.
Scott, Bruce
Shack, F. D.
Sharp, J. R.
Sinclair, I. McC.
Smith, W. L.
Somlyzy, A. M.
Sullivan, K. J.
Truss, W. E.
Tuckey, C. W.
Webster, A. P.
Wilson, J. B. C.
Woods, Bob
Wooldridge, M. R. L.

PAIRS

Sciacca, C.
Sawford R. W.
O’Neill, L. R. T.
Bevis, A.
Duncan, P.
Griffiths, A. G.
Blewett, N.
Darling, E. E.
Bilney, G. N.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

BILLS RETURNED FROM THE SENATE

The following Bills were returned from the Senate without amendment or requests:

Wool Legislation Amendment Bill 1990
Wool Tax (Nos. 1 to 5) Further Amendment Bills 1990
Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 1990-91
Committee of Privileges

Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 1990-91
Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Bill 1990-91

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE NATIONAL CRIME AUTHORITY

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. M.J.R. MacKellar)—Mr Speaker has received a message from the Senate acquainting the House of the Senate resolution referring to the Joint Committee on the National Crime Authority the following matter: the relationship between the National Crime Authority and James McCartney Anderson and whether the Authority has properly performed its statutory functions in respect of James McCartney Anderson.

ASSENT TO BILLS

Assent to the following Bills reported:
Australian National Maritime Museum Bill 1990
Arts, Environment, Tourism and Territories Legislation Amendment Bill 1990
First Home Owners Amendment Bill 1990
Wool Tax (No. 1) Further Amendment Bill 1990
Wool Tax (No. 2) Further Amendment Bill 1990
Wool Tax (No. 3) Further Amendment Bill 1990
Wool Tax (No. 4) Further Amendment Bill 1990
Wool Tax (No. 5) Further Amendment Bill 1990
Wool Legislation Amendment Bill 1990
Crimes (Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychoactive Substances) Bill 1990

COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES

Mr GEAR (Canning)—I present the report from the Committee of Privileges, incorporating a dissenting report, in connection with a matter referred to the Committee by the House on 19 September 1990, together with the minutes of proceedings of the Committee.

Ordered that the report be printed.

Mr GEAR—by leave—The report I have just presented follows a reference by the House on 19 September. An article in the Melbourne Sunday Herald dated 16 September by Mr M. Daly was brought to the attention of the House on 17 September by the honourable member for Calwell (Dr Theophanous), Chairman of the Joint Standing Committee on Migration Regulations. He stated that the article appeared to reveal a knowledge of a submission to the Joint Committee which the Committee had determined should be treated as confidential.

The honourable member for Calwell also stated that the Committee had determined that the article had constituted substantial interference with the Committee. Later, and following advice from Mr Speaker, the honourable member for Calwell reported that the Committee itself had sought to ascertain the source of the disclosure. Members had been questioned at a meeting, as had staff, but no information had been gained as to the source of the disclosure.

In considering this reference the Committee of Privileges realised that it was possible that the submission in question, or details of its contents, could have been disclosed by persons other than those associated with the Joint Committee. Accordingly, the Committee contacted a representative of the gay and lesbian immigration task force (GLITF) seeking information as to the circulation given to the submission before and after it was lodged, steps taken to ensure its confidentiality and so on. The report incorporates the response received from GLITF. From that response it is clear that the draft of the original submission was given a comparatively widespread circulation amongst members of the organisation. The Committee was advised:

It is probable that at least 60 members received and retained copies of either the draft or the final version.

The Committee recognised that there were a large number of possible sources of the disclosure but concluded that it was quite unlikely that any further inquiry would enable it to bring the matter to a more satisfactory conclusion. The Committee thus decided to recommend that in the circumstances no further action should be taken on the matter.
JINDALEE OVER-THE-HORIZON RADAR

Report of Public Works Committee

Mr HOLLIS (Throsby)—In accordance with the provisions of the Public Works Committee Act 1969, I present the report relating to the following proposed work: Jindalee over-the-horizon radar

Ordered that the report be printed.

Mr HOLLIS—by leave—The report which I have just tabled deals with the construction of a network of over-the-horizon radars together with associated facilities. This network will consist of radars in the Longreach area of Queensland and the Leonora region of Western Australia, a coordination centre at the Royal Australian Air Force base at Edinburgh in South Australia and a number of very small remote beacons and sounders. The cost of the public works aspect of the proposal is $95m.

The Jindalee radar works on the transmitted signal from an object being reflected off the ionosphere before illuminating a target area on the earth’s surface. Use of the ionosphere enables the radar to see over the horizon for distances up to 2,000 kilometres from Australia’s northern coastline.

Referral to the Committee was based on a ceiling price of $125m for the public works aspect of the project. During the Committee’s consideration the cost estimate was revised to $95m, based on revised tenders. This was made up of $40m for each of the radar facilities, $10m for the coordination centre and $5m for the remote beacons and sounders. The Committee has asked for details of the split of expenditure on the antennas and other facilities when a contract is awarded.

The Committee accepted that there was a need to establish the Jindalee network to carry out effective surveillance of ship and aircraft movements up to 2,000 kilometres from Australia’s northern coastline. To provide optimum performance, radars need to be located in the Leonora area of Western Australia and in the Longreach area of Queensland. The Department of Defence proposed that, instead of using the more traditional design and construct method, it would use the turnkey approach. In this approach, all works will be provided by the prime equipment contractor as an integral part of building the radar and all the services which go with the prime contract. The Committee has recommended that Defence provide it with an analysis of the effectiveness of the turnkey approach at the end of the project, concentrating on its cost, coordination and timing aspects compared with traditional project delivery systems.

The Committee has a continuing interest in the efficient use of energy and was very concerned about the forecast consumption of fuel at the radars, together with problems associated with connection to the Queensland State power grid. Accordingly, we have recommended that a high priority be given to overcoming these problems; that the use of alternative energy sources, especially solar energy, be fully investigated for their application to the project; and that discussions be held with adjoining landowners, who will be consulted about connection to the State grid system.

While the Department of Defence believed it had carried out an adequate program of consultation with the Longreach community, we have recommended that a further program be undertaken, based on that which was part of the public environmental report process in Western Australia. In the Longreach area there were community concerns about the project, and some submissions opposed it. There were also submissions in favour of the project and a considerable number of individual expressions of support. We took an amount of evidence in Longreach from both groups, and we believe that after Defence personnel had given evidence on a range of issues these local concerns had largely been resolved.

These concerns centred on the effects of electromagnetic radiation as people, stock and buildings would be within a 25-kilometre radius of a site proposed for the transmitter. A considerable amount of evidence was taken and supplementary
material provided on this subject and the Committee accepts advice that the appropriate Australian standard and design standards are being met. Nevertheless, it believes an urgent independent assessment should be made of the electromagnetic effect of a Jindalee transmitter at the site proposed near Longreach.

This was a particularly interesting inquiry which saw the Committee inspect likely sites in the Leonora and Longreach areas, hold public hearings in Kalgoorlie and Longreach, and visit the existing Jindalee facility at Alice Springs. On behalf of the Committee, I thank all the people who helped us during that long and eventful week.

I commend the report to the House.

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION CONFERENCE

Mr HOLDING (Melbourne Ports)—by leave—I present the report of the Australian delegation to the eighty-fourth conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. In October this year I had the honour to be a member of the Australian delegation to the eighty-fourth conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Punta del Este, Uruguay. The delegation was led by the Speaker and comprised myself, the honourable member for Moncrieff (Mrs Sullivan), who was the deputy leader, Senator the Hon. Margaret Reynolds, and the honourable member for Lyons (Mr Burr).

The conference was characterised by the near unanimity of view of most delegates on the items discussed. The conference had before it two items which were previously agreed to concerning the elimination of colonialism and cooperation between developed and developing countries, and literacy and education. I place on record the sterling work of Mrs Martin in the drafting committee of the political committee.

As it was a critical time in international relations, the conference took the unusual step of also placing supplementary and emergency supplementary items on its agenda. These comprised items dealing with the Middle East. A very strong resolution was passed dealing with the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

There was one aspect of the conference which I think is of great significance to the Parliament, that is, the role that was played by Australia in the Asian-Pacific group which, having regard to some of the historic tensions that exist within this region, enabled Australia to accept the role of honest broker. In that regard, our own distinguished Speaker chaired the meeting of that group with some of the aplomb and humour and judgment for which has become known in this House.

It is a matter of great importance that, at a time when the Twelve-Plus group was having regard to the way in which Europe was moving into a federation, where it is becoming a little uncertain of what its role is, it was very supportive of Australia's role in the Asian-Pacific region. Mr Speaker was a nominee for the Executive of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, with the support of both the Asian-Pacific group and the Twelve-Plus group, as well as the varying skills of members of the delegation, who used a variety of their own experience and political backgrounds to ensure the successful election of Mr Speaker to the Executive of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

That is a very important result both for the Speaker personally, and I congratulate him on his appointment, and also for this Parliament. I think all the delegates who were there felt that we had accomplished something, even if it was showing other parts of the world that Australia knew how to play the numbers game. In any event, the role that will now be carried out by the Speaker is of significance. It is important that in the Speaker's election the role of this Parliament and his position in this Parliament have been recognised at the international level. I will leave the range of comments to other delegates who were present and congratulate all delegates on the very important way in which they discharged their duties.

Mrs SULLIVAN (Moncrieff)—by leave—I rise briefly to support the comments made by the honourable member for Melbourne Ports (Mr Holding). As he
mentioned, I was deputy leader of the delegation and, together with my colleagues, had my first experience of an Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) conference. It was a fascinating experience and I look forward to future conferences. It will be my good fortune. I have attended ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organisation conferences on behalf of Australia as an observer in the past and I do appreciate the importance of the networking and working together of parliamentarians from other countries and the part it can play in relations between countries.

As the honourable member for Melbourne Ports mentioned, Australia is a member of two formal groups. One is the Twelve-Plus group, which comes from the fact that we are a liberal democracy. The other is the Asian-Pacific group, which derives from our geographic position. I want to make a very quick comment in relation to our geographic position and the role that I believe it is necessary we play at these conferences.

Only two Pacific countries are represented at the IPU—Australia and New Zealand—and they are probably as atypical of the Pacific as it is possible for countries to be. New Zealand did not attend this particular IPU conference. I was unaware that Australia would be the only Pacific country until I arrived there and changed the speech that I subsequently made on the subject of colonialism and regional cooperation. I thought it was very important that the facts in relation to the Pacific region in post-colonial days and also the unique types of regional cooperation that exist in the Pacific should be put on the record and that other countries should not be oblivious to the fact that things are done a little differently because of the imperatives of small island nations.

I am sure many Pacific nations would not necessarily think of Australia as the natural spokesperson for them; however, it ought to be kept to the front of the mind that not only are we an Asian country, the area which we tend to concentrate on politically, but also we are a Pacific country and we have very particular responsibilities to our Pacific neighbours. Specifically, at IPU conferences it may be necessary for Australia to be alert to the fact that Australia may well be the only country in a position to put the point of view of the Pacific countries in important matters.

I do not want to dwell on the subject of the women parliamentarians' meeting but I ought to mention it. This is now a regularly instituted meeting. The day before the conference proper is opened in plenary session, all the women parliamentarians who are attending the conference have a conference of their own. It is a formal meeting which is recognised within the IPU structure. I went to the conference with only a little background on it, thanks to a female senator who had attended a previous conference and who had told me what she could about this formal meeting. I was pleased to be there with Senator Margaret Reynolds; as a former Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Status of Women, she is a very knowledgeable person and we were able to work together in our contribution to that meeting.

Many underdeveloped countries had women parliamentarians amongst their representatives, although women parliamentarians in underdeveloped countries are in a very small minority. We were pleased, both in formal sessions and in informal discussions with them, to share what knowledge we had. Those women in particular feel there is a very real need for the women in their countries to have the support and understanding of governments and decision making bodies.

As a result of the role that we played in that conference that day, Australia was delegated by the meeting to submit an amendment to the coordinating committee of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in relation to the composition of drafting committees. Drafting committees, of course, have the very important job of drafting the resolutions that the conference votes on in the end. It is largely the resolutions as they are put out by the drafting committees which become the resolutions of the conferences.

The report is a little in error on that point. It ascribes to an informal meeting
of women at the end of the conference the direction to Australia to submit the amendment to the coordinating committee. In fact, because that meeting did not have any official role—it was an important meeting and one that I hope will become official in the future—it was the official conference of women set up formally under the auspices of the IPU that directed Australia to take the action Australia has subsequently taken; it was not the informal meeting at the end of the conference.

I also want to note that the women's conference considered wording for a draft resolution on the education item and in fact the wording of the draft resolution was incorporated in the resolution which became the final resolution of the conference. It was also decided that day that the women should put forward a topic for the eighty-fifth conference of the IPU and we were delighted when, on the final day, it was reported back that the recommendation made by the women will be one of the two selected items at the Pyongyang conference. That was item No. 4 on the agenda, 'Policies to put an end to violence against children and women'. In terms of consciousness raising, that will be a very interesting exercise in the IPU and I look forward to hearing the speeches on the topic, given that most of the speeches at the IPU are made by male delegates.

I also want to cover the issue of human rights. Australia plays a very important role in raising the issue of human rights at the IPU, and the conference report refers to that. There was tabled at this conference a summary of a report of an activity undertaken by the IPU as a result of a resolution that Australia put to the Inter-Parliamentary Council's 145th session, where it was decided to call on member parliaments to set up bodies within the parliament to monitor and promote the exercise of human rights within their own countries and to monitor and reinforce efforts towards ensuring human rights in bilateral relations between countries. Of course, we in Australia do so essentially through the parliamentary group of Amnesty International.

That survey of all the countries of the world was tabled at the conference and Australia received many compliments on its role. In the final session we urged that the report be updated, for two reasons. A number of countries did not respond to the original request from the IPU for details on what efforts their parliaments made to advocate, ensure or advance human rights; we thought that those countries would like another opportunity to respond appropriately, particularly when they see how other countries have responded, and perhaps to encourage some of the countries which said that they were considering setting up parliamentary groups on human rights to do that and make sure if they have done so they get the rightful acknowledgment in the report. Those two areas in which Australians have been so active in the past were well reflected in the final resolutions.

Australia was successful in being elected to the drafting committee to draft the resolution on the subject of colonialism and regional cooperation. I had the great honour of serving on that drafting committee. It was very hard work, but I believe that we were able to do very worthwhile work and I would like the House to note a couple of areas of that resolution to reinforce some of the things that I have been saying. Item 12 of the operative part of the resolution on page 81 of the report makes a very particular reference to the role of women in development. It is good to see that, in the context of discussions on colonialism in developing countries, women are not forgotten. I also want particularly to draw the attention of the House to the last paragraph of this resolution where it says that the conference—and I quote:

Calls on regional Parliaments to initiate efforts to encourage regional understanding and to establish arrangements to promote and secure respect for human rights.

Finally, I hope Australia and the Australian Government will take particular note of that last paragraph of the resolution and that Australia will initiate efforts to encourage regional understanding and to establish arrangements to promote and secure respect for human rights. I am sure
that other countries in the region would want to cooperate with Australia in that initiative and I urge the Government to follow through on that particular part of the resolution.

Mr BURR (Lyons)—by leave—Like the honourable member for Melbourne Ports (Mr Holding) and the honourable member for Moncrieff (Mrs Sullivan), I too was privileged to be a member of the Australian delegation to attend the eighty-fourth Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) conference in Uruguay. I would particularly like to thank my co-delegates to that conference, the honourable member for Grayndler (Mr Leo McLeay), who led the delegation, the two members who have already spoken, the honourable member for Melbourne Ports and the honourable member for Moncrieff, and Senator Margaret Reynolds, all of whom represented the Australian Parliament at that conference. It was a particularly good delegation that worked together as a team and I believe represented the Australian Parliament very proudly. I believe that collectively, working as a team, we made a good impression on the conference, represented this Parliament very proudly and made our mark in that conference, which contained delegations from 88 different countries of the world.

I particularly thank our support staff. Mr John Dyer, the secretary to the delegation, worked very hard, particularly in rather difficult circumstances because an industrial dispute was staged by the Embassy in Buenos Aires and, sadly, we lacked support from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and particularly from the Embassy in Buenos Aires. Mr Dyer was called upon to fulfil roles that in normal circumstances he would not be required to fulfil and he did it very well. He worked very hard and we all have a debt of gratitude to Mr Dyer.

In addition to Mr Dyer, we were very well supported by Mr John Godfrey, our foreign affairs adviser from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, who travelled with the delegation and worked particularly closely with the honourable member for Moncrieff in the drafting committee of which she has just spoken. I also pay tribute to Ann Stewart, from the office of Mr Speaker, who travelled with the delegation. She also worked very closely with all the delegation's members, and I believe that the delegation ought to thank her, too, for her support.

It is not just the members of the delegation and the support staff that the Australian Parliament should pay tribute to. I believe that we should also pay tribute to the work done by the supporting spouses who travelled with the delegation. I particularly mention Professor Henry Reynolds, Mrs Judy Holding and my wife, Roslyn. At many of the functions and other activities that took place at the conference, they were called upon to represent Australia and the Australian Parliament, and I believe they played a very useful and constructive role, along with the parliamentary and support staff people who were part of the delegation. I believe that we owe a debt of gratitude to them.

I congratulate Mr Speaker McLeay on being elected to the IPU executive for the next four years. That is a particularly prestigious position, in which I believe Mr Speaker will represent the Australian Parliament very proudly and will make a very significant contribution to the IPU executive. I was impressed by the lobbying campaign to have Mr Speaker elected—he was opposed by a Brazilian parliamentary member—and I am quite certain that when the vote was taken at the end, the Brazilian member of Parliament came to the conclusion that he could learn much about lobbying for numbers from the Australian Labor Party in Australia. The honourable member for Melbourne Ports led our lobbying campaign very well.

I point out the significance of the Asia-Pacific group, which is still in its formative stages. Much of the work done at the conference, as has been mentioned by the honourable member for Melbourne Ports and the honourable member for Moncrieff, added to the work done at the previous conference in Nicosia, where the honourable member for Newcastle (Mr Allan Morris) chaired the Asia-Pacific group and laid the foundation for much of the work
that was continued at the Uruguay conference. I think that we all ought to congratulate the honourable member for Newcastle, because his reputation certainly was evident at the Uruguay conference.

I impress on honourable members the need to give the Asia-Pacific group and its regional conferences a higher level of consideration than perhaps we do at the moment. Australia is playing a very significant role in this new group that has been formed. It gives Australia the opportunity of attaining a higher level of recognition than perhaps has been the case in the past.

The first regional conference representing all the Asia-Pacific countries will be held in Thailand in January. It is most significant that that conference will be attended by an Australian delegation, and in fact will be led by Mr Speaker McLeay. We were successful at this conference in having Mr John Dyer appointed Permanent Secretary to the Asia-Pacific group, and that will give Australia a very significant continuing role in that regional group.

I also refer to the need to have the Asia-Pacific regional conferences included as part of the annual schedule of overseas parliamentary visits. It is perhaps unfortunate that the conference in Thailand in January will effectively be visited by a group that is on another fact-finding mission. I feel that the Asia-Pacific conferences are of significance in their own right and ought not to be included as part of more fact-finding missions. I impress on those who are responsible for our overseas visits to give a higher degree of recognition to the Asia-Pacific conferences and include those conferences in our annual schedule of overseas visits. I was very proud to be a member of the Australian delegation, and I thank my co-delegates for their cooperation during the conference.

PRIVACY AMENDMENT BILL 1990
Bill received from the Senate, and read a first time.

Second Reading
Mr DUFFY (Holt—Attorney-General) (5.56)—I move:

That the Bill be now read a second time.

In 1988, this Parliament passed the Privacy Act 1988. That Act provided for the establishment of the office of Privacy Commissioner and for the protection of the privacy of individuals, both in relation to information about them held by Commonwealth agencies and in relation to their tax file numbers.

The Privacy Amendment Bill 1990 is the next step in the introduction of comprehensive privacy protection for the Australian community. The principal purpose of this Bill is to provide privacy protection for individuals in relation to their consumer credit records.

It is generally accepted that individuals have the right to have certain data protection principles applying to large collections of sensitive personal data. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development guidelines on personal privacy, which Australia has adhered to, set out these basic principles. The principles are: there should be limits to the collection of personal data and any such data should be obtained by lawful and fair means with the knowledge or consent of the data-subject; personal data should be relevant to the purposes for which it is to be used and should be correct; the purposes for which personal data is collected should be specified at the time of collection and subsequent use limited to the fulfilment of these purposes; personal data should not be disclosed for other purposes except with the consent of the data-subject or where required by law; personal data should be protected by security safeguards; individuals should be made aware who holds their personal data; individuals should have a right of access to and correction of their personal data; a data controller should be accountable for complying with measures to give effect to these principles.

These principles were adopted in the Privacy Act for application to Commonwealth agencies and to all tax file number users. This Bill adopts these principles to
provide privacy protection for individuals in relation to their personal information which is held by the consumer credit reporting industry.

Central credit information databanks, or credit reporting agencies, provide information to credit providers to assist decision making on the desirability of granting consumer credit. These databases, without proper supervision, hold considerable potential for privacy intrusion. New industry practices for credit profiling of individuals, which were being proposed at the time of the Government's decision to introduce this legislation, would have increased the dangers for privacy intrusion.

At the present time, there are inadequate controls on consumer credit reporting agencies to prevent them from using their databases for non-consumer credit purposes. The development of comprehensive commitment profiles would, if not prevented, increase the danger of information held by credit reporting agencies being used in unauthorised circumstances by bodies such as employers and private inquiry agents. It would also increase the potential for use of credit records for non-credit purposes. For example, credit records could be used for insurance proposals, insurance fraud, rental housing or occupational licensing which are all uses that clearly breach privacy principles.

The Australian Law Reform Commission's privacy report, which was tabled in this Parliament in late 1983, found that many members of the Australian community saw credit reporting agencies as posing a threat to privacy. A detailed public opinion poll carried out by the Law Reform Commission on attitudes to privacy ranked credit reporting agencies at the head of the list of potentially intrusive organisations. The Joint Select Committee on an Australia Card viewed with concern the lack of regulation and the potential for infringement of civil liberties in relation to personal information held by credit reporting agencies.

The great majority of Australians meet their credit commitments. In determining the appropriate form of privacy regulation for the credit reporting industry, what must be paramount is the fundamental right of these individuals to privacy. However, this must be balanced against both the need for businesses to operate efficiently, and the right of credit providers to protect their commercial interests. Also, the welfare of those borrowers who may get into difficulties or who are led into difficulties must not be forgotten. This Bill achieves that difficult balance.

The Bill establishes a privacy framework for the regulation of the consumer credit reporting industry. The Privacy Commissioner will be given a clear legislative mandate to develop a code of conduct with the industry. The code will provide a flexible and cooperative mechanism for the industry and community to give effect to the Bill. The Bill sets out a set of provisions which will regulate the collection, storage, access to, correction of, use and disclosure of personal information by credit providers and credit reporting agencies. With few exceptions, only those businesses which are providers of consumer credit will be allowed to have access to the consumer credit reporting system.

All records of personal information held by credit reporting agencies and information from central agencies held by credit providers such as banks, credit unions, finance companies, major retailers and other businesses which extend credit to customers will be subject to regulation by the new legislation. The code of conduct will be a major feature of the regulatory scheme for the consumer credit reporting industry. The code will apply to information held in, or disseminated from, a central database and to the transfer of information between industry participants. The Privacy Act will provide a statutory backing for the code and will direct the Privacy Commissioner, in developing the code of conduct, to use, as his benchmark, the information privacy principles set out in the Privacy Act. The code will be subject to parliamentary scrutiny as a disallowable instrument for the purposes of the Acts Interpretation Act 1901 and will be published in the Gazette.
The Bill will provide individuals with an enforceable right of access to, and correction of, their credit records. The Bill will provide that a credit report, held by a central reporting agency, will be available to a credit provider only when an application for credit is made. Credit providers will need to seek the consent of the client or customer before they can disclose personal information to other credit providers. However, the Bill recognises the need to protect the commercial rights of the credit industry. It accordingly provides for disclosure to other credit providers in situations where fraud exists or where it is clear that the individual in question intends not to discharge his or her credit obligations.

An important aspect of the Government's proposed regulation is that there will be strict requirements for consent before consumer credit information can be sought or passed on. Such information can be passed on at present without the consent or knowledge of the consumer. The new controls will mean that consumers will be able to have authority over information about themselves. Credit providers will be able to continue to maintain their own information on their clients.

The information that a credit reporting agency can hold about an individual will be set out in the Bill. Basically, a credit reporting agency will be able to hold the information that it currently holds. For example, a credit reporting agency will be permitted to hold information about an individual's bad debts and the fact that credit providers have inquired about the individual.

The Bill also limits access to consumer credit information files so that only legitimate use is made of information stored. This will mean that some current members of the leading consumer reporting agency, the Credit Reference Association of Australia (CRAA), will no longer have access to consumer credit information files. Such users include private investigators, real estate agencies and insurance companies. Government departments and agencies which are not credit providers will also be prevented from using credit reference files, except by exercising statutory powers.

The Bill includes a number of provisions specifically to accommodate accepted and legitimate commercial practices within the credit industry and business community. For example, where it is necessary for a company which is considering whether to purchase the debts of, or an interest in, another company to have access to credit details of the debtors to the vendor, access will be permitted for that purpose. Special provision is also included in the Bill for the legitimate practices of related companies such as holding companies or subsidiary companies to enable them, as separate credit providers, to disclose credit information where this is required within the overall structure of the related companies.

The provisions in the Bill will ensure that credit providers which are not corporations will be able to continue to enjoy access to credit information without having to become incorporated.

Positive Reporting

Community concerns with the credit industry were heightened by industry's proposals for the introduction of a new and much more comprehensive form of credit reporting, namely, positive reporting. This would have meant the development of a system reporting comprehensively on a person's credit history regardless of new loan applications or defaults on payment. Under this positive reporting system everybody who uses consumer credit in any form, such as credit cards or personal loans, would have a monthly statement on his or her account provided by credit providers to a central national database operated by a central agency. Credit providers would also supply the reporting agency with computer tapes of all their customers' credit accounts. These tapes would be merged with the central database, usually every 60 days. Credit providers would receive a report listing all known credit accounts, the balance owing on each account and its currency.

The credit reporting agency would effectively become a central clearing house of information about the current financial
commitments of all Australians. Positive reporting would constitute a major change in the level of information collected on individuals. While the notion of information collected in a centralised agency is not new, the collection of personal information on individuals’ spending habits is—credit and spending profiles of individuals would have been built up through all their credit transactions.

The Government does not consider that there is any proven substantial benefit from positive reporting proposals. In view of this, strong privacy concerns make any such expansion impossible to condone. The Government recognises that consumer credit reporting can be a useful adjunct to such lending practices. Such reporting is not and should not be a substitute for this. The Government therefore does not believe that the collection of much more extensive information about individuals is an effective way to reduce consumers’ credit overcommitment.

Also, the difficulties for banks in participating in such a scheme because of the confidentiality of their banker-client relationship, and the restrictive nature of the proposed scheme, weighed against the acceptance of positive reporting by the Government. The way to reduce consumer credit overcommitment is not positive reporting. The Government and the community must continue to focus on education, appropriate counselling and most importantly on responsible lending practices. This is even truer in a society where the use of credit is fast becoming a normal part of living, and where credit options proliferate.

I should make it clear that it is not the intention of this Bill to restrict the use of commercial credit information by credit providers or credit reporting agencies. The Bill distinguishes between consumer credit and commercial credit and will prevent the use of consumer credit details in assessing an application for commercial credit unless the individual consents in writing. The Privacy Commissioner will have an array of functions to protect the individual’s privacy. He will be able to investigate complaints, proceed with own motion inquiries into credit providers and reporting agencies’ practices in relation to the handling of information, and undertake random audits of credit providers and credit reporting agencies’ databases to ensure their adherence to the Act and the code of conduct. The credit provider or the credit reporting agency will handle complaints in the first instance. The Privacy Commissioner will handle only those complaints that cannot be resolved by industry.

The Privacy Commissioner has been given a range of mechanisms to enforce the privacy standards set out in the Act and in the code of conduct. A major role of the Commissioner will be to conciliate matters which involve a breach of the Act or the code. The Commissioner will also be able to make a determination that an individual be paid damages as compensation by a credit provider or credit reporting agency which has misused the individual’s personal credit information. There are also offence provisions carrying stringent penalties for individuals or companies that seek to obtain unauthorised access to credit records, or that intentionally or negligently supply false credit information or misuse credit information.

The Bill will provide individuals with comprehensive privacy protection for their credit records. It will provide an enforceable right of access to credit records and a practical means for individuals who have been adversely affected by misuse of the credit information to seek redress.

The legislative charter set out in the Bill, which will be further elaborated in the code of conduct, provides a balanced recognition of the interests of both lenders and borrowers. It pays proper regard to the issues of privacy and data protection. In particular, it seeks to meet data protection requirements that information should be obtained and processed fairly. It also meets the principle that information should be relevant for the purpose for which it is held; it should not intrude to an unreasonable extent upon the personal affairs of individuals and it should not be used for incompatible purposes without the consent of the individual.
I present the explanatory memorandum to the Bill. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate (on motion by Mr Costello) adjourned.

AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS (PARLIAMENTARY SUPERVISION OF PROPOSALS) AMENDMENT BILL 1990

Bill received from the Senate, and read a first time.

Second Reading

Ordered that the second reading be made an order of the day for the next day of sitting.

AUSTRALIAN HORTICULTURAL CORPORATION AMENDMENT BILL 1990

Bill presented by Mr Staples, for Mr Kerin, and read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr STAPLES (Jagajaga—Minister for Aged, Family and Health Services) (6.12)—I move:

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The chief purpose of the Australian Horticultural Corporation Amendment Bill is to provide a mechanism for the establishment within the Australian Horticultural Corporation of an Australian Dried Fruits Board.

The Bill forms one component of the Government’s response to the report of September 1989 of the Industries Assistance Commission into the dried vine fruits industry. The Government agrees with the Commission that there needs to be reform of the existing level of government assistance arrangements for the dried vine fruits industry. The other measures are contained in the Dried Vine Fruits Legislation Amendment Bill, which covers changes to dried vine fruits statutory equalisation and sultana underwriting.

The Australian Horticultural Corporation Amendment Bill is also consistent with the Government’s decisions in response to the Review of Commonwealth Primary Industry Statutory Marketing Authorities of March 1990, written by Professor Jeremy Davis.

The Government announced on 18 October 1990, in response to the Davis review, that it would not proceed at this stage with the recommendation to re-form the Australian Horticultural Corporation, the Australian Dried Fruits Corporation and the Australian Honey Board into an Australian Agricultural Marketing Corporation. Rather than disrupt the relationship being developed between industry and the Australian Horticultural Corporation, which was established in 1988, the Government announced the incorporation of the dried vine fruits industry into the Horticultural Corporation.

Nevertheless, the dried vine fruits industry will retain a high degree of independence over its export marketing operations within the Australian Horticultural Corporation. This arrangement reflects the industry’s long history of competing successfully in export markets, a record of achievement which, unfortunately, has not always been matched by some of Australia’s other horticultural industries.

The future participation of the dried vine fruits industry in the Australian Horticultural Corporation through an Australian Dried Fruits Board is also in line with the Government’s view that, when monopoly export control powers are exercised, government needs to be assured that sufficient checks and balances are in place to ensure that the national interest is taken into account. The range of dried fruits export controls which are currently exercised by the Australian Dried Fruits Corporation will be continued by the Australian Dried Fruits Board, but under the broad oversight of the Australian Horticultural Corporation. The Government’s concern in this area will then largely be met.

The mechanism for the dried vine fruits industry joining the Australian Horticultural Corporation will be, as I have indicated above, the establishment of a product board, which is provided by the Bill before us. At this stage, it is my expectation that only the dried vine fruits
industry will operate within the Horticultural Corporation under these special provisions and that existing participants and newcomers will continue to participate directly in the Horticultural Corporation under the existing provisions.

I turn now to the specific provisions of the Australian Horticultural Corporation Amendment Bill 1990. A product board established within the Australian Horticultural Corporation will be required as its major task, in the same way as is the Corporation, to assist, or in the case of dried vine fruit to continue to assist, specific horticultural industries in export marketing.

Product boards will replace the existing option of industry forming product group committees. These were intended to provide a formal mechanism for the provision of product-specific advice to the Corporation. This role is now being efficiently and cost effectively exercised through market liaison committees established by the participating industry organisations in consultation with the Corporation. Should industries wish to formalise these without going to the cost of a product board, the Corporation retains the power to set up committees under the general committees provision and to delegate powers to such bodies.

Changes to the structure of the Australian Horticultural Corporation to provide for product boards are contained primarily in the early sections of part 2 of the Bill. The balance of part 2 sets out the form and areas of operation of product boards.

The Australian Horticultural Corporation's strategic planning process will need to take account of, and include reference to, products covered by product boards. The Corporation's annual report will include accounts of product board operations and separately audited product board financial statements.

In many respects the structure and operations of product boards mirror those of the Horticultural Corporation. This can be seen, for example, in the relationship between the Australian Horticultural Corporation and the Minister for Primary Industries and Energy, which is largely replicated in the relationship between the Corporation and a product board.

For the dried vine fruits industry, the proposed Australian Dried Fruits Board is set up under part 3 of this Bill. If there is a case in the future for setting up any other product board, the board will be established by regulations. These will set out the name of the board and the products to be covered by it.

The Bill makes special provision in the amendment to section 8 of the Horticultural Corporation Act to prevent both the Corporation and a board doing the same things at the same time to the same products. This is achieved by providing that the Corporation will not undertake functions in relation to a board's products unless that board is in agreement. Obviously, Corporation-wide activities may nonetheless be appropriate in such areas as advertising or market research programs, and a product board will still have the opportunity to participate in these.

A product board will be a body corporate. There are sound commercial reasons for providing a product board with corporate identity, particularly in terms of financial and contractual activities that it might undertake, but, as well, it clarifies for those who have contact with a board the authority under which it is operating. This will be particularly important for the proposed Australian Dried Fruits Board, which will take on longstanding arrangements with a number of overseas agencies and groups.

A product board will have functions and powers that mirror those of the Corporation. However, mindful of the great diversity in horticultural industries and the need to ensure that the product board structure is not unnecessarily rigid, the Bill provides for the functions of a particular board to be tailored to the product it covers.

For example, the dried vine fruits industry runs a very active private industry marketing program in Australia and there is no need for statutory involvement in this. The proposed Australian Dried Fruits Board will exercise only export activities,
and the functions relating to domestic activities are set to be removed.

A product board is to be empowered to control exports through the inclusion of new clauses in part V of the Horticultural Research and Development Corporation Act. The Government has agreed to the continuation of the current range of export controls for dried vine fruits. I would expect that these controls will be exercised by the proposed Australian Dried Fruits Board as conditions of export licensing under export licences issued by the Corporation. The Minister is empowered to give directions to boards under the same circumstances as apply to the Corporation, that is, only in exceptional circumstances.

A product board is to comprise an independent chairperson selected by the Corporation in consultation with relevant producer organisations and five other members. All board members are to be appointed by the Corporation. Each of the members, other than the chairperson, is to be selected by the relevant industry body so that each of the areas of expertise identified for these other board members is represented. In line with the Government’s recently announced policy, no age limit is to apply to members.

Because a product board is likely to have coverage of quite a narrow product or group of products, it is important that it can draw on product-specific advice and expertise from within its membership. The selection criteria therefore provide for three of the five board members to have such expertise. The other two members may be drawn from more general areas and, in any case, the Board will have recourse to the expertise of Corporation members for more broad ranging advice if necessary.

The selection process is not formalised in the same way as it is for statutory marketing authorities because of the product-specific nature that its membership will have. The representative industry body for products covered by a board is in the best position to identify such members. It is nonetheless expected that the selection process adopted by industry bodies will be a disciplined one that will withstand scrutiny.

Provision is made for the chairperson to be a member of the Corporation Board or to be drawn from outside the Corporation’s membership. In either case, attendance at Corporation meetings will provide an important opportunity for the Corporation to monitor regularly board activities. Provision is therefore made for the chairperson, if not a member of the Corporation, to attend meetings if requested.

A product board’s membership does not include a government member as each board will have regular access to the advice of the government member of the Corporation. A board would still be free to request an officer of my department to attend a product board meeting if this was considered necessary. A board will have a general manager and its own staff. For the Australian Dried Fruits Board, the existing staff of the Australian Dried Fruits Corporation will become the employees of the new board.

As for the Corporation, a board will be required to prepare corporate and annual operating plans which will be subject to the approval of the Corporation. To assist in the process of assessing a board’s effectiveness, and in keeping with recently announced government policy, a board will be required to develop, in consultation with its industry bodies, performance indicators. These indicators are then to be included in both the planning and report process. Once prepared, board plans will contribute to the preparation of the Corporation’s plans.

A board will contribute to the overheads of the Corporation and this arrangement will be set out in regulations. I would expect the Corporation and the relevant industry body covered by a board to contribute substantially to identifying this share on an equitable basis. The cost will nonetheless reflect the activities that the board will undertake in its own right which, for other participant industries, will be provided by the Corporation. The Bill sets out the mechanism for payment of funds to a board and for the payment of
costs to the Corporation such that both payments are to be made at the same time to each body. Amendment to the Horticultural Levy and Export Charge Acts and the associated collection Acts is necessary for this to occur, and these are provided for in Parts 5 to 8 of the Bill.

The Government's recently announced policy on accountability to levy payers now requires that annual general meetings be held. In conformity with this policy, the Australian Dried Fruits Board will be required to account annually to its levy payers through an annual general meeting. In due course, the Australian Horticultural Corporation will also be required to hold annual general meetings.

The provisions for the board's annual general meetings, contained in division four of the new Part IV, have been designed to take account of the broader corporate structure within which the Dried Fruits Board is to operate. Provision is therefore made for the chairpersons of both the board and the Corporation to present reports and for the board chairperson to present the board's last audited financial statements. As well, levy payers will be able to debate and vote upon changes to the rates of levy and export charge and, in the extreme case, on motions of no confidence in the board chairperson and members.

Only levy payers of dried vine fruit will be eligible to vote at the annual general meeting of the Australian Dried Fruits Board and provision is made for the board to establish a register of such persons for each meeting. Voting entitlements will be relative to the levy paid. The detailed procedures for convening a meeting and establishing the register of voters will be set out in regulations.

The Commonwealth will continue to collect and disburse industry levies to fund the operations of the Australian Dried Fruits Board, as is the case for the Australian Dried Fruits Corporation. Costs of these activities are fully recovered by the Commonwealth and there are no costs to consolidated revenue which will result from the Bill.

I commend the Bill to honourable members and present the explanatory memorandum.

Debate (on motion by Mr Downer) adjourned.

DRIED VINE FRUITS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 1990

Bill presented by Mr Staples, for Mr Kerin, and read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr STAPLES (Jagajaga—Minister for Aged, Family and Health Services) (6.24)—I move:

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this Bill is, first, to extend the sultana underwriting scheme by three years and, second, to remove statutory backing for domestic consumer transfers on the sale of dried vine fruit through the removal of the domestic component of statutory equalisation. The Bill forms part of the Government's response to the Industries Assistance Commission's report into the dried vine fruits industry. The other part is contained in the Australian Horticultural Corporation Amendment Bill.

The sultana underwriting scheme was implemented in the early 1980s in response to low world prices of sultanas. This in turn was the result of an oversupply of sultanas on world markets. The scheme was triggered in its first year of operation and $1.3m was paid out to producers. This amounted to about $16 per tonne. There have been no payouts since that time.

In 1986 the basis of the scheme was changed to reduce the level at which the Government would underwrite returns. The level was set at 80 per cent of the average ‘free on board’ export return for the past three years. As well, a sunset clause was included so that the scheme would terminate on 31 December 1990. This move reflected the Government’s view that, where possible, industry should take increasing responsibility for risk management and for responding to the vagaries of the marketplace.

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In the context of the current changes to the level of government involvement in other areas of the dried vine fruits industry and the government's concern to minimise the impact of these changes, the government is prepared to extend the underwriting scheme for a period of three years. In doing so, the Government is also taking into account the very regionalised nature of the dried vine fruits industry and concentrated effect on the regions that any impact could have.

I turn now to the second purpose of the Bill, that concerning equalisation arrangements. In each year when domestic returns of dried vine fruit exceed export returns, and this has been the case in 26 of the past 30 years, the domestic consumer effectively subsidises dried vine fruit export through the operation of the equalisation arrangements. In the 1985 year, for example, the Industries Assistance Commission reported this transfer amounted to some $13m. This is not the only effect of equalisation. As well, it has the effect of masking market signals to producers. A higher than actual return paid to a producer can result in poor production decisions and the misallocation of valuable resources.

The Government has acted in the past to reduce this masking effect by putting a cap on the equalisation payment that could be made over and above the average export return. This was implemented through legislative amendment in 1986 and equalisation payments are now limited to 15 per cent above average export returns. Nonetheless, the Government remains of the view that domestic transfers should cease and this can be achieved by removal of the domestic component of the equalisation arrangements.

Equalisation of export returns are set to continue and will take the form of a reconciliation of exporter returns after the end of each season. There will be no requirement for levy arrangements under equalisation of export returns.

The continuation of the sultana underwriting scheme continues the Commonwealth's liability to payment in the event that the scheme is triggered. The proposed changes to the equalisation arrangements will result in the removal of the equalisation levy and the removal of all financial involvement by the Commonwealth.

I commend the Bill to honourable members and I present the explanatory memorandum to this Bill.

Debate (on motion by Mr Downer) adjourned.

PIG SLAUGHTER LEVY AMENDMENT BILL 1990

Bill presented by Mr Staples, for Mr Kerin, and read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr STAPLES (Jagajaga—Minister for Aged, Family and Health Services) (6.27)—I move:

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill provides for amendments to the Pig Slaughter Levy Act 1971 to increase the maximum rate of the research and development levy to $1 per each pig slaughtered and the maximum rate of levy for marketing and promotion purposes to $2.50c per pig slaughtered.

The levies are used to partially fund the operations of the Pig Research and Development Corporation and to fully fund the Australian Pork Corporation. Both levy increases have been requested by the Australian Pork Producers' Federation, which is the recognised body representing levy payers.

Like a number of the levy collection acts for the industries within my portfolio, this Act provides for the maximum levy chargeable to be contained in the Act and for the operative level of levy to be set by regulation up to that maximum amount.

The present operational levy rates for research and promotion are at or near the maximum rates provided in the Pig Slaughter Levy Act 1971. Increasing the maximum rates will give industry the flexibility to increase contributions to research and promotion over some years and thus avoid the need for frequent amendments to the legislation.
For the research and development component the operative levy rate within the maximum is set by regulation on the recommendation of the Pig Research and Development Corporation, following consultation with the Australian Pork Producers Federation. The levy raised is matched by the Government for funding of research and development projects up to a maximum of 0.5 per cent of gross value of production of the industry.

This Government is keenly aware of the necessity of primary industry research and development. We have encouraged rural industries to increase their contributions to research to 0.5 per cent of gross value of production. In our May 1989 statement 'Research, Innovation and Competitiveness', the Government reaffirmed its commitment to continued matching of industry levies for funding of research and development up to 0.5 per cent of gross value of production.

The Australian pig industry is currently contributing about 0.35 per cent of its gross value of production to research and development and is planning to increase its levy payments to research and development beyond the present maximum rate. I would like to commend the industry's foresight and support of the need for increased research and development.

The operative rate for the marketing and promotion levy is set by regulation on the recommendation of the Australian Pork Corporation, again in consultation with industry. The levy is used to fund the operations of the Corporation which primarily develops and administers marketing and promotional strategies aimed at increasing the consumption of Australian pork and pork products.

The Australian Pork Corporation has been successful in recent years in assisting the industry to achieve increases in the market share of Australian pork as evidenced by the rising per capita consumption of pork meat. The operative levy rate for these purposes is currently set at the maximum rate. This Bill will make it possible for industry to seek increases in the operative rate which would allow the Corporation to maintain or expand its marketing and promotion program.

No additional budgetary outlays will result from this amendment. However, it will enable the government to agree to an industry request for an operative rate increase in the research and development levy, which would then generate additional matching budgetary outlays in future years. I commend the Bill to honourable members, and I present the explanatory memorandum to this Bill.

Debate (on motion by Mr Downer) adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 6.30 to 8 p.m.

MIDDLE EAST

Ministerial Statement

Debate resumed.

Dr CATLEY (Adelaide) (8.00)—I rise in support of the statement by the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) given earlier this afternoon in announcing the changes in the Australian forces deployed in the Middle East. Last August, I spoke in support of the Government's decision to deploy forces in the Middle East. Last August, I spoke in support of the Government's decision to deploy forces in the Middle East. I pointed out that there were a number of world order, moral and legal issues involved and that I did not want to support those at that time; rather, I wanted to concentrate on Australian self-interests. I did so at the time because there was community concern about why Australia should be deploying forces in the Middle East and I wanted to make it clear that concrete self-interests were involved.

Since that time, it has become much clearer to the community as a whole that Australia does have these self-interests, and the acceptance of our commitment there has become much more widespread. It is a tribute to the maturity of our foreign policy formulation process that today we move this motion in a bipartisan spirit. All the opinion polls are showing that the Government's support in the community is very widespread.

I would like to address today the world order, moral and legal issues that are involved in the deployment against aggression in the Middle East and do so with
respect to some analysis of the doctrine of collective security—a doctrine that has been much quoted, long pursued and, until now, very elusive. The society of states, the international order which we inhabit, evolved in western Europe over the last 300 or 400 years. It comprised nation states each seeking their own self-interest, if necessary by secret diplomacy or, if necessary, by war and the use of force. It was mostly untrammelled by doctrines of international law that were widespread but, by and large, unenforced and unenforceable. In the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, this evolved into the so-called balance of power system which enshrined the pursuit of self-interest by force and secret diplomacy by undemocratic states as a law of nature.

During the nineteenth century there evolved a number of political doctrines and movements which sprang into the contemporary Liberal Party and its liberalism and into the Labor Party and its social democratic and labourist ideas. We shared the hostility towards the doctrine of the balance of power and the pursuit of self-interest which periodically produced war as a result of the untrammelled use of force in the international system.

A number of political movements sought to abolish war by introducing changes to that international system. One doctrine that evolved was that of collective security. This came to naught before the First World War and then out of the First World War, with the attendant horrors caused by that widespread conflict, came the victory of powers led by governments with doctrines of liberalism, democracy, social democracy and national self-determination, which determined to change the international system so that wars did not occur again.

The League of Nations was set up, which had as its basis the doctrine of collective security. The doctrine was a very simple one. If a state attacked another state, thereby committing a blatant act of aggression, it would be branded in the League of Nations as an aggressor. Having identified that aggressor, the League of Nations states would then band together, by processes that were not clearly defined, and oppose that aggression. As a result, any aggressor—which had been a common practice in the old balance of power system—would be opposed by superior force and thereby be deterred from undertaking such aggression. The League of Nations system failed. It is worth reminding ourselves why it failed. It failed because of the unwillingness of the member states of the League of Nations to live up to the covenant of the League of Nations and enforce collective security defence against the aggressions of the 1930s.

Let us remind ourselves of what those aggressions looked like. Japan started its invasion—which was to last until 1945—in the early 1930s against China. Various European statesmen washed their hands of this problem, despite their international commitments, with one referring to China as a place about which he knew little and the British people cared less. In the case of Germany, the aggressions that the Germans committed in the Rhineland, and then in the Sudetenland, were excused by various doctrines—including the fact that many of the people there were of German speaking origin, anyway—and that peace in our time could be brought about by a deal with the German state. In the case of Italy, even more tragically, the invasion by Italy of what is now Ethiopia led to the appearance of Haile Selassie, that feudal monarch, in the League of Nations pleading for support that was not forthcoming.

The reason that these aggressions succeeded and eventually produced a much more widespread war was that the states which had pledged themselves to maintain the order of collective security had taken the easy option which we now know as appeasement. They took the easy option because avoiding conflict, killing and the use of force is only too consistent with the doctrines of liberalism, labor parties and social democracy. It is hardly surprising that the first reaction to the use of force by people espousing such ideologies is to avoid conflict. But in these cases, the unwillingness to enforce the doctrine of collective security only produced a larger war. Our first effort to change the international system had failed.
The second opportunity arose after the Second World War when an ideologically similar coalition of nations had won the global conflict—nations that were democratic liberal or socialist. They established the United Nations. The United Nations was also an attempt to produce a collective security arrangement except that, recognising the failings of the League of Nations in the 1930s, a two-tier system was introduced—that is, the General Assembly and the Security Council, the Security Council having permanent members who had a veto on the use of force under the collective security charter of the United Nations. The veto was a practical recognition of the inability of the League and then the United Nations actually to mobilise against a great power’s interests. If a great power was concerned, other means would have to be adopted.

Within five short years of the establishment of the United Nations it appeared to have gone the same way as the League, for slightly different reasons—that is, the establishment of a Cold War. The essential nature of the Cold War conflict between the Western and Eastern blocs—to some degree one could characterise it as a conflict between communist states and democratic states, although that would pervert some of the definitions that we utilise—was bipolar. As a result, all the smaller conflicts that emerged over the 45 years after the Second World War were enmeshed in that bipolar conflict and it was difficult, indeed impossible, to have a doctrine of collective security with all opposing the aggressor when almost every significant state in the world was aligned with one bloc or the other. The only significant exception was the Korean war, which was the exception because the Soviets were not in the United Nations to utilise their veto at the critical time that the decision was being made.

As a result, the veto system in the United Nations, combined with the permanent membership of five powers, ensured that the collective security doctrine of the United Nations, which had previously failed at the League of Nations, now failed at the United Nations. Only with the end of the Cold War has the opportunity of adopting a doctrine and a practice of collective security in the international system presented itself realistically to us. I urge that we support and pursue such a system of international relations as an alternative to the naked power politics which have characterised that system for so long. There is no guarantee that we will succeed in this endeavour, but I believe that we need to make every effort and that a state the size of Australia has a particular concern to do it.

The end of the Cold War has come about essentially through the application of sufficient pressure against the Soviet empire for the Soviets to be unable to maintain their previous doctrine of a socialist bloc and, as a result, we are now presented with the opportunity for the collapse of the bipolar world and deciding what the new order should look like. With all the best intentions in the world we may fail, but we must undertake an effort to change the nature of the international system. Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait presents us with the first serious test for that post-Cold War order, and the first serious test of whether collective security can be implemented as a global system.

It is true that the Iraq regime that has attacked, annexed and subdued Kuwait is a most unsavoury regime—and previous and I suppose following speakers will concentrate on this to a great degree. The point about collective security is that it is not an issue of the domestic nature of the regime concerned; it is its external behaviour—because, as you would know, Madam Deputy Speaker, some of our allies in this endeavour would not pass muster very easily if we were to apply the doctrines of democratic liberalism to their internal nature. We have here a country that has an unsavoury regime, but that is not here the primary issue. The primary issue is its external behaviour, which has been almost uninterrupted aggression or the threat of aggression against its neighbours.

It is true that, when Iraq attacked Iran in 1980, the relationship of the West towards it during that conflict was ambiguous—an ambiguity determined by the
nature of the Cold War which, as I have said, ensured that all local conflicts were subsumed under the bipolar geopolitical imperatives. Now it has attacked Kuwait in a post-Cold War order and the central issue has now become this: in the post-Cold War world, can one state attack, subdue and annex another? Is that to be permitted or are we to establish a world order in which this will be prevented?

As a side issue we might also take on board the fact that the Iraqi regime was clearly not going to stop with its invasion and subjugation of Kuwait. In the area of strategic studies, as I am sure you know, Madam Deputy Speaker, one asks about the behaviour of states: what are their motives, what are their intentions, and what are their capabilities? On these basic criteria that any strategist would ask about, the Iraqis had the motive to attack and subjugate Saudi Arabia on the basis of acquiring 45 per cent of the known world oil reserves; it had the intention, since it has continually stated its hostility towards the regime of Saudi Arabia; and it had a capability of about a million persons under arms for a state of 17 million population, with a projected nuclear capacity coming on board in a period of between 10 months and seven years, depending on how quickly it decided.

How were we to react? We have reacted with the classic application of a collective security doctrine. We have pursued collective security. It does not come about easily. One cannot imagine that all 160 member states of the United Nations will simultaneously stick up their hands and say, 'Let's go and stop this'. Someone has to take the initiative, create the political and strategic coalition that is required. Some will act more quickly because their direct interests are involved. Some will react more slowly because it takes them time to realise that global order is a primary national interest for all of us. Some may not do any more than put up their hands at the United Nations votings.

Nonetheless, if one looks at the sequence of events, the United Nations with our support first voted for voluntary sanctions, then voted for enforced sanctions. It then moved into a posture of deploying military force with a view to deterring the Iraqis from maintaining their position. As strategists make only too clear, the application of deterrence post facto is much more difficult than the exercise of deterrence before the act. As a result, the credibility of a military deterrent has been at risk all along. The new move of resolution 678 at the United Nations ensures that the Iraqis are now in no doubt about the credibility of the potential application of force and the requirement for them to behave in accord with the demands of the United Nations— that is, that they leave Kuwait. We have already seen diplomatic behaviour by the Iraqis that indicates they are going to operate in that way.

As these processes have been under way, criticisms of the Australian Government's position—which has of course received, as it receives today, bipartisan support for the most part—have emerged within the Australian community but have been somewhat diminished. However, I should just make a few observations about them. The hostage situation is a very delicate issue, and it is understandable that particularly those close to them should express concern about their well-being. But the issues at stake are very large and I should point out that the majority of the Australian hostages have already been evacuated without the assistance of what the Adelaide Advertiser in my electorate called the 'political has-beens' who are presently making visits to that area.

The notion that the Arabs should resolve this issue unimpeded by external powers is a rather strange one since the Syrians, the Saudi Arabians and the Egyptians are deploying with us. The idea that we may be propping up feudal regimes has some substance to it but the issue, as I have said, is one of collective security against the aggressive external behaviour of states, whatever their domestic regime may be and whatever the domestic regime of the state aggressed against may be. We have an opportunity to direct and construct a new world order based on doctrines of collective security. We as a smaller power should grasp this opportunity and even if it involves certain dangers for our citizens who may be in the
area, this is an opportunity that should not be allowed to fail as those before did.

Mr PEACOCK (Kiowong) (8.15)—I do, as has the Opposition today—particularly through the excellent and comprehensive address by the Leader of the Opposition (Dr Hewson)—support the statement made by the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) in the Parliament this afternoon. This therefore is, as the Leader of the Opposition said, a bipartisan national position. I support the criticisms of the Australian Labor Party that my Leader made in here, and they in no way detract from his and our support of the position that the Government has adopted in pursuance of resolution 678 of the United Nations (UN) Security Council.

On 21 August this year I spoke at some length on the debate on that occasion, directing my remarks to the legality of what was transpiring on behalf of both the United Nations and in particular the action that the President of the United States had taken—and I will not weary the House by tracking through the detail of articles 24 or 51 of the United Nations Charter, suffice it to say at this juncture that resolution 678, on which the Prime Minister hangs so much of his statement today, is one of a long line of resolutions that have now been passed by the United Nations calling on Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait and in fact moving through that to impose economic sanctions, then moving to the position of resolution 678 itself.

The objectives remain as they have been from the outset: firstly, that Iraq ought immediately and unconditionally to withdraw from Kuwait; secondly, that there be restoration of Kuwait's legitimate government; thirdly, that there be the release of all hostages and the free functioning of embassies; and, fourthly, that the stability and the security of the region thereby be guaranteed.

The United States of America is not alone in seeking these objectives, as other speakers have indicated and as I have mentioned in my opening remarks. The United Nations Security Council has endorsed 12 resolutions condemning the invasion, imposing the economic sanctions and agreeing to the use of force if necessary. Perhaps it is wise to remind honourable members of the salient elements of resolution 678 which was passed last week by the Security Council of the UN. After its preambular clauses, it says:

Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations,

1. Demands that Iraq comply fully with resolution 660 (1990) and all subsequent relevant resolutions and decides, while maintaining all its decisions, to allow Iraq one final opportunity, as a pause of goodwill, to do so;

2. Authorizes member states cooperating with the Government of Kuwait, unless Iraq on or before 15 January 1991 fully implements, as set forth in paragraph 1 above, the foregoing resolutions, to use all necessary means to uphold and implement Security Council resolution 660 (1990) and all subsequent relevant resolutions and to restore international peace and security in the area;

3. Requests all states to provide appropriate support for the actions undertaken in pursuance of paragraph 2 of this resolution.

Paragraph 3 therefore requests all states to provide appropriate support for the actions undertaken in pursuance of paragraph 2 of this resolution.

The legality I have taken the House through before; it is soundly based in public international law. Now the Government is correctly, as are others in the multilateral force, responding to this virtually unprecedented resolution of the United Nations calling on states to provide such support for actions to bring about the elements of the resolution itself. We know it to be legal. We know it to be that essential element of collective action in the United Nations. The Government is absolutely right in reacting in the way in which it has.

Countless opportunities have been given to Saddam Hussein to withdraw from Kuwait. I read with interest some five or six weeks ago—I regret that the dearth of comprehension that is oft shown in Australian press reporting of international relations was brought to the fore yet again on this issue—that Saddam Hussein had alleged that he had had a dream. This was thought to be a funny issue that could be played about with. Unless one understands the mind of such people, one may not comprehend what he was on about.
But it seemed to me momentarily that what he appeared to be on about, in indicating that he had had this dream in which Mohammed had come to him and, among other things, told him that the guns were facing the wrong way, was that this might have been the opening of the window through which he could crawl, if he needed to, to bring about a solution. After all, this is a secular leader of a secular party who, from the time of the invasion, has called in the name of Allah at all times.

Apart from that piece of information, there has not been the slightest move or statement that would have indicated that even the contemplation of any form of withdrawal for whatever reason was in mind. Therefore, the pressure has to continue to be exerted.

I have read with interest a remark by President Bush at a press conference he gave last Friday when he referred to the fact that some people ask, 'Why on earth do we need this additional pressure? Why not simply leave the sanctions in place? Show some patience'. As President Bush rightly said on Thursday or Friday: 

... people now caution patience. The United States and the entire world have been patient. I will continue to be patient, but yesterday's U.N. resolution ... properly says to Saddam Hussein, “Time is running out. You must leave Kuwait, and we've given you time to do just exactly that.”

He is right.

The previous speaker gave an interesting historical backdrop to the way in which the world community has sought to achieve over decades a form of collective action, collective security, in the name of peace but being prepared to act in unison should the occasion demand. Those who doubt both the legitimacy and the motives of what is transpiring now not only flout those endeavours and cast them aside but do not face the reality of the pressure that is being exerted by the Iraqi administration at present.

There is no doubt that the primary aim was the additional power which would come not only by grabbing Kuwait, as Saddam Hussein did, but also, unquestionably, in seeking to attack and conquer Saudi Arabia. That was to give him access to between 50 and 60 per cent—estimates vary—of the known oil reserves of the world. Does anyone in his right mind think that a dictator who has carried out acts of bloodshed, brutality, pillage and destruction, even on his own citizens, in the way in which this man has, ought to be given control of that degree of the supply of oil in the world?

The only thing I have regretted in the international statements that have been made so frequently, not just in this Parliament but elsewhere, is that, apart from referring to the brutality of the invasion and the breach of the United Nations charter by so invading Kuwait, there appears to have been a reluctance on the part of many leaders to say that we simply cannot have this man controlling that amount of oil. It is hardly necessary for me to spell out the consequences to the international community.

As President Bush rightly said late last week, the countries of eastern Europe are already effectively in depression, although he did not use that term. They are having their standard of living exacerbated as they struggle to bring about freer nation states. He referred to the impact the Gulf crisis is having on the developing countries of the world. There is a real crush on so many human beings around the world simply because of the question of oil alone, let alone the outright breach of the United Nations charter and the flagrant pillage and acts of brutality that are being practised, as we understand, in Kuwait itself.

So, in effect, I suppose we have a stalemate where the nations of the world, with United Nations support, have sought to impose pressure. It is working and having effect. But for it to succeed would obviously take so much longer. Acting under the aegis of the powers vested within the UN the contributions are now being made, and correctly so.

President Bush also proposed late last week face to face talks. The Secretary of State of the United States will fly to meet with Saddam Hussein. The Iraqi Foreign Minister can meet with President Bush to ensure that there is real comprehension
on the part of the Iraqis as to just how firm the resolve of those engaged in this task is to bring about a settlement of this issue.

I will not dwell on it, but I simply say that I was disappointed in some of the statements of the Left in this country which indicated that President Bush had shown no scope for negotiation whatsoever. If they genuinely held that view, and I suppose they did, at least that was answered late last week with the offer of face to face negotiations.

The Leader of the Opposition touched on one other matter which is important. He referred to the international community’s failure to appreciate the possibility of this invasion and regarded this as a serious oversight. I have to say in this Parliament that over recent years the intelligence forces of the Western world at least have failed on a number of significant occasions. For all that we are entering a new, warmer era through the official ending of the Cold War some two weeks ago, we ought to be recognising that, whether it be in respect of the economic deterioration in the Soviet Union, the divisions that should have been perceived within eastern Europe much earlier or, locally, the problems in Fiji some years ago, many of our intelligence services have not acted with the perspicacity with which they were once so capable of acting. The Leader of the Opposition was quite correct in drawing attention to that.

The tragedies of this invasion are not just the human dimensions of it all at this moment, with our own and so many other hostages barbarically kept in a nation state as alleged guests, or the slaughter, pillage or destruction in Kuwait itself. Two weeks ago we had the official ending of the Cold War, with all that that promised the international community in terms of opportunities—certainly for the first time in my lifetime save and except for a short period at the end of the Second World War when I was very young—to create a much better international environ, the better the entire human race will be.

I wish to reiterate our support for the Government’s statement and our support for those service men and women who are going to the Gulf and those already there. We trust that they return safely to their families. They are involved in a hazardous adventure, as are the hostages. I oft feel, as I see the photographs in newspapers and the vision of our Australian hostages on television, that people will become accustomed to seeing them there—and people allegedly working for their return. Unless this is resolved they could face a most horrendous fate. They are not mere hostages; they are certainly facing a great peril. I support the statement, as does the Opposition.

Mr LINDSAY (Herbert) (8.30)—At the outset I would like to congratulate the honourable member for Kooyong (Mr Peacock) on what has been an outstanding contribution to this Parliament. I also acknowledge his able and skilled appreciation of foreign affairs issues. The Parliament is indebted to him for his contribution.

The statement of the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) in this chamber this afternoon on the Gulf crisis supports the maintenance of peace and freedom in the world. These are ageless ideals shared by most of humanity. So it is perhaps appropriate for me to recall a quotation that has singular significance in this debate:

There is . . . no precedent for a people being the victim of such injustice and of being at present threatened by abandonment to an aggressor. Also there has never before been an example of any Government proceeding with the systematic extermination of a nation by barbarous means and violation of the most solemn promises, made to all the nations of the earth, that there should be no resort to a war of conquest and that there should not be used against innocent human beings terrible poison and harmful gases.

These words were not taken from a debate in the United Nations. They were not spoken in 1990. Indeed, they could have come from the Emir of Kuwait. Instead they were spoken in 1936 and they came from Haile Selassie, the leader of Ethiopia. He pleaded with the League of
Nations to rescue his country, which had been conquered, occupied and brutalised by Mussolini's legions. His plea to halt aggression failed and ultimately the world went to war.

The Prime Minister's statement today on the Gulf crisis marks an extraordinary moment in the history of Australia. It is a statement concerning a fundamental issue—that it is an inalienable right of a sovereign nation to exist peaceably among the family of nations. The United States Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Jock Covey, said in a recent speech:

There's something much more fundamental at stake: The vision of a better, more peaceful world beyond the Cold War. Saddam Hussein's aggression presented us with our first challenge to peace and progress in the post-Cold War era. The manner in which we respond to this challenge can set the tone for international relations for decades to come. In this particular instance, if we had done nothing in reaction to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, even without further direct aggression against Saudi Arabia and the other gulf states, we would have handed effective control of much of the Near East to a man who has demonstrated his utter contempt for civilised values.

Had we failed to confront him, all the other states in the region would have been compelled to follow his lead in everything, from oil pricing to his own special brand of Arab chauvinism. If we and our allies decided not to persevere in our efforts to contain and reverse Iraqi aggression, we would have demonstrated to every dictator and potential dictator in the world that we do not possess the political will to deal with ruthlessness. If we do not succeed now against Iraqi aggression, we will face Saddam Hussein, triumphant, rich, powerful, and unendingly ambitious. If we do not face him now, we will surely face him later, and at a much greater disadvantage.

Australia has always carried the torch of liberty. To millions of people around the globe Australia has always been seen to uphold the rights of mankind. Australia has fought for peace and security in numerous wars this century. Fundamentally, Australia has demonstrated again and again to the international community that it is prepared to fight if need be against aggressors to ensure the protection of free people.

The amount of disinformation and lies that have gained currency on this issue is quite extraordinary. Some critics say that a Gulf war would result in the useless sacrifice of young soldiers to secure oil supplies for rich nations. Certainly it is true that we cannot discount the importance of the energy resources in the Gulf to the world's economy. As much as 65 per cent of the world's known recoverable oil reserves are located in the Gulf. Gulf oil is essential to sustain the modern international economy. If Saddam Hussein were to exercise control of such a vast amount of oil, this would pose a grave risk to the world economy. For rich nations it would pose questions of stability and for many of the world's poor nations their very survival would be at stake.

However, the conquest of Kuwait and the theft of its oil are of secondary importance to Saddam Hussein. His main objective has always been to dominate the politics of the Middle East. Other Arab nations of the Middle East will ultimately be unable to resist the Iraqi dictator. Not only would Turkey, a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, be faced with the threat of the Iraqi military force but also Turkey's economy would be severely weakened, giving rise to the fear of political instability.

However, Saddam Hussein's ultimate objective is an attack on Israel. He would destroy Israel, its cities, its factories, its men, women and children and every vestige of Jewish presence on the land now known as Israel. It is extraordinary to watch on television the well-meaning but craven attempt of notable people bartering at the Baghdad bazaar for the lives of hostages seized by Hussein. How these people can participate in these excursions and justify their conduct on any moral ground seems incomprehensible to any notion of human decency.

Let the facts be told again. On 2 August 1990 Iraqi forces invaded and seized a small Arab nation which was their neighbour. Kuwait was once a prosperous country. It has now been pillaged and looted. Its infrastructure has been dismantled. Its citizens are being terrorised and there is evidence that numerous Kuwaiti male youths are being executed. There is evidence that babies have been snatched from incubators and shipped off
to Baghdad. Western citizens hiding in Kuwait live in mortal terror of discovery. Other hostages are being forced to act as human shields in various locations throughout Iraq. Jock Covey accurately observed:

The scale of savagery in this ongoing crime batter every principle of civilised life.

The 1949 Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, drafted by the same generation of statesmen who founded the United Nations, places specific obligations on Iraqi officials. It is very clear. The United States Government has submitted a document to the Security Council information on grave breaches of that convention by Iraq. Some of the grave breaches committed by Iraqi authorities include wilful killing. For example, in early October a report from Amnesty International alleged that scores of people had been hanged on the grounds of Kuwait university. On 12 October six youngsters were hanged for distributing leaflets, four people were shot for possession of a camera and a photocopy machine, and a family of seven was shot for possession of a United States passport, not theirs. A manager of a food shop was shot for not displaying a photograph of Saddam Hussein and two boys were executed in front of their parents.

As I said previously, in September there were numerous executions of Kuwaiti youths and also of medical workers for suspected involvement with the resistance. Evidence has been provided by Amnesty International of the most brutal methods of torture used against Kuwaiti citizens. The plunder of Kuwait is now beyond the imagination. Hospitals, mosques, schools, factories, port facilities, industrial complexes, residences—everything has been looted. Anything that could be moved has been stolen. What has been left behind has been partially destroyed.

In these barbaric circumstances, I ask those who criticise Australia's Gulf policy what they would have Australia do. Would they prefer that Australia renounce the use of force and restrict our options to one of negotiation only? Would they include only as an option the use of international sanctions against Iraq? Would they maintain that the events of Kuwait are no business of Australia and that these events concern a far distant country of whose people we know little? I simply say to those critics that they are wrong and their opposition to Australia's policy is rejected.

Along with 53 other members of the United Nations, Australia has responded to the conquest of Kuwait by contributing either economically or militarily to the effort to contain and reverse the aggression of the dictator Saddam Hussein. In fact, Australia, together with 26 other states, including Arab nations such as Egypt, Syria, Morocco and the Gulf states and other Muslim nations such as Pakistan, Bangladesh and Senegal, has contributed military forces to the Gulf region. Almost 400,000 allied troops are already in the Gulf region or are en route. About 200,000 of them are American men and women.

Critics of Australia's policy castigate the policies of the United States on the Gulf crisis but, as I have said on a number of occasions in this House, it is the United States that continually provides leadership to the free world to guarantee the success and the survival of liberty. Australia has an important role to play as a partner with the United States in guaranteeing the success and survival of liberty. The early dispatch of our naval vessels to the Gulf area is not only a reminder of our obligations but also a recognition that there are many people in Australia who do support the sentiments I have expressed in my remarks this evening.

The Gulf crisis has reminded Australians of our essential need as a maritime nation to be able to possess a fleet adequate to provide ships at all times, not only to meet our own defence but also to meet our alliance responsibilities, and to ensure that we have facilities able to support those ships. It is a great pity that we do not have a naval base on the west coast of Australia to support our ships.

In the three months since the invasion, an intensive diplomatic effort has been maintained by the United States to
achieve four goals announced by President Bush on 8 August. These principles are, first, the immediate unconditional and complete withdrawal of all Iraqi forces from Kuwait; secondly, the restoration of Kuwait's legitimate government; thirdly, the protection of the lives of American citizens held hostage by Iraq and, indeed, the release of all hostages; and fourthly, the security and stability of the Persian Gulf region.

Since that time there has been no evidence of flexibility in the Iraqi position. Saddam Hussein is intransigent. He seems to believe that time is on his side and that the allied coalition will crumble and ultimately the will of the free world to confront him will waste away. Saddam Hussein has 42 days to ponder his fate and that of his invasion forces. On 15 January the allies have authority to take whatever action may be required, including military force, to restore Kuwait's sovereignty.

I join with the honourable member for Kooyong in praying for the safety of our sailors on the ships dispatched to the Persian Gulf and that they may return safely home to these shores.

Mr DOWNER (Mayo) (8.45)—I congratulate the honourable member for Herbert (Mr Lindsay) on his excellent speech. It was particularly good. I support the measures which were announced today by the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) in relation to Australia's involvement with the Persian Gulf crisis and in particular the multinational force in the Persian Gulf.

I understand the great anxiety there is now in the Australian community about this grave crisis. That anxiety is well founded. It is completely comprehensible that people should be concerned about this crisis; indeed, they ought to be concerned about it. Above all, I also understand the great anxiety of the families of those service personnel, in particular our sailors, who are serving in the Persian Gulf and those who may in the future serve there due to the rotational nature of the arrangements the Government has announced. I think it is very important that we in this House recognise the pain that involvement by those Australian service personnel causes to their families and the anxiety those families must feel. Those families ought to know that we in this Parliament are thinking of them and are very concerned, along with them, about the welfare of our service personnel.

We also accept the very real danger that war could break out in the Persian Gulf next month or possibly in February. We hope that will not happen, but it will be avoided only if Iraq withdraws from Kuwait and if the matter can finally be resolved by an unconditional withdrawal on the part of Saddam Hussein.

I will address tonight four basic questions which I know the community is very concerned about in relation to the Gulf crisis. The first question that people may ponder is why the invasion by Iraq of Kuwait should matter at all. There are really two answers to that. In the first place, as many have already said in this debate, that invasion was totally illegal, contrary to the United Nations Charter, contrary to Security Council resolutions and contrary to the whole spirit of the international legal system.

Throughout history, territorial acquisition has been the major cause of conflict, including global conflict. The honourable member for Herbert referred to Italy's invasion of Abyssinia in 1936. In 1914 Germany marched into Belgium and the First World War began. In the 1930s Germany marched into Austria, Czechoslovakia, and eventually into Poland, and the Second World War began. It could well have begun earlier than with the invasion of Poland. Again, it was territorial acquisition by force which led to those two most tragic of all conflicts, the First World War and the Second World War.

Since the Second World War, an international legal system has been constructed for the specific purpose of stopping that kind of catastrophe happening again to the world. With the dimension of the weapons that we now have in the world, one can well understand why it is so important that that international legal system be made to work. That sys-
tem makes territorial acquisition by force simply illegal and it requires that any territorial disputes between nations be negotiated peacefully and under the auspices and institutions of the international legal system.

But that international legal system is as nothing if it cannot properly be enforced. Indeed, it is true to say that throughout the period of the Cold War there was very much a view that the international legal system was unenforceable. During my years as a diplomat I heard many people say that the international legal system simply did not matter, that people could ignore it. That was a very dangerous attitude for people to take then, and history explains why that was a dangerous attitude for them to take, but the fact that, with the end of the Cold War, the international legal system really can be made to work and really can be enforceable is something we should rejoice in but something we should ensure as well.

The second reason why the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait is so significant and is something we should be concerned about—and we should not be ashamed to say this—is that the Gulf region is of enormous economic importance to the world. Whether it is of economic importance or whether it is not does not change the principle of the case. But the fact that it is enormously important economically is something we need to ponder on. If Iraq were to seize control not just of Kuwait but of other parts of the Persian Gulf and the Middle East, the economic consequences for ordinary people living in my constituency and in all parts of Australia and the Western world would be very dire. The livelihoods of families would be directly affected and this Parliament would be negligent in its duty if it did not take into consideration the livelihoods of ordinary people in Australia.

There is no need for us to be ashamed of wanting to protect the global economy. We ought to try to protect a sensible global economic system. Kuwait clearly is a very important part of that system. It may be a small country with a small population but it has vast oil resources. After all, Iraq would not have invaded Kuwait in the first place if it were not ultimately after the economic resources of that country. Because of its oil wealth, Kuwait was able to lend Iraq a good deal of money—several billion dollars, I recall—during the Iraq-Iran war. To save repaying that loan, the Iraqis have marched into Kuwait. That is one of their motives for the attack. The second is that the Iraqi economy has been virtually bankrupted by President Saddam Hussein’s waging of war with Iran and consequently he has had to try to find ways to restore the revenue of his country. He thought invading a neighbour might not be a bad way of doing it.

If we were to carry out international relations around the world on that basis and that principle, we would have World War III within weeks. It is an utterly abhorrent principle, but it underlines very starkly the economic importance of the Gulf to the whole world, and we should not walk away from that. People need to understand that. It is a fact of life. I note that people such as the Australian Democrats say that this is abhorrent—that it is abhorrent that we should be concerned about the Gulf because of its economic importance. They are stark staring mad.

Another matter I want to address is the question of some people in the Australian community who ask why we should do anything at this juncture. Let me just remind people that, without the United States-led multinational force in Saudi Arabia, there is no doubt that President Saddam Hussein would have moved from Kuwait into Saudi Arabia, and possibly to other Gulf states as well. But, most significantly of all, as the honourable member for Herbert pointed out, I thought very sensibly, it would have allowed Saddam Hussein, the ‘Butcher of Baghdad’, to dominate the Middle East in general. For all its economic importance and the potential instability of the region, I cannot think of anything more dire for the world than to have a man like Saddam Hussein, who is willing to use poison gas even against his own people, dominating the Arab world. That is clearly one of his political ambitions and it is something that very much has to be resisted. If we as the Western world had adopted the ‘do
nothing’ approach, that is precisely what would have happened already.

Let me also say to those people who think we should do nothing that the United States and its allies cannot afford to retreat, defeated, from this. A retreat would, of course, be defeat. It would lead to the destruction of the international legal system, which would be reduced to the status of a farce. A retreat would create a generation of political instability in the Persian Gulf. We would have Arab pitched against Arab and that would have enormous economic consequences for the world. My view is that those who think that nothing should be done about this crisis are painfully myopic. They do not understand the enormous magnitude of this issue for the whole world.

The third question is the question we all ponder: what will happen now? I accept that there is a very real possibility that this whole matter could end in war. Saddam Hussein could withdraw at the last minute, on 13 or 14 January. I hope he does. But, if he does not do that, the international legal system will have to take its course and inevitably, as a result of that, there will be war in the Persian Gulf. We have to understand that. The Americans will not be able to accept some negotiating stunt by President Hussein to try to buy time. To do that would be tantamount to facing defeat on this issue, with all the consequences that I have already outlined.

Some people—and this is a very popular view—say we should give this whole exercise more time. Senator Sam Nunn in the United States says that we should give sanctions more time to work. Give them how long to work? Weeks, months, years? I do not doubt that it would take years for the economic sanctions to have the full effect of forcing Saddam Hussein to withdraw from Kuwait. I do not doubt that for a minute. I believe he and his country would be forced to put up with the hardship imposed by the sanctions at all costs because the loss of face for him would end in a very bloody internal defeat for him.

Those who argue that we should give it more time—that we should perhaps let sanctions work—are people who are blind to the fact that time is the thing that is on the side of Saddam Hussein. The longer this exercise goes on unresolved the greater the danger of a weakening of the Western and Arab coalition—the global coalition against Saddam Hussein. Public opinion in the West will begin to become indifferent. People will see it every night on television, get sick of seeing it and want the whole exercise to go away. Arab opinion, which is fragile on this issue, particularly amongst working people in Arab countries, would become even more fragile, with the danger over time of instability within those Arab countries which are supporting the multinational effort to get Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait.

Saddam understands all these things and that is why he is so committed to playing for time. That is also why, between now and 15 January, he will use every single negotiating ploy he can possibly conjure up in order to buy more time. We should not let him buy time. All he can do to satisfy the world is to withdraw from Kuwait and recognise that what he has done is abhorrent and illegal.

The final question I want to address is the question for all of us as Australians: why should we be involved? The fact is that these things that I have been talking about—the importance of the international legal system above all and also the economic importance of the Gulf—are not just local matters for the United States; this is a global matter. Everyone in the world has a direct interest in those matters being satisfactorily resolved, otherwise the post-Cold War world will be a shambles. We cannot just say that one or two countries should carry the burden. We cannot say that the countries which have been very willing to do that in the initial stages—the United States and Great Britain—should be left to carry the whole burden. It is gross and irresponsible to take that view.

Anybody who has been watching, as I have done over recent weeks, the CNN American news will recognise that the pain of absence from home for American serv-
ice men and women is obviously as great as it is for Australians. We have to understand that they are making a sacrifice, just as the Prime Minister is calling on the families of our service men and women and some of our service men and women to make a sacrifice. It does not matter whether somebody is from Grand Rapids in Michigan or from Goolwa in South Australia; the pain of making this contribution to the resolution of a very dire global problem will be the same. I believe the world ought to share the burden, and that includes Australia as part of that world. In the past we have always been prepared to stand up for great global principles and we ought to do that on this occasion.

In conclusion, as others have pointed out, particularly the Leader of the Opposition (Dr Hewson) in his speech, the Cold War came to an end in Paris two years ago, and we must continue the struggle for peace in the Persian Gulf as well. No matter how long any military conflict may take, if this is what it comes to in the end President Saddam Hussein will lose, since the resolve of the West, including Australia, and the international legal system will pave the way for a peaceful future for all of us and our children and grandchildren.

Mr HOLDING (Melbourne Ports) (9.00)—I desire to join this debate to make a number of points. I do not want to reiterate many of the points that have already been made, but I do think that there comes a time in the affairs of any nation when one has to make not only a hard political decision but also a moral political decision. The first question that the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) quite rightly addressed in his statement to the House was the significance of the resolution of the United Nations (UN). The reality is that the United Nations, which is the only body we have that represents an international legal position, has passed a resolution, after having endorsed sanctions, as one of a series of resolutions which now creates a situation where, unless Saddam Hussein withdraws from his illegal occupation of Kuwait, force may well be used.

What are the implications of that? First, we must ask ourselves: could Australia, as a member of the United Nations, have voted against that resolution or chosen to abstain? I do not believe that either of those positions was an alternative for Australia. And once we have voted for that resolution, there is no way, in my view, that we can with any sense of honour and international integrity say, 'We voted for that resolution, but we are going to leave it to somebody else to involve themselves in the detail of enforcing it'. If every nation state took that position, then of course the United Nations would be finished.

The issues have been canvassed. I heard tonight a former political colleague explain that he was unhappy with the situation and that he felt that it ought to be subject to negotiation. The reality is that any negotiating process is a two-way exercise. One cannot negotiate with someone who is not willing to negotiate. There has been not only an illegal and aggressive occupation of Kuwait but also an absolute and total denial of human rights—never mind the atrocities, which are just a part of it—to the Kuwaiti people. There can be no greater denial of one's human rights than to see someone executed or killed. Therefore, having tried to negotiate in simple human terms in a situation where Saddam Hussein has taken illegally Australian citizens and citizens of other nations to use them as hostages, and people of goodwill having gone to Iraq and said, 'We would like to negotiate with you; we suggest that you return them because they really are not part of your conflict', and failed, does the United Nations have any alternative other than to walk away and say, in an act of abandonment, 'In the final analysis there is nothing that we as an international body can or will ever do when a larger and more powerful nation state uses armed aggression to take over a weaker neighbour'? The day the United Nations takes that action in the present situation, we are in great difficulty.

I take the point made by several other speakers that, if action were not taken, Saddam Hussein would basically be able to exercise economic control over the oil
supplies of the Middle East. He does not have to invade Saudi Arabia if he has the kind of firepower and capacity for aggressive intent that he has got. Is anyone going to argue seriously that he will not be able to dictate the price of oil? Which of the Arab emirates, either together or individually, could withstand his firepower and capacity? When confronted in the first act with a situation where Saudi Arabia, an Arab nation, invites in the United States and other nations, his immediate response is not to negotiate but to try to get a jihad, a holy war, directed towards the state of Israel—a nation created by the United Nations itself as a result of the misery and agony of the Jewish people.

Some people who should have known better have argued that the question of the occupation of Kuwait can be settled only if the problems that exist in Israel in respect of the occupied territories are dealt with. There is a very real difference between territory that happens to be occupied as a result of a nation defending itself against aggressive acts—and that is the case with Israel, which has surrendered territory and made a peace treaty with Egypt—and territory that is occupied as a result of the commitment of other nations to destroy that nation state, which Saddam Hussein has made perfectly clear is one amongst many of his intentions. In this situation, walking away is not an answer. Walking away in a situation where nation states have an increasing capacity to destroy each other—and in some cases either have or will have a nuclear capacity—compounds the problem for all mankind, not only now but in the future. Therefore, it is important that this Parliament speak with one voice and basically, with one minor political exception, I think that has occurred.

The minor political exception, which I regret—and I do not think it should have occurred—happened during the speech of the Leader of the Opposition (Dr Hewson). He had the opportunity to unite this Parliament around what is a very important resolution. Hopefully he did not write the speech, but his advisers could not resist the opportunity to suggest that some kind of deal may have been made with elements within the Prime Minister's own Party which made his statement less worthy than it should have been.

Let me put on the record that the statement made by the Prime Minister today in the Parliament and endorsed by the Opposition contains no new points—and it has not left out any points—that he did not make in explaining the position of the Government and the Cabinet to the Caucus this morning. Having made that report, one or two questions were asked, and then that report was carried unanimously. I place that on the record because I believe that the Leader of the Opposition—a comparatively new Leader of the Opposition—who was in fact presented with an opportunity to support unrestrainedly a statement which the Opposition endorses, made a grievous error, putting it as mildly as I can, when he could not resist the cheap political shot and said, 'While we endorse the statement, we do not know whether you have made other commitments to other groups within your Party'.

Mr Ruddock—What does paragraph 4 mean: 'It is not proposed to make any other contribution of naval, air or ground forces'?

Mr HOLDING—I have been listening to this debate and I have heard Opposition member after Opposition member endorse the statement. If the honourable member for Dundas (Mr Ruddock) wants at this stage to call for a more substantial commitment than the Prime Minister has indicated, then he should say so. Nobody from the Opposition side during the course of this debate has been prepared to stand up and say other than that they endorse and support the statement. I have not heard anyone say—and I do not believe I will—'Well, of course, we should be sending in the Air Force, the Army; we should be going in gung ho'. That is not the situation. The situation is as the Prime Minister described it. I believe that he was speaking for the whole of this House when he said that what the Australian public and the Australian Government want—
Mr Ruddock—Does it close off future options?

Mr HOLDING—The honourable gentleman can tell me what he wants; what the Australian public wants to see is a negotiated settlement. But the Prime Minister made it perfectly clear to the House—and he made it perfectly clear to the Caucus in exactly the same terms—that if there is to be a negotiated settlement, the most likely way of achieving that is by supporting Australia in its involvement in the United Nations resolution.

That is the issue. I do not want to divide some of the views any further than necessary but I am not prepared to sit here and listen to a statement made by the Leader of the Opposition that goes on the parliamentary record and remains uncorrected. I want to say for the benefit of the Parliament, for the benefit of my own Party and for the benefit of the people of Australia that the points made by the Prime Minister in what was one of the most important speeches that will ever be made to this Parliament—which was endorsed substantially by all the Opposition speakers with this one odd reference from the Leader of the Opposition—were exactly the points made by him to the Caucus and endorsed unanimously.

Mr Truss—That was a change.

Mr HOLDING—The honourable member for Wide Bay (Mr Truss) would not know much about unanimous decisions in his Party. The difference in our Party is this: when the Prime Minister comes in with an important statement on a policy position, he usually not only carries the day but carries it unanimously. When the leader of the coalition has learned to do that, he may qualify to be an aspirant for the important position of Prime Minister, but not until such time. It is regrettable that the Leader of the Opposition said what he did in addressing what is a major statement which will carry the support of the Australian people.

It is a serious matter. It is important that the Parliament speak with one voice because it is important that the people of Australia speak with one voice. But we are a democracy; there will be citizens who will dissent. However, I believe that the issues and the results show that Australia not only acted correctly, but had no choice but to vote for the resolution. If we vote for the resolution then we are bound to involve ourselves in carrying it out. That is the hard part.

I hope—as I know all honourable members, irrespective of what political positions they have, do hope—that this will lead to a negotiated settlement. I hope that the resolution and the will now being expressed will lead to exercises in judgment which will take the heat out of this situation and ultimately lead to a withdrawal from Kuwait. That is our hope, and I believe it is a reasonable hope, having regard to the strong, affirmative decision taken by the United Nations—one which clearly carries the support of this Parliament.

Mr RUDDOCK (Dundas) (9.13)—Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank you for the call in this matter. I wish to endorse generously the statement of the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke). During my discussions I will take up some of the comments of the honourable member for Melbourne Ports (Mr Holding), who spoke before me, but I will not do so immediately.

This is the second debate we have had on the situation in the Middle East. The first took place on 21 August last. I spoke on that occasion. On that occasion the Opposition supported a motion proposed by the Prime Minister. The fact is that that motion received the support of the Opposition parties. We acknowledged then, as we do today, that the crisis in the Middle East was one of the gravest tests for the international community since 1945. We indicated that this crisis had brought us to a turning point in history and that we had now entered into a new phase in significant international relationships.

All of us have observed the changes that have taken place in eastern Europe—the way in which the relationships between the major powers have been renegotiated. In response to this situation we have seen a new sense of purpose in the
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United Nations. One of the great problems we face is that the renegotiation of relationships has led to a situation where there could well be a vacuum in the relationships between smaller countries. It was this that Iraq sought by its invasion of Kuwait to take advantage of. An opportunity to gain resources and territory existed and Iraq thought it could move with impunity, without there being any substantial challenge to the decisions that it had taken. If that situation were to persist, given the new relationship that has emerged between the major powers, then no smaller country could see itself secure from other more avaricious states that might seek to take advantage of them. There are important standards of international law and conduct which we must uphold, and it is in Australia’s interest to ensure that those relationships are upheld. It is important not only for our own future security but also for the security of other interests we may have.

Australia has been challenged in other ways. Some Australians who have been working in Kuwait and in Iraq have been held against their will. When we last debated this question they were not called hostages. Now throughout the world it is generally acknowledged that they have been held as hostages. They have been taken to military installations and used in a way which is totally and absolutely unreasonable in any international sense at all, and Australia is directly involved—our people are involved.

So we have an unprovoked and unjustified invasion of another country. We have had a group of people in Iraq, 16 million in number, who have fought an eight-year war with Iran, who are now battle hardened, who have sought to gain territory and who have shown in their conduct within their own nation that individual lives are worth very little.

We have seen people in Iraq, the Kurdish people in particular—a minority group—subjected to some of the worst oppression and subjected to the use of poison gas and the like. All of this has happened in a very short period of time, and the international community has responded to this stage largely by putting in place troops to protect other countries within the region from risk and has sought by the use of sanctions to persuade Iraq that it should move from Kuwait.

Those sanctions to date have proven to be ineffective. Some 11 resolutions have been carried in the United Nations Security Council. The latest resolution, which we are now discussing in responding to the Prime Minister’s statement, is its twelfth. Earlier resolutions have covered a range of international legal issues arising out of the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, including the failure to heed the Security Council resolutions calling for withdrawal and naming the mistreatment of third country nationals residing in Iraq and Kuwait. We have seen the liability that Iraq has now incurred under international law for loss, damage and injury suffered by Kuwait and third states as a result of the invasion and illegal occupation.

The latest resolution adds a new factor. It is a time limit for the withdrawal from Kuwait. It authorises United Nations members now ‘to use all necessary means’ to uphold and implement all previous Security Council resolutions. That is the element of this matter which is now clearly before us and which the statement today of the Prime Minister deals with in detail. The Prime Minister notes that resolution 678 authorises member states of the United Nations from 15 January 1991 ‘to use all necessary means’ to uphold and implement the Security Council’s previous resolutions. As was made quite clear by the way in which this matter was debated, that means that using ‘all necessary means’ could encompass the use of armed force to compel compliance with the Security Council’s resolutions.

The United Nations has authorised the deployment of military forces in the past, and this resolution now authorises that in relation to Kuwait. The resolution was very broadly supported, as was also acknowledged by the Prime Minister. A vote of 12 nations to two with one abstention—sponsored by six members of the Security Council: the United States, Britain, the Soviet Union, France, Canada and Romania—makes this a very significant resolution.
But it is a resolution that puts a time limit on Iraq to act. I do not believe that anybody in this Parliament or in the Security Council wants war. Certainly, the Prime Minister in his statement made it clear that he sees that as a last resort. President Bush has made it clear that military force is only to be used as a last resort. We have seen the United States President indicate to Iraq that he is willing to have his Secretary of State meet with President Hussein. Also President Bush is willing to meet with Iraq's Foreign Minister in order to pursue discussion.

I think honourable members need to have it very clearly in mind that this is not a situation in which there will be any debate about what the objective is. It appears from some of the statements that we have seen, emanating particularly from Iraq, that Iraq believes that it can change the ground rules. Today we have seen a statement from the Iraqi delegate, Adnan Malik, in the General Assembly of the United Nations, in which he says that the issue is the future of the Palestinian people and their need to have a homeland in the West Bank and Gaza, with Jerusalem as its capital, before any other Middle East questions can be dealt with. He went on to say in his statement:

The first question is Palestine... Palestine comes first, Palestine comes second and Palestine comes third.

If this matter is to be considered in that context, those discussions will be fruitless. That really brings us to a situation in which we need to have it clearly in our own minds what the Prime Minister's statement today and the United Nations' resolution are doing. By the time limits set, they are giving Iraq time to withdraw. If Iraq does not withdraw unconditionally within that time, it seems to me that the international community is now left with few options indeed. That is the matter that is before us.

We have spelt out clearly, as the Prime Minister has done again today, our interests in this matter, why it is important for the international community to have acted as it has and why it is important for Australia to uphold the Charter of the United Nations in the maintenance of international order. We have dealt in some detail with the human rights issues which have arisen.

The Prime Minister in his statement today also sets out exactly what role Australia will take to comply with resolution 678. The Prime Minister informed the House 'that Australia is prepared to make our naval task force available to serve with allied forces in operations authorised by resolution 678, should that become necessary'. His statement also dealt with redeployment of our ships and the provision of additional medical personnel.

The one point raised today by the honourable member for Melbourne Ports and by the Leader of the Opposition (Dr Hewson) which is of particular importance and which is quite inexplicable in its isolation was this statement of the Prime Minister:

It is not proposed to make any other contribution of naval, air or ground forces.

When that statement was made, no time frame was mentioned. I do not know whether that is a statement for today, tomorrow, next month or in the event that there is war in the Middle East. The Prime Minister has not made that clear. The statement was unnecessary and it can only be included for some particular purpose.

The faction meetings of the Australian Labor Party that were mentioned in the press make it very clearly that a statement along those lines was part of the arrangement entered into to obtain agreement within the Labor Party on this statement. I do not regard that as an unreasonable matter to have been commented on by the Leader of the Opposition. We have given fulsome support to the decisions taken by the Government. If further decisions prove necessary, obviously we would give further consideration to those matters.

Time does not permit me to cover in detail the other questions that I would have liked to address in this debate, particularly the grave human rights abuses that have occurred in Kuwait during Iraq's occupation. So I want to take the oppor-
tunity to endorse very strongly the comments of the honourable member for Herbert (Mr Lindsay) in his speech today, because he highlighted in a most detailed way the material that has been made available by Amnesty International and other evidence given to the United Nations about what is happening in Kuwait.

This is a position which ought to horrify all civilised human beings. It is a matter on which the international community has to act with resolution, otherwise circumstances of this sort may very well recur in other places at other times. I do not think any human beings want to see that occur.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. M.J.R. MacKellar)—Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

Dr THEOPHANOUS (Calwell) (9.28)—I am pleased to be speaking in this debate, particularly as it appears that I am the only member of the Left who will be speaking. But I want to assure the community that, in fact, the Left of the Australian Labor Party has had a very lengthy and detailed meeting, considered all the issues and come to a resolution, which I will refer to later. It is along the lines of trying to ensure that everything is done to achieve a peaceful resolution of this crisis. That is the fundamental starting point, that is, that everything is done to try to achieve a peaceful resolution of the crisis.

Our resolution also recognises that we are living in a historic time in terms of foreign policy and foreign affairs. A new world order is emerging, as is shown by the unprecedented resolution—that is, resolution 678—of the United Nations Security Council, which has authorised member states ‘to use all necessary means’ to implement United Nations resolution 660 if Iraq does not withdraw from Kuwait before 15 January 1991.

I say that this is an unprecedented resolution because such a resolution would not have been possible even 18 months ago. The pace of events has enabled the old fundamental divisions in Europe and in much of the rest of the world between the former communist countries of the Soviet bloc and the Western countries now to become virtually non-existent.

There is increasingly a new world order. This was shown at the recent conference on peace and cooperation in Europe where most of the European countries came together for the first time in a spirit of very great goodwill. It is in that context and in the context of cooperation between the five fundamental members of the United Nations Security Council that it was possible to carry such a resolution.

For many years, some people have been saying that the United Nations ought to have the power to assert its authority, that it ought to have the power to intervene in disputes, because often it has carried resolutions when one country has invaded another or there have been actions contrary to international law, and those resolutions have been ignored. People, especially from the Left, have lamented the United Nations' lack of power.

When a situation arises in which the United Nations has gained a tremendous boost in its power, in its prestige, in its authority, and it is able to carry resolutions and concrete actions as a result of those resolutions, then people who describe themselves as leftist or socialist should not be concerned about it but should welcome such developments because the increase in the powers of the United Nations is a very significant development. It is something which the Australian Labor Party, for example, has been committed to for many, many years—ever since the time of Dr Evatt, who wanted to see a strong United Nations, a United Nations which was able to impose its will in many circumstances against countries that were in breach of international law. I believe it is because of that situation that it is important to support the United Nations position.

Not only is it important in this particular context of Iraq—I will come back to that in a moment—but it is important because there are many other issues that the United Nations has to deal with. Many people have mentioned the resolutions of the United Nations in relation to the Is-
raeli-Palestinian conflict. Many people have mentioned the problem of Cambodia, which the United Nations is trying to resolve. There is also the problem of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus. These are all matters on which the United Nations has carried important resolutions.

Once this crisis has ended, it is important that attention is paid to those resolutions. But if one were to say, 'Look, with the United Nations resolutions, you can take the ones you like and the ones you do not like you can forget about', then with that kind of attitude to international law, which some people have suggested should be the way to proceed, one would not have the basis of a consistent new world order which we are trying to establish.

There are people, no matter how good their intentions, who are now saying that because they perceive that this resolution is being sponsored by the United States—and of course it is not just the United States which is sponsoring it—they want to be opposed to the resolution, therefore undermining the unity and credibility of the United Nations. In that context we would end up with a situation in which the United Nations' primary role would be undermined.

If the gains to be made from the new breakthroughs in superpower relations and from the new order at the United Nations are to be sustained, I do not believe that one can proceed on the basis of simply saying, 'Look, I do not like the Americans. I do not like the extent of their involvement. Therefore, I do not want to proceed in relation to doing something about the fundamental problem of Iraq'.

We want to emphasise the important role of the United Nations as a peacemaker. How does a peacemaker proceed in the context of what we have here—the invasion and annexation of one country by another? It may be the case that there were genuine grievances on the part of Iraq in relation to Kuwait. But many nations have genuine grievances against others. It is not an acceptable form of international behaviour to resolve such a genuine grievance by an invasion. We cannot allow that to be a principle of international law or of international order.

Representatives of the former Kuwaiti Government came to this Parliament and spoke to the members of the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence. They said quite clearly that, if Saddam Hussein were prepared to withdraw, they would be ready to put all of the disputes on the table at any international forum, including the Arab League, including the United Nations, and including the International Court of Justice. If that is the situation, then that should be the case.

As the situation in the Gulf has built up, a number of people have said that no doubt there would be a pre-emptive strike by the United States without any participation of the other nations. They have been proved wrong. That has not happened. What has happened is that the United States and others have proceeded to work within the United Nations. I remind people that the Gulf resolution was not sponsored just by the United States but by five other members of the Security Council, including the Soviet Union. What we have is an international effort being concentrated there.

Some people have taken certain statements made by some American generals or by some various low level spokespeople and have tried to build them up into a situation where everybody is itching to go to war. This is not the case because if everybody had been itching to go to war there would have been war at the beginning of the crisis. The fact is that the international forces have proceeded on the basis of trying to do everything within the context of intentional law.

Let me illustrate that by referring to the position of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union was reluctant initially to support a resolution involving all necessary means, including force, because it felt that there ought to be an exploration of various avenues for peace. One of the things that the Soviet Union did was to send a special envoy to the Arab world, and to Baghdad. He proposed a number of negotiations, a number of concessions to
Saddam Hussein. What happened? He was sent packing.

Other envoys have suggested things. The French have attempted discussions. Again, they were sent packing. Even King Hussein of Jordan has suggested ways out of the crisis. Again, he has been told that this is not possible. So international personages, countries, powers and distinguished people who have thought about the possibility of discussion and negotiation in this process have been sent packing, told that they were wasting their time and that nothing would be achieved. They have gone away.

It is very significant that the Soviet Union, after this process, came to the conclusion that it would sponsor this resolution. It came to the view that Saddam Hussein is intractable, has taken over control of Kuwait and is not interested in any discussion or negotiation process. In that context, the United Nations resolution is important. The fact that it was supported by such a broad number of countries is important because, as I said, the role of the United Nations as peacemaker is what is at stake.

How does one achieve the role of peacemaker in the context in which, as I said, one country has taken control of another, refuses to negotiate, refuses to discuss sensibly and refuses to leave? What can be done in that context?

The attempt to draw a parallel between this situation and other international problems of the past such as, for example, Vietnam, is totally incorrect and misleading. In this situation the international community has made a determination, through the United Nations, that this country that has invaded another ought to leave—its forces ought to be withdrawn. In that context, it is nothing like the situation in Vietnam where a conflict between some of the Western powers and some of the Soviet bloc powers focused on that poor country of Vietnam; it is nothing like that. In this situation, all the major powers of the world are saying, ‘Saddam Hussein has to get out of Kuwait’, and international law is requiring that he should do so. I believe that in that context it is important for us to show determination.

But that does not mean that we should not be seeking a peaceful resolution. I welcome the decision of President Bush to send the Secretary of State to Baghdad for discussions. But, as other honourable members have mentioned, such discussions will be fruitless unless they are serious discussions about the Kuwait issue—about the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. The discussions will be fruitless unless that is a major topic of discussion. If Iraq has other complaints, it may be able to convey them in these discussions and negotiations and we may be able to get a peaceful resolution. I hope so.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Sullivan)—Order! The honourable member’s time has expired.

Mr MacKELLAR (Warringah) (9.43)—I want to congratulate the honourable member for Calwell (Dr Theophanous) on his speech tonight. This is probably the first occasion when those in this new chamber have had the opportunity of debating an issue which is of absolutely fundamental importance, not only to the chamber but to the people of Australia. This afternoon and this evening a succession of speakers from both sides of the Parliament have addressed the issue under debate with a good deal of clarity, in my view, and some intellectual rigour. I was particularly interested in the contribution from the honourable member for Calwell because, as he said at the start of his speech, he was representing the Left this evening. Of course, the Left faction of the Australian Labor Party would have had a great deal of difficulty with many of the issues which have been addressed in the decision making process which is reaching fruition this evening.

One of the fascinating and, indeed, hopeful effects of recent changes internationally is that the United Nations now has a real opportunity of playing the sort of role that people had in mind for it way back in 1946. This is probably the first chance that the United Nations has had to play that sort of role. It is facing up to the responsibilities that it has. It has also,
by the Security Council resolutions that we have heard so much about during this debate, laid down in very straightforward terms the sort of action which the international community, as represented by the United Nations and the Security Council, deems to be appropriate for the situation which is confronting not only people in the Middle East but also those who have to make decisions about such situations.

I am very pleased that Australia is playing the role that it is—and I think it is an appropriate role—in relation to the international effort. I say only that Australia's record in international affairs of this nature has been a proud one. Not always, of course, have our efforts been applauded by the United Nations; not always have they had the sanction of the United Nations; but always, in my view, they have had the sanction of principle being applied in relation to the commitments we have made. The latest Security Council resolution requires that Iraq should comply fully with the terms of resolutions 660, 661, 662, 664 and 665 and withdraw all its forces unconditionally to the positions on which they stood on 1 August.

I was interested to hear the honourable member for Calwell mention the visit to Australia of the former Foreign Minister for Kuwait, who briefed the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade on some of the issues leading up to the invasion of Kuwait in August this year. I have no reason to disbelieve what the Minister told us on that occasion, but it did seem extraordinarily plain that Kuwait, if there was some dispute with Iraq, was very pleased to have an international arbiter adjudge any of those issues which had been coming forward and received assurances right until the invasion that no invasion was contemplated. I have not seen a great deal of publicity given to this situation, but it only adds to the perfidy of the actions of Saddam Hussein when he invaded, so callously and brutally, a fellow Arab state in August this year.

The Security Council and the United Nations have passed a series of resolutions which are increasing the pressure on Iraq to comply or suffer the consequences. As we know, the latest one suggests that if Iraq should not withdraw its forces, those member states of the United Nations are authorised to use such force as may be necessary to compel Iraq's compliance. I make the point that it is not a green light for war. As other speakers have mentioned, what it is, in effect, is a pause of goodwill. It is a time for Saddam Hussein to realise that, if he does not leave Kuwait in peace and does not release all the hostages, he will be forced, by international pressure of an armed and military kind, so to do.

There will be, as I understand it, no other pressures put on Iraq during this pause. There will be a continuation of the blockade and the sanctions, but there will be no military action, as I understand it, during this time, provided, of course, that Saddam Hussein does not undertake any military actions."It is a period which should allow Saddam Hussein to reflect on his actions and their consequences.

It is now four months since Iraq obliterated Kuwait and began its contemptible bargaining with the lives of its foreign hostages. This is a new situation in international affairs which must be dealt with, and dealt with very firmly. I understand the feeling of the families of the hostages who are held—not only those from Australia but those from a number of other countries throughout the world—and in many cases the feelings of hopelessness that they may have. The situation of the hostages themselves in Iraq and Kuwait elicit our utmost sympathy. Governments have to make difficult decisions and the Australian Government has been absolutely right in its approach towards the situation of the hostages. The very great majority of the families of the hostages would agree with the attitude of the Australian Government and other governments throughout the world in relation to this issue.

I think in some instances it is sad to see a man like Saddam Hussein taking the action that he has, using innocent people as human shields or as bargaining chips, and to see some of the people who have involved themselves in the efforts to
bargain for the lives of the hostages. Understandably, people want to see those hostages released; understandably, every effort should be made to secure their release—but not at the abandonment of the very real and firm principle that not only Australia but so many countries throughout the world have decided to support.

There is no doubt about it; it was an unprovoked act of aggression. One could hardly suggest that Kuwait had an army poised to threaten Iraq's boundaries. As I understand it, there had been no diplomatic disputes or actions by Kuwait that might have been seen by Iraq as insulting or belligerent. Rather it was to the contrary. It seems to me the evidence suggests that Kuwait had been particularly helpful, not only in recent times but also during the long, drawn out Iraq-Iran war, in assisting Iraq. I think it is interesting that Iraq has made almost no attempt to justify its takeover of Kuwait. If there were reasons of substance, I have no doubt that Saddam Hussein would have wasted little time in telling the world of his grievances. But there are none, and the action is really nothing more than a blatant grab for the wealth of a friendly and largely undefended Arab neighbour.

It is pleasing that the international community has made clear right from the beginning that it does not support and will resist Iraq's military attack and occupation of Kuwait, and that opposition has made its most recent point with the passing of the latest resolution of the Security Council. There has been an unprecedented response by the international community. It has been swift; it has been almost unanimous; it has indicated a clear determination to have Saddam Hussein withdraw from Kuwait. The international community has also had, which I think is commendable, the patience to seek a peaceful solution—but not at any price.

Sanctions are in place, as we know, and are being convincingly applied. But it seems that they are not sufficient in themselves to force Iraq to relinquish its ill-gotten gains. What we have is a resolution which puts into place the strongest possible bid for a peaceful solution. The international community has agreed that the period from now until the deadline of 15 January 1991 should be seen as a genuine opportunity to achieve peace and to leave no uncertainty in Saddam Hussein's mind as to exactly how the international community feels and what his country, Iraq, must do.

The United Nations is not asking for surrender. It is not asking for any change in the leadership of Iraq or for its soldiers to lay down their arms. What the United Nations and its member states require is that Iraq comply fully with the terms of resolution 660 and all later resolutions by withdrawing all its forces unconditionally to the positions in which they stood on 1 August 1990. Quite simply, as we know, the world community—and it is the world community—has given Iraq an ultimatum: get out of Kuwait or be forced out.

Other speakers have mentioned that there is some dispute within the community as to what business it is of Australia's to be involved in this situation. I think that the honourable member for Melbourne Ports (Mr Holding) put the issue quite clearly in the opening stages of his speech when he said that we are a member of the United Nations; we have played a significant role in that organisation; and, when we go along with those resolutions that the United Nations passes, when we put up our hand or make our vote, we are then duty bound to follow through.

As I mentioned earlier in my contribution, Australia has a proud history in defying aggression, and it has not been an easy task. A lot of people have laid down their lives in support of that principle, and we must pay tribute to those who are risking their lives in the present situation to follow that principle of resisting aggression. There is no doubt that it does sharpen the mind enormously when one is placed in a potentially warlike situation where in very real terms one's own continued existence is under threat.

One of the aspects of this whole situation which has been of particular importance is that it has given the opportunity to the Australian defence forces to assess their capacity to respond to international
situations or situations of this nature. I think there are many lessons to be learned from the problems that have been thrown up by the requirement that the Government has placed upon the defence forces to participate in these issues. That is not altogether a bad thing, because it is only by being involved in exercises such as this that in fact the planning that goes on continuously and the capacity to respond are truly put to the test.

I have been impressed with the way in which the broad membership of the Australian community has been supportive of the role that Australia has adopted in relation to this crisis, and that has been largely due to the fact that this Parliament has been very supportive, on both sides of the Speaker's chair, of the decisions being taken. That does not mean to say of course that we do not question from time to time certain individual aspects of the decision making process, but we do, all of us, agree—and I have not heard a single speaker oppose the proposition—that naked aggression must be resisted, and resisted at the cost of Australian lives if that be the case.

It is a very sombre and a very serious decision that the Australian Government has taken, and it is a very sombre and serious debate that the Parliament has engaged in today in which we have reflected upon that decision and given it our support. It really brings home to the individual members of Parliament, whether here in the House of Representatives or in the Senate, the sorts of responsibilities that are thrust upon one as a member of the parliament or of the government of a nation.

I am glad that the whole debate has been approached in the manner that it has been and that we can in a very realistic and utterly united way say to those members of the Australian armed forces who will be placing their own lives at risk that we support them, that we have admiration for them and that we know that they will conduct themselves in the great tradition of Australian service men and women over so many years.

Mr GRACE (Fowler) (9.58)—As Chairman of the Caucus foreign affairs, defence and trade committee, I am pleased that the response of the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) to the United Nations Security Council’s resolution 678 on the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait enjoys bipartisan support in this House. Apart from a few snide remarks about internal Australian Labor Party politics, I am particularly pleased to note that the response of the Leader of the Opposition (Dr Hewson) is one of support for the Government’s actions to date.

I am not so comfortable, however, with the broken-down bandwagon of those generally failed ex-politicians who have either misunderstood or deliberately misrepresented Australia’s involvement in the blockade of Iraq. We have all heard, of course, of the many supposed reasons why Australia should not become involved in any confrontation on foreign soil. We have had the shibboleth trotted out regarding Australia being a lackey the United States, and we have been reminded of both the pre-invasion lifestyle of many of the citizens of Kuwait and the events and atrocities that have taken place around the world over the years where the major players in the current conflict have remained silent.

Unfortunately, I believe that arguments of this nature have failed completely to understand either the great changes that are occurring in world relationships in the wake of the destruction of the Cold War or the ramifications for future world peace of a victory for Hussein in Kuwait.

No-one argues that there have been inconsistencies in the world community’s treatment of aggressors in the past. But that does not by one centimetre lessen either the need for the world community to stand firm in the present circumstances or our hope that such an historic approach by the United Nations in this case will set a firm standard for the future.

As I believe I said in a speech to this House shortly after the decision was taken to supply warships to the Gulf, the issues involved in the present crisis can be seen to be very much black and white. To my
mind, Saddam Hussein is an unbalanced megalomaniac who lusts for control of both the Arab nations and the oil that lies beneath Arab soil. He knows that such control will give him the status he believes he so richly deserves—entry into the arena of the superpowers.

It has been in response to the blatant refusal of Hussein to withdraw from Kuwait in the face of almost universal condemnation that the Security Council has authorised the use of the ultimate sanction—military action to force his withdrawal. The various members of the United Nations Security Council, with the very obvious exceptions of Cuba and Yemen, decided that it was not enough for the world to sit back and wash its hands of Kuwait.

The Security Council very clearly indicated that the current blockade is not a United States venture but a world response to a problem with the potential to throw the whole world into chaos. Under the auspices of resolution 678, member states have been authorised to use all necessary means to uphold and implement the Security Council's previous resolutions on the Gulf crisis. Anybody who has read or listened to my previous addresses to the House regarding Kuwait will understand my abhorrence of war of any description in view of my own experience of war.

Member states have also been requested to provide appropriate support for action taken under this resolution. Australia has very rightly indicated that it is prepared to expand the role of its naval contingent in the Middle East in response to the United Nations' decision. As the Prime Minister said, our naval vessels will move into a more involved position in the actual Persian Gulf as opposed to their previous blockading role in the Gulf of Oman. Also, two medical teams are to be sent to the area in case hostilities break out. It is important to remind the House, however, that no other commitment has been sought of Australia, nor has any been offered. I repeat: no other commitment has been sought or offered.

The bottom line, hopefully, is that hostilities will be avoided from 15 January, the day on which the military intervention is authorised. Despite his delusions of grandeur and his irrational behaviour, there is no evidence to support any conclusion that Saddam is not cunning in the extreme. There is every reason to believe that the resolve being shown by the world community will have a sobering impact on Saddam's thoughts on the future of Kuwait. If the latest signals emanating from Baghdad can be taken at face value, there is a very clear indication that the pressure generated by the Security Council's resolution is having the desired effect. Saddam's willingness to talk with the United States shows that he now accepts that Kuwait will not be left for him to devour. Perhaps he is even beginning to understand that, when world leaders such as our Prime Minister talk of the need to show that aggression does not pay, they are not merely engaging in rhetoric.

Events subsequent to resolution 678 stand in stark contrast with the attitude of Iraq prior to 29 November. The simple fact has been that Saddam's stranglehold on all aspects of the Iraqi production and distribution process has lessened the impact of the economic blockade. This could have meant, in the absence of a strong resolution of the nature of resolution 678, that the task of inducing Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait could have been a long and not necessarily successful process.

Of course, time has been Saddam's greatest ally. We have seen the machinations he has used over the process of releasing hostages. It has been an unfortunate fact that private negotiators who have gone to Iraq to procure the release of hostages have unwittingly given a great deal of comfort to the regime in Baghdad. That is the level to which people of the calibre of Saddam are prepared to stoop. That is not to say that those who have given of their time to help the hostages have done the wrong thing; most have gone with the highest of ideals and some have been able to achieve results for those people held against their will.

As the Prime Minister said in his speech today, we are glad for each and every
hostage that has been able to get out of Iraq, albeit through Saddam's hostage lottery. However, we want every hostage to be given the freedom to leave and we deplore the concept of playing hostages off against the actions of their governments. Unfortunately, the fact is that governments cannot bargain for hostages in dealing with terrorists. To do that would strengthen the hand of people such as Saddam Hussein, who makes no distinction between right or wrong, moral or immoral.

The new mood of the nineties is for an international community in which the rule of law is respected. Such a change in international thinking is to be applauded. Australia is right to play its part in standing up against international terrorists such as Saddam Hussein.

Mr CARLTON (Mackellar) (10.08)—The House has been used to discussing matters of the economy. But tonight we discuss matters of war and peace, of life, death and liberty. Economic issues have a profound human significance, but their effects are always at the margin. With a few exceptions, economic defects take time to develop. They can be devastating; indeed, in the present circumstances they are. But the sense of drama is defused and people seem to react slowly.

In this case we have had dramatic action. Already many people have died in the Middle East. But tonight we contemplate the dreadful prospect of thousands of dead and we have to be part of the decision as to whether or not to draw the line on dictatorship and aggression. There are potentially dreadful consequences whichever way we decide.

What we face in this case is clearly naked and unprovoked aggression. It follows 10 years of brutal war waged by Saddam Hussein against Iran. It follows an internal dictatorship of great terror and brutality. It follows the use of chemical weapons against Iran but also, more disgraceful even than that, against the citizens of Iraq itself, the Kurdish minority. It is a situation in which half of the world's oil reserves are at stake, and that affects the lifeblood of the economies of all the nations of the world, whether they are rich or poor.

There is also the threat of nuclear aggression if the dictator is not stopped and put back. As we know, the Israelis managed to take out nuclear plants that were being developed by Saddam Hussein some years ago. If they had not been taken out they would be one of the factors in the present equation. I suggest to the House that if this matter is not resolved, the threat of nuclear aggression on the part of Saddam Hussein will once more be a real international threat.

This is a very difficult matter for the democracies. Democracies always find it difficult to face up to totalitarian opponents. People in democratic countries are peaceful people. Democracies are full of dissident voices. People in democracies react instinctively against the use of force. People in democracies do not like the thought of killing anybody, for whatever reason. People in democracies, over the centuries that they have fought for their liberty and their freedom, have worked out ways of resolving things by discussion without the use of force. They even recoil against the use of force against criminals and, in countries like ours, have decided over many years not to exact the death penalty in criminal matters.

Democracies have respect for the rule of law, not only internal law but international law. They like to follow all those rules that have been set up by wise people over a number of years to try to resolve international disputes by peaceful means. Of course, they also like to act in concert with other peaceful nations. There are always multinational requirements in any of these difficulties and it is always difficult to get agreement amongst democracies, even more difficult to get agreement with a coalition of democracies and non-democracies, as we have in this case.

One of the things we should do in this situation is pay a very great tribute to the leadership of the most powerful democracy in the world, that of the United States of America. The United States has taken leadership in this particular situation, despite the enormous difficulties of doing
so. What have been the problems that the United States has faced in trying to get people in the democracies to face up to this threat? The first one has been to try to create an international coalition against aggression, against one completely controlled totalitarian nation where all the thought processes, the means of communication and what everybody does is controlled essentially by one man and by one national instrument of policy, without any internal dissident voices. Whatever dissident voices might have been raised earlier have been eliminated by force. That is on one side.

On the other side, the United States has had to try to get together a coalition, first of all, of democracies, with all the variety that each of them holds, all the potentially dissident opinions within each of those democracies, all the different perceptions of national interest and also all the preoccupations that those democracies might have at this particular time. For example, one of the most powerful of those democracies has been in the process of having elections. I refer, of course, to Germany, which naturally has been preoccupied with creating a vast new democracy over the shreds of the communist state in eastern Europe.

This international coalition includes non-democracies. It also includes Arab nations which might naturally feel some affinity for their brothers in Iraq, but they have decided to join this international coalition. Getting all these people together has been a very difficult task. Within the United States there is also a very difficult domestic constituency. The United States, the 200-year-old democracy, is one of the most vigorous democracies in the world, where debate is always very strong and there are always dissident voices.

There is also an extraordinarily great cost to the American people themselves. They bear the main financial cost of what will happen in this particular situation. Their families bear the biggest personal burden of their sons and some of their daughters potentially being victims of a conflict a long way from their shores. Individual families in the United States, and also, I might suggest, some families in our own country, have to face up to that terrible question. The leaders in the United States have to face up to that on a larger scale than in any other country involved.

The other problem the United States has to face up to is the question of the United Nations. It has had to try to get the re-enforcement of a resolution of the UN Security Council. Only once before in the history of the United Nations has there been a resolution for the use potentially of force to resolve a conflict. That was in 1950. That only occurred when the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics had absent itself from the Security Council. That really was not a test of the Security Council as such. Here we have the first real test in history of the mechanism that the victorious nations after the Second World War had set up to try to deal with international problems. After the first very real test of that the United States had to try to get a positive resolution in favour of the potential use of force if necessary in order to resolve this terrible problem.

The United Nations resolution is a great tribute to George Bush and Secretary of State James Baker, the latter having tirelessly travelled the capitals of the world over the last few months and weeks to get the agreement of this disparate array of countries and people and to try to get a resolution through the Security Council, which we know has been successful. It is also a tribute to the resolute support of Mrs Margaret Thatcher, former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, a resolute supporter of the United States effort and one who gave great comfort to it in an hour of very great difficulty. It is also a great tribute, may I say, to President Gorbachev of the Soviet Union, who, despite the most immense personal and national difficulties within the Soviet Union, has found it possible to get the support of that large and very troubled country for this Security Council resolution. It is a tribute, too, to the Australian Government and to those who have supported what the Australian Government has done to go hand in hand with the Americans, the British, the Soviet Union and others
in order to draw a line against dictatorship and aggression.

It is clearly necessary to draw that line. It has taken a very long time for the democracies to learn the lessons as to how to deal with aggression, the lessons of Munich, where we failed. We did not take the steps at the time we should have done. It was a time when I was only a very small child. Certainly I am old enough to remember some of the consequences of our not drawing the line at that time. We have also learned the lessons more recently with what happened in the Cold War. Honourable members should just think what would have happened if the democracies post-1945 had not drawn the line against an aggressive Soviet Union. What would have been the awful consequences of that? For 20 years the United States had the capacity to obliterate the Soviet Union without any threat of retaliation, which was some evidence of its good intentions. For another 20 years the United States was able to draw the line on the Soviet Union by a policy of mutual terror. Miraculously and wonderfully that era has now passed.

The democracies have now learned how to deal with dictatorship, and in this case, through a resolution of the Security Council, they have decided to draw that line. That is a resolution for peace, not for war. If there is any decency, any rational thought processes still available to the dictator in Iraq, then peace will have been secured by the Security Council resolution. It is a resolution for peace. The line has been drawn. The clear path for peaceful resolution of this problem has been laid out and it is open to Saddam Hussein to take that path of peace. That path would not be clearly laid out if the democracies and their non-democratic allies in this particular situation had not made it utterly clear that, if he did not withdraw, then force would ensue.

Unfortunately, Saddam Hussein's understanding of the situation has been delayed because the messages to the dictator have been blurred by the normal processes of democracy. Free media, free comment, dissident voices, visitors to Iraq—we all know that the dissident gets the press in the Western world. We all know that in a free society the person who is unusual gets more publicity. It may well be that the dictator has taken comfort in this and has drawn the wrong message from the signals he has been getting from the free Western press.

Resolution 678 of the Security Council should make it clear to Saddam Hussein what the vast silent majority of the rest of the world really believes. The reality is not in the blurred messages of a free Western press—none of us would deny the press that freedom because that is part of all our freedom; the real message is in that resolution of the Security Council, which says, 'Thus far and no further. You, Saddam Hussein, have the chance for peace and we hope you take it'.

In the interest of our sailors and our soldiers, all our people who are in the Gulf at this moment, with whom we share the wish for peace, we hope that commonsense will prevail and that Saddam Hussein will withdraw from Kuwait and that none of us will be faced with the horror of war.

Mr LES SCOTT (Oxley) (10.23)—On being elected to this place just over two years ago, I never contemplated that I would be standing here tonight speaking on an issue of such significance to world peace and of such concern to all Australians. None of us would have forecast the changes in eastern Europe either, with the end of the Cold War and the destruction of the Berlin Wall. These changes in eastern Europe have offered a new era for the world in peace and goodwill.

The Gulf crisis has certainly caused new tensions which the international community, through the United Nations (UN), has recently responded to. The statement today by the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) clearly states Australia's response to United Nations resolution 678. The seriousness of the position in the Gulf and the threat it poses to world peace cannot be underestimated.

The Prime Minister correctly describes UN resolution 678 as extremely grave. The fact that only once before has the UN authorised the use of armed force to
enforce its resolution indicates the very serious nature of the position in the Persian Gulf. The strong support from a wide number of nations clearly shows the high priority that those nations put on the importance of the role of the United Nations in this dispute.

The people of the world are entitled to live in peace; countries, no matter how small, are entitled to live in peace and not be threatened by aggressive neighbours. In my view, the essential point of resolution 678 is that it seeks a peaceful resolution to the dispute, although the resolution clearly has teeth in that it does propose use of force, which is of concern and must be the last resort. Naturally, a peaceful resolution to this crisis is the one I am sure all honourable members would seek. Of course, it is disappointing that it has been necessary for the UN to carry such a resolution in an effort to bring this crisis to a satisfactory resolution for all. The prospect of war is a dreadful thought, and I hope and pray that it can be avoided.

Last weekend I attended a number of functions around my electorate, particularly church functions. I noticed that in each one they prayed for a peaceful resolution in the Middle East. This year we have been reminded of the horrors of war, especially by the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of Anzac. I was fortunate to play a part in those commemorations. We must remember that while this event occurred some 75 years ago, the threat of a recurrence is staring us in the facet today.

Since the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq on 2 August, Australia has shared the concern of the rest of the world over the Gulf crisis. It is important that Australia show its concern by playing an active role in the peaceful resolution of the crisis. As a responsible member of the international community, Australia has played a very important part. Along with other countries' fleets, Australia's part in the peaceful blockade of the Gulf to enforce UN sanctions has let the world know how committed we are to seeing a resolution of the conflict in the Middle East free of violence.

This Government views with abhorrence any other solution to resolving the crisis. The commitment and camaraderie of Australia's defence personnel in the Middle East are matters of which we can all be proud. This is especially so of the families of the personnel stationed in the Gulf. They are the ones who really feel it. These people, along with the families of those Australians held captive in the Persian Gulf, are the ones who are feeling the loneliness and concern of the conflict more than most of us.

Given this degree of support across Australia, I join with the Minister for Defence Science and Personnel (Mr Bilney) in expressing my concern at the words today of the Leader of the Opposition (Dr Hewson). He brought party politics into this debate when in my view we should have wide bipartisan support. I commend the members of the Opposition who have supported the Prime Minister's statement, but I have to admit that I was rather disappointed to read the Opposition Leader's comments on the preparedness of Australia's defence forces for such hostilities. It is the view of the Government that there is a clear distinction between having the capability to use force and actually using it.

Having a large defence establishment at the RAAF base at Amberley, in my electorate, I am well aware of the importance of such installations to the defence of our country. The F111 squadrons, No. 1 and No. 6, based at Amberley are capable of performing well in combat conditions, as has been shown by their performance in recent competitions with other international air forces.

However, as I said, having the capability is one thing; using it is another. War is indeed a terrible thing in which there can be no winners but many losers. We do not want to see war again; and United Nations resolution 678 is the best insurance against any heightened conflict. Indeed, it is the preparedness I referred to when speaking of the F111 that will best provide for a peaceful resolution in the Gulf. On this issue the Government is crystal clear. Although the Leader of the Opposition dubiously sought to drive a
wedge in the Government's stand, our position was made clear by the Prime Minister in his address earlier this afternoon. He does not propose to make any other contribution of naval, air or ground forces.

I offer my support to the members of the defence forces who are serving in the Gulf. I think most honourable members would have some constituents whose family members are serving in the Gulf or who have been affected. I know how the stress and tension affect them, particularly coming up to the festive season, when I am sure a lot of them will be saddened by having their families away. I am sure all members of the House share my concern for them, and we can only join together in supporting very strongly the Prime Minister's statement here today.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Sullivan)—Order! It being 10.30 p.m., I propose the question:

That the House do now adjourn

**Insurance Compensation**

Mr HOWARD (Bennelong) (10.30)—For the first time in years I take the opportunity on the adjournment debate of raising a matter of monumental injustice to two constituents of mine, Mr and Mrs Charles DiFrancesco of Northwood. In 1986 the company of which they were the principal shareholders paid a $73,000 insurance premium to a broker known as Toikan to insure an industrial property of theirs in which they carried on their business. According to their understanding, that policy was duly arranged. Subsequently, a fire lit by persons unknown—deliberately, so it was established—effectively destroyed the premises and rendered the operation of their business in those premises quite impossible. A very substantial loss was suffered as a result of that fire.

Court action then ensued. My constituents' company sued both the broker and the company with which they believed insurance had been effected. It was established that the insurance had never been properly effected with the company involved, Sun Alliance Insurance, and judgment was entered against the broker. There was then a dispute as to the liability of the broker. That was finally established and a judgment in the value of $2.3m was assessed by the commercial division of the New South Wales Supreme Court.

It then transpired that the broker became insolvent and the only redress that my constituents had was then to proceed against the professional indemnifier to the broker. When those proceedings were taken, the professional indemnifier, under a legal technicality, was able to establish that the broker had falsely completed the proposal form for the professional indemnity. As a consequence, my constituents have been left literally swinging to the tune of $2.3m, having in good faith taken out an insurance policy on which they paid a premium of $73,000. There has been no fraud, no dishonesty, no chicanery, no short changing and no 'spivvery', if I can use that word, on the part of my constituents, who have been literally left swinging.

I do not normally use the forms of this House to raise an injustice of this kind, but my constituents have been to the highest court in this country and their appeals have been turned down. They have no redress other than through their member of parliament and no redress other than to appeal to some sense of compensation by or act of grace payment on the part of the Government.

Insurance broking legislation has clearly been demonstrated by this case to have been inadequate. There were some doubts raised about the veracity of the broker back in 1986. Despite that, the broker secured registration. My constituents have been to the Supreme Court of New South Wales and to the Court of Appeal in New South Wales. They sought special leave to appeal to the High Court of Australia and that was turned down. Presumably there were legal grounds for that; I do not, of course, traduce the decision of any of the courts of this country.

It seems to me to be a monumental injustice, in plain common language, that my constituents pay a premium and think
they have a policy when that policy has not been properly taken out and the broker to whom the money was paid goes insolvent. My constituents are in the position where they think that the broker has taken out a professional indemnity insurance, find that the broker has falsely filled out the proposal and, as a result, the professional indemnifier is able to avoid responsibility. As a consequence, my constituents—decent, hardworking Australians—are down the drain to the tune of $2.3m, their partners have lost their home, their business careers are devastated and their personal aspirations are naturally greatly circumscribed. It is a case that deserves the attention of this Government by way of some sense of compensation or act of grace payment. I thank the House for the opportunity of raising a monumental injustice—which involves a miscellany of shonkiness—on behalf of two constituents of mine who I think have been very shabbily treated by the institutions and the system of justice as it now exists in this country.

Corningware

Mr BRERETON (Kingsford-Smith) (10.35)—In the short time available to me tonight, I wish to highlight a blatant example of the way some foreign corporations exploit Australian consumers with their pricing policies. I do so with the intention of increasing consumer awareness of the extent to which they are being ripped off. Ultimately, I believe that if the Australian consumer refuses to be treated in such a disdainful manner, the sheer weight of public opinion will force a revision of these reprehensible pricing practices.

The particular corporate thief to which I refer is the Corning corporation. Most Australians would be familiar with the Corningware range of products and many would no doubt have a Corning product in their range of kitchenware. Those who do would also be aware that Corning products are anything but cheap in this country. Fewer Australians would be aware of the vast gulf which exists between the prices charged for Corning products in the United States of America and those levied for exactly the same products in Australia. It is my intention to change this situation, for once these excessive price differentials become apparent to Australian consumers, they, like me, will conclude that Corning’s pricing policies in this country are completely unacceptable.

To underline these absurd international price differences, I arranged for a Corningware shopping survey in both the United States and Australia. The results of the survey are staggering. To cite a couple of examples, a two-quart covered casserole dish which retails in the US for $18 is sold in Australia for $56, while the top of the range five-quart covered casserole container, which costs $25 in the US, retails in Australia for $75. Even allowing for exchange rate considerations, such differences are too extreme to be justified. I could cite numerous other examples where ridiculous price differences exist between directly comparable products in the Corningware range. In every case the Australian product retails for an amount which is up to three times as much as the same product costs in the USA.

To struggling Australian families for whom cooking ware is an essential item, the differences represent an unwelcome and unnecessary burden. It is a burden which deserves investigation or, at the very least, explanation. In the process, Corning’s Australian pricing policy should come under a great deal of scrutiny. The Corning group maintains a branch in Australia which has its own sales and distribution arm. Through this operation, Corningware is distributed to select retailers, none of whom could be described as discount stores. Naturally, this guarantees healthy profits for the retailers as well as for Corning.

The situation in Australia contrasts markedly with that which prevails in the US. There Corningware products can be freely sourced to all manner of retail outlets at prices which are considerably below their Australian levels. This allows retailers such as K Mart and Cash and Carry to charge significant margins and still retail the products at prices which are at least 60 per cent better than those in
Australia. Were such accessible distribution arrangements evident in this country, the price differences would be considerably narrower.

Corning has at times gone to great lengths to protect its cosy marketing and distribution networks. It has even resorted to court action to lock out distributors who may be threatening its position of market dominance. Under the guise of protecting the trademark, it has no qualms about abusing the legal system in the same way that it abuses the trust of Australian consumers.

Such behaviour is not, unfortunately, confined to Corning. Other foreign manufacturers and importers have resorted to the same price tactics in a bid to obtain maximum returns from Australia's relatively small market. Without the high turnover of the US market, they have obviously decided that price maximisation via market manipulation is the most lucrative path to take. In the process, the average Australian consumer has become the helpless victim of corporate profiteering. Unscrupulous pricing policies such as these should properly be dealt with by the Prices Surveillance Authority. Certainly, it is my intention to have them referred for investigation. More importantly, it is my intention to make Australian consumers aware of how shabbily they are treated relative to their US counterparts.

By publicising this matter, I am hopeful that pressure will be exerted on those companies which have milked Australian consumers for their precious dollars. It has been all too easy for the offending companies to engage in price inflating activities in the past. The Government must ensure that it is not so simple in the future.

Affirmative Action Agency

Mr TAYLOR (Groom) (10.40)—On 7 November in the Senate the Minister for Industrial Relations (Senator Cook) tabled the annual report of the Affirmative Action Agency. In that report, amongst others, the highly regarded and long-established company, McCafferty's Management Pty Ltd, whose headquarters are in Toowoomba, was named. On the same day, a letter was received by McCafferty's Management from the Director of Affirmative Action, Ms Valerie Pratt, which said in part:

... I have to advise you that in accordance with Section 19 of the Affirmative Action Act, McCafferty's Management Pty Ltd has been named in my annual report to Parliament for failing to meet its reporting obligations as a "relevant employer" under the legislation.

On 16 November, Ms Pratt again wrote a letter to McCafferty's in which she said, referring to the 7 November tabling:

Since that time, a number of companies have contacted me, expressing a wish to comply with the requirements of the Act. I have advised those companies that it is still possible to lodge a report on their affirmative action program for 1990. I plan to issue a press release in mid December, advising of the response of such companies to the reporting requirements.

She goes on to say:

The success of the Affirmative Action Act in removing discrimination against women rests on the co-operation of businesses such as your own. I therefore invite you to re-consider your position in respect of lodging a report on your affirmative action program.

On the same day Jack McCafferty, the Managing Director of McCafferty's, received a letter from Ms Katy Steenstrup, the Women's Industrial Officer of the Trades and Labor Council of Queensland, which said in part:

The reports—referring to the annual reports—

not only act as a means of supplying an accurate picture of womens employment but also reminds employers of the productivity potential that female employees offer.

The Trades and Labor Council would encourage your company to submit your completed report as soon as possible so that the valuable data from your organisation can be added to the national profile of women's employment.

I think it is only fair that I place on the public record this evening the response in part from McCafferty's contained in a letter of about the same date to the editor of the Toowoomba Chronicle in which the Secretary and Personnel Manager of that company said:

The naming of this Company in Federal Parliament for failing to lodge on time, a report concerning anti-discrimination of women in the workplace is just another prime example of bu-
reaucratic madness and is in itself discrimination against a selected band of employers merely because they have a large work force.

This Company is an equal opportunity employer and promotes women in the workplace equally with men. Our priorities nevertheless are not that of having to prove this policy to a Government Department, rather we are more concerned at keeping this business viable in difficult times and giving security of employment to our 400 staff a very large percentage of whom are women.

In the final paragraph of the return to the Affirmative Action Agency, which has now been submitted, the company said:

Like a lot of other small businesses we try to keep overheads down so we can achieve some level of profit and hopefully continue to employ our current staff—which comprise a large percentage of women.

The expectations of your agency with regards to monitoring, evaluations, objectives, forward estimates etc. are not realistic and simply add to our overhead costs by replacing productive labour with non-productive reporting and adding increased burdens on our present staff workload.

Perhaps your agency could alleviate this workload by sending your own staff into the workplace to ascertain the progress of your affirmative action campaign. We are certain you would get a much more accurate analysis than delegating a lot of bureaucratic paperwork to the employer concerned—as though we weren't already burdened with enough.

I finish at this late hour this evening by asking two questions, on behalf of Mr McCafferty, of the Affirmative Action Agency: first, how many men are employed in the Affirmative Action Agency; and, secondly, is it indeed an equal opportunity employer?

**Sunfrost Foods**

**Dr CATLEY (Adelaide) (10.45)**—I have been approached by Mr Mark Lawrence of the Food Preservers Union which is currently acting for members until recently employed at the Sunfrost Foods Pty Ltd factory at Dudley Park in my electorate. The company is associated with the New South Wales registered Sunfrost Group. Following action by the Westpac Banking Corporation, which is owed some $9m, a receiver was appointed to Sunfrost in July of this year—a development which was followed by the announcement that a number of retrenchments would occur. It was simultaneously announced that the retrenched workers would receive appropriate entitlements under the relevant awards. It was also made clear that these same entitlements would be paid in the event of any further retrenchments, regardless of when they might occur.

In September it became necessary for the receiver to make further retrenchments, and on this occasion, as was the case in July, volunteers were called for. On this occasion, also, the receiver gave an undertaking at a meeting with employees and their union that retrenchment payments would still be made, regardless of whether workers left then or waited until eventual closure of the factory. It was this assurance that encouraged certain skilled key employees at the factory to remain with the company after personal approaches by members of management retained by the receiver.

On Friday, 9 November, the union was advised by the receiver that the Westpac Bank had decided that the business would not be sold as a going concern and that as from 23 November the employment of all employees would be terminated. On Monday, 12 November, the unions were presented with copies of the ‘Reports as to Affairs’ of the Sunfrost associated companies. These indicated that, despite the priority accorded to the payment of workers’ entitlements under the companies code, there were insufficient funds in the employing company—Sunfrost Foods Pty Ltd—to meet either retrenchment pay obligations or accrued annual and long service leave entitlements. These obligations amounted to approximately $300,000.

Mr Speaker, imagine the outrage of the union and its members at this situation! The receiver and management, who had earlier given assurances that workers who stayed on would in no way be disadvantaged, were now saying that the cupboard was bare and that they would receive nothing. The workers affected, moreover, were the most skilled and committed of the original workforce. It was their loyalty which enabled the company to keep trading between July and November and thereby pay off other debts. Documents made available by the receiver reveal that there are sufficient funds to meet these
obligations in a related company—Sun-frost (SA) Pty Ltd. The receiver, however, will make no payment, arguing that Sun-frost (SA) Pty Ltd is not the employing company, in spite of its ownership of the land, buildings and a range of plant and equipment at the Dudley Park site—that is, it is a technicality.

The matter gets worse. The receiver announced on 21 November that written assurances over previous retrenchments would not now be honoured. These agreements had provided for the payment of entitlements in instalments over a 10-week period. Sixteen employees retrenched in September and October were caught out in this way. This was at a meeting recommended by the Industrial Relations Commission after the union had advised of a dispute.

Here is an example of the worst kind of corporate behaviour on the part of both the company and the receiver. Indeed, the receiver, under legal pressure from the union, recently conceded that it had in fact been the employer since its appointment as receiver on 3 July and was therefore liable for entitlements accrued during the short period since that date. Yet previously, of course, the receiver had been unwilling to admit that liability.

In conclusion, I make two points. First, if employers are able to get away with this kind of asset juggling which enables them to avoid their obligations to workers, then we need to look at the laws that enable them to behave in this way. This is not the first time that I have heard of workers being denied award or severance pay entitlements on the basis of what appears to a non-lawyer like me to be fairly frivolous legal technicalities such as I have outlined tonight and on previous occasions.

Secondly, there is a clear message to Australian workers—join your union. In spite of what some in the Opposition have said, the days of having to combine worker with worker against employer iniquity have not passed totally and may be returning with greater ferocity in the event of this Government departing the scene—which, I am happy to report, remains unlikely.

Nerang High School

Mr BRADFORD (McPherson) (10.50)—I am tempted to depart from my set piece for a moment to respond to the honourable member for Kingsford-Smith (Mr Brereton), who has now left the chamber. Tonight he followed up his act of some time back now of tipping the bucket on an Australian company. The last time it was Levis; tonight it was the turn of Corningware. I should perhaps have taken the opportunity to explain to him a little bit about how the price differentials between America and Australia occur. But suffice it to say the bottom line is that people do not have to buy Levis and they do not have to buy Corningware if they do not want to.

However, I want to speak about something in many respects more interesting. I recently had the pleasure of attending the presentation of awards at the annual speech night for a high school in my electorate. I suppose there is nothing terribly uncommon about that sort of activity for a member of parliament. However, I want to say how impressed I was with that particular occasion.

I am speaking about the Nerang High School, which is certainly no ordinary school. Indeed, I would describe it as a very excellent public school. It has over 1,400 students and over 90 teachers. The subjects offered include the standard high school subjects, along with a number of others, including shorthand, tourism, introduction to catering, Japanese, practical computer methods, accounting, and receptionist training. It has a Japanese exchange program with a sister school in Japan, whereby every July the Japanese school sends about 20 students to Nerang for three weeks, and every September Nerang reciprocates by sending the same number of students to Japan.

Nerang High School's year 12 formal this year was acknowledged in the Brisbane papers as being one of the 'biggest' in south-east Queensland. Nerang High School has an outstanding reputation in the community for both the con-
duct and appearance of its students. It has a wide extracurricular emphasis on cultural pursuits such as music, drama and debating. I am sure that all honourable members of this House would agree that these are tremendous attributes and achievements for any school. Such a reputation and relevant curriculum are usually developed only with time and tradition.

But what so impressed me with Nerang High is the fact that it is only five years young. Nerang High commenced in 1986 with only 239 students, and through the hard work and dedication of the staff has become a school I am truly proud to have within the electorate of McPherson. If I may, I should like to mention quickly the winners of each year level of the award for academic excellence: year 8, Nataliya Johnson; year 9, Stephen Hess; year 10, Jonathan Dennis; year 11, Jeffrey Hollindale; and year 12, Jamie Mulcahy and Robert Proctor.

The principal’s award was given to the two school captains, Karen Burvill and Craig Pond. The student council service award, which was donated by me, was won by vice-captain, Susie Latham. Finally, the student of the year was Alexandra Badham. I congratulate these and the many other award winners on the night. In my view, the bright and enthusiastic young people, such as those I met at Nerang High School on this occasion, are certainly representative of our nation’s most precious resource.

In Canberra we concentrate a lot on economics, industry, social security and a myriad of other political issues. But I believe that none can compare as matters of discussion with the importance of our young people in terms of what they represent for a secure, prosperous and stable future for our country.

I wish the first seniors to graduate from Nerang High well as they move on into tertiary study and some move out to seek jobs in the marketplace. I should also like to place on record my congratulations of the acting principal, Mr Prouten, and the staff at Nerang High for having cultivated and encouraged the enthusiasm and creative spirit of the students who have had the privilege of attending this progressive State high school in Queensland.

Australian Flag

Mr GRACE (Fowler) (10.54)—During the last sitting of the Parliament I intended to speak on the protection of the Australian flag. Unfortunately, the debate was shortened and I was unable to do so. I therefore take this opportunity to say a few words on the subject.

In my travels in my electorate over recent months I have found a very strong level of support for action to be taken to impose legal penalties against those who would desecrate or otherwise dishonour the Australian flag. No doubt this mood of popular disapproval has been fuelled by a couple of well publicised acts of public flag desecration, one of which was referred to by the honourable member for Parkes (Mr Cobb) in this House on 23 August 1990.

I must say that in witnessing the incidents myself I experienced a sense of abhorrence at what were totally unnecessary and distasteful acts against the symbol of our nationhood. They were the types of actions that I believe most people would feel are beyond what should reasonably be expected as a right of free speech. And yet so often we hear the argument used that free speech demands that individuals should have the right to act as they please, so long as they do not hurt others. Unfortunately for that point of view, I believe very strongly that the rights of the individual are not, and never can be, absolute.

All laws are framed to protect the majority and reflect the views and sensibilities that the majority accept as being right and proper. In essence, to argue that those who desecrate our national flag must be allowed to do so as a right of free speech is the same as suggesting that society’s standards on clothing and language should be equally unenforceable by law. Such a suggestion is, of course, nonsense.

As the honourable member for Capricornia (Mr Wright) said in his speech on this subject, there is much merit in the
proposals put forward by the honourable member for Parkes, although there are aspects of his position which require clarification and consideration. I believe it is one thing to put forward a position which broadly proscribes a class of action, but another to deal sensibly with the nuts and bolts of how any legislation would work.

In his speech the honourable member for Parkes said that it should:

... be law that anyone who desecrates or otherwise dishonours the national flag or an Australian ensign or who without lawful authority burns, mutilates or otherwise destroys our flag shall be deemed guilty of an offence and subject to a penalty of $5,000, or imprisonment for two years, or both.

Apart from the severity of the penalties, there are countless numbers of situations that could arise that would need to be considered before such a policy could be supported. For example, pity the poor patriot with a flagpole in his front yard who replaces his old torn and frayed flag and disposes of it without official permission. More sensibly, who would decide what constitutes a desecration or a dishonourment? As the honourable member for Parkes said himself:

Admittedly, the flag means different things to different people.

The Oxford Dictionary describes the word 'desecrate' in the following terms:

violate the sanctity of, convert from sacred or holy or noble to profane or evil uses.

That is a broad description that can have religious connotations and a countless number of interpretations. One can almost see the legal fraternity licking its lips at the prospect of such a loosely worded piece of legislation becoming law.

Notwithstanding the obvious interpretational problems contained in such a proposition, the crux of the matter is that the Australian people do not feel comfortable with disrespect being shown to their flag. This says a great deal for our emerging maturity and our rapid movement away from our cultural cringe. People are now proud of their country, and they are proud of the symbolism of their flag, whether or not they would like to see a new flag design introduced.

For the record, I am a great supporter of the present Australian flag. I do not want it changed, I see no reason for it to change, and I personally believe that most Australians share my point of view. As the Australian public has shown a concern for desecration of our flag, it is appropriate for the matter to be dealt with in this House. Although it has always been my belief that education is preferable to legal sanction in matters of this kind—and I know that most honourable members act similarly to me in going regularly to schools to present and explain our flag—I believe the broad thrust of the position of the honourable member for Parkes should be further considered. I would certainly support a Bill that more adequately could demonstrate that it would be just and workable in practice.

House adjourned at 10.59 p.m.

NOTICES

The following notices were given:

Mr Duffy to present a Bill for an Act to amend the law relating to companies.

Mr Crean to present a Bill for an Act to amend the Insurance Act 1973.

Mr Kerin to present a Bill for an Act to establish an Australian Fisheries Management Authority and a Fishing Industry Policy Council, and for other related purposes.

Mr Peacock to present a Bill for an Act to amend the Crimes Act 1914, and for related purposes.

PAPERS

The following papers were deemed to have been presented on 4 December 1990:

Australian Meat and Live-stock Corporation Act—Orders—1990—


MQ35/90—High Quality Beef to EEC—1991 Quota Administration Scheme.

MQ36/90—Sheepmeat and/or Goatmeat to EEC—1991 Quota Administration Scheme.

MQ37/90—Buffalo Meat to EEC—1991 Quota Administration Scheme.

Christmas Island Act—Regulations—1990—No. 1 (Christmas Island Assembly Ordinance).
Civil Aviation Act—Civil Aviation Regulations—Civil Aviation Orders—Parts—
29—Amendments, dated 29 November 1990.
40—Amendments, dated 29 November 1990.

Defence Act—
Determinations under section 58B—1990—
No. 140—Rates of Travelling Allowance—Tonga and other allowances.
No. 143—Contribution for full-time use of official vehicle.
No. 146—Rates of Travelling Allowance—Czechoslovakia and other allowances.
No. 151—Rates of Travelling Allowance—Republic of the Marshall Islands and other allowances.
No. 156—Rates of Travelling Allowance—Western Samoa and other allowances.
No. 158—Travelling allowance—allowance not payable and Meal Allowance Overseas—allowance not payable.
No. 159—Rates of Travelling Allowance—Bangladesh and other allowances.
No. 161—Rates of Travelling Allowance—Argentina and other allowances.
No. 163—Rates of Travelling Allowance—India (Elsewhere) and other allowances.
No. 165—Repeal of provisions of Overseas Defence Determination 1990/73 and other allowances.
No. 166—Rate of allowance—PNGDF and other allowances.
No. 170—Revised rates of allowance and other allowances.
No. 174—Temporary Accommodation Allowance.

No. 175—Cadet Forces Allowances.

Fisheries Act—
Notices—Nos. BSS 2, NTF 2, NWS 2, SBT 1.
Plan of Management—
Nos. NPF 3, NPF 4, NPF 5—Northern Prawn Fishery Management Plan (Amendment).

Heard Island and McDonald Islands Act—Ordinance—1990—No. 1—Environment Protection and Management (Amendment).


Lands Acquisition Act—Statement of land acquired by agreement authorised under subsection 125 (3).

National Health Act—Determinations—1990—Nos. BPT 9, BPT 10, BPT 11, BPT 12.

Proclamation by His Excellency the Governor-General fixing 14 November 1990 as the date on which subsection 17 (3), section 28 and subsections 29 (3) and 34 (3) of the Protection of the Sea Legislation Amendment Act 1986 shall come into operation.


Public Service Act—
Determinations—1990—Nos. 86, 131, 135, 139, 140, 142, 143, 149, 151, 157, 181, 182, 184, 188, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 209, 210, LES 7, LES 11, LES 14, LES 15.

Parliamentary Presiding Officers’ Determination—1990—No. 28.


Public Service Act—
Determinations—1990—Nos. 86, 131, 135, 139, 140, 142, 143, 149, 151, 157, 181, 182, 184, 188, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 209, 210, LES 7, LES 11, LES 14, LES 15.

Parliamentary Presiding Officers’ Determination—1990—No. 28.


Telecommunications Act—Direction pursuant to subsection 73 (2)—No. 2, dated 9 November 1990.

Veterans’ Entitlements Act—Instruments varying—
Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, dated 21 November 1990.

Treatment Principles, dated 6 November 1990.
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The following answers to questions were circulated:

**ABC: Land at Burwood, Victoria**

*Question No. 9*

Mr N.A. Brown asked the Minister for Transport and Communications, upon notice, on 9 May 1990:

1. What was the total cost of the land and buildings at Burwood, Vic, owned by the ABC and presently used in part by Radio Australia.

2. Has that land and the buildings on it now been sold or otherwise disposed of; if so, for what sum.

3. What is the present value of the land and the buildings on it.

4. What is the value of the land and buildings known as Broadcast House in Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, owned by the ABC.

5. Has that land and the buildings on it now been sold or otherwise disposed of; if so, for what sum.

6. What is the value of the land and buildings in Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, adjacent to Broadcast House and owned by the ABC.

7. Has that land and the buildings on it now been sold or otherwise disposed of; if so, for what sum.

8. What is the value of the land and buildings known as the Waverley Theatre in Malvern East, Vic, owned by the ABC.

9. Has that land and the buildings on it now been sold or otherwise disposed of; if so, for what sum.

10. What was the cost of the land purchased by the ABC at South Bank in Melbourne.

11. What total sum has been spent by the ABC to date on the South Bank project.

12. What is the expected cost to the ABC of the South Bank project, including the building, fit-out costs, interest charges, management fees and all other associated costs.

Mr Beazley—The answer to the honourable member's question, based on information provided by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, is as follows:

1. The cost of the land at Burwood was $5.75m; the cost of the Radio Australia building in October 1982 was $7.3m plus $0.9m for technical fit-out.

2. No. On 14 September 1990, the Jennings Group notified the ABC that they were not in a position to proceed with the purchase of ABC properties in Melbourne, including the current ABC Radio site on the corner of Lonsdale and William Streets, unused land at East Burwood and the current Radio Australia building at East Burwood.

3. The value of all the ABC's land and improvements at East Burwood is between $25.2m and $27.5m (May 1989). The unused land at East Burwood was valued by the Australian Valuation Office at $11.5m in August 1990. However, in the current environment in Melbourne it is expected that the properties would not sell for as much as this.

4. Valuation of Broadcast House, land and buildings, Lonsdale Street, at 9 July 1990 was between $13.5m and $17m.

5. No. See answer to (2) above.

6. The land adjacent to Broadcast House is all part of a single title and is included in item (4) above.

7. No. See answer to (2) above.

8. Valuation of the Waverley Theatre during 1989 ranged from $690,000 to $890,000, but in August 1990 has been revised to $300,000.

9. No. See answer to (2) above.

10. The cost of the South Bank site was $5.762m.

11. The ABC has spent $14.488m on the Southbank project to date, consisting of:

   - Land purchase $5.762m
   - Design $3.145m
   - Piling $2.828m
   - Interest $2.391m
   - Project Team $0.362m

12. There is no current expected cost of the Southbank project as it has been deferred indefinitely.

**Rehabilitation of Prisoners**

*Question No. 81*

Mr Melham asked the Minister for Higher Education and Employment Services, upon notice, on 17 May 1990:

What resources does each of the Department/s or agencies for which the Minister has portfolio responsibility make available to prisoners and ex-prisoners in New South Wales during (a) the term of their incarceration, (b) the term of their post-custodial probation period or (c) in the case of prisoners subject to fixed terms of imprisonment, the twelve months following their release from custody to assist in their post-custodial management or rehabilitation.
Mr Baldwin—The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

The Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) provides many services to prisoners and ex-prisoners to assist them to re-enter the workforce as quickly as possible. Specifically, in New South Wales, the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET), particularly through the CES provides the following services:

(a) A Prisoner Literacy through Video Project which aims to encourage prisoners in NSW gaols to participate in literacy programs.

The Vocational Maths Learning Program which aims to improve the numeracy skills of Prisoners at Malabar Prisoners Complex.

Maroubra Junction CES has a liaison program with the Malabar Prisons Complex.

CES offices in the Sydney City/Eastern Area of DEET liaise with the Probation and Parole Services about prisoners and ex-prisoners.

Broadmeadow CES arranges supervised group visits of detainees from Worimi.

Cessnock CES has a liaison program with Cessnock Correctional Centre.

The Department also provides support to Aboriginal people who wish to participate in part-time or full-time study whilst in prison.

(b) & (c) Both Gosford CES and Gosford Youth Access Centre (YAC) closely liaise with staff at the Mt Penang Training Centre. As a part of the pre-release program they provide: Career talks; individual advice on career and social matters; jobsearch assistance with groups attending the CES; referral to training and employment and advice on accommodation.

The Broken Hill and Bathurst CES both liaise with staff and provide information to residents of the local gaols.

These services include: addressing pre-release groups; regular liaison with social workers and advice on income support and general DEET services available on release.

The Wagga, Tumut and Cooma CES offices have liaison and information programs with their local gaols. These services include one-to-one pre-release registration interviews at the institution followed by post release assistance with income support, counselling, program referral etc. The pre-release contacts are made on a needs basis by Wagga and Cooma CES and monthly by Tumut CES. Tumut CES did approximately 240 pre-release registration interviews during 1989.

The juvenile court at Worimi is serviced one day per week by Newcastle YAC as a visiting service which provides counselling, assistance with accommodation income support, referral to other agencies and advice on DEET services and programs.

Maitland CES has a liaison program with Probation and Parole as Maitland is a maximum security gaol.

Muskwellbrook CES participates in a one day a month pre-release program at St Helliers Prison Farm which includes registration interviews, labour market advice and advice on DEET services and programs.

Grafton CES has a regular contact with the Education Services within Grafton Gaol, providing advice on the labour market and DEET services and programs.

Burwood CES participates in a Youth Interagency which focuses on young offenders; has a liaison program with Burwood Community Youth Centre; has a liaison program with Yasmar Detention Centre which includes visits and referrals for Jobsearch and other assistance; contact with the Youth Offenders Support Team at Summer Hill which also involves visits and advice as well as contact with Probation and Parole, Burwood which involves approximately 5—6 referrals per month.

Auburn CES has a liaison program with the Silverwater Complex of Prisons with an active involvement in the work release program.

Penrith CES regularly liaises with its local probation and parole office and has a liaison program with the Emu Plains Training Centre. Penrith YAC has an active liaison program with the Youth Offenders Support Team based at Cobham Remand Centre.

Blacktown CES regularly liaises with both staff at Parklea Prison and their local Probation and Parole Office.

Parramatta YAC has an active liaison program with both its Probation and Parole Office and the Youth Offenders Support Team at Cobham from which they accept and caseload referrals.

Mt Druitt YAC provides a once a fortnight visiting service to Cobham Remand Centre and provides advice on employment and training matters.

Following an Aboriginal prisoner's release, the Training for Aboriginal Program (TAP) is available immediately and the training offered can be adapted to suit the client. On release, there is continuing support through ABSTUDY for Aboriginal ex-
prisoners who wish to continue studies or take up further studies.

Under the JOBSTART, JOBTRAIN and Skillshare Programs, the target groups are broadly long-term unemployed (six out of the last nine months) and/or otherwise especially disadvantaged jobseekers.

Ex-prisoners are included in the especially disadvantaged group and are therefore eligible to participate in the programs immediately they register with the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES). Because they are in the target group Skillshare projects can also provide services to ex-prisoners without them necessarily being registered with the CES.

In addition to this, the Jobsearch Training Program does not have a qualifying period of unemployment and ex-prisoners, along with other job seekers, are eligible for assistance immediately they register with the CES.

As ex-prisoners are not separately identified on the Departmental statistical systems used to record details of participants in the above mentioned labour market programs, resources spent on prisoners and ex-prisoners cannot be readily identified.

Imported Peat (Question No. 123)

Mr John Scott asked the Minister for Community Services and Health, upon notice, on 21 August 1990:

(1) Has his attention been drawn to the statement on page 5 of the 1989 annual report of Defender Australia Ltd that tests showed imported peat from Europe contained 600 per cent more radioactivity than peat from Tasmania.

(2) Is caesium-137 one of the radioactive substances in the imported peat.

(3) Is he able to say whether tests in Europe after the Chernobyl explosion on 26 April 1986 showed that foods such as lettuce and chives were heavily contaminated with caesium-137.

(4) Does caesium-137 get into lettuce and other plants by being taken up from the soil by the plants' roots.

(5) Will he take immediate action to monitor imported peat and to prohibit the importation into Australia of peat that could lead to Australian food becoming radioactive.

Mr Staples—The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

(1-2) Tests on a number of samples of imported and locally-produced peat moss have been carried out by the Australian Radiation Laboratory (ARL) at various times since the Chernobyl accident in April 1986. The results of measurement on imported peat moss have shown that the levels of radioactive contamination due to fall-out from the Chernobyl accident are quite variable and depend upon the origin of the peat. Radioactive isotopes of caesium, namely caesium-137 and caesium-134, were detected along with naturally-occurring radionuclides.

The tests referred to in this Question were carried out last year by ARL. These revealed that the radioactive caesium (caesium-137 and caesium-134) content of a sample of Russian peat moss was approximately 300 Becquerel per kilogram (Bq/kg).

Although peat moss can only be indirectly compared with food, this concentration is well below the guideline value of 1000 Bq/kg for trade in foodstuffs, that was established in July 1988 by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation in conjunction with the World Health Organization. A limit of 600 Bq/kg has been used since 1987 in Australia to restrict the importation of food contaminated by radioactivity from the Chernobyl accident. These limits are based on the conservative assumption that an individual's total diet has been contaminated and correspond to a very low risk of developing radiation-induced cancer.

It is interesting that, although fall-out from Chernobyl did not reach Australia, Tasmanian peat moss has trace levels of caesium-137 (up to 1 Bq/kg), due to fall-out from atmospheric nuclear weapons tests carried out in the 1960's and 1970's.

(3) After Chernobyl, many European countries reported detectable levels of caesium-137 in a wide range of foodstuffs. The level of contamination depended both on food type and on the region from which it originated. Generally, levels in vegetables were considerably less than products such as milk and meat. There was no indication that foods such as lettuce and chives were "heavily" contaminated by caesium-137.

(4) It is possible for caesium-137 to enter the plant from the soil. However, for leafy vegetables, such as lettuce, direct deposition on to the plant is a much more important pathway by which contamination can occur.

Previous studies in Australia have shown that there is negligible uptake of caesium-137 and caesium-134 in mushrooms grown in peat moss contaminated with these radionuclides and other vegetable seedlings can be expected to behave similarly.

(5) It is considered that the use of imported peat moss, some of which contains radioactive caesium, will not lead to significant levels of radioactivity in Australian food products and, on public health grounds, there is no reason to restrict the importation of the European peat.
Appointment of Women to Government Bodies

(Question No. 128)

Mr Langmore asked the Treasurer, upon notice, on 21 August 1990:

For each of the (a) boards, (b) councils and (c) committees to which the Minister has the power to appoint members, what (i) proportion of the positions is now held by women and (ii) what change in that proportion has there been since the ALP Caucus passed the motion in August 1988 requiring a minimum of 25 per cent of all appointments to Government boards, councils and committees to be women.

Mr Keating—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Board/Membership</th>
<th>(i) Proportion of Women Held</th>
<th>(ii) Change in Proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Investment Review Board</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>No change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax Relief Board</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>+5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax Agent Board</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>+17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing Loans Insurance Corporation</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>No change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Australian Statistics Advisory Council</td>
<td>18.75%</td>
<td>No change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Superannuation Consultative Committee</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>No change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Insurance Consultative Committee</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>No change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Insurance Consultative Committee</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>No change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT Constitution Avenue, CANBERRA</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>+5.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| ** Branch Office REGIONAL OFFICE | ** Parramatta Office 2-12 Macquarie Street, PARRAMATTA ** Penrith Office 2-12 Macquarie Street, PARRAMATTA ** Sydney South Office 7-13 Hunter Street, SYDNEY ** Sydney CBD Centre Point Tower Market Street, SYDNEY 468 Peel Street, TAMWORTH 25 Tompson Street, WAGGA WAGGA 43 Burelli Street, WOLLONGONG NT 9 Parsons Street, ALICE SPRINGS Cnr Mitchell & Briggs Street, DARWIN QLD ** 320 Adelaide Street, BRISBANE 107 Lake Street, CAIRNS Cnr Victoria & Gregory Streets, MACKAY 130 Victoria Parade, ROCKHAMPTON Condamine Centre, Bell Street, TOOWOOMBA ** 22 Walker Street, TOWNSVILLE SA ** 65 King William Street, ADELAIDE Oxenham Drive, ELIZABETH 5 Percy Street, MT GAMBIER TAS ** 188 Collins Street, HOBART 111 St John Street, LAUNCESTON VIC 24 Doveton Street North, BALLARAT 35 Mundy Street, BENDIGO ** 14 Mason Street, DANDELONG 170 Little Malop Street, GEELONG 24 Darlot Street, HORSHAM ** 350 Collins Street, MELBOURNE ** 280 King Street, MELBOURNE 135 Timor Street, WARRNAMBOOL

Australian Taxation Office

(Question No. 139)

Mr Tim Fischer asked the Treasurer, upon notice, on 21 August 1990:

(1) How many branch offices of the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) exist in Australia

(2) What is the (a) location and (b) staff turnover for the last two years of each ATO branch office

(3) What potential productivity statistics exist with regard to each branch office, especially in the processing of income tax returns
Turnover rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branch</th>
<th>ASL T/over</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>ASL T/over</th>
<th>%</th>
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<td>Brisbane</td>
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<td>268</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sydney South</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>#%</td>
<td>1036</td>
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<td>Townsville</td>
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<td>74</td>
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<td>Vic. North</td>
<td>856</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>911</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

KEY

Penrith Office not included as established 1 July 1990.

# — Sydney South Office established 1 July 1989.

ASL — Average Staffing Level over the period

T/over — (Recruitment Wastage) divided by 2.

% — Turnover as a percentage of ASL.

A3—The ATO monitors each Branch Office’s performance in the processing of income tax returns against the achievement of a number of corporate goals.

For the financial year 1990-91, some of the goals are:

• turnaround of electronic lodged returns: 80% within 14 days and 98% within 8 weeks;
• turnaround of other returns: 80% within 6 weeks and 98% within 8 weeks;
• lodgements of returns: 90% of non-agent lodgements by 31 October 1990;
• error and omission amendments: where the amendment is the result of ATO error—within 4 weeks and in other cases within 8 weeks;
• Partnership and Trust processing: 95% by 14.6.91.

The ATO has a National Production Committee which monitors and evaluates Branch Office workloads against resources, oversees the achievement of corporate goals and, where necessary, arranges transfer of work between offices, for example, in the case of natural disaster, computer problems, etc.
Mr Tickner—The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

Information provided by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission indicates that the Burren Aboriginal Corporation has, since its inception, received only one grant from an Agency responsible to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. This was a grant of $50,000 provided by the former Department of Aboriginal Affairs in the 1989/90 financial year for the purpose of constructing a training centre for the use of the Bourke Aboriginal community.

Austudy
(Question No. 211)

Mr Bruce Scott asked the Minister for Higher Education and Employment Services, upon notice, on 12 September 1990:

1. Will the awards of $2000 to the best and brightest year 12 students (a) be considered taxable income and (b) affect their entitlements for Austudy.

2. Will recipients of other bursaries and grants in recognition of students' achievements be treated in the same way with respect to (a) income tax and (b) Austudy entitlements as recipients of the $2000 awards.

Mr Baldwin—The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

(1) The Government has announced its intention to award, commencing in 1991, Australian Students Prizes of 500 awards of $2,000 each for outstanding achievement by year 12 students.

The administrative arrangements for the Australian Students Prize will be finalised once the views of State Ministers of Education are known. The issue as to whether the Prize will be considered taxable income will be clarified with the Taxation Office once these arrangements have been finalised. Prizes are not regarded as income for the Austudy personal income test. A prize relates to past studies and carries no obligation to undertake further study.

(2) For Austudy purposes a bursary is a form of educational assistance and is taken into account for the purposes of the Austudy personal income test. A grant that relates to past studies and carries no obligation to undertake further study would be classed as a prize and would not be taken into account for the purposes of the Austudy personal income test.

Educational assistance from the Commonwealth for, or in respect of, a student aged 16 years or over is taxable. Commonwealth educational assistance for, or in respect of, a student aged under 16 is not taxable.

I am not in a position to comment on taxation of non-Commonwealth educational assistance and prizes.

Ostrich Farming
(Question No. 212)

Mr Bruce Scott asked the Minister for Resources, upon notice, on 12 September 1990:

1. Has his attention been drawn to the potential for ostrich farming in Australia.

2. Will priority be given to building quarantine facilities for the importation of ostriches; if so, what priority.

3. Are sufficient funds available for building quarantine facilities for the importation of ostriches; if not, will allowance be made for private quarantine facilities to cater for import demand.

4. Is he able to estimate when it will be possible to import (a) live ostriches and (b) ostrich eggs for hatching.

Mr Griffiths—The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

(1) Yes.

(2) Current avian quarantine facilities are small and not at all suited to quarantining ostriches. The Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) is investigating other mechanisms to facilitate imports, including the possible use of the high security quarantine station on the Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

It is not possible to give priority to the building of suitable facilities for ostriches until such time as the disease status of these birds is known and necessary quarantine conditions are developed.

(3) No. AQIS is prepared to consider proposals for private quarantine premises provided these premises are of an equivalent biosecurity level to existing Commonwealth avian facilities.

(4) (a) & (b) No, AQIS is unable to estimate when it will be possible to import live ostriches or ostrich eggs as the importation of ostriches poses several major short and medium-term difficulties — birds are only readily available in Africa, a high disease risk source — there is insufficient knowledge of the risk ostriches pose as asymptomatic carrier of disease agents — current avian quarantine facilities are small and not suited to quarantining ostriches
.. design and construction of new facilities would take some time

.. the investigation of alternative measures to import will require disease surveys, consultation and development of new protocols.

Telephone Tapping
(Question No. 224)

Mr Peacock asked the Attorney-General, upon notice, on 17 September 1990:

(1) On what date was the report for 1988-89 prepared in accordance with the Telecommunications (Interception) Act 1979 (a) compiled and (b) presented to him.

(2) What agency (a) prepared the report (b) presented it to him.

(3) With respect to the provision for agencies other than the Australian Federal Police to seek the issue of warrants for law enforcement purposes, referred to at page 2 of the report, to September 1990 what agencies have (a) applied to be and (b) been declared as, an eligible authority under section 34 of the Telecommunications (Interception) Act and on what dates.

(4) With respect to the reports by Telecom referred to at page 5 of the report, (a) how many reports were made by the Managing Director to the Attorney-General under section 97 of the Act and (b) on what date was each report made.

(5) With respect to reports by the Ombudsman referred to at page 5 of the report, (a) how many inspections were made by the Ombudsman under Part VIII of the Act, (b) on what date was each inspection made, (c) how many reports were prepared by the Ombudsman under Part VIII and (d) on what date was each report made.

(6) With respect to the information set out in Table 10 at page 19 of the report, relating to the (a) National Crime Authority, (b) New South Wales Police and (c) Victorian Police, what was the number of (i) prosecutions made as a result of arrests and (ii) convictions obtained as a result of prosecutions made on the basis of lawfully obtained information.

(7) With respect to the information set out in Table 10 at page 19 of the report, relating to the 27 arrests by the Australian Federal Police which remain after prosecutions and convictions, (a) if prosecutions have been, or are likely to be, commenced with respect to those remaining arrests, (i) how many and (ii) what categories of prescribed offences were involved.

Mr Duffy—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) The report was prepared in the latter part of 1989 and submitted to the then Attorney-General on 22 December 1989. After the election earlier this year, the report was submitted to me on 1 May 1990.

(2) The Attorney-General’s Department.

(3) (a) Pages 3 and 4 of the report to 30 June 1989 list those agencies entitled to apply for warrants at that time. Since 30 June 1989, only one agency has applied to be declared, namely, the NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption.

(b) The NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption was declared with effect from 6 June 1990.

(4) (a) The Managing Director of Telecom made three reports on the nature and timing of acts done by Telecom employees during the reporting period to enable interception under warrant to take place.

(b) The reports were made on 14 April 1989, 27 June 1989 and 25 August 1989.

(5) Each of the agencies entitled to apply for the issue of a warrant during the reporting period was the subject of inspection and report by the relevant Ombudsman.

(i) Australian Federal Police:

(a) 2 inspections.

(b) The inspections were conducted during the periods from 23 November 1988 to 15 December 1988 and from 8 May 1989 to 30 June 1989.

(c) 1 report.


(ii) National Crime Authority:

(a) 2 inspections and 1 follow-up visit.

(b) The inspections were conducted during the periods from 12 December 1988 to 16 December 1988 and from 19 June 1989 to 21 June 1989, with the follow-up visit taking place on 26 June 1989.

(c) 1 report.


(iii) New South Wales Police:

(a) 332 inspections.

(b) The inspections were conducted during the periods from 13 February 1989 to 28 February 1989 and from 10 April 1989 to 21 April 1989.


(iv) State Drug Crime Commission of New South Wales:
   (a) 1 inspection.
   (b) The inspection was conducted on 2 June 1989.

(v) Victoria Police:
   (a) At least 1 inspection.
   (b) Date of inspection not stated in Ombudsman's report.
   (c) The Victorian Ombudsman made 1 report under section 12 of the Telecommunications (Interception) (State Provisions) Act 1988 (VIC).

(6) (i) As stated in the report, in relation to the National Crime Authority, New South Wales Police and Victoria Police, no prosecutions in which lawfully obtained information was given in evidence were completed in the reporting period.

(ii) Since no prosecutions in which lawfully obtained information was given in evidence were completed in the reporting period, there were no convictions recorded arising from such prosecutions.

(7) The implication of the question is that there is a correlation between the figures for arrests, prosecutions and convictions in a particular reporting year. While in some cases the three may be correlated, it is more likely to be the case that they are not, as a prosecution will usually not be completed in the same reporting period as the relevant arrest takes place. Indeed, prosecutions may take several years from the time of arrest to complete, especially when the offender absconds. Moreover, it should be noted that "number of arrests" is not the same as "number of charges laid": an arrested person may be prosecuted and convicted for a number of offences. Accordingly, the information provided in Table 10 does not necessarily mean that for 1988-89, there are 27 arrested persons in relation to whom prosecution action is outstanding. The annual report for 1989-90 will provide information of prosecutions completed and convictions recorded in that reporting period, some of which will relate to arrests reported in the 1988-89 annual report.

**Telephone Tapping**

(Question No. 225)

Mr Peacock asked the Attorney-General, upon notice, on 17 September 1990:

(1) With respect to paragraph 3.5 at page 9 of the report for 1988-89 of the Law Reform Commission, which of the Commission's recommendations on telephone tapping have (a) been adopted in (i) the Telecommunications (Interception) Amendment Act 1987 or (ii) other legislation and (b) not been adopted or are otherwise outstanding.

(2) With respect to the recommendations referred to in chapter 3 of the report, have any (a) announcement, (b) action or (c) other steps been taken by the Government, (i) before or (ii) after 1988-89, in response to the recommendations in paragraphs (A) 3.9—debt recovery and insolvency, (B) 3.10—defamation, (C) 3.12—standing in public interest litigation, (D) 3.13—grouped proceedings in the Federal Court, (E) 3.14—Aboriginal customary laws, (F) 3.18—the Commonwealth Prisoners Act, (G) 3.19—sentencing, (H) 3.20—evidence—work to date, (I) 3.24—criminal Admiralty jurisdiction and the law of prize, (J) 3.25—service and execution of process, (K) 3.27—matrimonial property, (L) 3.28—insolvency, (M) 3.29-31—product liability, (N) 3.35—references—debt recovery and insolvency and (O) 3.36—references—occupiers' liability; if so, what is the substance of each case.

Mr Duffy—The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

(1) The Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) made a number of recommendations in relation to telecommunications interception in its Privacy Report ALRC No. 22 (Volume 2 paragraphs 1141-1173).

Secret Surveillance of Telecommunications (paragraph 1141)

The ALRC recommended that it continue to be an offence to intercept telecommunications. The Telecommunications (Interception) Act 1979 has provided for such an offence (subsection 7(1)) since it was enacted and continues to do so.

Extension of Scope of Telecommunications (Interception) Act 1979 (paragraphs 1142 and 1143)

A majority recommendation of the ALRC was that the Telecommunications (Interception) Act 1979 continue to regulate only communications that are passing over the telecommunications system, with those communications that have not
yet been or are no longer committed to the system being protected by State or Territory listening device legislation. No amendment to the Telecommunications (Interception) Act 1979 was required to reflect this recommendation.

Participant Monitoring (paragraph 1144)  
The ALRC, by a majority, recommended that participant monitoring of telecommunications should not be an offence. Although it is an offence for one party to a telephone call to record the conversation without the knowledge of the other party, the issue of participant monitoring is being considered as part of a review of the Telecommunications (Interception) Act 1979 currently being undertaken by my Department.

International Telecommunications (paragraph 1145)  
The ALRC recommended that the Telecommunications (Interception) Act 1979 be amended so as to regulate the interception of communications passing over the telecommunications system controlled by OTC. The Telecommunications (Interception) Act 1979 was amended in 1989 to extend the protection it affords to any telecommunications system operated by a carrier (that is, Telecom, OTC or AUSSAT) to the extent that the network is within Australia.

Wireless Telegraphy Act (paragraph 1146)  
The Wireless Telegraphy Act 1905, the subject of a recommendation by the ALRC, was repealed in 1985 by the Radiocommunications (Transitional Provisions and Consequential Amendments) Act 1983. The subject matter of the Wireless Telegraphy Act is now dealt with by the Radiocommunications Act 1983. In the Second Reading Speech relating to that Act, it was said that it was the Government’s policy to regulate as few classes of radiocommunications receivers as possible consistent with the objective of efficient radio spectrum management.

Implications of the Davidson Report (paragraph 1147)  
The ALRC made recommendations on the basis of the possible implementation of recommendations contained in the 1982 Davidson Report (report of the Committee of Inquiry into Telecommunications Services in Australia). The thrust of the ALRC’s concerns with that report—that the protections afforded by the Telecommunications (Interception) Act 1979 be extended to protect telecommunications carried by carriers other than Telecom—is reflected by the amendments to that Act made as a consequence of the enactment of the Telecommunications Act 1989.

Offences for which warrant are available (paragraph 1160)  
The ALRC recommended that a warrant authorising interception should only be available in respect of the investigation of an offence that carries a penalty of 7 years imprisonment or more. That recommendation was reflected, with some modifications, in amendments made to the Telecommunications (Interception) Act 1979 in 1987. The Act now provides for the issue of warrants in relation to two classes of offences, namely—

- “class 1” offences, which include murder; kidnapping; narcotics offences punishable as provided by section 253 of the Customs Act 1901; where an application for a warrant is made by the National Crime Authority, an offence in relation to which the Authority is conducting a special investigation within the meaning of the National Crime Authority Act 1984; and ancillary offences (such as aiding, abetting, conspiring, etc) in relation to the other class 1 offences; and
- “class 2” offences, which include loss of life or serious personal injury, or serious risk of such loss or injury; serious damage to property in circumstances endangering a person’s safety; trafficking in narcotic drugs; serious fraud; serious loss to the revenue of the Commonwealth or a State; and ancillary offences in relation to the other class 2 offences.

Written application (paragraph 1162)  
The ALRC recommended that a written application should be required as part of the warrant application process. Section 40, inserted in the Act by the Telecommunications (Interception) Amendment Act 1987, requires a warrant application to be in writing except where, in accordance with the Act’s provisions, an application is made by telephone.

Use of other investigative techniques (paragraph 1163)  
The ALRC recommended that the availability and suitability of other methods of obtaining evidence should be taken into account when warrant applications are considered. That recommendation is reflected in provisions inserted in the Act by the Telecommunications (Interception) Amendment Act 1987—see paragraphs 45 (e) dealing with the issue of a warrant in relation to a class 1 offence, and paragraphs 46 (2) (d), (e) and (f) dealing with the issue of a warrant in relation to a class 2 offence.

Seriousness of offence (paragraph 1164)  
The ALRC recommended that the seriousness of the offence under investigation should be considered as part of the warrant application process. That recommendation is reflected in the provisions dealing with the issue of a warrant in relation to class 2 offences inserted in the Act by the Telecommunications (Interception) Amendment Act 1987—see paragraph 46 (2) (b). Because of the inherently serious nature of class 1 offences, the Government did not consider it necessary for the procedures dealing with the issue of warrants for those offences to specify that the gravity of the
offence under investigation be taken into account when a warrant application is made.

Time limits (paragraph 1165)
The ALRC recommended that a warrant should remain in force for a maximum period of 30 days. The Government did not accept that recommendation, but amended the Act in 1987 (see subsection 49(3)) to provide, in accordance with the recommendation of the Joint Select Committee on Telecommunications Interception, for a maximum period of 90 days.

Reports by Australian Federal Police (paragraph 1166)
The ALRC recommended that reports by the Australian Federal Police on its activities under the Telecommunications (Interception) Act 1979 be made to the Attorney-General rather than the Minister who, at the time of the ALRC’s report, was responsible for the AFP’s activities, namely, the Special Minister for State. Under the 1987 amendments to the Act, the AFP provides the Attorney-General with reports on applications made, and warrants issued, under the Act (section 94), and on acts done by members of the AFP in connection the interception of communications under warrants issued under Part VI of the Act (section 98).

Reporting to the Parliament (paragraph 1167)
The ALRC recommended that the Attorney-General report annually to Parliament on a number of aspects of interceptions conducted under warrants issued for law enforcement purposes. Under Division 2 of Part IX of the Telecommunications (Interception) Act 1979 (inserted in 1987), the Attorney-General is required to have prepared each year a report, to be tabled in the Parliament, providing details concerning interceptions for law enforcement purposes. The first such report was tabled in the Senate on 23 May 1990, and in the House of Representatives on 31 May 1990.

Exclusion of evidence (paragraph 1170)
The ALRC recommended that, where information has been obtained by means of unlawful interception, the common law rules on the admissibility of such information, expounded in Bunning v Cross (1978) 141 CLR 54, be displaced by what it called the reverse onus exclusionary rule, under which a court would retain a discretion to admit the information in certain circumstances. The Government did not accept this recommendation. Since the commencement of the Telecommunications (Interception) Amendment Act 1987, information obtained in contravention of the Act is inadmissible in all proceedings except those for the prosecution of a person charged with such a contravention. This exclusionary rule is subject to a discretion in a court to admit information where the contravention is due to an insubstantial defect or irregularity in cases where a warrant or purported warrant has been obtained.

Telephone warrants (paragraph 1171)
As recommended by the ALRC, the Telecommunications (Interception) Act 1979, as a result of the 1987 amendments, now contains provisions dealing with applications for the issue of a warrant by telephone—see sections 40, 43, 50, 51, 52, 53 and 54.

Disclosure of information (paragraphs 1172 and 1173)
The ALRC recommended that lawfully intercepted information irrelevant to any offence be protected from disclosure to any person. The Telecommunications (Interception) Act 1979 reflects that position.

The ALRC recommended that, where information obtained by lawful interception relates to an offence for which a warrant could have been issued, there should be no prohibition on disclosing it for the purposes of investigating that offence. The Telecommunications (Interception) Act 1979 reflects that position.

The ALRC also recommended that, where information obtained by intercepting under a warrant relates to an offence other than the offence specified in the warrant, it should not be disclosed for the purposes of its investigation unless the offence carries a penalty of 7 years’ imprisonment or more. The 1987 amendments to the Act do not reflect that position, but continue the Act’s pre-existing policy of permitting such information to be used, among other purposes, for a purpose connected with any offence punishable for a period of at least 3 years’ imprisonment.

(2)

(A) Debt Recovery and Insolvency (ALRC 36): Responsibility for legislation governing debt recovery in the ACT Magistrates Court passed to the ACT Government on 1 July 1990. Prior to that date, my Department had prepared and circulated for comment a draft Magistrates Court (Civil Jurisdiction) (Amendment) Ordinance. That draft Ordinance provided for extensive replacement and revision of debt recovery procedures in the ACT Magistrates Court. It would, amongst other things, largely implement the ALRC’s recommendations relating to the Magistrates Court.

(B) Defamation (ALRC 11): (a) Announcement: The Law Reform Commission Report “Unfair Publication: Defamation and Privacy” (Report No 11) was tabled in June 1979 by the then Attorney-General, Senator the Hon Peter Durack, QC. At the time of tabling, Senator Durack announced that he would refer the report to the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General. After consider-
ation of the Report by the Standing Committee, Senator Durack announced in February 1980 that the Government of the day did not intend to use the option put forward by the Australian Law Reform Commission that the Commonwealth should use its available Constitutional powers to enact a national defamation law.

(b) Action: Fundamental to the issue of uniform defamation laws is an appreciation of the fact that the Commonwealth has no specific Constitutional power over defamation. However, the question of uniform defamation laws is under consideration by the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General. The Attorneys of New South Wales, Queensland, and Victoria have distributed a discussion paper on reform of defamation laws. At the most recent meeting of the Standing Committee, the Attorneys-General of those three States announced that they had agreed to produce a further discussion paper at the end of November 1990 indicating areas of agreement and canvassing issues not covered in the first paper.

(c) Other steps: The answer to this part of the Honourable Member’s question is dealt with above in relation to (a).

(C) Standing in Public Interest Litigation (ALRC 27): The report is under consideration by my Department. No announcement has been made by the Government.

(D) Grouped Proceedings in the Federal Court (ALRC 46): The report is under consideration by my Department. No announcement has been made by the Government.

(E) Aboriginal Customary Laws (ALRC 31): As carriage of this matter is with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), and its portfolio Department, the Department of Employment, Education and Training, it is not appropriate for me to comment.


(G) Sentencing (ALRC 44): New sentencing legislation was enacted in the Crimes Legislation Amendment Act (No. 2) 1989. The provisions in that Act relating to sentencing came into force on 17 July 1990.

(H) Evidence (ALRC 26 and 38): On 7 February 1990, the then Attorney-General, the Hon Lionel Bowen MP, announced that the Government would introduce an Evidence Bill based largely on the recommendations of the ALRC.

(I) Criminal Admiralty Jurisdiction and the Law of Prize: The ALRC is yet to report on this reference and it is therefore inappropriate for me to comment on the matter at this stage.

(J) Service and Execution of Process (ALRC 40): On 24 August 1990, I announced that the Service and Execution of Process Act 1901 would be repealed and replaced following consideration of the ALRC’s recommendations.

(K) Matrimonial Property (ALRC 39): The report is under consideration. No announcement has been made.

(L) Insolvency (ALRC 45): The Insolvency and Trustee Service, Australia, a division of the Attorney-General’s Department, is currently working on a project to replace the Bankruptcy Act 1966 with a new Act. The main objectives intended to be achieved by the enactment of new legislation are: to implement recommendations of the Australian Law Reform Commission made in Report No. 45 General Insolvency Inquiry; to advance harmonisation of the bankruptcy laws of Australia and New Zealand pursuant to the Closer Economic Relations (CER) policy; and to reform and rationalise the bankruptcy administration. Work on preliminary drafting instructions is currently in progress.


(N) Debt Recovery and Insolvency (ALRC 36): The answer to this question is at (A) above.

(O) Occupiers’ Liability (ALRC 42): This has been the responsibility of the ACT Government since Self-Government Day on 11 May 1989.

Tibet
(Question No. 226)
Mr Cobb asked the Minister representing the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, upon notice, on 17 September 1990:

Is the Minister able to say whether there is any evidence of recent human rights violations by the Chinese in Tibet; if so, what (a) are the circumstances, (b) action has been taken by the Government and (c) was the response to that action.
Dr Blewett—The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

There is a lack of reliable information available to governments and interested parties outside China concerning the human rights situation in Tibet. However, international human rights organisations continue to report instances of alleged human rights abuses in Tibet, including arbitrary arrests, detention without trial and alleged torture and execution of Tibetans. Many, if not most, of the individuals concerned are reported to be monks or nuns.

The Australian Government has raised the human rights situation in Tibet with the Chinese Government on a number of occasions, and will continue to convey its concerns to the Chinese authorities over these continuing and disturbing allegations. In discussions with the Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Liu Huaqiu on 4 September 1990 in Beijing, Dr Blewett sought an official response from the Chinese Government to a large number of individual cases previously raised with the Chinese authorities, including a number of Tibetans. Most recently, I again sought a response from the Chinese Government to these representations in discussions with Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen in New York on 1 October. Regrettably, to date the Chinese Government has not provided a response.

Radioactive Waste
(Question No. 231)

Ms McHugh asked the Minister for Community Services and Health, upon notice, on 17 September 1990:

(1) With respect to the current consideration of guidelines for the classification and disposal of radioactive wastes in Australia by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), why are the classification and disposal of low-level radioactive waste being considered.

(2) Will he give an assurance that the consideration of the guidelines will not lead to Australia being able to accept radioactive waste from overseas.

(3) Noting that the commonly accepted guideline for a radioactive substance to decay to relatively safe levels of radioactivity is 10 half-lives, how long will the waste repository envisaged by the NHMRC need to remain intact if, as outlined in Table 1 of the proposed NHMRC guidelines, the repository accepts strontium-90.

(4) How will the repository remain intact for the period referred to in part (3).

(5) Given that the exposure pathways outlined in Appendix A of the proposed NHMRC guidelines envisage a repository which is only very lightly engineered, would it therefore be possible for there to be a breach of the repository without anyone knowing and that exposure to waste would subsequently occur.

(6) Has his attention been drawn to alternative heavily engineered waste disposal strategies being adopted by France, at La Manche, and Canada, namely the Intrusion Resistant Underground Structure (IRUS) approach.

(7) Will he give an assurance that any future Australian low-level radioactive waste repository will follow a similar heavily engineered approach rather than a lightly engineered approach.

Mr Staples—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) The Code of Practice and Guidelines on the safe disposal of low-level radioactive wastes are being prepared for consideration by the NHMRC for recommendation to the States and Territories—which carry the regulatory responsibility in Australia. The present situation is that waste containing low levels of radioactivity, exceeding that allowed to be committed directly to waste systems, is held in temporary storage at Commonwealth and State Government facilities and by private companies. Hence, there is a need for the development of repositories, together with guidance for selecting appropriate sites and criteria for classifying the material for disposal. A uniform approach to the problem throughout Australia should then be possible.

(2) The Code and Guidelines are intended to apply only to the disposal of low-level radioactive wastes generated in Australia.

(3) The Code and Guidelines specify a period of 200 years as the length of time during which there is to be institutional control and management of a burial site following its closure. The criteria on physical integrity and chemical stability of buried waste include a requirement of structural stability for 300 years if the waste has been specially treated or conditioned to meet the acceptance criteria for disposal.

(4) I am advised that it is generally accepted that waste contained in a matrix such as concrete will retain its structural integrity for at least 300 years and probably much longer.

(5) The recommendations on the siting of a facility, and its design and institutional control for a specified period following closure, are intended to minimise the possibility of intentional or inadvertent human intrusion.

(6) and (7) The “heavily engineered” waste disposal facilities at La Manche, France, and as proposed by Canada, are for intermediate-level radioactive waste as well as low-level waste. The NHMRC Code of Practice and Guidelines do not apply to the disposal of intermediate level waste.
Ozone Depletion
(Question No. 235)

Mr Ferguson asked the Minister for the Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territories, upon notice, on 17 September 1990:

(1) Has her attention been drawn to the theory that because iron increases planktonic photosynthesis, powdered rust might be used to counter ozone depletion.

(2) Has her Department appraised that theory; if so, (a) does the theory have merit, (b) what would be the mechanics of making iron available to plankton, (c) what would be the event of negative by-products and (d) will the Department put the theory into effect.

Mrs Kelly—The answers to the honourable member’s questions are as follows:

(1) Yes. The 10 May 1990 edition of the Nature magazine (Vol 345, pp 156-158) carried an article by Martin, Gordon and Fitzwater in which the authors report that they are testing the hypothesis that marine phytoplankton growth is limited in the offshore waters of the Antarctic because of iron deficiency. The article has no direct relevance to the protection of the ozone layer. However, the authors’ hypothesis is that this lack of iron could be the limiting factor of the effectiveness of phytoplankton acting as a sink for atmospheric carbon dioxide. However, they have not suggested that powdered rust be used to promote phytoplankton growth.

(2) (a) The authors hint at the possibility of counteracting global warming by using iron fertilisation of the ocean to stimulate phytoplankton growth and thus increase the removal of atmospheric carbon dioxide. Whether it would be feasible to raise the iron contents of the open ocean surface waters and whether such operations would have the desired result is not clear at this stage. The underlying principle of the theory that one could correct the imbalance in the natural environment through a technological fix is highly questionable. The suggestion is a theory, not a practical proposition and its merits are questionable before all the questions are addressed.

(b), (c) Given that the idea is highly speculative, there is no information whatsoever on how it could be carried out, nor what the consequences would be.

(d) In the light of answers to (a), (b) and (c) above, the theory cannot and should not be considered as a practical proposition at this stage.

ABC: Programs
(Question No. 237)

Mr Tuckey asked the Minister for Transport and Communications, upon notice, on 18 September 1990:

Has the ABC management decided that Saturday programs in Western Australia will be broadcast from Sydney at the end of the football season; if so, why.

Mr Beazley—The answer to the honourable member’s question, based on information provided by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, is as follows:

Yes. The ABC has decided to introduce a new national sporting program on ABC Radio at weekends in mid October. This will usually be broadcast in WA, but there will continue to be local sports input.

The ABC has advised that this decision will enable the ABC to present a high quality, cost effective coverage of the national sporting scene.

Treasury: Access and Equity Plan
(Question No. 243)

Mr Ruddock asked the Treasurer, upon notice, on 19 September 1990:

With respect to each of the Departments and agencies for which the Minister has portfolio responsibility, (a) when (i) was the first round Access and Equity Plan published and (ii) will the second round Access and Equity Plan be published, (b) what mechanisms have been set up, including at the regional level, to ensure ongoing consultation on access and equity with community organisations, (c) which community organisations or representatives are involved in such mechanisms, (d) which officer has major responsibilities for access and equity in the Department or agency and what is the officer’s position and (e) what are the names and contact numbers of the access and equity officers in each region.

Mr Keating—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(a) (i) The first round Australian Taxation Office (ATO) Access and Equity Plan has been sent to the Department of Treasury for inclusion in that portfolio’s plan.

(a) (ii) The ATO Access and Equity Plan is due to be revised this year. The second round Access and Equity Plan will be forwarded to the Department of Treasury for publication.

(b) The Commissioner of Taxation has established an advisory panel, the Commissioner’s Advisory Panel (CAP), which includes representatives of community groups at the highest level. Within each office the ATO has established public education units which liaise with community groups including ethnic community organisations.

To improve communication between the ATO and ethnic organisations the ATO organised a conference, Appreciating Diversity in and by the ATO, at the Sydney South Office on 10-11 October 1989. Organisations represented were: ATO,
Public Service Commission, Westpac, Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants, the Federation of Ethnic Communities’ Councils of Australia (FECCA) and the Office of Multicultural Affairs. The conference provided a forum for discussion and exchange of views on ATO service, tax matters and perceptions and experiences of tax agents. All participants received a published report.

(c) Mr Carl Harbaum, MBE, Chairman of FECCA, is a member of the Commissioner’s Advisory Panel, as is Ms Merle Mitchell, President of the Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS).

(d) The ATO’s sixteen Branch Offices are the primary points of contact for the provision of service to taxpayers and other clients. Access and equity responsibilities are carried by each Branch and rest with access and equity officers located in each Branch.

(e) The appropriate people to contact in each ATO Branch Office are the Public Education Unit (PEU) contacts. PEU contacts in each Branch Office provide feedback on ethnic community concerns to National Office. Their telephone numbers are given below.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Telephone Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>08 237 2898</td>
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<tr>
<td>Albury/Wodonga</td>
<td>060 410 399</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>07 222 5392</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>06 276 3715</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chatswood</td>
<td>02 419 9621</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dandenong</td>
<td>03 797 2191</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hobart</td>
<td>002 204 612</td>
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<tr>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>03 608 2364</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>049 251 092</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parramatta</td>
<td>02 893 3786</td>
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<td>Penrith</td>
<td>02 893 2741</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perth</td>
<td>09 326 3018</td>
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<td>Sydney CBD</td>
<td>02 210 3240</td>
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<td>02 210 7215</td>
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<tr>
<td>Townsville</td>
<td>077 229 465</td>
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<tr>
<td>Victoria North</td>
<td>03 608 9988</td>
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Attorney-General: Access and Equity Plan
(Question No. 247)

Mr Ruddock asked the Attorney-General, upon notice, on 19 September 1990:

With respect to each of the Departments and agencies for which the Minister has portfolio responsibility, (a) when (i) was the first round of Access and Equity Plan published and (ii) will the second round Access and Equity Plan be published, (b) what mechanisms have been set up, including at the regional level, to ensure ongoing consultation on access and equity with community organisations, (c) which community organisations or representatives are involved in such mechanisms, (d) which officer has major responsibilities for access and equity in the Department or agency and what is the officer’s position and (e) what are the names and contact telephone numbers of the access and equity officers in each region.

Mr Duffy—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(a) (i) October 1988.

(ii) The precise time of publication of the second round Plan cannot be stated as this will depend on the program set by the Office of Multicultural Affairs. We expect to have the Plan completed by early 1991.

(b) No formal mechanisms have been set up at departmental level at this stage. However, portfolio agencies which have a high exposure to Access and Equity issues such as the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, the Australian Federal Police, the Family Court of Australia, the Federal Bureau of Consumer Affairs and the Office of Legal Aid and Family Services have established ongoing consultative arrangements with community organisations.

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission for example, adopted a strategy for ongoing consultation in July 1988. As well as regular contact on an ongoing basis, the strategy includes an annual consultation meeting conducted over two days with representatives from major national non-government organisations.

In cases where community organisations are funded or partly funded by my portfolio, officers usually have the opportunity for input into the development of policies and guidelines of the bodies concerned to ensure, amongst other things, that the principles of the access and equity strategy are observed.

The agencies mentioned above are also involved in community education programs. The Family Court of Australia through its counselling services, provides community education and liaison programs. The aim of these programs is to educate workers in related fields and potential users of the Court on the services provided by the Court.

My Department participated in all the consultative forums organised by the Office of Multicultural Affairs earlier this year.

(c) Although the department does not have formal consultative mechanisms in place at this time, those bodies of the portfolio discussed in part (b) consult with the following organisations and groups on an ongoing basis: Major non-governmental organisations in the ethnic, Aboriginal, women’s, children’s, disability, mental illness and general human rights policy fields. More specifically:

- Secondary school children undertaking courses with a social awareness component
- Tertiary students enrolled in law, medicine, nursing or other social courses
Lawyers, welfare workers and community health workers

Legal health and welfare agencies

(d) Mr M N Cramsie, Assistant Secretary, Executive Branch of the Corporate Services Division of the Department is the officer with major responsibility for access and equity in the Department.

(e) A formal network of regional access and equity contact officers has not been established at this stage but steps are underway at present to establish such a network. In the meantime access and equity enquiries are normally directed to the Assistant Director, Corporate Services Branch, in each capital city.

In:

NSW Mr Chris Shead (02) 581 7990
Vic Mr Bob Brown (03) 606 1218
Qld Mr Brian Chester-Master (07) 226 5711
SA Mr Kevin Tilley (08) 213 4216
WA Mr Russell Trott (09) 425 7111
Tas Mr Randall Bevis (002) 20 1700
NT Mr Bernie O'Connell (089) 81 4833

Employment, Education and Training: Access and Equity Plan
(Question No. 248)

Mr Ruddock asked the Minister for Employment, Education and Training, upon notice, on 19 September 1990:

With respect to each of the Departments and agencies for which the Minister has portfolio responsibility, (a) when (i) was the first round Access and Equity Plan published and (ii) will the second round Access and Equity Plan be published, (b) what mechanisms have been set up, including at the regional level, to ensure ongoing consultation on access and equity with community organisations, (c) which community organisations or representatives are involved in such mechanisms, (d) which officer has major responsibilities for access and equity in the Department or agency and what is the officer's position and (e) what are the names and contact telephone numbers of the access and equity officers in each region.

Mr Dawkins—The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

Access and Equity Plans are required from portfolio departments only and not from agencies. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATISC) is exempt from producing a Plan as its client group is regarded as part of the overall Access and Equity target group and therefore is already receiving focused attention. The following answers relate to the Department of Employment, Education and Training.

(a) (i) October 1988. (ii) During the first half of 1991.

(b) My Department consults widely throughout the Australian community, through a range of consultative mechanisms, on issues affecting equitable access to programs and services.

While there are no consultations exclusive to the issue of access and equity, the consultative mechanisms in place provide comprehensive input to the access and equity processes.

(c) Consultations regularly take place with local, State/Territory and national organisations, and include immigrant, Aboriginal, non-English speaking background, community welfare and women's organisations.

(d) Principal Adviser, Policy Secretariat.

(e) Each State and Territory office of the Department designates an officer to be responsible for access and equity matters. Contact telephone numbers for these officers are:

- New South Wales
  Telephone (02) 218 8555
- Victoria
  Telephone (03) 666 7166
- Queensland
  Telephone (07) 226 9111
- Western Australia
  Telephone (09) 425 4545
- South Australia
  Telephone (08) 224 6111
- Tasmania
  Telephone (002) 35 7111
- Northern Territory
  Telephone (089) 82 9211

Defence: Access and Equity Plan
(Question No. 253)

Mr Ruddock asked the Minister representing the Minister for Defence, upon notice, on 19 September 1990:

With respect to each of the Departments and agencies for which the Minister has portfolio responsibility, (a) when (i) was the first round Access and Equity Plan published and (ii) will the second round Access and Equity Plan be published, (b) what mechanisms have been set up, including at the regional level, to ensure ongoing consultation and access and equity with community organisations, (c) which community organisations or representatives are involved in such mechanisms, (d) which officer has major responsibilities for access and equity in the Department
or agency and what is the officer's position and (e) what are the names and contact telephone numbers of the access and equity officers in each region.

Mr Bilney—The Minister for Defence has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

(a) (i) February 1990
   (ii) Not later than June 1991
(b) The mission of the Defence organisation is to protect and promote the security of Australia and its people against armed attack or other military pressure. While the Defence function is not analogous to the delivery of programs such as social welfare or community health, Defence has been involved in a number of initiatives that expose the Organisation to the community, such as:
   - The report by Mr Alan Wrigley on 'The Defence Force and the Community—A Partnership in Australia's defence'.
   - The Chief of the Defence Force, General P. Gration, conducts forums with community leaders throughout Australia on an opportunity basis.
   - By introducing special strategies, the Australian Defence Force (ADF) is trying to draw recruits from a wider range of backgrounds so that the composition of the ADF better reflects the composition of the community.

In addition many aspects of Defence's Access and Equity goals are pursued through the Department's EEO Program.

(c) not applicable
(d) The Director of Equal Employment Opportunity and Policy, phone 2668744.
(e) EEO Co-ordinators in each Defence Regional Office.
   NSW (02) 2662911
   VIC (03) 2821111
   QLD (07) 2262600
   SA (08) 2939911
   WA (09) 3237211
   TAS (002) 212200
   NT (089) 801155
   ACT (06) 2659111

(1) How many Australian Public Service (APS) officers of ASO grades 1 to 8 have joined the Minister's Department in Canberra through (a) transfer at the same grade or (b) promotion, from APS positions based outside Canberra within the last six months.

(2) What was the average cost to the Minister's Department, in terms of (a) sale or purchase of home, (b) removal to Canberra, (c) conveyance to Canberra, (d) removal of pets, (e) settling out, (f) settling in, (g) temporary accommodation allowance and (h) disturbance allowance for the officers referred to in part (1) who (i) transferred at the same level or (ii) were promoted.

Mr Beddall—The Minister for Administrative Services has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

(1) (a) 4 (b) 3
   (2) (i) (c) $118 (h) $590 (a), (b), (d), (e), (f), (g) Nil
   (2) (ii) (b) $3450 (c) $866 (h) $282 (a), (d), (e), (f), (g) Nil

Unemployment Benefits Guide
(Question No. 301)

Mr Filing asked the Minister representing the Minister for Social Security, upon notice, on 20 September 1990:

Do the explanations in the guide to the unemployment benefits enrolment form for questions three and four on the form appear in converse order.

Mr Howe—The Minister for Social Security has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

In May 1989 the form SU19A was printed with questions 3 and 4 in the reverse order from the order in the previous form. The explanatory text was not adjusted. The discrepancy has been corrected in the most recent printing.

Portsea Military Area
(Question No. 328)

Mr Reith asked the Minister for Defence Science and Personnel, upon notice, on 9 October 1990:

(1) What sums are being provided for (a) maintenance and (b) capital works for the School of Army Health, Norris Barracks, in (i) 1990-91, (ii) 1991-92 and (iii) 1992-93.

(2) What are the Commonwealth's obligations to repair, maintain or upgrade historic buildings within the Portsea military area.

(3) Is the Commonwealth able to subdivide, sell or lease all or part of the Portsea military area; if so, (a) what consideration has the De-
In the early 1980's sale of Portsea was identified as a possible option to offset some of the construction costs of the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA). However, on 14 October 1985 it was agreed by the Prime Minister that the future of Portsea be decided independently of the ADFA project. Following a detailed study by Army in 1985 on the future of Portsea following planned relocation of the Officer Cadet School to Canberra, it was confirmed that Portsea would be the site for the School of Army Health which was to relocate from Healesville. Earlier subdivisions/disposal options were then subsumed into negotiations with the State of Victoria on a Land Exchange Agreement.

In 1988, under the Land Exchange Agreement, 215.1 hectares of PMA were transferred to the State for inclusion in the Point Nepean National Park.

The 311 ha now remaining in Commonwealth ownership comprises the cantonment area and the Defence exercise area. The cantonment area (72 ha) contains the School of Army Health, the Quarantine Station and other heritage buildings. The Defence exercise area (239 ha) is mainly undisturbed natural vegetation which has considerable conservation value. The exercise area is contaminated by unexploded ordnance (UXO).

Other than transfer of some land to the State in 1988, no further consideration has been given to subdivision, sale or lease of the cantonment or Defence exercise areas. Furthermore, heritage and conservation considerations and the presence of UXO would militate against release of this land.

(4) Since 1985, the Army has not prepared any report which recommends the disposal of the Portsea Military Area. As part of a study into Defence Regional Support arrangements, administrative support structures at all Defence bases and facilities in Victoria and Tasmania are presently under examination. A first working draft of the report suggests that the continuing Army presence at Portsea should be reviewed. More generally Defence continues to review the efficient and effective use of its property holdings, having regard to Defence's overall objectives and available resources.

(5) No valuations have been sought since the finalisation of the Point Nepean Land Exchange Agreement between the Commonwealth and the State of Victoria.

(6) During the years 1986-89 the School provided conference facilities for numerous conferences and seminars on about a monthly basis. The conferences were attended by Defence person nel from throughout Australia and from Allied Nations. In 1990 the School was formally recognised as the Third Military District Conference Centre while maintaining its primary role as the training establishment for members of the Australian Army Health Services i.e. Medical, Dental and Nursing Corps members.
The following conferences and seminars have been held since January 1990:

a. 08-10 January Puckapunyal Logistic Battalion Officers' Leadership Seminar.
b. 19-20 February 28 February Commander Third Military District Command and Leadership Seminar.
c. 02 February Defence Force Pay Management Conference.
d. 06-08 March Puckapunyal Logistic Battalion Warrant Officers' and Senior Non-Commissioned Officers' Leadership Seminar.
e. 19-23 March Director General of the Army Health Services Conference.
f. 15 April Third Military District Occupational Health and Safety Officers' Meeting.
g. 14-16 May Broadmeadows Logistic Battalion Officers' and Warrant Officers' Leadership Seminar.
h. 21-25 May Broadmeadows Logistic Battalion Warrant Officers' and Senior Non-Commissioned Officers' Leadership Seminar.
i. 06-07 June District Support Unit Watsonia Officers', Warrant Officers' and Senior Non-Commissioned Officers' Leadership Seminar.
j. 23-24 June Director of Medical Services Third Military District-Health Services Conference.
k. 03-05 July Equipment Development Establishment Management Effectiveness Seminar.
l. 17-20 July Australian Army Psychology Corps Conference.
m. 23-27 July Australian Institute of Environmental Health, Disaster Management Seminar.
n. 31 July 02 August Soldier Career Management Agency Management Seminar.
o. 12-13 September Engineering Development Establishment Management Effectiveness Seminar.
p. 17-20 September Third Military District Chaplains' Conference.
q. 24-26 September Australian Defence Family Information Liaison Staff (ADFILS).

The following Conferences and Seminars are scheduled.
1990

a. 21-24 October Headquarters Logistic Command Risk Management Seminar.
b. 28 October 02 November Army Community Services Management Seminar.
c. 12-14 November Defence Audit Branch Management Seminar.
d. 19-23 November Engineering Development Establishment Value Analysis Course.
e. 26-29 November Soldier Career Management Agency Management Seminar.

1991

f. 18-21 March Surgeon General of the Australian Defence Force Conference.
g. 29 July Headquarters Logistic Command Logistics Exercise (LOGEX).
h. 02-05 September Third Military District Chaplains' Conference.

1992

i. 21-25 September Director General Army Health Services Conference.

In addition to Conference facilities, the School's military training area, grenade range, twenty five metre small arms range, classification range, playing fields and classrooms, when not in use to train members of the Australian Army Health Services, have been made available to other units, organisations and community groups.

The following activities using School facilities have occurred since January 1990.

a. 13 January Southern Peninsula Rescue Squad. Use of Jarman Oval Playing Field to conduct Portsea Pro Am Tennis Competition Finals.
b. 11 February Radio 3AW. Use of Jarman Ovals Playing Field to conduct Miss 3AW Teenage Quest of Victoria Barbecue to raise funds for the Royal Womens Hospital.
c. 10-23 February 3 Psychology Unit (Army Reserve). Use of military training area, ranges and classrooms to conduct its annual training.

d. 24-28 February Wisconsin National Guard Band. Accommodation during its tour of Victoria.

e. 01 April Victorian Conservation Group Annual Picnic. Use of barbecue facilities and historic tours.

f. 21 April 6 Field Ambulance (Army Reserve). Use of military training area and ranges to conduct field training.

g. 28-29 April Army Apprentice School. Accommodation for SCUBA Diving Course.

h. 29 April Victorian Heritage Week Tours.

i. 05-06 May 3 Army Reserve Recruiting Unit. Use of military training area and ranges to conduct field training.

j. 07-13 May 2 Signal Regiment. Use of military training area and ranges to conduct field training.

k. 18-20 May Peninsula School Cadet Unit. Use of military training area to conduct field training.

l. 28-29 May Australian Army Command and Staff College. Use of military training area to conduct field training.

m. 29 May 02 June 11-13 June 5/7th Battalion Royal Australian Regiment. Use of military training area.

n. 18-27 June Victorian Police Department. Use of classrooms to conduct a training course.

o. 04-06 July 09-13 July 2 Signal Regiment. Use of military training area and ranges to conduct field training.

p. 25-31 July 2 Signal Regiment. Use of military training area to conduct a communications exercise.

q. 08-14 August Australian Army Command and Staff College. Use of military training area to conduct an escape and evasion exercise.

r. 18-19 August Operation Raleigh. Use of military training area to test and select venturers.

s. 01-02 September Australian Army Apprentice School. Accommodation for SCUBA Course.

t. 03-07 September Soldier Career Management Agency. Accommodation and use of military training area and ranges for field training.

The following activities using School facilities are scheduled:

a. 03-04 November 16-17 November 2 Recovery Unit (Army Reserve). Bivouac facilities while unit carries out a recovery task on Channel Fort in Port Phillip.

b. 14-19 November Headquarters 3 Division Survey Unit. Use of military training area to conduct map making exercise.

c. 26-30 November 1 Armoured Regiment. Use of military training area for Adventure Training.

d. 06-11 December Peninsular School Cadets. Use of classrooms and military training area to conduct its Senior Non-Commissioned Officers' Course.

The following units have made range bookings for 1991:

1. 3 Psychology Unit,

2. 127 Signal Squadron,

3. 2 Signal Regiment,

4. 6 Engineer Group,

5. 7 Transport Squadron, and

6. 3 Army Reserve Recruiting Unit.

The School's facilities are being used to their fullest extent and will continue to be made available to units of the Australian Defence Force and various community groups when not required for the training of Australian Army Health Services personnel.

**Bogan Gate Army Supply System**

(Question No. 335)

**Mr Cobb** asked the Minister for Defence Science and Personnel, upon notice, on 10 October 1990:

1. What fixed assets exist at the Bogan Gate Army Supply Depot.
(2) Does the Government intend to close the Depot; if so, (a) what are the details and (b) what will be done with the fixed assets.

Mr Bilney—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) The fixed assets consist of: An administration building. A stores complex including a transport building and fire station. Four ammunition storage buildings. Workshop facilities. Rail siding shed. Sleeping accommodation for living-in personnel. Central kitchen and messing facilities for officers, sergeants and rank and file members. Canteen facilities and a social hall. Sporting facilities including a swimming pool. Twelve married quarters.

(2) Closure of Bogan Gate Ammunition Depot has been intended for several years, as part of the on-going rationalisation of Defence’s support infrastructure. Army is concentrating its New South Wales ammunition holdings at Myambat. The present plan is to cease ammunition operations at Bogan Gate by December 1991. Closure would allow for redeployment of military manpower. Civilian staff who could not be redeployed or reassigned to other functions would have to be declared redundant. While staff at Bogan Gate were advised personally by the General Officer Commanding Logistic Command in April this year of the intention to scale down and close operations, I will not be making a formal statement to the Parliament on this until later this year. The full twelve months notice will be given to civilian employees. The recent movement of ammunition out of Bogan Gate took advantage of the short term availability of Land Command transport assets. That move did not affect the timetable for closure. Decisions have not been made on the future use or disposal of the property.

Mr Keating—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) The purpose of the Industry Commission is to provide advice to the Government on industry policy issues, to report generally on the economic performance of industry and the effects of regulation and assistance and to enhance community understanding of such issues. The Commission is an advisory body that conducts open and public inquiries. It is required to report and advise on industry matters from the perspective of the community as a whole, rather than the interest of any particular industry, region or community group.

For further detail, see the Industry Commission Act, 1989 (especially s.6 and s.8 which deal with the functions of the Commission and the Government’s policy guidelines), my press release of 15 August 1989 announcing the establishment of the Industry Commission, and the second reading speech of 2 November 1989 on the Industry Commission Bill.

(2) & (3) The Industry Commission has released a draft report as part of its inquiry into the automotive industry. That report will provide the basis for further community comment. When the Commission’s final report is received by 31 December 1990, the Government will give careful consideration to all recommendations.

Papua New Guinea Parliament
(Question No. 344)

Mr Halverson asked the Minister representing the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, upon notice, on 16 October 1990:

(1) Is the Minister able to say how many members of the Papua New Guinea Parliament were (a) elected, (b) re-elected, (c) defeated or (d) retired in each election in Papua New Guinea since independence.

Dr Blewett—The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

(1) In the 1977 election:
there were two (2) new seats;
eighteen (18) members did not recontest;
fifty-four (54) recontesting members were unsuccessful;
and there were seventy-four (74) new members.

(2) In the 1982 election:
six (6) members did not recontest;
fifty-three (53) recontesting members were unsuccessful;
fifty (50) recontesting members were suc-
cessful; and there were fifty-nine (59) new members.

(3) In the 1987 election:
five (5) members did not recontest;
fourty-eight (48) recontesting members were unsuccessful;
fifty-six (56) recontesting members were successful; and there were fifty-three (53) new members.

Public Debt Interest
(Question No. 347)

Mr Moore asked the Minister for Transport and Communications, upon notice, on 17 October 1990:

Did he say at a joint press conference with the Prime Minister on 24 September 1990 that the proceeds of savings on public debt interest following privatisation would form a fund for infrastructure development; if so, (a) what sum would be saved with respect to the public debt interest, (b) who would administer the fund, (c) who would have access to the fund, (d) who would decide how funds should be disbursed and (e) would the ACTU have a role in administering the fund.

Mr Beazley—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

I indicated at the joint press conference with the Prime Minister on 24 September 1990 that the favoured use of the proceeds from the sale of Australian Airlines was to retire public debt and use the interest savings generated to form effectively a fund for infrastructure development.

A final decision on this has not yet been made and its timing will depend on factors such as the finalisation of sale arrangements. If the outcome is to use the sale proceeds in the manner I have suggested then the matters of detail raised in your question will have to be addressed. Until this occurs I cannot be more specific in my answer. I would add however, that there are a number of issues that will have to be carefully thought through before any arrangements for an infrastructure fund are decided on.

Sheep Slaughter Program
(Question No. 353)

Mr Cobb asked the Minister for Primary Industries and Energy, upon notice, on 17 October 1990:

What are the economic and logistical considerations in processing and freighting at least a proportion of the mutton from any proposed sheep slaughter program to overseas countries.

Mr Kerin—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

If the honourable member is referring to the use of some of the sheep to be slaughtered as food aid in the form of mutton, a great deal of consideration has been given to this issue. The Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation in conjunction with the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau (AIDAB), the Sheepmeat Council of Australia and the World Food Programme have thoroughly investigated this option. In the case of frozen or chilled mutton or even live sheep an identified problem is that it is unlikely the aid recipient countries would have the necessary infrastructure to receive such product. Regarding processed mutton, the cost of processing results in products such as canned mutton being very expensive compared with other traditional forms of food aid, supplied by Australia, such as wheat and powdered milk. Even if sheep are supplied to the processor at a nil charge, the cost of processing mutton into canned food is high, at around $3400 per tonne against wheat at around $150 per tonne. Given the lower cost of other types of food aid, mutton offers poor value in terms of nutritional benefit to the receiving country per dollar spent on the aid in Australia. Additionally, canned mutton is largely an unfamiliar product in aid recipient countries and for that reason can be an unacceptable aid item. These factors thus preclude the use of the limited food aid budget for this purpose at this time.

The use of sheep resulting from any proposed slaughter scheme for commercial mutton sales to overseas countries is under close examination. A proportion of the sheep likely to be slaughtered are older sheep with an end carcass weight of less than 17 kilograms and as such are not commercially viable for mutton production even at zero cost to works. Younger animals brought in for slaughter are more likely to be commercially viable. The Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation and the sheepmeat industry are intensifying their efforts to identify international markets for mutton. It is encouraging that a significant sale of 24,000 tonnes of mutton has recently been made to Iran and prospects in the USSR and some other countries are promising.

International Airlines: Safety Incidents
(Question No. 357)

Mr Jull asked the Minister for Transport and Communications, upon notice:

(1) How many safety incidents regarding the operations of international airlines into and out of Australia have been reported since 1985.

(2) With respect to each incident referred to in part (1): (a) was the incident investigated, (b) what was the result of each investigation, (c) what action was taken, and (d) were charges laid or disciplinary action taken.

(3) Did any of the incidents referred to in part (1) involve foreign pilots being under the influence of alcohol; if so, with respect to each inci-
dent (a) when did it occur, (b) what were the circumstances regarding the reporting of the incident, and (c) what action was taken.

Mr Beazley—The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

(1) 528 incidents were reported to the Bureau of Air Safety Investigation during the period.

(2) Because of the numbers involved, it is not practical to provide details on each of the individual incidents.

(3) I am advised that none of the reported incidents contained allegations that foreign pilots were under the influence of alcohol.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions
(Question No. 378)

Mr Langmore asked the Minister for the Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territories, upon notice, on 7 November 1990:

(1) How is the level of greenhouse gas emissions for 1988 to be measured and what are the estimates of those emissions.

(2) How will greenhouse gas emissions be monitored in the future.

Mrs Kelly—The answers to the honourable member's question is as follows:

(1) Greenhouse gas emissions are not normally directly measured. They are derived, for example, from the amount of fossil fuels used in the case of carbon dioxide emissions or the number of sheep and cattle in the case of methane emissions. Other sources of emissions are similarly assessed to give the total emission.

The Australian and New Zealand Environment Council (ANZEC), which consists of Commonwealth, State, Territory and New Zealand environment Ministers, is finalising a detailed National Inventory of Greenhouse Gas Emissions for the year 1987-88. An estimate of overall emissions is also given in ANZEC's recent report 'Reducing Greenhouse Gases—Options for Australia'. The emissions given in this report for 1987-88, in millions of tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gas</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carbon</td>
<td>270.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methane</td>
<td>111.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chlorofluorocarbons</td>
<td>64.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nitrous Oxide</td>
<td>87.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2) By continuing to update the National Inventory of Greenhouse Gas Emissions it will be possible to monitor our progress on meeting the interim planning target to reduce emissions by 20% by 2005.

Racial Discrimination
(Question No. 386)

Mr Hollis asked the Minister representing the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, upon notice, on 8 November 1990:

(1) Will Australia be making its seventh periodic report, covering the period from January 1987 to October 1990, to the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) for hearing in Geneva in March 1991.

(2) Further to the answers to questions Nos 98 (Hansard, 18 February 1988, page 318), 1571 (Hansard, 24 May 1989, page 2889) and 180, will the report referred to in part (1) explain the delay in concluding the Archer River Property case in which the High Court on 11 May 1982 gave judgement in favour of Mr Koowarta under the Racial Discrimination Act 1975.

(3) Is the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission consulted in the preparation of the biennial reports to CERD.

Dr Blewett—The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

(1) Australia's Seventh Periodic Report to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) is currently being prepared under the co-ordination of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The UN Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination is scheduled to consider Australia's Sixth and Seventh Periodic Reports in March 1991.

(2) The background to the Archer River Property Case was explained to the House on 8 November 1990 by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.

Australia's Seventh Periodic Report to CERD formally covers the period October 1987 to October 1990. During this reporting cycle there have been few developments in the Archer River Case. I have been informed by the office of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission that Australia's Seventh Periodic Report will not, therefore deal with this case.

(3) The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) is consulted in the preparation of Australian reports under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, including in respect of complaints lodged with the HREOC under the Racial Discrimination Act (1975) and activities of the HREOC with regard to combating racial discrimination through education programs and research undertaken.
Mr Hollis asked the Attorney-General, upon notice, on 8 November 1990:

(1) By and from which countries have nominations been made for vacancies in the International Court of Justice.

(2) Further to the answer to question No. 27, (Hansard, 21 August 1990, page 1209), which nominations have been recommended by the Australian National Group.

Mr Duffy—The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

(1) The following list of nominations by National Groups of persons for election to the International Court was issued by the United Nations (A/45/544):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name and nationality</th>
<th>Nominated by the National Group of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aguilar Mawdsley, Andres</td>
<td>Austria, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Denmark,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Venezuela)</td>
<td>Dominican Republic, Greece, Finland, Ireland,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jamaica, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, Spain,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Northern Ireland, Vanuatu, Venezuela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amega, Atsu-Koffi</td>
<td>Togo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Togo)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asante, Samuel K B</td>
<td>Federal Republic of Germany, Ghana, Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Ghana)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross Espiell, Hector</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Uruguay)</td>
<td>Federal Republic of Germany, Philippines, Senegal,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uruguay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guillaume, Gilbert</td>
<td>Algeria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(France)</td>
<td>Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Federal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Republic of Germany, Finland, France, Greece, Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Luxembourg, Netherlands, Senegal, Spain, Sweden</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Answers to Questions

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name and nationality</th>
<th>Nominated by the National Group of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Jennings, Sir Robert Yewdall  
(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) | Switzerland  
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland  
United States of America  
Uruguay |
| Mudawi, Mohamed Yousif  
(Sudan) | Sudan  
Mexico |
| Patel, Dorab  
(Pakistan) | Belgium |
| Pathak, Raghunandan Swarup  
(India) | Ireland |
| Ranjeva, Raymond  
(Madagascar) | Canada  
France  
Madagascar |
| Razafindralambo, Edilbert  
(Madagascar) | Greece  
Luxembourg  
Switzerland |
| Sucharitkul, Sompong  
(Thailand) | Netherlands |
Name and nationality | Nominated by the National Group of
--- | ---
Sy, Seydou Madani (Senegal) | France Senegal Thailand
Syquia, Enrique P (Philippines) | Dominican Republic Mexico Philippines Thailand Uruguay
Weeramantry, Christopher Gregory (Sri Lanka) | New Zealand Sri Lanka

(2) The Australian National Group nominated Judges Jennings (UK) and Guillaume (France). In elections on 15 November 1990 the following were elected: Aguilar (Venezuela), Guillaume (France), Jennings (UK), Weeramantry (Sri Lanka), Ranjeva (Madagascar).

**Australian Surveying and Land Information Group** (Question No. 419)

Mr Filing asked the Minister representing the Minister for Administrative Services, upon notice, on 15 November 1990:

(1) To what extent is the Australian Surveying and Land Information Group (AUSLIG) obliged to operate on a commercial footing.

(2) Which Commonwealth departments have used the services of AUSLIG during (a) 1989-90 and (b) 1990-91 to the date of answering this question.

(3) Are Commonwealth departments obliged to use the services of AUSLIG.

(4) In commercial terms, is AUSLIG able to provide services at a rate comparable to private competitors.

(5) Is the cost of the promotion of AUSLIG in competition with private firms considered to be part of AUSLIG's commercial activities to the extent that it is balanced against total receipts.

(6) Have there been any instances where AUSLIG has sent surveyors to remote centres when the services of private competitors have been available in the same place at less expense.

(7) Are private surveying contractors available to perform most of AUSLIG's tasks; if not, what tasks.

Mr Beddall—The Minister for Administrative Services has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

(1) AUSLIG is obliged to charge for its client-based services to enable costs to be met from revenue rather than budget appropriations. AUSLIG also undertakes community service obligation activities. AUSLIG's geodetic, general and revision mapping, national atlas program, remote sensing, offshore boundaries and co-ordination of Commonwealth activities were identified by the Government in September 1988 as public interest activities to be funded from the Budget but with revenue targets. AUSLIG manages all its finances on a Group 2 trust account.

(2) (a) Aboriginal Affairs (ATSIC)
Administrative Services
Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territories
Attorney-General's
Community Services and Health
Defence
Employment, Education and Training
Foreign Affairs and Trade
Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs
Industry, Technology and Commerce
Primary Industries and Energy
Transport and Communications
Treasury
Veterans' Affairs
(b) As for (a).

(3) No, not since 1 July 1990.

(4) Few, if any private competitors provide the range of services offered by AUSLIG. In areas where there is commonality, AUSLIG's rates compare favourably with the Institution of Surveyors' guide for fees.

(5) Any promotion costs associated with AUSLIG's client-based activities are covered by revenue received from the provision of services to clients.

(6) As a national organisation with offices in all capital cities, AUSLIG employs its resources to maximise efficiency and effectiveness. There may also be considerations of confidentiality, scope of work and timeliness which may warrant the use of in-house resources rather than
private sector firms, but decisions are made on a case by case basis.

(7) The private sector has the capacity to undertake only some of AUSLIG's tasks. Whilst nationally the private sector has the capability to undertake routine survey tasks, it does not have the capability in areas such as national remote sensing, offshore boundaries, geodesy, national digital data base co-ordination and management.