COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

House of Representatives

Official Hansard

No. 13, 1968
Tuesday, 26 March 1968

TWENTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT
SECOND SESSION—FIRST PERIOD

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH

TWENTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT—SECOND SESSION: FIRST PERIOD

GOVERNOR-GENERAL

His Excellency the Right Honourable Richard Gardiner, Baron Casey, a Member of Her Majesty’s Most Honourable Privy Council, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Member of the Order of Companions of Honour, Companion of the Distinguished Service Order, upon whom has been conferred the Decoration of the Military Cross, Knight of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem, Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief in and over the Commonwealth of Australia from 22 September 1965.

Commonwealth of Australia Gazette

No. 107A
Canberra, Tuesday, 19 December 1967

HIS Excellency the Governor-General directs it to be notified, for general information, that he has:

(a) determined the appointment of The Right Honourable Harold Edward Holt, M.P., as Prime Minister; and

(b) directed and appointed The Right Honourable John McEwen M.P., a member of the Federal Executive Council, to hold the office of Prime Minister and to administer the Department of State connected with that office.

McEWEN GOVERNMENT

(AS FROM 19 DECEMBER 1967)

Prime Minister and Minister for Trade and Industry
The Right Honourable John McEwen

Treasurer
The Right Honourable William McMahon

Minister for External Affairs
The Right Honourable Paul Meernaa Caedwalla Hasluck

Minister for Defence
The Honourable Allen Fairhall

Minister for Primary Industry
The Honourable John Douglas Anthony

Minister for Education and Science
Senator the Honourable John Grey Gorton

Postmaster-General; and Vice-President of the Executive Council
The Honourable Alan Shallcross Hulme

Minister for National Development
The Honourable David Eric Fairbairn, D.F.C.

Minister for Supply
Senator the Honourable Norman Henry Denham Henty

Minister for Labour and National Service
The Honourable Leslie Harry Ernest Bury

Minister for Social Services; and Minister assisting the Minister for Trade and Industry
The Honourable Ian McCahon Sinclair

(The above Ministers constitute the Cabinet)

Minister for Shipping and Transport
The Honourable Gordon Freeth

Minister for Territories
The Honourable Charles Edward Barnes

Minister for Civil Aviation
The Honourable Reginald William Colin Swartz, M.B.E., E.D.

Minister for Immigration
The Honourable Billy Mackie Snedden, Q.C.

Minister for Health
The Honourable Alexander James Forbes, M.C.

Minister for Air; and Minister assisting the Treasurer
The Honourable Peter Howson

Minister for Customs and Excise
Senator the Honourable Kenneth McColl Anderson

Minister for Repatriation
Senator the Honourable Gerald Colin McKellar

Minister for Housing
Senator the Honourable Dame Annabelle Jane Mary Rankin, D.B.E.

Minister for the Army
The Honourable John Malcolm Fraser

Minister for Works
The Honourable Charles Robert Kelly

Attorney-General
The Honourable Nigel Hubert Bowen, Q.C.

Minister for the Navy; and, under the Minister for Trade and Industry, Minister-in-Charge of Tourist Activities
The Honourable Donald Leslie Chipp

Minister for the Interior
The Honourable Peter James Nixon
HIS Excellency the Governor-General directs it to be notified, for general information, that he has:

(a) determined the appointment of The Right Honourable John McEwen, M.P., as Prime Minister; and
(b) directed and appointed Senator the Honourable John Grey Gorton, a member of the Federal Executive Council, to hold the office of Prime Minister and to administer the Department of State connected with that office.

HIS Excellency the Governor-General directs it to be notified, for general information, that, today on the occasion of the administration of the Oath of Office to Senator the Honourable John Grey Gorton as Prime Minister of Australia, he made the following statement:

"Whereas on the 17th day of December, 1967 I was advised by the Right Honourable John McEwen M.P., Deputy Prime Minister, that the Right Honourable Harold Edward Holt, M.P., then Prime Minister of Australia, was unavailable to perform the duties of his office and was in all probability dead;

And whereas, upon the information available to me, it appeared to me that, notwithstanding exhaustive and adequate search by land, sea and air, (which was continued until 5th January, 1968) the body of the said Harold Edward Holt was lost in the sea and remained undiscovered, and that, having regard to the circumstances of his disappearance on the 17th day of December, 1967 and to the searches so made, he was in all probability dead;

And whereas, upon the said advice and information, I decided on the 19th day of December, 1967 to determine the Commission formerly granted by me to the said Harold Edward Holt to hold the office of Prime Minister and to grant a Commission to the said John McEwen to execute the duties of such office;

And whereas on the 19th day of December, 1967 Harold Edward Holt's Commission was determined and a Commission was issued to John McEwen;

And whereas on the 10th day of January, 1968 the said John McEwen tendered to me and I accepted his resignation as Prime Minister of Australia;

Now, I address you, John Grey Gorton, having been advised by John McEwen, Prime Minister of Australia that you command the necessary political support—I have decided to grant a Commission to you, John Grey Gorton to hold the office of Prime Minister of Australia. I now invite you to make the Oath of Office."

FIRST GORTON GOVERNMENT

(AS FROM 10 JANUARY 1968)

(Other than the appointment of Senator The Honourable John Grey Gorton to replace the Right Honourable John McEwen in the office of Prime Minister, the constitution of this Government is as for the McEwen Government).
HIS Excellency the Governor-General directs it to be notified, for general information, that he has:

(a) determined the appointment of The Honourable John Grey Gorton, M.P., as Prime Minister; and

(b) directed and appointed The Honourable John Grey Gorton, M.P., a member of the Federal Executive Council, to hold the office of Prime Minister and to administer the Department of State connected with that office.

SECOND GORTON GOVERNMENT

(AS FROM 28 FEBRUARY 1968)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minister</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prime Minister</td>
<td>The Right Honourable John Grey Gorton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Trade and Industry</td>
<td>The Right Honourable John McEwen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>The Right Honourable William McMahon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for External Affairs</td>
<td>The Right Honourable Paul Meernaa Cadwalla Hasluck</td>
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<td>Minister for Defence</td>
<td>The Honourable Allen Fairhall</td>
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<td>The Honourable John Douglas Anthony</td>
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<td>Postmaster-General; and Vice-President of the Executive Council</td>
<td>The Honourable Alan Shallcross Huime</td>
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<td>The Honourable David Eric Fairbairn, D.F.C.</td>
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<td>The Honourable Leslie Harry Ernest Bury</td>
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<td>Minister for Shipping and Transport; and Minister assisting the Minister for Trade and Industry</td>
<td>The Honourable Jan McCahon Sinclair</td>
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<td>Senator the Honourable Kenneth McColl Anderson</td>
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<td>Minister for Civil Aviation</td>
<td>(The above Ministers constitute the Cabinet)</td>
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<td>The Honourable Gordon Freeth</td>
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<td>The Honourable Charles Edward Barnes</td>
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<td>Senator the Honourable Malcolm Fox Scott</td>
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<td>Minister for Social Services; and Minister-in-Charge of Aboriginal Affairs</td>
<td>The Honourable William Charles Wentworth</td>
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<td>Minister for Works; and under the Minister for Trade and Industry Minister-in-Charge of Tourist Activities</td>
<td>Senator the Honourable Reginald Charles Wright</td>
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MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

TWENTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT—SECOND SESSION: FIRST PERIOD

Speaker—The Honourable William John Aston

Leader of the House—The Honourable Billy Mackie Snedden, Q.C.

Chairman of Committees—Philip Ernest Luccok


Leader of the Opposition—Edward Gough Whitlam, Q.C.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition—Lance Herbert Barnard

Leader of the Australian Country Party—The Right Honourable John McEwen

Deputy Leader of the Australian Country Party—The Honourable John Douglas Anthony

Adermann, Rt Hon. Charles Frederick
Allan, Archibald Ian
Anthony, Hon. John Douglas
Armstrong, Adam Alexander, M.C.
Arthur, William Tevlin
Aston, Hon. William John
Barnard, Lance Herbert
Barnes, Hon. Charles Edward
Bates, Henry Jefferson
Beaton, Noel Lawrence
Beazley, Kim Edward
Benson, Samuel James, R.D.
Birrell, Frederick Ronald
Bonnett, Robert Noel
Bosman, Leonard Lewis
Bowen, Hon. Nigel Hubert, Q.C.
Bridges-Maxwell, Crawford William
Brownbill, Miss Kay Cathrine Millin
Bryant, Gordon Munro
Buchanan, Alexander Andrew
Bury, Hon. Leslie Harry Ernest
Cairns, James Ford
Cairns, Kevin Michael Kieran
Calder, Stephen Edward, D.F.C.
Calwell, Rt Hon. Arthur Augustus
Cameron, Clyde Robert
Cameron, Donald Milner
Chaney, Hon. Frederick Charles, A.F.C.
Chipp, Hon. Donald Leslie
Clark, Joseph James
Cleaver, Richard
Collard, Frederick Walter
Connor, Reginald Francis Xavier
Cope, James Francis
Corbett, James
Costa, Dominic Eric
Courtnay, Frank
Cramer, Hon. Sir John Oscar
Crean, Frank
Cross, Manfred Douglas
Curtin, Daniel James
Daly, Frederick Michael
Davies, Ronald
Devine, Leonard Thomas
Dobie, James Donald Mathieson
Drury, Edward Nigel
Duthie, Gilbert William Arthur
England, John Armstrong, E.D.
Erwin, George Dudley
Everingham, Douglas Nixon
Failes, Laurence John
Fairbairn, Hon. David Eric, D.F.C.

Fisher (Qld)
Gwydir (N.S.W.)
Richmond (N.S.W.)
Riverina (N.S.W.)
Barton (N.S.W.)
Phillip (N.S.W.)
Bass (Tas.)
McPherson (Qld)
Macarthur (N.S.W.)
Bendigo (Vic.)
Fremantle (W.A.)
Batman (Vic.)
Port Adelaide (S.A.)
Herbert (Qld)
St George (N.S.W.)
Parramatta (N.S.W.)
Robertson (N.S.W.)
Kingston (S.A.)
Wills (Vic.)
McMillan (Vic.)
 Wentworth (N.S.W.)
Yarra (Vic.)
Lilley (Qld)
(N.T.)
Melbourne (Vic.)
Hindmarsh (S.A.)
Griffith (Qld)
Perth (W.A.)
Higinbotham (Vic.)
Darling (N.S.W.)
Swan (W.A.)
Kalgoorlie (W.A.)
Cunningham (N.S.W.)
Watson (N.S.W.)
Maranoa (Qld)
Banks (N.S.W.)
Darebin (Vic.)
Bennelong (N.S.W.)
Melbourne Ports (Vic.)
Brisbane (Qld)
Kingsford-Smith (N.S.W.)
Grayndler (N.S.W.)
Braddon (Tas.)
East Sydney (N.S.W.)
Hughes (N.S.W.)
Ryan (Qld)
Wilmot (Tas.)
Calare (N.S.W.)
Ballarat (Vic.)
Capricornia (Qld)
Lawson (N.S.W.)
Farrer (N.S.W.)
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<td>Fairhall, Hon. Allen</td>
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<td>Forbes, Hon. Alexander James, M.C.</td>
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<td>Fox, Edmund Maxwell Cameron</td>
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<td>Fraser, James Reay</td>
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<td>Fraser, Hon. John Malcolm</td>
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<td>Freeth, Hon. Gordon</td>
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<td>Fulton, William John</td>
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<td>Gibba, Wylie Talbot</td>
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<td>Gibson, Adrian</td>
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<td>Giles, Geoffrey O'Halloran</td>
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<td>Gorton, Rt Hon. John Grey</td>
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<td>Graham, Bruce William</td>
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<td>Griffiths, Charles Edward</td>
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<td>Hallett, John Mead</td>
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<td>Hansen, Brendan Percival</td>
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<td>Harrison, Eli James</td>
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<td>Hasluck, Rt Hon. Paul Meernaas Caedwalla</td>
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<td>Haworth, Hon. William Crawford</td>
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<td>Hayden, William George</td>
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<td>Holten, Rendle McNeilage</td>
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<td>Howson, Hon. Peter</td>
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<td>Hughes, Thomas Eyre Forrest, Q.C.</td>
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<td>Hulme, Hon. Alan Shaileress</td>
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<td>Irwin, Leslie Herbert, M.B.E.</td>
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<td>James, Albert William</td>
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<td>Jarman, Alan William</td>
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<td>Jess, John David</td>
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<td>Jessop, Donald Scott</td>
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<td>Jones, Charles Keith</td>
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<td>Katter, Robert Cummin</td>
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<td>Kelly, Hon. Charles Robert</td>
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<td>Kent Hughes, Hon. Sir Wilfrid Selwyn, K.B.E., M.V.O., M.C., E.D.</td>
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<td>Killen, Denis James</td>
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<td>King, Robert Shannon</td>
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<td>Lee, Mervyn William</td>
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<td>Luchetti, Anthony Sylvester</td>
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<td>Lucock, Philip Ernest</td>
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<td>Lynch, Hon. Philip Reginald</td>
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<td>Mackay, Malcolm George</td>
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<td>Maisey, Donald William</td>
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<td>McGewan, Rt Hon. John</td>
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<td>McFvor, Hector James</td>
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<td>McLeay, John Elden</td>
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<td>McMahon, Rt Hon. William</td>
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<td>Minogue, Daniel</td>
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<td>Munro, Dugald Ronald Ross</td>
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<td>Nicholls, Martin Henry</td>
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<td>Nixon, Hon. Peter James</td>
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<td>O'Connor, William Paul</td>
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<td>Patterson, Rex Alan</td>
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<td>Peacock, Andrew Sharp</td>
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<td>Pearsall, Thomas Gordon</td>
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<td>Peters, Edward William</td>
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<td>Pettitt, John Alexander</td>
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<td>Robinson, Ian Louis</td>
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<td>Scholes, Gordon Glen Denton</td>
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<td>Sinclair, Hon. Ian McCahon</td>
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<td>Snedden, Hon. Billy Mackie, Q.C.</td>
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<td>Stewart, Francis Eugene</td>
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<td>St John, Edward Henry, Q.C.</td>
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<td>Stokes, Philip William Clifford, E.D.</td>
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<td>Street, Anthony Austin</td>
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<td>Swartz, Hon. Reginald William Colin, M.B.E., E.D.</td>
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<td>Turnbull, Winton George, C.B.E.</td>
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<td>Turner, Henry Basil</td>
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<td>Uren, Thomas</td>
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<td>Webb, Charles Harry</td>
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<td>Wentworth, Hon. William Charles</td>
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<td>Whitlam, Edward Gough, Q.C.</td>
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<td>Whitton, Raymond Harold</td>
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<td>Wilson, Ian Bonython Cameron</td>
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THE COMMITTEES OF THE SESSION

(FIRST PERIOD)

STANDING COMMITTEES

HOUSE: Mr Speaker, Mr Failes, Mr J. R. Fraser, Mr Graham, Mr Hansen, Mr McIvor, Mr Stokes.

LIBRARY: Mr Speaker, Mr Ian Allan, Mr Bryant, Mr Cross, Mr Drury (from 4 April 1968), Mr O'Connor, Mr Turner, Mr Wentworth (to 4 April 1968).

PRINTING: Mr Graham (Chairman), Miss Brownbill, Mr Bryant, Mr Buchanan (from 4 April 1968), Mr Corbett, Mr J. R. Fraser, Mr Lynch (to 4 April 1968), Mr Stewart.

PRIVILEGES: Mr Clark, Mr Crean, Mr Drury, Mr J. R. Fraser, Mr James, Mr Killen, Mr Peacock, Mr St. John, Mr Turnbull.

STANDING ORDERS: Mr Speaker (Chairman), the Chairman of Committees, the Leader of the House, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Mr Bryant, Mr Clark, Mr Drury, Mr Duthie, Mr Fulton, Mr Gorton, Mr McEwen.

JOINT STATUTORY COMMITTEES

BROADCASTING OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS: Mr Speaker (Chairman), Mr President, Senator McClelland, Senator Sim, and Mr Arthur, Miss Brownbill, Mr Costa, Mr Luchetti, Mr Turnbull.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS: Mr Cleaver (Chairman), Senator Fitzgerald, Senator Webster, Senator Dame Ivy Wedgwood, and Mr Collard, Mr Cope, Mr Dobie, Mr Fox, Mr Peters, Mr Robinson.

PUBLIC WORKS: Mr Chaney (Chairman), Senator Bramson, Senator Dittmer, Senator Prowse, and Mr Bosman, Mr Fulton, Mr Holten, Mr James, Mr O'Connor.

JOINT COMMITTEES

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY: Senator Wood (Chairman and member to 16 May 1968), Senator Marriott (Chairman from 16 May 1968, member to 2 May 1968), Senator Cotton (to 2 May 1968), Senator Devitt, Senator Sir Kenneth Morris, Senator Toohey, Senator Dame Ivy Wedgwood, and Mr Daly, Mr England, Mr Fox, Mr J. R. Fraser.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS: Senator Cormack (Chairman), Senator Bull, Senator Drury, Senator Laught, Senator Mattner, Senator McManus, Senator Mulvihill, Senator Willesee, and Mr Ian Allan, Mr Armstrong, Mr Barnard, Mr Beazley, Mr Costa, Mr Cross, Mr Davies, Mr Giles, Mr Hughes, Mr Jess, Mr Killen, Mr Peacock, Mr Turner.

NEW AND PERMANENT PARLIAMENT HOUSE: Mr President (Chairman), Mr Speaker (Deputy Chairman), the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Country Party in the House of Representatives, the Leader of the Opposition in the House of Representatives, Senator Devitt, Senator Drake-Brockman, Senator McClelland, Senator Dame Ivy Wedgwood, and Mr Barnard, Mr Birrell, Mr Bryant, Mr Duthie, Mr Drury, Mr Erwin, Mr Giles, Mr Luchetti, Mr Nixon.
PARLIAMENTARY DEPARTMENTS

SENATE
Clerk—J. R. Odgers
Deputy Clerk—R. E. Bullock
Clerk-Assistant—K. O. Bradshaw
Principal Parliamentary Officer—A. R. Cumming Thom
Usher of the Black Rod—H. C. Nicholls

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Clerk—A. G. Turner, C.B.E.
Deputy Clerk—N. J. Parkes, O.B.E.
Clerk-Assistant—J. A. Pettifer
Principal Parliamentary Officer—D. M. Blake
Serjeant-at-Arms—A. R. Browning

PARLIAMENTARY REPORTING STAFF
Principal Parliamentary Reporter—A. K. Healy
Second Reporter—W. J. Bridgman
Third Reporter—K. R. Ingram

LIBRARY
Librarian—A. P. Fleming, O.B.E.

JOINT HOUSE
Chief Executive Officer—R. W. Hillyer
THE ACTS OF THE SESSION

(SECOND SESSION: FIRST PERIOD)

Appropriation Act (No. 3) 1967–68 (Act No. 20 of 1968)—
An Act to appropriate a sum out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, additional to the sum appropriated by the Appropriation Act (No. 1) 1967–68, for the service of the year ending on the thirtieth day of June, One thousand nine hundred and sixty-eight.

Appropriation Act (No. 4) 1967–68 (Act No. 21 of 1968)—
An Act to appropriate a sum out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, additional to the sum appropriated by the Appropriation Act (No. 2) 1967–68, for certain expenditure in respect of the year ending on the thirtieth day of June, One thousand nine hundred and sixty-eight.

Beer Excise Act 1968 (Act No. 19 of 1968)—
An Act to amend the Beer Excise Act 1901–1966 in relation to the establishment of a Collectorate of Customs in the Northern Territory.

Canned Fruit Excise Act 1968 (Act No. 17 of 1968)—
An Act to amend the Canned Fruit Excise Act 1963–1966 in relation to the establishment of a Collectorate of Customs in the Northern Territory.

Canned Fruits Export Marketing Act 1968 (Act No. 37 of 1968)—

Coal Excise Act 1968 (Act No. 18 of 1968)—
An Act to amend the Coal Excise Act 1949–1966 in relation to the establishment of a Collectorate of Customs in the Northern Territory.

Commonwealth Employees' Furlough Act 1968 (Act No. 26 of 1968)—

Commonwealth Employees' Furlough Act (No. 2) 1968 (Act No. 58 of 1968)—
An Act to amend the Commonwealth Employees' Furlough Act 1943–1967, as amended by the Commonwealth Employees' Furlough Act 1968, with respect to certain Leave.

Commonwealth Railways Act 1968 (Act No. 27 of 1968)—

Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1968 (Act No. 38 of 1968)—

Copyright Act 1968 (Act No. 63 of 1968)—
An Act relating to Copyright, and for other purposes.

Customs Act 1968 (Act No. 14 of 1968)—
An Act to amend the Customs Act 1901–1967 for the purpose of establishing a Collectorate of Customs in the Northern Territory, and for purposes related thereto.

Customs Tariff 1968 (Act No. 39 of 1968)—
An Act relating to Duties of Customs.

Defence Forces Retirement Benefits Act 1968 (Act No. 55 of 1968)—

Defence Forces Retirement Benefits Act (No. 2) 1968 (Act No. 56 of 1968)—

Defence (Re-establishment) Act 1968 (Act No. 10 of 1968)—

Designs Act 1968 (Act No. 64 of 1968)—

Distillation Act 1968 (Act No. 16 of 1968)—
An Act to amend the Distillation Act 1901–1966 in relation to the establishment of a Collectorate of Customs in the Northern Territory.

Excise Act 1968 (Act No. 15 of 1968)—
An Act to amend the Excise Act 1901–1966 in relation to the establishment of a Collectorate of Customs in the Northern Territory.

Income Tax Assessment Act 1968 (Act No. 4 of 1968)—
An Act to amend the Law relating to Income Tax.

Income Tax Assessment Act (No. 2) 1968 (Act No. 60 of 1968)—
An Act to amend the Law relating to Income Tax.
The Acts of the Session

Income Tax (International Agreements) Act 1968 (Act No. 3 of 1968)—

International Development Association (Additional Contribution) Act 1968 (Act No. 45 of 1968)—
An Act to approve the payment by Australia of a Further Contribution to the International Development Association.

Loan (Airlines Equipment) Act 1968 (Act No. 46 of 1968)—
An Act to approve the raising by way of Loan of Moneys in the Currency of the Federal Republic of Germany to be lent to the Australian National Airlines Commission, and for related purposes.

Loan Act 1968 (Act No. 40 of 1968)—
An Act to amend the Loan Act 1967.

Loans Securities Act 1968 (Act No. 28 of 1968)—

National Service Act 1968 (Act No. 51 of 1968)—
An Act to amend the National Service Act 1951–1966.

Native Members of the Forces Benefits Act 1968 (Act No. 8 of 1968)—

Naval Defence Act 1968 (Act No. 24 of 1968)—

Navigation Act 1968 (Act No. 62 of 1968)—

New South Wales Grant (Flood Mitigation) Act 1968 (Act No. 2 of 1968)—
An Act to amend section 5 of the New South Wales Grant (Flood Mitigation) Act 1964–1966.

Northern Territory (Administration) Act 1968 (Act No. 5 of 1968)—
An Act relating to the Rights of an Officer of the Public Service of the Commonwealth who is appointed to the Office of Administrator of the Northern Territory of Australia.

Northern Territory (Administration) Act (No. 2) 1968 (Act No. 47 of 1968)—
An Act relating to the Composition of the Legislative Council of the Northern Territory of Australia and to the Assent by the Governor-General to Ordinances of that Territory.

Northern Territory Representation Act 1968 (Act No. 11 of 1968)—
An Act relating to the Representation of the Northern Territory of Australia in the House of Representatives.

Officers’ Rights Declaration Act 1968 (Act No. 6 of 1968)—
An Act to amend the Schedule to the Officers’ Rights Declaration Act 1928–1959 in relation to the Office of Administrator of the Northern Territory of Australia.

Overseas Telecommunications Act 1968 (Act No. 31 of 1968)—

Papua and New Guinea Act 1968 (Act No. 25 of 1968)—

Pay-roll Tax Assessment Act 1968 (Act No. 61 of 1968)—

Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1968 (Act No. 1 of 1968)—
An Act to amend sections 16 and 146 of the Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1967.

Post and Telegraph Act 1968 (Act No. 32 of 1968)—

Post and Telegraph Act (No. 2) 1968 (Act No. 33 of 1968)—
An Act relating to the Finances of the Post Office Services.

Public Service Act 1968 (Act No. 59 of 1968)—
An Act to amend the Public Service Act 1922–1967 with respect to certain Leave.

Queensland Grant (Maraboon Dam) Act 1968 (Act No. 35 of 1968)—
An Act to grant Financial Assistance to the State of Queensland in connection with the construction of a Dam on the Nogoa River near Emerald in that State.

Railway Agreement (New South Wales) Act 1968 (Act No. 43 of 1968)—
An Act relating to an agreement between the Commonwealth and the State of New South Wales with respect to the Railway from Parkes to Broken Hill.

Railway Agreement (Queensland) Act 1968 (Act No. 41 of 1968)—
An Act relating to a Supplemental Agreement between the Commonwealth and the State of Queensland with respect to the Collinsville-Townsville-Mount Isa Railway.

Removal of Prisoners (Territories) Act 1968 (Act No. 9 of 1968)—
Science and Industry Research Act 1968 (Act No. 7 of 1968)—

Science and Industry Research Act (No. 2) 1968 (Act No. 52 of 1968)—

States Grants (Beef Cattle Roads) Act 1968 (Act No. 44 of 1968)—
An Act to grant Financial Assistance to the States of Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia in connection with the construction of certain Roads to be used for the transport of Beef Cattle.

States Grants (Deserted Wives) Act 1968 (Act No. 48 of 1968)—
An Act to grant Financial Assistance to certain States in respect of Benefits provided for Deserted Wives, and certain other Women, having the Custody, Care and Control of Children.

States Grants (Drought Assistance) Act 1968 (Act No. 29 of 1968)—
An Act to grant Financial Assistance to the States of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia in relation to Loss of Revenue due to the Effects of Drought.

States Grants (Drought Reimbursement) Act 1968 (Act No. 30 of 1968)—
An Act to make provision for the Grant of Financial Assistance to the States of Victoria and South Australia for the purpose of meeting the Cost of Measures for Alleviating the Effects of Drought.

States Grants (Science Laboratories) Act 1968 (Act No. 12 of 1968)—
An Act to grant Financial Assistance to the States for Science Laboratories and Equipment in Schools.

States Grants (Technical Training) Act 1968 (Act No. 53 of 1968)—

Superannuation Act 1968 (Act No. 49 of 1968)—
An Act to amend the Superannuation Act 1922–1967 in relation to Employees who become Contributors to the Defence Forces Retirement Benefits Fund, and for purposes related thereto.

Superannuation Act (No. 2) 1968 (Act No. 57 of 1968)—
An Act to amend the Superannuation Act 1922–1967 in relation to the Retrenchment of Employees and to make consequential amendments of the Superannuation Act 1968.

Supply Act (No. 1) 1968–69 (Act No. 22 of 1968)—
An Act to make interim provision for the appropriation of moneys out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the service of the year ending on the thirtieth day of June, One thousand nine hundred and sixty-nine.

Supply Act (No. 2) 1968–69 (Act No. 23 of 1968)—
An Act to make interim provision for the appropriation of moneys out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for certain expenditure in respect of the year ending on the thirtieth day of June, One thousand nine hundred and sixty-nine.

Tasmania Agreement (Hydro-Electric Power Development) Act 1968 (Act No. 42 of 1968)—

United States Naval Communication Station (Civilian Employees) Act 1968 (Act No. 54 of 1968)—
An Act to provide Rights in respect of the Injury, Disease or Death of certain Civilian Employees at the United States Naval Communication Station in Australia.

Universities (Financial Assistance) Act 1968 (Act No. 13 of 1968)—
An Act to amend the Second Schedule to the Universities (Financial Assistance) Act 1966–1967 in relation to the University of Newcastle and La Trobe University.

Victoria Grant (River Murray Salinity) Act 1968 (Act No. 34 of 1968)—
An Act to grant Financial Assistance to the State of Victoria in connection with Measures to reduce the Salinity of the River Murray.

Western Australia Agreement (Ord River Irrigation) Act 1968 (Act No. 50 of 1968)—
An Act relating to an Agreement between the Commonwealth and the State of Western Australia in respect of Financial Assistance for the construction of a Dam on the Ord River and associated Works.
Bankruptcy Bill 1968—
  Initiated in the House of Representatives. Second Reading.

Death Penalty Abolition Bill 1968—
  Passed by the Senate.
  Transmitted to the House of Representatives. Second Reading.

Extradition (Commonwealth Countries) Bill 1968—
  Initiated in the House of Representatives. Second Reading.

Extradition (Foreign States) Bill 1968—
  Initiated in the House of Representatives. Second Reading.

Fisheries Bill 1968—
  Initiated in the House of Representatives. Second Reading.

High Court Procedure Bill 1968—
  Initiated in the House of Representatives. First Reading.

Judges' Pensions Bill 1968—
  Initiated in the House of Representatives. Second Reading.

Law Officers Bill 1968—
  Initiated in the House of Representatives. Second Reading.

Patents Bill 1968—
  Initiated in the House of Representatives. Second Reading.

Public Service Bill (No. 2) 1968—
  Initiated in the House of Representatives. Second Reading.

Spirits Bill 1968—
  Initiated in the House of Representatives. Second Reading.
PARLIAMENT PROROGUED AND CONVENED
TWENTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT—SECOND SESSION
('Gazette', No. 15 of 1968)

PROCLAMATION

Commonwealth of Australia to wit

CASEY

Governor-General.

WHEREAS by section five of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia it is amongst other things provided that the Governor-General may appoint such times for holding the sessions of the Parliament as he thinks fit, and may also, from time to time, by Proclamation or otherwise, prorogue the Parliament:

Now therefore I, Richard Gardiner, Baron Casey, the Governor-General aforesaid, in exercise of the power conferred by the said Constitution, do by this my Proclamation prorogue the Parliament until Tuesday, the twelfth day of March, One thousand nine hundred and sixty-eight, or, in the event of circumstances arising, at present unforeseen, which render it expedient that the Parliament should be summoned to assemble at an earlier date, until such earlier date as is fixed by a Proclamation summoning the Parliament to assemble and be held for the despatch of business.

Furthermore I appoint the said Tuesday, the twelfth day of March, One thousand nine hundred and sixty-eight, or such earlier date (if any) as is fixed by Proclamation, as the day for the Parliament to assemble and be held for the despatch of business. And all Senators and Members of the House of Representatives are hereby required to give their attendance accordingly in the building known as Parliament House, Canberra, at the hour of three o'clock in the afternoon on the said Tuesday, the twelfth day of March, One thousand nine hundred and sixty-eight or, in the event of an earlier date being fixed by Proclamation, at three o'clock in the afternoon on the date so fixed.

Given under my Hand this ninth day of February in the year of our Lord, One thousand nine hundred and sixty-eight, and in the seventeenth year of Her Majesty's reign.

By His Excellency's Command,

J. G. GORTON
Prime Minister

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!
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Tuesday, 26 March 1968

Mr SPEAKER (Hon. W. J. Aston) took the chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

DEVALUATION OF STERLING

Mr NICHOLLS—My question is directed to the Minister for Trade and Industry. Since the devaluation of sterling by the United Kingdom Government, no significant price decreases of British manufactured goods on the Australian market have been evident. As the 14½ per cent devaluation of sterling took effect several months ago, can the Minister tell the House whether the Australian people are being fleeced and the decrease of prices absorbed into the profits of business enterprises in this country?

Mr McEWEN—I cannot answer in any dogmatic or specific terms at all. Some British companies have reduced the prices of certain items following devaluation in order to regain a competitive position. Other companies that have not felt it necessary to establish a competitive position by reducing prices have continued to sell at the old Australian prices. I think that is the situation.

SNOWY MOUNTAINS AUTHORITY

Mr ST JOHN—I address my question to the Minister for National Development. Has there been a decision to issue retrenchment notices to employees of the Snowy Mountains Hydro-electric Authority? If so, how many and what categories of employees are involved? Does this affect any of the engineering or professional staff? What notice will retrenched employees receive and are the Minister and his Department making every effort to ensure that they will obtain other appropriate employment?

Mr FAIRBAIRN—The honourable member will recall that I made a statement last year—I think it was in June—just after my return from overseas. In it I said that the policy of the Government was to retain from the Snowy Mountains Authority a body of personnel who would be available in a consultative capacity either to the States or to others requiring its services and who would be able to give first class information on dam building, design investigation and work on hydrology. At the same time I said that, apart from this body, no one would be retained for construction work after the work in the Snowy Mountains area had been completed. We have now reached the stage where, with the completion of work in the Jindabyne and Khancoban areas, a number of people are becoming redundant. The Government realises, therefore, that it will shortly have to issue notices of retrenchment. At the present moment the Commissioner, Mr Dann, is having discussions with the unions and it would not be appropriate for me now to state the conditions that the Government believes should apply to the people who are retrenched.

I can tell the honourable member that a relatively small number is affected. As honourable members know, the bulk of the work in the Snowy Mountains area is being done by contractors. Of course, as they finish their work the contractors will be available for work in other parts. Of the small number of permanent and temporary staff employees of the Snowy Mountains Authority, some will be employed in the retained consultant body, some will be retained to work for the Snowy Mountains Council—in other words to operate the scheme—and a number will retire through age or for other reasons. The result is that the number to be retrenched will be fairly small. Nevertheless, the Government is very anxious that the utmost should be done to see that these people are assisted to obtain some other form of work which is suitable to them. We have decided to give the greatest possible assistance. But, as I say, until the Commissioner has completed his discussions with the unions, I do not think it would be appropriate for me to comment further.

FILMS

Mr HANSEN—My question is addressed to the Prime Minister as Leader of the Government and No. 1 citizen of Australia. Has he, like many other Australians, been thoroughly sickened by the publicity and commercialisation given to sadistic, murdering American bank robbers known as Bonnie and Clyde? Does he agree that the glorification of these two hoodlums can only add to juvenile crime being committed by impressionable people who might hope to gain similar publicity and glory? Will he as
Prime Minister give a lead by denouncing such glorification by persons whose only real interest is in extracting dollars and by urging youth groups to refrain from celebrating Bonnie and Clyde nights?

Mr GORTON—The question deals with a film which I have not, myself, seen but of which I have seen reports which seem to indicate that this film does glorify killing sprees—I think those were the words used—by two individuals in the southern States of America some considerable time ago. It appears that the film does completely change what was essentially a small time hoodlum activity into something to which glamour is attached. I do not know whether that would lead to an increase in juvenile crime. I suppose that would have to be a matter of opinion for those closely cognisant of such things. But I think it must be unsavoury—the honourable member would perhaps agree with the use of that word—that this should be done. On the other hand, I am not sure whether it is suggested that censorship should be applied. There is a film board which looks at these things before they come into Australia. But if I am asked simply to say whether I think this is an unsavoury development and one which most people would find repugnant, then I would agree with the honourable member.

TASMANIAN FRUIT EXPORTS

Mr PEARSALL—Is the Minister for Primary Industry aware of the steep increase in production and presentation costs facing the export fruit industry in Tasmania? Has he been informed of the substantially reduced guarantee prices, replacing forward sales, which will affect approximately 90% of the Tasmanian export crop? Does he realise the lack of confidence and sense of insecurity these conditions are causing in the industry? Is the Minister aware of the strong case submitted by the State Fruit Board to the State Government requesting a guarantee pending market realisation? Has a case been presented to the Federal Government by the State Government of Tasmania for such assistance for the current season? Finally, if a case has been received will he agree to treat the matter with sympathy and expedition?

Mr ANTHONY—I am very conscious that packing costs and freight costs do represent a high proportion of the proceeds of sales of apples and pears on the export market. However, the matter of selling arrangements is one strictly between the grower or exporter of the fruit and the overseas interests. I am not aware that the State Fruit Board has submitted any request for assistance to the Tasmanian Government; nor has the Tasmanian Government made any approach to the Commonwealth Government for special assistance. However, should this come about, I will certainly look at the request sympathetically. But I really cannot say what the eventual result will be.

CHOWILLA DAM

Mr LUCHETTI—I direct my question to the Minister for National Development. Will he confirm a report that the Chowilla water storage project is to be abandoned? Did he say that the proposed 5 million acre feet capacity of the dam was larger than was ever required and that a capacity of 1½ million acre feet would ensure that South Australia would never have water restrictions? If so, on what information relating to population growth or seasons does he base this view? Finally, what plans has the Government to provide a water supply alternative to that which would be provided by the Chowilla Dam?

Mr FAIRBAIRN—A decision has not yet been made about whether the next major storage on the River Murray should be at Chowilla or at some alternative site further upstream. The River Murray Commission will meet again on 24th April. We hope by then to have available sufficient information to enable a recommendation to be made. However, the final decision about where work will proceed must be made by the Prime Minister and the Premiers of the three States concerned. Investigation work undertaken by the Technical Committee of the River Murray Commission has thrown some doubt on the immediate development of the Chowilla Dam, for a number of reasons.

The first is that the likely cost has escalated enormously from an original estimate of $28m to a final cost, at the calling of tenders, of $70m. Although the project appeared to be a good prospect at an estimated cost of $28m, we had to look at the figure of $70m to see whether it would
not be possible to obtain cheaper water for South Australia by some other means. The results of discussions in the Technical Committee so far tend to show that the decision to suspend work at Chowilla was correct, because a number of other sites which are appearing would be more suitable and would allow water to be provided at a very much lower cost per acre foot. Let me just give the honourable member several figures relating to this aspect. It has been estimated that an additional acre foot of water provided at Chowilla would cost $242, compared with $53 to $55 an acre foot at Dartmouth, on the Mitta River, and Murray Gates, where sites for upper river storage are being looked at.

There is also the additional problem of salinity. In the Chowilla area, salinity has increased enormously. An interim report that we have received from technical consultants shows that there would be a likelihood of a slight buildup of salinity if a dam were constructed at Chowilla. As I have said, there are a number of other technical reasons for the suspension of work there. Basically, the situation is that the River Murray Commission, at its next meeting, will make whatever recommendation it believes is correct. It will then be for the four governments concerned to get together and decide where a major storage should be provided.

UNIVERSITY QUOTAS

Dr GIBBS—I address a question to the Minister for Education and Science. Has he seen a report that general quotas will be imposed on students entering the University of Queensland in 1970? Is this report correct? If so, is this to be done because the Queensland Government is unable to match the Commonwealth subsidies intended for the building of a new university in Brisbane? If this is so, will the Minister confer with the relevant authorities, both State and Federal, with a view to correcting this highly undesirable state of affairs?

Mr MALCOLM FRASER—Last week, the honorable member for Moreton also showed an interest in this matter and asked me a question related to it. I am not sure that I can add much to the answer that I then gave him. I have been in touch with the Australian Universities Commission and I have ascertained that it has no information that would confirm a report that general quotas are to be introduced at the University of Queensland or that it would be necessary to introduce general quotas there. Now that the statement has been made I am quite sure that this is something to which it will be devoting attention. I would again like to draw the attention of the House to the fact that the University of Queensland and, particularly the University of Townsville are having quite substantially increased grants made available to them in this triennium as compared to the last triennium, and also that tertiary education opportunities in Queensland, as in other States, are broadening and widening as a result of the Commonwealth’s intervention in the technical college field.

These colleges are being expanded to colleges of advanced education. Commonwealth support is available in Queensland to colleges of advanced education at Brisbane, Toowoomba and Rockhampton, and to the Queensland Agricultural College. This all adds to the educational opportunities at a tertiary level in that State. It is correct that the Commonwealth matched the maximum grants that the Queensland Government was prepared to make available both in the field of university education and for advanced colleges. We assessed how far the Queensland Government was prepared to go in working out the funds to be made available in this triennium and the Commonwealth matched within the formulae the maximum funds that the Queensland Government was prepared to provide. Clearly the Commission will be looking quite closely at these matters during its investigation this year. It is expected that the establishment of the Griffith University College, on which some initial work has been undertaken during this triennium, will be a major recommendation for the next triennium, which will be 1970-1972.

GREAT BARRIER REEF

Mr FULTON—This question is considered vital as there is some doubt about the matter. I ask the Attorney-General: Who has control over the Great Barrier Reef? Is it controlled by the Australian
Government or the Queensland Government? Is this reef considered part of Australia's continental shelf? If the Queensland Government or the Commonwealth Government has control over the reef is this fact recognised internationally? If the Queensland Government has control has it asked the Commonwealth Government for assistance to police the Reef against intruders and despoilers?

Mr BOWEN—The Great Barrier Reef is not regarded as part of the mainland territory of Australia. Being submerged at high tide it is not an island; but it does constitute part of the continental shelf. As honourable members will be aware, last year the Government passed a Fisheries Act which gives us control of the waters and free-flowing fish within 12 miles of our coastline. Sedentary fish, the inhabitants of the Reef, are covered by the Pearl Fisheries Act 1952, which covers pearl shell, trochus, beche-de-mer and green snails. We would have power to pass an Act to control fishing for clams and other sedentary fish on the Reef. We have not exercised this power. There have been one or two activities on the Reef which have caused the Queensland Government to approach this Government. I think that the Minister for External Affairs made representations in respect of acts performed by nationals of another country. As far as legislation is concerned, we have power to go further than we have, but whether we would be able to police such legislation is a matter that would not fall within my Department.

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

Mr GILES—I address my question to the Minister for Trade and Industry. It relates to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. Recently a rearrangement of exchange rates occurred, which was evidenced by nations devaluing their currencies. In this instance and in any future instances of revaluation do such currency movements invalidate GATT arrangements? Secondly, how does the Minister see the position of GATT in relation to the future flow of international trade?

Mr McEWEN—Answering the last part of the question first, I think that there is no reason to expect that GATT—imperfect as it is—will not continue to facilitate international trade. The average reduction in tariffs of all the contracting parties other than the devaluing countries under the Kennedy Round was of the order of 30%. A world wide reduction in tariffs to that extent must facilitate trade. As to the rights of a country that is a contracting party, if other trading partners devalue their currency, no country which is a member of the International Monetary Fund may devalue its currency more than 10%, if my memory is correct, without first obtaining the consent of that institution. But if the result of a devaluation of the currency of one trading partner should jeopardise the industries of a contracting party there is provision—I believe it is is Article 19, speaking from memory—which specifically entitles that party so put at a disadvantage to take compensatory action to protect its own industries.

IMMIGRATION

Mr WHITLAM—Has the Prime Minister's attention been drawn to a letter printed in the London 'Times' early this month under the heading 'Immigrant Policy' and signed by the Agent-General for Victoria? One passage in the letter states that South Africa and Rhodesia are in a similar position to Australia in that they are resisting the march of Communism in the Southern Hemisphere. Will the Prime Minister repudiate this inept and offensive statement of Australia's migration policy and assert that pronouncements in Great Britain on matters of Australian national policy are within the province of the High Commissioner for Australia and not the agents-general of the Australian States?

Mr GORTON—My attention, in fact, has not been drawn to the letter to which the Leader of the Opposition refers. But I would think—and this would need to be the subject of a legal interpretation which at the moment I am not entitled legally to give—that unless and until the external affairs power is made exclusive, representatives of State Governments who are appointed, as they are appointed to London or the United
States of America, would be able, speaking for those governments but not for the Commonwealth, to make statements and would not be able to be prevented from making statements. That is a matter of legal interpretation, which I think is correct. As for the rest of the Leader of the Opposition's question, I believe it perfectly true to state that Australia, in fact, is resisting the encroachments of Communism in this part of the world and I have no apology to make for that part of the letter.

**TAXATION**

Mr JARMAN—My question is directed to the Treasurer. Taking into account the efforts of the Government to assist the people of South Vietnam in all ways, would the Treasurer be prepared to look favourably at allowing tax deductions to those people and organisations who so generously subscribed almost $80,000 to the Vietnam Refugee Appeal conducted by the Melbourne 'Age' and to similar appeals conducted in this country for aid to the South Vietnamese people?

Mr McMATHON—It is true, as the honourable member has said, that we are anxious to help the South Vietnamese and our other allies in South Vietnam in any way we reasonably can. I remind the honourable member that under our present taxation laws gifts of this kind cannot be made without alteration to the taxation laws. The reasons for the decision are clear. Firstly, if a deduction is allowed, in many circumstances the Government itself makes the major contribution. In other words, the amount is paid by the general taxpayer rather than by the person making the contribution. Secondly, we have a great number of applications to consider each year for payments overseas to be made subject to income tax deduction.

At Budget time, when these matters are considered, we have to make up our minds what degree of priority we will give to each of the requests made. I point out to the honourable member that our assistance to overseas countries given directly, and without any tags whatsoever, is of the order of $142m. The proportion of our gross national product that we give for these purposes puts us well up towards the top in the international league. The only other country, as has been stated by my colleague, the Minister for External Affairs, which is in a higher position in this context is France. However, knowing the interest that the honourable member has in this problem, I assure him that we will look at the matter during our forthcoming Budget discussions, and the decisions we make will be made known when the Budget itself is introduced.

**DEСALINATION OF SEA WATER**

Mr DUTHIE—I ask the Minister for National Development a question. Is any research at present being undertaken in the Department of National Development into the economic use of desalination processes? If so, will the Government speed up this work, particularly in relation to the use of nuclear power for desalination, as a basis for a national plan to use desalinated sea water to beat drought and chronic water shortages? I remind the Minister that success in this direction already has been achieved on the Californian coast, where a nuclear desalination plant will eventually produce 150 million gallons of pure water per day.

Mr FAIRBAIRN—The Australian Water Resources Council produced a booklet on desalination about 18 months ago. This is available and I will see that the honourable member gets a copy of it. Basically the States and the Commonwealth are agreed that it is unlikely that in the immediate or foreseeable future we will see in Australia major desalination plants operating with nuclear power, because an enormous nuclear power station would be required to provide power cheaply enough. The honourable member says that this process is operating at San Diego. I believe the contract for this was signed by President Johnson only last May, and if the Americans are already producing the quantity mentioned by the honourable member they must be more competent at building this kind of installation than I thought they were. Nevertheless, this plant will come into operation at some future date.

We in Australia have, of course, a number of desalination plants operating, but these are rather small ones. There are solar stills such as the one at Coober Pedy, and there is also a desalination plant at King Bay operated by
Hampersley Iron Pty Ltd. This plant works on the waste heat coming from the diesel engines that are operating there. The Water Resources Council said in its report that it believes that there is an opportunity in Australia for the use of small to medium sized plants in mining towns and other remote areas. We do not believe, however, that in the immediate future we will see really large plants operating efficiently and effectively in the desalination of sea water, although in time such plants will undoubtedly be established. For the immediate future we think it will be cheaper to obtain additional water by constructing more storages than by desalinating sea water.

SOUTH EAST ASIA

Mr ROBINSON—My question is directed to the Prime Minister. I refer to the invasion of Laos by the North Vietnamese and the serious implications of this aggression. Has the Government had an opportunity to consider fully the seriousness of the situation? Will an official Government statement be made at an early date concerning this further extension by the Communists of the war in South East Asia?

Mr GORTON—This matter has not as yet been considered by the Government as a government, but the Minister for External Affairs will no doubt be bringing to the attention of the Government, and subsequently to the attention of the House, the views which he and the Government have on this matter.

PHARMACEUTICAL SERVICES

Mr BARNARD—Has the Minister for Health received the report of a survey of chemists' dispensing costs under the national health scheme which was commissioned in June 1965? Does the report verify the contention of the Federated Pharmaceutical Service Guild of Australia that higher fees for chemists dispensing national health scheme prescriptions are justified? If the Minister has the report, when will he make public the recommendations contained in it?

Dr FORBES—The report to which the honourable gentleman refers became available to my Department about a fortnight ago. I have not yet seen it. It is being studied by my Department and when that study is completed the Government will want to have a look at the report. When the Government has done so the report will form the basis of negotiations between the Government and the Pharmaceutical Guild of Australia.

PITT STREET TELEPHONE EXCHANGE

Mr BOSMAN—I address a question to the Minister for the Navy representing the Minister for Works. Can he inform the House whether the Commonwealth Department of Works has been successful in improving on the time set for the construction of the Pitt Street Telephone Exchange, thus eliminating the crisis period that was adverted to during the deliberations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works on this matter? Can he give details of any improvements that have been achieved?

Mr KELLY—The Department of Works is well aware of the necessity for a close timetable on the construction of the Pitt Street Telephone Exchange. The present position, if I remember it rightly, is that the excavation tender has been let and the work will be finalised next month. The tender for the supply and fabrication of the steel has also been let and is due for completion in November. The tender for the construction of the frame and the completion of the main building closes next month. I can assure the honourable member for St George that a valiant effort has been made to advance the timetable for this important construction. At the moment I am glad to be able to inform him that the programme of the Department of Works is running to schedule.

DEVALUATION OF CURRENCY

Mr BEATON—I refer the Minister for Primary Industry to the devaluation of British and other currencies and its effects upon Australian industry, particularly primary industry. Because of the vital importance of devaluation to our industries and to the nation, will the Minister make available to the House the report of the Devaluation Reporting Committee on the effects of devaluation, or, alternatively, will he make an early and full statement to the House on the matter? Further, is he aware
that rural industries are anxiously awaiting the decisions of the Government as to the amount and method of compensation? When will such decisions be made and when can we expect an announcement? Is the Minister aware that some industries—for instance, the fresh fruit industry—need this knowledge urgently so that they can determine their method of overseas sales and plans for future production?

Mr ANTHONY — The Government stated that industries which were affected by devaluation—that is where losses were demonstrably and unavoidably due to devaluation—could submit a claim to the Devaluation Reporting Committee, which consists of the head of my Department, Mr Maiden, the head of the Department of Trade and Industry and a senior officer of the Treasury. The task of this Committee has been to analyse the claims and submit a report to the Prime Minister. I am led to believe that a report recently has been submitted to the Prime Minister. He will bring it before Cabinet for assessment and Cabinet will determine whether it will be made public. I am not in a position to say anything further in that direction. However, in relation to fresh fruit industries which are anxious to know what compensation they will receive, I would advise those industries to proceed normally in carrying out their commercial transactions because only after a transaction is carried out can a claim in respect of demonstrable loss be lodged. So, I would suggest that they go ahead and then put in a claim to the Devaluation Reporting Committee.

WATER RESOURCES

Mr TURNBULL—I ask the Minister for National Development a question. Is it a fact that in Australia an average of 50%—or more in parts of Victoria—of water is lost between storage and consumer? Is it a fact also that in recent years we have not been able to keep our storages full? Has it become a matter of urgency to make the best use of the water that we are able to conserve? If so, will the Minister call a meeting, at which he would preside, of appropriate responsible State Ministers so that a representative discussion may take place on the desirability of introducing a system of pipe lining, which could lead to a saving of water equal to the amount that might be conserved by duplicating existing water storages?

Mr FAIRBAIRN—I agree with a lot of what the honorable member has said. We are particularly short of water. Some of our storages have not filled for some considerable time. In fact, the major storage on the Murray River has overflowed for only a few days since 1964. It is essential therefore that we aim at conserving our water and using it to the best advantage. But in doing this we run up against the difficulties of constitutional responsibility. The River Murray Commission has control over the water of the Murray only while it is in the river. The moment the water is diverted it becomes the property of the State to which it is diverted and it is the responsibility of that State to say how the water will be used and conserved. Nevertheless, I have pointed out to the Australian Water Resources Council the losses that will occur in certain areas and I have been told by the States that it is their desire to undertake as much pipe lining as they can. Unfortunately, if we are short of water in this country we are also short of money and projects such as pipe lining are expensive. I will raise this matter again at a meeting of the Water Resources Council to be held within the next few weeks. Further discussion may then take place.

HELECOPTER ACCIDENT

Mr WEBB—I direct to the Minister for Civil Aviation a question about the tragedy that occurred last Friday when a helicopter crashed on an oil rig in Bass Strait, resulting in the deaths of three journalists. This was a tragedy which I am sure we all regret and I hope that the Minister will, on behalf of the House, convey our sympathy to the relatives of the victims and to those who were injured in the accident. Does the Minister propose to arrange a public inquiry into all aspects of the accident? If such an inquiry is held will he permit the Australian Journalists Association, the survivors and relatives of the victims to be legally represented?

Mr SWARTZ—At this stage it is not proposed to hold a public inquiry but the normal departmental investigation is under way at the moment. After question time I propose to seek leave of the House to make a statement on this matter.
PARLIAMENT

Mr ERWIN—I ask the Leader of the House a question. There has been speculation that the House will conclude its sittings for the autumn sessional period on 16th May. So that members may know what their responsibilities to the Parliament will be, will the Leader of the House say whether the Parliament will in fact rise on 16th May?

Mr SNEDDEN—Last week I saw a report that the Parliament would conclude its autumn sittings on 16th May. Repetition of that statement seems to have given it some aura of authenticity. It is not an authentic statement, as I am sure honourable members opposite will know. On 15th February last I wrote a letter all Ministers, to the Opposition and to all Party Whips, pointing out the programme so far as it could at that point of time be certain.

It will be remembered that in that letter I said we would sit for 4 weeks and then have 3 weeks recess, occasioned by Easter and Anzac Day in juxtaposition. We would then return for 3 weeks and there would follow a normal week’s recess. In that letter honourable members were alerted for a resumption of the sitting on 28th May. In that letter I stated also:

It is not possible to forecast an exact concluding date for the autumn sittings because this will be changed depending on progress of legislation which is to go before the Parliament.

That is still correct. It was my expectation at the time of writing the letter, as it now is, that we will sit into June. I might say that at about this time last year similar statements were made and subsequent events showed that those statements were quite unjustified.

REPATRIATION

Mr SCHOLES—I preface my question to the Minister for the Army by saying that I understand there is a regular flow of officers of the Citizen Military Forces to Vietnam for short periods in order to acquaint them with conditions in that area so they can more adequately carry out their duties. I ask: While officers of the CMF are in Vietnam, are they fully covered by the terms of the Repatriation Act? If they were killed would their widows be entitled to a Service pension of any description? To what compensation would they be entitled?

What arrangements are made for officers who contract disease while in Vietnam, an event which can occur in that area?

Mr LYNCH—I am generally aware of the matter to which the honourable member has referred, but rather than risk misleading the House by endeavouring to call on the total number of specifics to which he has referred I shall treat his question as being on notice and give him a reply within 24 hours.

TRADE PRACTICES

Mr IRWIN—My question to the Attorney-General relates to cardboard cartons used for the packaging of apples. Is the Minister aware that the Bilpin Agricultural Bureau has written several letters to the Registrar of Trade Practices complaining of collective tendering by manufacturers in the supply of cartons to growers? Is he further aware that the Bureau has not received a reply to any one letter?

Mr BOWEN—Whilst I seek to keep informed I seek also to avoid any control over or interference in the activities of the Commissioner of Trade Practices. Honourable members will know that the administration of the Trade Practices Act is committed to him free from any political control. However, I shall make some inquiry about this. I am not aware of any complaint about collusive tendering in the case of apple cartons. I shall make an inquiry and shall ask particularly why, if correspondence has been sent to the Commissioner, it has not been acknowledged.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Mr DALY—I direct a question to the Prime Minister. Has his attention been drawn to an address to the Young Liberals at Newcastle last weekend by the Minister for Social Services deploiring the fall in the birthrate and indicating proposals for increased family allowances in the next Budget? If so, will he state whether the Minister was announcing Government decisions on these benefits? Has it been decided to increase all child endowment payments, which in some cases have remained stationary for 20 years, as well as to increase maternity allowances, which have remained unchanged since the date of their introduction in 1943, a period of 25 years?
Mr GORTON—I have not studied the statement to which the honourable member refers, but I can assure the House that statements of Government policy, when they are made, are made after Government consideration and on behalf of the Government. This, I think, did not even purport to be a statement of Government policy.

MOTOR VEHICLE INDUSTRY

Mr DONALD CAMERON—I direct my question to the Minister for Trade and Industry and, at the outset, state my belief that the Australian motor industry is of tremendous importance to this country. In view of representations to be made by Australian motor vehicle manufacturers, during which I anticipate they will seek more protection from the continued inroads made by overseas manufacturers, will the Minister point out to the delegation that if Australian manufacturers expect to continue to receive sympathetic consideration and protection they should always be prepared to give Australians a worthy product—not one which is frequently described in many quarters as shoddy and cheaply finished?

Mr McEWEN—The quality of the Australian product is shown by the volume of demand. Speaking off the top of my head, I think the production of motor vehicles in Australia is about 400,000 a year. Most of these vehicles are sold on the domestic market. This makes the motor vehicle industry very important to the Australian economy. In the world scene, I would not think that a dozen countries have the volume of motor vehicle production that Australia has. By measurement on the domestic scene, where it is the second biggest employer of labour, and by international measurement, the Australian motor vehicle industry is very important and is certainly worthy of the support that the Government has given it. This does not mean that Australia has excluded competition from other countries. Some Japanese cars are assembled in Australia and the Japanese now have more than 10% of the Australian market for motor vehicles. Last year more than 36,000 Japanese vehicles were sold here.

I read in the Press a report that the Japanese believe that any action to protect the Australian motor vehicle industry against unbridled Japanese competition would be unjust and unwarranted. I also read a report suggesting that the Japanese would be justified in taking retaliatory action if we tried to protect the Australian industry. Let me put the matter in perspective. Last year we took 36,000 Japanese motor vehicles. Less than 10 years ago I was unable to negotiate successfully with the Japanese Government for permission to sell even one Australian motor vehicle in Japan. We should compare the Japanese Government’s protection of its motor vehicle industry with the open market that the Japanese have enjoyed in Australia. Let my friends the primary producers think that if we protect our motor vehicle industry the Japanese will feel disposed to raise barriers against our primary products, let me point out that, although Japan has a consuming public of about 100 million we are unable to sell much butter to Japan. I negotiated for months in 1963 for the right to sell 7,000 tons of beef—not Australian beef but beef from the whole world—to Japan, but without success.

Australia is one of the world’s biggest exporters of wheat, but the Japanese find that they cannot undertake to buy more than 350,000 tons of wheat a year from us. They say that Australian wheat is unsatisfactory. We eat bread made from Australian wheat. The British eat bread made from Australian wheat. But the Japanese find that it is more satisfactory to put a different value on American soft wheat, although ours is mostly soft wheat. Most of the wheat bought by Japan is by political contrivance and it comes from the United States of America and Canada rather than from Australia. The Japanese find difficulty in removing a very high tariff against Australian sugar. They argue that they have a sugar industry to protect. When I ask about their sugar industry I am told about a sweet potato industry that produces some glucose. None the less, a substantial tariff obstacle is erected against our sugar. When I inquire about the dimensions of the Japanese beef industry that is being protected from Australian beef by quota and exchange control obstructions, I find that the average number of beef cattle on the farms where beef cattle are raised is fewer than two head. But this is the industry that is being protected.
I have never complained about any of these matters. I have told successive Japanese Prime Ministers that I am not asking them to expose to unwarranted competition industries that in their judgment they believe should be protected. I merely ask for such access to their markets as will not harm their industries. I merely ask that Australian industries be given the same rights on Japanese markets as the Japanese industries have on Australian markets.

HELIACOPTER ACCIDENT

Ministerial Statement

Mr SWARTZ (Darling Downs—Minister for Civil Aviation)—by leave—Mr Speaker, I have sought leave to make a statement to the House concerning the unfortunate accident, last Friday, involving a helicopter operating onto an oil rig off the coast of Victoria, near Sale. As honourable members will already know, the accident occurred while the helicopter, VH-UTW, a Bell 204B which is the civil version of the Iroquois, was carrying out a landing on the helipad on the Barracouta oil rig. As a result of the accident, two newspaper men and a publicity officer of the Esso company lost their lives and seven other Press, television and Esso personnel were injured. Speaking for myself and, I would think, all members of this House, I would like to express sympathy to their families and relatives of those who lost their lives in this tragic accident.

The helicopter concerned was the only one of its type currently employed on civil operations in Australia and was being operated by Helicopter Utilities Pty Ltd of Sydney, under contract to Esso. On this particular day the helicopter was being used for operations associated with the visit of a party of some 25 Press and television personnel to the oil rig. The particular flight which culminated in the accident was a local flight from the helipad to permit photographers in the helicopter to photograph the rig from the air and, at the same time, to permit reporters and photographers on the rig to observe a typical helicopter operation onto the helipad. For this latter purpose some persons had been permitted onto one corner of the helipad whilst others were on the stairway leading up to the pad.

Officers of the Air Safety Investigation Branch of my Department commenced an investigation into the circumstances of this accident on Friday afternoon. The investigation continued over the weekend and is being carried on with the utmost despatch but there will be, of course, a considerable lapse of time before firm conclusions can be reached. There is still some investigation to be carried out at the site. Some parts of the helicopter which are in Melbourne will require detailed laboratory examination and the main wreckage of the helicopter, which is being transported to Sydney, will be subjected to further detailed engineering examination.

At this stage of the investigation I can only give preliminary advice as to the circumstances of the accident. It appears most likely that the helicopter was on the point of making a normal landing on the helipad when, for a reason yet to be determined, damage occurred to the tail rotor assembly and this deprived the pilot of directional control. As a consequence of loss of directional control, the helicopter slewed through approximately 160 degrees with the pontoons at least in partial contact with the helipad and the action of slewing caused failure of the supports of the port pontoon. The main rotor of the helicopter would continue to rotate at high speed during this sequence and there are marks which indicate that the main rotor came in contact with the helipad deck at several points. It is probable that it was the main rotor which caused the injuries and fatalities to persons above the level of the deck.

While it is still too early to reject any potential causal areas, it is obvious that our attention will be focused on the two principal considerations of the damage to the tail rotor assembly and the proximity of persons being on the helipad, at the position at which they were, while operations were in progress. I will inform the House, as soon as possible, of conclusions reached in these regards.

Mr CHARLES JONES (Newcastle)—by leave—I join with the Minister for Civil Aviation (Mr Swartz), and with the honourable member for Stirling (Mr Webb) who earlier this afternoon asked a question about the recent helicopter accident, in extending my sympathy to the relatives of the unfortunate men who lost their lives in this tragedy. May I say that it would be much better for good relations in this
Parliament if Ministers would give Opposition members a little more notice that important statements of this kind were to be made. I learned only at about 10 minutes past 3 this afternoon that the Minister proposed to make his statement. I just bring that point briefly to your attention, Mr Speaker, and to the attention of the Minister. This is the second occasion on which he has made a statement without giving the Opposition much notice.

**Mr Swartz**—The business sheet indicated that the statement was to be made.

**Mr Whitlam**—The subject was not stated.

**Mr CHARLES JONES**—That is so; the subject was not mentioned. The business sheet merely indicated that a ministerial statement was to be made. The Minister cannot get out of the situation as easily as he wishes.

This is the second helicopter accident that has occurred within approximately 12 months. I think we all can throw our minds back to the occasion when a helicopter crashed in Sydney after encountering trouble apparently similar to that which struck the machine that crashed the other day. I am not able to discuss factual details in exact terms, however, because I have not had time to check this aspect of the accident owing to the lateness of the notice that the Opposition received this afternoon in respect of the Minister's statement. In the helicopter crash in Sydney, two employees of the Australian Broadcasting Commission—a reporter and a photographer—lost their lives. Three more pressmen, who, I assume, were members of the Australian Journalists Association, have now lost their lives in another helicopter accident. I hate to think what could have happened had the machine fallen right among the reporters assembled on the oil rig. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr Whitlam) has just reminded me that the accident in Sydney occurred on a Saturday afternoon when not many people were in the streets. Honourable members can imagine what would have happened had it occurred in one of the main city streets at a busy time. Those honourable members who live in Sydney or who know it well can readily imagine how tragic the consequences would have been. That accident, however, happened at about 3 o'clock on a Saturday afternoon when the streets in the immediate area were relatively empty.

I am concerned about what is being done by the Department of Civil Aviation to ensure that helicopters are properly serviced. I am concerned also about servicing activities in respect of the large number of light aircraft, both privately owned and on charter, that are being involved in accidents throughout Australia these days. Indeed, all of us are not altogether happy about what is happening in relation to large commercial aircraft. Many of us have our own ideas about the Winton disaster and about other accidents that have occurred. I believe that members of the Parliament should be given more information about the findings of the Department in relation to aircraft accidents. I regret that the Minister has not stated that a public inquiry will be held. After all, the relatives of the men who lost their lives are entitled to know the real reasons why the accident occurred.

Does a helicopter become completely uncontrolable when certain things happen to it? If I remember correctly, at the inquiry into the Sydney accident it was stated that a couple of bolts had come loose and that if the pilot had been fully advised as to what precautionary manoeuvres to follow he might have been able to avoid the crash. This is not my say so; this is what came out of that inquiry. Is the same explanation applicable in this case? For the Minister to come in and make such a brief statement at this stage is not fair to the relatives of the men who lost their lives or to honourable members. The Minister said that he would inform the House as soon as possible of the conclusions that are reached. I hope that that will not be too far away. I also hope that he will bring us some more positive information about what is being done to control helicopters and what advice is given to the pilots of these machines.

I understand that there is competition in Australia between the owners of these helicopters. I remember, that 8 or 9 months ago or maybe a little longer I received some correspondence which indicated the extreme competition that was entering this field with overseas operators taking over from Australian charter agents. I think that the
Minister should give us a little more information when he presents his report. He should also consider holding a public inquiry so that the relatives and those associated with the men who lost their lives can at least have the satisfaction of knowing what happened.

Dr MACKAY (Evans)—by leave—I, too, would like to extend sympathy to the relatives of those who lost their lives and also to the journalists, some of whom were very badly maimed by this accident. However, I cannot accept the attitude that has been taken by the honourable member for Newcastle (Mr Charles Jones) in virtually censuring the Minister for Civil Aviation (Mr Swartz) for not giving adequate notice of this interim statement that has been made. I believe that the House is grateful to the Minister for coming forward immediately, indicating that an inquiry is proceeding, and giving us a good deal of insight into the kind of inquiry it is. I feel that it is quite uncalled for to indicate, without stating a reason, that there is a necessity for a public inquiry. A demand for a public inquiry sometimes comes with it a suggestion of improper practice or motive.

I have looked through the report into the Winton disaster in Queensland and I must say that I am tremendously impressed with the thoroughness of the examination that was carried out and with the thoroughness of the report. The Minister has come into the House at the first available opportunity and has given an up to the moment report. I believe that the kind of attack that has been made on him as a result of his actions is thoroughly unjustified.

Mr UREN (Reid)—by leave—The reason I rise is to ask why a public inquiry is not to be held into this accident. I was viewing television on the day that the accident occurred and I heard a Melbourne commentator from Channel 9 who was an eyewitness to the accident—he was on the drilling rig on which the helicopter was landing—give his version of what happened. He said that when the helicopter was 3 or 4 feet from the platform, the tail of the helicopter hit the platform and consequently the accident occurred. However, several hours later when he was asked in the television studio what he thought caused the accident he said he thought that one of the pontoons collapsed. So this television commentator who was present and saw the accident gave two different versions within a short period of time. Surely the Minister for Civil Aviation (Mr Swartz) could at least check the transcript of the commentator's statements. There may be many eye witnesses who would give conflicting evidence about what really happened. Therefore I think that the people of Australia have a right to a public inquiry. There should not be a private inquiry. Three men who were responsible for communications in Australia have lost their lives. We want a public inquiry into this helicopter crash. The honourable member for Newcastle (Mr Charles Jones) raised the point that there has been a question mark in this country for some time regarding the operation of commercial aircraft. There are also more and more people moving into the private aircraft field. Unless we have strict controls over private aircraft as well as commercial aircraft we will have very many more accidents occurring in this country. I support the request of the honourable member for Newcastle for a public inquiry.

HIGH COURT OF AUSTRALIA
Ministerial Statement

Mr BOWEN (Parramatta—Attorney-General)—by leave—I desire to inform the House of a decision that has been taken by the Government in regard to the transfer to Canberra of the principal seat of the High Court of Australia. As honourable members will be aware, the High Court now holds regular sittings at least once a year in each of the capital cities of the six States. It sits in the capital cities both as a Full Court and to hear single Justice matters. The principal seat of the High Court is, however, in Melbourne where it has been since the commencement of the High Court.

It has always been the intention that the principal seat of the High Court should at some time be established at the seat of Government. Indeed, the original provision in the Judiciary Act 1903, section 10, contained a firm statement that 'the principal seat of the High Court shall be at the seat of Government'. There was provision that until the seat of Government was established the principal seat of the High Court should be at such place as the Governor-General from time to time appointed. In 1903 the
Governor-General ordered that the principal seat of the High Court should be at Melbourne. In 1926, when the seat of Government was about to be moved to Canberra, section 10 of the Judiciary Act was amended to provide that on and after a date to be fixed by proclamation the principal seat of the High Court would be at the seat of Government. In the meantime, as honourable members will be aware, the Principal Registry of the High Court has continued to be in Melbourne.

The Government has had discussions from time to time with the Chief Justice with a view to coming to some decision as to the appropriate time for moving the principal seat of the High Court to Canberra. The Chief Justice has indicated his desire that some decision be made regarding moving the principal seat of the High Court to Canberra. He has emphasised that, in his view, the present arrangements for the functioning of the Court mean that the Court is not sufficiently accepted throughout Australia as the symbol of Commonwealth judicial power and, in this regard, as a symbol of Australian federation. Both the Government and the Chief Justice have come to the conclusion that the time has arrived when some decision should be taken and announced in regard to the principal seat of the Court.

It is therefore my duty to inform the House that the Government has approved in principle the transfer to Canberra of the principal seat of the High Court and has given instructions for the preparation of plans for a prestige building. The National Capital Development Commission has been directed to develop plans for a prestige building on the lake-side site immediately to the east of Parkes Place and in a line with the National Library. Cabinet has asked that the plans be developed to the stage where cost estimates can be established and timetables determined. At this stage the Government has not committed itself to any specific timing and the actual transfer of the principal seat of the High Court to Canberra will depend on a number of factors.

The transfer of the principal seat will not necessarily mean that all full court matters of the High Court will be heard in Canberra from the time of the transfer. Both the Chief Justice and the Government contemplate that there would have to be some transitional provision, at least for the hearing of full court matters in capital cities other than Sydney and Melbourne. It is anticipated also that single justice sittings will continue to be held in the various capital cities although the establishment of the new Federal Superior Court would be likely to reduce the number of matters calling for hearing before a single justice. A further announcement will be made when the Government has considered the plans and the report of the National Capital Development Commission but the Government does not expect to be able for some time to indicate when it is likely that the principal seat of the High Court will be transferred to Canberra. In the meantime, the Government is confident that its decision now announced will meet with the approval of the Australian people.

Mr WHITLAM (Werriwa—Leader of the Opposition)—by leave—I am sure that the people will approve the announcement which the Government has made. It is the fulfilment of a very proper provision which is almost as old as this Parliament itself and as old as the High Court itself. I compliment the Attorney-General (Mr Bowen) on the progress which he has made in this concept. I recall that on 31st March 1965, in answer to a question which I had asked on the matter, his predecessor stated:

I am unable to say when the matter was last formally considered. For my part, I am aware of the provision. A proclamation under section 10 of the Judiciary Act is not appropriate at this date.

I rise, not only to compliment the Attorney-General on the milestone which he has achieved, but also to ask a companion question. After I had received the reply which I have mentioned I asked:

When was consideration last given to making the proclamation under section 128 of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act that the principal registry shall be situated at the seat of government? On 20th May 1965 the Attorney-General's predecessor answered:

I am aware of the provision to which the honourable member refers but I am unable to say when the matter was last formally considered. A proclamation under section 128 of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act is not appropriate at this date.

Obviously in the intervening 3 years there has been an intensification of the industrial dominance of the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Court. This is an
irreversible and desirable trend. I do not kno whether the Attorney-General would feel that he could make an announcement on this subject at this time, but I would welcome the assurance that he is giving the same constructive attention to this as he has clearly given to the companion section of the Judiciary Act.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL’S SPEECH

Address-in-Reply

Debate resumed from 21 March (vide page 405), on motion by Mr Fox:

That the following Address-in-Reply to the Speech of His Excellency the Governor-General be agreed to:

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY:

We, the House of Representatives of the Commonweal of Australia, in Parliament assembled, desire to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Excellency for the Speech which you have been pleased to address to Parliament.

Mr TURNBULL (Mallee) [3.43]—As we all know, at the present time Parliament is debating the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply to the Governor-General’s Speech delivered at the opening of the Second Session of the Twenty-sixth Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia. I pay tribute to the Governor-General. In that high office he has travelled all around Australia and he has met with the approval, I believe, of all the people. I have not heard one word said against him in or out of Parliament. I believe that even the Opposition was pleased at his appointment. In his own right, he is a great man and I pay tribute to him.

The Governor-General spoke about the late Prime Minister and said that we should acknowledge the great services which he had rendered to this nation. The Governor-General went on further to say:

That these achievements were recognised beyond Australia was evident from the attendance at Mr Holt’s memorial service of the Prince of Wales.

Then the Governor-General referred to the attendance of leaders of nations throughout the world to illustrate the esteem in which the late Mr Holt was held by those people who had met him when he had travelled to different countries throughout the world.

I say to the new Prime Minister (Mr Gorton): Good luck. However, I believe that the Prime Minister does not work on luck. I believe that the experience that he has had and the wisdom that he can put into the work that he will do in Parliament will help us considerably. The new Prime Minister is a constituent of mine in Mallee. I believe that it will not be very long before he moves away to the electorate of Higgins and becomes a constituent of that electorate. In the meantime, he is a constituent of the Mallee electorate.

Over the last few years when starting a speech on any important occasion in this House I have said that we should have some priorities for action. I have referred, as the first two priorities, to defence and water conservation in that order. It is remarkable to note the effect that the drought has had on the speeches made in the House. I would say that 60% more members now are speaking about water conservation than previously. This is only natural and, of course, it is to be approved. When a drought comes along people see just how devastating it is, particularly when it hits a city like Melbourne. People say: ‘We do not know what to do. Will the rain come? What does the future hold?’ Representatives from the Melbourne area and, as a matter of fact, from all over Australia have brought increasingly to the notice of Parliament the need for water conservation. Before I deal with that subject I want to say one or two words about defence because even if we conserve enough water to give us added productivity and all those things that this country wants, they are not much good to us if we cannot protect them.

I believe that the No. 1 priority is defence. In this regard I was pleased to read in the Governor-General’s Speech that the strength of the armed forces now exceeds 138,000, compared with 105,000 3 years ago. I believe that the forces should be built up more than this. Nevertheless, it is a step in the right direction. We hear a lot said about Vietnam. I believe this is our point of defence at the present time. So many Opposition speakers in the House seem to be against our forces operating in Vietnam. As a matter of fact the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Whitlam), according to headlines in a newspaper yesterday said that if the Australian Labor Party came into office and the United States of America did not stop the bombing then immediately the Labor Government would withdraw our
forces from Vietnam. I wondered why the Leader of the Opposition said that at this time. It was probably because he had in mind that he was meeting the Victorian Central Executive that night. We know that the extreme section of the Victorian Executive somehow would take some kind of succour from the fact that the Leader of the Opposition was leaning towards their kind of policy.

I believe that our boys overseas should receive the greatest support from the Government and from the Australian population. One would have thought, listening to some speakers, that this war was different to others. It is not a different war when one looks into it properly. Our men are not on a quest in search of gain such as led our forefathers to the Austral shore. Our men have not been prepared to invade and outrage weaker nationalities in lawless rage of conquest. Thank God their mission is as pure and as noble as any undertaken to rid the world of would-be tyrants. Australians can be proud and pleased of our forces in two great World Wars and a number of smaller conflicts in that when our men went overseas they did not go in search of gain. They went to preserve the freedom of this country. There is a feeling in this country that we should protect this country only when it is invaded, but the general principle of Governments—and I do not mean the present Government only—has been that we should protect this country as well as we can by supporting our allies before the enemy gets to our shores. Anyone who has travelled around in wartime or who has been in one of the forces and seen what happens to those countries that are devastated by war will agree with this. By allying ourselves with other nations fighting against an aggressor in other countries, we are helping our allies. We are not just devastating the other country and saving our own. After all if the aggressor's troops were to fight here our ally's country would be devastated before they got here.

Let us not forget for one moment that we would not have this Parliament if it had not been for the ex-servicemen who fought for the freedom of this country on different occasions. Thank God we had available men who on so many occasions were willing to fight and make the supreme sacrifice so that we in this country may live in peace and liberty. I do not think this can be said too often. Some people have been stating that we should not build up our national image, that we should more or less subscribe to a kind of socialism of nations throughout the world. I believe that only by being strong can we protect ourselves and help to protect other nations. Only by being productive and strong can we help to feed the undernourished countries of the world. Therefore it is our duty to be national minded. Why is there this feeling that is creeping in amongst some sections of the population and which has been apparent in Opposition speeches that we should not in any circumstances show our national strength and declare our national ambitions? These are things that we must do. We must build ourselves up to the highest possible peak.

A good deal has been said about water conservation. All the things that we want, such as improved social services and a higher standard of living and all the other things that we hope will be provided for our people, will come only from greater productivity, from our ability to make more money. The gravest misquotation I know of is: 'Money is the root of all evil'. This is completely wrong. The biblical quotation is: 'The love of money is the root of all evil'. Money is a good thing. What can one do without it? It is very handy at home and it is essential when we travel abroad. We want more money in this country. We want more of what we call foreign capital, and this means that we must have more exports which will bring fresh money into Australia to revitalise our economy. We have been getting a good deal of money from overseas, and this has been objected to by quite a number of Opposition members. It has, however, proved to be of great value, particularly in enabling us to carry out great projects like the Snowy Mountains scheme.

Mr Devine—Started by Labor.

Mr TURNBULL—As far as I am concerned, all Labor did was to have a few members go down there one day and turn the first sod. I found shortly after I came here that Labor was not doing much about the Snowy Mountains project, and I had something to say about it. The record is in Hansard, I would not make this statement unless I could substantiate it by reference to Hansard. I had to urge the Labor Government to get on with the project.
After the first sod was turned Labor went out of office in 1949 and since that time this Government has been left to pursue the project. It has done everything that has been done to carry out that project. One might even say that it started the scheme, because turning the first sod could not really be said to represent the starting of the scheme.

Honourable members who have spoken about water conservation have all urged an extension of our storages. I asked a question on this subject today. I asked whether it was a fact that more than 50% of the water we conserve in Australia is lost between the storages and the consumers, and whether in Victoria the proportion is much higher. It has been said that more than 90% of the conserved water is lost between the storages and consumers in a part of the Mallee electorate, which I represent. It is a fair proposition that we should introduce pipelining. If we have a very wet season we do not want more storages; the one set of storages will do. But if we have a run of very dry seasons we cannot fill the storages.

Naturally we must make the best possible use of the water that we can conserve. I have asked the Minister for National Development (Mr Fairbairn) to convene a meeting, at which he would be chairman, of the appropriate State Ministers to go into this subject. The answer given in the past to my recommendations about pipelining has been that it would cost too much money, but I believe that the installation of pipelining would effectively double the amount of conserved water that we now have available for use. Pipelining represents only a single expense, but it gives a dual advantage. Firstly, it provides an opportunity to use the conserved water to the best advantage. Secondly, it makes extra water available in times when there are no drought conditions. This means that in those times we can grow many necessary primary products which we do not normally grow. By this I mean products that we can sell. Wheat is grown on dry land and sheep are raised on dry land, but if ample water were provided many more products could be grown, and they would grow quite prolifically. It is for this reason that whenever I speak in this House I want to stress the need for irrigation by means of pipelining. I do not want anybody to think that I have just thought of this pipelining suggestion because of the drought. I have been stressing the need for this for at least 15 years in this House, and it is about time something was done about it.

I would like to say a few words also about decentralisation. For many politicians this is simply a catchcry. Last September the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate (Senator Cohen), Mr Primmer and one or two others made a visit to Mildura. This was some little time before the Senate election. They must have carried out some research, because in the newspaper in which their visit was announced there appeared an article in which an endeavour was made to have a hit at me. It misfired, however. It was headed: 'City drift attacked by member'. The article referred to a speech that was given by the honourable member for Bendigo (Mr Beaton) in this House. Let me say that I find no fault now with the honourable member for Bendigo because he has apologised for what he said, and when a man apologises I am willing to accept the apology. The newspaper reported the honourable member for Bendigo as saying in his speech:

The honourable member (referring to me) should not talk (about decentralisation). . . . In his electorate all he can do is talk about it, but he does nothing about it.

Mr Bryant—That is right.

Mr TURBULL—The honourable member for Bendigo apologised for making this remark. Of course he knows it is completely untrue. I do not come into this House calling out for decentralisation, but I do come here advocating things like pipelining and a better deal for dried fruit growers and wheat growers and other people engaged in primary production. I advocate the establishment of an authority to promote the welfare of producers in the Murray Valley. I have been accused of being far too parochial and of sticking too much to my electorate, but I do so in an effort to increase decentralisation. This is not done by using the word as a catchcry but by building up in the country the things that will attract people to go there. The newspaper article to which I referred quoted an interjection of mine which I made during the speech of the honourable member for Bendigo. I said by way of interjection: 'Implement the Electoral Act.' I was referring to the power of
distribution commissioners to establish electorates with a number of voters 20% above or 20% below the quota. The newspaper article continued:

He (Mr Beaton) referred to a book called 'Economic Policy and the Size of Cities,' which he said contained valuable evidence to show that for every person and industry in the city, and every population increase in the city, the cost to the community was tremendous. Something should be done about it, Mr Beaton said.

I agree with the honourable member whole-heartedly; something should be done about it. What is the best thing to do about it? The best thing is to do as I suggested and implement the Electoral Act so that the distribution commissioners will use to the full their power to have 20% above or below the quota. If the country electorates were 20% below the quota and city electorates were 20% above it, this would even things up. This is what I have called 'decentralised political representation'. Of course the Labor Party is strongly against it. It wants one vote one value. Yet we have the strange situation in the Senate of a State the size of Tasmania having the same voting power as New South Wales and Victoria, although those States have probably more than twenty times as many voters as Tasmania has. The Labor Party never says anything in criticism of this situation. I do not either, because I agree with it. It is right that we should keep Tasmania and other low population States on equal terms with New South Wales because it is most necessary for us in this Commonwealth of Australia to build up the population and the productivity of the smaller States. The Labor Party apparently agrees with that. If it is right, then we should build up the population of the sparsely populated areas.

We should try to prevent the drift to Melbourne and other cities and to build up country populations. The only way this can be done is by decentralising political representation. Because there are more votes in the cities the cities get more amenities. Country people say: 'We must go to Melbourne. My children need a better education. I can get a job there.' People go to Melbourne and its population increases. When there is a redistribution, because there are more people in Melbourne the city gets more members and, consequently, more amenities, and so the process continues. The reverse applies to country areas. It is time something was done about this, as has been suggested by the honourable member for Bendigo, but it is no good merely putting notices of motion on the notice paper concerning what should be done about decentralisation and not supporting the decentralisation of political representation. This is not a question of gerrymandering; it is a matter of grave national importance which every honourable member should support to the hilt.

I now refer to the Melbourne 'Herald' of 25th March and to an article which is headed 'I'd Flog These MPs, Says Sir William'. This statement is attributed to Sir William Yeo, the New South Wales State President of the Returned Services League. It is a great thing that an ex-serviceman should say that he would flog other ex-servicemen! Perhaps he has heard about the Japanese flogging people in the Changi prisoner of war camp and in other places. Evidently he was not there. I do not know where he served but my first reaction, on seeing this article, was to think that we should flog him. I immediately realised that that was wrong thinking. I shall try to be as kind as I can, because I believe that any man who would make such a suggestion is, to a certain extent, deranged. He must be. Sometimes when boys and men are brought before the courts, people say: 'We should flog these criminals', but people with a greater knowledge of human nature: 'That is no good. We must give them special treatment.' Apparently Sir William needs special treatment. The Press article also stated:

'If I had my way, they are the chaps I would flog, because they are recreant to everything that is clean and decent in this country', Sir William said angrily.

No man in his right senses could have said that, so he must have been angry. However, I do not like people suggesting that honourable members are recreant to everything that is clean and decent in this country. Any person making such a claim should be ashamed of himself. Sir William has made a general allegation, so no honourable member can claim that it was a personal attack. It was completely wrong for the head of the Returned Services League of New South Wales to make such an attack. After all, he is ignorant of procedure in this House. What happens here is that decisions are made in the Party rooms and when a matter is brought into this chamber the Party attitude
to it has been determined and even Sir William would not know what members had said. No doubt Labor Party members will seize on this statement by Sir William Yeo and try to make some political gain from it.

The honourable member for Newcastle (Mr Charles Jones) said that secondary industry is our real producer. Secondary industry does not produce; it only processes. Secondary industry has priced itself out of the world markets. Primary industry accounts for 80% of our exports. It builds up our overseas reserves enabling us to buy raw material that is not available in Australia—raw material without which our secondary industries could not continue to function satisfactorily. It is strange that the honourable member for Bendigo should urge the establishment of industries in country areas while the honourable member for Newcastle comments on the high cost of establishing factories elsewhere than in the cities. Sir Henry Bolte has said ‘we are not solely supported by farmers'; but we are to a great extent and he should know that wheat is the best paying freight of his railways.

Sir William Yeo’s outburst was related to war pensions. One of the greatest improvements in repatriation pensions was the introduction of the intermediate rate of pension. All honourable members receive requests for assistance from persons who claim that their health has deteriorated and who want their pensions to be increased. A person will say: ‘I am on the 40% pension. Will you try to get me a 60% or 100% pension?' The intermediate rate pension has been a wonderful innovation. I think I am right in saying that it was first suggested by the honourable member for Wimmera (Mr King) in 1959. Would he be the sort of man Sir William would want flogged?

The honourable member for Hunter (Mr James) concluded his remarks on this debate by quoting allegedly from a poem by Robbie Burns. It did not make sense, and it did not sound like Burns. The first line he quoted was:

Desist for shame, proceed nae further;

The honourable member was relating this line to our involvement in Vietnam. I am sure that the Hansard staff had considerable trouble in locating the quotation. I have studied Burns for many years and I do not know the poem. The poem does not even have the spirit of Burns. Let me quote a poem of Burns which does reveal something of his spirit. He wrote:

Scots, wha hae wi’ Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has ten his bed,
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to victory.

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward’s grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?

Let him turn and fleer!

That is the spirit of Burns and the spirit of Scotland. Let me quote from ‘Cam Ye by Athol’:

‘I hae but ane son,
My brave young Donal’,
But if I had ten
They’d follow Glengarry.

I say to the people who do not believe that Australia should support the Americans in Vietnam, let them turn and flee. I do not say that they are traitors to Australia, because I know there a lot of good men among them, but they are not upholding the highest ideals of this nation nor are they supporting the principles that made the British people great.

Mr PEARSELL (Franklin) [4.8]—I support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply and congratulate the honourable member for Henty (Mr Fox) on his typically thoughtful contribution in moving the motion. I congratulate also the honourable member for the Northern Territory (Mr Calder) on his speech in seconding the motion. He is to be congratulated for his persistence in winning for this vast and important area of the continent, which he so capably represents, the democratic right for its member to cast a vote on all matters, and not just parochial matters, that come before this chamber.

I join with other honourable members in paying my humble and sincere tribute to the late Prime Minister. Many honourable members of this House owe their political existence here to his dedicated leadership and inspiring example. Several honourable members have referred to the manifold problems confronting the primary industries of this nation. The position in which many farmers find themselves today cannot be exaggerated. Perhaps never since the depression years of the late 1920s and early 1930s have they faced so many or such complex problems. The price of wool not
only limits the income of, and further development by, the farmers in this industry, but materially and adversely affects our overseas balances. Because of the magnitude and duration of the present drought, breeding flocks and cattle herds throughout all of the south eastern States are being decimated. The small fruit industry in Tasmania is faced with ruin unless something is done in the immediate future to guarantee a stable market and stable price for the produce. The dairy farmer producing butter is now confronted with real problems, necessitating a provision in the Governor-General’s Speech designed to allow many uneconomic properties to be absorbed by others in an effort to create greater stability within the industry.

Freights on all exported goods are constantly rising, and the effects of the devaluation of British sterling have given rise to additional apprehension and conjecture. In addition, of course, we are confronted with the possibility of the British Budget still further adversely affecting Australian primary industries. This sequence of events is occurring because Australia has an embarrassing over-production of food. Yet we live in a starving world. Most of the products which I have mentioned are produced within an economy of ever rising costs for the use of a market which, even if dependable, is uncertain as to the financial return which the producer can expect. Britain has been looked upon as the traditional market for many of our primary products. We look with concern at her efforts to join the European Economic Community. If those efforts are successful they will give further rise to uncertainty and misgiving within this industry.

The problems confronting fruitgrowers in Tasmania and affecting the very future of the industry have never appeared greater than they are today. Many of these growers were affected in varying degrees by the bush fires of February 1967. These were followed by the drought, which still persists in many parts of the Commonwealth. With commendable courage and fortitude and a lot of help from this Government, the orchardists have turned their hands to the task of rehabilitation. They have replanted and reworked their orchards and have produced a large crop but they are now confronted with potential returns which may not realise the cost of presentation.

The result of the fruit season is of paramount importance to all of southern Tasmania. The economy is closely and dependently geared to this industry. There are more than 1,000 growers in the south of the island alone who are vitally concerned with the future of the industry and its immediate prospects. Also there are many people who form the labour force which is dependent on those 1,000 growers. The fruit growing industry is a generator of a tremendous labour force which is needed for the meticulous handling of this important crop. Many thousands of people are connected indirectly and directly with the industry. It requires a large labour force to grow, pick, grade, pack, deliver, ship and market the crop. The supply of sprays, machinery, equipment, fertilisers and packaging requisites is inseparably bound to the welfare of this important industry. The annual value to Tasmania of the apple and pear crop has ranged over recent years between $16m and $20m. The fruit crop provides between 45% and 60% of agricultural earnings for the State and represents more than 15% of the total income from all primary industries in Tasmania. Total apple exports from Australia in 1966 were 8½ million bushels, valued at almost $26m. Tasmania contributed 6½ million bushels, valued at almost $19m. Tasmania’s contribution represented more than 72% of Australia’s exports. Those figures may serve to illustrate the paramount importance of this industry to Tasmania and the equally important role it plays in Australia’s export earnings.

It would be a calamity of major significance should any disaster in marketing befall the industry. Costs over which the grower has no control are constantly being loaded upon him. The time has now come when he can no longer absorb these costs. Some form of financial guarantee is a pressing necessity. A recent cost survey by the State Fruit Board reveals a minimum cost of production of $2.28 a bushel. If one adds the small figure of 40c for the grower’s wages and management costs, 5% for the capital value of his holding, and 74% for depreciation on plant and machinery, the cost of production rises to $2.92. I would suggest that these figures are in no way extravagant. In fact, the whole survey is somewhat conservative and, of course, most of the cost figures are actuarial.
The export season has now commenced and the average forward sale price, which will affect about 10% of the crop, is $2.40 f.o.b., leaving nothing for the grower. It is estimated that approximately 70% of the crop will be sold under the system of guaranteed advance. This advance averages $1.10. The remainder of the crop will be exported on open consignment. These figures illustrate the grave problem which confronts the industry in Tasmania. As against an inescapable cost of $2.28 the grower is assured of a guaranteed advance of only $1.10, which is not even 50% of his cost of production. He is then left to await the outcome of a market 12,000 miles distant and a selling period of 5 to 8 weeks hence. This situation has created in the industry feelings of doubt, uncertainty and frustration. Some growers may be forced out of production by circumstances over which they have no control. Such growers may not necessarily be the least efficient growers. Future investment in the industry may be looked upon as nothing more than a gamble. Any decline in production must mean loss of income both for the State and for the Commonwealth.

I believe that some form of financial guarantee is essential. Such a guarantee would give incentive and purpose to an industry which at the moment is beset by doubt and apprehension. Such a guarantee would ensure Tasmania's ability to meet its export quota and would permit growers to forward their fruit with confidence. The Commonwealth Government would be required to make a financial contribution to the industry only when market returns are known and the position can be surveyed against a known background. I therefore urge the Government to take this action, which is the only course open to ensure stability and confidence within the industry. The industry is unanimous in its contention that such a course of action is necessary. Producers, exporters, the State Fruit Board and the State Government are of one mind in the request which I make today on their behalf. I am reliably informed that a formal application for such a guarantee has been made to the Commonwealth. Should a guarantee not be given I am afraid that thousands of bushels of fruit will drop and ruin and hundreds of growers may face bankruptcy. Due to the drought in other States it is possible that difficulty may be experienced in filling space quotas in those States. When and if this happens Tasmanian growers will be asked to make good any short fall in space so that the benefit of the 10c rebate may be obtained. Tasmanian growers can and will step in and fill the quota if this form of guarantee is provided.

I would point out that the industry is seeking this assistance only for this season and because of rising costs over which the grower has no control. The freight increase was imposed despite the protest of the Minister for Trade and Industry (Mr McEwen). Other unknown factors which may affect the industry include the effect of devaluation of sterling on this season's market and the effect of the United Kingdom budget, which could compound the problems confronting the industry. A more positive and lasting solution may be found for future seasons by one of the committees currently investigating the industry's problems. An industry assistance committee, comprising three growers, one from Tasmania, one from New South Wales and a pear grower from Victoria, as well as an exporter, a shipper and a member of the Australian Apple and Pear Board, has been established. It is endeavouring to devise ways and means of placing the industry on a better footing for future seasons. A committee of investigation has been set up by the Australian Apple and Pear Board. That Committee has taken evidence in Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Hobart and Launceston. It comprises three people with many years of experience. They are Messrs Critchley, Lloyd and Sargeant. The committee commenced its investigations only last September but has already submitted an interim report.

So I submit that the industry is doing all within its power to find a long-term solution to the problems that confront it. I believe that while we in Australia are faced with ever rising costs, over which we have no control, and while we are dependent upon a distant and unpredictable market, there is a need for some form of assurance which will allow growers to proceed with confidence to grow fruit, knowing that they are assured of a just reward for their labours. I would point out that the guarantee that is being sought is not dependent entirely on the possible effects of devaluation. The present situation in the industry was brought about by a combination of
problems over which the industry has no control but which have been thrust upon it. I have pointed out briefly in passing that one of these problems is the increase in the cost of freight. The Deputy Prime Minister expressed some concern about this. Yet, while he was in the process of expressing concern, members of the Apple and Pear Board conferred with the Conference Line and agreed on freights to be charged for this season's crop. This agreement, of course, resulted in another increase which inevitably will be passed on to the grower. I wonder how much longer this can possibly go on. However, this is the intolerable situation in which the fruitgrower finds himself at the present moment.

The industry is of paramount importance to southern Tasmania and plays an important part in the economy of northern and north-western Tasmania also. Should anything befall this industry it could result in a loss of our overseas markets which would be a loss not just for this season but could well be a loss in perpetuity. This cannot be allowed to happen. In the Governor-General's Speech mention was made of steps to be taken to consolidate the dairying industry, an industry which has enjoyed over the years a subsidy which annually runs into many millions of dollars. At long last we are facing up to this proposition. We do not want to create a set of circumstances in which a dairy farmer will be helped to overcome his problem while the fruit grower may have only one alternative as a form of production, that is, to resort to dairy farming. The only other alternative for the fruit grower is to sell up his holding in country areas and be forced, as the honourable member for Mallee (Mr Turnbull) has just said, to move into the city. It will be little short of a major tragedy for Tasmania if this situation cannot be resolved.

In many of the sophisticated countries today—America in particular and, to a lesser degree, England—they have found it necessary to give some form of assurance to primary industry and to the person who produces primary products. There was a time when we could take a gamble, when the industry had the inbuilt capacity to be able to absorb one season's loss in perhaps three seasons. This situation no longer applies in our primary industries. The time has come when not only the fruit industry but also many others will need some form of guaranteed advance which will finally have to be resolved in accordance with a realisation of the world's markets. Steps have already been taken to investigate the potentialities of other markets further to our north and no doubt our markets there will increase. We live in a part of the world where the living standards are such that our potential markets are unable to pay at a figure which equals our high cost structure. But this high cost structure is not the fault of the industry; in many respects it is due to costs which have been thrust upon it. I hope that the request which has come forward to the Government will be viewed sympathetically.

I have mentioned in the remarks I have made so far only the actuarial cost of production survey which has been undertaken into costs in the industry. Many of these costs are beyond the industry's own control. I have not mentioned the incidence of freight cost which has risen this season to the astronomical figure of $2.34 for the shipment of a bushel of apples from Tasmania to our United Kingdom market. This figure is arrived at by negotiation between the Board and the Conference Line.

I feel that the time has come when the freight increases and the other cost burdens which are being imposed upon the industry can no longer in fairness be borne. I ask those Ministers who are to make a decision as a result of the approach which has been made by the Tasmanian Government, with the full accord and complete support of all those associated with the industry, to realise that they hold in their hands the destiny of the whole of the fruit industry in Tasmania. I ask them to realise also that this is one of the means whereby this industry can be saved. I have not exaggerated the situation in any way. Before rejecting the application which has been made and which at this moment will not cost the Commonwealth Government one single dollar but will inject into the industry confidence for the Tasmanian grower, I ask them to consider what I have said. Then the whole matter can be reviewed in the light of market prospects, devaluation and all the costs which the industry has been asked to absorb. I urge those responsible before making a decision to make any investigation that they consider necessary and to seek the views of the Tasmanian Fruit Board which,
I am sure, will be in a position to confirm the picture which I have painted today, bleak though it is. Some solution must be found for the future of this industry which plays such an enormously important part in the economy of Tasmania and plays its role in the welfare of the Commonwealth.

Mr ST JOHN (Warringah) [4.27]—I wish to take up a subject matter very different from that which was so forcibly put by my respected colleague, the honourable member for Franklin (Mr Pearsall). I take as my starting point the following words from the Governor-General's Speech, which I beg leave to read, in which he said:

The destiny of Papua and New Guinea is to become a self-governing country developed for independence if and when it is clearly demonstrated by the majority of the indigenous population that this is what they wish. My Government's basic policy of Papua and New Guinea is therefore to develop it for self-determination.

Whether some subsequent special relationship with Australia is worked out, and what such a special relationship might be, can only be worked out in the future between the then Government of a self-governing Papua and New Guinea and the then Government of Australia.

But my Government believes that the development of Papua and New Guinea as a seventh State of Australia is fraught with difficulties, and that statehood, as against self-government, is not likely to be the outcome of development.

I wish to say something of pressing importance in relation to those words and, indeed, in relation to the Territory of Papua and New Guinea generally.

The progress reports furnished by the Administrator in recent weeks in connection with the United Nations Visiting Mission give an encouraging picture of a people who, whilst they aspire to ultimate independence, are grateful to the Australian Administration and wish to see independence come about when they want it and not before. I recall also that my good friend, the honourable member for Deakin (Mr Jarman), spoke last Thursday week in glowing terms of what is being done in the Territory following his recent visit up there. I too did the same in the course of a previous speech which I made in this House on 30th August 1967, in the course of which I made a plea for a right to apply for leave to appeal in what is known as the Local Officers Salaries Case. Nothing that has occurred since has caused me to doubt that the plea was well justified, though it has not been heeded.

On this occasion, however, I wish to speak of two further matters of major importance to the Territory at the present time: First, the future political development of the Territory; and secondly, university education in the Territory. I shall hope to demonstrate that these two matters are closely inter-related. But first, as I have said, the matter of the future political development of the Territory. I want to start with a proposition which I believe to be now incontrovertible, that the ultimate goal for the Territory is and indeed must be independence—not self-government; not self-determination; not independence 'if and when it is clearly demonstrated by the majority of the indigenous population that this is what they wish.' None of those things should be the goal, advisable though they may sound, desirable as they may be in themselves or as steps on the way to independence. The goal can and should be stated in one simple, unequivocal word—independence. Note that I do not say independence now. The appropriate time for independence is a separate matter for which I can spare no time this afternoon. Let me just say that in a speech delivered as recently as 1951, the Minister for External Affairs (Mr Hasluck), who was then the Minister for Territories and who did so much for the Territory, speaking of the days when the indigenous inhabitants and the immigrant people should be living side by side on terms of equality, said:

Those times may be far away—they may be more than a century in the future.

Though it could not then be foreseen, the pace of change has quickened immeasurably even since then. Independence may have to come sooner than we think and though we have no wish to hasten it unduly we must prepare for that possibility.

Why is it so important that we should fix a goal clearly in our minds? For one simple reason and that is that, when once we admit and recognise a goal, all the planning and all the efforts, both of this Government and people and of the Government and people of the Territory, will be directed towards that one clear goal—a goal which at the moment is shrouded in mist and a matter of speculation as to if and when.

Why do I say the goal must be independence and independence without ifs and buts of any kind? Again the answer is simple.
This matter of the proper path of political development in Papua and New Guinea was debated at length at the last Summer School of the Australian Institute of Political Science, which was held in this city in January last. There can be no doubt as to the consensus of opinion at that School, which represented many shades of political opinion and to which some of the most expert and able minds and some of the most experienced people in the Territory and this country contributed. The long list of distinguished speakers included our own Minister for External Territories (Mr Barnes). But if he failed to accept independence quite unequivocally as the goal, he was among the very few who did.

The feeling of the School on this matter was summed up lucidly and accurately by Sir Norman Cowper, a former President of the Institute, in these words:

An equivocating policy is unreal and dangerous in that it distracts people of the Territory from getting on with the job of securing their independence as soon as possible. Ministerial policy must not continue to hold out unspecified promises for, this way, activity continues in profitless channels and ultimately frustration and bitterness result... .

It is better to bring New Guinea to independence sooner than later and our aim should be to bring this about as soon as circumstances permit.

The process of reasoning is very direct. There were three possibilities. They were seventh State, independence or some intermediate dependent status. For reasons good or bad, which I do not pause to debate, the seventh State concept is out. Regardless of what some may have wished, there seems to be no prospect that the Australian people as a whole would be prepared to accept the Territory of Papua and New Guinea as a seventh State, with all that it would imply in relation to our political structure, the economy, social services, freedom of movement, race relations and so on. This much I think is recognised in the Governor-General's Speech. Equally the idea of some permanently dependent status is quite unreal. I believe that it would not be acceptable to us, it would not finally content the people of the Territory and it would not be acceptable to the United Nations, to whom we are accountable for the Trust Territory of New Guinea at least. So we return to the ineluctable conclusion that independence is the goal—a goal to be attained, if I may use the phrase made famous by the Supreme Court of the United States, with all convenient speed.

Mr Benson—Should independence be when the people of the Territory wish it or when we say so?

Mr ST JOHN—Certainly it should be when they say so, if they demand it. The only question that arises in my mind is whether it should be granted even if they do not demand it at some time in the future. I do not believe that this situation will arise. The time will come, and it will come much sooner than we anticipate, when they will in fact demand it and as promised we shall indeed grant it.

Perhaps the passage I quoted from the Governor-General's Speech was intended to mean just exactly what I have said here this afternoon. If so, what I have said today will have done no harm in underlining it, but if it was not so intended I must respectfully disagree with it.

Since the Summer School, events have taken a significant turn in the recent election from which the Pangu Pati has emerged as a strong political party destined to grow stronger and destined quite surely, so it would seem, if we may judge from what has happened elsewhere, to advance to the point where nothing but complete independence will satisfy it. This should not dismay us. Let us accept it and bend our endeavours to ensure that, when independence comes, a friendly relationship will continue—a relationship from which both of us have so much to gain in human terms, in economic terms, in mutual defence and in the whole gamut of international relationships. New Guinea is on our threshold. It is the nearest and, may I say, the dearest of the countries of Asia and one with which our history is closely intertwined. By our conduct in relation to New Guinea we shall be judged by the countries of Asia and by the whole international community. Let us perform our trust in a manner of which we can be proud and in such a way as to promote and not to sour that friendly relationship to which I am sure we all aspire.

I turn now to the closely related matter of university education. I say 'closely related' for the obvious reason that independence will be a sorry farce unless the country is
The University will not know until August—when the academic year is in its second month—precisely what its budget will be. But it does know it will receive 'much less' than the $4.5m requested for 1968-69 and again for 1969-70. The uncertainty is the result of the Government's insistence that the University's financing 'should be a local matter'. The truth, of course, is that the budget is really decided by the Department of Territories in Canberra—and will be for years to come. The Currie Commission recommended special Commonwealth grants be made to ensure the University continuity of funds in its early years, but the immediate problem is the University's present budget. The Department of Territories must ensure the University has what it needs—now.

One cannot but agree with what was thus said by the 'Sydney Morning Herald'. But I much regret to inform the House that, according to what I have been told by Professor Inglis, the damage is done for this year at least. It is now too late to retrieve the students who have been let slip and who now, with their hopes dashed, have gone elsewhere.

The Minister made a reply—I am sorry he has not remained in the House to hear me refer to it—to what was said by Professor Inglis. I have a report of what he stated taken from the 'Canberra Times' of 24th February 1968. Professor Inglis, in turn, replied to that and again the report I have taken is from the 'Canberra Times', this time of 11th March. Mr Speaker, unfortunately I have no time—and I am sure the Whip can endorse me in this—to give details of that argument between the Minister and the Acting Vice-Chancellor, who said what he did, I believe, with the full approval of the University's Council. But the record is there for those who are interested in the papers to which I have referred. Suffice it to say that, to my regret, I must concede that it seems the Professor had much the best of that argument. I see nothing which would cause me to resile in any way from the position taken by 'The Sydney Morning Herald' with which I have expressed my reluctant agreement.

I shall give but one example of the practical effect of the proposed cuts, this time in a very important sphere—that of legal training. For some years now the Law Council of Australia has been stressing the paramount importance of indigenous law graduates if we are to preserve the rule of law in an independent Papua and New Guinea. Let us see then what will happen in the law.
faculty if the Government adheres to its present intentions and the University of Papua and New Guinea is not able to take on the projected staff in 1969 and 1970. I understand that three courses only would be open and they are: First, that they could postpone the teaching of third and subsequent years until sufficient funds are available. Secondly, they could convert the law course at the University of Papua and New Guinea into a preparation for studies at an Australian university and reorganise the first 2 years so that the student could obtain the maximum amount of credit on transfer. Thirdly, they could redesign the Ll.B. course with a smaller content and smaller number of class-contact hours per unit. With the present staff and some part-time assistance, it would be possible to teach a complete Ll.B. course though not one geared to the needs of the Territory nor at the standards of any of the existing Australian law schools. Any one of these courses would be a retrograde step. We can only view these possibilities with shame. We must see to it that this does not happen.

My last quotes are from Dr J. T. Gunther, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Papua and New Guinea. In the first, as reported in the 'Sydney Morning Herald' of 19th March 1968, Dr Gunther said:

... to meet minimum Territory needs an annual student intake at least three times as high as current funds allowed would be needed.

In the second, as reported in the Australian Broadcasting Commission news service of the same date, Dr Gunther sharply criticised Australia over the education of native born people of the Territory. He said Australia's record in the Territory was a proud one, but that history would note the almost abject failure of Australia to educate Papuans and New Guineans before 1945. He said he doubted whether, in 1971, there would be any country in the world less well equipped with university graduates than Papua and New Guinea. At present the Territory had only four native university graduates. At the end of 1970 the number would not have reached forty. The Vice-Chancellor said there seemed to be a belief that when the University of Papua and New Guinea asked for funds, it was seeking them at the expense of primary, secondary or technical education. But if 200 graduates—and this is the punch line—were produced each year and these replaced Australians in the Territory public service, the Government would save $600,000 to $800,000 a year. At the end of 10 years, the saving would be $6m to $8m in wages, or more than the cost of running the University. These are the words of no mere academic. They are the wise words of a very capable and experienced man—the highly respected Assistant Administrator of the Territory prior to his appointment as Vice-Chancellor of the University.

At this stage we must be prepared to give first priority to the needs of the Territory in the matter of education in general, and university education in particular, even at some sacrifice if it were necessary, of the funds to be made available for similar purposes in Australia where we are so much further advanced and so much more fortunate. But if Dr Gunther is right, and I see no reason to doubt his words, even the argument based on economy is invalidated. It will be cheaper in the long run to train the indigenous graduates than to pay vastly more for the services of the Australian expatriates whom they would replace. To do otherwise is perhaps not merely dangerous parsimony; if I may use a phrase which has not yet been decriminalised, it is to be penny wise and pound foolish.

Mr Speaker, I have not quoted today from rabble rousers or iconoclasts. As to the goal of independence, I have quoted from Sir Norman Cowper, who needs no encomiums from me, summing up the views of the recent Summer School. As to university education, I have used the words of Professor K. S. Inglis, of a leader-writer on the 'Sydney Morning Herald', and of Dr John Gunther, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Papua and New Guinea and a former Assistant Administrator of the Territory. These are responsible, experienced people who know exactly what they are talking about. They express a point of view with which I am in complete agreement and I feel that, if given the facts, the majority of the members of this House, regardless of party affiliations, would agree also. There is a vast fund of goodwill here towards the people of the Territory. At least I would like to believe this is so. I should like to see an opportunity provided for debate in this House
on these very important matters. It should not be confined to a summer school or a few savoys in the Press. It should be debated here, for it is here that responsibility lies.

May I say, finally, that it gives me no pleasure if once again I am in public disagreement with my Minister. I have indeed uttered many words in praise of what has been done in the Territory. I would like to reiterate them before I close. I feel I would be lacking in a proper sense of responsibility to this House and, indeed, to this nation if I did not express the concern which I am sure that many share in this matter of university education in the Territory. History will judge us harshly if we fail to act as the situation now demands in the Territory. The necessary funds must be made available to enable the University of Papua and New Guinea, for which we have such high hopes, to advance at the rate planned by the Council and contemplated by the Currie Commission set up by this Government.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Presentation of Address-in-Reply

Mr SPEAKER—Order! I have to inform the House that I have ascertained that His Excellency the Governor-General will be pleased to receive the Address-in-Reply at Government House at half-past 5 o'clock p.m. on Thursday, 4th April. I shall be glad if the mover and the seconder of the motion together with other honourable members will accompany me to present the Address.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent the House discussing a definite matter of public importance proposed to the Speaker by the honourable member for Bass (Mr Barnard).

REPATRIATION

Discussion of Matter of Public Importance

Mr SPEAKER—I have received a letter from the honourable member for Bass (Mr Barnard) proposing that a definite matter of public importance be submitted to the House for discussion, namely:

The Government's permitting repatriation benefits to fall to their lowest value in history.

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).

Mr BARNARD (Bass) [4.48]—For the second time in 6 months the Opposition raises as a matter of urgency the Government's failure to prevent drastic erosion in the value of repatriation pensions. We do this today for two reasons. Firstly, in recent years there has been a drastic curtailment of the ability of this House to deal with repatriation Bills. There have been repeated instances of Government reluctance to put repatriation legislation before this Parliament. This pronounced sensitivity of the Government in relation to repatriation policies has been exposed repeatedly. The Opposition asserts that the Government has sought repeatedly to curtail debate on repatriation legislation and stifle parliamentary scrutiny of the meagre repatriation benefits paid in this country. The Government has been reduced to the expedient of giving lengthy and precise titles to its repatriation Bills so that debate can be confined to a very narrow range. In this House, the Government has frequently resorted to use of the gag to prevent Opposition members from dissecting this important issue. Furthermore, the Government has even resorted to redrafting a Repatriation Bill, after it had been amended in another place, to ensure its passage through this Parliament in the form it wanted. Honourable members will recall that only 2 years ago, when the members of another place had agreed to an amendment which had been submitted by the Opposition there and which had been carried, the Government took the unprecedented course of introducing a further Repatriation Bill in this chamber, merely to defeat the move that had been made by the Opposition in the Senate. As a result of the Government's action on that occasion, repatriation legislation introduced by the Government in future will be restrictive and the Opposition will no longer be able to propose the kind of amendment that has been traditionally regarded as its right in this Parliament.

Earlier this afternoon, I heard the honourable member for Mallee (Mr Turnbull) speaking about repatriation. No-
one was more vocal about repatriation than was he when he was in opposition. In those days, he and his colleagues of the then Opposition were able freely to propose amendments to Repatriation Bills if they wished to do so. I should like to hear the honourable member this afternoon justify to the House the Government's action in introducing, as it did last year and the year before, repatriation measures that are completely restrictive, thereby preventing open and frank discussion in this Parliament of matters that are of great importance to the many thousands of ex-servicemen who look to this Government for generosity. We believe that the Government's extreme sensitivity and its blatantly restrictive practices represent grave dangers to parliamentary legislative procedure. Similar tactics could be applied in any field in which the Government feared embarrassment, with a consequent limitation of debate in the Parliament. We should be able to have comprehensive debates and we should be untrammelled by an unfair use of parliamentary forms. I urge the honourable member for Mallee and especially the honourable member for Bradford (Mr Turner) and the honourable member for Warringah (Mr St John) who in this place frequently discuss the rights of individual members freely to express their opinions on any legislation that comes before the Parliament, and if necessary to propose amendments, to speak up on this issue.

The second reason for the submission of this urgency proposal to permit discussion of this subject, Sir, is the dramatic growth of dissatisfaction with the Government's pension payments to ex-servicemen. This has been illustrated in many ways. The Returned Services League, after many years of patient advocacy of higher pension benefits, has taken the unprecedented step of conducting a public campaign against the Government. The RSL is not a radical body; it is not a partisan organisation; and it is not noted for any basic sympathy with the aspirations of the Australian Labor Party. The campaign mounted by the League at the time of the last Senate election can be interpreted only as a reflection of grave dissatisfaction with the Government among hundreds of thousands of returned service men and women. This dissatisfaction was demonstrated clearly yesterday at a meeting in Canberra, when representatives of twelve national ex-service organisations, representing more than a million ex-service men and women and war widows, condemned the present inadequate level of war and service pensions and allowances. During the whole of the time that I have been a member of this Parliament, I have never before known this course of action to be adopted by those who represent ex-servicemen in this country. On this occasion, they have met in Canberra to protest against the Government's action in allowing pension rates in recent years to deteriorate to an alarmingly low level. The conference found that there was ample evidence that the Government had not honoured the principle of fair compensation for incapacity, ill health, and bereavement resulting from war injuries. Delegates said that there was widespread and mounting evidence of hardship and distress because of inadequate pension levels. In this Parliament, the Opposition has ceaselessly urged improvements in the Repatriation Act, and restoration of the relative values of benefits. In association with the national ex-service organisations, we shall continue to press to the utmost a concerted campaign for improved pension payments.

The economic argument for higher payments can be put quite briefly. When the present system of payments was introduced in 1920, the special rate total and permanent incapacity pension was 103% of the basic wage of the day. In 1943, it matched the basic wage. In 1950, it rose to 101% of the basic wage. That was one year after the Menzies Government assumed office. Sir Robert Menzies, then Mr Menzies, as Leader of the Opposition, had promised to increase repatriation benefits. He undertook that the purchasing power of pensions would be maintained. So, in 1950, the special rate TPI pension rose to 101% of the basic wage. These comparisons are significant, because the years that I have mentioned were the only ones in which there were general reviews of repatriation pensions and allowances. A consistent relationship between the special rate pension and the Commonwealth basic wage was regarded as a desired welfare objective by the governments that made those reviews. In the 17 years since the last general review of payments and allowances, the special rate pension has dwindled to 81% of the minimum wage, which now stands at $37.55 a week.
In other words, in 17 years the relative value of the special rate pension has deteriorated by 20%. This is despite the promise in 1949 that the purchasing power of pensions would be maintained. Sir Robert Menzies at that time made special reference to ex-servicemen and those who represent them. The erosion of purchasing power induced by this decline can be emphasised by reference to the prices spiral of the same period. A similar marked deterioration in relative value can be shown by examining the general rate 100% pension payable to an ex-serviceman whose war caused disabilities reduce his earning capacity. In 1920, this pension was 54% of the Commonwealth basic wage. By 1943, it had fallen marginally to 52% and by 1950 to 51%. The relative stability up to that time has not been maintained since. Between 1943 and 1950, the decline was very small indeed. Today, the general rate pension, which is $12 a week, is only 32% of the minimum wage. This represents a drop of about 40% from the level established by the review made by the Government in 1950.

These comparative figures illustrate plainly how the purchasing power of repatriation pensions has withered away under the administration of this Government. The figures explain in telling form the reason for the grave dissatisfaction of the whole ex-service community in Australia at this continuing trend. It is a trend that can only intensify as further gains in the minimum wage are made. It is an alarming trend at a time when most Australians believe that there has been a marked eating away of their living standards. If this feeling is widespread among relatively affluent sections of the community, it must weigh much more heavily on disabled people on meagre pensions whose purchasing power is not being maintained.

When this deterioration in pensions and payments was last raised in this House, the Minister for Civil Aviation (Mr Swartz) made a considered defence of the Government's repatriation policies. He attempted to justify its failure to maintain the relative values of benefits by listing improvements made over the past 17 years. Undoubtedly advances have been made in this period in the facilities and benefits available to veterans. But these improvements cannot seriously be put forward as offsetting the erosion of pension values. In the main, the improvements have not produced any sizeable increase in repatriation expenditure. They should not be used to gloss over the position of the general and special rate pensioners or war widows who are still forced to rely on pensions that have surrendered considerable purchasing power since 1950.

The Minister also justified the entire repatriation scheme by comparing it most favourably with schemes for veterans in other countries. Undoubtedly there are many fine features of the Australian repatriation system, but if the Minister sought to imply that pensions paid in this country are superior to those paid in other countries he is completely wrong. I have briefly examined the level of benefits for veterans payable in the United States of America that are listed in the 1964 edition of the United States Code. It should be noted that these payments are 4 years old and quite probably they have been increased. Unfortunately, these are the most recent figures available to me at this time. But even allowing for the fact that these are 1964 figures, the United States benefits are considerably higher than the pension payments of this Government. I take as one brief example the basic compensation payment for total disability, which in 1964 stood at $US250 a month. This works out at about $A54 a week. Compare that sum with the special rate that is now being paid by this Government—

Mr Stokes—What about the cost of living in the United States?

Mr BARNARD—Even allowing for higher living costs in the United States, this payment compares very favourably with the special rate of $30.55 a week paid in Australia. In addition there is a graduated scale for special kinds of permanent disabilities caused by war service. For example, in the USA an ex-serviceman who is totally deaf and blind because of war injuries receives a weekly compensation that is equivalent to $A118. In Australia an ex-serviceman in the same position would receive no more than the amount that is now paid to the special rate pensioner. I am not convinced that the principle of differentiating between various forms of permanent and total disability is a sound one, but certainly the maximum...
benefit paid in the United States under veterans' legislation is roughly four times the basic rate paid in Australia. The minimum benefit payable to a totally and permanently incapacitated ex-serviceman is almost twice the Australian payment. As I have said, these figures are 4 years out of date and it is quite probable that they understated the comparison. Even so, I believe that they show the relative stagnation of repatriation pensions and payments in Australia by comparison with world standards.

Sir, as I stated when I first commenced to address the House, the Opposition raises this urgent matter today—the second occasion in 6 months that we have done so—because we believe that the representations that have been made by ex-servicemen's organisations in this country are fully justified. They are entitled to seek an increase. This Government has allowed standards to deteriorate.

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

Mr SWARTZ (Darling Downs—Minister for Civil Aviation) [5.4]—After listening to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition (Mr Barnard) I am sure that we can only come to the conclusion that this motion is a form of political opportunism designed to coincide with the meeting of ex-servicemen's organisations that was held in Canberra yesterday. I am sure that from the Government's point of view there could be no possible objection to a meeting such as the one held yesterday. Indeed, I think we would feel that ex-servicemen's organisations were failing in their duty if they did not continue to press the case for ex-servicemen and their dependants. I am sure that submissions that are made from the meeting yesterday will go to the appropriate Minister or Ministers and will be considered in relation to the Budget proposals at a later stage. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition suggested that there was some form of restriction on the debating of repatriation matters—

Mr Barnard—So there is.

Mr SWARTZ—I can recall when I was Minister for Repatriation a few years ago sitting up here till the early hours of the morning during the annual debate on Repatriation Bills. I can recall similar debates virtually each year since I have been representing the Minister for Repatriation in this House. In addition, opportunities to discuss repatriation matters arise during the Budget debate, the Estimates debate, the Address-in-Reply debate, urgency debates and adjournment debates. Also, there is a period for questions each day. How many of these opportunities have been used by the Opposition to debate repatriation matters? When all these occasions are available it is no use the Opposition claiming that there is some form of restriction on repatriation debates in this House.

The basic questions for consideration are whether repatriation pension and benefit levels are generally satisfactory and whether the Government's approach to changing the levels from time to time is a reasonable one. In considering the adequacy of pension rates there are two important matters to be taken into account so that the issue can be judged in proper perspective. These are the general purpose of the repatriation system and the place of pensions as part of a broadly based and wide ranging overall system for the care of disabled ex-servicemen or the dependants of deceased ex-servicemen. So far as purpose is concerned, we set out in Australia to provide a compensatory system which includes financial compensation by way of pensions, medical treatment facilities and re-establishment measures where these are appropriate and a range of additional assistance, including help for the education of the children of the more seriously disabled or deceased ex-servicemen. Within this compensation framework pensions and allowances are obviously very important. The Government accepts this and has demonstrated over the years a practical concern for keeping rates at a reasonable level that is consistent with the purpose of our repatriation system and the varying needs of incapacitated ex-servicemen and their dependants.

It is always relatively easy to mount a criticism of a government on the grounds that it has not done as much as it could have done or that it has failed in some other way. For that reason I think it important that the Government's approach to the fixing of repatriation pension levels is known and understood. Fixing these levels is no simple matter. It involves the Government's responsibility to the whole community and some assessment of the prospective resources and the many compelling and
competing demands on them. It is of the essence of government that this type of judgment be made. In relation to repatriation matters specifically, when the Government considers adjustments to the level of repatriation pensions it does not look at any one specific criterion—for example, the single criterion of changes in wages rates, which is often urged as the only possible yardstick by those who claim pensions rates to be insufficient. The Government's approach is to have regard to a variety of factors, including movement in wage rates, movement in the cost of living, the freedom of war pensions from income tax and the fact that various ancillary benefits which have been extended from time to time, as has been mentioned by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, are available to war pensioners.

I believe that it must be agreed that this is a responsible approach both to the Government's overall responsibility for the conduct of the country's affairs and its responsibility for the specific problems arising from the needs of one special segment of the community which is looked after within the repatriation system. The fact is that from this responsible approach a consistent pattern of progress has emerged in repatriation affairs, part of which has been a steady increase in repatriation pensions levels. The Government's review of repatriation matters takes place, not just occasionally, but every year. In fact there has been some change for the better in repatriation arrangements in every year since the Government came to office and there have been some pensions increases in almost every year.

As a result of this practice of continuing review we have rates now which are by no means unreasonable and which certainly should not attract the kind of criticism which the motion here today implies. This is illustrated both by the present level of the main pension rates and by the significant increases in them since the Government came to office. The totally and permanently incapacitated rate of pensions is now $30.50, compared with $10.60 in 1949. This is an increase over the period of 188%. The 100% general rate pension, now $12, has increased 118%. The war widows pensions, now $13, have increased by 117%. The war widows pension and domestic allowances, in combination, which are now $20, have increased by 196% and it is of interest that approximately 96% of war widows receive the domestic allowance in addition to their pension. It is interesting that those who criticise pension levels make comparisons with movements in the basic wage and minimum wage. It seems to be overlooked, however, that one could use quite validly another criterion in the same way. A study of the movements since 1949-50 of the cost of living, as measured by the consumer price index, clearly shows that the Government has more than maintained the value of the special and general rate pensions. The movement in the index from 1949-50 to 1966-67 was 110%. This of course compares with the pensions increases, ranging from 118% to 196%, which I have already mentioned. Therefore if it is satisfactory for one comparison to be made, I believe consideration must be given to a comparison of that type associated with the cost of living.

Looking in more detail at the amounts that may be received by way of pension and allowances, a married TPI pensioner with two children now receives $37.30 per week in war pension. Subject to means, he may also receive service pension of up to $16.45, giving a total family pension income of $53.75 per week. The fact that a married TPI pensioner can receive the service pension supplement leads me to a further point. In making any assessment of repatriation pension rates, one must give due weight to the changes which the Government has brought about in the conditions which apply to the receipt of pensions. For example, in 1955 the Government, in accordance with its policy of providing additional assistance where the need is greatest, removed the ceilings laid down in the Repatriation Act on the amounts that a war pensioner could receive by way of war, service and civil pensions. In 1949-50 a special rate pensioner and his wife could receive war pension only, totalling then between them $13 per week. Today, subject to the means test, the total payment to a special rate pensioner and his wife by way of war and service pension is $41.76 per week, an increase of 221%, compared with the increase of 110% in the consumer price index. In 1949-50, under the ceiling maintained by the previous Government, a general rate pensioner could, subject to the
means test, receive a maximum weekly payment of war and service pension of $6.25. Now the maximum payment has been increased to $23 per week, comprising war pension of $12 and the part service pension of $11, an increase of 268% over the 1949-50 level.

In addition to pensions there are, of course, additional allowances according to the severity or type of disablement. For example, there is attendant's allowance of $6.50 or $10.50 per week and recreation transport allowance of $10 or $20 per month. When looked at in detail the present repatriation rates are comparable with any in the world and can be supplemented by way of allowances for those with particular types of disablement or if disablement is of special severity. I have a record showing a comparison with every country in the world where assistance is maintained. I can assure honourable members that the facts I have stated are correct. The war pensions can be supplemented also by means test pension for those who otherwise qualify.

It may interest the House to know that repatriation expenditure on pensions has increased in a dramatic way since 1949-50. The expenditure on war pensions and allowances in that year was $41m, compared with an estimated expenditure of $165m in 1967-68. Service pension payments have risen in the same time from $2.8m to $32m.

To return to the thoughts with which I began on whether pensions levels themselves are reasonable, given the overall system of which they are a part, and whether the Government's approach to repatriation pensioning is responsible. I am sure that, after consideration of the facts that I have mentioned, the answer to both these questions in this House should be yes. The real test is whether our wide range system of compensation and treatment, sympathetically administered, reasonably looks after the needs of those who have become incapacitated as a result of war service; or, in the case of those who have died as a result of it, makes proper provision for their dependants. The criticism of pensions rates, which has been made, certainly demonstrates no real deficiency in the present arrangements. There will be room for difference of opinion always about whether a particular amount at a particular time is exactly as it should be. The differences can be accounted for, at least in part, by the different responsibilities of those who are obliged to make the final decisions. A Government, with the high responsibility for guiding the direction of a nation's progress, from time to time necessarily may take a different view, as to priorities or amounts, from those who are directly concerned as recipients of repatriation pensions. I have been concerned to show, however, that the Government has been able to meet both its overall responsibility and its responsibility for its repatriation pensioners.

I conclude by reminding honourable members that the Government believes that there is real merit in its programme of annual review and that it proposes to continue reviewing repatriation arrangements on this annual basis and making such adjustments as are warranted in the light of each separate examination.

Mr STEWART (Lang) [5.18]—The relief really showed on the face of the Minister for Civil Aviation (Mr Swartz) when he saw the light go on, indicating that he had one minute in which to conclude his speech. Anyone listening to the Minister could judge that he had no enthusiasm at all for his task. He presented a weak case. The case was opposed by twelve organisations representing over one million ex-servicemen, ex-service women and war widows throughout Australia. I congratulate the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the honourable member for Bass (Mr Barnard), in proposing a discussion on a matter of urgency today. I also congratulate the Returned Services League and the other ex-service organisations of men and women who met yesterday in Canberra and re-kindled their vigour to fight for the cause of their less fortunate and disabled comrades. For far too long the ex-service organisations have accepted the scant consideration given by the present Government to their submissions made prior to the presentation of each Budget. I appreciate the outlook adopted by the ex-service organisations in not pressing too violently when their claims have been ignored and overlooked by the Government. After all, the organisations regarded themselves as being patriotic and non-political organisations. They did not want to enter into the
political arena. They wanted to present their submissions logically, coolly and sensibly and they wanted the Government to consider those submissions in the manner in which they were presented. But their good faith and their decency were construed as weaknesses by the present Minister for Civil Aviation (Mr Swartz) when he was Minister for Repatriation, just as they have been by the present Minister for Repatriation (Senator McKellar) and by most of the other Ministers for Repatriation who have held that office since this Government came to power.

In 1964 I made a speech in the debate on the Repatriation Bill. I spoke about the privileged position enjoyed by the Returned Servicemen's League in being the only organisation in the community with direct access to the Cabinet. I said:

Has the preferential treatment that it has received been of any great advantage to it? I feel that it has not been anywhere near the advantage that the Minister and his predecessors and others have endeavoured to make out. I feel, also, that this concession of having direct access to Cabinet, together with a few CBEs, plus a few honeyed words from the Prime Minister (Sir Robert Menzies) and various Ministers for Repatriation, has tended to draw the teeth of the RSL and to turn it into a tame cat organisation.

Those remarks appear at page 812 of Hansard for 1st September 1964. I am pleased to see that the RSL has taken the initiative and has convened a meeting of ex-service organisations to discuss repatriation benefits and their drastic fall in value. If my words of 1964 had even just a little to do with the new approach of the returned servicemen's organisations, then I am grateful that I uttered those words.

All ex-service men and women and all their organisations have every right to be angry and dissatisfied with present pension payments. Shortly before the Senate election in 1967 the RSL decided at a congress to put out a brochure on repatriation benefits. I have one of them in my hand at the moment. The notation on the front page is: 'Honoured in war, forgotten in peace.' On one of the other pages appears a comparative diagram for the total incapacity pension, showing that in 1920 the pension was 103% of the then Commonwealth basic wage. By 1943 it had dropped to 100% of the basic wage. We find that in 1950 it had risen to 101% of the then basic wage, but by 1967 it had dropped to 81% of the minimum wage. A further table shows that in 1920 the 100% pension, the highest rate for partial incapacity, was 54% of the basic wage. In 1943 it was 52% of the basic wage at that time, in 1950, it was 51% and in 1967 it was only 32% of then minimum wage. I have a bundle of these brochures which were authorised and published by the RSL. I seek your permission, Mr Deputy Speaker, to have them distributed to honourable members who are now in the House, so that none of them may say that in the future he has never seen this brochure.

Let me take these figures a little further and give the House some information about how the pension rates have moved between 1964 and 1967. In 1964 the Commonwealth basic wage was $30.80 a week. In 1967 it was $37.55, an increase of $6.75 or 22%. Over the same period the pension for the totally and permanently incapacitated ex-serviceman increased from $28.50 to $30.50, an increase of 7%, and the 100% general rate pension did not increase at all. These figures give some indication of the drastic fall in the pensions paid to these ex-servicemen.

Mr Buchanan—Do you not allow for the other alterations?

Mr STEWART—The rate of pension is the basic consideration. One of the honourable member's previous leaders, who held the office of Prime Minister for a great many years, said in 1949 that the rates of pensions would be maintained and, indeed, that they would be increased. Fringe benefits are not under discussion at all, and the fringe benefits have not had much effect in increasing the value of repatriation benefits. The Minister for Civil Aviation who spoke a few moments ago classified all these payments as compensatory payments. If there was a level of compensation in a certain year 20 or 30 years ago, that level of compensation should be maintained through the years. It should not decline year after year. It should be kept at that level, and this is the argument that the Labor Party puts on this issue.

At the conference held yesterday, twelve ex-servicemen's and women's organisations were represented. Many representatives made statements after a resolution had
been adopted, and I shall quote a few of them, as set out in a Press statement issued by the National President of the RSL:

Mr A. J. Chambers, Federal President of the T.B. Association, compared the pension rates to those of senators and other parliamentarians and pointed out that the T.P.I. pension had dropped from being 32% of a senator's pay in 1920 to 17% at the present time.

An interesting comment was made by the National President of the War Widows' Guild, Mrs Eric Mayo, who said:

War Widows and other pensioners could only assume that they were being asked to pay for the war in Vietnam.

Of course the most violent comment came from the New South Wales State President of the Returned Servicemens League, Sir William Yeo. I must admit that he is noted for extravagant statements and I do not agree with the part of his statement in which he said he would flog members of Parliament, if only because this method of punishment is outdated and the more modern method seems to be the water torture treatment. I have before me a newspaper report of Sir William Yeo's statement, which reads:

The New South Wales State President of the Returned Servicemens League, Sir William Yeo, strongly attacked ex-servicemen politicians today for their attitude towards war pensions. If anyone had forgotten ex-servicemen, it was today's ex-service members of Parliament, he said. They had thrown away all thought of the comradeship they spoke about at reunions.

'If I had my way, they are the chaps I would flog, because they are recreant to everything that is clean and decent in this country,' Sir William said angrily.

'As long as they sit and not fight for their former comrades, this position will exist.'

I would suggest to Sir William Yeo and to all members of ex-service men's and women's organisations that the best way to treat this Government is to withdraw from it their votes at election time. Over the years this Government has shown time and time again, just as did the Minister for Civil Aviation when he was Minister for Repatriation, a lack of sympathy for ex-servicemen and women and their problems. I agree with Sir William Yeo that ex-service members on the opposite side of the House play up their service careers at election time, but when repatriation matters are being discussed in this House they are silent and do not fight for their comrades.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. W. C. Haworth)—Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr STOKES (Maribyrnong) [5.28]—I want to say at the outset that I agree that the purchasing power of repatriation pensions generally has been eroded over recent times. It was unfortunate, of course, that the Government last year, faced with a certain amount of economic stress, occasioned to a great degree by a sharp and unprecedented increase in defence expenditure, decided to withhold any increases in the repatriation and social service fields. This decision, coupled with the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission's minimum wage concept in July 1967, undoubtedly forced the purchasing power of those on fixed incomes, such as pensioners and superannuitants, further downwards. It must be admitted that as wages rise so do costs of production. Therefore the prices of consumer goods have spiralled ever upwards.

I now wish to refer to a pamphlet which has been circulated and which honourable members have had for some time. It was issued by the Returned Servicemen's League. On receipt of this pamphlet the Government members ex-servicemen's committee wrote to Sir Arthur Lee, the National President of the Returned Servicemen's League, on 8th November 1967. I feel obliged to quote from that letter. On 8th November 1967 we wrote:

Although we appreciate that rising costs and increased wages have caused an imbalance in the ratio which existing pensions bear to the present day minimum wage, we would also point out that the liberalisation of the means test for social service benefits effective from April of this year did enable the more needy of the T & PI pensioners and the war widows in the requisite age bracket to claim up to an additional $3 per week service pension...

It is noted that your repatriation sub-committee has never sought an opportunity in the past to discuss these matters with our Committee but we assure you of our willingness to assist in this regard at any time in the future.

We have had regular annual conferences with representatives of totally and permanently incapacitated ex-servicemen and with representatives of blind ex-servicemen, and we have put their submissions to the Government. Sir Arthur Lee replied to our letter and said he would like to discuss the position with the Committee. He was magnanimous enough to suggest that the
National Executive of the RSL should meet us in either February or May of this year. He set out a request based on a minimum wage of $37.55 for TPI pensioners, with 50% of that amount for the 100% general rate and for war widows and proportionate adjustments for other categories. On 30th November I replied that we would be pleased to meet the National Executive and to discuss proposed submissions to the Government for consideration in the 1968 Budget. I pointed out that tying pensions to a minimum wage was not a practical basis but that the social services age pension plus the permissible income was a better standard. Thus the TPI pension plus the wife's allowance should equal the married social service rate plus what the TPI pensioner cannot earn—the permissible income that is allowed to the civilian couple. I also asked that this aspect be discussed by the Executive at its February meeting.

Arrangements were later made for a meeting to take place between the National Executive and the Government Members Ex-Servicemen's Committee in May. That was the position up until yesterday. Now we find that the New South Wales President, Sir William Yeo, a member of the National Executive which is to meet us, is off beam as usual and is publicly attacking Government ex-servicemen for sitting down and not fighting for their former comrades. This irascible old gentleman says he would flog us. What he has done is far worse, because what he has done is to undermine this get-together which has been arranged for May and which intended to accomplish something to benefit those former comrades. I am not an intolerant person and as far as I am concerned, and this applies to my committee also, the meeting will proceed and I hope that the good sense of the Federal President and the other State Presidents will prevail. However Sir William Yeo's undisciplined outburst will have had an effect on the camaradie we may have expected at a meeting between ex-servicemen. On the question of sitting down and doing nothing, the Government Members Ex-Servicemen's Committee made strong submissions to the late Prime Minister last November. The submissions included two resolutions. The first related to the provision of free medical and hospital benefits for Boer War and 1914-18 ex-servicemen.

Mr Barnard—The honourable member should have voted for our amendments 3 years ago.

Mr Stokes—I am telling the honourable member what my Committee has done. The second resolution provided for all war pensions to be excluded from income in the calculation of the means test for service pensions. This would bring the rate for the needy married TPI pensioner up to $54 a week. Unfortunately the Prime Minister was lost, so we must return again to these submissions.

On the question of tying pensions to the minimum wage, I ask: What minimum wage? In July 1967 when the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission did away with the basic wage and introduced the concept of the minimum wage it fixed different minimum wage standards for each capital city. In fact in Victoria there are three or four different minimum wage standards. So what do we do? There is no Federal minimum wage standard. There is a non-official acceptance of an average of the six capital cities, but this is a silly thing to tie a pension to. On the other hand, on the social services basis that I mentioned earlier we have one basic formula only. It is constantly under review and has been constantly adjusted. I refer to the social services pension. I remind the House that under a Labor government, which did have the pensions tied to the basic wage, the pensions were reduced when the basic wage fell. While repatriation pensions are overdue for a review, the ex-servicemen on the Government side of the House, particularly those on my Committee, have worked strenuously and hard, and will continue to do so, in the interests of ex-servicemen.

It is often said: 'You cannot always win', but flogging a willing horse is not my idea of a fair crack of the whip. Let me refer briefly to this matter of definite public importance. This is the second time the Opposition has raised this question, yet since 1964 the aspects under discussion have been apparent. How many times have members opposite raised matters of definite public importance that have been completely immaterial and which would not stand up against a subject such as this?
This debate has been pure humbug. Honourable members opposite have sought to make political capital out of the situation that has arisen. Why has the Labor Party not raised this matter before if it is so dear to the hearts of honourable members opposite? They talk a lot but they do not do anything. All they do is talk, but members on my side of the House work hard for ex-servicemen, and we hope to achieve more for them in the future.

Mr DEVINE (East Sydney) [5.38]—I support the remarks of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition (Mr Barnard) who raised this matter of definite public importance. This is one of the few occasions when the Opposition has the opportunity to discuss repatriation benefits. The Minister for Civil Aviation (Mr Swartz) suggested that there were other forms by which the Opposition could have raised this matter in the Parliament. He mentioned in question time the debate on the motion for the adjournment of the House. Honourable members who have been here for some time know that when repatriation matters are discussed by the Parliament the Government arranges for such debates to be held on a Wednesday when the proceedings of this House are not being broadcast. This prevents the great listening public from hearing such important debates. I have known frequent occasions when the Minister has been the only member from the Government side to present the Government's attitude on this subject. Many of the members opposite who wear the badges of ex-servicemen's organisations have remained silent. Today was the first time since I have been a member when Government members have had a full team to debate repatriation benefits. I ask any member to stand and be counted if he contends that ex-servicemen are getting a fair go with their pensions. The organisations that met yesterday were very vocal. They claimed that ex-servicemen were not getting a fair go at the hands of this Government. Those organisations represent more than one million ex-servicemen. Can Government supporters honestly claim that these organisations are wrong and that their representatives are talking through their hats? The organisations are concerned about the welfare of Australia's ex-servicemen. Government supporters, who have voted to send kids to Vietnam, should see that they are looked after when they come back to this country.

Mr Stokes—They are.

Mr DEVINE—That remains to be seen. The ex-service organisations claim that returned servicemen are not being looked after. This is the fault of the Government. The Opposition cannot be blamed because on every occasion we have sought to improve repatriation benefits. The honourable member for Maribyrong (Mr Stokes) is a member of the Government members' Defence Forces retirement benefits fund committee. Because of his efforts the Government has made improvements in the Defence Forces retirement benefits. We know that Commonwealth super-annuation pensioners have had their pensions increased in line with the increased cost of living. Why is the Government unable to give similar consideration to repatriation pensioners? Nobody could satisfy me that repatriation pensions, particularly the totally and permanently incapacitated pension, are adequate. These people should be receiving the minimum wage laid down by the arbitration court as necessary to sustain a person. Why is the ex-serviceman not entitled to this amount?

We have every right to raise this matter in the Parliament. Whenever the Opposition has moved an amendment to legislation, seeking to increase repatriation benefits in line with submissions made by ex-service organisations, its efforts have been thwarted by the Government. Government supporters have consistently voted against our moves to obtain justice for ex-servicemen. When even the Minister for Repatriation (Senator McKellar) attends meetings of ex-service organisations he listens to their problems, but what he hears goes in one ear and out the other. I would submit that in the present Minister for Repatriation the Government has reached the bottom of the barrel. He is the worst Minister for Repatriation in our history, and that is saying a lot. If he thinks that ex-servicemen are not getting a fair go he should resign his portfolio in protest against the Government's inaction. All we have from the Government is talk, but no action. We know that in another place the Opposition has sought to improve repatriation benefits and allowances. We want an inquiry into repatriation. There has not been an inquiry since the 1950s. We know that section 47 of the Repatriation Act is not
being implemented to the benefit of ex-servicemen. For a long time the Government has been accused of neglecting ex-servicemen. This afternoon the Minister for Civil Aviation told us that the Government must consider the needs of all and not just the purchasing power of pensioners. Will he deny that the purchasing power of the average citizen has increased out of all proportion to that of pensioners? No amount of talk about the needs of the rest of the community can justify the disparity between the purchasing power of the pensioner and that of other members of the community. Whenever the Minister leaves his electorate he receives an allowance of $24 a day. This is what the Government says he should have to live on. Senior Ministers get even more. The Government says that such payments are justified because of the cost of living but it cannot see any need to increase pensions. Nobody in this Parliament could justify the payment of $24 a day to a Minister while he is travelling around the country. Pensioners do not get even that much a week to live on.

How is this Government treating pensioners? The War Service Homes Division is contemplating the building of homes for migrants. It is not worrying about homes for ex-servicemen. There are many ex-servicemen who cannot raise the finance necessary for a deposit on a home. There must be thousands who cannot afford to purchase a home. They are on housing commission waiting lists. Yet the War Service Homes Division proposes to build homes for migrants. I am not opposed to migrants getting a home. I think everybody should be properly housed, but I do not think it is right for the War Service Homes Division to build homes for migrants, sometimes before they arrive in the country, when at the same time there are ex-servicemen looking for decent homes. Such action cannot be justified.

Ex-servicemen suffering a disability due to war service cannot obtain permanent employment in the Commonwealth Public Service. This Government claims that it will look after ex-servicemen, but it will not give them even permanent employment. How do Government supporters justify this action? These are matters which honourable members opposite should raise at their party meetings. They are matters that should at least be aired.

The ex-service organisations which met yesterday in Canberra protested loudly about pensions. Those organisations had a democratic right to meet. At last they are waking up to the fact that ex-servicemen are not getting a fair go at the hands of this Government. Their arguments for improved repatriation benefits are set out clearly in the pamphlet which was circulated shortly before last year's Senate election. The organisations are concerned about the decline in the purchasing power of pensions. Sir William Yeo, New South Wales President of the Returned Services League, said that if he had his way he would flog Government supporters. I belong to a party which does not believe in capital punishment and I cannot support Sir William. I think that the verbal lash is sufficient for Government supporters. But I think Sir William was justified in attacking Government supporters, many of whom wear ex-service badges.

A report in the 'Sydney Morning Herald' of today's date, relating to yesterday's meeting in Canberra of ex-service organisations, reads:

The RSL National President, Sir Arthur Lee, said that repeated RSL submissions to the Government had met with 'consistent rejections or, at best, small increases that did little to provide real justice to our pensioners.'

War and Service pensions were compensation paid to men and women who had made great sacrifices in war.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member’s time has expired.

Mr ARMSTRONG (Riverina) [5.47]—I wonder how much enthusiasm has been engendered for this debate, initiated by the Opposition, by what happened yesterday at the meeting of ex-service organisations. Honourable members opposite may talk as much as they like about pensions being at an all time low, but they are suggesting that a standard must be maintained which they themselves did not adhere to. I believe that certain adjustments and reforms are necessary but they should be made only after reasoned thinking and not as a result of political stunts. Later I will outline the reforms which I think are worthy of earnest consideration, but first let me elaborate on
my claim that Opposition members are seeking standards which they did not adhere to when they were in power. In 1949 the special rate pension was $10.60 a week. Upon assuming office in 1950 this Government immediately increased the pension to $14 a week. Similarly, the general rate was increased by $2 immediately—an increase of 40%. Since 1949 the Government has made many improvements in repatriation pensions and allowances. It conducted a basic review of repatriation benefits immediately on taking office and has reviewed benefits in each subsequent year. It made substantial increases in all main pension rates and has added new benefits to those already existing. It has adapted repatriation measures to meet new conditions of service and has improved and developed medical treatment services. All these repatriation reforms have been built onto an already sound system.

Consideration should be given to a review of the basic rate and such a review should be made in the light of the whole aspect of repatriation benefits which have been widened over a period of years by this Government. I believe that any criticism on particular points should be weighed against the overall picture. I suggest that the Australian repatriation system compares more than favourably with repatriation systems in other countries. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition (Mr Barnard) mentioned the American system and he cited the basic rate in the United States but he would agree with me that the provision of benefits in that country is not nearly as wide as under our system. There is one aspect of repatriation on which I propose to dwell in some detail. I refer to the method of determining claims. All honourable members are aware that claims are determined by independent bodies and there is provision for a series of appeals. I understand that all members of repatriation boards, the Repatriation Commission, the Entitlement Appeal Tribunals and chairmen of Assessment Appeal Tribunals are ex-servicemen who have seen active service. One member of each of the boards, the Commission and each Entitlement Appeal Board, as well as all chairmen of Assessment Appeal Tribunals are selected from lists of names submitted by ex-service organisations. This system, it is claimed, relieves the claimant of the burden of proof and gives him the benefit of any doubt. Further appeal is available to a claimant provided only that additional evidence of a substantial nature is furnished.

I should like to dwell for a moment on the onus of proof provisions under which a claimant is given the benefit of any doubt. I believe that in some cases this provision should be applied more liberally. I am not critical of the general approach to the onus of proof provisions, but it is laid down that all claims and appeals are to be decided according to natural justice and the merits of the case. It is laid down also that the determining authorities are not bound by technicalities, legal forms or the laws of evidence. The provision states also that the claimant or appellant is to be given the benefit of any doubt and that all reasonable inferences are to be drawn in his favour to the exclusion of all other inferences. It is set down finally that where there is any doubt in the mind of the determining authority the claim is to be allowed. It has been laid down that it is not necessary for a claimant to prove his case but that the determining authority must allow a claim unless the Commonwealth proves that it should not be allowed. I should like to deal with that at greater length because I suggest, with respect, that this provision could be applied much more liberally to many ex-servicemen who served during the Great War. I refer particularly to men who did not report minor disabilities because their object was to get home as quickly as possible. This was particularly the case in the Great War when these men were overseas. They all wanted to get home as soon as they could and, in many cases, they avoided reporting disabilities because they thought that it would prevent them from getting home as soon as they might otherwise have done.

I should like to see free hospital and medical benefits for ex-servicemen of the 1914-18 war. Many of them are coming to a stage where they are in advanced years. Any man who served in the Great War must be of fairly advanced years. I believe also that no war pension should be included in income in applying a means test for service pensions. The justice of a pension should not necessarily be tied to any figure; it
should be measured by a comparison with the claimant's disabilities. As the Minister for Civil Aviation (Mr Swartz) has said, almost in these words, whether any sum paid as a pension is right at a particular time is often questionable. But there are many First World War men who are now suffering from disabilities which they may not be able to prove resulted from service in the First World War. Because of the lapse of time it is very difficult for them to furnish proof. However, this situation does create what I believe are almost injustices when a claim is not allowed. I have in mind a particular case in my electorate. The man of whom I speak saw service in the First World War. He was wounded while in service, came back to Australia and then went overseas again. He receives a pension for a 10% disability but is now completely and absolutely invalided. Unfortunately his income is just enough to debar him from receiving any further benefit, so he has to struggle along on his income for the rest of his life. Tragically, it seems that that will not be very long.

I urge the Government to give very close consideration also to the funeral benefit. This may not sound very important, but it certainly is of great importance to Returned Services League branches which have to bear the expense of funerals. I believe that the funeral grant made under the Repatriation Act should be increased. I ask the Government to give very careful and favourable consideration to the reforms that I have suggested. I do not agree with the honourable member for East Sydney (Mr Devine) who made the very wide and sweeping charge about our present Minister for Repatriation (Senator McKellar). He is a very considerate and sympathetic man. I support the Government in its whole approach to the generalities of the repatriation system which I believe is a good one. Nevertheless, I ask that careful consideration be given to the reforms I have suggested and that some increase be made in the levels of payment throughout our repatriation system.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER—Order! The time allotted for the discussion of this matter has expired.

Sitting suspended from 5.58 to 8 p.m.

Mr HASLUCK (Curtin—Minister for External Affairs)—by leave—Mr Speaker, as this is my first ministerial statement in the new session of Parliament I am going to open by stating very briefly the broad principles and objectives of Australian foreign policy. I shall not elaborate the various points, as they have all been developed in earlier statements.

The primary objective of Australian foreign policy is to protect and advance Australian interests. This is not interpreted narrowly, for our own welfare and security are bound up with that of others. We cannot live prosperous and safe if a great part of the world is living in poverty without hope and is torn by war.

Second, and following from that, Australia works for a world order based on the principles and purposes of the United Nations. We want to see the great powers co-operating together to the greatest extent possible to prevent major wars, to ease tensions, and to help the economic development of the whole world. We are conscious of the great world issues of power and their interaction with issues of regional security. We recognise the special responsibilities of the great powers, as the charter of the United Nations does, but we also insist on a proper role being accorded to the middle and small powers, which for their part have responsibilities to discharge and rights to be respected. Australia plays its part in collective defence against aggression.

Third, Australia has a direct and special interest in the region of Southern and Eastern Asia, the Western Pacific, and the Indian Ocean, for this is where we live. Australia seeks through its diplomatic missions and in other ways to understand each of the neighbouring countries and its interests and to help them to understand us. Australia participates actively and constructively in a number of regional bodies with many of its Asian neighbours. Australia welcomes the growing movement towards regional co-operation in Asia. This co-operation is an expression of national independence as well as a method of supporting that independence. Regional co-operation is
proceeding in a variety of ways and, in addition to the other countries of the area, Australia, India, Indonesia and Japan have special contributions to make in the common interest. The most difficult task of all—and it is a global as well as a regional task—is that of reaching the point where the mainland of China will fit into good international relations. There is no simple answer to that; the goal has to be sought over a period of time but we have seen it for many years past as one of the major international problems of our time.

Fourth, Australia co-operates closely and responsibly with the United States of America. Our relationship is formally expressed in ANZUS; in daily practice it finds expression in a constant exchange of views and in working together in many fields. The United States is our most powerful ally.

Fifth, Australia has special relationships with countries of the Commonwealth. With Britain we have deep historical ties and shared institutions and traditions. New Zealand is our neighbour and sister nation and on vital international issues we can speak as one. In addition to Australia and New Zealand, there are no fewer than six other Commonwealth countries in our region and vicinity—Pakistan, India, Ceylon, Malaysia, Singapore and Mauritius. There are also the smaller and emerging island territories in the South Pacific, most of them but not all in the Commonwealth, and Australia has a particular call to co-operate with them.

Sixth, as a part of all the foregoing, Australia gives special weight to the economic element in international affairs. As a country dependent still on its exports of food and raw materials, and on investment for development, Australia needs an expanding world economy and trade outlets and international monetary stability. Australia contributes economic assistance to other countries and will continue to do so. We take an active part in international economic affairs. We believe that continued international action in the economic field is essential in tackling world problems.

Finally, Australia observes basic human rights and fundamental freedoms at home and believes in the promotion and encouragement of respect for them in the rest of the world without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.

Having thus set out in bare terms—I recognise they are very bare and summary terms—the main principles and present-day objectives of Australian foreign policy, I turn now to some current questions. I intend to confine this statement to three matters of immediate concern to Australia—Vietnam, the British withdrawal from Malaysia, and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons—in order that reasonable limits of time may not be exceeded.

VIETNAM

The Republic of Vietnam and its allies face today a new and anxious situation, testing to the full our resolution. Violating their pledge to observe a Lunar New Year truce, the Vietcong and North Vietnamese forces on 30th and 31st January struck at nearly all the major cities and towns of the country and have continued to press military action against the population centres.

Five months ago I spoke to the House of the progress being made on all fronts—military, political and economic. The military situation when I spoke was then moving steadily in our favour and there was a growing sense of assurance and security. It is, of course, an elementary fact in warfare that if one side reaches the conclusion that the other's tactics are failing, the same sort of assessment is likely to be gaining currency in the enemy's capital. It is now known that during 1967 a basic reappraisal of policy was made in Hanoi and Hanoi concluded that they should drastically change their overall strategy for the conduct of the war. I am not guessing; this statement is based on the evidence of documents.

There were many grounds on which the enemy could feel serious frustration and lack of progress during 1967. Despite increasing expenditure of men and material in military actions throughout the country-side they were being held militarily and the proportion of the population under their control was dropping. Threats and harassment, and the issue of a new version of the National Liberation Front's political programme, had not prevented the successful conduct of local, presidential and National Assembly elections in South Vietnam. Despite efforts of destruction, the Vietnamese economy was beginning to move forward. That was the position as the enemy saw it at the end of 1967.
In this frustration, the enemy decided to take more risks than they had previously calculated to be acceptable. This is amply attested by evidence from enemy sources. So North Vietnam took the war into the cities in an attempt to recapture momentum, revitalise faith in victory, and reverse the military and political trends against them. The Communists were fighting for great stakes in the Tet offensive. They were prepared to take punishing losses.

The military assaults in the Tet offensive were designed to produce an overall state of demoralisation and collapse on the part of the Government of South Vietnam, a sense of defeatism and fragmentation in the South Vietnamese armed forces, and a display of popular support for Vietcong forces from the ordinary people in the cities and towns. Many enemy prisoners who have been captured since the offensive opened have revealed that their instructions were to stay on in the towns and to await a 'general uprising' against the Government. Many had no withdrawal order—a fact that accounted in part for the huge casualty figures.

During the offensive many appeals on Communist radio units were made to Government servants and soldiers to change their allegiance. Plans were prepared for the capture of key divisional commanders so that they could be coerced into bringing their troops over to the Vietcong.

In these objectives the enemy failed. In reality, very few officers and men did defect. No units changed sides, but men cut off from their units reported for duty with other units. The Vietnamese armed forces as a whole took the shock of the offensive and, although considerably under strength because of the Tet leave during the truce, threw the attackers out of most of the cities and towns. In the surprise and confusion, some ground was initially lost, but recovery was quick, and professional skill and courage was shown by the South Vietnamese forces.

Captured documents make clear the enemy's own disappointment at their failure to produce the popular reaction sought. In the cities and towns there were few defections, either forced or voluntary, from the Government side or by private civilians. No doubt some of those who did join the Vietcong were sympathisers who had been planted to wait for such developments. In areas temporarily occupied by the Vietcong many Government officials with their families were kidnapped and killed as they continued their allegiance to the South.

During the crisis both Houses in the National Assembly expressed their support for the Government. Many prominent South Vietnamese leaders, including critics of the Government, have subsequently ignored the Vietcong threat to their lives and publicly rallied to the support of the Republic of South Vietnam. Among these are politicians, religious leaders and trade union officials. The Government itself has not been shaken. On the contrary, it has been active in mobilising its resources to meet the challenge and to cope with the great material problems that have been created.

One of the first matters to which the Government of South Vietnam has directed its attention has been the need to increase further the size of the Vietnamese armed forces. Among the measures being taken are the postponement of discharges from the armed services, the recall of former soldiers who served for 5 years or less, the lowering of the conscription age from 20 to 18, and military training for civil servants under the age of 45 and students over the age of 17. These measures are expected to increase the strength of the armed forces by at least 65,000 by the middle of the year.

The human toll resulting from this enemy attack has been heavy both for the attackers and the defenders and for innocent civilians. As a result of the offensive, thousands of Vietnamese have been killed, captured or wounded, hundreds of thousands of others have been rendered homeless and made refugees, food supplies have been strained and essential services taxed.

So, the Government of Vietnam created a special task force to tackle the massive problems of food supply, health and sanitation, refugees and communications. Immunisation against disease is being administered, and the normal public utilities have been restored. The immediate needs of over 600,000 new refugees and homeless, more than 120,000 of them in the Saigon area alone, are being met. President Thieu announced on 21st March that the recovery programme and the return
of security to the cities and towns had already reduced the total from 600,000 to 405,000. Distribution problems are being overcome, prices of basic foodstuffs are beginning to return to pre-Tet levels, and roads are being re-opened.

While effective emergency work is going on effectively, very serious long-term problems have been created by the Tet offensive. Even now, a comprehensive picture of the situation in the countryside is not available to us. The material and psychological damage to the Revolutionary Development Programme for making life better in the villages is expected to have been serious, and many Revolutionary Development teams have been diverted from long-term pacification activities to emergency relief work. Recovery of momentum under this programme in which confidence and continuity are essential elements, is receiving urgent attention. The Vietnamese economy has been seriously affected. Before the offensive, encouraging progress was evident in many sectors, but the enemy's destructive efforts have set this back many months. Much of the industry has been damaged, bank credit tightened and commercial activity reduced. Merely restoring economic activity to its pre-Tet levels is the major priority task for the Government.

The Australian Government has already allocated $A300,000 towards the supply of urgently needed materials such as vaccines, and building materials. Through the Australian Council for Overseas Aid, many Australian voluntary organisations have also made significant contributions. The importance of continued Australian support for longer-term programmes has very obviously not diminished. On behalf of the Government I want to express our deepest gratitude and appreciation to the Australian civil aid personnel in Vietnam who have continued their work through the difficult and dangerous times of the offensive. I might give special mention to the three Australian surgical teams at Bien Hoa, Long Xuyen and Vung Tau, who coped so admirably with the increased physical problems as well as the large influx of victims of the offensive. I should likewise commend the personnel of the Embassy in Saigon, for the steady performance of their duties in conditions of danger and uncertainty.

This military offensive, the results of which I have tried briefly to sketch, is only one, even if the most conspicuous, aspect of Hanoi's new strategy. On 29th December 1967, the North Vietnamese Foreign Minister made his declaration that after the United States unconditionally ended the bombing and all other acts of war against North Vietnam, the leaders in Hanoi would talk to the United States. Following that announcement the United States immediately took diplomatic steps to test the bona fides of this declaration. On 14th February, when the results of these soundings had been carefully assessed, the United States Secretary of State, Mr Rusk, reported that the reaction of the North Vietnamese was entirely negative.

At the same time, the United States has made its own position on the opening of talks abundantly clear. In a speech at San Antonio on 29th September 1967, President Johnson said:

The United States is willing to stop all aerial and naval bombardment of North Vietnam when this will lead promptly to productive discussions. We, of course, assume that while discussions proceed North Vietnam would not take advantage of the bombing cessation or limitations.

Then, in testimony to the Armed Services Committee of the United States Senate on 26th January 1968, the new Secretary of Defence, Mr Clark Clifford, explained in more detail:

I do not expect them (the enemy) to stop their military activities. . . . their military activity will continue in South Viet-Nam, I assume, until there is a cease fire agreed upon. I assume that they will continue to transport the normal amount of goods, men and munitions to South Viet-Nam. I assume that we will continue to maintain our forces and support our forces during that period. But despite this clear public affirmation of a quite remarkable generous United States position—a position which was already privately well known in Hanoi even before it had been publicly announced—the North Vietnamese reply was again rejection.

Now what does all this mean? The statement of the North Vietnamese Foreign Minister about readiness to talk was made not long before the Tet offensive and well after that review of strategy by Hanoi which called for an intensification of the war effort. The statement came when preparations by way of planning, infiltration of personnel, and stockpiling for the offensive must have been virtually complete. It is my view that
in the period preceding the offensive Hanoi used its talk of discussion and negotiation for purposes of political and psychological warfare designed to weaken the will of the South Vietnamese and their allies and to provide a screen for its own preparations to try to force a military solution.

I turn now to the political aspect of the situation. As part of its political warfare Hanoi and the Vietcong now place growing emphasis on a 'coalition government' for the South. This emphasis has been designed to improve the appeal of the National Liberation Front both within South Vietnam and internationally. And in our own country there are good people who are attracted by the idea that perhaps the ending of this war may come from a 'coalition' in the South between the National Liberation Front and someone else. But what is the North's conception of a 'coalition government'? A recently captured document originating with the People's Revolutionary Party made it clear that the real power is intended to be gained by the National Liberation Front. Referring to the party of the Vietcong, this captured document stated:

In regard to the coalition government our Party will exercise overall control over it . . . the coalition government may include a non-revolutionary element as President but he basically must follow the line of action of the Front's political programme . . . the real power will be in our hands and we will follow the Front's political programme.

So we should clearly understand that the coalition that the enemy envisages would be brought into being, not by negotiation and agreement with the present Saigon Government, but only after the present Saigon Government and the National Assembly had been abolished and the whole State structure remoulded. The 'coalition' would be one between the Front and individuals and new organisations of its own creation. There were attempts during the Tet offensive to build up a picture of such organisations springing into existence. During the offensive the Vietcong's Liberation Radio referred to the cities producing alliances — this was the phrase used — of 'national and peace forces' with whom the Front would form a government. Surely a 'coalition' of this kind would be a denial of the right of the South Vietnamese people to choose their own way of life and their own form of government. The experiences of the past 6 weeks also make it clear, if any proof were needed, that this kind of 'coalition' would involve outright sacrifice not only of key political figures but also of civil servants, police, soldiers and other persons or groups who have worked with the present Government.

It is quite clear from the available documentary material that North Vietnam and the Vietcong see talk of negotiations and even the mounting of talks themselves as weapons for helping to win control of the South. The talks would be with the United States, not with the Saigon Government. The bombing of the North would stop, but not the fighting in the South. Does anyone doubt that the full range of psychological and political effort would be used to portray the United States as seeking a way to get out and the Saigon Government as being discredited? It is the constant aim of North Vietnam and the Vietcong to drive a wedge between the United States and South Vietnam and to create among the people of South Vietnam a loss of confidence in the United States. They want the people of South Vietnam to lose heart and to see no other prospect than giving way to the Vietcong backed by the full might of Communist North Vietnam. The aim is to paralyse and fragment the present structure of authority in the South and produce a sense of defeatism and hopelessness.

The reason why I have given this background, Mr Speaker, is that — I say this with deep respect to those concerned — there is some misguided comment among well meaning people in Australia about the prospects of peace. Surely, in considering our own approach to talks or negotiations we must have regard to the reality of the background that I have described. The Australian Government with its allies, is pledged 'to pursue any avenue which could lead to a secure and just peace'. But we shall not reach that point by yielding before military and political offensives and calling for talks when the enemy is clearly bent on the use of force. The sad but inescapable conclusion to which a study of events and the evidence of North Vietnamese documents and pronouncements leads me is that for the time being North Vietnam still prefers to seek a military solution. If any ray of hope appeared that it would be ready
to discuss a peaceful solution the response on the part of ourselves and our allies would be as ready as it has always been.

I want now, Sir, to say something about the bombing of targets in North Vietnam and the appeals that are being made from various quarters that the bombing should stop. The Australian Government has never seen bombing as a substitute for sustained military, political and economic effort in the South. But we believe that the bombing of targets in the North serves important military objectives. It is important for interdiction and for its cumulative effects. The intensity of the world-wide Communist campaign against bombing is evidence that bombing is hurting. North Vietnamese forces are fighting in the South. Large quantities of modern arms are passing through North Vietnam to South Vietnam. These include the mortar bombs and rockets which are now being launched on a large scale against the South Vietnamese cities and towns and installations. I ask the House: What impression of resolution and determination would the allies give to the embattled, war-torn suffering people of South Vietnam if the controlled and selective bombing of North Vietnam were to be terminated—and terminated at a time when the other side steps up the level of violence against the people of the South?

In my view there is all too much misleading public talk that the Vietnamese are subordinate or secondary in the war in Vietnam. Hanoi's target is the Government of South Vietnam and the social, economic and administrative fabric of the country. Its aims are to weaken them through intensified terrorism, military pressure, and harassment of cities and installations, all to bring about a deep sense of insecurity and hopelessness. It seeks, also, economic dislocation and strangulation, and social dislocation through refugee movements. It is this total picture that we must keep before us. We cannot judge what is going on only in terms of the daily reports of war drama. Nor can we allow our will to sway and falter with reverses or variations in the course of the fighting. Fluctuating fortunes do not affect the moral and political basis of our commitment.

Nor can we allow our basic thinking to be governed by what we, in our secure and stable national environment, may see as weak spots and disappointing performances in South Vietnam. Such things as factionalism, loyalty to family and groups and even corruption have not been unknown in many countries emerging from war and colonialism. They were far more prevalent when the threat to South Vietnam developed and the allied countries took their basic decisions to come to the aid of South Vietnam than they are today. The first years after the fall of the Diem regime were marked by great confusion and divisions. But the steady trend has been to political stability, national solidarity and a sense of genuine independence. These are the goals that the people have set for themselves. The North Vietnamese and the Vietcong have been unable to enlist support in the population centres, overthrow the Government, destroy the administration or cause the collapse of the armed forces. The political progress achieved in the last 2 years has not been effaced by the attacks on the towns and the cities.

Honourable members will recall that the Speech by the Governor-General stated that the Australian Government was determined to maintain its support and assistance for the United States and the Government of South Vietnam. We are engaged in close discussion at political, diplomatic and military levels with these governments concerning our combined efforts for resisting and overcoming the military challenge and for strengthening the social, economic and governmental fabric in South Vietnam. We have a vigorous part to play in assisting with our resources and with our advice.

In our view the aggression against the Republic of Vietnam is contrary to the whole march of human history in the direction of respect for international order, respect for the principles of non-interference in the affairs of other countries and respect for the principle of territorial integrity. These are the principles in the Charter of United Nations and these are surely the principles on which any kind of peaceful world community can be built. These are the principles we have to keep before us when we look hopefully for a path towards negotiation.

REGIONAL SECURITY IN SOUTH EAST ASIA

The second major topic of this speech concerns the further changes in British defence policy and foreign policy in the
Far East. I recall to the House what I said on this subject in my speech of last August and to avoid repetition I ask honourable members to link what I said then with what I am about to say now. In January of this year the United Kingdom Government announced decisions it had taken to hasten the withdrawal of its forces east of Suez. The adjustments we had already made in our own thinking had to be subjected to further adjustments. The assumptions we had already made for planning purposes about the rundown of British forces had to be revised still further. There has been close study of these issues by Cabinet; a special visit was paid by me to Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia in February; a technical mission drawn from the Australian and New Zealand defence and service establishments has been working on the whole range of technical and service problems that arise, and it is expected that at the end of May or early in June a Ministerial conference representative of the United Kingdom, Malaysia, Singapore, New Zealand and Australia—the so-called five-power meeting—will be held to explore outstanding matters.

As stated in the Governor-General's Speech at the official opening of Parliament, the Government will take part in these five-power consultations and will be prepared to discuss the size and role of an Australian contribution to combined defence arrangements which embrace a joint Singapore-Malaysia defence effort. It is not for me to anticipate the kind of discussions that will take place at the five-power conference. I simply say that the Government attaches a good deal of importance to these talks and hopes that they will lay the foundation for continuing close association of the five Commonwealth countries.

It is still too early to give the results of the work of our special missions and indeed some of the subject matter belongs more properly to my colleague the Minister for Defence (Mr Fairhall). I am sure honourable members will recognise that there are a number of particular problems engaging our attention following the British decision. For example, the large British defence complex in Malaysia and Singapore has hitherto been available to Malaysian and Singapore forces, as well as to our own. What facilities will be needed in the future to support the forces that remain in the area? What installations and facilities should be retained from the British defence complex and on what terms? As another example, statements have been made about Britain's future role. What precisely will it be? In what stages will the withdrawal take place? What provision will be made in the longer term for training, joint exercises in the area and for deployment of forces? I give these simply as an example of some of the matters that are under examination.

Beyond such particular questions lies the yet unresolved question of what is the best form of co-operation that Australia itself can give in the longer term to her neighbours and allies in order to contribute to our own security by helping to maintain a common security. Our advisers are also working at this problem and it is obvious that the answer we shape for the longer-term problem will also have a bearing on the answer we give to the more immediate problem of ensuring that Malaysia and Singapore are not left vulnerable to any prospective threat that may arise during the period of the British run-down, the improvement of their own capacity for self-defence and the working out of the new system of security to replace the old. The decisions on the most effective contribution we can make in the longer term to the security of Malaysia and Singapore cannot, of course, be taken in isolation from other problems concerning security of the whole region, the varying threats that may have to be faced, co-operation with allies and our own defence capacity. In the defence field, Australia wants to see Malaysia and Singapore working very closely together, partly because this in itself is a contribution to regional security and partly because the effective defence of each is dependent on the co-operation of the other. So we welcome the meetings now being held regularly between the Defence Ministers of the two countries and their declaration that the defence of Singapore and the defence of Malaysia are inseparable.

The Australian Government considers that regional security has to be sought through co-operation between the free and independent countries of the region. Our neighbours are showing growing capacity to safeguard the region through their own co-operative efforts and through joint and several constructive endeavour. We welcome
the growth of purpose and confidence among our neighbouring countries in respect of these matters and their intentions to do more through mutual effort and regional association. There is now awareness among the countries of the region of one another's basic security interest and that what each is doing in the security field is important to its neighbour and to the stability of the area as a whole.

For various reasons which I think it would be diplomatic to leave unstated, I do not think that at this time we can talk realistically of one big defence pact covering all the countries of the region. We can readily envisage, however, a variety of arrangements, some multilateral, some bilateral, some specific and some less clearly defined, all of which will contribute to regional security. They can range from the exchange of security information to actual military co-operation. Regional security even now can be promoted in a variety of ways, including developing economic and diplomatic co-operation and such things as joint technical projects which bring added strength to the participating countries. We in Australia are working to make the best use of all such opportunities.

Because the Leader of the Opposition at one time made statements about a defence pact with Indonesia I believe I should say something about our relations with our nearest neighbour. In my visit to Malaysia and Singapore in February, I also visited Djakarta. I was received by General Soeharto and also had talks with the Foreign Minister, Dr Malik, and some other leading figures in the Foreign Office and armed forces. The purpose of my visit was to inform the Indonesian Government of the trend of Australian thinking and to exchange views freely on the range of matters of mutual interest. On an earlier occasion in this House, on 26th August last year, I indicated the importance that Australia attached to Indonesia and to our relations with Indonesia, and my recent visit was part of the process whereby our two countries maintain contact with one another. It was my third visit to Indonesia in the last eighteen months and Dr Malik, who was in Australia last December to represent his country at the memorial service for Mr Holt, will visit Australia next month.

I did not propose any military pact with Indonesia, nor did I advocate any formal military arrangements involving the countries of the region. The reason was that the Government of Indonesia has made its position known both publicly and in private and we respect that position. Indonesia has said that it will not join military pacts. It has adopted the view that 'tying itself to any world bloc or becoming involved in military pacts' would be prejudicial to 'a free and active foreign policy'. I am quoting from the basic resolution on Indonesian foreign policy which has been adopted by the highest body, the Consultative Council, in 1966 and reaffirmed on a number of subsequent occasions. That is, I say, a view which we respect; just as we respect other expressions of policies of non-alignment.

At the same time the Indonesian Government is co-operating in practical ways with neighbouring countries for mutual security and has indicated that military co-operation with neighbouring countries can develop. In general we should recognise that our neighbours, like ourselves, face the dilemma that they want to concentrate their national efforts on economic progress and national development but they are deeply conscious that their goals of security and an independent future can be threatened. They take the view, which is in accord with our own, that economic and social progress in the region is dependent on political stability and on security from the disruptive effects of subversion, insurrection and infiltration. In all our neighbouring countries there are able and dedicated governments who see constructive national development as a major responsibility and who are deeply concerned to bring into balance the requirements of defence and security with the present burdens of economic progress. It is to the interest of Australia to work with them and one of the main aims of our diplomatic activity is to build that foundation of trust and friendship and to achieve that close understanding of each other that are essential if we are to find peace and prosperity together.

While we see the need and the value for the future of regional co-operation for security we also have to recognise the reality that the strength of non-regional powers also is needed, both to meet regional threats and to maintain global security. At present the guaranteed security provided by
the United States of America to a number of Asian states under a range of bilateral treaties and the guaranteed security we and New Zealand enjoy under the ANZUS Pact do more than any other single factor to give a sense of security in the East. Our alliance with the United States of America is the foundation of our own present security and, in one sense, it provides the base from which we ourselves can plan our own contributions to regional security, both as a member of SEATO and through any other opportunities that may be made in the future. Hence our consultation with the United States is also close and constant, on broader problems of security as well as on the conduct of the war in Vietnam.

Because of our basic belief in the interaction of global and regional security problems we also value the special entrance we have as a member of the Commonwealth to discussions with the United Kingdom Government. We have spoken plainly to the Wilson Government about its policy east of Suez but we still respect Britain's place in the world, the role that Britain still has to play and the importance to mankind today of Anglo-American understanding and co-operation. I say that the Britain that was the bulwark of freedom in two world wars does not change its essential character just because it faces difficulties.

Next week in Wellington, at the ministerial meetings of SEATO, and associated talks, I will have again the opportunity of discussion both of regional and world problems with the United States Secretary of State, Mr Dean Rusk, and the British Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, Mr George Thomson, as well as with representatives of neighbouring countries. These discussions with other governments are not isolated exercises but form a careful pattern. It is in the nature of decision-making by the Australian Government on defence and security matters that careful and lengthy consultations take place with other interested governments. Our external obligations and commitments are not confined to one easily identified strategic situation but involve a variety of possible situations, all of which could be critically important to us. Our obligations and commitments find formal expression in our association with the Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement, and in our declared responsibilities for the defence of the Territory of Papua and New Guinea. We cannot afford over-commitment in any one direction and we must make a balanced contribution to regional stability and defence.

When we are thinking ahead, whether in terms of the undertakings into which we can enter with other countries or whether in terms of the size and composition of forces for which we must plan, we necessarily take into account the intentions and the thinking of the governments with whom we are working in various partnerships. The role Australia can play must be related to the role that other countries are able and willing to play. For a country of our size and resources, our commitments are considerable. It is not easy to think of another country of comparable size, which is similarly placed. We see our various associations, differently framed as they may be and in some cases with different partners, as complementary and mutually reinforcing.

Australian's position is well understood by the countries interested in security and stability in the region; both the countries in the region and those participating from outside the region. They accept that Australia's military contributions in the various theatres must be carefully measured, shaped and allocated according to the changing priorities. I believe that we have established a record for having a realistic, positive and responsible attitude to the security problems of the Asian region. One of the most important contributions that Australia has to make to the Asian and the Pacific region is Australia's own strength and stability and we cannot forget that. In the years ahead it can become a source of assurance to our neighbours that we are here, that we are stable and that we are following an assured and rational course. As honourable members know, the Government is proceeding strongly with our own development and must continue to do so. The more we develop, the stronger we grow; consequently the greater will be the contribution we can make and the more will be the resources we shall be able to deploy, both for national and regional security.
We have to recognise, of course, that so long as the situation in Vietnam is unresolved the future of South East Asia as a whole is uncertain. Until an eventual settlement in Vietnam is worked out, the overall regional security position is fluid and not finally defined. These considerations are necessarily in the mind of the Government when determining the part Australia can play now and in the developing circumstances of the Asian region.

As well as the war in Vietnam and the security of the Malaysia-Singapore area, there are other critical areas, such as Laos and Korea. We are closely interested in the situation in those areas for regional security has to be effective on an extended front and not only in individual places. Moreover, Australian defence and security policies are not merely a response to particular emergencies but have to be forward-looking, taking into account not only the present crises but also the dangers and opportunities of the future.

The Government has frequently declared that it is in the Asian and Pacific region that the risks to world peace are the greatest. Any military conflict in the modern world carries with it wider risks. With our allies we must remain prepared to use military power in the defence of free and independent countries, but we must do so in the awareness that recourse to military force, with the prospects of deepening confrontation of the great powers, carries with it the ultimate danger of global nuclear confrontation. Today’s problems are too grave to permit prejudice or dogmatism. They require the greatest clarity of thought, exact analysis and steadiness of purpose to serve our interests.

We also have to be ready to detect and make what we can of any new opportunities of a changing international environment. Now, Sir, I turn to a matter of great importance to Australia and to the future of the world—the draft treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERA-
TION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

The Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee, which has been meeting in Geneva and considering this matter for a long time, finally agreed on 14th March to transmit the text of a draft treaty for consideration by the resumed session of the United Nations General Assembly next month. If the General Assembly approves a text, which may or may not be identical with that discussed in Geneva, the draft treaty will then be open for signature and subsequent ratification.

The first comment I make is that it is a considerable achievement for a text to have been agreed on by the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union. Unfortunately the two other countries with nuclear weapons, France and Communist China, have not shown any sign of being prepared to accept it.

The United States, Britain and the Soviet Union have agreed on a draft resolution for submission to the Security Council, indicating that they will support immediate action by the United Nations in accordance with the procedures of the Security Council to give assistance to any non-nuclear power in the event of attack or the threat of attack by nuclear weapons. What it means in practical terms, and the extent to which it provides protection for non-nuclear nations, will, of course, require considerable study.

The three nuclear powers who are joining in the Security Council resolution have said that they will make supporting declarations in the Council when the resolution is considered, and so I do not want to commit myself further just now or to prejudice developments before these explorations and elaborations can be attempted.

The Australian Government has consistently seen the dangers inherent in the proliferation of nuclear weapons and in the increase in the number of nations possessing such weapons. We therefore fully share the hope that effective measures will be found to prevent such further spread of nuclear weapons. We also share the hope that this proposed treaty may become such an effective measure.

However, the draft treaty has many implications for Australia and has to be examined very carefully. The broad principles and some particular aspects have of course been under consideration within the Government for a long while. When a text emerged this month from the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee—and it was issued only on 15th March—it became necessary for further special and intensive
study on the basis of this text to be undertaken in our defence committee and in other parts of the Government so that Australia's position can be settled by the time the General Assembly meets next month. This discussion and examination are still going on.

I shall refer briefly to some aspects which will indicate to the House why it is necessary to examine the text of the draft treaty very carefully before taking a final and detailed position. As I said, the basic approach of the Australian Government is that we want an effective and equitable treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, provided that it does not endanger our future national security and hamper our development, and we therefore want the nations of the world to arrive at a text of an effective treaty which we can support and adhere to.

As its title indicates, the draft treaty is directed primarily to arms and to matters of military security. Australia's strategic and tactical requirements, now and for the future, are therefore directly involved, and the latest text is being scrutinised by the Government and its advisers in that light. One has to remember that while restrictions would be imposed on Australia they would also be imposed on other countries that became parties to the treaty. It has to be examined whether those restrictions would apply with equal weight and effectiveness on all potential nuclear powers, including particularly those which have already gone some considerable way towards being able to manufacture nuclear weapons of their own and on their own. In an examination of the relevant capacities of different countries, such factors as the availability of means of delivery have to be taken into account, and also whether the economic and financial burden of developing nuclear weapons can be borne. We also have to remind ourselves that the treaty may have considerable effects on the future development of Australia.

While the draft treaty covers the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, it also has very important implications for nuclear activity in the non-military field. Some of the controls over nuclear activity for military purposes could apply so as to prevent activity by Australia for non-military purposes because those non-military purposes might be considered also to have military applications. For example, would the treaty prevent the development and production in Australia of nuclear fuels and methods of nuclear propulsion which could be of great civil use but which could also be of military use or a step towards production of nuclear weapons? Would research and development be prevented in certain directions which show great promise for future technological development for civilian uses? Those are some of the matters which are receiving examination and require further consultations with other governments with a view to ascertaining and reaching agreement on interpretations of the treaty or perhaps modifications of the present draft. Some of the consultations will probably have to be pursued with other delegations when the United Nations General Assembly meets in New York. In brief, what is needed by Australia and countries in a similar position is some assurance that the draft treaty would not freeze for all time the present relative positions of the various countries in respect of their level of technological development in the nuclear field, with all that that would imply for future economic and scientific progress.

Other matters also need attention, such as the impact on Australia of an effective and pervasive inspection system, and the degree to which Australia would be bound by future international decisions under the draft treaty in regard to inspection or other controls. If a number of countries with significant nuclear potential do not adhere to the draft treaty when its terms have been finally settled, then its value and effectiveness would not be great and every other country would have to weigh carefully whether it could afford to come in.

I have said enough about the non-proliferation treaty to indicate to the House the spirit in which the Australian Government is approaching this important question and the reason why, in Australia's own interests, a final and detailed position cannot be staked until there has been much further examination. I lay on the table of the House the draft treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, which will be submitted to the resumed session of the United Nations General Assembly next month, and also the draft resolution which the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union will propose for adoption by the Security Council.
I have been talking of very grave matters and I have tried to talk of them in a sober and unemotional way. These are grave matters that affect the very survival of Australia. Every one of the three matters on which I have touched is a matter that goes right to the core of our own survival as a nation. It goes right to the core of the opportunity that we may have as a nation in the coming years to have control of our own destiny and to try to build a happier life here for our future. Every one of these three matters touches vitally on the question whether Australia will be able to work together in a friendly and harmonious way with neighbouring countries for the good of humanity in general. These are grave matters. As I have said, I have tried to speak of them soberly, factually and without emotion. I would trust that the debate which ensues would keep the considerations at the same level. I present the following paper:

International affairs—Ministerial statement, 26 March 1968—

and move:

That the House take note of the paper.

Suspension of Standing Orders

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

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent the Leader of the Opposition speaking without limitation of time.

Mr Whitlam (Werriwa—Leader of the Opposition) [9.3]—I agree that the three matters upon which the Minister for External Affairs (Mr Hasluck) has concentrated tonight are the three crucial developments which have taken place since he last addressed the House on this subject matter. They are crucial matters for our country and for our region. The United States of America and the Soviet Union have drafted a nuclear non-proliferation treaty and, together with Britain, have sealed the agreement with their guarantee of nuclear protection for non-nuclear countries that are themselves willing to accept the treaty. The pace of British withdrawal from South East Asia has been accelerated. The Vietcong Tet offensive in Vietnam has dramatically illustrated, but not altered, the real nature of that appalling conflict. I shall deal quite briefly with the first of these matters.

I find the Minister’s approach to the draft treaty disappointingly half-hearted and begrudging. There should be no doubt that complex as this matter is, and as this treaty is, Australia should still sign it. If it is impossible to get a better treaty then the treaty should be signed as it is. It is disappointing that China and France, the two lesser nuclear powers, have not supported the treaty, let alone the guarantee. Australia is not guiltless in the international ostracism of China. Australia is not guiltless in the fact that France has been able to carry out nuclear tests in our hemisphere. These tests could not have been perpetrated if Australian ports and airports on the mainland and in New Guinea had not been made available for French aircraft and ships. France is about to perpetrate such tests again. The Australian Government has repeatedly rebuffed the efforts of every country on the west coast of South America to join in protests to France against the previous and the imminent tests. One cannot help feeling that the Government is inhibited in the whole of this matter by the comments which the new Prime Minister (Mr Gorton) made in another place in May 1957.

Mr Buchanan—How far back does the Leader of the Opposition have to go?

Mr Speaker—Order! I ask the Leader of the Opposition to resume his seat for a moment. I remind the House that all interjections are out of order. They have been coming from both sides of the House in rather rapid succession. I remind honourable members that the Minister for External Affairs was heard in comparative silence and I expect the same respect to be shown to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Whitlam—The Prime Minister brushed off this matter during question time last week. It was raised on several occasions during the debate on the Address-in-Reply to the Governor-General’s Speech—the Speech which the Prime Minister drafted following on the prorogation of Parliament which he sought. He may have changed his position since 1957. He may, in fact, still maintain it, but at least it ought to be stated. His view in 1957 was this:

I should hope that we would use our defence funds and endeavour to secure for this country some measure of atomic or hydrogen defence. . . . I should like to see us have intercontinental missiles of our own and have our own bomber aircraft, capable of delivering our own bombs should we find that necessary.
Is that still the Prime Minister's attitude, or has he changed it?

I repeat that events of the past 8 weeks in Vietnam have illustrated, but not altered, the nature of the war. They have demonstrated that the policy pursued for the past 3 years in Vietnam has failed. They have emphasised the need for that policy to be changed. It was apparent before the Tet offensive that the United States cannot be dislodged by any military effort which either the Vietcong or North Vietnam is capable of mounting. It was clear before the Tet offensive that the policy of punishing North Vietnam had not destroyed the capacity of the Vietcong to mount highly organised and highly effective offensives and to overrun and hold temporarily any city or town in South Vietnam. It was apparent before the Tet offensive that the South Vietnamese Government had in no way won the confidence or the active support of the people of South Vietnam.

In all these respects, and in every respect, the complete failure of the policy pursued by the allies and supported by the Australian Government was manifest. The Tet offensive has merely underlined these failures. The result has been that no city, town or village—not even Saigon itself—is perfectly secure. About 1.1 million people have been made homeless in a nation where the home represents the entire possessions of a family and, to an extent which we can barely conceive, represents the identity and meaning of a family. The number of civilian dead, killed by the activity of both sides, is estimated at 15,000 with 70,000 injured.

The pacification programme is in ruins, utterly overwhelmed by the almost insuperable problem of new refugees. The incessant and insensate bombing of North Vietnam for over three years, allegedly designed to reduce the flow of men and arms from North Vietnam, has resulted in the Vietcong never having been so well and so effectively armed as they are now; North Vietnamese regulars have never been so numerous and never more effective. The policy designed to raise the cost of the war to North Vietnam has raised immeasurably the cost of the war to the United States, but principally and appallingly it has raised the cost of the war to the civilian population of South Vietnam. For the first time since 1812, the United States is fighting a war which is opposed by a substantial and powerful section of her people, including a sizeable proportion of Congress. For the first time since Pearl Harbour, isolationism has become a factor in her national politics. The war has introduced a new and menacing instability in the international monetary system.

There has never been a stage in this war when its supporters and the supporters of the war in being waged have not claimed that each stage of escalation was the last necessary step to secure victory. There has never been a stage in this war when each successive escalation has not raised new difficulties and increased all the existing ones. Every effort in the conduct of the war has been used as a justification for the repetition of error and the accumulation of error. This is perhaps the first war in history where failure rather than success has become self-justifying.

The Government has not even explained or justified the change of tactics in its own area of responsibility in South Vietnam. For nearly 2 years the Australian troops in Vietnam had conducted a cautious and painstaking operation aimed at the securing and rehabilitation of the Phuoc Tuy province. Within its limits, this operation had been relatively successful. In January, two-thirds of the force was sent on a search and destroy operation 30 to 50 miles away from its base in Nui Dat. The result was that the resettlement village in Hoa Long, a few miles from Nui Dat, was overrun and its chiefs killed. The provincial capital of Baria was invaded. For the first time in 2 years, areas which had seemed secure were proved not to be secure. The former Minister for the Army has denied that there has been in fact a change in the nature of the operations being conducted by the Australian Task Force. The Prime Minister has said nothing, but appears to deny that the Government has any responsibility for the conduct of our operations. For, on 26th February, explaining the appointment of the honourable member for Flinders (Mr Lynch) as Minister for the Army, he said:

I feel he has had considerable managerial experience, personnel management experience, business experience, all of which should be helpful in the administration of a department. Of course, neither he nor any other Minister would affect the fighting of the department because that is a military matter which is done by the Chiefs of the Service.
The Prime Minister's position on the commitment is thoroughly confused. He said on 2nd February that, as far as he was concerned, the commitment would be held to its present size. Asked if that was permanent, the Prime Minister said: 'As far as I am concerned it is'. He said, in effect, that the size of the commitment reached in November of last year was exactly right — right in terms of our capacity, right in terms of the objectives of the war, right in terms of the nature of the war, right in terms of the American response to the war, right in all circumstances and all eventualities. He made his statement in the midst of the Tet offensive, at the very time when General Wheeler was in Saigon to prepare his request to the President for more troops, at the very time when Saigon was in flames, when the American Embassy itself had been, for the better part of a day, in the hands of the Vietcong, when the Imperial capital of Hue was occupied by the Vietcong and was to remain so for a further 3 weeks, when 34 provincial capitals had been temporarily overrun, when the bases at Tan Son Nhut and Da Nang were under heavy attack, and when the number of additional civilian refugees had already risen to 200,000.

What does the Prime Minister's statement mean in terms of the justification for this war, which has always been given by the Government of which he was a member? To Sir Robert Menzies, Vietnam was the place where we resisted 'the downward thrust of China between the Pacific and Indian Oceans'. To Mr Holt, Vietnam was 'the battleground of freedom'. If they believed these grossly inflated, grossly simplified terms, then it could be said that there was some consistency about their having made an open-ended commitment to an open-ended war. They would neither limit our commitment or attempt to limit the hostilities. The present Prime Minister is in the position of limiting the commitment but refusing to make any attempt to limit the war. If it is right — I believe it is right — for Australia to limit her commitment, how can it be right not to try to limit the war? Or, alternatively, is the Prime Minister saying that it is right for America to escalate the war but right for Australia to limit her role in it?

On 10th March 1966, the Minister for External Affairs said:

'It is all very well for the critics and the doubters — wholly sincere as I know many of them are — to plead for negotiations. They are understandably unhappy over the loss of life, the waste and the brutalising effect of a protracted war. We are all unhappy about these things. But the critics have no solutions of their own which can be accepted with honour and with prudence; they have no practical formula for bringing the parties to the negotiating table; they have no course to propose as a genuine alternative to the one which we are pursuing.

Since he made that statement, there have been exactly 2 more years of loss of life, of waste; 2 more years of the brutalising effects of this protracted war. For 2 years the policy of punishing the North to bring peace to the South has been tried and it has failed. What is the honourable and prudent course for this country to take now?

It is prudent for the Australian Government now to use its influence with the United States to change the course and conduct of the war, to end the bombing of the North, to seek negotiations on the basis of acceptance of the Vietcong as a party to the negotiations, to refrain from further escalation, to concentrate on securing the cities and towns and to assist where possible in and insist where necessary on South Vietnamese measures to promote land reforms and to control corruption. It is honourable and prudent for a good ally to encourage these measures. It would be prudent for us to urge the United States to avoid those steps which will lead to her humiliation in this war and in this region. It would not be honourable for us to urge her to continue a policy of escalation and intensification which has already proved a disastrous failure and which, if continued, will ensure further failure and humiliation. It would not be prudent for us to encourage a policy which through failure and disillusion will lead to ultimate withdrawal of American interest and influence in this region. It would not be honourable for us to encourage America in further escalation when, according to the Prime Minister, we will not share in the burdens of that further escalation. We have a clear duty to use our influence along these lines. Is there any prospect that our influence can be effective?' There is every prospect. Indeed, we have already used our influence, but it has been used to escalate and perpetuate this conflict.
In May last year, the United States Administration was engaged in a total reappraisal of its policy of bombing North Vietnam. All America's NATO allies had urged her to end it. The Australian Prime Minister declared in favour of continuing the bombing at the very time the review was under way. His views were used by the Administration to deter and dissuade critics in Congress.

Last August, the United States Ambassador to the United Nations, Mr Arthur Goldberg, sought support for an American proposal to recognise the National Liberation Front as a party to any negotiations. Australia refused her support for this American proposal. The existence of the proposal was hidden by the Minister for External Affairs from the Parliament and the people. If the Treasurer was right in telling me on 20th November last that he did not know of the proposal, then the Minister must have hidden its existence from Cabinet. Because it also happened to be a Labor proposal, the Treasurer had denounced this American proposal in the international affairs debate here in August and November. This was to be the king hit against my party during last year's Senate elections. The planned line was made perfectly clear by the Treasurer when he said on 22nd August:

Would we as a government be prepared to recommend now that the National Liberation Front should be a negotiating party? It is a treacherous organisation within South Vietnam. It is but the agent of the North Vietnamese Government. It is carrying out the evil purposes of the North Vietnamese Government and on that basis I do not believe it should be recognised at law or permitted to put its point of view alongside that of its masters at the negotiating table.

He repeated this view in the debate on 2nd November last year.

The Goldberg proposal at the United Nations would never have been known here or even in the country except for the United States Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the same day, 2nd November, when Ambassador Goldberg made it publicly known, and also made it perfectly clear, that America was and is still willing to accept the NLF as a party to negotiations. Whatever may have been the motives of the Government in opposing it, sabotaging it and hiding it, here was a clear case of Australia's influence being used to effect; but it was used against negotiations, against peace, against the wishes of the United States, and against the interests of Australia herself.

I have repeatedly said that the cessation of the bombing will not guarantee that negotiations will start when the bombing stops. But they will never begin as long as the bombing continues. Advocates of the bombing have now abandoned the political and diplomatic arguments once used to justify it. They no longer hold that we can bomb Hanoi to the conference table; they no longer hold that it will break the morale of the North Vietnamese people or bring down the Communist government there; they no longer hold that it had raised the morale of the people of South Vietnam, or would rally them to active support of the South Vietnamese Government. They now cling solely to the military argument. And most of the validity of the purely military argument has been destroyed by the Tet offensive. How can it be said that bombing has reduced the effectiveness of the North Vietnamese when they are more effective now than when the bombing started 3 years ago; how can it be said to have reduced the flow of arms when the Vietcong have never been so well armed as they are now. How can it be said to have significantly reduced allied losses when they have never been so high.

Even if the purely military argument for bombing had any validity, even if Mr McNamara was wrong in saying that its military effect was marginal, the fact is that in this war no major decision has been made on purely military grounds; political and diplomatic arguments have qualified every military decision. The decision against the so-called 'hot pursuit' into Cambodia is essentially a political and diplomatic one, taken against military advice that the Cambodian sanctuary adds to allied losses and prolongs the war. The decision against Inchon-type landings in North Vietnam has been a political decision. The decision to share military command and responsibility with the army of South Vietnam is essentially a political decision. The decision which the President apparently has taken not to grant in full the request of the Saigon command for 200,000 additional American troops is a political and economic one. The decision not to use nuclear weapons is a
political, diplomatic and moral decision. In waging what Mr McNamara has described as a 'limited war for limited objectives with limited means', political and diplomatic considerations have to be weighed constantly against purely military considerations. There is no reason why the bombing alone should be considered a purely military question. And in this case, diplomatic considerations overwhelm any military arguments. The military effects are marginal; the diplomatic effects of ending the bombing might well be revolutionary. More than anything else, it has been responsible for America's international isolation on Vietnam. It is a continuing source of weakness in her diplomatic stance. It undermines her world prestige and authority.

Continuation of the bombing encourages Russia to maintain and increase her support for Hanoi. Russia is the only country now in a position to put pressure on Hanoi to negotiate. Only if Russia co-operates is there any possibility that this war can be ended on a negotiated basis. If Russia can be made to co-operate, there is a chance that a settlement in Vietnam can be made part of a wider settlement for the whole Indo-China area. But there will and can be no co-operation from Russia while the bombing continues. While the bombing continues, the words and promises of the Russian leaders cannot be put to the test. It is now time that they should be put to the test. Only by stopping the bombing can the United States regain the diplomatic initiative in this war. The Secretary of State, Mr Rusk, has said that the Administration is now re-examining its policy and strategy in Vietnam 'from A to Z'. Our voice should now be heard, our influence should now be exerted to ensure that this re-examination is made fruitful. This is our right; it is our responsibility. We should not merely wait for change, as the Prime Minister suggested in Hobart last night. We should urge the change ourselves.

The Prime Minister said on Friday that our reason for being in South Vietnam was to protect the rights of the people of South Vietnam. This is perhaps a different approach from that of his predecessor who said it was 'unlucky for the people of Vietnam that the world power struggle was being fought out in their backyard'. It is now time that the interests and rights of the people should be considered. We have practically destroyed their country in their 'protection'. We have made 1½ million people homeless in protecting them. We have destroyed their towns. We have wrecked their Imperial City of Hue in protecting it. We have recaptured a ruin. Let us not pretend that the people of South Vietnam do not attach any blame to us for all of this. The Italians do not blame only the Germans for causing the destruction of Monte Cassino. The Germans do not blame only the Nazis for the destruction of Dresden. The chief desire of the Vietnamese people today is not simply for 'protection'. It is for peace. If the war continues much longer, they will insist on peace at any price.

The Catholic Bishops of South Vietnam have called for negotiations. They believe that it is better to try to negotiate now than later. Are we in our arrogance to say they are wrong? Are we to say that this is not an authentic voice raised on behalf of the people of Vietnam? As the Bishops said in their statement of 16th January:

Is the war to continue until South Vietnam is destroyed?

If the war continues on its present course, the situation in 6 months time will be exactly as it was 6 months ago when the Minister for External Affairs made his last statement; but thousands more will be dead and maimed and homeless. If it continues in its present course, the situation will be the same in 10 years time, but millions more will be dead and maimed and homeless. We will be no nearer achieving a government able to win the active support of the people. This is the most fragile government in South East Asia. It may be no less democratic than some, it may be no more corrupt than others. But more than any other government in the region, it fails to represent the nationalism and fulfil the expectations of the people. The elections last year were a remarkable manifestation of the spirit of the people and the depth of their desire for representative government and democratic institutions. The elections were a victory for the people of South Vietnam, rather than for President Thieu and Vice-President Ky.

It is more comprehensible and advantageous to Australians for the people to have a non-Communist government in Saigon. Australians would wish and expect
the Government in Saigon to take and be
enabled to take steps to gain the support
of the people, of whom I am satisfied the
majority are non-Communist.

Even in a war situation, much can be
done to build support for the institutions of
representative government, if the govern-
ment can be seen by the people to be work-
ing for their betterment. Two tangible ways
this can be done are by land reform and cor-
rup tion control. The failure of the present
Government and all its predecessors to re-
distribute the land resumed from the French
has nothing whatever to do with the war,
it is just the failure of successive govern-
ments to do their job, which was initiated
over 10 years ago. Nor need corruption
be left to run riot just because of the war.
Corruption in South Vietnam is not merely
a method of self-enrichment for high
officials; it is a necessary way of life for
the whole army and public service. It was
put to me by Vietnamese themselves that
one of the reasons why wealthy families
prefer to keep their highly trained sons in
France—the men who would be doctors
and engineers in Vietnam—is because
official salaries are so low that they would
be obliged to live by corruption. There are
more Vietnamese doctors, engineers and
technicians in France than in Vietnam.
South Vietnam is probably the only country
in the world where rich parents send their
sons to Paris to preserve their moral purity.

To the peasant of Vietnam, the lowly
provincial official is the representative of
the Saigon Government; if there is cor-
rup tion on that level, then the Government
stands for corruption as far as the peasant
is concerned. One of the reasons why the
Army is unpopular is that its troops still
have to loot to live.

This is not a problem which can be
shrugged off by blaming the war. Nor is
there no possibility of reform. The United
States spends $30 billion a year on the
war; less than one-tenth of that amount is
spent in subsidising the Government of Viet-
nam to pay the wages of its officials and its
soldiers. If this proportion were raised, so
that wages could be raised to a livable
level, the return in increased effectiveness
of the Government and the Army and in
increased support for them, would be much
greater than the same amount spent on
escalation of the military effort.

South Vietnam now has a form of repres-
entative government. It is as far as ever
from having an effective administration.
This would still be the position if no more
forces came from the north and no more
equipment came through the north. Out-
siders can protect a country; they can pro-
vide its Government with money, equipment
and experts, clinics and schools and market
places and communications. But only the
Government of a country itself can produce
men for its civil service and intelligence
service, its police forces and its armed forces.
Here outsiders can do no more than help
with pay, equipment and advice.

There are the things that we should be
urging. We should be lending our support
to those within the United States Adminis-
tration and in the South Vietnamese Go-
vernment and the United States civil and
military officers in South Vietnam itself, who
are also urging it. It is a complete mistake
to believe that those who are urging a
change of policy are all outside the
Administration. They are in the Administra-
tion and they are in Vietnam as well as in
the mainland United States.

What must now disturb Australians most
is the apparent supineness of our Govern-
ment. It is a truly defeatist government,
for it offers nothing more than a continu-
ation of policies that have failed. We hear a
great deal of talk about morale. The true
deroysers of morale are those who offer
nothing but failure, and maintain that
failure must be supported because there is
no alternative. This is truly a counsel of
despair—and it is the only counsel offered
by the Government of Australia. It is not
courage merely to persist in failed methods.
In the words of Pope Paul to President
Johnson at Christmas, it takes courage to
stop such methods.

One of the great tragedies of this war is
that preoccupation with it postpones action
on building and developing the societies and
economies of the rest of the nations of the
region. America cannot, and Japan and the
Western European nations will not, play as
positive and fruitful a part in this most
vital of all tasks while the war continues.
But it is not necessary for Australia to wait
for the end of the war before we take new
initiatives. Indeed, it is made necessary that
we should do so in the light of Britain's
accelerated withdrawal from east of Suez.
Last week the Minister used the device of an inspired question to defend the adequacy of Australia's aid programme and, incidentally, to criticise statements of mine.

Mr Hasluck—It was not inspired.

Mr WHITLAM—The Minister raised an aunt sally by implying that I had criticised the personnel operating our aid programme. In fact, had he taken the trouble to obtain and read my speech before arranging the question—

Mr Hasluck—I did not arrange the question. I did not know it was coming.

Mr WHITLAM—Then I shall rephrase my remarks. Had the Minister taken the trouble to obtain and read my speech before making his reply, which was from prepared notes—

Mr Hasluck—I had never heard of your speech until I heard the question.

Mr WHITLAM—In fact, the Minister referred to me in his answer. If he had taken the trouble to obtain and read the text of my speech, he would have known that I paid particular tribute to the officers of his own Department.

Mr Hasluck—Thank you.

Mr WHITLAM—The gravamen of my criticism is that the planning and administration of our external aid is fragmented among an excessive number of departments and organisations, and that Treasury control of multilateral aid exercises an inhibiting effect on the programme.

The Minister continues, in another spontaneous answer apparently to inflate the statistics of our overseas aid by including Papua and New Guinea. Excluding Papua and New Guinea, the percentage of our gross national product spent on aid is 0.25%, making us thirteenth rather than second in the line of international donors. Per capita we spend only $4.5 on aid. This is less than Sweden, Denmark, Germany or Austria. Can the Minister maintain that European countries 12,000 miles away have a greater stake in the development of the region we live in, the most turbulent and deprived area of the world? Of our aid 63% goes to Papua and New Guinea, a Territory for which we have accepted and for which we sought special responsibility, and with which, in the eyes of the world, we maintain a special relationship. We are responsible for the situation where no New Guinean can take any final decision in his own country. We deliberately foster the feeling of dependence upon us and then use that feeling of dependence as an argument against their independence. We use the statistics of our $91.6m budgetary allocation for New Guinea to bolster, by nearly three-quarters, the amount of aid to underdeveloped countries which we claim we are so generously giving. Yet much even of this is spent on education, social services and health services for Australians resident in Papua and New Guinea.

Mr Clyde Cameron—Burns Philp.

Mr WHITLAM—If we compare the amount that Burns Philp & Co. Ltd and W. R. Carpenter and Co. Ltd put into New Guinea each year with the amount they take out, we will have a proper appreciation of our altruism towards the Territory. We hold over the heads of the people of New Guinea the implied threat that, when they gain independence, aid from Australia will cease, when in fact we know very well it must be maintained and indeed increased. We know equally well that we must do so in our own interests, even if we do not do it in the interests of the people of New Guinea.

The Minister's arguments simply indicate the lack of any sense of urgency on the Government's part. Statements by the Prime Minister have continually emphasised our insignificance as an influence in this region and the insignificance of any aid that we can give. I have frequently pointed out that the true perspective of our situation is that we have a greater gross national product than all the countries in the Association of South East Asian Nations combined. Indeed, we are richer than all the countries which lie between Australia and India, China and Japan. Our aid does not always have to be costly or ambitious to be effective. An excellent example of what can be done quite cheaply is to be found at the Armed Forces Vehicle Rebuild Workshop at Rang Sit near Bangkok. In skills, training and equipment we have contributed $US1m of the $US3m to put the workshop in operation. Three hundred apprentices will be trained in an essential basic skill every 2 years. The immediate beneficiary
of this project is the Thai Army, but the men being trained there will continue as civil mechanics. The whole level of skill in a basic area of great need in this region will have been raised through our efforts. A great deal will have been achieved for that country at a relatively small cost to us. There is nothing more conducive to lethargy and inactivity in helping developing countries than a mistaken idea that the problems are so huge as to make specific programmes worthless.

The Government has not been daunted by financial and administrative difficulties in making military commitments; the problems suddenly become extraordinarily difficult when it comes to a civilian commitment. Aid always seems available to purchase military equipment but not basic civil facilities. There is difficulty in supporting civilian workers in the field when local supplies are either delayed or unobtainable. If there is a military commitment, however, the problem is soon overcome. We must learn to support our civilian workers in the field as readily as we support troops. We must apply the same initiative and resourcefulness in waging war against poverty, disease and ignorance. I repeat for the benefit of the Minister what I said in the speech he chose to criticise last Thursday. It is time we stopped being amateur dabblers in aid and took the whole problem seriously.

We should, in addition, combine our activities more closely with those of other nations. The Japanese place great emphasis on what we call 'aid', and what they call, rather more acceptably, 'economic cooperation'. They have some reservations, naturally enough, because they realise that in some countries of South East Asia their military presence during the war is still remembered. They realise that their overwhelming industrial and commercial strength and skill may make people fearful of putting themselves in their hands. The Japanese, however, place a great deal of emphasis on the United Nations; no people pay so much respect to the United Nations. Japan can make a great deal of assistance available in the region. Not even the United States can make a greater contribution to the development of the West Pacific and South East Asia than Japan. Australia should take the opportunity of contributing comparably with Japan. Japan has eight times our population or resources, but we must certainly contribute proportionately. To Indonesia Japan already extends more than eight times Australia's aid.

In the light of Britain's accelerated withdrawal east of Suez, it has become increasingly urgent that Australia's efforts to build the defences, societies and economies of the nations in our region be stepped up. We should not give the impression that we are interested in Malaysia and Singapore only for our own purposes. We have a clear obligation to see that cities like Penang and Malacca, which have been dependent to a quite large extent on the presence of Australian forces, do not appear to have been left in the lurch by Australia. We can make quite a significant contribution in the training of officers and the provision of sophisticated defence equipment. Australia must ensure that any arrangements she makes with Singapore and Malaysia are primarily for the purpose of protection, not policing. One of the difficulties in stationing troops in Malaysia is that they might be based in an urban area such as Penang, where there have been racial disturbances. Keeping order in another country is an extraordinarily destructive role for a foreign nation to undertake or have thrust upon it.

Regional arrangements should not be restricted to military and economic arrangements. We have a contribution to make in the trade field by helping provide specialised services, particularly shipping. The Malaysian Government unsuccessfully suggested to the Australian Government last year that the countries in the area should provide some of their own shipping. All the countries in the region are in the same position as Australia is of being dependent on the provision of shipping services by our customers.

The Minister referred to my having made a statement about a defence pact with Indonesia. I think I should point out I have never suggested that Australia should have a defence pact with Indonesia alone. At the same time I have warned against Australia having a defence pact with Malaysia and Singapore alone. I have pointed out that any pacts in this region which omit Indonesia would be defective pacts. At the same time I have pointed out
that it is comprehensible to Indonesia as well as to other nations in the area if existing arrangements are continued. Arrangements in the Commonwealth context are readily understood. The general theme I have made is that ASEAN is the most beneficial and the most natural regional arrangement in this area. I agree with the Minister that the increasing interest in regional arrangements is one of the most wholesome and encouraging developments in this area. I have contented myself with saying that Australia should stand ready to encourage ASEAN to have more members and more functions.

Britain's withdrawal east of Suez is also a withdrawal west of Panama. She is withdrawing from the Indian Ocean. Within a decade she will have withdrawn from the Pacific Ocean. There is a real importance in looking at it in this way, because we too often overlook the position of Britain in the colony of Fiji, the protectorate of the Solomon Islands and the New Hebrides Condominium, all covered by the South Pacific Commission. The Australian Government has been extraordinarily reluctant to enlarge the role of the South Pacific Commission. Our Government's attitude towards Fiji in particular has been discreditable. Fiji may be politically a British colony, but her investments and commercial patterns are almost wholly determined by Australia. The Australian Government has refused to give assistance to the Fijian Government. It has taken an ungenerous, short-sighted and selfish attitude. I repeat that Fiji, economically, is an Australian colony. This is understood in Fiji. It is understood by every other country which is aware of the problems of Fiji.

We should act in our region as a good friend, a good neighbour and a good ally. We should encourage and assist the United States to turn her energies, wealth and idealism into constructive and fruitful efforts to defend, develop and democratise our region. The problems are enormous, but they are not insuperable. The time to begin in earnest is now.

Sir WILFRID KENT HUGHES (Chisholm) [9.50]—Mr Speaker, I congratulate the Minister for External Affairs (Mr Hasluck) on a very clear, even if somewhat lengthy, statement of the facts of the situation in South Vietnam today and of the seven pillars on which our foreign policy is based. But I never thought that in an Australian Parliament I would hear a Leader of the Opposition make a speech for which there would be loud rejoicings in Hanoi, as there will be tomorrow after the speech that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Whitlam) made tonight. I agree with the Minister, who said that there were three areas of immediate concern to Australia. Unfortunately, neither he nor the Leader of the Opposition said anything about the Indian Ocean region, except that it will be a very important strategic area in the future. This afternoon, the Leader of the Opposition, at question time, criticised the Agent-General for Victoria in London for having made a statement that was published, or having written a letter to a London newspaper, declaring that Rhodesia and South Africa were preventing the downward thrust of Communism into the southern part of Africa. Why should not the Agent-General for Victoria say that? What right has the Leader of the Opposition to criticise him for it in the Federal Parliament?

Mr Uren—He has every right.

Sir WILFRID KENT HUGHES—The Victorian Premier is the man to do it if anybody should do it. Why did the Leader of the Opposition criticise the Agent-General for making a plain statement of fact? Does the Leader of the Opposition consider that the terrorists are freedom fighters? Does he support the Communist run African National Congress? Has he ever been to southern Africa? Did he not in this place the other day criticise a member of the Ministry for talking about Vietnam and say that the Minister had never been there? Let the Leader of the Opposition cast his mind back to a 2-hour debate on conscription that took place in a Sydney television studio. In that debate, he was very critical of me and my opinions on Vietnam. I asked him why he had not been there, and suggested that if he went, he might learn something. The honourable gentleman, to his credit, went to Vietnam. But he has not been to Africa. He has not talked even with the Leader of the Opposition in Rhodesia. He has not talked with the chiefs in Ovamboland, with Sir Seretse Khama, or with Dr H. Kamuzu Banda, and asked them what they think of the terrorists. He has not learned, apparently, that it is the African...
people themselves who provide the intelligence that enables most of these terrorists to be caught. The honourable gentleman has not even bothered to find out why there are a million foreign Africans in South Africa today. There would be millions more if more were free to enter. Many of those who are there now would in that event have their standards of living destroyed and there would be unemployment. That is one reason why work permits have to be policed strictly. The Leader of the Opposition does not go there and find out these things for himself. He calls people who go there racists and rebels. What about him now, and what about the question that I asked last week? He said that the honourable member for Moreton (Mr Killen) and I were racists and rebels for having gone to Rhodesia and South Africa. Why did not the honourable gentleman apply the same terms of opprobrium to Senator Benn and the honourable member for Newcastle, Mr James?

Mr James—The electorate is Hunter.

Sir WILFRID KENT HUGHES—I am sorry—the honourable member for Hunter, who returned with safari clothes. He was very wise to have done so. I returned with some safari clothes also. Why did not the Leader of the Opposition apply the same terms of opprobrium to the Honourable Mr Galbally, a member of the Victorian Legislative Council? All those persons are members of the Australian Labor Party. The Leader of the Opposition did not describe them as racists or rebels. The honourable member for Melbourne Ports (Mr Crean) also visited Africa. The attitude of the Leader of the Opposition shows the fallacy of his arguments. At the end of last year, he criticised the Government for not having strenuously supported peace proposals to end the Vietnam war. The fallaciousness of his argument was clearly demonstrated by no less a person than the Right Honourable Harold Wilson, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

Mr Stokes—A Labour Prime Minister.

Sir WILFRID KENT HUGHES—He leads a Labour government. Mr Wilson stated that everything possible had been done in efforts to bring Hanoi to the conference table. Yet the Leader of the Opposition in this House goes on tonight in the same strain as before. I was very glad that he and the honourable member for Yarra (Dr J. F. Cairns) did go to Vietnam. It was rather interesting to see what happened when they went. Apparently they both had chips on their shoulders and woodyards on their consciences. What the honourable member for Yarra said when he was in Vietnam was very different from what he said when he came back, and the Leader of the Opposition got himself into such an impasse that he finally decided he had better plug for massive aid and trade. I think that was the expression that he used. Tonight, he has taken the same line. I ask him: How does he think he can institute land reform, political reform or any other reform, or help a country to get on its feet when it is racked by the kind of war that exists in South Vietnam today?

Why did this war occur in the first place? When I was in the country in 1958, standards of living had risen, and there were even 300,000 tons of rice available for export. Diem, in spite of what people may say about him, with the assistance of the Americans, was introducing reforms. Perhaps he was going too slowly for some people. At any rate, considerable reforms were being brought in. At that time, I saw the number of schools that had been started and supplied with teachers and all the requirements needed for education. I visited some of them. I went right through the country and I saw what was being done to introduce land reform and to rehabilitate the refugees who came down from North Vietnam to Ban Men Thuot, where they had their five acres, a cow and a fish pond. All these things were being done in 1958—the Leader of the Opposition apparently did not know about it—and all that was done has now been destroyed by the Communists because they did not like the shop window opposite. I do not wonder that the honourable gentleman is now retiring from the chamber, retreating in haste in the same way that he recommends the Australian nation should do in pursuance of a policy of scuttle and desert.

What did the honourable member for Melbourne Ports say in South Africa? I quoted his remarks last week. He stated that the Labor Party would be the alternative government in Australia before very long and that it would withdraw the Australian troops from Vietnam. What did the
right honourable member for Melbourne (Mr Calwell) say is the policy of the Labor Party? As I said when his remarks were reported, he is not the only old man of the sea around the neck of the Leader of the Opposition. Labor's policy, as we know, is enunciated by the right honourable member for Melbourne. Yet the Leader of the Opposition tries to tell us that it is something entirely different. He signed a pledge to uphold the Party's policy, but is he called a rebel and a traitor? He may wish to change Labor's policy by going about and talking as he does. And good luck to him if he can. But that policy has not yet been changed. Apparently, he imagines that this evening he can convince us that by kindness we can bring the Communists in Hanoi to the conference table. Has he forgotten what happened after World War II when those who represented the equivalent of the National Liberation Front were taken into the government by the democrats in Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria? Has he conveniently forgotten the Marshall Plan—not for Europe, but for China? That was a plan under which the Americans, perhaps in their inexperience, said that the Government of China had to take the Communists in with it. What was the result? The whole of mainland China was handed over to Communism. This is the Communist policy, and Communists make no bones about it. They tell us about it plainly. They tell us that when they get into trouble they will seek a ceasefire or an armistice. Some people fall for this in the same way that, as I told honourable members last week, Senator Robert Kennedy fell for Sukarno's request in 1964. All these things are as plain as a pikestaff. The Communists do not try to hide them any more than Mao Tse-tung tries to hide the fact that the conquest of South East Asia is the first step towards world conquest. The Leader of the Opposition thinks that he knows more about these problems. Perhaps he does. In an article appearing in yesterday's Melbourne 'Herald' Sir Gerald Templer is reported as having said:

If the leaders of the Opposition will not take any notice of Sir Gerald Templer will he take notice of his friend the Socialist Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr Lee Kuan Yew, who has been very downright, forthright and clear in a statement along exactly the same lines as that of Sir Gerald Templer. At one time the Leader of the Opposition was going to be the Deputy Leader of the Socialist International with the Prime Minister of Singapore as the Leader. Now he has scuttled and deserted the Prime Minister of Singapore in what he has advocated tonight. How can anybody trust him when he turns round on his policy in this fashion? How can any Australian trust him? I think that the electors are sick and tired of these fantasies of a tortured and twisted mind. In his ambition to get on to the Government benches he is willing to wring the last ounce of aid from the tears and tragedies of Australian widows and mothers who have lost husbands and sons in the battle for freedom—freedom for him to get up in the House and make the speech that he did tonight. I hope that he is ashamed of himself. I hope that every member of the Australian Labor Party who follows his policy is ashamed of it.

The age of the Curtins and the Chifleys has gone. The Labor Party merely tries to make political capital out of advocating policies which it knows must result in success for the Communists. The Labor Party has not been supported so far by the electors and I hope that it never will be. If it is, it will be a sad day for Australia just as it will be a sad day for Australia if Senator Robert Kennedy is elected President of the United States of America. Everywhere Senator Kennedy has gone in Asia he has always been wrong. He was wrong on the 'be kind to Sukarno' policy that he tried to force down the Malaysian Cabinet's throat in 1964, which, as I said last week, was a year before the September 30th coup of 1965. Senator Kennedy has been unable to control racial riots in his own country but he has visited South Africa and told the South African Government how to do it.

We have to use much larger maps in the future than we have used in the past because not only is South East Asia vital to Australia but so is southern Africa. It is the only trade route and the only line
of communication with Europe that may be left to us because Russia is coming right down into northern Africa, taking control of the Red Sea, rearming Yemen and trying to get control of the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean in conjunction with India. This area of southern Africa has become just as important as South East Asia and yet we do not know anything about it. I congratulate the honourable member for Melbourne Ports and the other members of the ALP who visited that area. Even if they disagree with everything that is going on, at least they have some realistic appraisal or appreciation of the situation. So far most Australians do not even seem to know the importance of it. In the opinion of the Leader of the Opposition, nobody should even visit this area. But it would do the Leader of the Opposition a lot of good to visit Malawi and talk to Dr Banda as I did; visit Botswana and talk to Sir Seretse Khama; visit Lesotho and talk to Chief Leabua Jonathan—

Mr James—Did he call you Bill?

Sir WILFRID KENT HUGHES—I would not mind what he called me, but unfortunately I did not see him during my last tour. But I did have a very interesting interview with Dr Banda. He is one of the keenest to establish regional co-operation and development in that area. It is not that he agrees with the South African policy, but he said: 'If I am going to improve the standard of living of my people I must work with those who are willing to help us'. There is criticism in the north because they say that South Africa and Rhodesia are willing to help Malawi, Botswana and these other nations. After all, who began this apartheid or policy of separate development? In 1909 Britain created Basutoland, Swaziland and Bechuanaland—now Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana. The present policy is along the same lines. Yet we get U Thant the Secretary-General of the United Nations going to the Organisation of African Unity meetings last year in Kinshasa and advocating force to be used against Angola, Mozambique and Rhodesia and against South Africa for its activities in South West Africa. Last week I stated that he never mentioned the fact that his own country had sent 200,000 or more Indians back to India. I ask those honourable members—and the honourable member for Hunter was one—who went to Uganda recently: How many refugees are there in Uganda from southern Sudan? There are 160,000 refugees, of which probably two-thirds are from southern Sudan, where Britain has turned over to the Moslems all the Christians and the other non-Moslems, causing more casualties than there have been in Vietnam. We never hear about this. Why are these do-gooders not interested in these other parts? Why do they always concentrate on South Africa, Rhodesia, Angola and Mozambique? They want to create chaos in southern Africa which will result in communism setting in. Then communism will be well on the way to world conquest. If honourable members opposite use maps they will see that that is what will happen, but they will not look further than the end of their long noses. If we can guarantee security in South East Asia, stop chaos occurring in Southern Africa and begin regional co-operation for development, those areas will move forward so fast and the standard of living of all races will improve so much that an example will be set for the kind of progress which is the best answer to communism's attempted world conquest.

Mr BARNARD (Bass) [10.9]—This House tonight debates the war in Vietnam in a completely new context. I am sure that honourable members will recall the last debate in this House on 2nd November last year. It was the last debate on Vietnam in which the late Prime Minister, Mr Harold Holt, participated. The other speakers on that occasion were the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr McEwen), the Treasurer (Mr McMahon) and the Minister for Defence (Mr Fairhall).

The first major point to be noted tonight is the absence of the Prime Minister (Mr Gorton) from the debate. The second is the line-up of speakers from the Government side. I believe that the Government has treated the House contemptuously by not bothering to put forward a senior Minister on this grave and complex issue. The failure of the Prime Minister to enter the debate and the absence of senior Ministers is an incredible and shameful situation. The Opposition did not agree with the late Prime Minister on Vietnam, but we always admired the pugnacity and gusto with which he advocated the Government's case. It is to the credit of his memory that always he
regarded a debate on foreign affairs as an extremely serious parliamentary event. He certainly would not have countenanced the line up of speakers that the Government has put forward tonight against the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Whitlam). I find it incomprehensible that on a grave and complex issue of great significance to Australia the Government should not put forward a senior Minister such as the Minister for Defence, whose portfolio surely is relevant to the matter that we are debating tonight. The Government has reduced what should be the most important debate of the parliamentary session to a travesty of parliamentary dignity and procedure.

For the second time in two parliamentary sitting days the Prime Minister has not taken part in a major debate in the House. The first debate in which he failed to appear was on the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply—apparently for a very trivial reason. It is beyond comprehension that the Prime Minister should miss an opportunity of clarifying his Government's Vietnam policies in the light of the drastic change in the war since the last debate in the House. The Prime Minister has not made any statement to the House on the Vietnam war, apart from his emotional and incoherent speech on the water torture allegation. Outside the House he has made a number of peculiar statements on the war. For example, this morning the Prime Minister is quoted in the Press as saying that Australia would have a decision forced on it if President Johnson failed to gain re-election and the United States of America had a change of heart on Vietnam. I quote the account of the Prime Minister's remarks, which account was substantially verified by other reports, given in the 'Sydney Morning Herald'. The Prime Minister is quoted as saying:

We cannot, as a nation of 12 million, hope to achieve a result without the full involvement of the United States and its other allies.

This must be the most monumental understatement ever made by an Australian Prime Minister. Apparently, the Prime Minister does not intend to go it alone in Vietnam if the Americans pull out. What are the Prime Minister's objectives in the Vietnam war? What does the Government hope to achieve by persevering with an increasingly futile policy of complete commitment? Today we find that allied forces in South Vietnam have been forced on to the defensive. They have relinquished control of great tracts of South Vietnamese countryside which were nominally pacified and under the control of the central Government. In this explosive situation the Prime Minister has ignored his first opportunity to explain to the Parliament the implications of the Tet offensive and the great reappraisal of military strategy now going on in America, as evidenced by the replacement of General Westmoreland. The attitude of the Prime Minister must bewilder his supporters and the Australian people. In a Press briefing on 2nd February the Prime Minister was questioned about Australia's commitment to Vietnam. I quote from page 3 of the transcript of this briefing, where the Prime Minister was asked:

In view of these latest developments, is there any suggestion that Australia will increase its commitment?

The Prime Minister answered:

Australia won't increase its commitment.

That was a definite statement. He was asked further:

Is that a permanent statement, Sir? Or the position as it . . .

The Prime Minister at this stage interrupted and answered:

As far as I am concerned it is.

The Prime Minister has since slid away from this clear and unequivocal undertaking, for which he was widely praised. The Prime Minister claimed that his remarks referred only to the Tet offensive, which in his words was just flaming up. Quite clearly, the Prime Minister was not confining his remarks to the Tet offensive but to the overall future of Australia's commitment. The Prime Minister was asked directly by the interviewer if he had made a permanent statement of intention or just a statement in relation to the Tet offensive. This is perfectly clear from the transcript. The Prime Minister answered:

As far as I am concerned it is.

The Prime Minister since has been firmly suppressed and he is now putting forward the traditional line of complete and total adherence to American responses. If America escalates Australia applauds and counsels further escalation. Presumably if America decides to scale down the course of the war the Government will give unqualified approval without thought of
inconsistency. If America withdraws completely the Government will express its moral flexibility and justify withdrawal. The Government is chained irrevocably to the responses of the United States, just as its predecessor was. The Government has neither the independence nor the inclination to assess the war and evolve its own policies and responses.

I would like to recall for some honourable members some of the fatuous statements made in the House during the last debate. I refer briefly to the initial statement made by the Minister for External Affairs (Mr Hasluck), who said on that occasion:

The war is by no means over but it is not at a stalemate. The immense buildup in strength and logistic preparation give today a capacity to increase pressure at all points.

This is the last statement made to the House by the Minister back in November 1967. It is very different from the statement made on these issues by the Minister tonight. The Minister adopted a completely different tone in his statement this evening. The cold truth is that the allied forces are unable to apply aggressive pressure at any point in South Vietnam at the moment. Despite the huge air power of the Americans and the vast logistic structure build-up in South Vietnam the allied forces have immense difficulty in applying sufficient pressure at any point to clear it effectively of Vietcong. The capacity to increase pressure at all points, boasted by the Minister for External Affairs, has completely disappeared, if it ever existed. Tonight the Minister made no mention of the issue that he raised so strongly in the debate in 1967.

I refer again to the previous debate and the speech made by the Treasurer who cited the percentage of the four corps areas substantially controlled by the Government of South Vietnam. The Treasurer said that in the first corps area 60% of the population was controlled by the central Government, compared with 35% 18 months before. He went on to list similar impressive figures relating to increasing central Government control in the other three corps areas. It would be an interesting exercise for the Treasurer to have another look at his figures and give his present assessment of the areas of South Vietnam controlled by the Central Government. It is worth noting here the opinion of Mr Denis Warner, a distinguished correspondent, who has covered the struggle in Vietnam for many years. In an article published in the 'Sydney Morning Herald' of 25th March, Mr Warner said that at a rough guess probably about 5% of the total area of South Vietnam was permanently under Government and allied control day and night. Even if this estimate is unduly pessimistic it conveys a shattering impression of the impact of the Tet offensive on Government control of the countryside.

Another contributor to the debate last year was the Minister for Defence who said that there was no doubt that the war was being won by the allies. The Minister for External Affairs has claimed that first hand observational evidence shows that the morale of the North Vietnamese and the Vietcong is certainly declining. He described the war in Vietnam as a war of movement and not of position, and he said of the tactics of the allies: 'Our experience has grown, with much success, as one sees by the results'. He made the rather patronising concession that the allies still had a great deal to learn about this kind of war—a conclusion that the Opposition does not dispute at this stage.

I have selected these few examples at random to show the nature of misinformation supplied by this Government to the Parliament and the people on the war in Vietnam. Such statements as these would be pathetic if they were not so tragic. They reveal a complete lack of understanding by the Government of the war in Vietnam, of the nature of its commitment to the war and of the expected future course of the war. Even today there is no evidence of any increasing realism on the part of the Government. There is not even the slightest sign that it intends to reappraise the war and readjust its objectives. It has failed to supply the information on which the Australian electorate could make an honest appraisal of Australia's objectives in Vietnam and of what the allied forces are trying to do. Ultimately this reappraisal will be forced on the Government as it has been forced on the American administration.

I want to refer briefly to the policies of the Australian Labor Party, policies which have been savagely distorted by the Government. They have been referred to tonight
by the honourable member for Chisholm (Sir Wilfrid Kent Hughes). We advance three policy objectives as the basis for a negotiated settlement of the war in Vietnam. The first is an end to the bombing of North Vietnam. The former United States Secretary of Defence, Mr Robert McNamara, has said that the aims of the bombing were to bolster the morale of the South Vietnamese, to slow down and impede infiltration from North Vietnam and to emphasise to North Vietnam the big and continuing price to be paid for continued aggression. Quite clearly the bombing has failed to secure any of these objectives. As the Leader of the Opposition pointed out when he replied this evening on behalf of the Opposition, there are now more North Vietnamese troops in South Vietnam, and certainly more North Vietnamese arms and equipment in South Vietnam, than there were when the bombing commenced in 1965. The Leader of the Opposition and I and other members of this Party have consistently put to the Australian people a viewpoint which now has the support of influential people in the United States; that is that the bombing should stop.

The Minister for External Affairs said tonight that opportunities had been presented to Hanoi to open negotiations, and that if Hanoi would agree to do so the bombing would stop. But this course has never been pursued, either by this Australian Government or by the United States Government. Surely this Government is in a position to exert some influence on the United States on this question. We believe that until the bombing of North Vietnam ceases it will not be possible to bring these people to the conference table. The bombing of North Vietnam carries with it grave dangers of further escalation and greater involvement in the war, and these raids must therefore be ended. What do the allies lose if the bombing is ended? Quite clearly they lose nothing.

The second point of Labor policy is that the National Liberation Front should be recognised as a principal party to negotiations. It is elementary logic that negotiations to end the war can be successfully undertaken only with the military opponent, and this is as much the National Liberation Front as it is the Hanoi Government. Surely any member of this Parliament who has had the opportunity of seeing the situation in Vietnam must realise that no government will be successful in South Vietnam unless it includes representatives of the National Liberation Front. It will not be possible to conclude negotiations successfully between North and South Vietnam unless the National Liberation Front is a party to the negotiations. As the Leader of the Opposition pointed out tonight, we have been frequently told in the past, as we were told in a debate in 1967 by the Minister for External Affairs, that Australia would never agree to the National Liberation Front being a party to negotiations, that the United States would never recognise the National Liberation Front and that recognition of it was not acceptable to the South Vietnamese Government. Shortly after the debate took place in this Parliament in 1967, as the Leader of the Opposition again has pointed out, the United States Ambassador to the United Nations indicated that the United States would be prepared to accept the National Liberation Front as a party to the negotiations for a successful conclusion of the hostilities in Vietnam.

The third point of our policy is the scaling down of the scope of the war so that normal economic life can be resumed. This transformation of the war into holding operations is increasingly seen as the only rational alternative following the failure of the pacification programme. Quite clearly the only hope of the allies is to concentrate on securing the limited but highly populated areas that they control at the moment. It seems inevitable that much of the South Vietnamese countryside must remain indefinitely under the control of the Vietcong. The futility of trying to hold and pacify the entire countryside has been proved by many unsuccessful attempts. If the allies are pressed in maintaining security in the great cities of Vietnam they cannot give security to the rural hamlets. This is the kind of approach that it seems increasingly logical for the Americans to adopt. The only alternative is a huge escalation of the military effort, which could achieve victory only by the obliteration of Vietnam.

The approach of the Opposition to this war has been vindicated by the aftermath of the Tet offensive and the grave reappraisal of the war that is going on at the moment in the United States. Our proposals are essentially the same as those now being put
with great passion and eloquence to the American people by Senator McCarthy and Senator Robert Kennedy. The Government's only response has been the sort of dogmatic anti-Communism which has faded in the great enlightened nations. The senior members of this Government formed their concepts of foreign policy at the time of Stalin and the cold war in Europe. They have made no attempt to change these stale ideas in accordance with the growth of nationalism in Asia and the disintegration of the monolithic Communist world.

I would like to conclude by quoting briefly General Ridgway, a commander of the United Nations Forces in the Korean war and a soldier of irreproachable patriotism. General Ridgway has said:

With no clearcut limit to our immediate military objective, and no precise and pragmatic definition of our immediate and long range objectives, we commit ourselves to an upward spiralling course that may approach annihilation.

General Ridgway has defined precisely the present predicament of this Government. It has not limited its military commitment. It has not defined either the immediate or long term objectives of its Vietnam commitment. Its attitudes are illogical and irrational. It is committed to a course of mindless escalation that can end only in disaster. Past wars have had some inescapable reality or some acceptable crusade to justify them. The Vietnam war is justified by neither.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. W. C. Haworth)—Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr IAN ALLAN (Gwydir) [10.30]—Insofar as I could understand the remarks of the honourable member for Bass (Mr Barnard), he seemed to be advocating that Australian soldiers in Vietnam should run out on their mates. I do not know who he represents, but he certainly does not represent, with this sentiment, the great majority of Australians who believe in that peculiarly Australian habit of sticking with one's mates. This is the reason why the public has shown such a complete lack of faith in the Opposition over the past 20 years and will continue to show a lack of faith in and support for the Australian Labor Party which puts up such an unAustralian point of view. We believe in staying with our friends and in helping the free peoples of the world. Our powerful allies, the United States of America and Great Britain, have shown in the past that they serve ideals of a much higher and worthier nature than those served or given lip service to by other nations. They have been prepared to sacrifice their blood and treasure at no gain to themselves in order to help, in this particular instance, the free people of Vietnam to maintain their way of life, their religious freedom and their right of association—in other words to maintain the four freedoms which were championed during the last war and for which many of us thought we were fighting. This is what we are doing in Vietnam. It is a worthy ideal which some people preserve and which is getting the support of the Australian people. Because of this peculiar un-Australian philosophy of the Labor Party, this year is a crisis year for Australia in foreign affairs. It is a crisis of confidence—a crisis that will test our courage and our conviction. This is partly due to the strange attitude of the Labor Party, but it is due also to the effects of a situation outside Australia. There is the current turmoil in Vietnam, which is more serious than it has ever been in the past and more confusing. There is the threatened withdrawal of British forces from the Pacific and Indian Ocean areas. It is a Presidential election year in the United States—always a year of conflict and difficulty in that nation. I have referred to the situation in Vietnam but I have confidence that if we continue resolutely on the path on which we have set out feet we will succeed in Vietnam. We have right on our side and in this fight we will have increasingly the support of all people in South East Asia, particularly those who dwell in troubled Vietnam.

Because of the proposed withdrawal of British forces from east of Suez, Australia feels, for the first time in its history, particularly naked. We have not been in this situation before. There has always been, since Australia was established, a British presence handy and adjacent to our shores. We know that we have to face responsibilities which we have not had to face in the past and this is causing some anxiety in certain places. Our confidence is being assaulted by Press reports emanating from the United States. As this is a Presidential year we are getting the backwash of all
the political bally-hoo associated with any Presidential election. It is unfortunate that
in this particular year most of the bally-hoo is associated with foreign affairs, and par-
ticularly with the war in Vietnam. Furthermore, in the United States, there is a tradition
that freedom of the Press is inseparable from democracy. Freedom of the Press is in-
terpreted in that country as a freedom for the Press to print every item of sen-
sational news, right or wrong, that it can pick up from any source. This also makes
it difficult for us in Australia to plot a steady course. We find it hard to understand
quite what is going on in the United States—what their intentions are and what their
capabilities are.

Then, of course, there is the third strain
in the news which emanates from America.
It comes from other countries too, but we
got a flood from the United States. I refer
to deliberately tainted news—tainted by
Communist propaganda. This is a third
strain which makes it extremely hard for
people in Australia to sift the wheat from
the chaff and to get at the true position of
the United States or the true state of the
war in Vietnam.

What are we going to do about these
matters? First I suggest that we set up an
Army public relations unit staffed by officers
on short commissions. This service, which
we have had in past wars, would provide us
with a constant stream of complete and
accurate news so that whatever amount of
sensation appeared in the Press we would
know that there was a steady stream of
good, sound and truthful information
appearing in our periodicals. This would
give confidence to our troops. It would help
their morale to know that they had asso-
ciated with them a public relations unit
operating under military discipline and it
would help us to wage a successful conflict
in Vietnam. Finally, as I have said, it
would aid considerably in restoring our
confidence and maintaining our confidence
at home.

Secondly we can, as the Minister for
External Affairs (Mr Hasluck) indicated
when he spoke earlier tonight, play our part
in assisting the formation of regional pacts
for mutual defence in the South East Asian
area. It is surprising to many people who
do not know anything of the dedication of
our diplomats, particularly in the Asian
area, that Australia should be held in such
high respect throughout Asia, but that is a
fact. We are in a particularly favourable
position to take a leading role in helping
to form regional defensive pacts in Asia.
This can do much to help us to stretch out
our rather meagre resources to defend Aus-
tralia now that Britain is to withdraw her
forces from our shores. We are extending
ourselves very much at present. In fact, we
have just about reached the limit, if one
compares the amount we spend on defence
with that spent by other countries, the
amount we allocate to foreign aid—in spite
of what the Opposition says—and the
amount we allocate towards vast capital
works for the development of the nation. It
will be seen that we can spare very little
more without sacrificing something that is
vital to the continued progress of the
nation. So we are obliged to see that we
get the maximum result from what we
spend on defence. This means that we have
to spread it pretty thinly over a wide area.
To augment it we need, in our own interests
apart from the interests of our neighbours,
to see established a number of regional
mutual security pacts.

Finally, what we can do to maintain
our confidence and resolution in Australia
is to continue to play a part in helping to
bring about closer relations between the
two super powers in the world—the Union
of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United
States of America—in joint security arrange-
ments. The arrangements that have been
made up to date are fragmentary. They
have been achieved as a result of tedious
and painful negotiations but they have been
achieved and we are now in the process of
achieving one further step. In the past few
years we have had the nuclear test ban
treaty and the treaty dealing with outer
space. Now we are considering the nuclear
non-proliferation treaty. It is to be hoped
that the trend for the super powers to
get together and arrange agreements for
mutual security and the establishment of a
rule of law for world peace will continue
and accelerate. Perhaps we can play a
useful part in this trend. I hope we will
endeavour to do so because nothing is more
certain than that if the two super powers
could get together and frame an effective
policy for the achievement of security for
all nations, we would be able to set about
solving some of the desperate problems

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caused by over-population and would be able to divert a large proportion of our resources away from wasteful defence spending. I believe this can be done. The trend has been established. We have certain agreements operating. Anything we can do to speed up this process will be beneficial. This is the highest and most useful task we can tackle at present. We in Australia need to maintain our resolution and our courage during what will be a troubled year. This year will be a hard one because it will be the first year in which we have had to stand alone without the British presence. It is a year of decision in the United States and a year of military decision in Vietnam. I trust that the Government will act with a full sense of responsibility and will devise policies which are positive and will lead Australia towards the role that it is destined to play in the future, namely as a leading nation, guiding and sustaining its neighbours in the South East Asian area.

Dr J. F. Cairns (Yarra) [10.43]—During my 13 years in this House the debates that have taken place in it on foreign affairs have always been very important. Invariably the Prime Minister has appeared in the debate as second or third speaker and invariably senior Ministers, including the Treasurer (Mr McMahon) and the Minister for Trade and Industry (Mr McEwen), have taken part in the debates. But tonight this debate is fizzling out for want of speakers from the Government side. Tonight no senior Minister has seen fit to follow the Minister for External Affairs (Mr Hasluck). The responsibility of speaking second from the Government side fell to a backbencher who was unable to maintain his place in the Ministry. He has been followed on the Government side by the honourable member for Gwydir (Mr Ian Allan), who would not pretend for a moment to have any special contribution to make upon foreign affairs. The honourable member was unable to use his full 20 minutes of speaking time. This is the standard of debate with which the Government is leaving us on this very important subject.

Nothing like this has happened in the 13 years that I have been here. On every occasion Sir Robert Menzies took part in the debate at an early stage. On every other occasion the late Mr Harold Holt took part in the debate. But where is the much vaunted successor, Mr Gorton, who was to set such a high standard? He has not spoken in the House since his debacle in the previous debate about Vietnam. I wonder whether he is not able or game to tackle the debate now being held. The answer to that query can be left to those who interject rather than speak. If I might draw your attention to the interjections from the Government side, Mr Speaker, their standard is extremely high—much higher in fact than the standard of contribution made by Government supporters to this debate. I feel a little impatient with members like the honourable member for Kennedy (Mr Katter), who continuously interjects but hardly ever sees fit to test his ability or knowledge in making a speech on a subject of this kind. He invariably misses the opportunity to speak about external affairs—an opportunity which is staring him in the face now.

The most important aspect of foreign affairs at this moment is the war in Vietnam. I do not think anybody can regard the course of that war with any degree of confidence. This Government and its supporters are perhaps the only people in the world who have no criticism to offer of the policies that have been tried in Vietnam. They are the only people who continuously approve of everything that is done; who continuously ignore failures and errors; who continuously ignore tragedies of all sorts; who continuously explain away defeats and great difficulties encountered in Vietnam as victories. I think it is fair to say that even this evening the Minister for External Affairs argued that the recent Tet offensive was really a failure which would turn out to be a victory for the allied forces. This is not good enough, but perhaps we do not need to be too analytical in Australia. Perhaps this is the explanation of the inability of the Australian Government and its supporters to produce any critical attitudes towards what is happening. Anybody with any common sense would acknowledge that if mistakes are being made and things are going wrong, the proper thing to do is to make an analysis to find out what is wrong. Of course, it may not be necessary for this to happen in Australia, because recently the Prime Minister said that no matter what happened in America, if there is a change of
President or of policy there, Australia would change also; we would follow whatever America did. He said that if America wants to escalate the war and go into North Vietnam or China, we will follow. If, on the other hand, America decides to withdraw from Vietnam, we will withdraw. So perhaps this is the reason why there is no need for any analysis in Australia. We need only to ascertain what the Americans intend to do and to give our approval for that course. Certainly this is the position the Government has taken. Is this the reason for the lack of attention by Government supporters to debates of this kind. When they do speak in such debates they do nothing but approve and excuse what is happening.

Tonight the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Whitlam) made an effective speech, every word of which I support. What would be the position if criticism of the Government's policy was not confined to the Labor Party? The position is that such criticism is not confined to this side of the House. Recently I was interested to see a report of a speech made by Sir Alan Watt, who for many years was Secretary of the Department of External Affairs. The report, which appeared in the 'Australian' of 4th November 1967, is headed 'We Need a New Asian Policy, Diplomat Warns' and reads:

Developments in Asia required a fundamental re-examination of Australian foreign and defence policy, Sir Alan Watt, a distinguished former diplomat, said last night.

But, significantly, he added: 'If the Australian Government comes to the conclusion that the war cannot be won, or that the price of continuance is greater than the price of withdrawal, it should exercise maximum influence privately upon the American Government designed to secure an American withdrawal, with whatever safeguards for the South Vietnamese as may still be procurable.'

Sir Alan said no country should follow an all-or-nothing policy in one particular direction, rigid and unchanging whatever the circumstances. 'Thus, Australia can neither be British to the bootstraps nor go all the way with LBJ,' he said.

I was quoting then the remarks of Sir Alan Watt who was head of the Australian Department of External Affairs for many years. I wonder how many other people in the Department of External Affairs agree with Sir Alan Watt but cannot speak because Government regulations prevent them from speaking. I wonder whether it is necessary for a man to resign or retire from the Department, as did Mr Gregory Clark and Sir Alan Watt, to be able to put forward a point of view that has some critical content, but also, of course, one of which the Government probably takes no notice, even when that advice is given by a man who is the head of one of the Government's own departments.

The situation is not the same in the United States of America. America is a free country and the Opposition in America has been putting a clearer and more convincing course. It has said that what has happened in America is not in the interests of America, nor is it in the interests of Vietnam. I want to refer now to eight statements made recently by American senators. These are all senators who until about 1964 supported the intervention in Vietnam. Senator Case said:

... it is now a question as to whether or not the war is winnable without the destruction of South Vietnam ...

I want to know whether any Government supporter in this place has ever taken that question seriously into account. Do the Ministers and the few Government supporters who are in the House at the moment ever ask themselves the question whether or not the war is winnable without the destruction of South Vietnam? Have Government supporters ever taken that seriously into account? Do they think that Senator Case, a distinguished United States senator who has come to the conclusion that this cannot be done without the destruction of South Vietnam, is so completely wrong, never having given much consideration to that question themselves? Another distinguished American, Senator Church, said recently:

During the Second World War I served in Asia. I came away persuaded that Asia is an endless morass and that the day of Western control of Asian affairs had passed. We are the last (Western power) to keep a foothold on the mainland of Asia. Sometimes I think we are fascinated by this baited trap... where huge populations wait to engulf us, and legions of young Americans are being beckoned to their graves...

Does any Government supporter give serious thought to a proposition like this? Does any Minister think this might be true? Is any Minister or Government supporter even aware that Senator Church said that?
I doubt it. I should like now to quote some remarks made by Senator Kennedy. He said:

Every time we have had difficulty over a period of the past 7 years, over the period during which I was in the executive branch, and since I left the executive branch, the answer has always been to escalate the conflict. It has always been to send more troops, or increase the bombing. We have always stated that... Victory is just ahead of us. ... Victory is not just ahead of us. It was not in 1961 or 1962 when I was one of those who predicted there was a light at the end of the tunnel. ... More troops, or increasing the bombing, is not the answer. ... Senator Robert Kennedy says that more troops and increasing the bombing is not the answer. Does any honourable member on the Government side of the chamber have any other answer?

Mr Ian Allan—What did the President say?

Dr J. F. Cairns—Does any Minister have any kind of other answer, except more troops and more bombing? If any Minister or any honourable member opposite has any answer other than more troops and more bombing he has failed to give that answer to the House. If any honourable member opposite has another answer, I ask him to tell us of it. Senator Kennedy went on to say:

Moreover there is a question of our moral responsibility. That might be a strange concept to quite a number of supporters of the Government. It may seem strange to them that morals have anything to do with this issue. Senator Kennedy thinks that they have. I think it is very belittling for the honourable member for Gwydir (Mr Ian Allan) to interject as he did a few minutes ago in referring to a man who is distinguished in his own country and throughout the world. I do not think that the honourable member for Gwydir will ever equal him. Senator Kennedy went on:

Are we like the God of the Old Testament that we can decide in Washington, DC, what cities, what towns, what hamlets in Vietnam are going to be destroyed? ... Do we have that authority to kill tens and tens of thousands of people because we say we have a commitment to the South Vietnamese people? But have they been consulted—in Hue, in Ben Tre, or in the other towns that have been destroyed? ... Most of the people killed in South Vietnam have been civilians. It has just been revealed that 135,000 tons of napalm have been dropped in Vietnam since 1963, and a great deal of that napalm was dropped upon civilians. Senator Kennedy wants to know whether we have the moral right to destroy a village because it is suspected as a place where the Vietcong are harboured.

Mr Corbett—What is the other side doing?

Dr J. F. Cairns—It is their country. Has that ever occurred to the honourable member?

Mr Corbett—It is not the country of the North Vietnamese.

Dr J. F. Cairns—There are very few North Vietnamese in South Vietnam, and from the beginning the main battle in South Vietnam has been carried on by the South Vietnamese, and is being carried on now by the South Vietnamese. I am a little impatient with people who continue to deny that which has been established as the truth by all the historians who have written on the subject. I am impatient particularly when I know that the people who deny it have never even taken the trouble to examine any of the evidence. I am impatient with this sort of distortion of the situation, this refusal to re-examine our own position, even to the slightest extent.

The honourable member for Chisholm (Sir Wilfrid Kent Hughes) puts the world right, from Africa to Asia. He knows the answers to the troubles all around the world. I think we might take a little more notice of people like Senator Kennedy than members of the Australian Country Party seem to be prepared to do. Of course, if Senator Kennedy came out in support of their point of view he would be a great man. Anybody with whom members of the Country Party disagree is said by them to be foolish, misled, or a traitor. Members of the Country Party have no respect for anybody but their own, and their opinions are based on nothing but newspaper headlines. Senator Hartke is another distinguished American senator. Recently he said:

... not only are our young men being sacrificed at an increasing rate but... the whole economic system of the United States is now in danger of collapsing... just as a leach bleeds a person to death, this country is being bled of its treasure, its manpower and its young people...
The people who think that the enemy is sinister and arranges all sorts of traps into which anti-Communists can fall so that they may be misled, could never have perfected a better trap than Vietnam. It has created a gold crisis around the world, it is bringing civil war into the United States and it is bringing the battle into the centres of American cities. Yet honourable members opposite think that this is a situation that does not need critical examination.

I have very little time left to me to indicate why I think that all the predictions about success in Vietnam have been wrong why the strategy that has been worked out has proved to have so many defects and to be involved with so many mistakes. I think it is because the situation has been wrongly analysed and diagnosed from the beginning. It is assumed that what is being done in South Vietnam is not being done by the South Vietnamese people; that what we are fighting in South Vietnam has nothing to do with the South Vietnamese people and is aggression that has come from somewhere else. Because the strength of the support of the South Vietnamese people for the Vietcong has been so fundamentally underestimated, all the mistakes in strategy and tactics that have gone wrong are derived from that factor. As long as the Governments in the United States and Australia continue to underestimate the strength of the indigenous support in South Vietnam for the Vietcong, military strategy will continue to go wrong. As long as the fundamental mistake is made and as long as that support is brushed aside by senior Ministers and others who ought to know better, the military strategy will go wrong.

The situation was made clear when the Americans made their commitment. In 1954 John Foster Dulles said:

The important thing for now is not to mourn the past but to seize the future opportunity to prevent the loss in northern Vietnam from leading to the extension of Communism throughout South East Asia. One lesson is that resistance to Communism needs popular support and this in turn means that the people should feel that they are defending their own national institutions.

The resistance to Communism in South Vietnam has never had popular support. That is why the military tactics and strategy have gone wrong. Ten years later, in 1964, Robert McNamara, who understood the position better than most, said:

... we have learned that in Vietnam political and economic progress are the sine qua non of military success.

Political and economic progress has not been made in South Vietnam; therefore, there is no military success. These aims were not achieved. I could go on quoting to the House the evidence of statistics and the statements of people who were expert in their fields from now until midnight to show that there has not been any political and economic progress in South Vietnam.

Most of the officials and many of the military leaders have continually been wrong about this. If we want to know what is right from time to time, we get a far better account from the accredited Press representatives in South Vietnam than we get from the officials. Men like Denis Warner objectively have been more right more often than have any of the officials or any of the generals. In the 'Last Confucian' Warner said, speaking of the Diem Government:

Like medieval inquisitors, their witch-hunting for sources of demoralisation was indiscriminate, haphazard, ineffective and brutal.

This was said of the Diem Government. But there has been no better government in South Vietnam since Diem was assassinated. Diem had all these defects, but as a government of Vietnamese the Diem Government was more substantial than any government that has had power since then.

The main need in Vietnam is economic, political and social progress. This has not been possible because we have been backing people whose interests are against allowing these changes to take place. Therefore, the political and economic progress that Robert McNamara saw as the sine qua non of military success has been missing and the strategic and tactical military plans that have been adopted have failed and continue to fail.

Mr SPEAKER (Hon. W. J. Aston)—Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

Debate (on motion by Mr Hughes) adjourned.

House adjourned at 11.4 p.m.
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

The following answers to questions upon notice were circulated:

**Customs Revenue**
(Question No. 22)
Mr Webb asked the Minister representing the Minister for Customs and Excise, upon notice:
What was the contribution to Customs revenue from each of the States for:
(a) the year ended 30th June 1967, and
(b) the 10 years ended 30th June 1967?

**NET CUSTOMS AND PRIMAGE DUTIES CONTRIBUTED BY EACH OF THE STATES FOR—**
(a) the year ended 30 June 1967

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<th>Queensland</th>
<th>South Australia</th>
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(b) the ten years ended 30 June 1967

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**Defence Press and Radio Committee**
(Question No. 49)
Mr Devine asked the Prime Minister, upon notice:
1. Do members of the Defence Press and Radio Committee receive any remuneration from the Government?
2. If so, what is the amount paid to each representative?

**Mr Gorton—**The answer to the honourable member’s questions is as follows:
1 and 2. The members of the Defence Press and Broadcasting Committee comprise Press, Radio, television and official representatives. The official representatives receive their salaries as Commonwealth public servants. The non-official representatives are not remunerated.

**Australian Citizenship Convention**
(Question No. 42)
Mr Scholes asked the Minister for Immigration, upon notice:
1. What was the total cost of the Australian Citizenship Convention held in January?
2. On what basis are representatives selected?
3. Are organisations asked to nominate persons, or are selections made by the Minister?
4. Are invitations extended to members of State Parliaments? If so, on what basis?
5. Are representatives invited from migrant communities?

**Mr Snedden—**The answers to the honourable member’s questions are as follows:
1. In 1967-68 Budget, an amount of $32,600 was appropriated for the 1968 Australian Citizenship Convention. Accounting for the Convention is not yet fully completed but to date an amount of $22,333 has been expended.
2 and 3. Organisations interested in and actively working for the integration of migrants and which are nationally constituted, are invited by the Minister to nominate delegates. In addition, for the 1968 Convention certain individuals were invited on the basis of particular experience or activity in integration which would significantly contribute to or benefit from their participation in the Convention.
4. Invitations are extended to Ministers for Immigration or the Minister responsible for Immigration in each State Parliament.
5. In general, not as such: Each Good Neighbour Council’s delegation is made up of Australian-born and migrant delegates. In 1968 non-British migrants represented approximately 37% of these delegations. Some former migrants attend in other specific capacities.