AUSTRALIA

TWENTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION: SECOND PERIOD

Governor-General

His Excellency the Honourable Sir John Robert Kerr, Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Knight of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem, one of Her Majesty’s Council learned in the law, Governor-General of Australia and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Force of Australia from 11 July 1974.

Second Whitlam Ministry
(From 10 February 1975)

Prime Minister
Deputy Prime Minister and Treasurer
Minister for Minerals and Energy
Minister for Social Security
Leader of the Government in the Senate and Minister for Agriculture
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Minister for Overseas Trade
Minister for Services and Property and Leader of the House
Minister for the Media and Manager of Government Business in the Senate
Minister for Defence
Minister for Northern Development and Minister for the Northern Territory
Minister for Labour and Immigration
Minister for Education
Special Minister of State and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister in Matters Relating to the Public Service
Minister for Repatriation and Compensation
Minister for Urban and Regional Development
Postmaster-General
Minister for Housing and Construction
Minister for Transport
Minister for Health
*Attorney-General and Minister for Customs and Excise
Minister for Manufacturing Industry
Minister for the Capital Territory
†Minister for the Environment and Conservation
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Minister for Science, Minister Assisting the Minister for Foreign Affairs in Matters Relating to Papua New Guinea and Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence
Minister for Tourism and Recreation, Vice-President of the Executive Council and Minister Assisting the Treasurer

The Honourable Edward Gough Whitlam, Q.C.
The Honourable James Ford Cairns
The Honourable Reginald Francis Xavier Connor
The Honourable William George Hayden
Senator the Honourable Kenneth Shaw Wriedt
Senator the Honourable Donald Robert Willessee
The Honourable Frank Crean
The Honourable Frederick Michael Daly
The Honourable Lance Herbert Barnard
The Honourable Rex Alan Patterson
The Honourable Clyde Robert Cameron
The Honourable Kim Edward Beazley
The Honourable Lionel Frost Bowen
Senator the Honourable John Murray Wheeldon
The Honourable Thomas Uren
Senator the Honourable Reginald Bishop
The Honourable Leslie Royston Johnson
The Honourable Charles Keith Jones
The Honourable Douglas Nixon Everingham
The Honourable Keppel Earl Enderby, Q.C.
Senator the Honourable James Robert McClelland
The Honourable Gordon Munro Bryant, E.D.
The Honourable Moses Henry Cass
Senator the Honourable James Luke Cavanagh
The Honourable William Lawrence Morrison

The Honourable Francis Eugene Stewart

† Minister for Environment from 21 April 1975.
* Attorney-General and Minister for Police and Customs from 27 March 1975.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Candidate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prime Minister</td>
<td>The Honourable Edward Gough Whitlam, Q.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Environment</td>
<td>The Honourable James Ford Cairns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Minerals and Energy</td>
<td>The Honourable Reginald Francis Xavier Connor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>The Honourable William George Hayden</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Agriculture and Leader of the Government in the Senate</td>
<td>Senator the Honourable Kenneth Shaw Wriedt</td>
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<td>Minister for Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>Senator the Honourable Donald Robert Willessee</td>
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<td>The Honourable Frederick Michael Daly</td>
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<td>Special Minister of State and Manager of Government Business in the Senate</td>
<td>Senator the Honourable Douglas McCalland</td>
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<td>Minister for Northern Australia</td>
<td>The Honourable Rex Alan Patterson</td>
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<td>The Honourable Thomas Uren</td>
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<td>Postmaster-General and Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence</td>
<td>Senator the Honourable Reginald Bishop</td>
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<td>Minister for Aboriginal Affairs</td>
<td>The Honourable Leslie Royston Johnson</td>
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<td>Minister for Transport</td>
<td>The Honourable Charles Keith Jones</td>
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<td>Minister for Health</td>
<td>The Honourable Douglas Nixon Everingham</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attorney-General</td>
<td>The Honourable Keppel Earl Enderby, Q.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Labor and Immigration and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister in Matters Relating to the Public Service</td>
<td>Senator the Honourable James Robert McClelland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for the Capital Territory</td>
<td>The Honourable Gordon Munro Bryant, E.D.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for the Media</td>
<td>The Honourable Moses Henry Cass</td>
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<td>Minister for Police and Customs</td>
<td>Senator the Honourable James Luke Cavanagh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence and Minister Assisting the Minister for Foreign Affairs in Matters Relating to the Islands of the Pacific</td>
<td>The Honourable William Lawrence Morrison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Tourism and Recreation, Vice-President of the Executive Council and Minister Assisting the Treasurer and the Minister for Social Security and Minister for Repatriation and Compensation</td>
<td>The Honourable Francis Eugene Stewart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Housing and Construction and Minister Assisting the Minister for Urban and Regional Development</td>
<td>The Honourable Joseph Martin Riordan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Second Whitlam Ministry
(From 2 July 1975)

Prime Minister and Minister for Environment
Minister for Minerals and Energy
Treasurer
Minister for Agriculture and Leader of the Government in the Senate
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Minister for Overseas Trade
Minister for Services and Property and Leader of the House
Special Minister of State and Manager of Government Business in the Senate
Minister for Northern Australia
Minister for Science and Consumer Affairs
Minister for Education
Minister for Manufacturing Industry
Minister for Social Security and Minister for Repatriation and Compensation
Minister for Urban and Regional Development
Postmaster-General and Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Minister for Transport
Minister for Health
Attorney-General
Minister for Labour and Immigration and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister in Matters Relating to the Public Service
Minister for the Capital Territory
Minister for the Media
Minister for Police and Customs
Minister for Defence and Minister Assisting the Minister for Foreign Affairs in Matters Relating to the Islands of the Pacific
Minister for Tourism and Recreation, Vice-President of the Executive Council and Minister Assisting the Treasurer and the Minister for Social Security and Minister for Repatriation and Compensation
Minister for Housing and Construction and Minister Assisting the Minister for Urban and Regional Development

The Honourable Edward Gough Whitlam, Q.C.
The Honourable Reginald Francis Xavier Connor
The Honourable William George Hayden
Senator the Honourable Kenneth Shaw Wriedt

Senator the Honourable Donald Robert Willsees
The Honourable Frank Crean
The Honourable Frederick Michael Daly

Senator the Honourable Douglas McClelland

The Honourable Rex Alan Patterson
The Honourable Clyde Robert Cameron
The Honourable Kim Edward Beazley
The Honourable Lionel Frost Bowen
Senator the Honourable John Murray Wheeldon

The Honourable Thomas Uren
Senator the Honourable Reginald Bishop

The Honourable Leslie Royston Johnson
The Honourable Charles Keith Jones
The Honourable Douglas Nixon Everingham
The Honourable Keppel Earl Enderby, Q.C.
Senator the Honourable James Robert McClelland

The Honourable Gordon Munro Bryant, E.D.
The Honourable Moses Henry Cass
Senator the Honourable James Luke Cavanagh
The Honourable William Lawrence Morrison

The Honourable Francis Eugene Stewart

The Honourable Joseph Martin Riordan
MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

TWENTY NINTH PARLIAMENT—FIRST SESSION: SECOND PERIOD

Speaker—(1) The Honourable James Francis Cope
(2) The Honourable Gordon Glen Denton Scholes

Leader of the House—The Honourable Frederick Michael Daly

Chairman of Committees—(3) Gordon Glen Denton Scholes
(4) Joseph Max Berinson

Deputy Chairmen of Committees—Mr Armitage, (5) Mr Berinson, Mr Drury, Mr Giles,
(6) Mr Innes, (7) Dr Jenkins, (8) Mr Keith Johnson, Mr Luchetti, Mr Lucock, Mr Martin

Leader of the Opposition—(9) The Right Honourable Billy Mackie Snedden, Q.C.
(10) The Honourable John Malcolm Fraser

Deputy Leader of the Opposition—The Honourable Phillip Reginald Lynch

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

Deputy Leader of the Australian Country Party—The Honourable Ian McCahon Sinclair

Adermann, Albert Evan ................................................. Fisher (Qld)
Anthony, Rt Hon. John Douglas ...........................................
Armitage, John Lindsay ...................................................
(1) Barnard, Hon. Lance Herbert .......................................
Beazley, Hon. Kim Edward .............................................
Bennett, Adrian Frank ..................................................
Berinson, Joseph Max ...................................................
Bonnell, Robert Noel ...................................................
Bourchier, John William ..............................................
Bowen, Hon. Lionel Frost .............................................
Bryant, Hon. Gordon Munro, E.D. ...................................
Bungey, Melville Harold ...............................................
Cadman, Alan Glynder ................................................
Cairns, Hon. James Ford ..............................................
Cairns, Hon. Kevin Michael Keirnan ................................
Calder, Stephen Edward, D.F.C. .....................................
Cameron, Hon. Clyde Robert .......................................... Cameron, Donald Milner .............................................
Cass, Hon. Moses Henry ..............................................
Child, Gloria Joan Liles ............................................... Chipp, Hon. Donald Leslie ........................................
Clayton, Gareth ........................................................
Coates, John ..................................................................
Cohen, Barry .............................................................
Collard, Frederick Walter ............................................... Connolly, David Miles ................................................
Connor, Hon. Reginald Francis Xavier ..............................
COPE, Hon. James Francis .............................................
Corbett, James ............................................................
Crean, Hon. Frank ......................................................
Cross, Manfred Douglas ................................................
Daly, Hon. Frederick Michael .........................................
Davies, Ronald ...........................................................
Dawkins, John Sydney .................................................
Drummond, Peter Hertzog .............................................
Drury, Edward Nigel, C.B.E. ........................................
Duthie, Gilbert William Arthur ........................................
Edwards, Harold Raymond ...........................................
Elliot, Robert James, Q.C. ...........................................
Enderby, Hon. Keppel Earl, Q.C. ....................................
England, John Armstrong, E.D. ......................................
Erwin, Hon. George Dudley ...........................................
Everingham, Hon. Douglas Nixon ....................................
Fairbairn, Hon. David Eric, D.F.C. ..................................
Fisher, Peter Stanley ...................................................
Fitzpatrick, John ........................................................
Forbes, Dr the Hon. Alexander James, M.C. ....................
Fraser, Hon. John Malcolm ..........................................
Members of the House of Representatives

Fry, Kenneth Lionel ............................................. Fraser (A.C.T.)
Fulton, William John ............................................. Leichhardt (Qld)
Garland, Hon. Ransley Victor ..................................... Curtin (W.A.)
Garrick, Horace James ............................................. Batman (Vic.)
Giles, Geoffrey O'Halloran ....................................... Angas (S.A.)
Gorton, Rt Hon. John Grey, C.H. ............................... Higgins (Vic.)
Graham, Bruce William ............................................. North Sydney (N.S.W.)
Gun, Richard Townsend ........................................... Kingston (S.A.)
Hayden, Hon. William George .................................... Oxley (Qld)
Hewson, Henry Arthur ............................................. McMillan (Vic.)
Hodges, John Charles ............................................. Petrie (Qld)
Holten, Hon. Rendle McNeilage .................................. Indi (Vic.)
Howard, John Winston ............................................. Bennelong (N.S.W.)
Hunt, Hon. Ralph James Dunnett .................................. Gwydir (N.S.W.)
Hurford, Christopher John ......................................... Adelaide (S.A.)
Hyde, John Martin .................................................. Moore (W.A.)
Innes, Urquhart Edward ............................................. Melbourne (Vic.)
Jacobi, Ralph ......................................................... Hawker (S.A.)
James, Albert William ............................................ Hunter (N.S.W.)
Jarman, Alan William .............................................. Deakin (Vic.)
Jenkins, Henry Alfred .............................................. Scullin (Vic.)
Johnson, Leonard Keith ........................................... Burke (Vic.)
Johnson, Hon. Leslie Royston ..................................... Hughes (N.S.W.)
Jones, Hon. Charles Keith ......................................... Newcastle (N.S.W.)
Katter, Hon. Robert Cummin ...................................... Kennedy (Qld)
Keating, Paul John .................................................. Blaxland (N.S.W.)
Kelly, Hon. Charles Robert ........................................ Wakefield (S.A.)
Keogh, Leonard Joseph ........................................... Bowman (Qld)
Kerin, John Charles ................................................. Macarthur (N.S.W.)
Killen, Hon. Denis James .......................................... Moreton (Qld)
King, Hon. Robert Shannon .................................... Wimmera (Vic.)
Klugman, Richard Emanuel .......................................... Prospect (N.S.W.)
Lamb, Anthony Hamilton ........................................... La Trobe (Vic.)
Lloyd, Bruce .......................................................... Murray (Vic.)
Luchetti, Anthony Sylvester ........................................ Macquarie (N.S.W.)
Lucock, Philip Ernest, C.B.E. ..................................... Lyne (N.S.W.)
Lusher, Stephen Augustus .......................................... Hume (N.S.W.)
Lynch, Hon. Phillip Reginald ...................................... Flinders (Vic.)
MacKellar, Michael John Randal .................................. Warringah (N.S.W.)
Macphee, Ian Malcolm ............................................. Balclayla (Vic.)
McKenzie, David Charles .......................................... Diamond Valley (Vic.)
McLeay, Hon. John Elden .......................................... Boothby (S.A.)
McMahon, Rt Hon. William, C.H. ................................. Lowe (N.S.W.)
McVeigh, Daniel Thomas .......................................... Darling Downs (Qld)
Martin, Vincent Joseph ............................................. Banks (N.S.W.)
Mathews, Charles Race Thorson .................................. Casey (Vic.)
Millar, Percival Clarence ........................................... Wide Bay (Qld)
Morris, Peter Frederick ........................................... Shortland (N.S.W.)
Morrison, Hon. William Lawrence ................................ St George (N.S.W.)
Mulder, Allan William .............................................. Evans (N.S.W.)
(10) Newman, Kevin Eugene ....................................... Bass (Tas.)
Nicholls, Martin Henry ............................................. Bonython (S.A.)
Nixon, Hon. Peter James ............................................ Gippsland (Vic.)
O’Keefe, Frank Lionel .............................................. Paterson (N.S.W.)
Oldmeadow, Maxwell Wilkinson ................................... Holt (Vic.)
Patterson, Hon. Rex Alan .......................................... Dawson (Qld)
Peacock, Hon. Andrew Sharp ....................................... Kooyong (Vic.)
Reynolds, Leonard James ......................................... Barton (N.S.W.)
Riordan, Joseph Martin ............................................. Phillip (N.S.W.)
Robinson, Eric Laidlaw ............................................. McPherson (Qld)
Robinson, Hon. Ian Louis .......................................... Cowper (N.S.W.)
Ruddock, Philip Maxwell ............................................. Parramatta (N.S.W.)
Shahles, Gordon Glen Denton ...................................... Corio (Vic.)
Sherry, Raymond Henry ............................................. Franklin (Tas.)
Sinclair, Hon. Ian McLean .......................................... New England (N.S.W.)
Sneden, Rt Hon. Billy Mackie, Q.C. .............................. Bruce (Vic.)
Staley, Anthony Allan .............................................. Chisholm (Vic.)
Stewart, Hon. Francis Eugene ..................................... Lang (N.S.W.)
Street, Hon. Anthony Austin ...................................... Corangamite (Vic.)

(10) Sworn 9 July 1975
## Members of the House of Representatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Division</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sullivan, John William</td>
<td>Riverina (N.S.W.)</td>
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<td>Thorburn, Ray William</td>
<td>Cook (N.S.W.)</td>
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<td>Uren, Hon. Thomas</td>
<td>Reid (N.S.W.)</td>
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<td>Viner, Robert Ian</td>
<td>Stirling (W.A.)</td>
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<td>Wallis, Laurie George</td>
<td>Grey (S.A.)</td>
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<td>Wentworth, Hon. William Charles</td>
<td>Mackellar (N.S.W.)</td>
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<td>Whan, Robert Bruce</td>
<td>Eden Monaro (N.S.W.)</td>
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<td>Whitlam, Hon. Edward Gough, Q.C.</td>
<td>Werriwa (N.S.W.)</td>
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<td>Willis, Ralph</td>
<td>Gellibrand (Vic.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wilson, Ian Bonython Cameron</td>
<td>Sturt (S.A.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young, Michael Jerome</td>
<td>Port Adelaide (S.A.)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
THE COMMITTEES OF THE SESSION

(FIRST SESSION—SECOND PERIOD)

STANDING COMMITTEES

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS—Mr Cross (Chairman), Mr Clayton, Mr Collard, Mr Dawkins, Mr Fisher (from 20 May 1975), Mr Hunt (to 20 May 1975), Mr Jarman, Mr Ruddock, Mr Thorburn, Mr Wentworth.

ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION—Dr Jenkins (Chairman), Mr Bouchier (to 16 April 1975), Mr Hodges (from 16 April 1975), Mr Jarman (from 16 April 1975), Mr Kerin, Mr Lamb, Mr Morris, Mr Ian Robinson, Mr Wilson (to 16 April 1975).

HOUSE—Mr Speaker, Mr Berinson (to 8 April 1975), Mr Bugey, Mr Donald Cameron, Mr Clayton, Mr Cohen, Mr Holten, Mr Keogh (from 8 April 1975).

LIBRARY—Mr Speaker, Mr Cross, Mr Erwin, Dr Klugman, Mr Luchetti, Mr O’Keefe, Mr Wentworth.

PRIVILEGES—Dr J. F. Cairns, Mr Donald Cameron, Mr Drury, Mr Enderby, Mr Innes, Dr Jenkins, Mr Luchetti (from 8 April 1975), Mr Lucock, Mr Scholes (to 8 April 1975), Mr Viner.

PUBLICATIONS—Mr McKenzie (Chairman), Mr Erwin, Mr Hodges, Mr Lamb, Mr Mathews, Mr Millar, Mr Oldmeadow.

ROAD SAFETY—Mr Cohen (Chairman), Mr Bennett, Mr Erwin, Mr Innes (from 5 March 1975), Mr Katter, Dr Klugman (to 5 March 1975), Mr McKenzie, Mr Ruddock.

STANDING ORDERS—Mr Speaker, the Chairman of Committees, the Leader of the House, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Mr Anthony, Mr Bryant, Dr J. F. Cairns, Mr Drury, Mr Garland, Mr Hurford (from 8 April 1975), Mr Sinclair.

JOINT STATUTORY COMMITTEES

BROADCASTING OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS—Mr Speaker (Chairman), Mr President, Senator Coleman, Senator Webster, and Mr Donald Cameron, Mr Coates, Mr Duthie, Mr England, Mr Sherry.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS—Senator McAuliffe (Chairman), Senator Grimes, Senator Guiliouye, and Mr Collard, Mr Connolly, Mr Graham, Mr Lushier, Mr Martin, Mr Morris, Mr Reynolds.

PUBLIC WORKS—Mr Keith Johnson (Chairman), Senator Jessop, Senator Melzer, Senator Poyser, and Mr Bonnett, Mr Garrick, Mr Kelly, Mr Keogh, Mr McVeigh.

JOINT COMMITTEES

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY—Senator Milliner (Chairman) (to 30 June 1975), Senator Davidson (from 11 June 1975), Senator Devitt, Senator Marriott, and Mr Fisher (to 20 May 1975), Mr Fry, Mr Hewson (from 20 May 1975), Mr Howard, Mr Kerin, Mr Whan.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENCE—Senator Wheeldon (Chairman), Senator Carrick, Senator Drury, Senator McIntosh, Senator Maunsell, Senator Primmer, Senator Sim, and Mr Berinson, Mr Coates, Mr Connolly, Mr Corbett, Mr Cross, Mr Dawkins, Dr Forbes (to 16 April 1975), Mr Fry, Mr Giles, Mr Kerin, Mr Killen (from 16 April 1975), Dr Klugman, Mr Lucock, Mr Oldmeadow, Mr Peacock.

NORTHERN TERRITORY—Mr James (Chairman), Senator Kee, Senator McLaren, Senator Marriott, Senator Shell, and Mr Calder, Mr FitzPatrick, Mr Kelly, Mr Wallis.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE SYSTEM—Dr Jenkins (Chairman), Senator Sir Magnus Cormack, Senator Drake-Brockman, Senator Gietzelt, Senator McAuliffe, Senator Mulvihill, Senator Rae, and Mr Berinson (to 14 April 1975), Mr Fairbairn, Dr Forbes, Dr Jenkins, Dr Klugman (from 4 March 1975), Mr Morris (from 15 April 1975), Mr Ian Robinson, Mr Scholes (Chairman until membership terminated on 3 March 1975), Mr Young.

PECUNIARY INTERESTS OF MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENT—Mr Riordan (Chairman), Senator Georges, Senator James McClelland, Senator Marriott, Senator Shell (from 22 April 1975), Senator Webster (to 22 April 1975), and Mr Keating, Mr Martin, Mr Nixon, Mr Eric Robinson.

PRICES—Mr Hurford (Chairman), Senator Chaney, Senator Coleman, Senator Gietzelt, Senator Scott, and Mrs Child, Mr Hodges, Mr Howard, Mr King, Mr Whan, Mr Willis.

SELECT COMMITTEES

SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES—Mr Mathews (Chairman), Mr Cadman, Dr Gun, Mr Hyde (from 16 April 1975), Mr Innes, Mr McVeigh, Mr Oldmeadow, Mr Wilson (to 16 April 1975).
PARLIAMENTARY DEPARTMENTS

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

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Clerk of the House—N. J. Parkes, O.B.E.
Deputy Clerk of the House—J. A. Pettifer
First Clerk Assistant—D. M. Blake, V.R.D.
Clerk Assistant—A. R. Browning
Senior Parliamentary Officers:
Table Office—L. M. Barlin
Bills and Papers Office—I. C. Cochran
Sergeant-at-Arms Office—D. M. Piper
Committee Office—G. J. Horsfield

PARLIAMENTARY REPORTING STAFF
Principal Parliamentary Reporter—W. J. Bridgman
Assistant Principal Parliamentary Reporter—K. R. Ingram
Leader of Staff (House of Representatives)—G. R. Fraser
Leader of Staff (Senate)—J. F. Kerr

LIBRARY
Parliamentary Librarian—A. L. Moore, O.B.E.

JOINT HOUSE
Secretary—R. W. Hillyer
THE ACTS OF THE SESSION

(FIRST SESSION: SECOND PERIOD)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (Queensland Discriminatory Laws) Act 1975 (Act No. 75 of 1975)—
An Act to make Provision with respect to the Peoples of the Aboriginal race of Australia, and the race to which Torres Strait Islanders belong, for the purpose of preventing Discrimination in certain respects against those Peoples under laws of Queensland.

Appropriation Act (No. 3) 1974–75 (Act No. 9 of 1975)—
An Act to appropriate a sum out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, additional to the sum appropriated by the Appropriation Act (No. 1) 1974–75 for the service of the year ending on 30 June 1975.

Appropriation Act (No. 4) 1974–75 (Act No. 10 of 1975)—
An Act to appropriate a sum out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, additional to the sum appropriated by the Appropriation Act (No. 2) 1974–75 for certain expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 1975.

Appropriation Act (No. 5) 1974–75 (Act No. 31 of 1975)—
An Act to appropriate a sum out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, additional to the sums appropriated by the Appropriation Act (No. 1) 1974–75 and the Appropriation Act (No. 3) 1974–75, for the service of the year ending on 30 June 1975.

Appropriation Act (No. 6) 1974–75 (Act No. 32 of 1975)—
An Act to appropriate a sum out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, additional to the sums appropriated by the Appropriation Act (No. 2) 1974–75 and the Appropriation Act (No. 4) 1974–75, for certain expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 1975.

Appropriation (Development Bank) Act 1975 (Act No. 7 of 1975)—
An Act to appropriate a sum out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the purpose of loans to the Commonwealth Development Bank of Australia.

Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975 (Act No. 60 of 1975)—
An Act to establish an Australian Bureau of Statistics and for related Purposes.

Australia Council Act 1975 (Act No. 11 of 1975)—
An Act to establish a Council for Purposes connected with the Promotion of the Arts, and to make Provision for related Matters.

Australian Film Commission Act 1975 (Act No. 6 of 1975)—
An Act to Establish an Australian Film Commission.

Australian Heritage Commission Act 1975 (Act No. 57 of 1975)—
An Act to establish an Australian Heritage Commission.

Australian Housing Corporation Act 1975 (Act No. 25 of 1975)—
An Act to establish an Australian Housing Corporation.

Australian Industry Development Corporation Act 1975 (Act No. 4 of 1975)—
An Act Relating to the Australian Industry Development Corporation.

Australian National Railways Act 1975 (Act No. 26 of 1975)—

Australian War Memorial Act 1975 (Act No. 27 of 1975)—

Book Bounty Act 1975 (Act No. 5 of 1975)—

Children's Commission Act 1975 (Act No. 51 of 1975)—
An Act for and in Relation to the Establishment of a Children's Commission.

Common Informers (Parliamentary Disqualifications) Act 1975 (Act No. 28 of 1975)—
An Act to make other Provision with respect to the Matter in respect of which Provision is made by section 46 of the Constitution.

Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1975 (Act No. 64 of 1975)—

Curriculum Development Centre Act 1975 (Act No. 41 of 1975)—
An Act to establish a Curriculum Development Centre.

Customs Act 1975 (Act No. 77 of 1975)—

Customs Tariff (Anti-Dumping) Act 1975 (Act No. 76 of 1975)—
An Act relating to certain Special Duties of Customs.

Customs Tariff Validation Act 1975 (Act No. 78 of 1975)—
An Act to provide for the Validation of certain Collections of Duties of Customs in accordance with Customs Tariff Proposals and Gazette Notices.

Dairy Produce Act 1975 (Act No. 82 of 1975)—

Dairy Produce Sales Promotion Act 1975 (Act No. 83 of 1975)—

Darwin Cyclone Damage Compensation Act 1975 (Act No. 43 of 1975)—
An Act to provide for Payment by Australia of Compensation in respect of Loss of, or Damage to, Property arising out of the Darwin Cyclone.

Darwin Reconstruction Act 1975 (Act No. 2 of 1975)—
An Act to establish a Darwin Reconstruction Commission for purposes arising out of the Devastation of Darwin by Cyclone.

Dried Fruits Export Charges Act 1975 (Act No. 73 of 1975)—
The Acts of the Session

Dried Fruits Levy Act 1975 (Act No. 72 of 1975)—
An Act to amend the Dried Fruits Levy Act 1971 for purposes of Metric Conversion.


Family Law Act 1975 (Act No. 53 of 1975)—
An Act relating to Marriage and to Divorce and Matrimonial Causes and, in relation thereto, Parental Rights and the Custody and Guardianship of Infants, and certain other Matters.

Fisheries Act 1975 (Act No. 3 of 1975)—

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975 (Act No. 85 of 1975)—

Grants Commission Act 1975 (Act No. 59 of 1975)—

Health Insurance Act 1975 (Act No. 58 of 1975)—

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Income Tax Assessment Act 1975 (Act No. 80 of 1975)—
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Loans (Australian Shipping Commission) Act 1975 (Act No. 44 of 1975)—
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Loan (War Service Land Settlement) Act 1975 (Act No. 62 of 1975)—
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National Capital Development Commission Act 1975 (Act No. 66 of 1975)—

National Gallery Act 1975 (Act No. 61 of 1975)—
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National Health Act 1975 (Act No. 1 of 1975)—
An Act to amend the National Health Act 1953–1973, as amended by the National Health Act 1974.

National Health Act (No. 2) 1975 (Act No. 13 of 1975)—
An Act to amend the National Health Act 1953–1974, as amended by the National Health Act 1975.

An Act to make provision for and in relation to the Establishment of National Parks and other Parks and Reserves and the Protection and Conservation of Wildlife.

Northern Territory Supreme Court Act 1975 (Act No. 84 of 1975)—

Pig Industry Research Act 1975 (Act No. 47 of 1975)—
An Act to amend the Pig Industry Research Act 1971.

Pig Meat Promotion Act 1975 (Act No. 48 of 1975)—
An Act to establish a Pig Meat Promotion Trust Account and for purposes connected therewith.

Pig Slaughter Levy Act 1975 (Act No. 45 of 1975)—
An Act to amend the Pig Slaughter Levy Act 1971.

Pig Slaughter Levy Collection Act 1975 (Act No. 46 of 1975)—
An Act to amend the Pig Slaughter Levy Collection Act 1971.

Postal Services Act 1975 (Act No. 54 of 1975)—
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Postal and Telecommunications Commissions (Transitional Provisions) Act 1975 (Act No. 56 of 1975)—

Privy Council (Appeals from the High Court) Act 1975 (Act No. 33 of 1975)—
An Act to limit further the matters in which Special Leave of Appeal from the High Court of Australia to Her Majesty in Council may be asked.

Public Service Acts Amendment Act 1975 (Act No. 40 of 1975)—
An Act relating to the Australian Public Service.

Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Act No. 52 of 1975)—
An Act relating to the Elimination of Racial and other Discrimination.

Railways (South Australia) Act 1975 (Act No. 69 of 1975)—
An Act relating to the Acquisition by Australia, with the consent of South Australia, of certain Railways of South Australia and to the Construction and Extension by Australia, with the consent of South Australia, of Railways in South Australia, and for purposes connected therewith.

Railways (Tasmania) Act 1975 (Act No. 70 of 1975)—
An Act relating to the Acquisition by Australia, with the consent of Tasmania, of the Railways of Tasmania and to the Construction and Extension by Australia, with the consent of Tasmania, of Railways in Tasmania, and for purposes connected therewith.

Refrigeration Compressors Bounty Act 1975 (Act No. 14 of 1975)—
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Remuneration and Allowances Act 1975 (Act No. 8 of 1975)—
An Act relating to the Remuneration and Allowances payable to the Holders of certain judicial and other Offices.

Repatriation Acts Amendment Act 1975 (Act No. 35 of 1975)—
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Road Safety and Standards Authority Act 1975 (Act No. 30 of 1975)—
An Act to establish a Road Safety and Standards Authority.

Sales Tax Act (No. 1) 1975 (Act No. 15 of 1975)—
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Sales Tax (Exemptions and Classifications) Act 1975 (Act No. 24 of 1975)—
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Ship Construction Bounty Act 1975 (Act No. 79 of 1975)—
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Snowy Mountains Hydro-electric Power Act 1975 (Act No. 29 of 1975)—
An Act to amend the Snowy Mountains Hydro-electric Power Act 1949–1973 in relation to the Offices of Commissioner and Associate Commissioner.

Social Services Act 1975 (Act No. 34 of 1975)—
An Act relating to Social Services.

States Grants (Advanced Education) Act 1975 (Act No. 67 of 1975)—

States Grants (Beef Industry) Act 1975 (Act No. 81 of 1975)—
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States Grants (Universities) Act 1975 (Act No. 68 of 1975)—

Supply Act (No. 1) 1975–76 (Act No. 38 of 1975)—
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Supply Act (No. 2) 1975–76 (Act No. 39 of 1975)—
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 30 June 1976.

Tasman Bridge Restoration Act 1975 (Act No. 37 of 1975)—
An Act relating to an Agreement between Australia and Tasmania relating to the Restoration of the Tasman Bridge on the Derwent River at Hobart.

Tasmania Grant (Associated Pulp and Paper Mills Limited) Act 1975 (Act No. 71 of 1975)—

Technical and Further Education Commission Act 1975 (Act No. 42 of 1975)—
An Act to make provision for and in relation to the Establishment of a Commission on Technical and Further Education.

Telecommunications Act 1975 (Act No. 55 of 1975)—
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Trade Practices Act 1975 (Act No. 63 of 1975)—
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Trade Union Training Authority Act 1975 (Act No. 50 of 1975)—
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Urban and Regional Development (Financial Assistance) Act 1975 (Act No. 74 of 1975)—

Victoria Grant (Seymour Flood Mitigation) Act 1975 (Act No. 65 of 1975)—
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Apple and Pear Levy Bill 1975—
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Wednesday, 5 March 1975

Mr SPEAKER (Hon. G. G. D. Scholes) took the chair at 10 a.m., and read prayers.

Mr McMahon—I raise a point of order, Mr Speaker. I draw your attention to the state of the House. I do this in deference to you, Mr Speaker, and to what I know to be your intention with regard to the state of the House.

Mr SPEAKER—Order! The right honourable gentleman is drawing attention to the state of the House. There is a quorum present in the House.

PETITIONS

The Clerk—Petitions have been lodged for presentation as follows and copies will be referred to the appropriate Ministers:

Family Law Bill

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives in Parliament assembled: The humble Petition of the undersigned citizens of Australia respectfully sheweth:

That marriage is an exclusive lifelong partnership between one woman and one man, which should not be dissolved at the will of one party after 12 months notice nor without a reasonable attempt at reconciliation and

That a husband should normally be responsible for maintaining his wife and children within marriage.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that the Family Law Bill 1974 be amended

(1) To require a reasonable attempt at reconciliation with the aid of counselling at least twelve months prior to the application for a divorce;

(2) To specify three objective tests for irretrievable breakdown, namely

(a) intolerable behaviour,

(b) desertion for at least 2 years,

(c) separation for at least 3 years;

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

by Mr Charles Jones.

Petition received.

Family Law Bill

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives assembled. The humble Petition of the undersigned, all being of or above the age of 18 years as follows:

1. Your petitioners oppose and seek the deletion of those provisions of the Family Law Bill 1974 which supplant the existing grounds by the introduction of the sole ground of irretrievable break-down, which remove any consideration of fault, and which will weaken the family unit while causing more widespread injustice because:

(a) it imposes on society a radical alteration of divorce law far beyond identifiable requirements or desires;

(b) it lowers the status of marriage by permitting people to "drift" into divorce, reduces parental importance and leads to increasing institutionalisation of children with consequential delinquency;

(c) it will not reduce the "in-fighting" in a divorce suit which mainly occurs over matters of property and custody;

(d) it will not encourage maturity in acceptance of marital and parental obligations and responsibilities.

2. Your petitioners commend the divorce legislation introduced in Great Britain in 1973, which acknowledges the importance of the family unit, mirrors community requirements, secures justice for innocent people and establishes a realistic definition of irretrievable breakdown, and call for similar legislation to be provided in Australia.

Your petitioners, therefore, humbly pray that the House of Representatives in Parliament assembled will make provision accordingly.

by Mr Drury.

Petition received.

Metric System

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives in Parliament assembled. The Petition of the undersigned citizens of Australia respectfully sheweth:

That the plan to obliterate the traditional weights and measures of this country is causing and will cause widespread inconvenience, confusion, expense and distress.

That there is no certainty that any significant benefits or indeed any benefits at all will follow the use of the new weights and measures.

That the traditional weights and measures are eminently satisfactory.

Your petitioners therefore pray:

That the Metric Conversion Act be repealed, and that the Government take urgent steps to cause the traditional and familiar units to be restored to those areas where the greatest inconvenience and distress are occurring, that is to say in meteorology, in road distances, in sport, in the building and allied trades, in the printing trade, and in retail trade.

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

by Mr Fisher and Mr Graham.

Petitions received.

Family Law Bill

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives in Parliament assembled. We the undersigned citizens of the Commonwealth of Australia by this our humble Petition respectfully sheweth:

We are concerned that the Family Law Bill has been delayed long enough. Its contents represent a consensus view of community feelings towards family breakdown and it should be made law at the earliest possible time.

We support the sole ground of irretrievable breakdown based on 12 months separation, and we ask the parliament to pass the bill in its present form.

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

As on the electoral roll.

by Mr Lloyd and Mr Mathews.

Petitions received.

Hansard Subscription Rates

To the Honourable Speaker, and Members of the House of Representatives in Parliament assembled. The humble Petition of the undersigned citizens of Australia respectfully sheweth:
That the increased price of the Hansard subscription will place it beyond the financial reach of most people;

That it is basic in a Parliamentary democracy that electors have easy access to records of the debates in their Parliament;

That making Hansard available only to an elite who can afford it is at odds with the concept of open government.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that the Government will reduce the cost of the Hansard subscription so that it is still available at a moderate price to any interested citizen.

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

by Mr Drury.

Petition received.

Taxation: Education Expenses
To the Honourable Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives in Parliament assembled. The humble Petition of citizens of Australia respectfully sheweth:

That the claim in the "Budget Speech, 1974-75" delivered on 17th September, 1974, that there is no longer a case for providing substantial indirect assistance through the taxation system because the Australian Government's programs involve substantial increases in direct expenditures on education, is disputed.

That the reduction from $400 to $150 of the maximum amount deductible against 1974-75 income for education or self-education expenses will not be offset by the increases in direct expenditures on education, as such increases are not likely to reduce the direct costs to parents and guardians of educating their children.

That the effect of the reduction to $150 will be to force, for financial reasons, many persons wishing to educate their children at non-government schools, to send their children to government schools.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray the Government will take measures to restore to $400 the amount deductible against 1974-75 income for education and self-education expenses.

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

by Dr Edwards.

Petition received.

Low Cost Accommodation, Reid, Australian Capital Territory
To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives in Parliament assembled. We the undersigned citizens of Canberra by this our humble Petition respectfully sheweth:

(1) Certain decisions as to the use of land, now vacant, known as Sections 7, 8 and 9 Reid, A.C.T., have been taken without any kind of consultation with the residents of Reid;

(2) Pursuant to those decisions a Task Force made proposals for construction of "low-cost accommodation" without any kind of consultation with the residents of Reid;

(3) The residents of Reid are seriously concerned at the implications of what is proposed in that

(a) a "ghetto" may develop
(b) the amenity of the neighbourhood may be lost forever
(c) the development will not be effective in helping those social groups it purports to assist

(4) Therefore your petitioners ask that this Honourable House ensure that the proposed developments do not proceed until they have been reassessed and respectfully ask that this petition be referred forthwith to the Joint Committee on the A.C.T.:

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

by Mr Fry.

Petition received.

Whales
To the Honourable, the Speaker, and Members of the House of Representatives in Parliament assembled. The humble Petition of the undersigned citizens of Australia respectfully sheweth:

(a) That whales are a significant element in the world's wildlife heritage.

(b) That whales are highly intelligent highly evolved creatures.

(c) That there is a growing international concern at the continued killing of whales for commercial gain.

(d) That synthetic products are able to replace all whale products.

(e) That Australia continues to operate a whaling station and to import whale products.


Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that the members in Parliament assembled will move to immediately revoke all whaling licences issued by the Australian Government and to reimpose a total ban on the importation of all whale produce.

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

by Mr McKenzie.

Petition received.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANISATION

Mr RUDDOCK—Did the Prime Minister, on 18 February or thereabouts, write to a senior Sydney businessman with Middle East government connections saying that not only is it no secret that he regretted the need for the Government decision on the Palestine Liberation Organisation visas but also if the PLO wishes to send representatives to Australia it should now make applications through Australian diplomatic posts? Is that a change in the Cabinet decision previously taken?

Mr WHITLAM—The Cabinet decision was made in respect of a particular application and it was made in the light of the dissension which would have been caused in the community if the visit of the Palestine Liberation Organisation had taken place at that time. The Australian
Government, of course, welcomes the position where there can be public discussion of any public issues. If the PLO, for instance, wants its case to be put it should be free to have it put, like anybody else. The difficulty in the PLO case was that self-appointed spokesmen decided to push it. If the PLO wishes to become a government the reasonable thing for it to do is to contact governments or their representatives. There are representatives of the Australian Government in many of the countries where there are supporters of the PLO.

LORD HOWE ISLAND AIR SERVICES

Mr COPE—I desire to ask the Minister for Transport a question without notice which, incidentally, is not a Dorothy Dix question. I preface my question by stating that the regular air service between Lord Howe Island and the mainland ceased last Friday and as a consequence, unless something is done to restore such a regular air service, Lord Howe Island will be destroyed as one of Australia’s leading tourist resorts. I ask the Minister: Will he, by leave of the House, make a statement sometime today or tomorrow setting out the Government’s attitude to this problem as I believe an answer on this subject during question time would of necessity be far too lengthy?

Mr CHARLES JONES—In view of the honourable member’s request I shall try to be brief in replying to his question. The facts of the matter are that the Air Transport Group of the Department of Transport made a decision on this question in the form of a recommendation to me that a particular airline should be permitted to operate the service between the mainland of Australia and Lord Howe Island. I was prepared to go ahead with that recommendation and to authorise—I think the firm’s proper name is North Coast Airlines—to operate the service from Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie. There would have been connecting flights by Eastwest Airlines Ltd and Airlines of New South Wales operating from Sydney to those 2 centres. Then they would have operated the service from those 2 cities to Lord Howe Island.

I received representations from a member of the Lord Howe Island Board requesting a direct service from Sydney to Lord Howe Island. I agreed to that request and also to the request of the New South Wales Minister for Transport, Mr Fife, to allow the State Government time to examine whether another operator could be licensed to carry on that service. I believe the New South Wales Government was to interview another operator yesterday. At this point I have no information as to the result of yesterday’s conference. This Government has not held up the licensing. We were not instrumental in any way whatsoever in Airlines of New South Wales cancelling it. As the honourable members would know, Airlines of New South Wales or Ansett Airlines of Australia made a press statement which clearly indicated that the reason for Ansett’s withdrawing its services was the tactics employed by the Australian Pilots Federation.

CAMBODIA

Mr HUNT—Is the Prime Minister concerned at the latest communist aggression in Cambodia and the possible fall of Phnom Penh to the communist rebels? If so, has the Australian Government attempted to use its influence in bringing about peace in Cambodia? If not, will the Australian Government initiate, either bilaterally or in association with other countries, diplomatic moves to ease the tensions in South East Asia? I have one further question that is not unrelated. Are the Press reports true that the United States of America has asked Australia to make a bigger financial contribution to maintaining the naval base at Singapore?

Mr WHITLAM—In respect of the last question, not as far as I have been informed. About Cambodia, Australia did co-operate with the Association of South East Asian Nations and with Japan and several other countries in an initiative in the last meeting of the General Assembly of the United Nations to bring about, we hoped, some diplomatic intervention to achieve peace in Cambodia. I cannot say that the initiative has got very far. Nevertheless it was adopted by the General Assembly and we are fully involved, with all our neighbours, in promoting it. I want to say that it is far too simple to suggest that there is communist aggression in Cambodia. The fact is that the opposition to the Lon Nol Government is widespread, both ideologically and geographically, and has been ever since President Thieu, sacked on by President Nixon, invaded the country 5 years ago.

NATURAL GAS

Mr REYNOLDS—My question is addressed to the Minister for Minerals and Energy. What is the Minister’s reply to the widely reported and repeated criticisms of natural gas development by the New South Wales Minister for Mines and Fuel, Mr Freudenstein? Have those criticisms been repudiated by the General Manager of the Australian Gas Light Company?

Mr CONNOR—The Australian Gas Light Company undoubtedly needs to be saved from
its self-appointed friends. As a matter of fact, the cost of the main line of the pipeline from Gidgealpa to Wilton will be $186m and not $250m, as he has stated. The subject of the lateral lines is one on which again there has been foolish misrepresentation. Our undertaking was to extend those laterals to the provincial cities of Lithgow, Bathurst and Orange and also to Cootamundra and Wagga, and we will do so. The rest of the responsibility from Wilton into the metropolitan area and beyond—northwards to Newcastle and also the feeder main to Wollongong and Port Kembla—is a matter for the Australian Gas Light Company.

Pricing is not the function of the Pipeline Authority. Pricing is a matter for arrangement and negotiation between the Australian Gas Light Company and the members of the Cooper Basin consortium. It has not been our responsibility. Nevertheless we did indicate recently, as did the South Australian Government, our disapproval of the increase in prices. Nevertheless natural gas is still a bargain. The contract price at Gidgealpa through the gate valve is 30c per thousand cubic feet or the equivalent of 3c per therm. Natural gas has a heat value 2\frac{1}{4} times that of coal gas. Therefore, in terms of the coal gas equivalent, its cost is 13c per thousand cubic feet. The figures for the transmission costs—and we are only common carriers of it—will be readily available to the various corporations that will be served in the country and they will have at their disposal all the resources of the Prices Justification Tribunal.

I might add also in rebuttal of another of Mr Freudenstein’s innuendoes in respect of decentralisation that if he were to take the trouble to read the terms of the Pipeline Authority Act he would find that there is provision in it for natural gas to be supplied at an even price to whatever the corporation or other authority may be that is receiving it. The Minister for Mines and Energy has chosen to try his prentice hand at stirring up a little trouble. He will get no mileage out of it. In turn he might well devote his attention to ensuring—

Mr Donald Cameron—I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. Are you going to exercise your powers to curtail the lengthy answers to which we have been subjected and which are cutting down question time?

Mr SPEAKER—Order! The honourable gentleman will not make speeches as points of order. He is as aware as I am that that is not a point of order which is covered by the Standing Orders.

Mr McMahon—On that point of order, Mr Speaker, may I draw your attention to standing order 145 which requires that an answer be relevant. This answer has now become political and is not now relevant to the question.

Mr SPEAKER—I would have thought that the right honourable gentleman had been in the chamber long enough to know that politics is what this place is all about. I think that if he recalls the question, he will know that the answer has close relevance to it.

Mr Connor—I would suggest to the fledgling Minister for Mines and Energy in New South Wales that he might try his prentice hand at something else if he really wants to stir up trouble. Otherwise all he is doing is poking at the lion through the bars of the cage.

MEDIBANK

Mr Kevin Cairns—My question is directed to the Prime Minister. I refer to the proposed development of the Government’s health scheme—the one which is euphemistically called Medibank. I ask the Prime Minister: In the arrangements being negotiated with the States concerning the hospital—that is the government or public hospitals—aspects of Medibank are assurances included which would guarantee that any relief given to State budgets by a Commonwealth contribution would be disregarded so far as a claim at State’s application to the Grants Commission is concerned or, that a claimant State would not be penalised in its special grants due to the Government’s scheme. If necessary, to ensure that there is no penalty will the Prime Minister seek to bring about an appropriate amendment to the Grants Commission Act?

Mr Whitlam—I am very glad to give the assurance that the honourable gentleman seeks. His own State of Queensland has been for very many years penalised—some of those years being ones when it has made application to the Grants Commission—because it has continued a free hospital system and it could not get any relief from the Grants Commission since New South Wales and Victoria abandoned the free hospital system when the Menzies Government did not renew the free hospital agreement with the State governments in the early 1950s.

Mr Kevin Cairns—You do not understand the question—

Mr Whitlam—I thought I had. I am sorry if I did not understand it, because I thought it was an excellent question. Queensland is the only State which has continued a free hospital service after the Menzies Government cancelled the free
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hospital scheme which the Chifley Government made by agreement with all the States in 1947. States can receive grants from the Grants Commission only if they are unable to provide services of the quality provided by New South Wales and Victoria by using the fiscal means used by New South Wales and Victoria. Since New South Wales and Victoria did not maintain a free hospital scheme by their own fiscal efforts, Queensland has been unable to receive assistance from the Grants Commission in its continued efforts to maintain a free hospital system. Discussions have been held by the Minister for Social Security and me with our counterparts in South Australia and Tasmania. We have made it plain that if an agreement for a free hospital scheme is once again made with those States, as was made in 1947, those States will in no way be penalised in the case of any applications which they would make to the Grants Commission.

CONSTITUTIONAL FREEDOM

Mrs CHILD—Is the Prime Minister aware of any recent developments which might impede the constitutional freedom of any Australian political party to organise and advance its policies in any or every Australian State and Territory?

Mr WHITlam—It is true that many of the States are pursuing a policy which will centralise in their bureaucracies a very great number of programs which, in accordance with thought in most countries today, including Australia, should be carried out more on a local, regional or community basis. This is the fault of the challenges which the Liberal States are making in the High Court to the RED scheme and to the Australian Assistance Plan. The thrust of my Government’s policies has been very largely to use community and local organisations to involve people in localities in deciding and in recommending what assistance and what programs Governments should provide.

There are a very great number of programs including those for aged and homeless and handicapped persons, isolated children, health centres, legal aid offices, meals on wheels and so on which will be brought down if the Liberal State governments’ challenges in the High Court succeed. These are programs which were initiated mostly by my Government but in many cases by our predecessors as well. The whole modernisation of Australian welfare services and community activities will be brought down if the State governments succeed in their attempts to preserve such activities on a centralised State basis.

Mr Sinclair—I rise to take a point of order. Last week, Mr Speaker, your predecessor ruled that matters pertaining to the High Court—

Mr WHITlam—I have finished answering the question.

Mr Sinclair—Your predecessor ruled that any matter which is related to an application before the High Court should not be canvassed in question time. The substance of the reply by the Prime Minister, although I could not hear it in detail, seemed to me to be canvassing the decision of the High Court. I ask that you rule it out of order.

Mr SPEAKER—The ruling of Mr Speaker Cope was—

Opposition members—Speak up!

Mr SPEAKER—If the honourable gentlemen will remain silent they might hear. The substance of Mr Speaker Cope’s ruling, I think, was not quite as the honourable member said. If I ruled an answer of this type to be out of order, I think almost every answer given to a question here could be ruled out of order on some basis. But I will study the matter that he raises and see how far it goes.

SPEECH BY PRIME MINISTER IN BRUSSELS

Mr SNEDDEN—Did the Prime Minister make a speech in Brussels on 18 December last—a prepared speech—in which he said that the question of European food imports could not be separated from the wish of European countries to obtain supplies of energy resources? Did he tell European governments that which he stated in that speech? Has he told the Japanese Government that the question of the continuation of energy, particularly coal, supplies from Australia to Japan or to Europe may change if there is not a willingness on the part of those countries to take Australian beef?

Mr WHITlam—This was last week’s controversy. The right honourable gentleman would not express a view at the time when the Country Party Premier of Queensland, aided and abetted by the Deputy Leader of the Country Party in this Parliament, was pushing this line. I did not put it in such simplistic and crude terms as the Leader of the Opposition suggests. Of course I discussed general trading relations.

Mr Chipp—You said it just the same. I have it here.

Mr WHITlam—In fact, my attitude on these matters is exactly the same as that of the honourable gentleman who interjects. When this matter
was raised last week in this House, the honourable gentleman made his attitude plain and so did I. But his Leader is behind even him and he is behind me.

Mr Chipp—You changed your mind.

Mr SPEAKER—The honourable member for Hotham will remain silent.

Mr Chipp—Mr Speaker, I ask for leave to incorporate the Prime Minister’s speech.

Mr SPEAKER—The honourable gentleman will resume his seat. If he does that again, he will not remain in the chamber.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Mr KEOGH—My question is directed to the Minister for Social Security. I ask the Minister: Has he noted—

Mr Lusher—I rise to take a point of order. Members on this side of the House saw the Minister for Social Security taking the honourable member for Henty the question—

Mr SPEAKER—The honourable member will resume his seat.

Mr Lusher—Mr Speaker—

Mr SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member will resume his seat. If he takes another frivolous point of order, I will deal with him. I call the honourable member for Bowman.

Mr KEOGH—Has the Minister noted assertions from various sources that the present system of private health insurance leaves only 3 per cent to 4 per cent of the population uncovered? Can the Minister say whether this is true? Has he any objective evidence that will establish beyond any doubt the degree of cover that actually exists?

Mr HAYDEN—I have noted comments, some with malicious misrepresentation as the main motive, coming from the Opposition that only 3 per cent to 4 per cent of the community would be uncovered as a result of private health insurance, the pensioner medical service and repatriation medical arrangements. As members of the Opposition well know, this is completely untrue. They would know that a Bureau of Statistics publication of May 1973, reference No. 17.7, and a Bureau of Statistics publication of January 1974, reference No. 17.10, both point out that only 86.5 per cent of the Australian public is covered through either private health insurance or repatriation or pensioner medical type services.

More recently a report by Mr David St Leger Kelly, a reader in law at the University of Adelaide, based on a survey he is carrying out for the poverty inquiry, establishes that more than 40 per cent of debts brought before the courts are for medical, hospital and allied expenses. He also points out that many people go to gaol because they cannot meet these debts. Two very important survey reports on poverty have been released by Professor Henderson in the last 2 weeks. One is on Aborigines and Islanders in Brisbane. Paragraph 16 of the summary of findings in that report says of these people:

Few respondents had health...insurance.

Eight per cent was the figure quoted. But, more importantly and pertinently—it is unfortunate that the Leader of the Australian Country Party is not here today—the second survey report concerns rural poverty in northern New South Wales, an area which is covered largely by the electorate of the Leader of the Country Party. The report, referring to poor whites of that area, says:

At least 25 per cent of families had no medical insurance although only one family answered that they used the subsidised medical service. In 5 cases where the family had no medical insurance the household head was often sick.

This was in 11 per cent of the cases. These figures reveal the rather grim situation in the electorate of the Leader of the Country Party. The findings in this report are consistent with Professor Henderson’s interim report on poverty in Australia. In spite of the influence of the Country Party in the coalition government of some 20 years, Professor Henderson pointed out that rural non-farmer poverty in Australia represents the highest incidence of poverty in this country. The very poor and rather poor people in the rural non-farming sector represent over 25 per cent of that category of people. The Country Party has a very dismal record in this regard. I remind honourable members that this disgraceful situation of a very high incidence of absence of cover for essential health needs exists most pointedly in the electorate of the Leader of the Country Party. I think that these factual reports should dispel the misrepresentation that has been coming for some time from members of the Opposition.

HUME HIGHWAY

Mr LUSHER—I direct my question to the Minister for Transport. He will recall statements by himself and the Prime Minister that the Hume Highway would be re-routed to near Canberra, Tumut and Batlow. I draw the Minister’s attention to an article in the ‘Bulletin’ dated 1 March which suggests that re-routing the Hume Highway would cost at least $1,000m and would cut only 15 kilometres off the existing route. Will the
Minister comment on this report and indicate whether the proposed new Hume Highway is still a national priority? Will the Minister recommend the provision of an all-weather road from Canberra to Tumut in the event that the re-routed Hume Highway is not proceeded with? Will the Minister reallocate funds from the national highway program to rural shire road programs which presently are starved of funds?

Mr CHARLES JONES—The honourable member asked me that question privately last week. I told him that I had not seen the 'Bulletin' report. I have since seen it. I told him that at that stage I had not received the report from the Bureau of Roads which was doing the study. I can now advise the honourable member that I received the report. I have not completed reading it yet and I am not in a position to reply to the question until—

Mr Nixon—You are a slow reader, Charlie.

Mr CHARLES JONES—I admit to being a slow reader and not over-bright, but the honourable member will never recognise that that also applies to him. He will never look in the mirror.

PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANISATION

Mr BERINSON—I address to the Prime Minister a question supplementary to that asked earlier by the honourable member for Parramatta. Since the Prime Minister's reply seemed to indicate that an application for admission to Australia by a Palestine Liberation Organisation delegation might be considered more favourably now than at the time of its rejection just a few weeks ago can the Prime Minister say: Firstly, has there been any evidence in the meantime of any change in the basic PLO program calling for the elimination of Israel as a sovereign independent state? Secondly, has there been any change in the meantime in the United Nations charter calling for the protection of the integrity of the existing states? Thirdly, has there been any change in the meantime in the Australian Labor Party's platform calling for respect and recognition of Israel's sovereignty and right to exist? If there have not been changes in any of these respects will the Prime Minister ensure that consideration of future applications by a PLO delegation will consider these basic principles rather than the pragmatic questions of temporary tensions within the Australian community? If the principle of free speech and dissemination of Palestinian arguments is sought to be protected—

Mr SPEAKER—Order! I have to draw to the attention of the honourable member to the fact that he is now giving information.

Mr BERINSON—I am concluding with a question. If the principle of free speech and dissemination of Palestinian arguments is sought to be protected, will the Prime Minister give consideration to the proposition that this is already or could be adequately met by prominent Sydney businessmen, the honourable member for Parramatta, Mr Hartley, the friends of Palestine or any other persons already in Australia without the need to admit persons whose sole primary function is contrary to the policies of the Government itself and whose primary methods are indiscriminate terror?

Mr WHITI, AM—There has been no change in the Government's attitude towards matters in the Middle East. There has been no change in the Australian Labor Party's attitude on these matters. The Australian Labor Party and the Australian Government both support the long-standing resolutions which have been passed on this matter unanimously by the United Nations in the General Assembly and in the Security Council. The honourable gentleman cites some aspects alone of those resolutions. Of course the Australian Government and the Australian Labor Party are committed to the proposition that Israel should be a sovereign independent state, but the Australian Government and the Australian Labor Party are also committed to 2 other propositions. One is that Israel should withdraw from territories which she occupied by force; the other is that the Palestinian people have rights as well. The Palestinian people have a right to a sovereign independent state. The Palestinian people have a right to a national home.

It makes no contribution at all to the situation in the Middle East or to the situation in Australia for people in the Parliament, on either side, to push one side or one proposition to the exclusion of the arguments on the other side or the consideration of other propositions. There has been for too long unacceptable violence on both sides. It is simplistic to say that the PLO is committed totally to violence or to the destruction of the state of Israel. Some elements in the PLO are; other elements are not. We in Australia, particularly members of Parliament, should do nothing to exacerbate the situation in the Middle East or to exacerbate the situation in Australia. I believe that the arguments on the Middle East are well able to be put by people who live in Australia. It is true that the Arab community in Australia is more affluent and articulate than once was the case. The PLO argument is now receiving more
parity of presentation with the Israeli argument than was previously the case. At the same time, I do not readily lend myself to the proposition that people cannot come to Australia or go out of Australia at their wish.

**Opposition members—What about the cricketers?**

**Mr Whitlam**—I do not know if I am supposed to respond to such a fatuous interjection about cricketers. The fact is that in this case we helped cricketers in Australia to preserve their international standing and opportunities by the attitude we took. Furthermore, it is now likely that there will be some movement in South Africa to make South Africa once again an acceptable partner in international sport. This is scarcely a comparable matter but as the interjection comes from some senior but excited members of the Opposition I take the opportunity to answer it. The fact is, I believe, these days there is no political mileage at all for anybody in my Party or the Liberal Party or the Australian Country Party to be pushing the Israeli argument against the Arab side or the Arab argument against the Israeli side. There will be no peace in the Middle East until the United Nations’ resolutions are implemented. The present Australian Government has faithfully supported them. When it came to the crunch, our predecessors also supported them. There are various migrants in Australia and it behoves none of us to exacerbate feelings between those migrants. We would want Jews and Arabs to live happily side by side in Australia and also in the Middle East.

**WAGE INDEXATION**

**Mr Lynch**—I ask the Treasurer: Has the Australian Council of Trade Unions seriously jeopardised the Government’s wage indexation proposal? Why has the Government failed to secure support from the ACTU in this matter? Can he confidently assure this House that the Government’s so-called special relationship with the trade union movement will in fact bring the ACTU into line?

**Dr J. F. Cairns**—Whatever the relationship between the Government and the ACTU is, the Opposition would have a much inferior one if it happened to be the government. I would think the relationship between the ACTU and the Government over the last 2 years has been the closest that has existed between the ACTU and any government for at least 23 years and possibly even more. I would imagine that the relationship we would have if the Opposition happened to be the government would be changed into what I would call the ‘Fraser method of confrontation’—back to the penal powers; trade union leaders in gaol; imposing fines upon trade unions. I suppose that is the kind of relationship with the ACTU that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has in mind. But that is not ours.

I pointed out the other day in a statement that it would be of great advantage to Australian workers if indexation were introduced. Indexation could be effective only if the unions and the workers in general were satisfied that claims beyond indexation for cost of living reasons or for other reasons, with certain exceptions, should not be made. I think it is unfortunate that the ACTU has not been able to make this position more clear to the Commission. That was the point I was making. I hope that this will eventuate in the next few weeks. I am sure that what the Minister for Labor and Immigration has done and what I am trying to do will be conducive to that end.

**Utah Mining Australia Limited**

**Mr Jacobi**—I address a question to the Minister for Minerals and Energy with a great deal of alacrity. In view of the record profit of $70m said to have been made in Queensland this year by Utah Mining Australia Limited, in which we have only 10 per cent Australian equity, I ask the Minister: What are the mining rights of Utah Mining Australia Limited in the Queensland Bowen Basin? What steps does the Government intend to take to increase the level of Australian equity in the vast Utah holdings in the Bowen Basin?

**Mr Connor**—The rights of the Utah Mining Company to mine black coal in the Bowen Basin total 300 million tons. When the company first came to Queensland there was an arrangement whereby it could mine up to 30 per cent of the coal within the leases granted to it but not exceeding 300 million tons. It has now been discovered that there are 6.1 billion tons of coal there. Recently I was approached by spokesmen for the Utah Company asking whether the Government would agree to the company’s increasing its right to mine and to export from 300 million tons to 30 per cent of the 6.1 billion tons—about an additional 1500 million tons of prime coking coal which is the cream of the Queensland coal and which, at US$50 per ton, would be worth about US$75,000m. I told the gentlemen who approached me that the Government would honour to the letter their rights to extract 300 million tons and no more.

The company is already operating 4 open cut mines quite efficiently. It seeks to open a fifth. In
Queensland only 10 per cent of the coal is capable of being extracted by open cut mining methods. In respect of the company's area that would mean that where it has a right to extract 300 million tons it would be taking half of the easily won coal. I asked them specifically whether from their 4 existing open cut operations they could not increase their production. They said that they could. They said that it would cost them more to do so. Against that we must equate their anticipated profits of some $90m for the current year. Their Australian shareholdings are only 8 per cent.

As well as being charged with the responsibility of obtaining world parity prices for coal the Government must give due consideration to the Australian people's birthright. The Utah Mining Company can well proceed to extract its contracted amount. It has in hand contracts for 160 million tons. It has the right to extract another 140 million tons. At the present time, using as a stalking horse the creation of extra employment, there has been a spate of Press publicity suggesting that another mine should be opened. I say that the Government needs to give due consideration to proper mining and to proper conservation methods, and in the future it will be done. This Government will honour to the letter commercial commitments entered into, but if and when the company has extracted its full quota of 300 million tons it will then be at liberty, under a Labor administration, to sell its plant to an Australian consortium. There are plenty of them who are willing to take over the operation from there. Buying back the coal is just one of the methods by which we can buy back the farm and restore ownership to the Australian people.

**MUNICIPAL RATES**

Mr GRAHAM—My question, which is addressed to the Deputy Prime Minister and Treasurer, relates to the preparation of the 1975-76 Budget which he will be undertaking in the next few months. I ask: Is the Treasurer in receipt of advice of the great increases in municipal rates and Water Board rates within the electorate of North Sydney during the last 2 financial years? Is he prepared to comment upon the fact that 80 per cent of the annual revenue of the Sydney Metropolitan Water Sewerage and Drainage Board is spent upon interest rates on capital borrowings?

Dr J. F. CAIRNS—In the preparation of the Budget, of course, these matters will be taken into account. The additional and rising costs that have flowed to the States and to the local government bodies as a result of past Commonwealth-State financial relations—they have come from 23 years of government by the Party of which the honourable member is a member—will, of course, continue to be under examination by me and by the Treasury. At the same time, I point out that in the last 12 months the Australian Government has given direct assistance in respect of water and sewerage amounting, in the case of New South Wales, I think, to about $40m. I would prefer to make the choice to operate in that way rather than to extend tax deductions to increased amounts for ratepayers. Honourable members will realise that proceeding in that way tends to redress the progressiveness, the decided equity and fairness of the tax system, which again has been established over many years, because the higher the income the greater the value of the tax deduction. If, for instance, a person is paying two-thirds of his income in taxation, he gets as a tax deduction two-thirds of the amount of rates which he pays. If a person is paying one-third or one-fifth of his income in taxation, he gets back only one-third or one-fifth of the amount which he pays in rates. That position seems to be quite inequitable and it is not the policy of the Government to extend the system of that type of deduction.

**MEDIBANK**

Mr MORRIS—Has the attention of the Prime Minister been drawn to reports of new threats to obstruct the introduction of Medibank and the abolition of health insurance contributions? Does the Government propose to take these threats seriously?

Mr WHITLAM—Naturally the Government is concerned that there should still be attempts to frustrate the will of the people in respect of Medibank. There can scarcely have been a program of the Government which has been put to the people more frequently than the program that there should be free hospital treatment and that there should be subsidies for medical fees. That program was put to the people at the House of Representatives elections in 1969, 1972 and 1974. The legislation has gone through Parliament. It was debated in the Parliament 7 times on the basic Bills before it went through. It is true that the methods of financing the scheme were contained in Bills which have been rejected in the Senate.

I gather that this is one of those unfortunate matters in relation to which there is a difference of opinion, or at least of emphasis, between the
Liberal Party and the Country Party. The Country Party is wanting to grasp any scheme at all to prevent a fair electoral distribution and it wants to have an election before the fair electoral distribution can come in and while the old distorted electorates still apply. It is therefore making statements that money will be refused to finance Medibank, which is the law of the land. The Liberal Party, I must say, has been saying different things at different times in different places. I do not want to exacerbate the relations between the 2 parties in this respect. I cannot make head or tail of what the Leader of the Opposition says on Medibank; nor, of course, can the newspapers which support him from time to time. I know what happens when one quotes the media on his views about Medibank. We never know what will happen in the House in those circumstances. We know how editors upset him.

So I am not going to respond at any greater length to the question that my colleague, the honourable member for Shortland, puts to me on this matter. The fact is that Medibank is the law of the land. It ought to be possible in Australia, as it is possible in Canada, which is another federal system, and as it is becoming possible in the United States, which is yet another federal system, for the government to make it possible for everybody to receive medical treatment, whatever his means and whatever his place of residence; that is, the community's health is the responsibility basically of the community. It pays the community to get people back to work, to be vigorous and healthy. That is not possible in Australia under the archaic and incomplete form of private insurance with which we have been saddled. This has been known for very many years. It was recognised by our opponents when they were in government. It was 5 years yesterday since the then Minister for Health adopted the recommendations of the Nimmo committee of inquiry into medical and hospital insurance funds. He adopted them, but of course when we bring them in he votes against them. As regards hospitals, it ought to be possible to have free hospital treatment in standard wards throughout Australia as the previous Labor Government brought about in 1947 and as the Menzies Government dismantled, scrapped, undid in 1952-53.

NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT AND OCCUPATION

Mr CLYDE CAMERON (Hindmarsh—Minister for Labor and Immigration)—For the information of honourable members I present the first annual report of the National Committee on Discrimination in Employment and Occupation for the year ended 30 June 1974, entitled: 'Towards Equal Opportunity in Employment'.

ANTARCTICA

Mr MORRISON (St George—Minister for Science)—For the information of honourable members I present volume 1 of the report of the advisory committee on Antarctic programs, dated December 1974. Copies of volume 2 have been placed in the Parliamentary Library and the Bills and Papers Office. I also present a discussion paper entitled: 'Towards New Perspectives for Australian Scientific Research in Antarctica'.

Mr Street—Mr Speaker, I ask that the paper be noted. It is a most significant report and a most important Green Paper. It should be debated in the Parliament. I request that the Leader of the House move that the Paper be noted.

Motion (by Mr Daly) agreed to:

That the House take note of the paper.

Debate (on motion by Mr Street) adjourned.

INDONESIAN FISHERMEN

Mr WHITLAM (Werriwa—Prime Minister)—For the information of honourable members I table a memorandum of understanding between the Government of Australia and the Government of the Republic of Indonesia regarding the operations of Indonesian traditional fishermen in areas of the Australian exclusive fishing zone and continental shelf.

MIDDLE-EAST

Mr Peacock—Mr Speaker, I seek leave to table a paper for the information of honourable members dealing with the Middle-East situation and setting out in detail the Opposition's approach to a foreign policy position paper prepared by me for the Opposition parties and dated 3 March 1975.

Mr SPEAKER—Is leave granted?

Government supporters—No.

Mr SPEAKER—Leave is not granted.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr RUDDOCK (Parramatta)—Mr Speaker, I wish to make a personal explanation.

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

Mr RUDDOCK—Yes, Mr Speaker, by the honourable member for Perth. In his question to the Prime Minister he suggested that the Palestine Liberation Organisation's views might be adequately presented by a number of people within Australia. He included Mr Hartley amongst those people and he included me. I do not know on what basis he included me because I have at no time supported or in any way advanced the views of the PLO. My question today was designed not to advance the views of the PLO but to elicit a statement from the Prime Minister and to enable him to state clearly his own position. I asked my question after reading an article that I perchance noticed in today's 'Australian' written by John Hughes and John Jukes, reporting a letter that had been addressed to a number of Sydney businessmen with Middle Eastern government connections.

Mr Berinson—On the basis of that statement by the honourable member——

Mr SPEAKER—Order! Does the honourable member claim to be misrepresented?

Mr Berinson—No, I am just seeking the opportunity to withdraw any such inference that might have been drawn from my earlier question. I want to say that I would be happy to accept the assurance given by the honourable member for Parramatta and to withdraw any inference in my question that may have led people to believe to the contrary.

UNEMPLOYMENT IN AUSTRALIA

Discussion of Matter of Public Importance

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

The need to establish a select committee of this House to inquire into:

(a) the extent and nature of present unemployment in Australia,
(b) the cost, adequacy and administration of current measures involved in alleviating unemployment, and
(c) the desirability of new measures to reduce unemployment.

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 MALCOLM FRASER (Wannon) (10.56)—During the short term of office of the present Government unemployment has risen from the respectable levels of the Opposition's time in government to a post war record of over 300 000 people—a figure that had not previously been reached since the Depression days of the 1930s. The administration of the Department of Labor and Immigration has been totally ill equipped to deal with the great addition in the number of people who have been applying for services and help from the Department of Labor and Immigration because it is a Department which had been geared to a full employment situation and which has suddenly found itself having to deal with the situation of quite massive unemployment. In addition to that the Minister for Labor and Immigration (Mr Clyde Cameron) has put additional administrative responsibilities on the Department in the administration of the income maintenance scheme and in the administration of vague and far reaching retaining proposals and of other matters which have greatly increased the workload on the Department, leading to a general breakdown in administration at the grass roots level of the Department and to a great deal of hardship and inconvenience to many thousands of individuals throughout Australia.

The Minister is responsible for these matters. He cannot say, as he did on another occasion, that it is the draftsman's fault or that it is the fault of his departmental officers. I believe in and accept the view that a Minister is responsible for the mistakes made in his Department, especially when they flow from the policy decisions of the Minister in particular. The Minister has over a long period had continuous advice from his Department on these matters. It is advice upon which no action was taken for a very long while. The Minister predicted in December 1973 that the unemployment rate would rise greatly, but he did nothing to try to get his Department into a position to handle the matter properly. We were told in January 1975 that there will be 500 additional staff employed. It will be probably 6 months before they provide any relief, which would be 12 months after the time in which the Minister ought to have moved in that direction. I think that the muddling by the Minister and the Government is shown in three short quotations. In May of last year the Prime Minister (Mr Whitlam) said:

Employment is high. Profitability is high. Trading is good. Business expectations for the future are that this situation will continue.

The Minister for Labor and Immigration said:

He——

that is Mr Whitlam——
is Prime Minister. Who am I to disagree with him? If he says there is going to be no unemployment, well, I suppose that is right.

But more recently—in December 1974—the Minister for Labor and Immigration said:

Whatever way you look at it the employment situation is bad.

That shows the changes in attitude and the lack of understanding of the present Government in relation to these matters. No matter what the Department can do, while there is high unemployment nothing can remove the indignity and the lack of morale of a person who really wants to get a job but who cannot get a job. Nothing can overcome the problems of families when children come home from school and say: 'Why is my father not at work today? Why is he here all the time?' That is a situation that the Minister for Labor and Immigration has in fact brought about. We have seen further examples of difficulties arising between the Minister for Labor and Immigration and the Minister for Social Security (Mr Hayden). When Arch Bevis hit at the bloat of jobless who were better off than those in work, at those who were abusing the system, on 15 or 16 February the Minister said:

For the dole loafers it's the end.

There was a long article, a special report, in the Melbourne 'Herald' as a result of that. Then in response to questions in this House it became clear that the Minister was going to do nothing about that. One of the problems for the Department is that it is basically left to the person concerned to determine whether a job is suitable. That was not the situation in our time. The authority of the officers of the Commonwealth Employment Service has been destroyed under this Minister.

We have the situation in which a number of unemployed are being passed to private charities for help. There was a long and authoritative article on this question in the 'National Times' of 17 February last. It pointed out that many unemployed people have been passed by the Department of Social Security and the Department of Labor and Immigration to charity agencies. Most agencies are receiving letters every day from both Departments because they are unable to cope with the relatively simple matter of relief payments. In these letters they say: 'This is to introduce'—they name the person concerned—'who due to technical difficulties in processing the claims has not received a cheque for 2 weeks. As a result he is without food and money. Any assistance you can offer will be accepted gratefully.' For 2 Departments of State to take that view of the present situation is surely a complete acceptance of the breakdown in the administrative processes of government in a very important area of activity.

The same article also points out that the relief schemes are absorbing only a small minority of those who are in fact involved. Those schemes are the Regional Employment Development Scheme, the structural assistance scheme and the National Employment and Training scheme. I should like to give some detailed criticisms and anomalies of each scheme. Criticism which brings to light anomalies is not to be construed as saying that we are opposed to the general objectives of these schemes, but their administration and guidelines need tightening and strengthening so that the administrative officers in the Department can understand the policy and the objectives of the Government and make decisions with speed and concern without the delays that now occur. The States are ignored in the administration of the RED scheme, and this has led to the situation in which the Victorian Premier said earlier this month that the RED scheme in particular had been very slow to start and to produce job opportunities. He said that the State Government offered over 2 months ago to administer the scheme—in the previous scheme the Government did it with 2 people, in the same way as the Government did it in previous years—and to provide jobs almost immediately at almost no administrative cost to the Commonwealth. He said that the offer was refused and the first jobs were not approved until only a few days ago. He added that even today only 210 people out of over 52 000 registered for unemployment in the State are getting support under the RED scheme. That offer by the Victorian Premier has been ignored because this Minister and the Government are concerned to centralise these matters in Canberra. That leads to delay. It leads to committees of Ministers trying to make decisions in areas in which they have no competence and, in spite of their approaches to members of this Parliament, on inadequate advice. It has also led to constitutional challenge which is not designed to stop the flow of money but to get sense and order back into the administration of these matters.

The RED scheme is not integrated with the NEAT scheme. This Government has no overall manpower policy. It is a jumble of ad hoc measures quite unrelated to each other. Under the RED scheme there is a bias towards the unskilled, and little help is given to women or to white collar workers. Very few women have got jobs under that scheme. More women would
have got jobs if the scheme had been adminis-
terred directly as was the case in the past. There is
little co-operation between Government depart-
ments—the Department of the Environment and
Conservation, the Department of Urban and
Regional Development and the Department of
Tourism and Recreation—quite apart from a lack
of co-operation with the States.

The declaration of areas under the control of
officers of the Commonwealth Employment Ser-
vice is much too broad. It excludes some serious
pockets of unemployment and, in some cases,
makes eligible other areas where there might be
a relatively low level of unemployment. The
Minister should adopt a more selective approach
than that. There is a delay in the making of de-
cisions because of the need to decentralise. We
have the situation where in one case I had verbal
advice well before Christmas. The local people
were told of this, but the written confirmation
was given only a few days ago. There are no ade-
quate standards in selection. There is no follow-up to see that matters proceed adequately
and properly. The Department cannot be
blamed for this. Because of the incompetence of
its Minister, the Department has not got the per-
sonnel. There is not an adequate staff. This is all
the more reason why the States and local govern-
ment authorities should be used more than they
are at the present time.

The NEAT scheme was in preparation for
more than a year before the Minister could get
Government approval. But again the conditions
under that scheme are not related to labour mar-
et requirements. The Department has no ade-
quate information on future labour market
requirements, and the Minister has done little to
put the Department into the position where a
proper assessment of these matters could be
made. No consideration was given to the strain
placed on the Department by the NEAT scheme,
the rises in the number of unemployed, the
income maintenance scheme and the freeze on
staff ceilings which was imposed by the Prime
Minister (Mr Whitlam). Only recently was that
freeze lifted in relation to the Department of
Labor and Immigration. If the Minister had
acted like a Minister he would have said: ‘Under
the circumstances prevailing the staff ceiling for
my Department is an utter impossibility’. He
should have said that he would not accept the
staff ceiling. He should have stood the Prime
Minister up over that matter because of the
workload that it placed on the people in the field
from the Department of Labor and Immigration.

The standards for admission to the NEAT
scheme are much too vague. It is forgotten that
the scheme itself cannot make employment
opportunities; it can only widen the capacities of
individuals. In this scheme there is an emphasis
on white collar workers because the facilities in
tertiary institutions are broadly based, but the fa-
cilities for adult trade training are almost non-
existent in a number of areas. That means that
the semi-skilled and the unskilled workers have
to rely on on-the-job training and the scheme, in
a number of instances of which the Minister
ought to be aware, has become an employment
subsidy scheme and nothing else. Schemes for
training are put forward merely to get a subsidy
from this Government. It has become just an em-
ployment subsidy scheme for certain specific
manufacturers. The scheme does little to reduce
unemployment because it benefits most the bet-
ter off and the better educated. To give one
example, it benefits those from the teaching pro-
fession.

Many people in the employment offices
throughout Australia are not clear whether the
unemployed have preference over others. The
training allowances provided under the scheme
are not in any way related to need as they ought
to be. There is the same allowance for a single
man and for a family man who has family obli-
gations and three or four dependants, although
his need is much greater than that of the single
man. For some people the allowances are greater
than the actual pay they would receive for work-
ing. There is the situation in which a widow with
nothing but a widow’s pension loses that pension
if she goes on to the retraining scheme, but some-
body with $20,000 a year can continue to receive
that $20,000 plus the training allowance. The
labour market information about the scheme is
inadequate and hopeless. I repeat that the De-
partment is understaffed. The guidelines are
vague. The regional offices of the Department
are overloaded. There is no follow-up because of
lack of adequate personnel within the Depart-
ment. There are phoney on-the-job training
schemes which are concealing the abuses under
the scheme.

Briefly, I shall say one or two things about the
income maintenance proposal. Why should
people who are put off their jobs because of tariff
cuts as opposed to revaluations or credit squeezes
or other Government policies, get special pro-
vision over and above people who are put off
work for other reasons? You cannot at this stage
say why somebody is unemployed. There are
double standards. A person who is unemployed
for reasons other than those that I have given
gets $31 a week. On the Minister’s own ad-
missions, a person can be paid up to $200 or
$204 a week under the income maintenance scheme. There is the situation in which a married woman would not be eligible for normal unemployment relief but she would be eligible for income maintenance. There is no integration of this scheme with the tertiary income scheme. There is too much subjective judgment of who is eligible and who is not eligible to receive assistance. Because of the eligibility criteria of the once-only situation, a person has a stimulus to stay out of work for 6 months as opposed to getting back into employment, because if that employment proved to be temporary that person would lose the subsequent benefit of several months assistance under the income maintenance proposal. The unemployed often are better off than those in employment. They receive higher wages and they do not have the problem of paying fares. Because there is no means test double job holders can have one job and still get income maintenance of $100 or more a week. A person who has been unemployed for one week could get a 6 months benefit under this scheme. We have the situation in which the unemployment costs are likely to be about $1,000m in 1975. Those are the costs of providing relief. Perhaps under present circumstances there is little that this Government can do about the total cost, but there is a great deal that it can do about the efficiency of the scheme.

We are pressing for a committee to examine these matters. It is important that it be a committee of this House. The House will be in recess for five or six weeks and a committee ought to be operating and examining these matters. A committee could sit and report back to the House. If the Minister will not accept this proposal we will move for the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable the House to establish such a committee forthwith.

Mr CLYDE CAMERON (Hindmarsh—Minister for Labor and Immigration) (11.11)—Once again, I congratulate the honourable member for Wannon (Mr Malcolm Fraser). I always admire the efficiency with which he handles discussions of this kind. It is in striking contrast to the way in which the Leader of the Liberal Party, Mr Snedden, handles similar matters. It is no wonder that Opposition members who yesterday sat behind the right honourable gentleman looked so grim and, sitting behind the honourable member for Wannon today, looked so delighted and excited as they heard their proposed new leader show the Leader of the Opposition how to do it.

The honourable member for Chisholm, Mr Tony Staley, spent all yesterday afternoon laughing at the Leader of the Opposition. He spent all this morning laughing with the honourable member for Wannon because he sees himself appointed as Attorney-General or some such Minister in the dim distant future when the honourable member for Wannon hands out his portfolios. If I was on the Opposition back bench, I would not waste much time supporting the present Leader of the Opposition. Take a tip from somebody who has been around this place a long time and who has seen people come and go: If any honourable gentleman sitting on the Opposition back bench wants to get on, he should fasten his star to the Wannon wagon because that is where the jobs are going to come from, not from the present Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Garland—Mr Speaker, I rise to a point. Relevancy surely is called for in this debate.

Mr SPEAKER—Yes. I ask the Minister to deal with the matter of public importance.

Mr CLYDE CAMERON—Certainly.

Mr Malcolm Fraser—I rise to take a point of order. Mr Speaker, I think it is relevant for the House to know what the Minister has said. The Minister has also offered his services to the Liberal Party because he knows that his own Government is so short lived.

Mr Speaker—the honourable member will not take fallacious points of order; otherwise I will deal with him.

Mr CLYDE CAMERON—that is a silly statement, as the honourable gentleman knows. I do say that the honourable gentleman handled the discussion fairly well. He has plenty of practice, especially on discussions of matters of public importance dealing with unemployment. This must be the sixth or seventh such discussion that he has proposed in the last 12 months.

I have some good news for him. I know that he will be delighted to learn that, although the preliminary provisional figures are not yet made up and will not be known to me until about Thursday or Friday of this week, my tip is that for the first time for 10 months, the raw figures—that is, the actual number of people who are unemployed—will fall for the month of February. That is good news for everybody. I am sure that everybody will be pleased to hear that—except, I suspect, that the Opposition will now switch to seasonally adjusted figures. The Opposition always does that. Its members oscillate between whichever is the best. Up until now, Opposition members have been talking about the
raw figures, that is, the actual figures of unemployed. I suspect that, because these figures are now falling, from now on we will be having our attention directed not to the fall which is occurring in the actual figures but to the rise which is occurring in the seasonally adjusted figures. It is inevitable that there will be a rise in the seasonally adjusted figures. But it is good news to those who have always been quoting the actual figures to learn that for the first time for 10 months the economy is now responding to what the Government is doing and there is likely to be a small decline for the first time in 10 months in the actual number of people who are unemployed.

The honourable gentleman proceeded to criticise the Government on some of its schemes to create employment. He talked about the RED scheme—that is, the Regional Employment Development scheme—and criticised it. This is the first time that anybody from either side of the House has criticised the RED scheme. I know of no honourable member who has criticised it. For the first time ever members of the Federal Parliament, whether they be in Opposition or in Government, are being recognised by local government authorities as a direct link between local government authorities and the Federal Parliament. Never before has a Federal parliamentarian been recognised as having any direct link between the Federal Parliament and local government authorities. No longer is a State government the only government authority and no longer is a State member of parliament regarded as the only link between local government authorities and government. Now a more important link has been forged—a link between local government authority and the national Parliament per medium of the House of Representatives member for the area concerned, whether he or she be Labor, Liberal or Country Party. This scheme has worked exceptionally well. I repeat that every member of this Parliament, whether he or she be on the Opposition side or the Government side, has cause to be extremely proud of the bipartisan attitude that he or she has taken in regard to the administration of the RED scheme. It has worked extremely well.

It is not true that the RED scheme ignores the States. State representatives are sitting on every one of the committees which administer the scheme. Last Wednesday, the RED Ministers decided that State committees should have full authority to determine finally all applications that come before them up to $100,000 per project without that project having to be referred either to the RED Ministers or to the central committee of senior officers who previously administered the scheme. From now on it should be possible, from the time a project is received by a State committee until the State committee is able to put its recommendation to me and my approval is given, that not more than eight or ten days will elapse. When a project is approved, a telegram is sent to the local authority concerned. But the local member of the House of Representatives must be satisfied that the project is one worth supporting. We will not support a scheme unless it is approved by the local member of the House of Representatives. If the local member recommends a scheme, we will approve it in that short time and we will make available up to 25 per cent of the cost of the scheme in advance in cash to the local government authority concerned. It is not only local government authorities which have benefitted from the scheme. All sorts of other public bodies have benefited including Lions clubs, the Methodist Church, the St Vincent de Paul Society—

Mr Hunt—And the Boy Scouts.

Mr CLYDE CAMERON—Not yet.

Mr Hunt—Yes.

Mr CLYDE CAMERON—Well, the honourable gentleman is one of the most successful in the Parliament, having secured with great relish from me no less than $1.5m for his electorate. That activity is the kind of goal that every member of this Parliament should set out to achieve. Every member should seek to emulate the honourable member. There have been few honourable members who have been more active in regard to RED projects than the honourable member for Gwyder.

It is not true to say that there are long delays. It is true to say that the RED scheme cannot provide a great deal of employment for women. This is because of the nature of the kind of work that the RED scheme is directed to carry out. In contrast to that, I can say that NEAT scheme—the National Employment and Training scheme—which the honourable gentleman from Wannon mentioned does the very reverse. More than two in every three who are approved for training under the NEAT scheme are women. So what the women lose under the RED scheme they pick up under the NEAT scheme.

The honourable gentleman said that there is no co-operation between government departments in the administration of the RED scheme. That is not true. All the departments of the Governments have co-operated magnificently. My RED colleagues have co-operated magnificently. Decisions taken by the RED Ministers and at the
officer level have been unanimous decisions. Never has there been any conflict, as the honourable gentleman suggests. He said also that the RED scheme excludes certain pockets of unemployment. Again, he is behind the times. The RED Ministers, to their great credit, have now decided that no area will be excluded from the operations of the RED scheme. Wherever a worthwhile project is put forward, provided it is adjacent or near to an area that has been declared it can be brought in under the RED scheme. The only qualification is that in areas that are not declared—areas that are merely adjacent to declared areas—each city municipality will be limited to $350,000 and each country shire will be limited to $100,000, and at this stage we will not be willing to use the RED finance for the purpose of constructing footpaths or for kerbing and drainage schemes which are open to RED areas which are declared as priority areas. No one, therefore, is excluded at all.

I have said enough to show that there is no delay in the decisions taken. It is all very well for the State governments to say: 'Let us administer it'. Of course they would love to administer it. They would love to administer it so that they could use money made available by this Parliament and let it go direct to local government authorities, ignoring the elected representatives in the Federal Parliament completely and letting members of State Parliaments who have had nothing to do with the raising of the revenue be the only ones to be recognised by the local government authorities. We are not going to do it. Another thing about the previous scheme compared to the RED scheme is this: By having the local members of the House of Representatives overseeing projects that are to be carried out, we know that decent projects, which have some social value, which will have some long lasting effect on the area concerned and which will improve the quality of life of the people, will be the criterion upon which members of this Parliament will insist in approving the RED projects. Under the old scheme no one knew what happened to the money. The money was spent on 'make work' projects that were designed simply to make work for people regardless of whether the work being done was the best that could be undertaken.

The honourable gentleman then switched on to the NEAT scheme. He said that it is not related to labour market requirements. It is related to them to an extent, but it is not related to them to the extent to which I would like to see it related to them. I would like to see the Government establish a bureau of labour economics. This will be done shortly. We will then be able to make short term, medium term and long term prognoses of what the labour needs are and to match the NEAT scheme to those needs. This is something which will come. But we have to remember that we started off from nothing. We came to office 2 years ago without any apparatus or machinery for making projections of labour needs in the future. The honourable gentleman talked about the staff ceiling. He asked why I did not stand the Prime Minister (Mr Whitlam) up. Does anyone in this Parliament imagine that there is anyone born who could stand the present Prime Minister up? He is the Prime Minister. He is a Prime Minister in reality as well as in name. He is a man whom we all respect.

Mr Ruddock—He is a dictator.

Mr CLYDE CAMERON—He is not a dictator at all because he bows willingly to the majority decision of the Caucus, the majority decision of the Conference and the majority decision of the Cabinet. No one accepts some Cabinet decisions willingly, but the Prime Minister accepts them as willingly as anyone else. He does not always win. The honourable gentleman talks about me standing the Prime Minister up. Fancy the honourable gentleman standing the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Snedden) up. If the honourable gentleman cannot stand the Leader of the Opposition up, how can he expect me to stand the Prime Minister up? That is a ridiculous proposition.

The honourable gentleman said that under the NEAT scheme the unemployed are given no preference over those who are already in employment. That is not true. It was true at the beginning. In the initial and infancy stages of NEAT a proper distinction was not made between people who were out of work and those who were in work. But it is now being made. Even including those who were accepted at the beginning and who are still being trained, the figures as of now show that 82 per cent of those getting NEAT training are people who are employed at the time.

Mr Malcolm Fraser—What about the anomalies in the allowance?

Mr CLYDE CAMERON—The only way to cure the anomalies in the allowance is to go back to the old system of saying that a married woman should not receive as much as a married man. We do not believe in that. We believe that we have to make a stand against discrimination between the sexes and therefore we are not prepared to discriminate. Reference was made to a widow who loses her widow's pension. Of course
a woman loses her widow's pension if she becomes eligible for $93 a week. We have had no complaint from any widow about losing her widow's pension in order to get training at $93 a week. That was not our law; that is a law that was put on the statute book years ago. In fact, it may have been put on the statute book in the time of the last Labor Government, for all I know. But it has been there for a quarter of a century. It ought to be there and it ought to stay there. It is proper and it should be there.

The total cost of unemployment relief is high, but as I have already indicated it is falling. We are pleased to note the fall that is starting to occur in the raw figures. We anticipate with confidence that the Opposition will now start quoting seasonally adjusted figures.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Berinson)—Order! The Minister's time has expired.

Mr MACPHEE (Balclava) (11.26)—The Minister for Labor and Immigration (Mr Clyde Cameron), in answering the honourable member for Wannon (Mr Malcolm Fraser), has shown that there is great validity in the general criticisms levelled by the honourable member for Wannon. The Minister made what he called a tip when he said that there will be a small decline in raw figures in the February unemployment figures. He also implied that there will be an increase in the seasonally adjusted figures.

The Minister accused the Opposition of switching from raw figures to seasonally adjusted figures as it suits its purposes. It is important to note that when there is a high level of unemployment seasonally adjusted figures have limited validity. When there is a high level of unemployment there is a great distortion in the actual method of calculating seasonally adjusted figures. Therefore, let us deal with this matter on the basis of raw figures. Let us deal with what the Minister has said, namely, that there will be a small decline in raw figures. He said that the small decline would still represent the greatest decline for 10 months. Of course, 10 months goes back to last April and excludes and ignores the fact that traditionally there is a lower level of unemployment in February than at any other time of the year because those persons who had registered as a result of leaving school have since been placed in employment, to acquire newer skills in areas which are not catered for by any adult apprenticeship programs or other adult training programs. Therefore, school leavers traditionally are absorbed rather faster than others who are unemployed. This simply means that the unemployment problem, to which the honourable member for Wannon has referred in six or seven other debates of this nature, continues to be a major problem and it more than justifies the foreshadowed motion of the honourable member that during the recess of this Parliament the matter be examined by a select committee of the House.

The Minister studiously ignored the criticisms made by the honourable member for Wannon regarding the income maintenance scheme. The honourable member pointed out some of the inequities that arise under this scheme. He pointed out that the scheme was introduced as a result of the 25 per cent across the board tariff cuts. He also pointed out that sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between the causes of retrenchments. General Government economic policies have contributed to many retrenchments. Some are bound up directly with the tariff cuts, some indirectly. But it is only those which are directly connected with tariff cuts to which the income maintenance scheme applies. So people who lost their jobs because of the general credit squeeze, the high interest rates, the high taxation rates and the currency revaluations are beyond the relief of this scheme. The scheme was badly conceived and it has been unjust in its application.

If the Minister wants another example of this he can listen to or look at the transcript of the radio program “PM” of 3 March in which a constituent of the honourable member for Banks (Mr Martin)—one of the Labor members in this place—gave a full description of the difficulties which he had in having his application for income maintenance processed. Other examples have come across the table from all members of this House. There are literally thousands of examples of anomalies and injustices which have resulted from the income maintenance scheme being related directly to those displaced by tariff policy and having no regard to other general economic policies. As a result, people on unemployment benefits are discriminated against when compared with their colleagues who are on a figure which represents an average of their 6 months earnings prior to their being retrenched.

The honourable member for Wannon referred towards the end of his speech to several other specific anomalies which were important. I mention another which relates to those people who remained in employment with firms which were affected by the tariff reduction. Overtime was reduced, so those who remained in employment in fact were getting less than the gross average earnings of those who were retrenched. Furthermore, some employees had protection, as the
honourable member for Wannon mentioned, when they had 2 jobs and were retrenched from one of those jobs as a result of tariff policy. We have also had the anomaly of employers being able to give a statutory declaration to employees to enable them to obtain benefits under the income maintenance scheme and the employers themselves not being recognised by the Department of Manufacturing Industry so that they could be similarly compensated as part of the entire structural readjustment program.

The Minister referred with some pride to the fact that the Regional Employment Development scheme has now worked extremely well. I suggest that the Minister should tour the Commonwealth Employment Service Offices where he would get a different story. If he spoke to officers in his own Department as opposed to those in the central offices in his Department he would get a different story about the way in which the program has worked. The Minister did acknowledge in his reply that there were deficiencies in the early stages of all 3 schemes and he did acknowledge that improvements had been made—running repairs one might say—but if anything needs to be underlined it is the fact that the general economic policy, not solely the preserve of the Minister, has contributed to the high unemployment situation and it is urgent that all of the means adopted be examined carefully by a select committee of this House. It is important that the Minister recognise his area of responsibility. It is important that he sees the RED scheme as being really an extension of social security. It is not an employment policy. It has merit as an extension of social security in these difficult times but it is not aimed at curbing unemployment as such. It is really aimed only at relieving the immediate suffering as a result of unemployment.

We also have a problem in the administration of the RED scheme which the Minister must acknowledge in that projects which are approved in certain areas are not approved in other areas. The actual criteria seem to vary almost daily. We have in the RED scheme something which is not a substitute for sound economic policy or sound economic planning. When the famous RED Ministers meet in their centralised decision—making inordinate delays do occur. The Minister has said they do not occur but every member of this House would have come across constituents who have found problems in all of these schemes—administrative delays—and this is largely due to the fact that departmental officers have not been circulated with a statement of policy. There is an absence of guidelines which brings an instability into the administration, an inconsistency of application and there is, particularly under the RED scheme, susceptibility to political pressure. It is one of those problems which the Minister pretends does not exist but if he goes to his offices he will find that it is quite serious.

The Minister by his reference to declared areas acknowledged that there have been deficiencies in the past but I would suggest that the criteria are still vague for the present. One may make similar criticisms regarding the National Employment and Training scheme. There are vague criteria for eligibility for training. Training under the NEAT scheme is really only a very accidental regard for the manpower policy problems. We have situations in which people in some cases are being paid income maintenance because their job has become redundant under tariff policy, yet someone else is being trained under the NEAT scheme to fill the job which has in fact become redundant. We have problems of this nature which underlie the emphasis the Opposition has been placing on the general economic policies of the Government and which show again the ultimate folly of the 25 per cent tariff reduction. There are so many examples that one cannot give them all the time that is available.

I do think it is important to refer to the subject matter of this discussion, that is, the nature and extent of unemployment, the remedies which have been adopted and also to point out that this House will be in recess and these matters will continue to be grave. Even though the Minister may take some comfort from a marginal reduction in unemployment the reduction will be far less than has been the case in any other February in memory. In those circumstances, because of the Minister’s failure to acknowledge the gravity of the situation, his failure to accept the challenge put out by the honourable member for Wannon, I move:

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent the honourable member for Wannon moving that a select committee be appointed for the purposes outlined by the honourable member for Wannon in the matter of public importance which he raised this morning.

The reason for moving that motion is, of course, as I have said, the Minister’s glee at the apparent reduction in unemployment in February which is in fact a reduction comparatively much less than in other months of February and the Minister’s failure to grasp the fact that the various unemployment relief programs have been ill conceived. They have not been conceived as a result of the unpreparedness of the previous Government but they have been ill-considered because of
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policies directly introduced by this Government which have aggravated the employment situation. The Minister has failed to acknowledge the fact that this House will be in recess for 4 weeks.

Mr DALY (Grayndler—Leader of the House) (11.37)—Mr Speaker, as the honourable member has broken an arrangement I move:

That the honourable member be not further heard.

Mr Malcolm Fraser—Mr Deputy Speaker, there was no arrangement made with me or the honourable member concerned.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Berinson)—Order! The question must be put without debate. The question is: 'That the honourable member be not further heard.'

Question put:

That the honourable member for Balaklava be not further heard.

The House divided:

(Mr Speaker—Hon. G. G. D. Scholes)

Ayes .......................... 63

Noes ........................... 58

Majority ........................ 5

AYES
Armitage, J. L.
Barnard, L. H.
Bennett, A. P.
Berinson, J. M.
Bowen, Lionel
Bryant, G. M.
Cairns, F. P.
Cameron, Clyde
Cass, M. H.
Child, G. J. L.
Clayton, G.
Cotes, J.
Cohen, B.
Coillard, F. W.
Connor, R. F. X.
Cope, J. F.
Crean, E.
Cross, M. D.
Dayt, F. M.
Davies, R.
Dawkins, J. S.
Dutch, G. W. A.
Enderby, K. E.
Everingham, D. N.
Fitzpatrick, J.
Fry, K. L.
Fulton, W. J.
Garrick, H. J.
Gee, R. T.
Hayden, W. G.
Hurford, C. J.
Innes, U. E.
Jacobi, J.
Jenkins, H. A.
Johnson, Keith
Johnson, Les
Jones, Charles
Keating, P. J.
Keogh, L. J.
Kein, J. C.
Kilgman, R. E.

NOES
Adermann, A. E.
Bonnett, R. N.
Bourchier, J. W.
Cadman, A. G.
Cairns, Kevin
Calder, S. E.
Chipp, D. L.
Connolly, D. M.
Corbett, J.
Drummond, P. H.
Drye, E. N.
Edwards, H. R.
Elliot, R. J.
Erwin, G. D.
Fairbairn, D. E.
Fisher, P. S.
Forbes, A. J.
Fraser, Malcolm
Garland, R. V.
Giles, G. O'H.
Gorton, J. G.
Graham, B. W.
Hewson, H. A.
Hodges, J. C.
Holten, R. McN.
Howard, J. W.
Hunt, R. J. D.
Hyde, J. M.
Jarman, A. W.
Katter, R. C.
Kelly, C. R.
Kilca, D. J.
King, R. S.
Lloyd, B.
Lucock, P. E.
Lusher, S. A.
Lynch, P. R.
MacKellar, M. J. R.
McLeay, J. E.
McMillan, W.
McVeigh, D. T.

AYES
McAplin, J. M.
Millar, P. C.
Nixon, P. J.
O'Keefe, F. L.
Peace, A. S.
Robinson, Eric
Robinson, Ian
Ruddock, P. F.
Sancclair, J. McC.
Staley, A. A.
Street, A. A.
Sullivan, J. W.
Viner, R. E.
Wentworth, W. C.
Wilson, I. B. C.

Tellers:
Cameron, Donald
England, J. A.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Mr Wentworth—I second the motion.

Mr SPEAKER—Order! The honourable gentleman might wait until I call for a seconder. I call the honourable member for Mackellar.

Mr WENTWORTH (Mackellar) (11.46)—Thank you. I second the motion.

Question (by Mr Daly) put:

That the honourable member for Mackellar be not further heard.

The House divided.

(Mr Speaker—Hon. G. G. D. Scholes)

Ayes .......................... 63

Noes ........................... 58

Majority ........................ 5

AYES
Armitage, J. L.
Barnard, L. H.
Bennett, A. F.
Berinson, J. M.
Bowen, Lionel
Bryant, G. M.
Cairns, F. P.
Cameron, Clyde
Cass, M. H.
Child, G. J. L.
Clayton, G.
Cotes, J.
Cohen, B.
Coillard, F. W.
Connor, R. F. X.
Cope, J. F.
Crean, E.
Cross, M. D.
Dayt, F. M.
Davies, R.
Dawkins, J. S.
Dutch, G. W. A.
Enderby, K. E.
Everingham, D. N.
Fitzpatrick, J.
Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Question put:
That the motion (Mr Macphee's) be agreed to.

The House divided.

(Mr Speaker—Hon. G. G. D. Scholes)

Ayes 58

Noes 63

Majority 5

AYES
Fry, K. L.
Fulton, W. J.
Garrioch, H. I.
Guan, R. T.
Hayden, W. G.
Hurford, C. J.
Innes, J. F.
Jacobi, R.
Jenkins, H. A.
Johnson, Keith
Johnson, Les
Jones, Charles
Keating, P. J.
Keogh, L. J.
Kezin, J. C.
Klugman, R. E.
Lamb, A. H.
Lauchetti, A. S.
McKenzie, D. C.
Martin, V. J.
Mathews, C. R. T.
Morris, P. F.
Morrison, W. L.
Mulder, A. W.
Oldmeadow, M. W.
Patterson, R. A.
Reynolds, L. J.
Riordan, J. M.
Sherry, R. R.
Stewart, F. E.
Thorburn, R. W.
Uren, T.
Wallis, L. G.
Whan, R. B.
Wills, R.
Young, M. J.

Tellers:
James, A. W.
Nicholls, M. H.

AYES
Dernham, A. E.
Bennett, R. N.
Bourchier, J. W.
Cedman, A. G.
Calms, Kevin
Calder, S. E.
Chipp, D. L.
Connolly, D. M.
Corbett, J.
Drummond, P. H.
Drury, E. N.
Edwards, H. R.
Elliott, J. E.
Erwin, G. D.
Fairbairn, D. E.
Fisher, P. S.
Forbes, A. J.
Fraser, Malcolm
Garland, R. V.
Giles, G. O. H.
Gorton, J. G.
Graham, B. W.
Hewison, H. A.

NOES
Howard, J. W.
Hunt, R. J. D.
Hyde, J. M.
Jarman, A. W.
Kamer, R. C.
Kelly, C. R.
Killen, D. J.
Lloyd, B.
Locock, P. E.
Lusher, S. A.
Lynch, P. R.
MacKellar, M. J. R.
McLeay, J. E.
McNab, W.
McVeigh, D. T.
McPhie, A. M.
Miller, P. C.
Nixon, P. J.
O'Keefe, F. L.
Peacock, A. S.
Robinson, Eric
Robinson, Ian
Ruddock, P. M.
Sinclair, I. McC.
Staley, A. A.
Street, A. A.
Sullivan, J. W.
Viner, R. I.
Wentworth, W. C.
Wilson, I. B. C.

Tellers:
Cameron, Donald
England, J. A.

AYES
Hodges, J. C.
Hobbs, R. McN.
Howard, J. L.
Hunt, R. J. D.
Hyde, J. M.
Jarman, A. W.
Kamer, R. C.
Kelly, C. R.
Killen, D. J.
Lloyd, B.
Locock, P. E.
Lusher, S. A.
Lynch, P. R.
MacKellar, M. J. R.
McLeay, J. E.
McMahan, W.
McVeigh, D. T.
Macphee, J. M.
Millar, P. C.
Nixon, P. J.
O'Keefe, F. L.
Peacock, A. S.
Robinson, Eric
Robinson, Ian
Ruddock, P. M.
Sinclair, I. McC.
Staley, A. A.
Street, A. A.
Sullivan, J. W.
Viner, R. I.
Wentworth, W. C.
Wilson, I. B. C.

Tellers:
Cameron, Donald
England, J. A.

AYES
Everingham, D. N.
FitzPatrick, J.
Fry, K. L.
Fulton, W. J.
Garrioch, H. I.
Guan, R. T.
Hayden, W. G.
Hurford, C. J.
Innes, U. E.
Jacobi, R.
Jenkins, H. A.
Johnson, Keith
Johnson, Les
Jones, Charles
Keating, P. J.
Keogh, L. J.
Keizin, J. C.
Klugman, R. E.
Lamb, A. H.
Lauchetti, A. S.
McKenzie, D. C.
Martin, V. J.
Mathews, C. R. T.
Morris, P. F.
Morrison, W. L.
Mulder, A. W.
Oldmeadow, M. W.
Patterson, R. A.
Reynolds, L. J.
Riordan, J. M.
Sherry, R. R.
Stewart, F. E.
Thorburn, R. W.
Uren, T.
Wallis, L. G.
Whan, R. B.
Wills, R.
Young, M. J.

Tellers:
James, A. W.
Nicholls, M. H.

I feel sure that the honourable member has read a document put out by the Department of Labor and Immigration. If he wants to know where the unemployed people are—it seems that that is what he is asking in paragraph (a) of the matter of public importance he has raised—and if he were to put a question to the Minister at any time the Minister could tell the honourable member, simply by quoting from this document, what classification of employees under the metal trades award are out or work, where they are out
Unemployment in Australia

of work, what vacancies exist—town by town, classification by classification, in every State. So the statistical information already exists. Another delightful document put out by the Minister's Department is entitled 'Monthly Review of the Employment Situation'. I recommend to the honourable member for Wannon that he should take the time and have the patience to read that document. I am sure that he would be able to obtain it from the Minister's office without any trouble at all.

What are we really talking about on the whole question of unemployment? In order to look at that, I suppose we need to go to the very core of our whole society. By the term 'core of our whole society' I mean the whole structure and nature of it—the pursuit of profit and the whole capitalist system generally, which seems to be based on the consumption of manufactured goods. Unemployment exists in every country that follows that sort of trend. I can instance Canada, the United States, Italy, Denmark and numerous others. In every single one of those countries unemployment was at a rate higher than the average rate in Australia for the decade 1962 to 1972. So for the Opposition to belabour the point that the present unemployment situation in Australia is the making of the present Government seems to stretch the bounds of credibility a lot. For instance, in January this year unemployment in Canada reached 6.7 per cent; in the United States it was 8.2 per cent; in Italy it was 4.1 per cent; in Denmark it was 6.5 per cent; and in Australia it was 4.1 per cent. I do not say that there is any connection between the figures; I use them merely as an illustration of the fact—this has been said by both the Treasurer (Dr J. F. Cairns) and the Minister for Labor and Immigration—that unemployment is not a phenomenon peculiar to Australia. It is a phenomenon to be found in every capitalist and manufacturing country in the world.

What do we find when we look at the type of people who are unemployed? We find that they are principally people who have no skills. Those people could be used in the community if they had skills, but they have none. We then ask ourselves why they do not have skills. In this regard we can go back longer than the 2 years that Labor has been in office and we can say that the previous Government did nothing to encourage young people to stay at school—they were not given the simple opportunity of staying at school to improve their educational standing under the previous Government—and no encouragement was given to industry to set up apprentice training schemes. So we have in Australia a lack of skilled tradesmen and a great number of unskilled people who just have not had the opportunity to become skilled. We have a shortage of technical teachers in every State of Australia, and particularly in those States that are governed by the Liberal conferences of those who sit opposite. The Labor Government has done everything to correct and overcome those things, but it cannot be done in 5 minutes. We just cannot untangle in 2 years the mess or the web that was left after 23 years of ineptitude.

I think the Minister for Labor and Immigration answered very well the charges in relation to the working of the National Employment and Training scheme. It is giving an opportunity to people who were denied by the previous Liberal Government the opportunity to receive training in skills. The Labor Government is making that sort of opportunity available to them, albeit they are now mature people and they should have had that opportunity when they were young. The honourable member for Wannon said that one of the reasons for delays occurring in the regional employment offices was the lack of staff. It seems that he is in some disagreement with his Leader in this regard because his Leader seems to advocate a cutback in Government spending. The employment of more people would involve an increase in Government spending. I just wanted to point out the difference between an increase and a decrease. So it seems that the Opposition says one thing when the occasion suits it and then turns around and changes it to something of a different vein.

I do not know what regional employment offices the honourable member for Balaclava (Mr Macphee) visits, but the 3 offices that service my area—I do not have a pocket handkerchief electorate—are probably the most efficient in the State. I pay great credit to the staffs working there. They are so efficient that I sometimes think that the Minister must have handpicked them. They are excellent people. They are doing their job very well and their knowledge of the area that they administer is beyond doubt. As a consequence, although I represent an area that is not noted for its millionaires—rather is it noted for people in the unskilled and semi-skilled categories; those who normally find themselves unemployed the quickest—I find that there is no problem. My office is right beside one of the regional employment offices. Over the last 6 months perhaps only one or two people have come and asked me a question about the NEAT scheme; other inquiries have been answered satisfactorily by the officers in the Department.
I reject out of hand the proposition that a select committee should be established, because it could do no more than is being done now. The Government is doing all of the things that a select committee would be asked to do. It seems to me that it would be a duplication of work and it would be an imposition on the time of members if they were to be asked to come together as a committee to consider matters that the Government is not simply considering but is doing. As the Minister has already pointed out, the recently announced figures show that there has been a decrease in unemployment. So, if the Opposition wants to talk about the desirability of new measures to reduce unemployment, I suggest that it talk about its whole philosophy in relation to how our society is structured and about its so-called free enterprise laissez faire proposition. The Opposition should ask itself: 'How do we distribute the wealth created for those who employ the workers?' We do it by employing people and giving them wages for their work. But with the introduction of greater mechanisation and more machinery the need for people to be employed will be less and less. I would be pleased to hear how the Opposition, with its capitalistic outlook, is going to solve that problem.

To say that the Regional Employment Development scheme is not working is to make one of the most untrue statements ever to be made in this House. I was speaking to my very good friend, the honourable member for Swan (Mr Bennett), and he told me that in his area work has been found for 300 people, all of whom are engaged in what would be considered to be community work and an asset to the community. That is not an isolated instance; there are many instances that one could give of the RED scheme providing the funds for essential community projects and, in turn, providing employment for people. So, to suggest that the RED scheme is not working is to make a very misleading statement. The rules as to parliamentary language prevent me from expressing my feelings in stronger terms. In an endeavour to score some political capital out of the situation, it seems that the Opposition is feeding the Australian community this constant line of untruths, but the community will not swallow it. There is little more that can be said about the matter of public importance. It was not put very substantially by either of the speakers who spoke for it. It is very difficult to argue against something that was not put very strongly in the first place. I shall leave it at that and just let the matter lie.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Berinson)—The discussion has concluded.

FISHERIES BILL 1975

Assent reported.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 3) 1974-75
Second Reading

Debate resumed from 4 March on motion by Dr J. F. Cairns:

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr KILLEN (Moreton) (12.8)—Before the time factor interrupted my observations last evening I was proceeding to summarise the lamentable state of the Australian economy and I was drawing attention to the fact that both by accident and by design the present Labor Government has brought this country to the very edge of national bankruptcy—a contention which is not to be lightly resisted, not even by the wiles, the charm and the determination of the Minister for Services and Property (Mr Daly). The fact remains that the Treasurer (Dr J. F. Cairns) today is the most dedicated socialist in the country. The fact remains that the Treasurer today is determined to create a socialist state in his lifetime, and every effort that the honourable gentleman makes is towards that end. Whether or not it be the case that some members of the Government are not thoroughly in an understanding of that goal is beside the point.

The country has been brought to the stage where it is invited to tolerate 300,000 odd of its citizens being out of work. The country today is invited to tolerate with indifference an inflation rate within touch of 25 per cent. The whole fabric of the Australian society today is being rent by profligacy in Government spending and by irresponsibility in management. It is being rent by those who are determined to smash the free enterprise system in Australia and to resort to the establishment of a socialist society. The Minister must realise, as he realises now, that that is the charge which the Opposition presents against him and against the Government of which he is a member.

Dr JENKINS (Scullin) (12.10)—In deference to the desire to have these Bills passed through this House as quickly as possible it is my intention to abbreviate very much the remarks that I had proposed to make. I have expressed myself on a previous occasion on my regard for and concern about the important economic problems from which Australia suffers arising from overseas circumstances. During the parliamentary recess I visited a number of countries. While we
have inflation and unemployment, I am satisfied that we have by far the best inbuilt government mechanisms to soften the effects of these problems. It is with some regret that I have to say that I did not observe any indication of short term improvement in overseas conditions. I feel that the problems will persist for some time.

However, the remarks that the honourable member for Gellibrand (Mr Willis) made on this issue in the House yesterday would bear studying by honourable members. I think he placed this matter on a common sense basis. The base of these Appropriation Bills of course is to provide the finance necessary to deal with the Darwin and Tasman Bridge disasters. These have been dealt with by honourable members closely associated with those areas either in this or in other debates. It is with regard to grants to the States that I want to pass some brief comments. I find it regrettable that the House has very little opportunity in a comprehensive way to discuss the financial relationships between the Australian Government and the State Governments. We do deal with grants Bills in various specific areas, otherwise the amounts that go to the States are allied with other matters such as they are in these Bills.

I note with some regret that the Constitutional Convention which was so widely lauded not so long ago has fallen by the wayside. In the area of State and Federal finances there was much to be done. However, the Senate has obstructed the make-up of the Australian-parliamentary delegation to that Convention and interest seems to have been lost. Every time there are Premiers conferences the Press and media are full of the threats of Federal and State confrontation. This arises from the basic problem of having a system that started with the inception of the Federal Parliament, which saw some few changes in the 1940s and has made very little progress since in the mechanisms that are used. We have not had an opportunity to discuss what submissions were made at the last conference. We certainly have notes on the conference. We have the Prime Minister's opening statement to that conference and we see the results in the amounts that are to be paid to the States. They are amounts which in the main are to try to combat some of the economic and unemployment problems we are suffering from at the moment.

At this stage of the debate and with the necessity for these appropriations to go through, it would be idle of me to try to go through these amounts in detail. They are substantial. They are to work in appropriate areas for relief. Welfare housing, roads, and the question of various council programs for employment are adequately covered. However, I make some comment that we should consider as a Parliament how these amounts are presented in carrying out the works and how it should be known that this Parliament and this Government accept their responsibility in areas. I get a little fed up at times when I see road programs with signs which say: "Your taxes working for you". The States are entirely claiming the credit for such projects. I believe that we should make known just what we are doing. I am not going into the Federal and State relationship too deeply. I use this as a vehicle to express my concern that this whole matter seems to have been dumped in considering the constitutional relationships and the desirable changes. It is about time that we woke up that a lot of our problems are concerned with this area.

I welcome the added appropriations that are made with regard to the National Employment and Training scheme and the national apprenticeship scheme. But allied with this I must speak, with regard to my own electorate, about the amount that is appropriated to assist staffing in those organisations or in the Department of Labor and Immigration which have so much responsibility in these matters. In the electorate of Scullin I have a high content of unskilled and semi-skilled workers and of industries which are allegedly affected by the tariff alterations. The staff of the Commonwealth Employment Service in that area has been under excessive strain in dealing with the problems. The added allocation of finance in the Bills will relieve this strain. I take the opportunity of paying a tribute to the work that the staff has done in recent months.

My friends comments are addressed to the amounts that are to be made available for medical research. Last year a number of workers in the medical research field expressed concern at the funding in those areas. On this occasion a payment of $2m is to be made to the Medical Research Endowment Fund. Both the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research and the Howard Florey Institute of Experimental Physiology in Medicine in Melbourne will receive grants of half a million dollars. I trust that this will go some way towards relieving the concern that was expressed by research workers in the field who make considerable material sacrifice in order to carry out an essential community procedure for the benefit of mankind. I commend the Appropriation Bills to House.

Mr McMAHON (Lowe) (12.19)—Naturally enough, when I had the opportunity to speak on these 2 Bills I asked myself the initial question:
Are these 2 Bills necessary or are they good, bad or indifferent? I had to come to the conclusion, after considerable thought, that they are bad. In other words, they truly reflect the fact that Labor has made a mess of the management of the Australian economy and now has—to use the language that members of the Australian Labor Party would use—to try to indulge in a repair job. But this is not the occasion for a repair job; this is the occasion for a totally new look at the Australian economy to be able to get an all embracing scheme, internally consistent and adapted to meet the need of the times. We do not find that in these 2 Appropriation Bills. In fact, we have been given no explanation about the various measures that the Government intends to take in order to correct the defects in the economy and to get the economy moving along as we of the Opposition would get it moving along, that is, at a very fast pace although not in the immediate future.

Let us look at the history of this matter. It goes back to the mini Budget the Prime Minister (Mr Whitlam) wanted to introduce. Rightly, I believe, the Caucus turned him sideways or, to use perhaps a better expression, stood him on his head. That is not a very elegant way in which to stand up any Prime Minister or to stand down any Prime Minister. Since then we have had the introduction of the last Budget. If ever there was a Budget which should have exercised moderation it was the last Budget, but it provided for an increase in expenditure of close to $3,000m or 32 per cent. Following the introduction of that Budget which went the wrong way we now find that 2 Appropriation Bills which provide for an expenditure of about $601m have been introduced before their time, that 2 more Appropriation Bills will be introduced next month and 2 Supply Bills before the end of the financial year and that later still we will see the introduction of a Budget which will of necessity have to provide about $210m for the Medibank scheme. If ever there has been an indication of a mess and if ever there has been an indication of an inability to control not only a Cabinet of 27 potential Prime Ministers but also a Caucus of 40 or 50 budding Prime Ministers we have it here. This is a clear indication that the Government does not know where it is going. I do not believe that on past experience one could ever come to the conclusion that the Government will get on to the right track. It is certain from all the historical facts that we have before us that if the Government ever does get on the right track there will then be a reversal here and a reversal there—one step forward and 2 steps backwards. That is the background against which we have to look at these 2 Bills.

I would like, if I can, to try to put this matter into perspective economically. I would like to consider the 4 different major problems that this country faces. We should never evade those problems. We must not be diverted by any of the emotion that is generated in the Parliament or the statements that are made by the Prime Minister or other Ministers that seek to divert attention from what is crucial to the success of our economy and to the life style and ability to live well of all Australians. Firstly, I want to look at our growth rate. It presents a miserable picture. This year we will have a failure of growth—a fall in growth—of 3 per cent. Of what consequence will that be? I believe that in terms of lost value of production due to the fall, we will lose opportunities for employment for 150,000 people and that there will be a loss in the real value of production of $1,500m in the year. That does paint a nasty picture and must make people think that the Labor Government has failed and ought to get out of office if it has any concept of integrity or decency. If that does not, nothing will.

But that is only part of the picture because normally we would expect to have a growth rate running at the level of an increase of perhaps 5 per cent per annum—2.5 per cent due to population and 2.5 per cent due to productivity. If one takes into account the total picture—the failures—of the Australian Labor Party to ensure growth of 5 per cent per annum. In stopping the employment from growing and making the unemployment level rise together with the avoidable loss in production because of the failure of growth at the rate, one will find that the total loss in value of production of $4,000m for the year. I believe that the clearest evidence of failure is to be found in these money Bills themselves.

I wish to turn, if I may, to some of the problems that I believe are facing this country and to what ought to be done about them. There can be no doubt that anyone who looks at the figures concerning the way in which the Australian Labor Party is recklessly spending money today is inevitably driven to the conclusion that we will have a deficit of at least $2,720m on the figures as we know them today. I have made that estimate and I believe that I will be shown to be right. I believe that that will be the total deficit and that there will be an internal deficit of probably $2,250m. But that is only as at today I have already mentioned that the Government will need $210m for the Medibank scheme. When
one starts to add up the additional figures one finds that an even greater general deficit of $3,000m is not so much a possibility but, I believe, something that we can consider a reality.

I have no doubt that the Government has been justified in presenting these Appropriation Bills because of its past mistakes in trying to get the economy moving along again at a fast bat by giving incentives for production, and to get people back to work. I agree with that. But no one can deny that a government which runs into chronic deficits in its budgeting and fiscal policy and which continues them for long is creating the atmosphere and the environment in which inflation will run riot and which will take several years to correct. Only today I read an article by Professor Sherfield—perhaps it was taken from a speech he had made—in which he was critical of the Labor Government. He pointed out the great need to ensure that over the course of the next 3 years the government of the day—it is probable that a Liberal-Country Party Government will have to accept this responsibility—must move to a balanced Budget. A deficit of the kind we have at present and the extravagant expenditure of money that is going on at present pose a task that I believe only the Liberal and Country Parties can handle because they alone are capable of producing the kind of Budget I have mentioned. They alone are disciplined enough to ensure that once a decision has been made, the policies will be put into effect. Unless, of course, there are differences that are really substantial a Liberal-Country Party government would ensure the kind of action is taken that would result in movement along the lines recommended by Professor Sherfield. Unless we can get a commonsense and rational approach to the Budget there is no doubt that inflation will remain the area in which our greatest source of concern will arise.

I turn now to the second important problem facing us, that is, the monetary policy of the government in this country. Whenever there is a growth in money supply of the kind we are having, there is necessarily a sowing of the seeds of inflation. The Labor Government has made an enormous mess of the overall fiscal and monetary management of this country. I do not entirely blame it because I think—this is one of the subjects about which I feel very deeply—that neither the Treasury nor the Reserve Bank has been able to present to the Houses of the Parliament, to the Government and to the people of this country consistently worked out policies relating to the money supply and an explanation of what they mean—or, if you like, the impact of change in M1 or M3 according to the definitions they have.

There is a pretty good rule that one should not increase the money supply by more than the growth in the gross national product in real terms with some additional amount relating to potential inflationary forces. Nor should we reduce the money supply below the established base. But what have we found in this respect? We have again seen the misapplication of policies. We have seen one step taken backwards, 2 steps taken forwards and several steps taken all over the place until no one quite knows where the Government is going. We struck the extraordinary position in the September quarter of last year—according to the M3 definition, which takes into account savings bank deposits—that there was a fall in the money base of something of the order of 8 per cent in seasonally adjusted terms. I do not know of any other country that has made a blunder of this kind in the application of general principles relating to the money supply. But the Government was not satisfied with that. It changed direction and went on a spending binge or a spending spree. It had to remove most of the influences that control the money base. We found in December that the money base had increased by something like 22 per cent.

That is the very environment in which a growth in inflationary pressures will flourish. It is the very environment in which the trade unions, which have been a little but only a little reserved in recent days, will see the opportunity to push further their wage claims. They will take no notice of the requests of the Minister for Labor and Immigration (Mr Clyde Cameron) or the Prime Minister to show caution and restraint and not to put in exaggerated wage claims in excess of the capacity of the community to pay. We now know that their idea relating to indexation has been an abysmal failure because the trade unions will not play the game, as has been made clear by the new general secretary of the Amalgamated Metal Workers Union today, and as well by various other union officials.

What puzzles me in regard to the money supply—it may be because of its present attachment to interest rate policy—is that yesterday the Reserve Bank was actually in the market buying back bonds and pumping more money into circulation, which is quite contrary to what you would do if you felt that there must be some restraint, some change of policy relating to excess money supply. The means of controlling money supply must cover the whole waterfront, not only by means of statutory reserve deposits, new and increased advances but also government expenditure. You must also keep a careful watch over
what is happening in the international markets, the inflow or outflow of money and the build-up or fall in our overseas reserves.

I now turn to what I regard as the paramount problem that faces Australia. I think that Professor Sherfield would agree with the policies of my party. Inflation now is running at a rate of 16 per cent, and it is highly improbable that it will remain at that figure for very long, particularly as the Government is adopting policies which, although they might have some influence on unemployment for the time being, must have a serious impact on inflation as the days flow into months and as the months flow into years. According to the most recent figures that have been made available to us there has been an increase to $154 in average male weekly earnings. That is an increase of 28 per cent compared with the figure for this time last year. By now it ought to be more than clear that if there is an increase in average weekly earnings very much in excess of productivity, making some allowance for inflationary pressures, then necessarily there is an inbuilt cost increase which in time will reflect itself in prices, although to a greater degree.

When one looks at the figures one realises that there has been a 28 per cent increase in average male weekly earnings but that the increase in productivity so far this year has been nil. Therefore, one must open up one's mind to the idea that instead of the inflation rate remaining at 16.1 per cent, in all probability it will rise to more than 20 per cent, to 25 per cent or even higher. In order to support that argument I mention to the House one of the other great dangers that we face. In the past year labour costs per unit of production have risen by 35 per cent but non-food consumer production has risen by only 19 per cent. From this cause alone one will find that inevitably there will be another inbuilt pressure stimulating inflation. I think it is generally agreed that with inflation running at the rate to which I have referred there can be no doubt that it will have an unfortunate impact on our production and also on the growth of our unemployment. There will be a failure of employment itself to grow. We all know that employment as such fell substantially in December to an extent that I cannot remember happening previously.

Now I turn to the question of confidence. You cannot get confidence in a community—confidence is one of the basic ingredients of success—when there is a government that does not know where it is going and is not capable of developing a consistent, comprehensive and predictable economic policy. This leaves the business world in a state of uncertainty and indecision about what it should do. The fact that the business community lacks confidence is clearly shown in the statistics which were issued today. There might have been a very small rise in retail sales, although that is dubious, but when you look at the failure that has occurred in private capital investment and at the fall that has occurred in building commencements—probably a small fall in private housing construction, but a fall of 30 per cent in government construction—you are driven relentlessly and remorselessly to the conclusion that we are not over our problems, and we never will get over our problems while the Labor Party is in government.

I conclude by referring to 2 statements that were made by the honourable member for Gellibrand (Mr Willis). Firstly, he referred to the problem of unemployment. When we went out of office the recorded unemployment figure was 88 000 for October, and we were still worried. It had taken us a long time to get the unemployment figures for October down to that level. Now we find an unemployment level of 320 000 and the honourable member for Gellibrand does not express any great dissatisfaction about that figure—none at all. Yet he stood in this chamber and said: 'We have to make international comparisons'. I do not believe that we have to make international comparisons. We have escaped the fury of the oil crisis. We are a country that can largely live unto ourselves. There is no other country in a better position economically and socially to insulate itself from the effects of overseas influences. We can take action domestically and within our own power to ensure that we, more than any other country, with the possible exception of Germany—it seems to be able to perform miracles—are able to ensure that our own people are not unemployed and do not have their standard of living consistently eroded.

Secondly, the honourable member for Gellibrand referred to the question of inflation. Of course it is high time to say that we had a few ups and downs between 1969 and 1972, but the policy actions that we took clearly indicated that we knew how to manage the economy. If one looks at the inflationary figures based on the consumer price index one sees that we had inflation down to 4.5 per cent or 4.6 per cent. If one looks at the implicit price deflator in connection with the national income statements, one sees that we had inflation down to 2.2 per cent. We showed that we could do the job. We showed that we were able to provide the effective type of government that is so desperately needed in this country today. I believe that if we were in government we
would most certainly have ensured that unemployment was down to a reasonable level and that inflation was under control. I believe that if the Government were to take some notice—already it has taken a great deal of notice of what we have said—of a few of the things that I have said today, for example, about budgetary control, the credit squeeze and the necessity to give pretty substantial and long term incentives to the manufacturing, producing and commercial interests in Australia, the country would do well. I hope that the Government will be able to do what I have suggested; I fear it will not. The Government has made too big a mess of this matter to think that it could ever justify itself in the eyes of the Australian people again.

Mr COATES (Denison) (12.38)—Much as I would like to spend some time commenting on the speech of the right honourable member for Lowe (Mr McMahon)—I think that he could have been fair to my colleague the honourable member for Gellibrand (Mr Willis)—I will concentrate my remarks in this debate on Appropriation Bill (No. 4) on the grant to Tasmania in respect of the Tasman Bridge disaster and of the investigation into the proposal to provide a further permanent bridge across the Derwent River. It is probably true to say that not many members in this House and not many people in Australia realise the dire effects of the loss of the Tasman Bridge on all the people of Hobart. The eastern shore of Hobart has been affected much more than the western shore—the eastern shore is represented by the honourable member for Franklin (Mr Sherry)—but the loss of the bridge has had a total effect on the whole community of Hobart. Certainly more people travel to work from the eastern shore of Hobart to the western shore and now they must do so mainly by ferry, but there are people on the western shore, in my electorate of Denison, who must travel to work on the eastern shore. People on the western shore face the problems of travelling to the airport to catch aircraft. Instead of a journey of 10 miles when the bridge was in operation, the trip the long way around is 46 miles. Problems arise also in respect of people who live on one side of the river and who have relatives, perhaps aged relatives in nursing homes, on the other side of the river. They are now psychologically cut off as well as physically cut off from those relatives.

We have heard stories of people who, only days before the bridge collapsed, moved from the western shore to the eastern shore and now wish that they had not done so. It is very hard for people not living in Hobart to realise the intangible effects suffered by people in Hobart. I refer to the psychological problems of reduced mobility resulting from the breaking of the link between the 2 shores. The effect of these psychological problems can be quite deep. I am sure that great social problems will arise in the next few years and until the crossing is restored. I suppose that there are some intangible effects with respect to tourism. There may well be some prospective tourists from the mainland who feel that, because of problems of transport, they should not now go to Hobart. I can assure them that any such problems would be exaggerated in their case as any difficulties would be a once only experience, for instance, in respect of a day trip from the city side to look at places on the eastern shore or to travel to Port Arthur. So, I do not think that any need arises for tourists to be reluctant to come to Hobart while the bridge is not in use.

The response of the Australian Government to the problems of Hobart has not been criticised and I do not think it is possible for it to be criticised. Within hours of the collapse of the Tasman Bridge, a commitment was made that the Australian Government would pick up the tab for any of the costs involved in connection with the disaster and the flow-on financial requirements from that occurrence. That commitment was confirmed at a relatively notional figure of $13m within a few days. Of that sum, $6m is provided in Appropriation Bill (No. 4) 1974-75.

The Department of Defence came rapidly to the rescue. In less than 12 hours of the collapse of this bridge, Navy divers had flown from Sydney and were in the water searching for cars that had driven off the bridge and casualties from the ship and from those cars. A helicopter service was provided by the Department of Defence to enable ambulance cases to be flown across the river. In the early stages following the disaster, the ferry service was entirely unpredictable. Queues, several people wide, extended for up to a mile at times. People must experience such frustrations to understand them. Army landing barges were made available to provide ambulance services across the river for urgent cases and for buses taking children to special schools, retarded children centres and so on.

This Bill makes provision for the temporary crossing that is to be built for essential services. This Bailey bridge will be provided by the Army. The Postmaster-General’s Department reacted very quickly. At least half of the telephone lines across the river were broken by the collapse of the bridge; they were part of the bridge structure. It is now a couple of weeks since those lines were
replaced by submarine cables. That is an example of a ready response to the need which arose. There are other much smaller needs for which responses came, such as the rapid provision of public telephones at the ferry terminals.

The major cost to the Australian Government may well be the repair of the bridge itself, though this depends on the outcome of insurance and possible litigation about it. I do not want to discuss that matter at this stage. The cost of the repair of the bridge if this must be financed by the Government will probably be the major one. The rebuilding of the Old Beach Road is progressing urgently to provide a slightly shorter route from east to west. The distance is still a long way around, but what is more or less a track in places is being upgraded to a highway. That work is ahead of schedule and, hopefully, will be completed before September.

Ferry terminals have been provided by the Tasmanian authorities but the cost associated with this work is being met by the Australian Government which also will meet any losses which might be incurred by those ferry services. At this point, I mention how much the people of Hobart appreciate the fact that the Sullivan’s Cove ferry service was in operation. This service commenced a couple of years ago, more or less as a tourist facility. It did not attract much commuter traffic. Following the collapse of the bridge, the existence of this service was appreciated. Services provided by ferries have been increased by the loan of one ferry, so far, from the New South Wales Government. Soon two more ferries from that source will be operating. These additional services are greatly welcomed.

The need to provide facilities for the ferries is a problem, as is the waiting time for ferries and the unpredictability of services. Timetables took a while to settle down and turn-around problems arose. I urge the Tasmanian Government not to hold back in extending services even if they run at a loss. It is important to provide predictable services, running to a timetable, so that people may catch a ferry at a specified time without needing to arrive half an hour or an hour earlier than that time to make sure that they do catch the ferry on which they wish to travel.

So far, the Australian Government has not refused one proposal from the Tasmanian Government. The Australian Government has agreed to provide money in respect of every proposal which has been put up for funding. There should not be any reluctance on the part of the Tasmanian Government to be quite radical in its proposals to overcome the problems of the people of Hobart, particularly those on the eastern shore, which will present themselves in the next couple of years.

I mention in passing that it would be a good thing if people continued to use the public transport services, that is, the buses and the ferries, when the rebuilding of the bridge is completed. Beneficial results from the increased use of these services have included the easing of traffic problems in Hobart and an easing in pollution levels. I hope that the ferry and co-ordinated bus services will be built up to such an extent that people will want to continue to use them with continuing beneficial effects for Hobart. I am pleased to see that my suggestion earlier that the Elizabeth Street wharf in Hobart be used as a central terminal is to be taken up and that various other proposals will be given effect with the assistance of the Australian Government.

One specific need is the provision of a health centre on the eastern shore. This was originally proposed by us in 1973. Problems have arisen including difficulties in negotiations with the medical profession. I hope that once again these inhibitions will not affect the State Government and that it will press ahead with the provision of a proper medical centre on the eastern shore so that services which are presently not available there can be provided.

There is much more that I would like to say about the Bills in general and about the proposed expenditure in regard to Hobart. The Government’s urgent humanitarian response to the problem cannot be criticised. I hope that the Opposition will support this measure so that money can be provided to reimburse the Tasmanian Government for all the costs associated with the Tasman Bridge disaster. Once again I urge the Tasmanian Government not to hold back in putting up proposals. The decisions and initiatives for proposals must come from the State Government. It is not for us to impose our proposals on it. Bearing in mind the record of the acceptance of proposals which have been put to us so far, I think the Tasmanian Government should keep putting up proposals for us to agree to. I think that such proposals will meet with a sympathetic response.

Mr KING (Wimmera) (12.51)—I thank the honourable member for Denison (Mr Coates) for cutting his time to allow me to say a few words on the Appropriation Bills before the final decision on them is made by the House. I take this opportunity to say to the honourable member that he has little fear that there will be any
The opposition from this side of the House in relation to the question that he has just been discussing. I think I can say with confidence that all members on this side join with him in their concern with the problems of his State and also with the problems that have resulted from the Darwin disaster.

In the few minutes available to me I want to speak basically to Appropriation Bill (No. 3). The appropriations for the Department of Labor and Immigration indicate that over $142m will be spent by the Department under subdivision 3., item 15. 'Structural Adjustment Assistance—Income Maintenance', and item 16, 'Regional Employment Development Scheme'. This part of the legislation naturally concerns me. Speaker after speaker on the Government side has compared this country with other countries. They seem to forget that a few years ago Australia was in the very fortunate position of having very low inflation and comparatively low unemployment. Whenever reference is made to inflation or unemployment today Government supporters seem to pick the country with the highest rate of inflation or unemployment and say: 'Well, we are better than that'. There is no doubt that if this Government continues in office both of these situations will deteriorate rather rapidly. The true value of the dollar, of course, is what the dollar will buy. I am amused that the Government should continue to claim that wages have increased at a greater rate than community prices because if this is the case someone has to make up the difference somewhere along the line. I can give a good example of where I think the difference lies. One can see where the difference lies if one has a close look at the report of the Australian Bureau of Statistics for January 1975. I seek leave to have incorporated in Hansard half of page 9 of this report.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Drury)—Is leave granted? There being no objection, leave is granted.

(The document read as follows)—

**TABLE 5.—CONSUMER PRICE INDEX**

**PARTICULARS FOR GROUPS, SUB-GROUPS AND SPECIAL GROUPINGS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONTHLY INDEX NUMBERS</th>
<th>SEPTEMBER QUARTER 1974</th>
<th>DECEMBER QUARTER 1974</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE CHANGE SINCE SEPTEMBER QUARTER 1974</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food Group</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cereal products</td>
<td>167.7</td>
<td>180.6</td>
<td>+7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy products</td>
<td>139.8</td>
<td>148.6</td>
<td>+6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preserved fruit and vegetables</td>
<td>133.1</td>
<td>138.3</td>
<td>+3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes and onions</td>
<td>338.9</td>
<td>267.6</td>
<td>-21.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft drinks, ice cream and confectionery</td>
<td>173.3</td>
<td>183.7</td>
<td>+6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat</td>
<td>166.1</td>
<td>155.3</td>
<td>-6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beef</td>
<td>154.5</td>
<td>141.0</td>
<td>-8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutton</td>
<td>189.5</td>
<td>160.3</td>
<td>-15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamb</td>
<td>175.7</td>
<td>150.6</td>
<td>-14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pork</td>
<td>163.3</td>
<td>171.9</td>
<td>+8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processed meat (e)</td>
<td>153.1</td>
<td>151.7</td>
<td>-0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snacks, take away food (f)(g)</td>
<td>(115.0)</td>
<td>(119.4)</td>
<td>+3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other food</td>
<td>131.9</td>
<td>137.3</td>
<td>+4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Group</td>
<td>161.9</td>
<td>161.6</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clothing and Drapery Group</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predominantly summer seasonal (h)</td>
<td>151.7</td>
<td>187.9</td>
<td>+23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predominantly winter seasonal (i)</td>
<td>169.5</td>
<td>169.5</td>
<td>+0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predominantly non-seasonal (j)</td>
<td>152.6</td>
<td>160.1</td>
<td>+4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footwear</td>
<td>190.4</td>
<td>199.4</td>
<td>+4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing and Drapery Group</td>
<td>161.1</td>
<td>172.8</td>
<td>+7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housing Group</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent, privately owned dwellings (j)</td>
<td>173.0</td>
<td>180.3</td>
<td>+4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent, government owned houses</td>
<td>157.1</td>
<td>160.7</td>
<td>+2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home ownership (k)</td>
<td>179.1</td>
<td>190.9</td>
<td>+6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House price and repairs and maintenance</td>
<td>175.1</td>
<td>186.1</td>
<td>+6.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mr KING—This table clearly indicates just where the difference lies. It shows those areas that are making a profit and those that are making a loss. The table shows that there was an increase in cost of 3.8 per cent for all groups in the December quarter. But what do we find if we look at the food group which is an important sector we cannot get away from? We find that this group did not show an increase, but rather a decrease. The percentage change between the September quarter and the December quarter was minus 0.2 per cent.

Naturally enough one should then look at what sectors are being penalised. As I have pointed out, the appropriation for the Department of Labor and Immigration is $142m which virtually will be used for unemployment purposes. This money basically is to go to former employees of secondary industry. But there are many other sections of the community that completely miss out. I refer in particular to the food producing areas. There is no appropriation at all for assistance under the Department of Agriculture in the Bill. The figures of the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that the returns to the potato industry, for example, have dropped by 21 per cent. Onions are in the same position. Meat has shown a drop of 6.5 per cent and beef of 8.7 per cent.

This does not give a true reflection of the overall situation that has existed because a report of the Department of Agriculture on meat prices put out on 13 February 1974 for the sales held on 6 February 1975, as compared with sales almost exactly 12 months before, shows that the price of bullocks has dropped from 84c to 26c a kilogram; vealers from 90c to 30c a kilogram, lamb from 97c to 48c a kilogram; and mutton from 44c to 10c a kilogram. This gives a clear indication of the difficulty which is facing this industry. These are the matters about which I am concerned. Prices in the United States of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group and sub-Group</th>
<th>September quarter 1974</th>
<th>December quarter 1974</th>
<th>Percentage change since September quarter (d)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local government rates and charges</td>
<td>185.4</td>
<td>199.2</td>
<td>+7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Group</td>
<td>174.8</td>
<td>184.3</td>
<td>+5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Supplies and Equipment Group—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuel and light</td>
<td>130.5</td>
<td>133.6</td>
<td>+2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>128.5</td>
<td>131.8</td>
<td>+2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas</td>
<td>132.4</td>
<td>132.7</td>
<td>+0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (1)</td>
<td>137.7</td>
<td>146.8</td>
<td>+6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household appliances</td>
<td>110.3</td>
<td>113.3</td>
<td>+2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture and floor coverings</td>
<td>171.2</td>
<td>180.3</td>
<td>+5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other household utensils, sundries and stationery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal requisites and proprietary medicines</td>
<td>150.1</td>
<td>156.8</td>
<td>+4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Supplies and Equipment Group</td>
<td>138.9</td>
<td>143.7</td>
<td>+3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous Group—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fares (m)</td>
<td>172.9</td>
<td>184.8</td>
<td>+6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor oil</td>
<td>156.6</td>
<td>163.9</td>
<td>+4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goods (a)</td>
<td>139.5</td>
<td>144.7</td>
<td>+3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services and charges (o)</td>
<td>207.1</td>
<td>222.3</td>
<td>+7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cigarettes and tobacco</td>
<td>167.9</td>
<td>167.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beer</td>
<td>155.1</td>
<td>159.7</td>
<td>+3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wines and spirits (f)</td>
<td>(117.6)</td>
<td>(122.6)</td>
<td>+4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postal and telephone services</td>
<td>141.1</td>
<td>171.5</td>
<td>+21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers and magazines</td>
<td>171.7</td>
<td>189.1</td>
<td>+10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational goods and services (f) (p)</td>
<td>(112.2)</td>
<td>(115.4)</td>
<td>+2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health services (q)</td>
<td>(167.9)</td>
<td>(179.1)</td>
<td>+6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services (s)</td>
<td>223.1</td>
<td>238.1</td>
<td>+6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous Group</td>
<td>167.7</td>
<td>176.1</td>
<td>+5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Groups</td>
<td>162.0</td>
<td>168.1</td>
<td>+3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Groups—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excluding food group</td>
<td>161.9</td>
<td>170.4</td>
<td>+5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excluding housing group</td>
<td>160.1</td>
<td>165.6</td>
<td>+3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goods component (t)</td>
<td>156.8</td>
<td>161.3</td>
<td>+2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services component (t)</td>
<td>183.3</td>
<td>195.8</td>
<td>+6.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
America have dropped by about 50 per cent. Prices in the European Economic Community countries and the United Kingdom have remained fairly steady. But there has been no assistance whatever for this type of industry in Australia. I appeal to the Treasurer (Dr J. F. Cairns) and the Minister for Labor and Immigration (Mr Clyde Cameron) to have a look at this matter.

I claim that there are three different groups of people under the present system. The first group is made up of people who have been officially affected by the Government’s decisions. I refer basically to people who were employed in the textile industry and who are entitled to receive what I classify as redundancy payments or income maintenance on the basis of their earnings over the previous 6 months. The second group is made up of people who happen to be thrown out of work for some reason that is not directly associated with the Government’s decisions. We all know that unemployment today has been caused by Government decisions and that some people have been affected more directly than others. However, the people who are not as directly affected do not qualify for redundancy payments and their unemployment relief drops back to $31 a week. So far so good.

I now move to the third group. I classify it as the self-employed group which is made up of small businessmen and farmers. What do the people in this group get if anything happens to their industry? If one looks at the Appropriation Bill one can see that they get absolutely nothing. People in this group who are unemployed have to qualify under some form of means test before they can get anywhere. I urge the Government to have a very close look at this situation because things have changed so dramatically in recent times, particularly in the meat and beef industries. People in these industries are now finding themselves in a very serious crisis. The Minister for Northern Development (Dr Patterson) is wrong when he says that he has tried to do everything that the cattlemen’s association has asked for.

I put these matters before you, Mr Deputy Speaker, so that the Government can give consideration to them. I hope that it does so, because they are urgent matters. I have to restrict my remarks because of the limited amount of time available to me. There are a couple of other matters that I think require some urgent attention as well. One of them relates to social security. But this side of the House is prepared to support the appropriations, fully realising, of course, the importance of some of the matters that have been raised in this chamber—namely, the Darwin disaster, the Tasman Bridge disaster and the need for funds to continue to be made available for unemployment relief.

Mr ADERMANN (Fisher)—Mr Speaker—

Motion (by Mr Nicholls) put:

That the question be now put.

The House divided.

(Mr Speaker—Hon. G. G. D. Scholes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AYES</th>
<th>54</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOES</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Majority** 1
Mr SPEAKER—Order! The result of the division is: Ayes 54; noes 55.

Opposition members—Hooray!

Mr SPEAKER—Order! Honourable members could wait until I have finished announcing the result of the division. The question is resolved in the negative. The debate will continue.

Sitting suspended from 1.12 to 2.15 p.m.

Mr Innes—I wish to make a personal explanation.

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

Mr Innes—Yes, Mr Speaker. Prior to the suspension of the sitting—

Mr Donald Cameron—I rise on a point of order.

Mr SPEAKER—Order! This is a personal explanation and it is something that should be settled immediately.

Mr Donald Cameron—The honourable member cannot interrupt another honourable member who already has the call.

Mr SPEAKER—Order! There has been a division. If the honourable member for Melbourne will resume his seat I will call the honourable member for Fisher now and call him later.

Mr ADERMAN (Fisher) (2.16)—Mr Speaker, the Government apparently is already becoming tired and its support is dwindling. We saw evidence of this prior to the luncheon break. These Appropriation Bills are necessary at this time because of 2 considerations. Firstly, they are necessary to provide funds for the commencement of the huge job of reconstruction in devastated Darwin and also as a result of the disaster in Tasmania. But, secondly they are necessary because of the devastation brought to this country by the incompetency and gross economic mismanagement of the Prime Minister (Mr Whitlam) who is more enamoured of the festivities and banquets in the glittering halls of the world than he is concerned by the empty cupboards and the bare tables in Australia, which he sometimes visits.

The Opposition and I personally would like to pay tribute to the courage of the people of Darwin and the tremendous spirit they have shown as even amidst the ruin and devastation they have determined that Darwin will be rebuilt. We pay tribute, too, to the splendid and unselfish service of General Stretton who symbolised that courage and that determination in the very fine role he undertook. We pay the highest tribute also to our colleague, Mr Sam Calder, the honourable member for the Northern Territory, whose service and sacrifice in the service of the battered city of Darwin has been magnificent and has been an inspiration. My colleague, the shadow Minister for the Northern Territory, Mr Katter, was in Darwin within a few hours showing that courage and strength for which he is widely known.

We recognise the immediate and effective role played by the Government, particularly under the direction of the Deputy Prime Minister (Dr J. F. Cairns) and assure him that this appropriation for Darwin reconstruction has our full and complete support and will be passed without any delay. Among the appropriations for Darwin the sum of $1m was sought for finance to small businessmen enabling them to resume operations. This has our endorsement as small businessmen play such a vital and very great role in the economy and the life of every town and city. I do appeal to the Treasurer, however, to ensure that this assistance will be meaningful, not hedged about with massive delay and red tape and not negated with shocking interest rates and stiff repayment schedules. Help of this nature is of no use at all and the finance cannot be used unless interest and redemption are reasonable, fair and within reach.

Nor does the Opposition put any impediment or delay in the way of appropriation for reconstruction in the wake of the Tasmanian bridge disaster. Unlike our omniscient Prime Minister we will await the findings of the commission of inquiry before we make any comment on the causes of the disaster. We endorse the proposed assistance to meet the huge cost of material damage which was the result. Nor do we for a moment protest at other provisions in these Bills. One provides $4m for hostel accommodation for the aged. We endorse that. It provides $4.5m for nursing homes and domiciliary nursing care for veterans. We endorse that also and these provisions will be supported. We will co-operate in expediting these provisions because the pensioners, the unemployed and so many others with no economic security are the ones who are bearing the suffering, the misery and the need which has stemmed from the unconcern and neglect of the Prime Minister who, not so long ago, was promising them Utopia. We are concerned about the survival and
Appropriation Bill (No. 3)

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support of these people, although as we are well aware the Prime Minister's only concern is for his own miserable political survival.

There is provision in these Bills for money for the Regional Employment Development scheme and the National Employment and Training scheme—which is not all that neat—and structural assistance. We will support these appropriations because if we did not we would be committing the same act of blatant betrayal and callous unconcern towards the hundreds of thousands of unemployed Australians whom this Prime Minister and his ally, the Minister for Labor and Immigration (Mr Clyde Cameron), have thrown on to the dole lines after promising so vehemently that it would not happen. Unfortunately, they will provide jobs only to about 21,000 unemployed. Our sorry record in Australia is that more than 300,000 Australians have lost their jobs, their security, their aspirations and their ambitions.

These things have been destroyed because this Government and this Prime Minister are too busy prattling about elections and conventions which they do not observe anyhow, strangling the democratic parliamentary institution, manipulating Senate vacancies and piling up a lot of Socialist Bills in a double dissolution frenzy. Indeed, if it were the Prime Minister who had to bear the odium, the misery and the suffering for his autocratic actions and his miserable failures, the Government would not get this appropriation but because so many Australians have to suffer privation, misery and loss which he has caused, we are very concerned. We will pass this legislation because if the Prime Minister does not care we most certainly do. We will expedite the passage of these Bills because already every Opposition member is being inundated with tragic complaints that service payments and unemployment benefits have not been received and delays of seven or eight weeks are occurring regularly. Almost invariably those who suffer these delays are in real need. Some are destitute. Apparently this Government and its illustrious leader who seek to take over the role and pedestal of Zeus does not care how they survive. How on earth can they buy food and the bare necessaries of life with delays like this. Thus, we will pass these Bills and pass them quickly so that we will not be a party to the cavalier treatment this Government is dishing out to so many Australians who are in such desperate need.

The need for the RED scheme and all the others arises from the miserable bungling of this Government which regards unemployment as a mere statistic. It does not seem to understand or care that its effect is measured in broken lives, human suffering, destruction of self-respect and dignity, and even the crying of hungry children. If it did, it would not be so intent on prodigal spending sprees for its own propaganda and aggrandisement but would be seeking to alleviate the misery that it has caused. Indeed, the Prime Minister seeks to compare himself with that great Australian, Sir Robert Menzies. He has not the capacity or the integrity of Sir Robert and even the eyebrows and the hair are but a pale imitation of Sir Robert. But the crucial difference is that Sir Robert was a great leader and statesman with complete loyalty to his colleagues. The present Prime Minister, of course, is completely dissimilar in that and every other respect.

The Treasurer's speech traversed in great detail the Darwin situation. I have noted—I record again—our recognition of his own personal, instant and energetic involvement and supervision of Darwin in the absence of the Prime Minister who was inspecting other ruins in other countries. But the Treasurer failed and continued to fail in the rest of his speech and at all times to face up to a debate on the economy. He failed, for example, to identify who is not telling the truth—the Prime Minister who now espouses what he once called economic vandalism and states that Government expenditure will be curtailed, or the Ministers who are increasing spending and who say that there will be no curtailment in their departments. Darwin and Tasmania must have the help provided in this appropriation even though it is outside the Budget. But is it not reasonable, because this need has arisen and must have top priority, that there should be an examination of lesser priorities to see where adjustments can be made to meet the Darwin needs without just increasing our already record deficit or feeding inflation? Darwin will need more. The Opposition recognises this and supports it.

Does the Treasurer not think that this should be anticipated and planned for, and that lesser priorities might have to give way at least in the short term? After all, the Prime Minister set something of a precedent by commissioning the Coombs report which redirected priorities. That was a disaster of a report and contributed to the mess which we are in because the Government was gullible enough to swallow it whole. But if Ministers continue to trumpet forth their grandiose schemes and if the Prime Minister was just talking through his hat when he spoke of deferrals in spending——

Mr James—He does not wear a hat.
Mr ADERMANN—No, he could not get one to fit. Darwin will be left short, its reconstruction will be prolonged, and agreements and promises will be varied or deferred, as this Government is continually doing. The Opposition will support these Appropriation Bills although the Prime Minister is in a hysteria about Supply, conventions and elections. If he claims he has a mandate to govern let him begin to give leadership and let him get down to the business of governing because that is the basis on which any judgment will be made, the basis on which the people of Australia will decide. If he did, he would not have to worry about his nightmares, awaking every night in a fever of perspiration and crying out: ‘Supply’, ‘Appropriation’, ‘Double dissolution’. These Appropriation Bills are urgent and necessary. The Opposition will not delay them. It will give them its full support.

Mr Calder—Mr Speaker—

Motion (by Mr Daly) put:

That the question be now put.

Mr SPEAKER—Is a division required? The House will divide.

(The bells being rung)—

Mr Calder—Mr Speaker, this Bill affects Darwin to a tremendous extent.

Mr SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member will resume his seat.

(Mr Speaker—Hon. G. G. D. Scholes).

Ayes .......................... 62
Noes .......................... 55

Majority .......................... 7

AYES

Armstrong, J. L.
Barnard, L. H.
Bennett, A. F.
Berinson, J. M.
Bowen, Lionel
Bryant, G. M.
Cairns, J. F.
Cameron, Clyde
Cass, M. H.
Child, G. J. L.
Clayton, G.
Coates, J.
Cohen, B.
Collard, F. W.
Connor, R. F. X.
Cope, J. F.
Crean, F.
Crom, M. D.
Daly, F. M.
Davies, R.
Dawkins, J. S.
Duthie, G. W. A.
Enderby, K. E.
Eveningham, D. N.
Findlay, J.
Fry, K. L.
Fulton, W. J.

NOES

Ademan, A. E.
Bennett, R. N.
Bourchier, J. W.
Cahill, Daniel
Cairns, Kevin
Calder, S. E.
Chipp, D. L.
Connolly, D. M.
Corbett, J.
Drummond, P. H.
Drury, E. N.
Edwards, H. R.
Ellicott, R. J.
Fairbairn, D. E.
Fisher, P. S.
Forbes, A. J.
Fisher, Malcolm
Garrick, H. J.
Gargan, W. G.
Haldane, C. J.
Hales, U. E.
Jacobi, R.
Jealott, H. A.
Johnston, Keith
Johnson, Les
Jones, Charles
Keating, P. J.
Keogh, L. J.
Ken, J. C.
Klugman, R. E.
Lamb, A. H.
Lachoniti, A. S.
McKenzie, D. C.
Martin, V. J.
Mathews, C. R. T.
Morris, P. F.
Morrison, W. L.
Mulder, A. W.
Oldmeadow, M. W.
Pattenos, R. A.
Reynolds, L. J.
Ricard, J. M.
Sherry, R. H.
Thorburn, K. W.
Uren, T.
Wallis, L. G.
Whan, R. B.
Williams, R.
Young, M. J.

Tellers:

James, A. W.
Nicholls, M. H.

PAIRS

Whitlam, E. G.
Beazley, K. E.

Snedden, B. M.
Anthony, J. D.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Original question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Leave granted for third reading to be moved forthwith.

Motion (by Dr J. F. Cairns) proposed:

That the Bill be now read a third time.

Mr CALDER (Northern Territory) (2.35)—When I rose before to speak on the Appropriation Bill (No. 3) the Leader of the House (Mr Daly), in a typically unsympathetic manner—

Mr McMahon—Mr Speaker, I draw your attention to the conduct of the Minister for Social Security (Mr Hayden) and other people who are gossiping over there.

Mr SPEAKER—Order! I ask honourable gentlemen to resume their seats. There are members on both sides of the chamber doing the same thing. I did not want to interrupt the honourable member for the Northern Territory and take up his time. I ask honourable gentlemen to resume their seats.
Mr CALDER—I was speaking about the performance of the Leader of the House in gagging me. This Bill means more to my electorate than to anyone else’s electorate. I was about to thank the Deputy Prime Minister (Dr J. F. Cairns) for the way in which he and the Minister for the Northern Territory (Dr Patterson) performed immediately after the Darwin disaster. In fact, since he is in the House I thank the Deputy Prime Minister personally for assisting me and some 12 or 15 Darwin citizens to get to Darwin in an aeroplane in which he was proceeding north with the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Snedden) on Boxing Day. It was his efforts alone that got me to the scene of the disaster, and those efforts were appreciated by me and by my electorate. I say also that the way the Deputy Prime Minister handled the situation in Darwin was a great credit to him and to the Government.

I have noticed that the debate on this Bill proceeded for 150 minutes. That works out at 15 seconds of debate for each million dollars involved. I mentioned earlier that the debate was gagged. It is the third gag motion moved within 2 days, and it is the twelfth gag motion for the year. But I am not here to dwell on that at any great length. I just wanted it brought to the notice of the House. An appropriation of $100m is involved in this Bill, which I thoroughly support. We on this side of the House support it. The appropriation is concerned with 2 major disasters.

The Government is to be deplored for its handling of the economy and the amount of money that it is seeking to appropriate by means of this Bill. It has made so many mistakes in the running of the economy that it now has to buy its way out of the situation in which it finds itself. However, I wish to discuss that part of the Bill which concerns Darwin. I mention the fact that the Bill provides for assistance to be given to small businesses to allow them to get going again. A considerable amount of money—I think it is $1m—is made available for this purpose. One of the main things in relation to the reconstruction or rehabilitation of Darwin is concerned with the morale of the people involved. This Bill goes a long way in assisting the people who are willing to return to build Darwin again. That assistance will be provided not only for the construction people but also for the citizens—the family men and women and their children. They are going to live a particularly hard life under tropical conditions for the next two or three years until the town emerges, as it will emerge, once again not only as our greatest gateway in the north but also, I would hope, as one of Australia’s greatest cities. We have a chance to do the job properly. I am certain that the Government will take that opportunity and give great assistance, just as it gave prompt and good assistance before this Bill was introduced and as is instanced by this Bill.

I would like to mention 2 points only. One concerns the financial assistance that has been provided to Darwin—I have made representations about this matter before—and the confidence of the citizens and business people returning to Darwin. I suggest and hope that the Government will consider very seriously the granting of tax holidays or assistance not only in relation to income tax but also in relation to sales tax. There is so much to be bought for the rebuilding program. I know that the Darwin Reconstruction Commission will be able to buy goods tax free, but the ordinary private citizen or the businessman, when he goes back to that devastated area, will need that sort of incentive. If he has to pay full tax on the things he needs to get going again, I feel that he just might not have the will to see it through or he might not have the financial strength to see it through. So I ask the Treasurer (Dr J. F. Cairns) to have a very hard look at this matter. It is one means by which inflation will not be aggravated. There has been a suggestion that a disability loading of $55 a head will be paid to people who are living and working in Darwin. I believe that a reduction in or an alleviation of the tax paid by these people would assist them to a far greater degree than would raising the level of their wages.

One other matter I wish to raise is the fact that there has been a move in Darwin for some 12 months now to establish a free port. Darwin is an utterly devastated city. Even the port itself has been damaged extensively. It is reckoned that it will take about 6 months to put the iron ore export loading facility back into working condition—that is if the iron ore company were in a position to work it. However, it is not, and the reason why it is not, to my way of thinking, is the Government’s policy on freights on the Frances Creek line. But the Darwin port itself took a battering, just as the town did. Situated where it is, Darwin is virtually an island, even though it is on the mainland. It is situated 950-odd miles from Alice Springs and a similar distance from Mount Isa. There is no major city anywhere in the area. If one can think of Hong Kong as being a free port and an island, I am certain that one can apply the same sort of thinking to a place such as Darwin.

We have to find industries and business and to create confidence. The adoption of this proposal
would assist in a major way in this matter. If we were able to do this, Darwin’s business activity would be rehabilitated in quite a short time. Also, the opening up of the uranium province at Ranger, which is only 100 or so miles away, would assist in Darwin’s rehabilitation. The opening of the Frances Creek mine would help because its ore goes through Darwin. As far as the uranium project is concerned, all of its personnel and supplies would pass through Darwin. These are the sorts of things at which I am asking the Government to look in speaking to the motion for the third reading of this Appropriation Bill. The free port might take a year or 2 years to establish but I think that the Government should look very hard at this proposal and should also look at any other business that could be established in the area. The people of the north are very well known for their initiative and guts and their ability to get on with the job. If they are given the chance to rehabilitate themselves they certainly will. I finish my remarks with that thought: Give the Darwin people something in the way of business incentive to carry on with and they will greatly assist in their own rebuilding and rehabilitation.

Mr JARMAN (Deakin) (2.46)—I will be very brief because I know the Government has a heavy schedule ahead of it this afternoon. It wants to get through its program. I had intended to speak on the second reading of the Bill but it was not possible. However, there is one provision of the Bill to which I specifically want to refer, and that is in respect of research assistants for members of Parliament. I think it is 21 years since the Menzies Government first provided an electorate office for members of the House of Representatives and senators and provided a secretary to staff that office. It was a great step forward and gave constituents easier access, through the secretary, to their member. It also removed some of the pressure from the member’s unpaid secretary, namely, his wife.

Few people realise how much the wives of members contribute to the work their husbands do on behalf of constituents. They get little or no recognition for this work apart of course from that given by their husbands—or at least one would hope so. When I was in Washington several years ago I was amazed to find that back bench members of the United States House of Representatives are supplied with a suite of offices and a staff of twelve. I would be the last to suggest that every member of the Australian House of Representatives should have a staff of such size, but I do applaud the Minister for Services and Property (Mr Daly) for making available under this legislation a research assistant or extra secretarial assistant, whichever the member finds is most needed to help him in his work.

Since the Minister took over this portfolio in 1973 he has done much in the provision of facilities and equipment for members, thus enabling them to do their work more efficiently. All honourable members know how much electoral work has increased in recent years. This latest provision of a research officer is sorely needed. It is a great pity that several journalists twisted the whole intention of this added assistance—made, mind you, to improve service to our constituents—into claiming that it was a payment to members’ wives. All I can say to such journalists is that what members’ wives do to assist their husbands they do willingly. They neither expect nor get any remuneration or payment for what they do. I thank the Minister for Services and Property for the extra assistance he has given to honourable members to help their constituents. I think that should be said in this debate when this Bill is being passed.

Mr DONALD CAMERON (Griffith) (2.48)—I would like to join with the honourable member for Deakin (Mr Jarmann) in congratulating the Minister for Services and Property (Mr Daly) for his efforts to give honourable members of this House a research worker. I draw to the attention of the House the concluding paragraph of a Brisbane ‘Courier Mail’ editorial dated 27 February in which it is said that this provision is extravagant and that backbench members should be able to do their own research as they have for almost 75 years. About 75 years ago a copy of the Brisbane ‘Courier Mail’, as did a copy of the Melbourne ‘Herald’ and other newspapers, cost a penny each. It would be appropriate for me to say that the Queensland newspaper group or the Herald group should be able to sell a newspaper for a penny as they did 75 years ago.

Why editors must continually attack members of Parliament I do not understand. I can appreciate that at times we are deserving of critical comments, but the volume of work in recent years has increased dramatically. As the Minister told the House the other day, in 1944 members of Parliament were given their first secretary. Now we are to be given a research assistant, some 31 years later. If the editors had any understanding of the volume of work which comes on to our tables here in Canberra and in our electorate offices they would not be so fast in shooting from the hip. In conclusion, I say to the person who
wrote this editorial, which reeks of misunderstanding, that if he walks into the Press Gallery and Press offices upstairs he will find that most of the Press men, his colleagues here in Canberra, complain about the fact that they can no longer keep up with the volume of work. One Press man I spoke to about the editorial said: ‘What is he talking about in Queensland? We even have research officers to help us in our duties’.

Mr SPEAKER—Order! At this stage I think I ought to tell honourable members that I gave the honourable member for the Northern Territory a lot of latitude. This is a third reading debate. I will not allow it to develop into a second reading debate.

Mr KATTER (Kennedy) (2.50)—I propose to speak very briefly on one particular item in the appropriations. Both of my colleagues have referred to the provision of research assistants and I should like to say to the Minister for Services and Property (Mr Daly), who is responsible for giving us the special advantage of additional secretarial assistance, just how significant it is in an electorate such as Kennedy, Kalgoorlie and many other vast electorates. The particular problems in such electorates include a huge amount of mail and inquiries because obviously branches of government departments do not exist in such areas to handle the inquiries. I have a secretary who works at least two or three nights a week and almost every weekend. I would say to the Minister, in his presence, that this provision is probably the most substantial contribution made to the efficient operation of an electorate and to give the people, particularly in remote areas where they do not have the advantage of being able to telephone a government department, a new era of representation. It will make it infinitely easier to give them effective representation. I place on record my appreciation of what I think is probably the greatest advance made—I stress again—to efficient representation for outlying areas.

Mr DALY (Grayndler—Minister for Services and Property) (2.52)—Mr Speaker, if I may claim your indulgence on the third reading of this Bill for a few moments, I should like to express my thanks to the honourable members who have spoken on this important aspect of parliamentary representation. Like other honourable members I appreciate the assistance that there will be. I regret that the Press has not treated the question fairly and objectively, as was mentioned by honourable members opposite, but has sought to degrade it under the impression that it was an extra $7,000 rise for members of the Parliament. That is completely false. Federal members with huge electorates or city electorates who are assisted by 2 secretaries are still a long way under the American standard of about 16 staff. I am grateful for the comments that have come forward and I shall try to consider constructive suggestions that might improve the way in which such assistance could be utilised in country districts. Naturally I have enjoyed these speeches more than any others in the debate. I take this opportunity of congratulating the honourable member for Griffith (Mr Donald Cameron) on his win just before lunch. I sincerely trust the honourable member for Kennedy (Mr Katter) wins the Flynn pre-selection ballot under the new boundaries.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a third time.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

Mr INNES (Melbourne)—Mr Speaker, I wish to make a personal explanation. Just prior to the luncheon adjournment there was, as I understand it, a division at or about 1 p.m. I was in a senator’s office from about 20 minutes——

(Opposition members interjecting)

Mr INNES—I crave your indulgence, Mr Speaker, in respect of those yahoos over in the Australian Country Party corner. The explanation is that——

Opposition members—He was caught with his pants down.

Mr SPEAKER—Order! Could we have a little order?

Mr INNES—I will stand here as long as the yahoos keep going.

Mr SPEAKER—The honourable member is entitled to make a personal explanation. I think the language is not language that I would use myself, but it is not something that I could ask to be withdrawn.

Mr INNES—I repeat that I was in a senator’s office from 12.40 p.m. until 1.15 p.m. and the bells rang only when the sitting of the House was suspended for the lunch break. I have reported this matter to the Clerk of the Senate. I consider it to be a very serious matter. I believe that the paging system in this place that alerts honourable members to attend at this chamber when it is necessary for them to do so ought to be as close to infallible as possible. The bells did not ring and I was not paged under what ought to be the normal circumstances. I ask you, Sir, to investigate the system and to ensure that honourable
The message received from His Excellency the Administrator was sent to the House of Representatives on the advice of the Government. It invokes a procedure under section 58 of the Constitution that has been used only on rare occasions. The section provides, amongst other things, that when a proposed law passed by both Houses of the Parliament is presented to the Governor-General for the Queen's assent he may return the proposed law to the House from which it originated and may transmit therewith any amendment that he may recommend and the House may deal with the recommendations. This procedure affords a method of correcting minor errors that may be found in a Bill after it has been passed by both Houses and before it has been assented to. The Administrator's message on this occasion deals with such a minor error that has been discovered in the Privy Council (Appeals from the High Court) Bill 1975. The error consists of the omission of the indefinite article 'a' before the word 'court' in clause 3 of the Bill. In spite of the minor nature of the error the Government considers that, in view of the constitutional significance of the Bill, it would be better if it were to express the intention exactly. I therefore recommend the amendment to the Committee. I should say in conclusion that a typographical error occurred in the process through the House.

Mr KILLEN (Moreton) (2.58)—The Opposition agrees with the recommendation made by the Attorney-General (Mr Enderby), who has, in a rather painfully long and elaborate explanation of what has happened now blamed the typewriter. The honourable and learned gentleman would have wrung more sympathy from us if he had said: 'I accept full responsibility for the grievous error which has taken place'. We are about to arrest the indefinite article 'a'. The honourable and learned gentleman has sought to shrink from the responsibility that he should accept in relation to this matter. I just want to say to my honourable and learned friend that a fact of life is that such is the pace in relation to the handling of legislation that the Government is insisting upon observing that errors of this nature occur. We should all be indebted to His Excellency for having pointed out this casus omissus to the Parliament and to the country. I hope that it will be such a solemn lesson to the Attorney-General that he will seek to use his massive influence with his colleagues to slow up the needless haste that the Government is proceeding with the handling of legislation. I hope that the Attorney-General will reflect upon the manner in which we are being asked to consider highly
technical legislation that is spread over a very large and growing field of activity. I hope that the Attorney-General has been chastened. Indeed, one can see the look of contrition on his face. I only hope that he will be encouraged to show it.

Question resolved in the affirmative.
Resolution reported; report adopted.

AUSTRALIAN INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION BILL 1975

Bill returned from the Senate with an amendment.

Motion (by Dr J. F. Cairns) agreed to:
That the amendment be taken into consideration in Committee of the whole House forthwith.

In Committee
Consideration of Senate's amendment.

Clause 11.
Section 16 of the Principal Act is repealed and the following section substituted:

"16. A Director, other than the Secretary to the Department of Manufacturing Industry or the Secretary to the Department of Minerals and Energy, shall be paid out of the funds of the Corporation such remuneration as is determined by the Remuneration Tribunal.

Senate's amendment—‘
In clause 11, at end of proposed section 16, add ‘but, if no determination of that remuneration by the Tribunal is in operation, he shall be paid remuneration—"

(a) at the rate that was applicable immediately before the commencement of the Australian Industry Development Corporation Act 1974; or

(b) if no rate was so applicable—at such rate as is prescribed’.

Dr J. F. CAIRNS (Lalor—Treasurer) (3.3)—I move:
That the amendment be agreed to.

When this Bill was before the Senate an amendment was proposed to clause 11 by Senator Wriedt on behalf of the Government in the following terms:

At end of proposed section 16, add ‘but, if no determination of that remuneration by the Tribunal is in operation, he shall be paid remuneration—"

(a) at the rate that was applicable immediately before the commencement of the Australian Industry Development Corporation Act 1974; or

(b) if no rate was so applicable—at such rate as is prescribed’.

I think that the amendment is self-explanatory.

Dr EDWARDS (Berowra) (3.5)—The Opposition has not opposed the Australian Industry Development Corporation Bill. As I said when the measure was before the House, the Liberal and Country Parties are resolute in their view that Australian initiative should be at the forefront of the development of Australia's industries and resources, and we see an enlarged and hopefully more efficient AIDC as contributing to this end.

The purpose of the amendment is to provide that if the Remuneration Tribunal has not made a determination in respect of the directors of the Corporation, the directors may continue to be paid at presently established rates. There is no objection to this.

Amendment agreed to.
Resolution reported; report adopted.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Giles)—I have received advice from the Prime Minister (Mr Whitlam) that he has nominated Mr Innes to be a member of the Standing Committee on Road Safety to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Dr Klugman.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Mr FRY (Fraser)—On behalf of the Joint Committee on the Australian Capital Territory, I bring up the Committee's report on self-government and public finance in the Australian Capital Territory.

Ordered that the report be printed.

Mr FRY—Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask leave of the House to make a short statement in connection with the report.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Giles)—Is leave granted? There being no objection, leave is granted.

Mr FRY—It is with pleasure that I bring up the Committee's report on self-government and public finance for the Australian Capital Territory. The inquiry began as an examination of the financial affairs of the Australian Capital Territory. The first evidence was taken during the 27th Parliament in June 1972. When the present Government came to power, the question of the proportion of State and municipal costs and revenues that should be met by the residents of the Australian Capital Territory was again referred to the re-constituted Committee. In August 1973, the scope of the inquiry was enlarged to include the whole question of self-government for the Australian Capital Territory and we were asked to consider that matter and the question of State and municipal costs, together.
There have been important institutional changes in the Australian Capital Territory during the period of the inquiry. Some of these changes were brought about by government. After the 1972 election a portfolio for the Australian Capital Territory was created and a new department, the Department of the Capital Territory, was formed to undertake functions relating to the Australian Capital Territory previously managed by the Department of the Interior. The creation of new departments like the Department of Urban and Regional Development has had consequences in Australian Capital Territory government as the National Capital Development Commission now reports to that Minister rather than the Minister for the Capital Territory. There have also been many changes in the management of functions of government for the Australian Capital Territory with new departures envisaged for the management of health and education. The Advisory Council, which until September of last year was a small body consisting of persons elected by the community and nominees of departments, was replaced by a chamber of 18 members all elected on an adult franchise in September 1974, and the new institution designated the Legislative Assembly, although it had no legislative functions, has been meeting and conducting business. It is hoped our report may assist in defining the nature of its powers and its place in Australian Capital Territory government.

During the period encompassed by our inquiry there has continued to be rapid growth in the Australian Capital Territory. The population now exceeds 180,000 and is expected to reach 300,000 at some stage during the next decade. Honourable members will be aware of the pace of development in Canberra. During this time, therefore, the Joint Committee on the Australian Capital Territory has been considering the related questions of, firstly, the most appropriate form of self-government for the Australian Capital Territory and, secondly, the proportion of the costs of government of the Australian Capital Territory that should be met by the Australian Capital Territory community and the Australian government respectively.

The inquiry began with the reference on costs as an examination of the public finances of the Australian Capital Territory. The Committee found it difficult to isolate the question of costs from the more general issues raised by self-government and so it welcomed the extension of the reference to include the question of self-government. It will be seen that we have recommended that self-government should be granted to the residents of the Australian Capital Territory in as wide terms as is consistent with the national interest. But we have also stressed in our report that self-government means financially responsible government so that, although the Territory should be eligible to receive grants from the Australian Government on a similar basis to those now paid by the Commonwealth to the States, the remaining costs should be met by taxes and charges raised locally. We discuss in some detail in the report the need to establish a set of public accounts for the Australian Capital Territory to replace the existing municipal and territorial accounts. This is an exercise that can only really begin once the powers of the Legislative Assembly and the range of functions to come under its control have been determined. A very important issue considered by the Committee was the basis upon which grants should be paid to a territorial government once established, by the Government of Australia. We have recommended that this question should be submitted to the Grants Commission for examination and report.

Apart from the question of finance the two most important issues the Committee had to determine were the question of the most appropriate form of self-government and the institutional arrangements to support it and the question of functions to be placed under local control and those to remain the responsibility of the Australian Government. The Committee has taken the broad view that unless the national interest dictates that the Australian Government should retain control of a function of government, then there should be a presumption in favour of the eventual transfer of that function to local control. It was established to our satisfaction that any transfer from national to local control does not and cannot involve any final and irrevocable loss of ultimate power to the Commonwealth. Under section 122 of the Constitution, the Parliament is given legislative power in relation to Territories. The exercise of legislative power by a Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory would therefore be and remain the exercise of a delegated or subordinate power from the Australian Parliament.

It follows from the constitutional position as we understand it that it is rather for the national Government to retain powers unto itself than to nominate a series of functions to be transferred to local control. Our approach has therefore been to recommend the powers that the Commonwealth should retain rather than the powers the local assembly should have. It is our conviction
that in one area at least the Australian Government should retain full power, and that is in the area of planning development, land management and leasehold administration. We recommend the establishment of a National Capital Development Corporation to absorb the existing NCDC and those sections of the Department of the Capital Territory administering functions related to land. We are opposed to the fragmentation of this function between different authorities and consider that they should all be placed under one authority responsible to a Minister of the Australian Government. The Legislative Assembly would, however, be represented on the Board of the Development Corporation. For reasons given at length in the report, we consider that the planning and land management function is so closely tied to the concept of Canberra as the national capital and the seat of government that it must always remain under national management.

In regard to other important functions, the responsibility elsewhere of State government, such as health and education, we see no reason why they should not pass eventually to local control. It is stressed in our report that self-government should not all come at once and that there should be a period of transition. Honourable members will realise that the Assembly and the institutions that will support it are not yet developed to the point where they can accept responsibility for all aspects that we see as eventually being placed under local control.

In view of the range and breadth of functions which we see as ultimately becoming the responsibility of the local community and the legislative role that this will entail, the Committee considers that a parliamentary form of government is the most appropriate form of government for the Australian Capital Territory. It is our recommendation that there should be a unicameral assembly to be called the Legislative Assembly consisting of 19 elected members who should be regarded as employed fulltime on their parliamentary duties and paid accordingly. We make no recommendations as to the level of their remuneration or other emoluments but suggest the appointment of a tribunal to consider the matter and make an initial recommendation. The system of elections recommended in the report is similar to that adopted for the recent Legislative Assembly election. We envisage that the Assembly, although it will have a delegated legislative role, will function like other parliaments in Australia and elsewhere in the world. The Government of the Territory should be formed from within the Assembly. We see this as happening in either of two ways. If there is a majority group capable of supporting a ministry in the Assembly, then a small executive could be formed from the members of the majority group accountable to the Assembly. Alternatively a committee system could operate with the chairman of each committee as the chief spokesman and accountable person for the particular area of government. The Committee sees the Assembly functioning on broad parliamentary lines. It would develop its own executive system, rules of procedures and practices in the light of parliamentary experience in Australia.

There would be two methods whereby laws would be made for the A.C.T. under this proposal. The Australian Government as the paramount legislature could make laws on any matter. It could exclude the authority of the Assembly by simply legislating on a subject whether the Assembly had legislated in that area or not. All other laws would be made by the Assembly in the form of ordinances. The ordinances of the Assembly would be subject to disallowance by the Senate or the House of Representatives but would not be subject to the veto of the Government of the day other than through its parliamentary majority. In our proposal once self-government was established there would be no Ministry for or Department of the Capital Territory. Laws would be initiated by the Government of the A.C.T. which would consist of members elected to and accountable to the Australian Capital Territory Legislative Assembly. The Committee considers that the proposals put forward in the report provide a workable basis for establishing self government in the A.C.T. I commend the report to the House.

Mr HOWARD (Bennelong)—by leave—My speech will be short. I join with the honourable member for Fraser (Mr Fry) in commending this report to the House. I wish to make 3 points very quickly. First, I compliment the Chairman of the Joint Committee on the Australian Capital Territory, Senator Milliner, on the manner in which he conducted the inquiry by that Committee into this matter. I express the view that at all stages the Committee’s deliberations on the form of self government which should be adopted for the Australian Capital Territory were approached in a non-partisan way and in a non-political fashion. This exercise was perhaps the first time since Federation when a committee of any Parliament in Australia had had the opportunity, as it were, of starting from scratch and drawing up an outline of the form of self government for a part of the Australian Commonwealth. I think the report will be read with interest not only by
residents of the A.C.T. but also throughout Australia by students of systems of government. I join with the honourable member for Fraser in commending the report to the House.

Mr FISHER (Mallee)—by leave—I wish to add my support to that given by the honourable member for Fraser (Mr Fry) and the honourable member for Bennelong (Mr Howard) to the report tabled by the Joint Committee on the Australian Capital Territory. As a relatively new member of the Committee I also must congratulate those members who have drawn up this report. With the honourable member for Bennelong, I add my congratulations to the Chairman of that Committee, Senator Milliner, for the tremendous amount of tolerance that he showed as Chairman and also for his great attention to detail. It would have been possible to present this report at an earlier date but, because of the detail on which the Chairman insisted, I believe that we now have a much better report and one which is more satisfactory.

I compliment also the staff who assisted the Joint Committee. I believe that the value of the work that the staff provided is evident in the report. Because of that work, the report has been produced most rapidly following quite a number of complications. It is quite proper that Canberra as a growing and vigorous city should have some self-determination in its government. But I do believe that it should recognise that with this will involve a tremendous amount of financial responsibility. This report will be the basis for discussion and of many references not only in Australia but throughout the rest of the world. I support the tabling of the report.

NATIONAL HEALTH BILL (No. 2) 1975
Second Reading

Debate resumed from 19 February on motion by Mr Hayden:

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr HAYDEN (Oxley—Minister for Social Security)—May I have the indulgence of the House to raise a point of procedure on this legislation. Before the debate is resumed on this Bill, I would like to suggest that it may suit the convenience of the House to have a general debate covering this Bill and the National Health Bill (No. 3) 1975, as they are associated measures. Separate questions will, of course, be put on each of the Bills at the conclusion of the debate. I suggest therefore, Mr Speaker, that you permit the subject matter of both Bills to be discussed in this debate.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Giles)—Is it the wish of the House to have a general debate covering both measures?

Mr Chipp—The Minister knows that I always co-operate.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER—The answer is yes. I will allow that course to be followed. I call the honourable member for Hotham.

Mr Haydon—Now watch the smile disappear.

Mr CHIPP (Hotham) (3.22)—Mr Deputy Speaker, I am happy to co-operate with the Minister for Social Security (Mr Haydon) and the Leader of the House (Mr Daly) as in this way the time of the House is saved. These 2 Bills seem to amend the same Act. As it happens, the Opposition will be supporting one Bill, the National Health Bill (No. 2) 1975, and vigorously and resolutely opposing the other, the National Health Bill (No. 3) 1975.

The National Health Bill (No. 2) 1975 is a simple but good amendment to the National Health Act. It proposes to allow Commonwealth and fund benefits to be paid to women who are pregnant when they join a fund and who are not now able to receive benefits for care and service associated with the pregnancy and birth. Also, it covers and provides benefits to uninsured people who become eligible for unemployment and sickness benefits and who are currently required to serve a 2 week waiting period before becoming eligible for benefits under the subsidised health benefits plan.

This Bill proposes that the special account system be extended to include the above groups of people. Although the numbers of people involved are small, this action will remove substantial costs and worries from individuals. This is especially so in the case of unemployment and sickness benefit recipients whose unemployment may be the result of sickness or accident and are thus at a severe disadvantage. The special account system was introduced in 1969 by a Liberal-Country Party Government and was meant to ‘assist the chronically ill or long term patients whose insurance entitlement expired under a maximum benefits clause. The cost incurred by funds in providing this additional cover was made good by the Government.

It is interesting to notice that the Minister is referring to the special accounts system this time in a commendatory way whereas, in the past few months, he has been vilifying the health funds for abusing the special account system and also knocking the concept of the special account anyway. I will not say any more on the National
Health Bill (No. 2) 1975. It is a relatively simple Bill. It is a good one, and the Opposition supports it.

The National Health Bill (No. 3), the second Bill, is a different proposition. This is the second occasion on which this House has considered the clauses of this Bill, which are identical to those contained in the National Health Bill (No. 2) 1974. That Bill had some good things latched on to it. For example, it included some subsidies for nursing homes, changes in the payments concerning handicapped children, the wider provision of surgical aids and medical aids and appliances and the extension of full approval rights for certain friendly society dispensaries. The Opposition supported the amendments which I have just recounted but opposed the other components of the 1974 Bill which now form this Bill. The Government accepted the amendments that were passed in the Senate. Those amendments took the form of excising from the National Health Bill (No. 2) 1974 the provisions relating to the health funds and leaving in the Bill the matters to which I have just referred. That Bill was then brought back to this House as amended, was passed and is now, I presume, proclaimed or about to be proclaimed.

So the Bill we now have before us is nothing but a naked assault by the Minister for Social Security on the administration and autonomy of the private health funds of Australia. It is for that reason that we vigorously oppose it and will continue to oppose it in another place. I am very disappointed that this Bill and the other Bill are being debated on a day when the House of Representatives is not on the air.

Mr Donald Cameron—They always do that on health Bills.

Mr CHIPP—I am a very charitable man, as my friend the honourable member for Griffith would readily concede. But I am not charitable enough to suggest that it was fortuitous that the Health Bills were brought forward on a Wednesday. I think it is contemptible that the Government will be spending or squandering $1.5m of taxpayers’ funds on publicising Labor Party propaganda in the form of its discredited health scheme and yet not only refuses to give the Opposition one cent to publicise its own health plans but also, when an opportunity comes along when the debate in this chamber can be broadcast, manipulates the scheduling of the Bills to such an extent that every health Bill seems to be debated while the House of Representatives is off the air. I do not know how many people listen to debates that are broadcast. Perhaps 20 000 or 40 000 people listen at any one time. But at least that is some audience to whom the Opposition can put over its point of view. The Government is putting over its point of view by the squandering of $1.5m on television to literally millions of Australians, with what I believe to be false and misleading advertising which virtually is Labor Party propaganda.

Mr Hayden—Oh, come on.

Mr CHIPP—If the Minister wants to interject, let me illustrate the point I am making. One of the advertisements states:

Medibank will provide free medical insurance cover for every man, woman and child in Australia.

I challenge the Minister, with your indulgence Mr Deputy Speaker, on 2 points: Does the advertisement paid for by taxpayers’ money say that; and is it not untrue? In his customary fashion the Minister finds himself in a corner from which he cannot retreat.

Mr Duthie—That is not right.

Mr CHIPP—What I have said is true because I have quoted from the advertisement. It is a blatant untruth to say that Medibank is free. The argument that the honourable member for Wilmot uses, namely, that something that will cost the Australian taxpayer $1,600m is free, is a very curious one as far as I am concerned.

Mr Duthie—You cannot understand it. You do not understand it.

Mr CHIPP—I readily concede that if I live to be one thousand, I will never comprehend the reasoning of the honourable member for Wilmot. If he is suggesting that a health scheme which on any reasonable estimate—

Mr Duthie—It is free from contributions. That is what it means.

Mr CHIPP—But it does not say that.

Mr Duthie—Why doesn’t it?

Mr CHIPP—Because it is misleading, and that is the very point I am making. If the advertisement said that the Medibank scheme would provide medical insurance free from contribution, that would be a true statement. But it does not say that. I imagine that any student of the English language who reads or hears on television that "Medibank will provide free medical insurance cover for every man, woman and child in Australia" is free to accept that this is not going to cost him anything. Any reasonable estimate indicates that the cost of the scheme will be $1,600m a year. Can the Minister tell me how it is free? Where is the money to come from? Has he some magical tree in Queensland from which
he plucks $1,600m a year to put into the cost of Medibank?

Untruths often are spoken in politics, and they are regrettable. But it is contemptible when untruths are spoken over radio and television at the taxpayers’ expense, and that is precisely what is happening with Medibank. The advertisement further states:

Medibank will cover all those Australians—more than one million of them—who are not insured against the high cost of sickness or injury at present. Not insured because they cannot insure themselves. So they simply cannot afford to become ill.

This also is untrue for the very reasons that the Minister knows. I have not the time to talk at the length at which I would like to talk about the advertisements that are being placed over radio and television. But I am curious as to why the Government is placing these advertisements. The Minister for Social Security has stated in this House that his health scheme has been fully explained and debated. The ‘Australian’ of 10 December 1974 said that this was the Minister’s justification for gagging the debate on the health scheme in this House. I have been at the dispatch box in front of me many times, debating the health scheme in this place. I think I have debated the health scheme or its allied legislation here about 7 times. I cannot remember an occasion on which the debate has not been gagged. I cannot remember an occasion on which there were not many members on this side of the House who wished to speak but who were gagged. But that did not stop the Minister from saying that the health scheme has been fully explained and debated.

The Minister cannot have it both ways. If he said on 10 December 1974 that the health scheme has been fully explained and debated, what is his justification for spending $1.5m in advertising Medibank on radio and television? That in itself is a complete inconsistency. The advertising campaign is not to explain Medibank; it is a blatant advertising gimmick of the Labor Party which is using taxpayers’ money to promote its own discredited scheme. If the Minister believes that the scheme has been fully explained, debated and understood, can he explain to me why 56 per cent of people who took part in a Gallup poll taken in December 1974 preferred a voluntary scheme to the Government’s plan? We heard the Prime Minister (Mr Whitlam) today repeat the sickening statement that Medibank has been approved by the Australian people on 3 occasions. He said the Minister has said and the people on the other side of the House have said ad nauseam that they have a mandate for Medibank and that it has been approved 3 times. That is a quaint kind of approval to me in which 56 per cent of the people oppose it. That is the kind of approval which I find difficult to understand, even using the logic of the Minister.

Turning to the provisions of this Bill, what do they do? This Bill gives the Minister absolute power over every health fund in Australia. Let us look at the health funds. We have heard the Minister speak on them. One thing which I will concede is that he is very good at abusive language. He is the master of hurtful invective, of the adjective that has some sting in it. One term that he has been using is the rapacious health funds or the greedy health funds, trying to conjure up the view that the health funds are some multinational company out here to rip profits off the Australian people and to plough them back overseas. The private health funds are co-operative societies. They are organised and consist of ordinary people—millions of them—who decide to insure themselves. They do not declare dividends to be paid to anybody. There is no profit made to be sent out of the country. They are co-operative societies—non-profit making.

Another point is that the powers that the Minister has in relation to the funds were increased in 1974 by amendment to the National Health Act. We did not oppose that amendment. In fact we supported it and standing at this table I commended the Minister for bringing in that amendment because I believed that there was not enough discipline by the federal Government, which did provide most of the income of the funds, over the funds and that the only weapon—if that is the right word; I do not think it is—to use over the funds was deregistration. The Minister made the point that that was too severe, that it was a steamhammer to hit a tack. I agreed with him, so we on this side of the House and also in the Senate agreed to the amendment and we believe that that additional power gave him sufficient powers.

What does this Bill do in relation to the funds? This Bill allows the Minister to have the power to transfer the reserves between medical and hospital funds and vice versa. Let us examine that proposition. There are the private health funds such as the Hospitals Benefits Association of Victoria, in Sydney the Medical Benefit Fund of Australia Ltd, the Hospitals Contributions Fund of Australia or whatever, the health fund which is run by a trade union—there are a great number of those—and there are also the friendly societies and the lodge funds. There are 2 separate compartments in health funds. There are the people
who want to insure themselves and their families against hospital charges. There are those of us who want to insure against doctors’ fees. It is not necessarily so that the people who insure themselves in both funds are identical. It could be that an almost entirely different group of people are insuring themselves in the medical fund as compared with those insuring themselves in the hospital fund. Let us assume that the medical fund has large reserves and the hospital fund has none. Is it equitable, is it fair that the excess contributions or the reserves of the medical fund should simply be taken out of that fund and be put into the hospital fund? That could well be robbing the assets of a great number of people which have been built up in good faith over the years and giving them to someone else. I just cannot see the justice in that. I just cannot see the equity in it. In fact, if it were done without the sanction of law it would be simply classified as theft, but the Minister wants to give this theft the sanction of the law by an Act of this Parliament. The controls in this Bill would give the responsible Minister very great powers over the funds. Reading from that, it would give an irresponsible Minister enormous powers over the funds. What powers are provided in this Bill?

This is an extraordinary Bill. I will not go into the technicalities because time will not allow me but I will summarise the Bill as I see it. If the Minister wants—to use the vernacular—to knock off a health fund or to take it over he then says: ‘This Bill gives me the power to indulge in an exercise of talking to myself’. As far as the Minister is concerned, I would strongly discourage that practice because I would strongly encourage him when he does get into conversation to discuss something with someone intelligent. This Bill gives him the opportunity of discussing something with himself. He has to ask himself the question: ‘Have I good reason to investigate that health fund?’ He asks himself: ‘Mr Hayden, do you think that that health fund needs investigation?’ The other Mr Hayden says: ‘Yes, I think it needs investigation’. So once he has come to that decision after that monologue, after dichotomising himself, he then has power to send in an inspector of his own choosing. That inspector can be anybody he chooses. The Bill, as I recall it, does not say the person has to be a public servant, a judge or anybody else. In other words, he can be—to use a horrid word—the Minister’s stooge. That inspector then reports to the Minister on the condition of that health fund. If the inspector, the Minister’s stooge, believes that that health fund needs somebody sent into it the Minister then can send in a judicial manager who can have all the powers that the administration and boards of directors of the funds now have. In other words, he can dissipate reserves or transfer reserves anywhere he likes. He can increase or decrease contribution rates. In other words, the funds and all their assets then become the child, the property of a Minister of the Crown. The Minister must be out of his mind if he believes for one moment that any responsible Opposition would accept such a ridiculous set of circumstances to give that kind of power to a Minister.

We will reject this Bill with the vigour with which we rejected the last one. This is part of the whole complex of the Labor Party’s national health scheme. I would just like to make 2 more comments about this matter which we in Opposition find it difficult to make because of the limitations of time put on us at question time and at any other time. I would like the Minister to tell me when he replies, although the technique usually adopted is that debates on health are gagged and the Minister uses that as an excuse for not replying to the questions raised and the points made by the Opposition, why we have not had any statements from him in the 2 years in which he has been in charge of this Bill so that the Parliament could debate the matters of policy. Why is it that he inevitably relies on a Dorothy Dixer and then takes anything up to 20 minutes of question time to announce policy, to explain policy without giving the Opposition an opportunity to debate it? Is he frightened of debate on this subject? Is he using the coward’s technique of scuttling off to television, spending the taxpayers’ money and not giving the Opposition a voice? Is he frightened of being overwhelmed again on television as he was during the last election campaign? That may be all very well, but why does the Minister come in here and invent mischief? I will give an example. He and the Prime Minister tried to create mischief between the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Sneden) and myself over alleged conflicting statements regarding Medibank. I will read into the record—it will take only 4 lines—the accusation of the Minister and the Prime Minister. They said that the Leader of the Opposition and I were at basic difference about what we would do with Medibank if we came to government. They quoted the Leader of the Opposition who, in an interview with the ‘Financial Review’ on 26 February was asked:

Would you abolish the Medibank scheme?

Mr Sneden replied:

It will depend on the extent to which the Medibank scheme has been imposed on the public. The freedom to reverse the scheme in its entirety is in practice confined.
If we are looking for honesty in this Parliament it should come not only from Ministers but essentially from the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister had that statement in front of him. With his huge entourage of advisers, surely he had my statement in front of him. Having had both statements in front of him he stood up and told this House that the Leader of the Opposition and I were at variance. This is my statement which has been published and which would have been in his office on 3 December 1974 a couple of months earlier. It is headed: 'Statement by Chipp—Shadow Minister for Social Security' and states that the Liberal Party-Country Party government would disband the Health Insurance Commission if returned to power at an appropriate time. I did not consult my Leader before he issued his statement, but those 2 statements are identical, showing identical purposes in our attitude towards Medibank. Both of us made the point that if we by some unfortunate occurrence were not returned to government within the next 12 months or 2 years it would be absurd to contemplate completely dismantling an organisation that had had 2 years to build up and run. This was not possible in the United Kingdom and it would not be possible here. It is, I believe, disgraceful when a Prime Minister and a Minister use their monopoly of time in this House blatantly and deliberately to tell untruths and to cause mischief. I challenge the Minister, in his response, to justify why he added to the mischief and why he added to the untruths of his Prime Minister.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Giles)—Order! I would like the honourable member to explain to me the connection between Medibank and this Bill, which I am under the impression is strictly about funds. I should be pleased if the honourable member would connect his remarks to this Bill.

Mr CHIPP—Thank you. I did mention earlier in my speech that it is absolutely vital that the National Health Bill (No. 3) be passed if Medibank is to be implemented in any fashion. Without it the Minister still has not the control over the private health funds that he must necessarily have if Medibank is to come into operation on 1 July. However, Mr Deputy Speaker, I will note your concern and I will be particularly relevant to this Bill. In conclusion I should like to give an indication of costs involved. The main concern we have with the national health scheme of the Labor Party is that it will be a deterioration in the quality of health care provided to the Australian people. That can be demonstrated and we have demonstrated it before. The second reason is the question of cost. I have been provided with some figures by Professor Barbara Shenfield, a distinguished authority in the field of national health in Great Britain, who says that the British national health service was estimated to cost £170m a year. It now costs £2,731m a year. That was the 1973 figure. Official statistics say that the present British health scheme, which is very similar to this proposed scheme, now needs an additional £500m to be pumped into it immediately as a bare minimum to prevent the service from breaking down completely. This is the kind of lunacy which this Labor Government wants to lead Australia into—something open-ended; subsidised demand in the name of its so-called health scheme.

I think it is good to remember that these are the results at the moment of the free national health scheme in Great Britain. Doctors are now emigrating from Great Britain. The general practitioners are threatening to withdraw their services. Consultants are working to rule. The waiting lists for non-urgent surgery and medical care can run up to over one year. There were fewer fully staffed hospitals in 1972 than there were 22 years earlier. There are fewer hospitals fully staffed now than before the beginning of their so-called health scheme.

Mr Lloyd—They have not built too many since, either.

Mr CHIPP—No, they have not. I thank my friend, the honourable member for Murray, for his interjection. The taxpayers must now find £2,731m a year for their free health scheme in Britain. That is the result of the experience in the United Kingdom. Even at this late hour on behalf of the Opposition I plead with the Labor Party and I plead with the Minister to stop this insanity because the Government will have not only an open-ended inflationary health scheme impacted upon us but something more serious—something that probably would cause the most serious damage possible to the Australian people. It will affect their health.

Mrs CHILD (Henry) (3.51)—I think it is just as well that the proceedings of the House are not being broadcast this afternoon. The honourable member for Hotham (Mr Chipp) was bemoaning the fact that he was not being heard but those listening would have been slightly confused as to which Bill was being discussed in the House. I am sure they would have thought, as you pointed out Mr Deputy Speaker, that we were discussing Medibank. It has been obvious every time any aspect of the National Health Bill has been discussed inside this House or outside this House
that the honourable member for Hotham becomes quite paranoiac about it.

This is a familiar Bill to this House as it was introduced in December 1974. The provisions of the Bill relating to supervision of health insurance organisations were also passed in this House but defeated in the Senate. The Government agreed to the deletions when the Bill was returned to this House because other sections of the Bill were of great importance to the Australian people. These related to certain medical and surgical aids and appliances. We did not want the Senate's obstructive practices to deprive individuals of the benefits they so urgently needed so we approved the Bill with its amendments. However, the Government believes that it must protect the rights of contributors in the health insurance organisations. It has re-introduced this Bill to make sure that the rights of the people are protected. It is always so odd that we hear so much about protecting the rights of the States. We do not hear very much from the Opposition about the protection of the rights of the people. I did not and I do not believe that State rights are in any way nearly as important as people's rights.

Consumers or contributors do not have representation on the bodies managing open funds. They do not have any say in how funds are operated. It is all the more important that the government has some voice in the operation of health insurance funds when we remember the extremely generous direct and indirect government subsidies to such funds. The health insurance organisations could not operate without generous government support. They could not have grown to their present strength without government support. While government money strongly supports such organisations the government is in a position whereby it cannot query any level of wages paid by the health insurance bodies. It cannot query the amount consumed by management expenses. It cannot question a fund's investment policy and neither can its contributors.

The government has no effective control over the individual items comprising management expenses—only in a general way over the total as a proportion of the contribution revenue. There is no effective corrective action against such organisations other than suspension or deregistration. Either action rebounds on those already suffering from the rigid controls. I refer to the contributors. If a health organisation is closed up, deregistered or suspended once again it is the contributors who are hurt. This is a most unsatisfactory measure, as the contributor suffers double: he also loses the Australian Government benefits. Further, such deregistration would end any control which the Australian Government could exercise over reserves, and those reserves are accumulated from contributors' money.

The provisions framed here by the Government give the Government similar powers to protect contributors as are contained in the Insurance Act. The Insurance Act provides that insurance arrangements can be adequately supervised in the interests of the contributors. That is what the Government is aiming to do here. The Bill includes provisions to enable the Minister for Social Security, where he believes it to be in the contributors' interests, to request an organisation to show cause why it should not be investigated in relation to specified matters. The Minister may appoint an inspector to conduct an investigation into specified matters relating to the affairs of the organisation. Who will protect the contributors' rights—the people's rights—if it is not the Australian Government, which also contributes to the health organisations and keeps them going?

All the health insurance organisations are effectively controlled by doctors. Most of the organisations provide no effective avenue for contributor representation on the controlling body. Let us take as an example the Medical Benefits Fund of Australia in New South Wales. It is one of the biggest funds in Australia. Its council comprises 12 medical members elected for a 5-year period and 12 other members appointed by the 3 State committees—Queensland, Tasmania and New South Wales. Incidentally, the State committees are also doctor controlled. By that I mean that they are controlled by medical practitioners. The whole of the build up of the health insurance funds is very adequately controlled by doctors, with very little voice from the contributors. The people do not have a say.

All contributors to health benefit funds would welcome the enactment of this Bill as a positive step forward in the protection of their interests. Honourable members will readily appreciate that this Bill is not related to Medibank, although people listening may be a little confused as Medibank seems to raise the blood pressure of the Opposition just as the National Health Bill did in earlier times. The honourable member for Hotham also pointed out that the Government did not give the Opposition any time to debate the National Health Bills as they were always gagged. I cannot remember any single Bill that has been debated at such length both inside and outside this House as this one, nor can I
remember any Bill that has been the subject of such vicious and malicious misrepresentation.

This Bill and its provisions are designed to enable health organisations to be supervised in a manner that will result in the organisations serving the needs of contributors more effectively. That is what they should be doing. The Bill provides that where it is proper for him to do so and when he has received a recommendation from the registration committee that the moneys standing to the credit of a fund may be properly reduced, the Minister may direct that a proportion of any excess reserves held in a hospital or medical fund may be used to finance in part medical and hospital benefits for long term and chronically ill members of the fund. What has the honourable member for Hotham to complain about in that provision? In my opinion the chronically ill members who have contributed to funds over many years have been very sadly neglected. There are provisions in the other portion of the Bill relating to instant cover for pregnant women. I have already heard that the Opposition proposes to support that provision so I will not go into that in detail. I am very glad to see that unemployed people will not now have to serve a waiting period of 2 weeks from the time they become unemployed before they are eligible for hospital and medical benefits under the subsidised health benefits plan.

I repeat that the Government has a mandate from the people to introduce a National Health Bill. No matter how the honourable member for Hotham may see it, the people elected this Government in 1972 on that platform. They re-elected the Government in 1974 on it. The Government put it through the Joint Sitting under the Constitution of this Parliament. I am sure that honourable members have seen enough erosion of democracy in this Parliament caused by the actions of the Senate and that they do not wish to see any further denigration of democracy in this House. The Government has a mandate.

Mr HODGES (Petrie) (4.0)—The honourable member for Henty (Mrs Child) seemed to labour the point about the protection of people's rights by the introduction of this Bill. It seems to be the call of the Government all the time that it is the champion of the people's rights. Let me say to the honourable member for Henty, to the Minister for Social Security (Mr Hayden) and to the Government that I do not hear of any massive numbers of people being hurt because this legislation has not been enacted. As I see it, if this Government remains in power the people will have no rights at all. I have been handling contributors to medical benefits funds for years. The largest fund in Queensland handles about 78 per cent of all people who are covered. As a pharmacist, for the last fifteen to twenty years I have been talking to people—let me state right here and now that I have no personal or vested interest in this matter because the very small amount of return that comes to any chemist by way of commissions is not worth considering; he provides a service to his customers—and I have not heard people wailing and complaining. Perhaps when he replies the Minister for Social Security can tell me what is the massive number of people who have been hurt or whether any people have been adversely affected because this proposed legislation has not become law.

I would like to join with the honourable member for Hotham (Mr Chipp) in this debate and direct my comments firstly to the National Health Bill (No. 3) 1975. If there were a prize for persistence on the part of Ministers it must surely go to the Minister for Social Security. No one has found the secret of perpetual motion, but as far as Cabinet Ministers are concerned he must come perilously close to fitting that description as he keeps tossing up these Bills with regular monotony. It is rather like a gramophone needle caught in the groove. The same section of the tune is played over and over again. I trust that the Minister will not repeat his rudeness to me in this chamber last week when he completely lost his cool. I must add that he apologised to me quite promptly.

The Opposition stands firm in its rejection of this Bill. It vigorously opposes the provisions of the Bill and will continue to do so in the future. The Minister made great play of the fact that the Bill is consistent with the recommendations of the Committee of Inquiry into Health Insurance—the Nimmo Committee report—which was referred to ad nauseam by the Minister and which was referred to in the same context this morning by the Prime Minister (Mr Whitlam) during question time. That Committee was established, as has been claimed, by the former Liberal-Country Party Government. In his earlier second reading speech, before the Senate rightly deleted the provisions of this Bill from the National Health Bill (No. 2) 1974, the Minister went to great pains to quote the former Minister for Health, the honourable member for Barker (Dr Forbes), as saying that he was giving consideration to the introduction of measures contained in this Bill. I suggest to the Minister for Social Security that the operative and important word is 'consideration'. The then Minister for Health was giving consideration to introducing legislation, every the inference to be drawn from
what the Minister for Social Security said is that the Liberal-Country Party Government was going to introduce legislation.

Does the Minister blindly adopt every recommendation that is put forward by every committee of inquiry, commission, board of review or tribunal? Of course he does not. It is the function of the Minister and of this Parliament to sort the wheat from the chaff. Advisers are important people and must be listened to, questioned and their findings respected. But heaven help the governmental system if the public servants and outsiders are permitted to run the show completely. That principle applies to all levels of Government, I might add. I do not want to be mistaken or misquoted on this issue. I have a high regard and a high respect for the intelligence, the judgment and the dedication of the great majority of public servants and those Australians who serve on these advisory committees, many of whom do so in an unpaid capacity, of course.

I move on to deal with that section of the Bill which deals at some length with deregistration. The Minister makes the shallow excuse that the reason for his desire to have the power to appoint an inspector to investigate the affairs of a medical benefits or hospital benefits organisation is his concern that the only punitive action open to the Government under the National Health Act is the deregistration of the organisation. I ask the Minister to be honest. The only reason he wants this power is so that he will be able to dictate to, and pry into the affairs of, the voluntary health funds. Last Thursday we saw in this House, and had a bitter taste of, dictatorship at its worst. In effect, what the Minister is saying is that he does not trust the people who are operating the organisations. I say to him that these people, with perhaps a few exceptions—I might add that there always will be exceptions—are citizens of impeccable character and their honesty and integrity leave nothing to be desired. So I submit to the Minister that there is no room for the fabrication of excuses that he keeps putting forward. There is no case for the appointment of an inspector. There is no good purpose to be served by the final clause, clause 11, which seeks to include the new Part VIA. What an intrusion this whole Part is into the already satisfactory functioning of the voluntary health organisations!

This morning we heard the Prime Minister speaking a lot of nonsense about archaic voluntary health organisations. The Opposition does not deny that there is a necessity for constant review and reform. But why is it necessary to dismantle an already well established scheme that has served this nation well? Why does not the Government introduce a scheme to provide cover for the 8 per cent of Australians or one million people referred to this morning by the Minister for Social Security as not being covered at present? However, I would challenge that figure given by the Minister. I personally believe it to be something of the order of 4 per cent. I might add that not all of those people are below the poverty line. There are many people in this country who elect not to be covered by a voluntary health organisation. Why is it necessary to demolish the present system at all? To me the reasons are quite obvious. The Government wants to centralise all operations in Canberra. It is a power grab by Ministers and a power grab by the dictatorial Labor Government. It is a true saying that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. As this Government continues with its power grab, so will the level of its corruption increase. So I reject out of hand the whole of clause 11 of the Bill, with its power to appoint an inspector and its statement of the inspector’s powers and duties. I reject also the proposed new sections that talk about the appointment of judicial managers and the winding up of funds. This is a poor piece of legislation which certainly deserves the axe.

Towards the end of the Minister’s second reading speech he refers quite pointedly to the fact that the Bill has no relation to Medibank. I respect the fact that the Deputy Speaker stated that the Bill does not give rise to a discussion on Medibank. But I suggest that the Minister has some grave doubts about the successful launching of Medibank. The promotion of Medibank is one of the greatest hard-sell operations ever undertaken in Australia’s history. An amount of $1.56m of Australian’s money is to be spent just on promotion alone.

Mr Donald Cameron—The ALP health program.

Mr HODGES—that is right; the ALP health program. The Minister must have grave doubts when he has to spend that sort of money in promoting a scheme which he says will be so readily acceptable to the Australian people. One surely would question whether it is necessary to spend any money on the promotion of this project. As I see it, the Government is rapidly creating a nation of no-hopers as it encourages people to accept larger and larger handouts and to perform less work. Productivity, of course, is at a low level. Why would people want to work in Australia today when there is no incentive to do so? Incentive has been abolished completely by the Government. This Medibank scheme will
quickly become a monster unable to be controlled and ever increasing in size and cost to the people of this nation. It will be another case of easy come easy go. People will be using and abusing a service because they do not have directly to put their hands into their pockets to pay for the service. I emphasise the point that they do not have directly to put their hands into their pockets. They will be paying for this scheme indirectly and paying very dearly for it.

I have been a pharmacist for some 20 years and I have witnessed at first hand the growing cost of the pharmaceutical benefits scheme. I have had pensioner patients say to me on numerous occasions—these are people who receive their prescriptions free of charge: 'If only there was some small charge, some token charge, a great deal of waste would be prevented'. I emphasise the point that the majority of those patients do not waste. But, of course, one will always find those who do. If there were just a small charge, much of the present waste would not take place. We have seen, of course, the failure of a similar scheme in Great Britain. The point I make in relation to the waste is that when people do not have directly to pay for a scheme there is a great deal of exploitation of it and a great deal of waste. I want to refer briefly to the transfer of reserves between the medical and hospital funds by a particular organisation. The honourable member for Hotham (Mr Chipp) covered this point very clearly. There are many people who join a hospital fund and many people who join a medical fund. I do not know how the Minister can justify the transference of funds from one fund to another when he is a member of a government which is talking of inequality in so many instances. In this case the Minister wants to introduce inequality into this scheme by the amendment which he seeks to make to it.

Finally, I wish to address a few remarks to the National Health Bill (No. 2) 1975. The Opposition is supporting this Bill. It provides for the removal or reduction of the waiting period before a person joining a health insurance organisation can claim a benefit. In the case of pregnant women, when this Bill becomes law they will have to wait for a period of 2 months before their benefits commence. Uninsured people who receive social security, unemployment, sickness and special benefits in fact have to wait 2 weeks before they are eligible to receive those benefits. Under the provisions of this Bill that waiting time of 2 weeks will be abolished. I support what is contained in that Bill. It certainly will relieve the anxiety and the financial hardship that many people in this country are experiencing today.

Mr KEATING (Blaxland) (4.12)—I very rarely rise to speak on any Bills connected with health because, like most honourable members in this place, I have my special interests. For the umpteenth time I have heard the honourable member for Hotham (Mr Chipp) rant and rave in this House and misrepresent the whole basis of the Government's health program. I just want to make a couple of points which are always skimmed over by the Opposition. The Opposition hopes that the Australian people will be guillible enough to accept what it says. Most of the speech of the honourable member for Hotham was devoted to the principle of the national health scheme—Medibank—and was not concerned with this Bill which deals with the supervision by the Australian Government of the operation of the medical and hospital organisations registered under the National Health Act.

The honourable member for Hotham said in criticism of the Government that the Labor Party was promoting its scheme and using government revenue to do so. It is claimed that the Government is spending $1.85m for that purpose. The dishonesty of that statement is that the thing which he calls 'its scheme' happens to be law. The Bill establishing Medibank was passed at a Joint Sitting of both Houses of the Parliament. We defeated the Opposition at 2 Federal elections on the issue. In the 1969 election we campaigned on it. Admittedly we did not form a government on that occasion, but we picked up many seats. It was a principal plank of our policy in 1969. It was a principal plank of our policy in 1972, and we formed a government on it. It was one of the reasons for the double dissolution in 1974 and it was a principal plank of our policy for the election that followed. We formed a government again on that occasion. Under the provisions of the Constitution there was held in this chamber a Joint Sitting of both Houses of the Parliament which passed our proposal into law. The scheme subsequently has been called Medibank. Members or the Opposition say that it is improper for the Australian Government to advertise to the people of Australia the details of a comprehensive medical program which is enacted in law. They try to misrepresent it and suggest that we are, in a partisan sense, promoting the Australian Labor Party program.

The honourable member for Hotham, that mouthpiece of the medical profession and the doctors, had to come in here again this afternoon and suggest that $1.85m ought to be given to the Liberal Party to promote its scheme, completely
disregarding the fact that the Constitution provided and allowed a Joint Sitting of both Houses of this Parliament to pass the scheme into law. Members of the Opposition parties behaved like lawbreakers in the Senate. They defeated the levy Bill which was to fund the measure which was already law. In other words, they had disrespect for the passage of the law under the Joint Sitting of both Houses. They frustrated the operation of the law by refusing the passage of that Bill through the Parliament. When it is proposed to fund the scheme from general revenue and the advertisements try to explain that there will be no contributions for the scheme, members of the Opposition misrepresent that we are trying to suggest that it is a free scheme. We say in the advertisements that the scheme will be funded from general revenue as is any other social service. What we are saying is that the people do not have to pay contributions, in case people are confused about it. There are to be no contributions.

The Opposition sides with the doctors. Dr Arnold appeared on the Australian Broadcasting Commission program ‘This Day Tonight’ the other night. When the girl interviewing him quizzed him about his mock indignation about the scheme and asked what is his objection he said that if the doctors carried out bulk billing and were paid by Medibank directly they would be de facto Commonwealth employees; there would be creeping socialism and the doctors would lose their independence. What a lot of rot. The present situation remains. If a patient wants to go and pay the doctor he can. The doctor may ask for the patient’s drawing rights on the fund and the patient has to agree to transfer them. Those are the facts of the situation.

Why do members of the Opposition dishonestly represent this all the time? What is their purpose? They know the present scheme is a hotch potch. It is funded from general revenue. Does one ever hear of any doctor now object to billing directly for repatriation benefits? Has anyone ever heard any screams from the medical profession about the fact that they presently bill directly for repatriation benefits? Never. But because there happens to be direct billing instead of going via the back door as it is now—the Government contribution is 50 per cent—through the private funds, because the private part has been eliminated from the scheme and the scheme is to be funded completely by the Government the doctors say that they are de facto Commonwealth employees, their independence is taken away, that the British health scheme is upon us with all the inherent problems.

Every member of this House knows that this scheme is entirely different from the British health scheme. Yet members of the Opposition try to misrepresent it. I do not know when they are ever going to learn. They have been knocked over twice. They try to oppose the scheme. They do not realise that a lot of people, like the people in my electorate, cannot afford to insure themselves for health protection. It is all right for members of the Opposition. They are getting reasonable salaries and represent electorates with people in the middle and reasonably high income groups. But a lot of people were given no health protection at all because it was too expensive for them. They will be given it under this scheme.

Why should members of the Opposition oppose it so stupidly, particularly after the passage of the proposal into law? They opposed the levy Bill and now they try to misrepresent the advertising of the scheme as something which the Australian Labor Party is using in a partisan way to try to prop up itself. The real position as far as this encroachment on the doctors’ rights is concerned is that there are 3 ways in which the scheme will operate: The patient may pay the doctor and receive a refund on receipt; the patient may forward the unpaid account to Medibank and receive a cheque made out to the doctor; or the doctor may directly bill Medibank after accepting assignment of the drawing rights from the patient. That is the real situation.

When we bring in a Bill to police the funds, it is said that that is a crime too. Members of the Opposition think that the funds should be able to go their merry way investing in all the projects that they have run in the past. A lot of their money went into speculative ventures, particularly during the boom in the economy in 1971-72. A lot of this investment was unpoliced. Now members of the Opposition say that there is something wrong with our proposal. They ought to have a look at themselves and decide what is honest motivation and what is decent policy. I do not think they have any conception of what the national Parliament is about and what is national responsibility in terms of a thing like the health of the Australian people.

This is a decent scheme. Why do members of the Opposition stand behind a man like the honourable member for Hotham and have the position misrepresented year in year out, debate in debate out? It is time they grew up and woke up to themselves. I shall not delay the House much longer. I was provoked into speaking this afternoon because I am sick and tired of listening.
to the garble and drivel from the synthetic member for Hotham who brings in all of his phoney arguments and misrepresentations day after day. I commend this legislation to the House. It is long overdue. It is about time that some of these funds had some decent supervision.

Mr Lloyd (Murray) (4.21)—If it had been anybody else on the Labor side of the chamber than the honourable member for Blaxland (Mr Keating) who referred to the honourable member for Hotham (Mr Chipp) in a most unparliamentary manner as a synthetic member, I would have asked for a withdrawal but I think that is all we can expect from the level of that honourable member. If one talks about dishonesty in the whole presentation of this debate one should look a little closer at that honourable member. What rot he talked when referring to a mandate for the scheme. One has to look only at the speeches of the Prime Minister (Mr Whitlam) at the 1972 election and the 1974 election. There were about 50 pages of proposals. How many pages of those proposals were on a national health scheme?

Does the Minister for Social Security (Mr Hayden) say that his proposals for superannuation or for old age pensions or something else were not the important matters? Does the Minister for Minerals and Energy (Mr Connor) say that his policy proposals were not the important matter? How can anybody say that there was a mandate for this particular proposal more than any other when it formed such a small part of the Government’s overall proposals and when at the last Federal election the Government’s vote dropped? How Government supporters can say that they have a mandate for anything after the vote dropping, especially when they made a bigger issue of this at the last election than at the election before, nobody in his right mind can understand.

Mr Hayden—Did you get the mandate instead of us then?

Mr Lloyd—We are not claiming that we have a mandate. That is why we are being honest and you are being dishonest in saying that the Government has a mandate above everything else for this proposal. As for talking about observing the law and the Constitution, the States have constitutionally and traditionally had a role in the delivery of health care in Australia. These States have been ignored in the presentation of this proposal by this Government. So let us not hear any more synthetic talk about sticking to the law and the Constitution. We heard the story that the proposal was passed by Parliament and that to spend $1.5m on advertising it is correct and is not political advertising. This scheme has not been implemented. There is at least a 50 per cent chance that there will be an election before this scheme is implemented. So all the money that the Government spends on this scheme will be blatant political advertising at the expense of the Australian taxpayer and money spent for straight political purposes—even if they are crooked political purposes in another way—before this scheme is introduced is nothing else but spending money for the advantage of a political party at the expense of the Australian taxpayer. So much for the dishonesty allegations that are being thrown backwards and forwards particularly from the other side of the House.

We are considering 2 contradictory Bills, the National Health Bill (No. 2) and the National Health Bill (No. 3). They are contradictory to each other and are contradictory to the avowed principles and purposes of the Government health program in general. Between them these 2 Bills imply that the Medibank scheme will actually not be introduced on 1 July. If the scheme is to be implemented on 1 July why at this eleventh hour—less than 4 months before the introduction date on which we are told both of these Bills will really become redundant—are they now being introduced? At least National Health Bill (No. 2) reduces the waiting period for eligibility of people unemployed.

The Government recognises and is perhaps facing up partially to a problem of its own creation; that is, the greatest unemployment that Australia has seen since the depression. This is in a country where there was less reason for the problems of unemployment and runaway inflation to occur than in just about any other country in the world. It has now reached this massive level. By reducing the waiting period for those unemployed the Government at least has recognised what it has created. Together with the reduction provided for in the National Health Bill (No. 2) in the waiting period for those in that category there is to be reduction in the waiting period for those who are pregnant when joining a health fund. Both of those alterations are sensible ones and I congratulate the Minister for Social Security for introducing them. Quite frankly we should have done that when we were in Government.

Mr Hayden—You say that often enough. You had enough time in which to do it. Lots of women became pregnant in that 20 years.

Mr Lloyd—And there will be a few more pregnant pauses before the Minister’s health
scheme comes into effect. At least I am being honest in that regard, which is more than can be said for some of the advertising which is being promoted now in relation to the Minister’s scheme. To continue the point I was making, I believe that the most sensible approach for the Government to adopt is to continue to alter the present scheme in the sensible way in which it has sought to alter it in relation to these proposals. Surely that is better than trying to bring in something that is so completely different that it will bring about chaos in and cause great expense to this country.

These 2 Bills also emphasise another point, that is, the value of the special account. The special account, which was introduced by the previous Liberal-Country Party Government, will be used in relation to the National Health Bill (No. 2) to pick up the expenses of those who are already pregnant when they join a health fund. Yet in the companion piece of legislation—the National Health Bill (No. 3)—the Minister has, by legislating against the health funds, also crippled the special account by depriving a health fund of its entitlement to the special account if the Minister considers that it has excessive financial reserves. So on the one hand the Minister is saying that the special account is a very valuable instrument of health policy and is adding to it and on the other he is taking away from it and adding to his own power over the health funds. However, the Minister already effectively sets the premiums that the health funds can charge and, in setting the premiums that the health funds can charge, he takes into calculation the amount of reserves that they have. Therefore he is trying to have 2 hits at the health funds at the same time. To show that the Minister has not actually been very generous in allowing the health funds to lift their premium rates I point out that in accordance with legislation introduced in this Parliament last year the funds have the right to appeal against the Minister’s decision and that two did appeal against the Minister’s decision and won handsomely. I believe that that proves that the Government will not allow the funds to retain adequate reserves and will not allow the funds to charge adequate premium levels.

The Minister is also saying that there is probably no need for the funds after 1 July if he is honest in saying, as he does through the advertisements, that Medibank will come into effect on 1 July. If we are not going to need the funds after 1 July and if we, as Australians, are not going to need private health insurance after 1 July, why is the Minister going to so much trouble with this

eleventh hour bid to tie up the health funds in knots and make them instruments of Government policy? Why is he doing that if they are going to be redundant? The Minister is trying to have it both ways. He is saying publicly at great expense to the taxpayer—at a minimum cost of $1.5m—that there is no need for health insurance because the health millennium will arrive on 1 July, but by this legislation he is effectively making the point that he is aware that the millennium will not arrive on 1 July, that there will be a need for private health insurance and that he is doing his best to cripple the health insurance funds ahead of that date.

That leads to the more important question of whether the Government’s health scheme or, as the Government calls it, Medibank will be introduced as advertised or whether the Government is guilty of 2 sins in this respect. It is guilty of many sins, but is it guilty of 2 sins in relation to these health Bills and health generally? Is it guilty of, firstly, false advertising and, secondly, the expenditure of public funds for political purposes? I believe that it is guilty on both counts. The 4 non-Labor States have not agreed to the introduction of Medibank or the Government’s nationalised health scheme. Have detailed arrangements and agreements been reached with the States of South Australia and Tasmania for the implementation of Medibank? The answer must be no. The information I have received is that there has only been agreement in principle. There is less than 4 months to go before this scheme is supposed to be introduced in those 2 States; yet agreement has only been reached in principle to the scheme. Of course, those 2 States have to agree to the scheme because they are Labor States. That is ignoring for the moment the fact that the doctors in those 2 States have refused to participate in the scheme. I believe that this must lead one to draw the conclusion that the Medibank scheme cannot be introduced anywhere in Australia—in the States anyway—on 1 July as advertised. So the Government is guilty on the court of false advertising at the taxpayers’ expense.

The second point I wish to make is that the Government’s scheme will not be free. People will have to pay more in total than they do now for their health benefits and their general health care and they will have to pay substantially more if they want more than a lowered standard of public ward accommodation at hospitals. They will have to pay dearly for the Government’s health scheme through the tax system—so dearly that the Government will not or cannot say how much its scheme will cost in total. Most outsiders
believe that it will be about double the existing health scheme arrangement. The Government cannot guarantee that there will be adequate public ward beds—that is, to use its own terminology, free beds—for the people because the majority of the people of Australia—70 per cent of them—who now prefer better than public ward accommodation, that is, intermediate or private ward beds, will be forced to switch to public ward beds and those beds will not be available because the Government can provide adequate public ward beds only by taking over the beds in the private, religious and charitable hospitals. If it does that the Government will abolish one of its own arguments, that is, that it is not restricting the freedom of choice of hospital beds in this country. It will also be acting in a most unsavoury and undemocratic manner in the takeover process.

I believe that the most expensive advertising campaign that is being conducted by the Government at the taxpayers’ expense for Medibank should be referred to the Commissioner of Trade Practices under the consumer protection provisions of the Trade Practices Act for false advertising. All the allegations of attempts at false advertising by private companies that have been made by the Government would pale into insignificance beside the Government’s massive false advertising campaign in this respect. Finally there is the question of the morality of the Government in spending $1.5m on a blatantly political campaign. The scheme has not been introduced yet. There may be an election before its implementation. I do not know whether there will be. Certainly the newspapers are talking about the holding of an election as if there is quite a possibility that that will happen and one has to believe the newspapers to a certain extent. Whenever the next election is held the respective health schemes will be a part of the competing policies of the 2 sides of the Parliament. Is it moral, is it just or is it fair for one side of the Parliament—the Government—to use $1.5m of the taxpayers’ money to push one of its own policies without at least providing an equivalent opportunity for the other side of the Parliament to do the same?

If an election is to be held I am sure that the Medibank scheme will not be the major part of that election campaign because the Government’s disastrous mishandling of the Australian economy must be the major issue. How, in 2 short years, the Government has turned a prosperous country with one of the lowest inflation rates and one of the lowest unemployment rates in the world into one with one of the highest on both counts is a national disaster which must be exposed and which must become the major part of any election campaign. Never before in the history of this country has so much of the public’s money been used for political advertising. If one adds to that the great public relations staffs which have been built up by Ministers and the Government machine generally, all at the public’s expense, to push blatantly political policies one comes up with a scandal of national proportions on how the Government is using the taxpayers money. I believe that the public will appreciate that in time and react to it. The Opposition supports the National Health Bill (No. 2) and rejects the National Health Bill (No. 3).

Mr Donald Cameron—Mr Deputy Speaker—
Motion (by Mr Daly) proposed:
That the question be now put.

The House divided.

(Mr Speaker—Hon. G. G. D. Scholes)

Ayes . . . . . . . . . . 63
Noes . . . . . . . . . . 58

Majority . . . . . . . . . . 5

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Morris, P. F.
Morrison, W. L.
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Oldmeadow, M. W.
Patterson, R. A.
Reynolds, L. J.
Riccardi, J. M.
Sherry, R. H.
Stewart, F. E.
Thorburn, R. W.
Uren, T.
Wallis, L. G.
When, R. B.
Willis, R.
Young, M. J.

NOES
Nixon, P. J.
O'Keefe, F. L.
Peacock, A. S.
Robinson, Eric
Robinson, Ian
Ruddock, P. M.
Sinclair, I. McC.
Staley, A. A.
Stuart, A. A.
Sullivan, J. W.
Viner, R. I.
Westworth, W. C.
Wilson, I. B. C.

Tellers:
Cameron, Donald
England, J. A.

Whidam, E. G.
Beazley, K. E.

PAs
Snedden, B. M.
Anthony, J. D.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.
Original question resolved in the affirmative.
Bill read a second time.
Message from the Governor-General recommending appropriation announced.

Third Reading
Leave granted for third reading to be moved forthwith.

Mr Donald Cameron—Mr Speaker——

Mr SPEAKER—Order! What exactly does the honourable member expect to do?

Mr Donald Cameron—Well, I expect to speak. I tried to speak before but the Minister moved the gag.

Mr SPEAKER—Order! Does the honourable member wish the House to go into Committee?

Mr Donald Cameron—I wish to speak on the third reading.

Mr SPEAKER—There is no question before the House. Would the honourable member mind resuming his seat. I call the Minister.

Motion (by Mr Hayden) proposed:
That the Bill be now read a third time.

Mr DONALD CAMERON (Griffith) (4.42)—The Opposition broadly supports the National Health Bill (No. 2). There is a syndrome whereby the Government is altering all legislation to accommodate those people who are unemployed. There are pregnant women and unemployed persons involved. If those people voted Labor at the last election, surely they would provide the definition of a 3-time loser.
AYES
Johnson, Lcs
Jones, Charles
Keating, P. J.
Keogh, L. J.
Kenia, J. C.
Klugman, R. E.
Lamb, A. H.
Lockett, A. S.
McKenzie, D. C.
Martin, V. J.
Matthews, C. R. T.
Morrice, P. F.
Morison, W. L.
Mulder, A. W.
Oldmeadow, M. W.
Patterson, R. A.
Reynolds, L. J.
Riordan, J. M.
Sherry, R. H.
Stewart, F. E.
Thorburn, R. W.
Uren, T.
Wailes, L. G.
Wills, R. B.
Williams, M. J.

NOES
Lusher, S. A.
Lynch, P. R.
Mackellar, M. J. R.
Mc Leay, J. E.
McMahon, W.
McVeigh, D. T.
Macphee, I. M.
Millar, P. C.
Nixon, P. J.
O'Keefe, P. L.
Peacock, A. S.
Robinson, Eric
Robinson, Ian
Ruddock, P. M.
Sinclair, I. McC.
Staley, A. A.
Street, A. A.
Sullivan, J. W.
Viner, R. I.
Wentworth, W. C.
Wilson, I. B. C.

Tellers:
Cameron, Donald
England, J. A.

Whitlam, E. G.
Beazley, K. E.
Snedden, B. M.
Anthony, J. D.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a second time.

Mr SPEAKER—Is it the wish of the House to proceed to the third reading forthwith?

Mr Chipp—With your indulgence, Mr Speaker, to save the time of the House I point out that the Opposition would not necessarily want to take this Bill into the Committee stage. We have co-operated with the Government in that we have agreed to a cognate debate on this Bill and the Bill with which the House has just dealt. As is my practice when I am in charge of a Bill, I believe in opposing a Bill by calling for one division and not wasting the time of the House in calling for further divisions. In return for that practice on this occasion I would ask you, Mr Speaker, if there are any members on this side of the House who wish to speak briefly on the third reading of this Bill—I do not know that there are—to be a little tolerant in allowing them some sort of discretion in what they might say.

Mr SPEAKER—Is it the wish of the House to proceed to the third reading forthwith?

Mr Hayden—Yes.

Third Reading

Motion (by Mr Hayden) proposed:
That the Bill be now read a third time.

Mr DONALD CAMERON (Griffith) (4.52)—The Opposition opposes this Bill even at the third reading stage. We believe that what is contained in this Bill will lead to the ultimate destruction of the private health organisations and thus facilitate the introduction into Australia of the Government's scheme called Medibank, Medicare, or Medibotch, which many of us believe it will be. The reason why we are so rigid in our opposition is that we have studied what has happened in the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada and also in Sweden. A study of what has happened in those places has led us to the conclusion that, whilst the Government may be well motivated in the belief that its health scheme will not get out of hand, in practice there is no way of containing the costs of a national health plan such as that proposed by the Minister for Social Security (Mr Hayden) and that this in itself will be destructive not only of medicine and health care in Australia but also of the economy of this nation.

We believe that the Government, through the advertising in which it has been indulging in the past, has been filling people with expectations which really when examined closely are nothing other than a perpetuation of a fraud. The cost of the Government's health scheme will be far greater than the Minister has told the nation. Looking at the situation in the United Kingdom, we find that that country is required to spend nearly £500m on its health scheme. In the early days of that scheme the British socialists, the equivalent of the Australian Labor Party, did not foresee that the cost of the scheme would rise so astronomically. The position in England today is that the British health scheme is being crippled and those responsible are screaming out for the injection of another £500m to save it and to get it back on its knees. Yet the present Federal Government in Australia is embarking on the same course of madness.

The cost of the United States Medicare system has turned out to be some eleven times more than the cost originally projected. The Minister for Social Security cannot assure this House or the Australian people that the same will not happen to the national health scheme which is being proposed here.

Mr Kelly—Eleven times more in the United States?

Mr DONALD CAMERON—that is right; it is eleven times more in that country. The concern that motivates me and other members on this side of the House in continuing our opposition to the Government's proposal for a health scheme is that in the long term it will be the poor people,
the little people, who will be hurt most. A situation will be created in which people will over-
use the available health care and, as in other countries, the system will be subjected to stresses
and strains with which it simply will not be able
to cope. The system will break down and it will
be the little people who will suffer most.

I believe that the world experience has been
such as to present us with a lesson. We should
continue our walk along the road of madness
and our efforts to completely dismantle and
destroy the existing scheme. I ask the Minister
for Social Security who is sitting at the table: Why
does he introduce this legislation right on the eve
of the introduction of his so-called scheme? Why
does he do this if he is so confident that Medibank
will get off the ground on 1 July? The
Government is plundering the public coffers in
using $1.56m to promote and advertise the
Australian Labor Party's health program. I recall
clearly the present Minister for Social Security
standing up when we were in government and
asking the then Minister for Health whether
action would be taken to ensure that the private
health funds did not use one cent of the contribu-
tors' money for the promotion of anti-ALP
health scheme propaganda. The then Minister
for Health rightly assured the questioner that this
was not the case and the funds were not allowed
to use contributors' money for that purpose. Yet,
today the present Government is prepared to
plunder Australian taxpayers' funds to promote
its health scheme. If there ever was inconsist-
ence, it is here today for all to see.

My good friend the honourable member for
Hotham (Mr Chipp) and other speakers on this
side of the House have pointed out that the situ-
ation would not be quite as painful if the adver-
tising being engaged in was honest and true. But
the Government is engaging in a false advertis-
ing campaign. I fear that many gullible people in
our society will believe the assurances of the
Minister for Social Security that his health pro-
gram will be good, when in fact we already have
all the signs that the introduction of such a
scheme will be disastrous to the health care of
this nation.

Let us be honest and realistic about what the
Government is doing. The Australian Labor
Party is a socialist party hellbent on the destruc-
tion of everything that is non-government. The
Prime Minister (Mr Whitlam) can speak in Syd-
ney every Friday of the week and assure private
enterprise that Labor cares about it; but
representatives of private enterprise have only to
come into this chamber and examine the type of
legislation that is introduced to see the real
motives of honourable members on the Govern-
ment side. The Government will continue to
drive every nail it can into the coffin which it has
constructed with its own hands for private
enterprise. The Bill which we are discussing in
the third reading stage is simply a Bill to enclose
private enterprise—this time the private health
funds. The Government has set out to destroy
completely and to tear down the funds so that it
can introduce its Medibank scheme. The
Government wants the private health funds de-
sroyed because it lives in fear that if it loses the
next election—and it cannot come quickly
enough—a government formed from people now
on this side of the House will tear down the
Medibank system if it is under way by then. The
Government is trying to destroy the framework
on which we can rebuild a sane health care
program.

Mr HEWSON (McMillan) (5.0)—The
National Health Bill (No. 3) appears to me to be
like a stillborn child that is getting mouth to
mouth resuscitation. This legislation has been
put before this Parliament so often that we are
just about sick and tired of it. On these occasions
every opportunity is given for repetitive argu-
ment. It would be safe to say that this child, this
National Health Bill (No. 3), was conceived by
two incompatible parents—the Australian Labor
Party and the Australian public. The Minister for
Social Security (Mr Hayden) flirted with the
Australian public and fell victim to a little en-
couragement. Because the Labor Party received
about 50 per cent of the votes at the last election,
the Minister thinks he has a mandate to carry out
something that he can impose upon the whole of
the Australian people.

Our opposition to this legislation stems from
the wisdom of our philosophy. Our policy, which
is a free enterprise approach, means that we be-
lieve in voluntary participation built around the
initiative and responsibility of people. Naturally
there are some people—only a small percen-
tage—who do not or cannot for various reasons
accept that responsibility. It is in those areas that
our realistic approach allows for some additions
to the voluntary scheme being accepted by the
public sector, namely the government. We do not
believe in the government dominating the popu-
lation. This Bill has been dished up to this Parlia-
ment on a number of occasions. Each time the
title has had to be amended to include the correct
date. The Minister has put up a continual bar-
rage of abuse of those people who oppose this
scheme. He talks about the saving to the tax-
payer. What saving? I wish someone would talk
sense to this Minister. He knows full well that unless the National Health Bill (No. 3) is carried Medibank cannot realistically become operative—unless, of course, he can get in the back door to the private health funds. He knows that this whole scheme is the responsibility of the taxpayers. They did not give him a mandate to fiddle with their money. They did not give him authority to kill their freedom. But he was given the doubtful responsibility as a Minister of giving guidance on the welfare of the people.

I am sick and tired of the honourable member for Henty (Mrs Child) using her sanctimonious approach about the people's rights and how her socialist Government has a mandate. Goodness me, what next? People's rights are better protected when the people themselves are involved, particularly in policies for their own welfare. That is the free enterprise approach which was so successful when we were in government. We recognise the need for social welfare. We recognise the value of and acknowledge some portions of this Bill which need to become operative. But we will not recognise or have a bar of socialism, and national health and Medibank smell of socialism.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Armitage)—I call the Minister for Social Security.

Mr HAYDEN (Oxley—Minister for Social Security) (5.2)—Mr Deputy Speaker—

Mr Chipp—Are you closing the debate?

Mr HAYDEN—Yes.

Mr Chipp—Could I have one minute?

Mr HAYDEN—Ask the Chair.

Mr Chipp—Could I have one minute, Mr Deputy Speaker?

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER—I have called the Minister for Social Security.

Mr Chipp—I ask the Minister to yield to me for one minute.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER—Is the Minister agreeable? There being no objection, the honourable member may proceed.

Mr CHIPP (Hotham) (5.3)—I thank the Minister for Social Security (Mr Hayden). We will not call for a division on the third reading of the Bill, but I want it on the record that this is not because we do not vigorously oppose the Bill; it is simply because I believe that we made the point once in dividing on the second reading and we do not want to waste the time of honourable members by calling for division after division. I just wanted to put that point on the record. Again I thank the Minister for allowing me to do so.

Mr HAYDEN (Oxley—Minister for Social Security) (5.4)—in reply—The honourable member for McMillan (Mr Hewson) suggested that this health insurance debate is like a stillborn child receiving mouth to mouth resuscitation. Let me say that the mixed metaphor seems to be the product of a misconception. There are only a couple of points I would like to make rather quickly in reply to the debate that has taken place. Firstly, I find it rather curious that the Opposition is resisting the proposal in this Bill for the appointment of an inspector to investigate the affairs of what is obviously a failing health insurance organisation, the proposal for the appointment of a judicial manager of a fund and the provisions for the winding up of a fund. I want to point out that the appointment of a judicial manager is an action which is empowered to the Australian Industrial Court and the organisation concerned is entitled to be heard by the Court in connection with any application to it for such an appointment. Furthermore during the term of judicial management the judicial manager is subject to the supervision of the Court, not the Minister. That is a very important point.

What is equally important, because it does establish the validity of the principles we have been putting forward and at the same time strikes at the very heart of the inconsistency of the Opposition on these matters, is that these provisions—provisions for inspections, investigations of organisations by an inspector, judicial management of a fund and the winding up of a fund—are provisions which are already established in legislation in the Insurance Act and in the Life Insurance Act. For instance, in regard to investigation of an organisation, sections 52, 54 to 57, and 59 to 61 of the Insurance Act already provide for this sort of action. In respect of the judicial management of a fund, sections 59 to 63 and 66 of the Life Insurance Act make that sort of provision. In regard to the winding up of a fund, sections 59, 64, 65, 72 (1) and 75 (4) of the Life Insurance Act make that sort of provision. The significance of this is that the Opposition accepted those principles in those Acts and they are equally valid and equally desirable in this legislation.

As optimistically confident as I am that the wellbeing of this country is going to be in the hands of this Government for a long time I am, however, not prepared to assert dogmatically that authority in the hands of this Government will go into infinity. One day we will probably have the misfortune of a Liberal-Country Party government and accordingly it too would require this sort of authority which we are seeking in
relation to the administration of private health insurance. It has little to do with the introduction of the Medibank program. It is nothing more than ancillary legislation. Medibank can come into operation without this legislation, but the operation of private health insurance would be not only much more messy but also less responsible to the needs and the rights of members of the community.

The next point I would like to mention concerns reserves. There is a sort of synthetic fury on the part of the honourable member for Hotham when he postures in heated opposition to this proposal that a fund should be able to transfer excess reserves from, say, a hospital fund into a medical fund. Already there exists under the National Health Act as a result of action taken by a previous Liberal-Country Party Government provision to transfer reserves from a hospital fund of a particular fund in one State to a hospital fund of the same fund in another State or similarly in relation to medical funds. It may interest members of the Opposition to know that we now have in the Department of Social Security an application to transfer reserves. The reserves are to be transferred from a hospital fund into a medical fund of a large open fund. Without this sort of authority we cannot approve that application, yet that fund is running in deficit in the medical fund and has a healthy surplus in its hospital fund.

I believe there are only 2 other points that deserve mentioning at this stage. One concerns the advertisements about Medibank. Medibank will provide free medical insurance cover for every man, woman and child in Australia and free public hospital care in those States the governments of which agree to allow such treatment to be made available. That is a fact. We say in our advertisements that that is because Medibank, like other social welfare services, will be financed by money from taxation revenue. It is consistent with the principle asserted by members of the Opposition such as the honourable member for Hotham who has on other occasions, with some sort of phoney indignation, argued that Medibank is a threat against free hospitals in Queensland. On the same basis that hospitals are free in Queensland or state education is free in this country, Medibank is free, and we put that point quite clearly and without any attempt to confuse or to mislead anyone. We state unequivocally that Medibank is free in that sense because like other social welfare services it will be financed by money from tax revenue.

On that point, let us be clear why it is free. It was not a decision of this Government to make it free. Our proposal was to levy a contribution on all taxpayers with certain exceptions for low income earners. The Opposition established beyond any doubt that Australia would have a free universal health insurance scheme, a free Medibank program, because it rejected the legislation which would have imposed that levy. It seems as though the Opposition, having based its major criticisms of the health insurance program—Medibank—on the levy concept decided to tidy it up and to make the program free. Australians have the Liberal-Country Party Opposition to thank for a free universal health insurance program coming into operation in Australia on 1 July. The Liberal-Country Party, presumably on some philosophical basis, decided that people should not pay a contribution. We would not have suggested it but we accept the principle and we are curiously interested whence came the philosophical motivation on the part of the Liberal-Country Party to assert to the point where it is unchangeable that Australians will have free universal health insurance—the Medibank program free of contributions. We thank the members of the Liberal-Country Party Opposition for that. They are the people who will bring about free universal insurance for Australians from 1 July 1975.

There has been some criticism of the cost of the information program that we have been conducting to explain to people how the Medibank program will operate. There is a long history of precedent to justify the program. For instance, Sir Earle Page introduced the present system of health insurance. In 1953 he had distributed to all households in Australia a 30-page booklet on his national health insurance scheme 6 months before appropriate legislation was introduced and more than 3 months before the gazettal of appropriate regulations. So whatever is said, at least we adhere to law and order, the old warcry of previous Liberal-Country Party governments. We had introduced legislation before we took this sort of action. The honourable member for Hotham criticised the expenditure of $1.5m on explaining this national program, one of the biggest undertakings which has ever been accepted by any country in the world, to bring in for the whole of the nation a universal health insurance program. Is it unreasonable to want to explain to people so that as much can be achieved, doubt can be removed and confusion can be eliminated in the course of the introduction of this program? There will be a change, quite a significant change and people have a right to expect that the whole program will be explained to them in simple, direct and correct terms. Compare the expenditure
on a program to benefit every person in this country, to cover every Australian including more than one million people who are not covered by the present health insurance program, many of them in Country Party electorates where there is the greatest relative poverty in this country. I think it is a rather ignominious achievement by the Country Party that it presided over the development of the greatest level of poverty in this country within the rural sectors of the community and did nothing about it.

In any case, I will move away from the feudal attitude of Country Party members who believe in wealthy land owners—their patrons—and poor serfs to serve the needs of the wealthy land owners in rural areas, and get on to the criticism made by the honourable member for Hotham and others that $1.5m was an extravagant expenditure on explaining the greatest social reform that has been accepted in any country.

Mr Chipp—I rise on a point of order. Mr Speaker quite properly applied Standing Orders to my friend the honourable member for Griffith when he tried to speak to the third reading of the previous Bill saying that the honourable member had to limit himself to the provisions of that Bill. The Minister is now canvassing the speeches that were made on the second reading which, as far as this House is concerned, were gagged. I can see no justice in the Minister now being permitted to reply to the second reading speeches when honourable members on this side of the House were stopped from speaking on the second reading. The point of order is that a speech on the third reading must be confined to the provisions of the Bill itself.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Armitage)—I must say that during the debate on the second reading tremendous leeway was allowed. When I came into the chair I looked at the 2 Bills. I was inclined to pull up some honourable members who were getting away from the purpose of the Bill. I have ascertained that other speakers in the debate had spoken on the question of Medibank which was not within the confines of the Bill. However, at this point of time it is correct that it is the debate on the third reading of the Bill. I request the Minister to confine himself to the contents of the Bill. If he wants to deal with Medibank he must tie it in with the contents of the Bill, as the honourable member for Hotham had to do in his speech on the second reading.

Mr Hayden—I will do better. I will wrap it up now. In 1972-73 a Liberal-Country Party Government budgeted $1.6m for military recruiting advertisements to recruit a few thousand people. The sum of $1.6m was allocated which, in real terms, is a considerably greater amount than the $1.5m which will be expended by this Government to explain a program to 13½ million Australians—every Australian in this country—who will draw on the benefits of this great social reform.

Question resolved in the affirmative.
Bill read a third time.

SALES TAX BILLS (Nos. 1 to 9) 1975
Second Readings
Debate resumed from 12 February on motion by Dr J. F. Cairns:
That the Bills be now read a second time.

Mr Enderby (Canberra—Attorney-General and Minister for Customs and Excise)—May I have the indulgence of the House to raise a point of procedure on this legislation. Before the debate is resumed on these Bills I would like to suggest that it might suit the convenience of the House to have a general debate on the Sales Tax Bills (Nos. 1 to 9) and the Sales Tax (Exemptions and Classifications) Bill as they are related measures. At the conclusion of the debate separate questions will, of course, be put on the Sales Tax Bills (Nos. 1 to 9) and on the Sales Tax (Exemptions and Classifications) Bill. I suggest therefore, that you permit the subject matter of the 10 Bills to be discussed in a cognate debate.

Mr Deputy Speaker—Is it the wish of the House to have a general debate covering the 10 measures? There being no objection, I will allow that course to be followed.

Dr Edwards (Berowra) (5.18)—The purpose of the Sales Tax Bills (Nos 1 to 9) 1975 and the Sales Tax (Exemptions and Classifications) Bill 1975 is to give effect to the announcement on 28 January last that sales tax on passenger vehicles would be reduced from 27½ per cent to 15 per cent and on vehicles ordinarily used for commercial purposes from 15 per cent to 5 per cent. That cut in the sales taxes was one measure of an emergency package of three. The other components of the package were that the Government determined to abandon the proposed tax on the private use of company cars—one of the Government's many somersaults at that time—and that import quotas on passenger and light commercial vehicles would be imposed during the next 12 months.

The tax cut is to be temporary. It is to operate in full from 29 January to 1 May. Thereafter it will revert to the previous rate at 2½ per centage
points a month beginning in May so that the full rate of 27½ per cent on passenger vehicles will apply again as from 1 September. These Bills are not opposed by the Opposition. Notwithstanding the current difficult world situation in international trade and one's own consciousness of our obligations as a major international trading nation, these measures became inevitable in order to restore a situation largely brought about by the Government's own policies—not by external factors—and made worse by the Government's delay in taking action when the need for urgent action had become manifestly necessary to keep the industry viable in the face of the Government's policies and, I concede, the emerging pressures of the world trade scene. They are, in fact, part and parcel of this Government's gyrations, somersaults, back flips, the lot which began with the hasty devaluation on 25 September, were in full flood with the Prime Minister's 12 November Budget mark III and climaxd with the compromise, accommodation and backdowns which occurred at Terrigal at the beginning of last month. It was a policy of 'full reverse as the best way forward'. At last we heard that profits are OK; the private sector is the greatest, the whole works. The only difficulty about it is, can anyone believe the Government? I doubt if the Australian people and the business sector in particular will believe it because the animal does not so easily change its spots.

Mr Graham—They will fall for the 3 cards trick if they do.

Dr Edwards—That is true indeed. A major element in the whole reversal is the Prime Minister's recent stance in the matter. He has seen—I was going to say 'the'—some light. The Prime Minister has averred that he does not accept that the problems of the motor industry and other industries, especially importing competing industries, are due to the cumulative effect of the Government's ill-advised policies—the whole gamut of them. He chooses to put the blame wholly, or if not wholly, largely, on wage increases. Not only inflation but now unemployment is the result of last year's wage increases. Tariff cuts? I refer to the 25 per cent across the board tariff cut in July 1973, the tariff cut in the electronic products industry in November 1973, the January-February 1974 cut in the tariff on white goods, the March 1974 reversal of the textile quotas, and so on. They do not cause unemployment, according to the Prime Minister. To talk about these things as causing unemployment, is 'garbage' so the Prime Minister says. Wage increases, not tariff reform so-called, are the trouble. What a line from the professed champion of the ordinary men and women of Australia. I think it was Mr Ross of the Textile Workers Union, with so many members of his own union unemployed, who in Melbourne threw this back in the Prime Minister's face and said, as I recall: 'What Gough is saying is the garbage'.

Unquestionably the thrust to inflation since about June last have been, and are, large wage and salary increases. It is of the utmost importance that the current prospective explosion of excessive claims be resisted and contained. The metal workers settlement in particular will be critical. Indeed, I shudder to think what it might be like for the industry before us 6 months hence when, with the tax moving back to its full rate, the industry simultaneously has to contend with the cost pressures stemming from these pressures obviously and clearly in the pipeline.

But in saying that let us have a bit of fair go as well as truth in this situation. This much needs to be said on the side of the unions—the Prime Minister will not say it so let me say it: It was the Government's policies in 1973, the massive expansion in Government spending plus the pace setting increases in salaries and conditions in the Public Service, and the open encouragement of large bargaining settlements and, I concede, seeing the honourable member for Gellibrand (Mr Willis) sitting opposite me, some impact from high world commodity prices, that fuelled inflation in 1973-74. Then in turn inflation, the increase in the cost of living, combined with the heavy bite of the personal income tax unchanged until recently, made the momentum of large wage and salary claims in 1974 to that extent inevitable and inexorable. Let that be said in justice to the unions. Let the Government accept the blame.

Apart from that, to offset that big spending in 1973-74 there was the credit squeeze of unparalleled severity from about March-April of last year until very recently. So, turning from the inflation problem to unemployment, the highest level of unemployment since the depression—in particular, unemployment in the motor industry—there is the first and major factor, the credit squeeze, the cut back in the availability of money and credit and the associated hike in interest rates to the highest levels in our history. That has affected most directly the building industry and, indirectly, just about every industry, not least the motor industry.

What I would stress is that that stance in monetary policy was not a measure adopted to counter emerging inflation, which just dropped
down from heaven or came in by ripples from another shore, as it was put by the honourable member for Hindmarsh, the delinquent but compliant Minister for Labor and Immigration (Mr Clyde Cameron). The credit squeeze was implemented as a deliberate act of Government policy. As my colleague the honourable member for Griffith (Mr Donald Cameron) was saying a little while ago, it was a deliberate act of Government policy to cut back the private sector, including the motor industry, to make room for the doctrinaire socialist expansion of the government sector. That is what the credit squeeze was all about. It was not just to fight some inflation that had suddenly appeared as though it had come down from heaven or from another shore, but to make way for this massive expansion of the government sector. So the credit squeeze had its impact on the private sector.

Then there were the tariff cuts and the revaluation. Both measures were part and parcel of the deliberate Whitlam policy of increasing imports, in part to meet the excess demand of 1973-74 created by the Government’s excessive spending, superimposed on a resurgent private sector, and partly in the pursuit of a misguided, back to front, cart before the horse policy of so called restructuring Australian industry. I say ‘back to front’ because the policy was to cut industry down, to cut out the alleged dead wood, before anything was thought out as to what should take its place. Does the Prime Minister suggest that the 25 per cent cut in the car tariff from 45 per cent, as it then was, to about 33.7 per cent—that is, to below the historic level of the mid-1960s when the Japanese first invaded this market—was of no effect? Who is he kidding?

There are some figures of his own that were reported briefly in the ‘Australian Financial Review’ recently. It was stated:

The Prime Minister, Mr Whitlam, is being bolstered in his calls for wages restraint by work commissioned by him on the effects on profitability of the 25 per cent across-the-board tariff cut compared to effects from wage increases.

According to this report, the study states that the tariff cut in the case of the motor industry expressed in terms of equivalent cost increase was 16 per cent on the higher estimate and just under 10 per cent on the lower. A cost increase of that sort, arbitrarily superimposed on cost increases stemming largely from wage claims made because of the impact of rising prices and the bite of the tax system, was a very large additional burden which contributed greatly to the difficulties of this industry. If the Prime Minister really believed that it was of no effect, why did his Government accede to the increase to 35 per cent and then by way of a primage duty surcharge of a further 10 per centage points to a duty of 45 per cent for this industry on 12 November last, thereby restoring precisely the status quo ante, that is, the situation prevailing before the original tariff cut? Of course the tariff cut was important, both in its immediate effect and in its effect of creating uncertainty in that industry and others.

Do the Prime Minister and the Government suggest that the successive revaluations of the Australian dollar, partially reversed on 25 September last, were of no effect? Vis-a-vis the pound sterling and other European currencies, not to mention the United States dollar, those revaluations opened up a margin in favour of imports of the order of 30 per centage points. That is, a United Kingdom product landed at, say, £3,000 in 1972 could ceteris paribus, as the economist would say, be landed at about $2,100 in 1973-74. If anything, the revaluation, which was too large and unduly prolonged, was greater in its effect in encouraging imports than the tariff cut and could very largely undo the tariff entirely down to near zero protection. So with the Australian economy open as never before, no wonder car imports surged when markets elsewhere, not least the Japanese home market itself, began to contract in the latter half of last year. I concede that much to external influences.

At this point let me sum up with respect to the causes of the high level of unemployment generally in this country and in the motor industry in particular. The growth in the level of unemployment has been more rapid than in nearly every other country, as analysed in detail in the ‘Australian’ newspaper today by Dr Barry Hughes. In respect of the emergence of this unemployment the situation has been that, to the unparalleled credit squeeze to which I referred and this pressure from import competition, were added the screwing down of prices and profits by the Prices Justification Tribunal, the ‘halving’—the substantial reduction—of export incentives, very important for the motor industry, the limiting of research and development expenditures, the withdrawal of the investment allowance and, very importantly, the bite of company taxation in this context of rapid inflation. To those as the top half of the scissors, so to speak, have been added the soaring costs from increased wages and salaries—the Prime Minister’s prime cause—as the bottom blade of the scissors. The inevitable outcome has been reduced business activity, low business confidence, investment stagnant and, unemployment which is already at 311,600 in
total and, on a seasonally adjusted basis, still growing.

All of the gyrations and somersaults of the Government recently, with the Government, to use a biblical allusion, acting like Gadarene swine but slamming on the brakes just before going over the cliff, unhappily will take a long while to turn the situation around and repair the damage, at least in terms of real development and real production. As I said earlier, how can the Australian people and the Australian business community believe in the intentions of the Government? So, a resurgence of private investment which is so critical to the sustained growth of the economy is unlikely. Without it, this ‘all-stops-out’ effort to combat unemployment undoubtedly will issue in a further acceleration of inflation in 1975-76. I stress the word ‘acceleration’ because the underlying rate of inflation is clearly still very high indeed. It is in the region of 15 per cent to 20 per cent per annum. As I said, there has been this all-out effort. We have a situation of the Government’s economic management being not just ‘stop go’ but ‘super stop go’.

Mr Graham—Are they working at the Mint tonight?

Dr EDWARDS—The Mint, of course, is flat out. It is perhaps the only industry in the country that is working in that way. As I say, the Government’s economic management is super stop go, with the ‘go’ mainly in the area of inflation rather than in the area of real production.

I come back specifically to the motor industry. What added to the urgency of the problems in the motor industry—as I said, the Government should have acted more quickly—was a remarkable stability in the prices of imports of the Japanese products in particular. I gather that the increase in the prices of those products was in the region of barely 5 per cent during a year when inflation in Japan was of the order of 25 per cent and cost increases were even higher. I think that those Japanese car manufacturers must have something of the secret of combating inflation. Perhaps a member of the Government should go there and get the good oil on the subject. Hence the urgent need for action to be taken on this matter. The picture for the industry is all too clear in the statistics. They show that total demand, as evidenced by new registrations, is on a clear down-trend due to the credit squeeze and rising general unemployment. They show that imports were up strongly from May and July in particular onwards. The 17 600 units imported in December accounted for more than 50 per cent of the total registrations of new cars and station wagons in that month. There we have this picture of the weakness in total demand and the upward surge of imports. Accordingly, home production and hence employment took a catastrophic dive in December-January, and the situation was almost bound to have got worse.

So we have before the House this package of measures embodied in these Sales Tax Bills. They are designed, I repeat, as an emergency measure to retrieve the situation created as the cumulative outcome of the Government’s ill advised economic policies. The inventory of the industry was clearly out of control. Hopefully the tax cut which we are validating, with its short term duration, will see that excess stock of vehicles eliminated and the block it was to continuing normal production removed. Hopefully this move will not amount merely to transferring demand forward to this first half of the year from the second half, thereby creating a worse problem at the end of the year. Hopefully this tax reduction, plus the other major element in the package—I refer to the quota restraint on imports—will provide a bridge over the bottom, so to speak, and a stimulus to resume more or less normal levels of production as the year progresses. There are bound to be problems and possible inequities in the imposition of quotas. The quotas and the tariff imposts are bound to impact somewhat inequitably on some low volume European models, but hopefully these difficulties can be ironed out.

Beyond the problems in the immediate period is the continuing issue of the long term position of the industry. There is still a great deal of uncertainty in the industry. I have stressed frequently, and I take this opportunity to do so again, that the Liberal and Country Parties are committed to an efficient, growing and diversified manufacturing industry. That is the way Australians have chosen to go and that is the course on which we embarked at least as long as 45 years ago when the Bridgen Committee reported on tariffs in 1929. In fact, this course goes back even further than that. In this situation of fostering a growing, broadly based, diversified manufacturing industry—I concede that theoretically that is not a so-called optimum situation but it is the one Australians chose and still want, in my view—a flourishing motor car industry has a key role both as a major employer of labour and as a key supporting or user industry for other Australian industries, for example, the steel industry and essential technologies such as
foundering and engineering. In contrast to the austere unrealism of the Industries Assistance Commission’s proposals for the motor industry, I venture the view that the Government’s proposals for the industry on a longer term basis, as announced on 12 November last, are in the right direction.

Mr Kelly—I do not agree with that.

Dr EDWARDS—My colleague, the honourable member for Wakefield (Mr Kelly), sometimes has divergent views from mine on this matter and no doubt he will take an opportunity to express them. I put the view that these measures are in the right direction and, for my own part, I have not the slightest doubt that, if we are to retain a broad based Australian manufacturing industry with an appropriate range of technologies, skills and know-how, the sort of government intervention, or the degree of ‘planning’, to call a spade a spade, involved in the proposed Australian content plan—I say in parenthesis that plan is one which seeks to achieve an average 85 per cent Australian content, following the phasing out of the existing plans—not only has to be accepted but also has to be encouraged. Indeed I suspect it should go further, involving perhaps specific direction within the overall 85 per cent as to some thing, or some things, that should be included in order that key technological know-how and skills are nurtured and developed.

In these matters I am touching on some large issues, as witnessed by the comment from my colleague. I leave them for debate at another time. In the meantime, part and parcel as the present measures are, as embodied in these sales tax Bills and the related elements of the package, of the Government’s ad hoc piecemeal and often ‘instant’ economic management, or rather mismanagement, of the Australian economy, the Opposition does not oppose the Bills before the House.

Mr WILLIS (Gellibrand) (5.46)—These Bills, as the honourable member for Berowra (Dr Edwards) has said, seek to implement part of an economic package determined by the Government in late January to avoid retrenchment of thousands of workers in the motor industry. That package, which was determined following a series of discussions with the car manufacturing companies of this country from mid-December to late January, involved 3 things: firstly, a reduction in the sales tax on passenger vehicles for 3 months and gradual restoration over the next three or four months; secondly, a decision to repeal the tax on the net standby value to employees of the use of company cars; and thirdly, the imposition of import quotas.

These Bills are concerned with the sales tax cuts and the repeal of the tax on the standby value of company cars. In discussing them it is gratifying to know that they have already had the effect, since they were announced on 29 January, of stimulating sales of new cars in quite a dramatic fashion. Although it is difficult to obtain any figures on the rate of increase in new car sales since 29 January we know from industry sources that sales accelerated remarkably during February. The Press is full of stories of dealers and manufacturers telling us that the market is running hot and will remain so for at least another few months. This picture forms a vivid contrast with the market up to January of this year which, for Australian produced cars in particular, was a dismal catalogue of declining demand and vast stockpiles of completed but unsold cars.

I turn to consider the factors that brought about this difficult situation and the need for government action embodied in these Bills. But before looking at the underlying causes I should say at this stage that the precipitating factor leading to intense government-industry discussions and this package of stimulatory measures was the threat by General Motors-Holden’s Ltd to retrench 5000 to 6000 employees; that is, between 15 per cent and 20 per cent of its total workforce. Given that for each person employed by the manufacturers in the car industry another person is employed in the material and components supplying side of the industry, this announcement by GMH was clearly a matter of great importance for the economy. It was also one of the most blatant acts of cynicism that any company has engaged in throughout the entire history of this country. Here we have a company which has amassed vast profits in Australia over the years, which has taken out of Australia something in excess of 150 times the amount of capital it ever brought here from its parent company, but which threatened just before Christmas to lay off 20 per cent of its workers and to do so without any redundancy payments.

This in itself was bad enough. It displayed the completely anti-social nature of a foreign-owned company interested only in screwing as much profit out of Australia as it could. In fact, its action was even more heinous than appears on the surface for this company along with other Australian vehicle manufacturing companies had been engaged, up to only a month previously, in a series of consultations and discussions with the Government concerning the
level of protection it should receive for the next 10 years. These discussions had been held at various levels of government—ministerial, advisory, departmental and even at Caucus Economic Committee level. So far as I am aware the companies gave no indication at any time of the likelihood or even the possibility of retrenchment in the near future provided they received something like the protection they were asking for, which was well above that then in existence.

On 14 November last the Government announced its new protection policy for the industry, which amounted to a virtual guarantee of survival for the Australian motor manufacturing industry. Tariffs were increased from 33 per cent to 45 per cent for completely built-up imports and were to remain at that level for at least 6 months and thereafter until the level of imports fell below 20 per cent of the market. Tariffs on imports of completely knocked down vehicles were increased, rising by 1.5 per cent to 27.5 per cent on 1 January of this year and moving up to 35 per cent over 4 years, during which time volume limitations would apply limiting the numbers to the 1974 production levels plus 3 per cent per annum on a company basis. Thus the competitive position of locally made cars vis-a-vis imports was quite substantially increased by these government decisions.

The manufacturers generally applauded these moves. General Motors-Holden's in particular publicly welcomed the moves and announced a $18m expansion program, thus giving emphasis to its satisfaction with the new protection levels. But was the company grateful for what had been done? Not one bit of it. Only a month later General Motors was threatening to lay off 20 per cent of its workers without retrenchment pay, and this at a time when there was serious unemployment which meant that those sacked would have little chance of obtaining alternative jobs. This is particularly aggravating when we consider the history of GMH in Australia. It has in fact done extremely well in Australia—far beyond the expectation of its parent company which did not risk one penny of new investment in the Holden project.

The American parent company, General Motors Corporation, had a total investment in Australia of less than $2m—about $1.9m. That was repaid many times before General Motors-Holden's began producing the Holden car in 1948. In fact the Holden project was financed by the people of Australia in the main through a $5m loan from the Commonwealth Bank. General Motors Corporation would not put one penny into the Holden project. The Bank of Adelaide put $500,000 into the project because on the board of directors there was a member of the Holden family who wanted to be part of the project, but basically it was financed by the people of Australia through the Commonwealth Bank. If the Holden project had failed General Motors would not have lost a penny; the people of Australia would have been the losers. What a return General Motors Corporation has had on its no risk investment.

After all taxes, General Motors-Holden's has made a profit of $489m from 1948 to 1973 and of that amount has sent $300m back home. Thus the original investment has been repaid over 150 times since 1948 and it was already repaid a number of times before that. In these circumstances one would imagine that General Motors-Holden's would have a sense of responsibility to the society from which it obtained such remarkably good fortune and which had supplied it with the wherewithal to launch such a profitable venture; but such was not the case and if it had not been for the intervention of this Government many General Motors-Holden's employees would now be out of work. However, I make it clear that neither General Motors-Holden's nor the other manufacturing companies have withdrawn their threat to dismiss workers. GMH has reduced the numbers that it says might go from 5000 to 2000 and has said that it would review the situation in 3 months' time. The other companies said they would review the situation after one month, and that period has now passed. One can only hope that neither Ford nor Chrysler will dismiss anyone at this time, given the fact that their sales have boomed in the last month.

One other aspect of this rescue operation by the Government which should be mentioned is that the companies have done precious little on their own account to stimulate sales. In the United States of America where vehicle sales have slumped so disastrously that 14 plants have closed down and 200 000 workers have been retrenched, similar action has been taken to stimulate sales; that is, prices have been reduced to attract customers. The difference as compared with Australia is that in the United States the vehicle manufacturing companies themselves have reduced their prices. Here their subsidiaries have left it to the Government to reduce prices by cutting sales tax. The only exception to that in Australia has been the Chrysler company, which reduced the price of its automatic Valiant to that of a manual Valiant, and the Volkswagen company, which reduced the price of an Audi sedan. It was indeed ironic that it was the price of a fully imported sedan—the Audi—that was the first to
be cut back in Australia. With one exception it has not been followed by the Australian manufacturers.

How, then, did the Australian manufacturers come to be in so much trouble with a stockpile of approximately 60,000 completed cars filling up paddocks all over the country? One must acknowledge that the revaluation of 1973 and the 25 per cent tariff cuts together improved the competitive position of the Japanese imports of small cars and so led to their making further inroads into the Australian market. But other factors come into it as well. Firstly, Japanese car sales had been increasing inexorably as a percentage of the total Australian sales before any tariff cuts or revaluations. In 1960 the Japanese had 0.1 per cent of the market in this country for cars and station wagons. By 1964 that share of the market had gone to 3.9 per cent: By 1969 it was 14.1 per cent and by 1972 it was 19.6 per cent.

So, under the previous Liberal-Country Party Governments, there was a rapid and continuous growth in the share of the market going to the Japanese and it was only to be expected that that would continue after 1972. Now that is in fact what has happened, but at an even faster pace, in the last 2 years. In 1973 the Japanese had 27 per cent of the market. By the September quarter of last year they had increased their share of the market to 34 per cent. But the point is that this substantial increase cannot be attributed to tariff cuts and revaluations alone. The continuance of the trend would have notably increased the Japanese share in any case, as consumer tastes continued to change away from the medium-sized car of the Holden, Falcon and Valiant type in favour of the small and medium light cars in which the Japanese are specialists. I seek leave to continue my remarks at a later hour this day.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

REMUNERATION AND ALLOWANCES BILL 1974

Second Reading

Consideration resumed from 24 July 1974 on motion by Mr Lionel Bowen:

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Motion (by Mr Daly) agreed to:

That the order of the day be discharged.

Sitting suspended from 5.58 to 8 p.m.

DEPUTY CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES

Mr Speaker—Pursuant to standing order 18 I lay on the table my warrant nominating the honourable members for Melbourne (Mr Innes) and Burke (Mr Keith Johnson) to act as Deputy Chairmen of Committees when requested to do so by the Chairman of Committees.

NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BILL 1975

Mr Speaker—I have received a message from the Senate returning the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Bill and acquainting the House that the Senate does not insist on its amendment disagreed to by the House, has agreed to the amendment passed by the House in place thereof, and has agreed to the consequential amendment made by the House.

BILLS RETURNED FROM THE SENATE

The following Bills were returned from the Senate without amendment:

Australian Film Commission Bill 1975.

Book Bounty Bill 1975.

NATIONAL GALLERY BILL 1975

Bill presented by Mr Whitlam, and read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr Whitlam (Werriwa—Prime Minister) (8.2)—I move:

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr Speaker, the purpose of the Bill is to establish an Australian National Gallery in the national capital to develop, maintain and exhibit a national collection of works of art and to provide an art focus for the whole Australian community. Like the Australia Council Bill, this is another historic initiative taken by the present Government to promote interest and activity in the arts in Australia. Our intention to introduce this legislation was announced in the Governor-General's Speech at the opening of Parliament on 27 February 1973 and again in the Speech by Her Majesty the Queen on 28 February 1974. Our commitment was reiterated in the policy speech for the 1974 election and confirmed in the Governor-General's Speech on 9 July 1974.

Honourable members will be aware of my longstanding interest in a National Gallery and the Hansard record of my questions over many years stand testimony to my concern about the growth of our national collection of works of art. I shall not dwell on the chequered history of the idea of a National Gallery but it is worth remembering that it is as old as the master plan for the national capital itself. Provision for it appeared in the list of requirements prepared for competitors submitting designs for the future city and Walter Burley Griffin in his own plan allowed for two such institutions. For a time the idea was
obscured by depression, war and the other great forces which were reshaping Australian society; but the vision was not lost and it was the force and vigour of Sir Daryl Lindsay, in particular, which once more brought it to the fore.

On 10 September 1965 the then Prime Minister, Sir Robert Menzies, announced the establishment of a National Art Gallery Committee of Inquiry under the chairmanship of Sir Daryl Lindsay. The Committee’s report was presented to the new Prime Minister, Mr Holt, on 14 March 1966. Mr Holt tabled it and paid tribute to it in a ministerial statement on 1 November 1967. The report recommended as the basis for all else that the Gallery be given statutory authority. The Committee suggested that construction of the Gallery might commence when the National Library was due for completion during 1968 and hoped that the opening of the Gallery in 1970 would be a fitting means of recognising in the national capital the 200th anniversary of the discovery of eastern Australia by Captain Cook. On 26 October 1971 the then Prime Minister, Mr McMahon, announced his Government’s intention to legislate for a permanent Council as a statutory body to administer the Gallery. He also announced at that time his Government’s intention to appoint Mr James Mollison as the Gallery’s first director.

The design of a Gallery building was entrusted to Edwards, Madigan, Torzillo and Briggs Pty Ltd, architects and town planners of Sydney. A contract for construction of the building was issued by my Government in April 1973, and on 7 November of that year I unveiled a foundation plaque commemorating the beginning of construction on the banks of Lake Burley Griffin nearby. A fine gallery building is not, however, an end in itself. In the final analysis, an institution is judged by what it offers and how effectively it does this, and in large measure this will depend upon the soundness of the principles on which it is based and the quality of the people who run it.

The Australian Government believes that the National Gallery Bill 1975 represents the best basis devised to this time for such an institution in our kind of society. It will be an independent statutory authority in many respects similar to the National Library of Australia. It will be responsible for the national collection of works of art and be expected to make the most advantageous use of the collection in the national interest.

The affairs of the Gallery will be conducted by a Council, including the Director of the Gallery, and not more than 10 other members chosen for their knowledge and experience of the visual arts or other areas of knowledge relevant to the affairs of the Gallery. It is in mind that there should always be a proper blend of the artistic and other interests most likely to optimise the effectiveness of the institution.

A novel feature of the Bill is that it provides for two statutory offices, the Director of the Australian National Gallery and the Secretary and Manager of the Gallery. The Director shall have overall responsibility to the Council for the running of the Gallery and its artistic direction, and the Secretary and Manager shall, under the Director, manage the day-to-day administration of the affairs of the Gallery and act as secretary to the Council. This provision has been introduced to avoid the problems which have arisen so often elsewhere, where unlikely and unreasonable combinations of different expertise and experience have been demanded of the one person, usually with unfortunate results. It is hoped that by this means there will always be a proper complement of artistic and administrative skills with the most satisfactory use being made of what each office-holder is best able to offer.

The Gallery will engage its own staff on terms and conditions determined by the Council but subject to the approval of the Public Service Board. This measure of flexibility is seen as essential to allow the Gallery to obtain the services of the best professional staff available whether in Australia or overseas, whether from other galleries or from universities or other areas.

In its financial affairs the Gallery will operate in much the same way as most other statutory authorities. It will be required to submit estimates to the Minister in the normal way and it will be funded by annual appropriation. It will operate its own bank accounts, but it will be required to keep proper accounts and records of its affairs which will be subject to inspection and audit by the Auditor-General. It will also prepare annual reports to the Minister which will be tabled in Parliament.

I shall not go into other features of the Bill here; I believe that altogether they will ensure the proper control and accountability of one of the nation’s important cultural institutions, while at the same time providing the vital elements of independence and flexibility which the institution requires to achieve the greatest measure of effectiveness.

Much has been said over the last year or two about some of the Gallery’s acquisitions of contemporary art from overseas. On balance, I think
this has been for the good. Many art-interested Australians have been obliged to reconsider some of their values and tastes and I believe that this is a salutary experience for us all every once in a while. I should like to remind honourable members, however, that the Gallery’s collection is indeed not confined to contemporary art from overseas.

In the view of the Director, the Gallery possesses close to the finest, balanced collection of Australian art anywhere in the country and it is virtually complete to this time. It is building a fine collection of primitive art based primarily on Pacific and African cultures. It is not neglecting the arts of our neighbours in Asia and the Far East nor the early civilizations of South America. The Gallery is assembling a major collection of graphic arts, and it already possesses the very fine Felix Man collection of lithographs tracing that art form from its very origins to recent times. A great sculpture collection is also being developed.

No Australian artist of importance has been neglected, and names like Constantin Brancusi, Alexander Calder, Honore Daumier, Auguste Rodin and Giambattista Tiepolo should leave no doubt that the Gallery is seeking the best of more than one period or place.

We have here the beginnings of an institution which it is my hope, and the Government’s, will be a source of pleasure and artistic stimulation for generations of Australians to come, a worthy addition to our growing national heritage, and an endeavour in which we might all take pride. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate (on motion by Mr Nixon) adjourned.

ELECTORAL LAWS AMENDMENT BILL 1974 [No. 2]

Bill presented by Mr Daly, and read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr Daly (Grayndler—Minister for Services and Property) (8.11)—I move:

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill is identical with that which I introduced on 13 November 1974 and which was passed without amendment on 25 November 1974. It was introduced into the Senate on 26 November 1974 and that chamber rejected it on 28 November 1974. The Senate’s rejection of the identical Bill in November last must be viewed in the light of the fact that many of the basic provisions of the Bill were similar to those in the Commonwealth Electoral Bill 1971 presented to this House by the then Minister for the Interior, the honourable member for Gwydir (Mr Hunt), on 31 March 1971, and read a second time. Thus the Opposition’s attitude to the earlier Bill can only be described as incomprehensible.

In the circumstances it would be idle of me to reiterate what I said in this House last November. I therefore confine myself to mentioning only 3 facets of the Bill. First, taken overall, the proposals in this Bill are intended to allow for a speedier finalisation of Federal election results and to improve voting facilities for electors. Second, the Bill introduces some new or changed procedures and corrects some obvious defects in the existing electoral law. Third, it proposes consequential amendments of the Senate Elections Act 1903-1948, the Senate Elections Act 1966 and the Representation Act 1903-1973. Three months have now elapsed since the Senate rejected an identical measure which I now introduce again. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate (on motion by Mr Killen) adjourned.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT CENTRE BILL 1975

Bill presented by Mr Beazley and read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr Beazley (Fremantle—Minister for Education) (8.13)—I move:

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill seeks to establish the Curriculum Development Centre as a statutory authority. In June 1973 the announcement was made of the Government’s decision to establish a Curriculum Development Centre, with the following functions: To undertake curriculum development tasks and to develop teaching and learning materials for use in schools; to commission and support curriculum and materials development; to display equipment and materials; to publish assessments and information about equipment and materials; to provide advisory services relating to curriculum and materials development; and to arrange the printing and marketing of materials. The Government’s intention that the Centre would be a statutory body, that it would have a governing council and that basic funding would be provided by the Australian Government was contained in the announcement of June 1973. Expenditure is expected to be around $2m to $3m annually when full operation is achieved.
In the word 'curriculum' educators refer to the whole range of learning experience which a child undergoes during his schooling. An aim of curriculum development is to relate education to the needs of the individual. It includes not only the design of courses but also the formulation of effective teaching methods and the design and production of books and other printed materials, slides and film strips, films, audio-tapes, and so on through the whole range of teaching and learning materials and the equipment required for their use in the classroom. A characteristic feature of education today is its diversity—in the range of student abilities and interests, in the degree of responsibility being accorded to individual schools, in the design of school buildings themselves. All these, and others, are creating pressure for diversity in courses, materials and teaching methods.

Experience in Australia and overseas has demonstrated the benefits that can accrue to children and to their schools from the concentration of relatively large funds and other resources on curriculum development on a national scale. In the United Kingdom a national Schools Council fosters curriculum and materials development by providing funds and other support and by arranging publication of results. In the United States of America several large projects have been mounted in recent years—in science, social science and the humanities—generally with federally provided budgets of several million dollars. The products of some of these are being used in Australian schools.

In Australia each of the State education departments has created facilities for curriculum development. In general, however, these facilities appear to be fully stretched in the production of materials of particular relevance to the individual State, and which receive limited use in other States. There is also a lack of any permanent facility for the exchange of information and ideas between the State curriculum agencies, and for receiving and assessing new concepts and developments from overseas. These considerations have for some time pointed to a need for a national body such as this Centre. Further, the Department of Education has, over a period, received many specific proposals for curriculum and materials development on a national scale, indicating that there would be ample work of a national character for a Curriculum Development Centre, now and in the future. The proposed Centre has been discussed with the State Ministers for Education, who are my colleagues on the Australian Education Council. They have given the proposal their full endorsement. The Bill provides that 3 nominees of the Education Council—that is, the State Ministers and I—be included in the membership of the Council of the Curriculum Development Centre.

Previous governments have given support and financial aid to national curriculum projects. I refer here particularly to the Australian Science Education Project, for which a total of $940,000 was contributed from Federal funds over the 5 year life of the project; secondly, to the program to stimulate the teaching of Asian languages and cultures in schools, for which $1.5m is being allocated, again over a 5 year period; and also to the National Committee on Social Science Teaching. All of these were initiated in consultation with the States. Each has made a valuable contribution in its respective area, and continues to do so. I wish to acknowledge the part played in implementing these projects by previous Ministers having responsibility for education, in particular the honourable member for Wannon (Mr Malcolm Fraser). The establishment of a Curriculum Development Centre is a logical development of the principle underlying these activities of the Australian Government in the curriculum development area.

So that work could begin as quickly as possible I announced an Interim Council for the Centre late in 1973. This Interim Council was to initiate all the functions of the Centre. It was also to establish liaison with existing bodies interested in curriculum development, determine staffing needs, and advise on the accommodation required for the Centre. A wide range of bodies was consulted in the formulation of the Interim Council, including the State Directors-General of Education, the Schools Commission, non-government school authorities, parents and teachers organisations, the Advisory Committee on Research and Development in Education and institutions involved in teacher education.

At this stage I would like to pay a tribute to the Chairman of the Interim Council, Professor G. T. Evans, and his fellow councillors, who have pursued the tasks given to them with vigour and imagination. In September 1974 the Interim Council released a statement on the 'Functions and Mode of Operation of the Centre'. For the information of honourable members, I table that document. The Council has also sponsored a number of projects. The largest of these, the Social Education Materials Project, is being undertaken by the Centre at the suggestion of, and jointly with, the National Committee on Social Science Teaching. The Project will develop 8 substantial units of teaching materials.
over a 3 year period, and all State education departments and the Catholic and other non-government school authorities are participating in it. The Australian Government is providing $1m towards the costs of the project.

The Bill itself would confirm the existing arrangements and would enable the appointment of a permanent Council and a Director of the Centre. In its administrative provisions, including such matters as grants, appointments, remuneration, accounting and auditing, the Bill follows the pattern of similar measures relating to other bodies and commissions in the education area, such as the Schools Commission. I will therefore mention only the main provisions. Clause 4 establishes the Centre as a statutory corporation. The Centre is to have dealings, often of a business nature, including sale and purchase of teaching materials, and as it will be engaging in the production and sale of educational materials it will need to hold copyright. Corporate status will enable it to do these things. Clause 5 lists the functions, and clause 6 the powers, of the Centre. I have already outlined the functions. The powers comprise those necessary for the discharge of the functions, including power to arrange for printing and publication of materials.

Clause 9 establishes the Council of the Curriculum Development Centre, and clause 10 states its function as the governing and policymaking body of the Centre. As provided in clause 11, the Council is to comprise between 11 and 16 part-time members, together with the Director of the Centre, who will be the executive member. Part-time members, one of whom will be appointed Chairman, will serve for terms of not more than 3 years. Clause 18 establishes the full-time statutory office of Director of the Centre. As indicated in clause 19, the Director will conduct the affairs of the Centre, in accordance with the directions of the Council. The Director will be appointed for a period of up to 7 years—clause 20—with the possibility of reappointment. Staff other than the Director are to be provided under the Public Service Act 1922-1974, as stated in clause 29. Apart from its permanent staff, it is expected that the Centre will wish to draw on the knowledge and experience of other persons, such as officers of the State education departments and the staffs of universities and colleges of advanced education. Clauses 30 and 31 provide for such arrangements to be made.

In keeping with the nature of its functions and operations it is proposed that the Centre's financial transactions be outside the public account. This intent is reflected in clauses 32 to 42. The principal funds of the Centre will be provided by the Australian Government. The Centre will also earn income from the sale of products and the provision of services—clause 46. Clause 47 requires the Centre to consult and co-operate with other bodies with an interest in its general area of work, such as the Schools Commission and the State departments of education. Large sums are being spent annually by the State and Australian governments and by non-government education authorities on the physical and manpower resources for schools. If maximum benefit is to be gained from these expenditures, and if the innate talents of our children are to be developed to meet the calls of society in the present and in the future, then proper arrangements for the continuous review and development of the materials and methods of teaching and learning in schools are essential. In establishing the Curriculum Development Centre the Government emphasises its recognition of the importance of curriculum development in improving and enriching the education of children and young people. I have pleasure in recommending the Bill to the House.

Debate (on motion by Mr Killen) adjourned.

TECHNICAL AND FURTHER EDUCATION COMMISSION BILL 1975

Bill presented by Mr Beazley, and read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr BEAZLEY (Fremantle—Minster for Education) (8.25)—I move:

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this Bill is to provide for the establishment of a Technical and Further Education Commission. Since it came to office, the Government has pursued a policy of establishing a complete range of expert, independent bodies to advise the Government on needs and priorities in the various sectors of education. To complement the Schools Commission, the Universities Commission and the Commission on Advanced Education, we are now establishing, through this Bill, a commission which will give the long underdeveloped area of technical and further education the same assurance of skilled and impartial consideration of its needs as have the areas of primary, secondary and tertiary education. The Technical and Further Education Commission is the last of these 4 commissions to be established; but it is by no means the least. It will be concerned with the quality of education that is to be received by something like half a million students throughout Australia.
The new Commission will continue and build upon the valuable work of the existing Interim Committee, the Australian Committee on Technical and Further Education, which as honourable members will recall was appointed in April 1973. That Committee reported in April 1974 on financial assistance to the States for the period 1 July 1974 to 31 December 1975. Its major recommendations were accepted by the Government and substantial funds are now being made available under the States Grants (Technical and Further Education) Act 1974. The Commission will be concerned not only with technical education but also with adult education in technical colleges, evening classes and classes conducted by adult education organisations such as the Workers Educational Association. Through a combination of provisions in clauses 3, 4 and 6 of the Bill, the Commission will be able to concern itself with technical and further education, in the sense just mentioned, whether it is conducted in technical colleges or by government or non-government non-profit adult education organisations.

A most important area of concern for the Commission will be the fostering of opportunities for recurrent education. As my colleague the Minister for Labor and Immigration (Mr Clyde Cameron) has pointed out, people who are now entering the workforce may well need re-training several times during their working life. The technical and further education sector will be responsible in large measure for the provision of facilities to meet this growing need. As I said in April 1974 when I tabled the Interim Committee's Report on Technical and Further Education in Australia, the report takes a long step in the direction of lifelong education and of opportunities for re-entry into education. It recommends unrestricted access for adults to vocationally oriented education. It removes barriers discouraging adults. It has particular regard for the needs of women, of country students, of migrants, and of handicapped persons. In establishing the Commission we are providing the permanent machinery for the development of these ideals and the creation of a flexible technical and further education system which will supply opportunities for education and training where and when these are needed, and not merely for a limited period early in the lifetime of students.

The Bill requires the Commission, in the performance of its functions, to consult with the relevant authorities in the States. The Commission will thus be a vehicle through which, in co-operation with the States, technical and further education can be developed, with the aid of Australian Government funds, to achieve the objectives I have outlined. The States will retain their existing responsibilities for administering programs of technical and further education. The assistance which the Australian Government will supply through the operation of the Commission, will be additional to the States' own expenditure. We will be looking to the States to maintain at least their existing level of effort in providing for technical and further education, so that the maximum benefit may flow from the Australian Government's contribution in this area.

The Bill provides for a Commission consisting of a full-time Chairman and Deputy Chairman and a part-time membership not exceeding ten. Appointment of members of the Commission and their conditions of service will be the same as for the other education commissions. The Commission may request the Minister to appoint committees to assist the Commission, and the Commission's secretariat will be employed under the Public Service Act. The functions of the Commission, as set out in clause 6, are to advise the Minister on the general development of technical and further education in Australia, on needs and priorities in the provision of facilities, on desirable standards for those facilities, and on financial assistance to the States for and in respect of institutions of technical and further education.

The Commission is required to perform its functions with a view to promoting the balanced development of technical and further education in Australia. The Commission will also promote the wide access of intending students to technical and further education facilities, on the basis of equal opportunity for all. The Commission will have regard to the aspirations of individuals as well as the requirements of the manpower situation in pursuing this end. The establishment of the Technical and Further Education Commission is an important event in Australian education. I regard this Bill as one of the most significant measures that I have had the satisfaction of introducing to the House. It represents a continuing commitment by the Government to a vital area of education. From now on, there will be a permanent body which will concern itself solely with the national development of technical and adult education. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate (on motion by Mr Killen) adjourned.
Second Reading

Mr LIONEL BOWEN (Kingsford-Smith—Special Minister of State and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister in Matters Relating to the Public Service) (8.33)—I move:

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill provides for the appointment of a further full-time member to the Grants Commission to relieve the onerous physical burden, stemming from the heavy workload and considerable travel, on the 4 existing full-time members of the Local Government Division of the Commission. It amends the Grants Commission Act 1973 to enable a chairman, such as the present chairman, Mr Justice Else-Mitchell, who immediately before his appointment was a judge of a federal or state court to have the same designation, rank, status and precedence as a judge of the Australian Capital Territory Supreme Court. It also incorporates machinery changes consequent on the existence of the Remuneration Tribunals Act 1973-74. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate (on motion by Mr Ellicott) adjourned.

REMUNERATION AND ALLOWANCES BILL 1975

Bill presented by Mr Lionel Bowen, and read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr LIONEL BOWEN (Kingsford Smith—Special Minister of State and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister in Matters Relating to the Public Service) (8.34)—I move:

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this Bill is to give effect to the Remuneration Tribunal’s recommendations for increases in the remuneration and travelling allowances payable to judges and persons having the status of judges. These recommendations were contained in the Tribunal’s 1975 review which I tabled in this House yesterday. The Bill provides for the increases to apply from 1 March, as recommended by the Tribunal. Legislation is necessary to give effect to the Tribunal’s findings because the Tribunal has power only to report on judges’ remuneration. For constitutional reasons, the Tribunal could not be given the power of determination in this case. I commend the Bill to the House.

(Leave granted for debate to proceed forthwith.)

Mr ELLICOTT (Wentworth) (8.35)—The Opposition does not wish to oppose this Bill.

Indeed, it regards it as one that ought to have been passed in July last year. Unfortunately it was not because, I regret to say, of the pique of the Prime Minister (Mr Whitlam) due to the fact that at the time we got ourselves embroiled in a situation relating to parliamentary salaries and judges’ remuneration became involved. It is to be hoped that that will not happen again. There have been 2 unsatisfactory aspects concerning judges’ remuneration in recent years. It is helpful to go back over the salaries of justices of the High Court since 1969. On 14 June 1969 the salary of the Chief Justice of the High Court was altered from $24,000 a year to $30,000 a year and the salary of justices of the High Court from $21,000 to $27,000 a year. On 1 April 1973 the salary of the Chief Justice was altered from $30,000 to $39,000 per annum. On the same date the salary of justices was altered from $27,000 to $35,300. Under this measure the Chief Justice’s salary will be altered from $39,000 to $45,000 and the salary of justices from from $35,000 to $41,000 a year.

Some members of the House and some members of the public may well feel that a salary of $45,000 is a very large salary. These salaries, of course, are kept at this sort of level in order to attract the right type of person to the Bench. It is so not only in respect of these salaries but also the salaries of other judges at the Federal level and in the State courts. Those who are appointed to the High Court from the Bar should be persons who are leaders of the Bar. A person at the Bar these days who is at the height of his capacities earns in excess of $100,000 a year. This is the sort of person who has to be attracted to come on to the Bench. I do not think that is widely known either to honourable members or to the public. A member of the Bar, of course, is dependent on his own brain power. If he has to retire from the Bar due to illness, there is no superannuation to look after him. Not all members of the Bar, of course, earn that amount, but the fact is that those who would be attracted to the High Court, who are in full flight, would be receiving an income in the 6-figure bracket. We should not think therefore that the figures under discussion are in any way excessive. They are not. They have to be fixed at a figure to attract the right sort of expertise.

In the catalogue of events that I gave 2 unsatisfactory features emerge and one hopes that they will not occur again. The first one is this: At 14 June 1969 the salary of a High Court justice was $21,000 a year. At that time officers such as the Solicitor-General and the heads of departments were receiving $22,500 a year. In other words,
the salary of a High Court justice was less than that of a departmental head. That was not a good feature of the way in which judicial salaries were fixed. The reason, of course, was an attempt was made to keep the two sets of salaries separate and judges’ salaries fell behind the salaries of departmental heads. That sort of thing should not happen again.

In 1973 the Remuneration Tribunals Act was passed following the report of Mr Justice Kerr, which was delivered towards the end of 1971. The purpose of the Act was to put the salaries not only of members of Parliament but also of judges and others outside the political arena. Under the Constitution the salaries of judges have to be fixed by this Parliament. The significant point to which I refer is that the whole purpose of the Remuneration Tribunals Act was to place the fixing of judges’ salaries outside the political arena and in a situation where once a recommen-
dation came in, it would be followed.

I have referred to the events of Last July already. They represent another unsatisfactory feature in relation to judges salaries. It is to be hoped that in the future when a report comes in immediate action will be taken by the Government of the day, whichever that government might be, to fix the salaries by law as is required by the Constitution and in accordance with the recommendation made by the Tribunal. The Opposi-
tion does not oppose this measure. I repeat that it should have been put through this Parlia-
ment in July last year. The Opposition wishes to assist in the speedy passage of this legislation.

Mr LUCOCK (Lyne) (8.43)—I want to make a comment in regard to this Bill. I think it is important. It makes provision for people, as the honourable member for Wentworth (Mr Ellicott) said, who have been left aside because of certain action that was taken by some mem-
bers of this Parliament last year. Unfortunately there appear to be certain factors and a certain lack of consideration by people even at this stage. As well as the subject matter that is being discussed in relation to this Bill I want to refer to some-
thing that I regard as a serious deficiency in the report of the Remuneration Tribunal in relation to the salaries of the First Division officers of the parliamentary departments. The reason I do this is that having had a fair amount of association with the Clerks of the House and also with the Clerks of the Senate, I appreciate very much the work they do and the assistance they give to the members of this House. If one studies the report of the Remuneration Tribunal, it states:

As has been customary in past salary reviews, we have considered this group as being essentially different from the Permanent Heads of Departments of State and consequently we have given them separate consideration. We determine their salaries as indicated in the Determination at page XIV of this Review.

The honourable member for Wentworth and the Special Minister of State (Mr Lionel Bowen) have mentioned the importance of judges, the importance of their position and the fact that if we are to attract to these positions men of the calibre that is needed, we must give attention to the remuneration they receive. This is not merely for the sake of the financial factor. I am sure that no one who enters into these spheres of service gives undue consideration to the remuneration which he receives. Yet there must always, in my opinion, be thought given to the fact that at least these people should receive just remuneration for the work they do.

I said that I felt I should say something about this particular point as well as relating my remarks to the salaries of the judges because of my very close association with the Clerks of the House—not only the two distinguished gentlemen who are here now but others who have served in that capacity during the time it has been my privilege to be a member of this House. I am sure that all honourable members are well aware from their own experience of the constant and immediate decisions which must be taken by the Clerk of our own chamber in giving advice on complex procedural questions. The Clerk of the Senate is similarly placed. In addi-
tion, of course, these 2 officers perform the same administrative functions and bear the same responsibilities to the Presiding Officers as per-
manent heads of executive departments con-
trolled by a Minister of the Crown. Yet—I think this is something to which we should give par-
cular attention at this time—they are currently paid nearly $9,000 less than the permanent head of even the smallest executive department. Are we to assume that the responsibilities of the 2 Clerks are less onerous by that degree than, for example, the head of the Department of Tourism and Recreation? This appears to be ludicrous to me. Not only are the Clerks at a disadvantage in relation to other permanent heads, incredibly, their salaries fall well behind those enjoyed by many officers of the Second Division of the Public Service.

I think to put this statement in perspective I might briefly outline the position of the Clerks in the 74 years since the Commonwealth Parliament came into being. In the first 20 years after Federation the Clerks of the Parliament were amongst the highest paid of the permanent heads and suffered only a slight decline in their
salary relativity in the ensuing 20 years. Since 1941, however, their position has progressively been eroded to the point that currently their salary is more than $1,000 less than that of a level 4 officer of the Second Division. They earn more than $3,000 less than a level 5 officer and nearly $5,000 less than an officer who is classified as a level 6 Second Division officer.

As I said, I am in full agreement with what has been said by the Special Minister of State and the honourable member for Wentworth in relation to judges. I think also at this specific time the House should give consideration to the factors that I am mentioning. The Remuneration Tribunal itself acknowledges that the Clerks and other parliamentary permanent heads are essentially different from the permanent heads of the departments of State. Its determination, however, seems to suggest that ‘different’ implies inferior and this is not the case. It is not the case in the United Kingdom and I know that honourable members are aware of an example in this regard and I do not think that it should be different here. In other words, I feel that at this specific time this is something to which the House might give particular attention.

I note from the Tribunal’s current review that it is concerned at the anomalies and inequities which exist in certain areas. I feel that it is incumbent upon me at this particular time to use the forum of this House to draw attention to a determination which may be unjust. I suggest that the House examine the determination relating to the parliamentary First Division officers in the light of its clear responsibility to assert once more the rights, the independence and something that we have been talking about a great deal—the dignity of the Parliament. While supporting this piece of legislation, I would ask the Special Minister of State, the Tribunal and the House to consider the matters that I have mentioned.

Current Salaries

Clerks of the Parliament—$27,012 plus nil allowance.
First Division Officers—$29,250 plus $1,750 allowance.
Second Division Officers—Level 6, $26,880; Level 5, $25,059; Level 4, $23,238; Level 3, $21,417; Level 2, $19,597; Level 1, $17,776.

Increases Proposed by Remuneration Tribunal

Clerks of the Parliament—$27,500 plus $1,000 allowance.
First Division Officers—First level (21 departmental heads) * $35,000 more plus ** $2,000 allowance. Second level (8 departmental heads) $32,500 plus $1,750 allowance.

* Loading of $1,000 to the Secretaries to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Department of the Treasury.

** Loading of $250 to the Secretaries to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Department of the Treasury.

The salaries of Second Division officers are as at 27 June 1974; a further claim has been lodged with the Public Service Arbitrator.

Mr LIONEL BOWEN (Kingsford-Smith—Special Minister of State) (8.50)—in reply—I thank honourable members for their contribution to this debate. In respect of the matters raised by the honourable member for Lyne (Mr Lucock), let me say that it is most important to illustrate clearly that the Remuneration Tribunal is an independent tribunal. Because of the Constitutional prohibition on it, the Tribunal can only make recommendations in this matter. The honourable member for Lyne referred to salaries payable to parliamentary officers. That is a matter of determination. Therefore the Tribunal, in making an impartial assessment, is autonomous. The only qualification would be if there were to be a disallowance of the determination. The Tribunal hears evidence and it would be appropriate for anybody, including the honourable member for Lyne, to give evidence to establish what he thinks may have been an injustice. It is proper that the Tribunal should assess the evidence. Admittedly, not everybody is satisfied with the findings of the Tribunal. We still find people who are dissatisfied with the findings of the Tribunal even though they asked it to report again. I understand that these matters will be the subject of further debate in the Senate.

As regards this particular piece of legislation, I think that everybody would agree that it is important that the judiciary should attract the best personnel. The Parliament also should attract the best personnel. There is no reason why anybody should be penalised because he is elevated to a high judicial office or elected to Parliament. It is quite unfair and ridiculous to suggest that people should make a sacrifice that would affect their families or their future simply because of the old concept that people who are elected to Parliament need not be paid anything at all. That concept is well out of date. As has been illustrated here, people make a considerable sacrifice to do what they think is in the best interests of their country. Finally, I must take the honourable member for Wentworth (Mr Ellicott) to task. There is no reason why the Bill relating to judges’ salaries introduced last year could not have been proceeded with.

Mr Ellicott—It was withdrawn.

Mr LIONEL BOWEN—It was not withdrawn. It was withdrawn only tonight, as the honourable member would understand. He is a very well qualified lawyer. If he looks at the business paper he will see that item 7 provides for the withdrawal of that Bill. Let me put it on the
record clearly that there was no fit of pique by the Prime Minister (Mr Whitlam). I introduced the Bill last year on the same day that I tabled the Remuneration Tribunal 1974 Review, on the firm understanding that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Snedden) would proceed with the passage of that Bill that same evening. Unfortunately in the Senate that afternoon Senator Wright moved for its disallowance, and following that the Leader of the Opposition refused to proceed with the debate. On the next day—the Thursday—at an Opposition Party meeting it was decided that the Opposition would support Senator Wright in the disallowance and the report was disallowed. Accordingly, the Bill could not proceed. So let me put on record the clear position. The Bill could have gone through last year and everybody’s salary could have been increased last year except for action taken in the Senate and supported in the Senate by the Opposition.

Mr Lucock—By a man who does not know the meaning of the word ‘loyalty’.

Mr LIONEL BOWEN—Irrespective of that, the fact is that support was given to the resolution. There was no suggestion of any interference by the Prime Minister. That should be clearly understood. If we had had the co-operation we are now receiving and we hope to receive in the Senate, that Bill could have been passed last July and everybody would have been able to proceed accordingly.

Mr Ellicott—It could have been proceeded with last July.

Mr LIONEL BOWEN—It could not have been proceeded with last July because the report was disallowed in the Senate.

Mr Ellicott—That did not stop the Parliament fixing the salaries.

Mr LIONEL BOWEN—It did, because the Bill was in accordance with the recommendation that was then disallowed. The honourable member is entitled to say that the Government could have proceeded with the judges Bill but it would have been pretty unusual to have proceeded with that Bill when the report was disapproved by the Opposition. I can assure honourable members that if the Leader of the Opposition had remained in the Parliament that Wednesday night last year that Bill would have gone through that evening. He decided that he could not remain here, and that was his business. Nevertheless there was a firm arrangement with me that it should go through that evening. I pass no further comment. I assure honourable members that it had nothing to do with the Prime Minister.

My attention has been drawn to another minor matter by my friend. In the Bill there is a reference to the Superior Court of Australia. Apparently this is a bit premature. The Court has not yet been created. We will need to make an alteration to the Bill in the Committee stage.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a second time.

Message from the Administrator recommending appropriation announced.

In Committee

The Bill.

Mr LIONEL BOWEN (Kingsford-Smith—Special Minister of State) (8.55)—I move:

In clause 3 omit ‘the Chief Justice of the Superior Court of Australia’.

The reason for that amendment is obvious in view of the comments that have been made.

Amendment agreed to.

Bill, as amended, agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment; report—by leave—adopted.

Third Reading

Bill (on motion by Mr Lionel Bowen)—by leave—read a third time.

ROAD SAFETY AND STANDARDS AUTHORITY BILL 1975

Bill presented by Mr Charles Jones, and read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr CHARLES JONES (Newcastle—Minister for Transport) (8.57)—I move:

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The Road Safety and Standards Authority Bill is a most important measure, well warranting the time and consideration of this the national Parliament. The tragic toll on our roads is a national problem which requires vigorous and co-ordinated action at the national level. The purpose of this Bill is to establish the Road Safety and Standards Authority as a statutory body responsible to the Minister for Transport. The objectives of the Authority are set out in clause 4 of the Bill. They are the promotion of road safety, promotion of means for the control of vehicle emissions and consumer protection in relation to motor vehicles.

Let me briefly put into perspective the human devastation and material waste that results from accidents on Australian roads. In 1974, 3571 Australians lost their lives in road accidents. We
do not yet know, and will not know for a couple of months, how many were injured or how the fatalities were spread among the various groups of road users. The position in 1973 was 3679 people killed and 95 204 injured. In the 10 years up to and including 1973, 34 000 Australians had been killed and 850 000 injured in road accidents. To put this another way, road accidents rank fourth among the major causes of death in Australia. They are responsible for half of all accidental deaths and are the major cause of death for males under the age of 25 years—a group upon whom so much of our national hopes and aspirations rests. These are sobering figures indeed. Australia simply cannot afford to continue killing 10 people and injuring 250 people a day in road accidents.

The tragedy and suffering from this maiming and death touch nearly everyone in the community in one way or another. I am sure there are many in this House who have had the numbing experience of hearing of the death or serious injury of a relative or close friend. Even in economic terms the cost of road accidents to the community is staggering. Estimates compiled a year or so ago put the annual cost as high as $1000m. This represents about 2 per cent of the gross national product, $75 per head, $180 per registered vehicle or 1c per vehicle kilometre. It must be apparent to all that the road toll is one of modern man’s greatest diseases. But like other diseases it has to be tackled logically and positively if its impact is to be minimised. This is what the Bill is all about—a logical and positive step through which a more concerted effort can be mounted to promote the safety of everyone using our roads.

Apalling though these figures are in the aggregate, the task of reducing the road toll is by no means an easy one. Accidents resulting in casualties occur on average only once for every one and a quarter million kilometres travelled on Australia’s roads. Moreover, road accidents are rarely caused by a single factor. They represent failures in the operation of the interacting components of a large and complicated transport system involving the vehicle, the road environment, the road user and his social environment. Consequently a substantial and sustained improvement in road safety will be attained only by raising the efficiency of the system to a much higher level—a task which will demand objective analysis of the problems involved and a high degree of co-operation between the contributing authorities. We certainly will not get there by adopting ‘by guess and by God’ methods or pursuit of personal hunches.

The task is further complicated by a complex institutional framework. Control of the factors affecting safety on Australian roads is currently exercised by the governments of the States and Territories through their individual legislation in respect of vehicle design and usage, driver licensing, traffic regulations, road planning and construction, traffic control, etc. Control is even further fragmented by a growing number of organisations with interests and responsibilities in one aspect or another of the road safety problem. Although there may be scope for further streamlining this framework there are certain inherent limitations on how far this can be carried in a broadly based field like road safety. Thus, fragmentation of authority is a fact of life which represents a continuing impediment to effective action to improve the standard of safety on Australian roads.

Over the last few years we have seen a change in the pattern of road deaths and injuries, coinciding with the introduction of compulsory seat belt wearing legislation and the continued extension of vehicle safety design rules into Australian cars. In the 3-year period from 1970 to 1973 vehicle occupant fatalities declined from 2693 in 1970 to 2463 in 1973, a drop of 9 per cent. Over this same period total motor vehicles on the register have gone up from 4.8 million to 5.6 million, an increase of 17 per cent. This means that the occupant fatality rate per 10 000 vehicles registered has dropped from about 5.6 to 4.4. However, not all vehicle occupants are subject to compulsory seat belt wearing laws. A particularly tragic aspect of the road toll is the death of so many young children. In 1970 there were 82 children under 7 years killed who were passengers in cars; by 1973 this had risen to 98, an increase of 20 per cent. Over the same period injuries increased from 2679 to 3033.

Again fatalities of pedestrians, cyclists and motor cyclists, that is those other road users who have not benefited from seat belt wearing and safer vehicle design, have gone up from 1105 in 1970 to 1216 in 1973, an increase of 10 per cent. Among these the increase in motor cyclist deaths is particularly alarming. In 1973, 330 motor cyclists lost their lives compared with 173 in 1970, an increase of 91 per cent. Over this period, motor cycle registrations increased by 84 per cent from 114 000 in 1970 to 210 000 in 1973. It is obvious that despite our successes in recent years we have much to do to bring the road toll under greater control, with a particular need to concentrate on the most vulnerable groups.

The other 2 fields of endeavour proposed for the Authority are of considerable importance to
the community. They should be seen as part of the Government's objectives of improving the quality of life in our cities and of protecting the consumer in respect of the quality of the goods and services he buys. Air pollution caused by motor vehicles is a matter of concern to the majority of Australians who live in our major cities. Vehicles are said to contribute 90 per cent of the carbon monoxide pollutants, 65 per cent of the hydrocarbons and 55 per cent of the nitrogen oxides in our cities. Reported levels for the larger cities in Australia of carbon monoxide and oxidants are up to four and five times the World Health Organisation's long term goals.

In short, motor vehicle related pollution is a problem in the larger cities of Australia. Measures adopted already are expected to about half carbon monoxide and hydrocarbon emissions in urban areas and arrest the growth of oxides of nitrogen emissions from 1977 to 1982. But we cannot afford to sit back and relax. We have to ensure we keep abreast of developing technology and in-service performance of the 'emissionised' vehicles as well as needs in terms of air quality. Similarly, for most people the purchase of their car is the second largest investment they make, second only to the purchase of the family home. Indeed Australians spend some $1200m a year on the purchase of private motor vehicles and a little more on their operation. Clearly this is a field where the consumer should know what to expect when he pays out his money whether it is for a new car, for maintenance or for repairs. The number of complaints we all receive or hear about indicates that many motorists are far from satisfied at the moment.

So much for the problem. Let me now turn to what has been done to reduce this toll. Road safety is not a party political issue. However, I must say that the record of this Government over the last 2 years is one of vigorous action. The House of Representatives Select—now Standing—Committee on Road Safety and the Expert Group on Road Safety were both re-appointed quickly. We have introduced a program of low cost improvements at locations with poor accident records and an initial $3m was provided in 1973-74. A total of $30m is being provided over the 3-year period of the current roads legislation, which commenced on 1 July last year.

You will recall, Mr Deputy Speaker, that I previously wrote to members of the House with a request that information on the locations of serious accidents be brought to my attention. I invite honourable members to do so again. The locations in question will again be referred to the relevant State authorities for consideration on their merits, with a view to including them in the traffic improvements program. We have expanded our research and road safety promotion activities to the extent that more than $1m has been allocated for this purpose during 1974-75. We have also taken the first steps to provide a central information service for those working in road safety. Indeed we have now implemented all the major recommendations by the Expert Group in its national review of the road accident situation in Australia.

Against this background I would like to highlight some of the key elements of this Bill. The Road Safety and Standards Authority will be a statutory body consisting of a chairman and two part-time members. As already mentioned the objectives of the Authority are the promotion of road safety, promotion of means for the control of vehicle emissions and consumer protection in relation to motor vehicles. Working closely with the Department of Transport the Authority will seek to do this through improvement programs, formulation of national standards and traffic codes, the certification of vehicles and components, research into all relevant factors, education and publicity campaigns and a comprehensive information service. These functions follow closely those recommended by both the Select Committee and the Expert Group. The Bill also includes a requirement on the Authority to consult appropriate authorities of Australia, the States and Territories, local governing bodies and other interested bodies. This requirement bears special mention. The Authority is not intended as a substitute for what others are doing in the field. It is intended as an addition to a better co-ordinated total effort. In particular it is intended that the Authority should assist the work of the Australian Transport Advisory Council through the provision of technical support and participation in its Standing Committee of Advisers and relevant advisory committees.

The Authority's staff will be appointed under the Public Service Act. The staff will be representative of a wide range of disciplines needed to undertake detailed investigations into the factors affecting vehicles, roads and the road environment, road user behaviour and the inter-relationships between them. To assist the Authority, provision has been made for the appointment of committees. Of particular importance will be the Advisory Committee on Road Safety Research and Information. The role of this Committee will be to advise the Minister on major research projects and to assist the Authority in facilitating communication with the various bodies associated with road safety. Once again,
creation of such a committee has been recommended by both the Select Committee and the Expert Group.

The Government not only proposes to establish the Authority, it also proposes to provide the Authority with the facilities required to enable it to get on with its most important task. As I announced late last year, facilities estimated to cost more than $10m are to be developed for the Authority near the Albury-Wodonga growth centre. These facilities will include several specialised laboratories and outdoor facilities incorporating a test track, skid pan and associated road network. The vehicle and component testing facilities will permit testing for compliance with all Australian design rules for motor vehicle safety and development of new or upgraded standards. They will also enable development of measures to control the effects on safety and emissions, of deterioration, replacement parts, repairs and modifications.

The road and traffic management facilities will enable testing of such safety innovations as ‘breakaway’ roadside furniture and permit controlled simulation of intersection manoeuvres which cannot be done on a normal road system. These facilities could be made available, on a cost recovery basis, to vehicle and component manufacturers or importers, many of whom do not have access to similar facilities in Australia. The Chairman of the Expert Group, Mr Justice Meares, summed up the position very well when speaking recently in Albury-Wodonga. He said:

The Authority, backed by comprehensive test facilities, will be the focal point for a second generation of vigorous, co-ordinated and multi-disciplinary efforts to reduce the tragic toll on our roads.

It is with pleasure that I commend the Bill to honourable members.

Debate (on motion by Mr Ellicott) adjourned.

**BROADCASTING AND TELEVISION BILL (No. 2) 1974 [No. 2]**

Bill presented by Mr Morrison, and read a first time.

**Second Reading**

Mr MORRISON (Minister for Science) (9.14)—I move:

That the Bill be now read a second time.

A Bill to amend the Broadcasting and Television Act was introduced into this House on 3 October 1974. The Bill was designed primarily to ensure that the Australian Broadcasting Control Board had adequate powers to carry out its functions effectively to ensure that adequate and comprehensive programs are presented by the licensees of commercial broadcasting and television stations. On the legal advice provided to the Government the Board appears not to have sufficient power to carry out the functions entrusted to it by Parliament. The Government regards this situation as most unsatisfactory. It now submits the Bill in the form in which it was transmitted to the Senate on 12 November 1974.

Clauses 6, 11, and 12 of the Bill were amended by the Government during the Committee stages of the Bill in this House, but I indicated at that time that there has been insufficient time to consider the impact of amendments proposed by the Opposition. I informed the House that the amendments moved by the honourable member for Moreton (Mr Killen) would be given full consideration when the Bill was transmitted to the other place.

This was done in accordance with my undertaking and in fact the Minister for the Media (Senator Douglas McClelland) in his second reading speech on 14 November, foreshadowed that he would propose an amendment to the Bill in the Committee stages of the debate in the other place.

The Minister informed the Senate that the Government saw some merit in the apparent intention of an amendment proposed by the Opposition. The intention of the amendment appeared to have been to subject the powers of the Broadcasting Authority to the scrutiny of the Parliament insofar as they deal with the regulation of the hours of transmissions, of programs and of advertising. The Minister, in his second reading speech in the Senate, said:

This Government's policy has always been to provide for adequate parliamentary supervision of the activities of government bodies and agencies.

The Minister then went on to explain that the program and advertising standards of the Broadcasting Control Board have never been subject to full parliamentary scrutiny in the past, and that the previous Government had made no provision for this in the Broadcasting and Television Act on any of the numerous occasions when it had sought to amend the Act in its 23 years in government. He said that the Labor Government accepted the desirability of parliamentary scrutiny and would propose it during the Committee stages of the debate. That debate did not eventuate. The Senate refused the Bill a second reading, and gave no opportunity for the Government to introduce its amendment. The Minister had explained the purpose of the proposed amendment in the following terms:
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TELEVISION STATIONS LICENCE FEES BILL 1974 [No. 2]

Bill presented by Mr Morrison, and read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr MORRISON (St George—Minister for Science) (9.21)—I move:

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill is in the same form as a Bill introduced in this House last year. It is consequential upon the Bill just presented to the House proposing amendments to the Broadcasting and Television Act. The Bill is a machinery amendment to the Television Stations Licence Fees Act 1964-1966, providing for an appropriate method of calculation for a television station licence fee when the licence is renewed for a period other than one year. The opportunity has also been taken to make formal amendments to bring the wording of the Act into line with current practice. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate (on motion by Mr Ellicott) adjourned.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Precedence

Mr DALY (Grayndler—Leader of the House) (9.22)—I move:

That Government Business shall take precedence over General Business tomorrow.

It is with some reluctance that I have moved that motion. The Government has no desire to interfere with private members’ business. As a matter of fact, the Government’s record in that regard is exceedingly good. But, as I desire to obtain the co-operation of the Opposition in regard to this motion, I do not intend to be political in any way. That, of course, is not unusual for me; but tonight I hope to excite myself by my courteous approach to the shadow Leader of the House in regard to this matter.

The reason I have asked for Government Business to be given precedence over General Business tomorrow and the co-operation of the Opposition is to enable the Family Law Bill to be brought on for debate for another period of time approximating 3 hours. Thirty-nine speakers have already spoken on the Family Law Bill and 31 speakers are still listed to speak. The average speaking time of those who have spoken so far has been 17 minutes. It will be seen, therefore, that the getting of a vote on even the motion for the second reading of the Bill would present great problems. Even if we were to debate the
measure consistently and to postpone the consideration of all other business it would still take a considerable amount of time to conclude the debate. Last Friday, for instance, we debated the measure all day and 19 speakers participated in the debate. I thought that it was a very interesting day and that it was one which was carried on in a very reasonable way. That shows the position in which we find ourselves and the problems with which we are faced.

There is a tremendous amount of public interest in this Bill. Although 31 speakers are still listed to speak, I think that it is possible that if time permitted everyone in the Parliament might well want to speak on the Family Law Bill. We are faced with the problem, therefore, that we have to take the opportunity that presents itself tomorrow in the course of the period set aside for Government Business to debate it or we may well be faced with the possibility of having to sit, say, every Friday until the debate on it is concluded. It may even be that we will have to set aside the whole business of the House for a given time in order to debate and bring this measure to finality.

Mr Sinclair—That might be better than some of the Bills you have been putting through.

Mr Daly—I do not know about that. We have been putting through some very good Bills. But this one, although it involves a non-Party issue, seems to have created more interest than all the other Bills. I do not know whether it is because there are many people who are interested in obtaining a divorce, but there is tremendous interest in the Bill. I hope that at my stage in life none of the provisions of the Bill will apply to me because I do not know anybody else who would have me. I might say that my wife often says that whoever gets me ought to send me back. But even with the setting aside of these additional times there will be great difficulties presented. The point I am making is that acceptance of this motion would permit roughly 3 hours of debate on the Bill tomorrow. If honourable members were to heed your request, Mr Deputy Speaker, about the curtailing of their speeches we might well be able to hear tomorrow all those who desire to speak to the motion for the second reading of the Bill.

The Government Party discussed this matter at a meeting the other day. At that meeting it was decided to set aside this time. It was also decided that if any honourable member desired to move at any stage ‘That the question be now put’ there would be an entirely free vote insofar as the supporters of the Government are concerned as to whether it should or should not be put. But the general desire was that this should not be done in the sense that it was hoped that everybody who desired to do so would have an opportunity to speak on the Bill.

Without further comment I point out that I have formally moved this motion and express my regret that this has had to be done. It is the first time since we have been in Government that we have had to suspend a private members’ day, although at times honourable members opposite have moved certain motions on that day. I wish to convey to the House the impression that this is for the very express purpose of discussing the Family Law Bill in relation to which I suppose it could be said that there is unprecedented interest in the community as every honourable member has been inundated with various points of view. I think that it is in the common good of the public and the members of this Parliament to dispose of the legislation one way or another at the earliest possible time. That is the reason why I have moved this motion tonight.

Mr SINCLAIR (New England) (9.26)—It is strange for those of us present in the Parliament to hear the sweet reasonableness which has just come from the Leader of the House (Mr Daly). I was not too sure whether it was quite the same sweet reasonableness as emerged after the gag motion that he managed to lose at around lunch time today. Nevertheless we are delighted that he has again demonstrated how little care he really has for the rights of honourable members on this side of the House. I said ‘delighted’ only because over the last few weeks we have seen the extent to which this Parliament, under the Australian Labor Party, and in particular under the care and guidance of the Leader of the House, has been progressively run down as a place of public debate of matters of significant public comment.

Mr Daly—Keep politics out of it.

Mr Sinclai—[I thought that I was being very polite, actually. It is unfortunate that the Family Law Bill, which I think every member of this House regards as having a tremendous importance, should be so relegated that it cannot be debated in any priority to Government Business. A number of Bills have gone through this House today and some are still under discussion. I am afraid that I cannot really understand why there is the necessity for the urgency of debate on them that there is on the Family Law Bill. I
would like seriously to register the concern that we of the Opposition have that Government Business of a character which is not contributing to the wellbeing of the individual citizens of Australia should be accorded a higher priority than a Family Law Bill which is fundamental to the whole social structure of our society. While we understand the concerns that the Leader of the House has for an early debate on the Family Law Bill and while we are quite prepared to debate that measure at any time, we do not believe that this is the way by which priority should be given to it. Indeed, I suggest that it must have been with a good deal of reluctance that the Leader of the House and the Prime Minister (Mr Whitlam) even accepted the deferral of perhaps an hour or so of the consideration of Government Business in order to permit the debate on the Family Law Bill to continue.

Last week we had a special one-day sitting in circumstances which all of us on this side of the House regarded as being most unfortunate. We had had the deplorable incident of the Thursday preceding the one-day sitting, and then the complete denial of question time to members of both sides of the House on the Friday. The special one-day debate really did not fit into the normal traditions of the Parliament. Virtually the normal give and take of politics was circumscribed. So we are sorry that the Government has seen fit to pre-empt the opportunity for private members to raise tomorrow the three matters that would normally emerge for our consideration. We are disappointed that the Government has not seen fit to set aside its business program to enable the debate on the Family Law Bill to continue. For that reason, we are not very happy with the motion.

The motions that would normally have been considered tomorrow are those listed as notices for general business Thursday No. 7 and orders of the day No. 1. I think it would be worth while for honourable members to consider that by providing the opportunity tomorrow to debate the Family Law Bill they will be precluding debate in this House on the Government’s plans for northern Australian development. That motion is to be moved by the honourable member for Kennedy (Mr Katter). In that motion he will suggest that the Government’s present policies are not contributing to the prosperous growth of northern Australia. I think that is an extraordinarily important subject, particularly at a time when necessarily there has to be a diversion of resources to the reconstruction of Darwin.

The honourable member for Kennedy, who represents a great expanse of north Queensland, had hoped to draw the Parliament’s attention to the problems in developing the rest of northern Australia at a time when government resources are being allocated specifically to the reconstruction of Darwin.

The honourable member for Curtin (Mr Garland) was to seek to raise another matter of immediate importance, and that is the whole of the circumstances surrounding the departure of Mr Ermolenko from Australia. Of course, it is not inappropriate to recall that Mr Ermolenko is now returning to Australia and the motion which was to have been moved tomorrow might well have been appropriate for consideration by the Parliament. If there had been time between 12 noon and 12.45 p.m. tomorrow we would have gone on to discuss the motion which has been moved by the honourable member for Mackellar (Mr Wentworth) concerning the restrictions that are placed upon the granting of supplementary assistance to pensioners being too severe. Those are the 3 matters which are being set aside to meet the whims of the Leader of the House. I am disappointed that after the unfortunate events of last week and the circumstances surrounding his defeat today, the Leader of the House did not realise that the numbers are not always with him and that the time will shortly arrive when again he will be sitting in his proper place on this side of the House and perhaps a government with a measure of sanity will return to reconstruct our country.

The Opposition does not like the motion which has been moved by the Leader of the House. It believes that priority should be given to private members’ business on private members’ day. We sincerely regret the pre-empting of the opportunity for debate on these 3 significantly important matters. However, given the necessity for debate on the Family Law Bill to continue and our desire to pursue that debate, we will not formally oppose the motion moved by the Leader of the House, although it is with some reluctance that we accept the motion.

Mr KING (Wimmera) (9.33)—I rise to indicate my agreement with what has been stated by the Deputy Leader of the Australian Country Party and the honourable member for New England (Mr Sinclair) on this important occasion. I was rather interested in the comments of the Leader of the House (Mr Daly). After he had completed his remarks I was not too sure just what he meant. I took it from what he said that tomorrow we will dispense with private members’ business and discuss the Family Law Bill. I also took it that he implied that we would deal with the Family Law Bill for some 3 hours. Is that correct?
Mr Daly—Maybe longer, but not less.

Mr King—I would like to know what he means by that, because he went on to say that 31 members desired to speak on the Family Law Bill. We spent the whole of Friday of last week discussing the Family Law Bill and in actual fact 19 members took part in the debate. If we could get through only 19 speakers in a whole day, what does the Leader of the House really mean by saying that the debate tomorrow will continue for 3 hours and that 31 members desire to speak in it? This concerns me. After all, I think that every honourable member is very interested in this matter and would like either to speak on the subject matter or to cast his vote one way or another. I am not taking sides at this stage. I should like to have some assurance that we will discuss the Family Law Bill for 3 hours or 4 hours or that we will finish the debate because, after all, as I have said some members would like to speak on the subject and they do not know what priority they have. My name has been on the list of those wishing to speak on this subject, but I do not know how far down the list I am. I do not know whether I will get an opportunity to speak tomorrow or at all. I think that before the motion that the Leader of the House has moved is agreed to, at least he ought to give us a clear indication of what he proposes to do.

I agree with the honourable member for New England. After all private members' business comes up for debate only once a fortnight. I am conscious of the fact that tomorrow this House will rise for a period of 4 weeks and that the Thursday of the first week when we return will be devoted to Grievance Day. I have not added it up, but it will be five or six weeks before there will be an opportunity to discuss private members' business. As the honourable member for New England has pointed out, there are some important issues to discuss. I also agree with him when he said that a lot of Government business is not so important. As a matter of fact, if the people outside this Parliament were given the opportunity they would certainly give higher priority, firstly, to private members' business and, secondly, to the Family Law Bill than to Government business.

Mr Daly (Grayndler—Leader of the House) (9.36)—in reply—I think that the only legislation that the honourable member for Wimmera (Mr King) would not put off to enable the Family Law Bill to be debated would be legislation dealing with the price of wheat or wool or chaff or with other matters concerning primary industry. The Government, as a government, has no intention of curtailing debate on the Family Law Bill.

As I mentioned earlier, if the gag is moved by a member from either side of the House tomorrow, so far as Government supporters are concerned there will be an entirely free vote on that question. At the conclusion of tomorrow's debate on the Family Law Bill about 50 members will have spoken in the debate.

It is hoped that because of the length of the debate on this measure that lies before us, members might see fit to curtail their speeches. If every one takes 20 minutes in which to make his speech it will be an exceedingly long debate. I would hope that tomorrow members might restrict their speeches to 10 minutes. I do not say that that will enable all the members who wish to speak on this subject to take part in the debate, but if those who take part in the debate restrict their speeches to 10 minutes we would get through about 20 speakers tomorrow. I expect that as time goes on a number of members will decide not to speak in the debate. If at the conclusion of the time that is to be set aside tomorrow to discuss this matter it is seen that only a few more members wish to speak in the debate, we might well be able to continue the debate and conclude it. We have no desire to curtail the debate or to stop members from speaking in it.

Government business is important. What is the more important question is a matter of opinion. The alternatives before us are quite clear. When we return after the recess we might well have to sit every Friday. Instead of having a 3 weeks' sitting period we might well have to continue sitting for a week or two and set that time aside exclusively to deal with the Family Law Bill. If debate on the Bill is not finished at the scheduled end of the session we might have to continue to sit into July.

Mr Sinclair—that is a very good idea. We will do that.

Mr Daly—When I was in Opposition I used to be as enthusiastic as the Deputy Leader of the Country Party, but from time to time I was frightened to death that the then Government might accept my offer. So I suggest to him that he should not show too much enthusiasm because I know what the pitfalls are. I only hope that if and when in the far distant future I return to the Opposition side I can remember some of the speeches that the Deputy Leader of the Country Party is making now. I will repeat them with great pleasure. Tomorrow will run its course. As events in regard to the debate open up tomorrow we will see how things are going. If the debate is not finished tomorrow we will have to continue
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REFRIGERATION COMPRESSORS
Bounty Bill 1974

Bill returned from the Senate with amendments and a request.

SALES TAX BILLS (Nos. 1 to 9) 1975
Second Readings

Debate resumed.

Mr WILLIS (Gellibrand) (9.42)—When this debate was adjourned almost 4 hours ago, I was discussing the factors, apart from tariff cuts and the revaluation, which accounted for the increase in the share of the market for cars and station wagons going to Japanese vehicles.

Another factor that also accounts in part for this substantial increase in the Japanese share of the market is the rapid increase in motoring costs, that is, in the cost of purchasing a car, running it and maintaining it. Car prices have increased substantially in the last 2 years partly because of the general situation of inflation that has prevailed but also because of the greater amount of safety equipment now built into motor vehicles. The combined effect of these 2 factors has been to push car prices up faster than the general level of prices. This undoubtedly has influenced customers into thinking small, particularly as the cost of financing a car purchase has also increased substantially with higher interest rates that are part and parcel of the inflationary circumstances of our time. Other costs also have increased rapidly as increasing wage costs have raised the price of servicing and maintenance, and insurance costs and registration fees have also been substantially increased.

The Royal Automobile Association of South Australia has produced some figures which illustrate the extent of the increases that have occurred. Between March and November of last year, the price of a Holden Kingswood 6 cylinder sedan with manual transmission rose 19.7 per cent. Its standing cost—that is, depreciation, interest, registration and insurance—rose by 21.7 per cent. Its running costs were up by 20.3 per cent. For a Valiant Galant, a smaller 4 cylinder car assembled in Australia from Japanese parts, the price rose 20.4 per cent, the standing cost increased by 19.4 per cent and running costs were up by 13.8 per cent. Thus the rate of increase in cost for the small car was much the same as for the Holden vehicle as regards price and standing costs but substantially less with respect to running costs. This differential in favour of the smaller car would not escape the customer, but even with the same rate of increase in all costs there is an incentive to consumers to
head towards the smaller cars to try to reduce their motoring costs as those costs become increasingly painful.

A third factor which is relevant to the increase in the Japanese share of the motor vehicle market is the contraction of the Japanese market and the increasing concentration which results from that factor in export markets, particularly in Australia. Other export markets have diminished with the world wide reduction in the car market which is due substantially to the factors that we are discussing here and also in other countries because of the very substantial increase in the price of petrol. One indication of the intensity with which the Japanese have sought the Australian market is the fact that, despite much higher levels of inflation in Japan than we have in this country, the price of Japanese cars imported to Australia has increased by only approximately 5 per cent. This factor was mentioned in this debate by the honourable member for Berowra (Dr Edwards). So we can see that the Japanese have been trying to keep their prices down to make their vehicles attractive. This is an additional factor which has helped to increase the share of Japanese cars in the Australian motor vehicle market.

For these reasons, it is far too simplistic to blame the troubles of the Australian motor manufacturing industry solely on the tariff cut and the revaluation. Indeed, it is difficult not to conclude that the industry itself must accept a substantial part of the responsibility for its present difficulties. It has continued to concentrate on the production of cars from which Australian consumers have been running away in ever larger numbers. Despite the rapid inroads made by the Japanese throughout the 1960s, no Australian manufacturer thought it worth while establishing a 4 cylinder engine plant in this country and concentrating on producing a good competitive Australian made light car to compete with the Japanese. Instead, General Motors-Holden's Pty Ltd has gone the other way, towards 8 cylinder engine production, which surely represented a remarkable misreading of the trends in consumer tastes.

Also right throughout the 1960s, at the same time as the Japanese increased their share of the market with small light efficient cars, the Australian producers have made their basic 6 cylinder cars longer, heavier, and more powerful, and consequently more out of time with the market. They seem to have imagined that they could dictate to consumers what sort of car they would purchase and that the car that they decided on should be a largish six or eight cylinder vehicle. It is a basic maxim of the American car industry that the bigger the car the bigger the profit. There is no doubt that the subsidiaries of that industry in Australia have tried to implement that maxim. However, the basic realities of economics and common sense have prevailed with the consumer, and Australian manufacturers are left with massive investment in facilities for producing cars which are less and less attractive to the customers.

The industry is also to blame for its troubles through its refusal to concentrate on a basic model and to try to make it profitable by a low cost brought about by efficiencies of large scale production. Various studies have shown that for one model of car costs of production per unit can be reduced by increasing the volume of production up to at least 400,000 units a year. Some studies have suggested that the economies can be again up to one million units a year.

The other inefficiency of the Australian industry is shown by the fact that manufacturers in Australia have a total market for cars and station wags of less than 500,000. We have several vehicle manufacturing firms with a variety of assemblers battling for that market of 500,000 vehicles, along with fully imported vehicles. In these circumstances, it is possible to obtain efficient production on a world scale. But the companies have compounded the problem by insisting on producing several models and then breaking the market up further by a bewildering array of options. Of course, this is, and has been, the easy way to make good profits. On the pretext of giving the customer exactly what he wants these companies have offered high priced options which substantially improve the profitability of their operations but reduce the efficiency of the industry.

Now, however, consumers are running away from this kind of motoring in droves with the result that the industry has a massive stockpile of cars, and the Government has had to prop it up through increased tariffs, import quotas and the measures contained in this Bill. Clearly, what is needed in this industry is some substantial restructuring which will produce an efficient industry concentrating on a small number of models of the type of car which the people want. In this connection I applaud the Government's attempts to induce the Japanese to begin manufacturing in this country. If this can be achieved at the same time as the number of manufacturers of medium sized cars is reduced, the people of Australia will have been well served. I support the Bill.
Mr DONALD CAMERON (Griffith) (9.49)—One of the facts which should be noted in this debate tonight is this: Had the Government not been so reckless in its handling of the economy of this nation, a Bill such as the one we have before us this evening would not even be before the House for discussion. When they look at the downturn in almost every area of manufacturing industry in the last couple of years, members on the Government side should hang their heads in shame. The Australian Labor Party, when in Opposition, roared like the bull of hope. In government it has been the means of destruction of so much that had a stable existence prior to it coming to office.

I want to throw a constructive thought into the debate tonight. I refer to something which is not actually included in the Bills but which should be, namely, the sales tax classification of taxis. I do not know how many vehicles are used in Australia solely as taxis. There must be thousands upon thousands. I suggest to the Treasurer (Dr J. F. Cairns) that consideration be given to the reclassification of these vehicles for sales tax purposes from private vehicles to commercial vehicles. The Government parades itself as representing the party which cares about people, particularly people in the lower income groups. Regrettably, one of the facts of life is that people in the lower income groups are living more and more on the outskirts of some of our huge cities. These people possibly use taxis more than the more affluent people who are able to afford the prices that are set today for inner city living. It is the poorer people who are forced to use taxis at times when public transport is not available.

Because of the policies of the present Government wages have rocketed to such a degree that, whether transport be in the hands of the government sector or the private sector, fares are rising so rapidly and losses have increased so rapidly that there has been a total rearrangement of bus and tram timetables and these services are stopping earlier and earlier. As a result, people are forced more and more to take taxis. I know that the Government wishes to get this legislation through this chamber this evening. Therefore I will be brief in my contribution. I respectfully suggest to the Treasurer, who is sitting at the table, that if he reclassified taxi cabs for sales tax purposes he would be making a contribution to holding the fares which are rising continually. Further, he would encourage taxi cab owners to buy new vehicles more frequently than they do at present. Because of the sales tax component in the price of a new vehicle, taxi cab owners today think in terms of their vehicle travelling about 200,000 miles before they sell it.

Mr James—What is the price of a taxi plate?

Mr DONALD CAMERON—It depends on where one comes from. I imagine that taxi plates would not be worth arazoo in the area from which the honourable member comes. But in the city of Brisbane they are worth some $16,000. It is probably inappropriate to say this, but I believe that a taxi licence should not be a commodity which can be sold to another driver. If a driver has to pay $16,000 for a licence in the first place, it means that he has to service his capital outlay and this will be a component in the fare. I believe that taxi licences should be issued by State governments and when the drivers no longer want to continue driving they should be handed back in. This also would make a contribution to lowering fares.

It is not for me this evening to speak on the role of State governments, but one of the great tragedies of the present Government is its practice of far too frequently poking its big nose into areas which are more the responsibility of State governments.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Keith Johnson)—Order! I ask the honourable member to return to the question before the House.

Mr DONALD CAMERON—I thought I was doing very well, Mr Deputy Speaker. But I will be more precise. I will wind up my comments by asking the Treasurer to consider my suggestion which would boost car sales and have the effect of stabilising taxi fares. I can see that the Treasurer has in his eyes a look that gives me reason for hope that this will be considered.

Dr J. F. Cairns—We will have it looked at.

Mr DONALD CAMERON—Thank you.

Mr ADERMANN (Fisher) (9.56)—Unless I am seriously provoked I will not speak for very many minutes on this legislation. Members of the Opposition have been criticised for saying that the Government is reversing much of its strategy and announcements. I think that this legislation might be another example of what the Government might call its flexible stability. The Bills before us are remarkable. They are quite without precedent in the way in which they have been drawn up. They do, of course, typify the Government’s record of acting belatedly to cure a problem of its own making. Earlier today the honourable member for Berowra (Dr Edwards) very well and very clearly showed step by step where the Government was to blame and he sheeted the blame home directly to the Government.
The Opposition will not oppose the Bills. It would appear as if some of the huge backlog of motor vehicles which have accumulated in Australian car yards might now be reduced because of the consequent decrease in prices. Of course, the car manufacturing industry has been in serious trouble for some time largely because of the previous unreasoned hatred of private enterprise and overseas investment in Australia. This was the attitude of the Government which was thereby guilty of creating considerable unemployment in the car industry. Again there might be a welcome reverse in this field. The Government would not need any advice and it continued its policies while saying all the time that it was the only party which would prevent unemployment. Now the Government, in its usual fashion, waits for the crisis and then moves, and moves ponderously. It waits until record numbers of Australian men and women have lost their jobs and retrenchments are unavoidable and then starts to get off its tail.

There is no foresight, no forward planning, and no concept of co-operating with and listening to industry. This Government picks up the pieces after the crash and tries to stick them together again. Unless these Bills are related to forward policy on their own they will not achieve what the Government wants them to achieve and what we hope they can achieve for the car industry in Australia. The Bills by reducing sales tax certainly will stimulate sales of cars. They will make inroads into the stocks held. This reduction and the import quotas may help in the long term to bring some sort of stability to the industry. But, unless there is some initiative and some concern, what will be the position if the stocks are cleared and manufacture starts again? Prices will go up again. Then what about the future of the industry and what about continued manufacture? The Government quite plainly has acted to clear stocks.

We see in these Bills a very unusual procedure. I believe that it is quite without precedent. We have seen in our time Bills that have reduced sales tax. We have seen in our time Bills that have increased sales tax. But I think this legislation is unique in that it seeks to do both things. The Bill proposes that sales tax be reduced, but then from 1 May and monthly thereafter the rates are to rise again until by 1 December they are restored. It is something like the thinking behind Christmas bargain sales: 'Buy now because this offer will last for only a very short period'. Prices will rise again as sales tax increases. Of course the price must increase. I hope that we are not going to start the same old razzle dazzle again. I am rather intrigued as to why the Government has produced legislation in this form. I can understand that it wants to reduce sales tax. I can understand the purpose but would it not have been better to see the effect of those sales tax cuts on the industry, to have a look at the climate and the industry itself before making the decision to increase sales tax? It makes one wonder whether the Government wants to write it all in a Bill while it can because of the reverses that we have seen. We have seen on a number of occasions the Government’s Caucus Economic Committee running for cover and the announcements that have been made, of course, have not been proceeded with. We do welcome the cuts. We welcome this move because it will save jobs.

We hope that these Bills are associated with forward thinking policies. The honourable member for Gellibrand (Mr Willis) talked a moment ago of other initiatives about which the Government is thinking. I hope that we will see in association with these Bills policy development that will give long term stability to the industry. I hope that we will not see a situation in which we will have cleared out stocks, the sales tax rises again, the number of cars in the yards increases again and jobs will be placed in jeopardy. We sincerely hope that what the Government is trying to achieve with this legislation will be achieved. We support the Bills.

Mr KEVIN CAIRNS (Lilley) (10.2)—It is not my intention to take too great a length of time over this matter, but it is important because of the principles that are contained in this legislation. I am not able to speak with a very intimate knowledge of the car industry in Australia but these Bills are important for 2 reasons. Firstly, this is the third of a series of measures that has been introduced in respect of a very great and a very large industry in Australia. So this legislation is important because this is the third measure in a series which are in fact the Government’s own picture view of disaster in the Australian economy. The second reason which I want to advert to a little later is the effects of the flight back to very great protectionism within the Australian economy of which these measures are a symptom.

The motor vehicle industry, as was to be expected, reflects the general trend of activity and of economic activity within the Australian economy. No matter what alibis are produced it is quite clear that this industry in Australia suffered a downturn in terms of its own production and in terms of the registration of cars
which coincided with the downturn in the Australian economy. Alibis have attempted to be created by the honourable member for Gellibrand (Mr Willis) but they are just not there. The motor vehicle industry went down as did other industries. It was not because of something special or different. For example, the decline in registrations occurred from the end of October. The decline in motor vehicle manufacture occurred during the month of November and it has continued since then. What is happening at the present time one is not able to say but it appears that this decline will gradually rise. Registrations went down from the end of October. The number of registrations declined as everything else went down and as all the indicators of production in Australia went down. Imports did not decline until December and January, so the Government itself decided to take quite massive and quite unique measures to resuscitate the car industry and save between 5000 and 8000 jobs of those people who would be directly affected as a result of the decline in this industry. Those jobs needed to be protected and insofar as the Government in this country still subscribes to the 1945 White Paper on full employment, the most solemn pact, the most solemn social contract which a Government can give to the people in this country, it had an obligation to assist the car industry and assist it it did.

It assisted the industry in 3 ways. This is the third way. It assisted the car industry in terms of the increases in tariff proposed during November. It assisted the industry in respect of the quota restrictions on imports from the middle of January. Now the Government is proposing to assist the car industry in terms of sales tax reductions and subsequent increases which are designed to increase demand in the short term. Fair enough, but there are some questions that need to be asked. The questions that need to be asked are in terms of the philosophy of the Government. What is being done is completely contrary to the philosophy on which this Government was elected and on which it proposed to act during 1973-74. Its philosophy then—it was a correct philosophy—was that Australia should do most what it can do best. It was a magnificent proposition.

When the Government made the 25½ per cent across the board tariff cut there were those who raised their voices in horror. I was not a member of this Parliament at the time and insofar as I was able to advise some people whose voices are heeded, particularly in the north, I sought to persuade them not to protest against the cutting of the tariffs. The tariff cut was done in a gross manner. It was done in a guache manner. That was the error, but it was not the primary error. The primary error was that the Government misunderstood its own philosophy. If it was to persuade Australians to do most what they can do best and if the cutting of the tariffs was part of that proposition it had to allow an as free as possible reallocation of resources, both material and human, within the Australian economy. Were that to occur the standard of living today would be higher and employment would be fuller. There was a philosophical clash because a socialist government, a naturally interventionist government, could not stand aside and allow that kind of circumstance to occur. The proposition that resources should move freely to areas in which they could be used for the best production and to produce the most was contrary to the attitudes of the Government which of its nature and of its philosophy had to intervene in the economy. So the Government was caught on a philosophy which it could not uphold and we have the dreadful downturn which has occurred and this quite dreadful downturn that has occurred in respect of the motor vehicle industry.

Three measures have been taken and they have been quite massive. What I am saying is that the symptom of disease in the car industry applies to such a large industry that it is almost the disease itself. What was the extent of the massive assistance which the Government proposed in respect of the car industry and of which this is the third measure and therefore appropriate to consider? They were the sales tax propositions, the tariff propositions and the quota propositions. One question to be asked—it is very important—is: If one is possessed with the proposition as to how much has been reallocated, what is the change in the net subsidy equivalent of what is being proposed for the car industry? It has to be appreciated that the result of those 3 measures—and sales tax is difficult to evaluate—amounts to an increase in a net subsidy equivalent of over $100m a year to that industry. That is a massive amount of money. It is in fact part of the flight back to protectionism on the part of this Government.

A couple of points need to be made. That means that the subsidy for the average car worker directly involved in the industry in Australia—I refer to the published comments of the Industries Assistance Commission on various options open to the Government—is now approaching $3,000 a year. Fair enough. Let that remain. It also means that the subsidy per car worker employed because of these measures but
who would not have been employed had these measures not been taken is $10,000 to $12,000 a year. It is a very great amount of assistance indeed. We might well ask who is paying, not only as regards the amounts of money involved but also as regards the economic effects on this. It should be remembered that under these circumstances the States are paying for the car workers who are being re-employed. The States are paying for the assistance, the managers, the capital, the entrepreneurs as well as the workers. Those resources come from the States of Australia which are the principal exporting parts of this Commonwealth.

The re-allocation of resources involved is not small; the effects on the economy are not small. They are in fact very great. When this is considered together with the other increases in protection that have occurred to the clothing industry, to tyre manufacturers, and proposed assistance for white goods and so on, the States of Australia that will be paying more per person employed than others will be my own State, Western Australia, and to a certain extent Tasmania. When protectionism re-occurs within the Australian economy it should be appreciated which parts of the Commonwealth are going to pay. Those parts are paying at the present time.

Therefore, one can understand that when the Premier of Queensland tries to make a deal with respect to coal exports in order to guarantee that the return from coal exports does have a significance within his own State, it is a reasonable policy. It is trying to return some of the benefits of an exporting industry to those regions and those communities in Australia which are in fact paying for exports because ultimately with high and rising protectionism it is the export industries and the export regions which have to pay. It also means that the worker in those export industries, be they coal or be they meat, is placed in a far more vulnerable position in being exposed—it applies to Tasmania in many respects as well—unadulteratedly to the whims of world competition. He is in a far more vulnerable position than workers in a number of States who are in protected industries. It is only concerning the re-allocation of those resources that I desire to say something.

This is not to be understood that I am in any way against protectionism. It is to be understood with the re-allocation of resources that those who pay for protection should be known and the facts publicised. Australia should be aware of those parts of the Commonwealth which are bearing the principal burden. It so happens that some of the export industries that have declined most and some of those States which have declined most in terms of employment opportunities are the ones which, in terms of their own natural industrial structures, are paying the biggest price for the reversion to protectionism in this nation. Above all, it ought to be appreciated that a flight back to protectionism is in fact a flight of defeat for a Government which said it wanted no part of it. So I have proposed and will continue to propose that in these circumstances there ought to be a resurrection of the Inter-State Commission in order to evaluate between States of the Commonwealth the benefits and the burdens of the tariff structure. In a protected country that is having difficulty in re-allocating its resources this is a most reasonable proposition and one which ought to be considered. No State, for example, can be expected to be the pliant, silent victim of a hands-off resources diplomacy, especially when it is shouted continually from the roof tops that the application of that resource diplomacy means the flight of resources away from that State. This applies particularly in respect of the basic resource and the basic development States in Australia which are Queensland, Western Australia and, to a significant extent, Tasmania. So, the distortions which are introduced here ought to be exposed and they ought to be known.

I conclude by saying this: I believe that full employment in Australia will come when this country in fact does most what it does best. It is a slogan created by the Minister for Manufacturing Industry (Senator James McClelland). It was obviously told to him because he does not understand it. In fact those industries which have been providing the greatest increases in employment over recent years have been some of those that have been under the least amount of protection. The Inter-State Commission—I have put this to the Government and I have put it to the Parliament—ought to be resurrected. It ought to be resurrected particularly under these circumstances, and above all, it ought to be resurrected to account for the conditions into which we will get and pre-eminently to indicate that there is equality of sacrifice and equality of burden in an increasing protectionist Australia between the regions of Australia which are receiving protection and those regions which are ultimately and in fact paying for it.

What has happened to the car industry is a microcosm of what has been happening with respect to the total country and the significance of the burdens, the significance of the net subsidies that are paid, ought to be made known so that there can be an allocation of resources which will result in standards of living being raised
more quickly in a country which can enjoy increasing full employment.

Mr GRAHAM (North Sydney) (10.17)—In view of the lateness of the hour I have agreed to restrict my comments considerably. Following the remarks of the honourable member for Lilley (Mr Kevin Cairns), who introduced some very interesting aspects of criticism of the Government’s economic policy, and after examining these Bills, I feel constrained to remind the House of the origin of the industry in this country. I feel that whilst we acknowledge the Government’s problem which emerged at the end of 1974 and the decision that the Government made, which is reflected in these Bills, the Government ought to recognise that in the first place when the automotive industry was established in Australia it was done largely as a result of political decisions that were made by the Labor Government in Australia—the Chifley Government in the Eighteenth Parliament. As the years have gone on and the automotive industry has grown we have seen tremendous economic pressures developing that have in recent years begun to reflect themselves in the sort of problems that the Prime Minister (Mr Whitlam) was referring to when he made some critical comments about production in Australia at the time last year when the Leyland company was in trouble.

The Prime Minister said at that time that it was impossible for a government to accept responsibility for the production of a company that was not able to sell its product. That to me at the time seemed a perfectly reasonable statement of fact. However, honourable members may recall that prior to the decision which is implemented in these Bills what actually happened was that the Government, giving careful consideration to the problems at the Zetland plant, came to a very generous conclusion and made arrangements with the Leyland company for a purchase of that plant and for the purchase of a large number of P76 motor cars. I do not know what has happened to those motor vehicles. I presume that they will emerge in government service at some time. When the situation referred to by the Treasurer (Dr J. F. Cairns) developed early in the new year and it appeared that General Motors-Holden’s Pty Ltd—which as I indicated earlier was the original company that was to produce the Australian motor car straight after the war—would retrench 5000 of its employees in mid-January the Government moved very quickly and dramatically. As the honourable member for Lilley (Mr Kevin Cairns) said, this was a departure from government philosophy and government policy.

I hope that when the Treasurer winds up the debate, if he has anything to say, he will be prepared to give us the information that may be before him or before his advisers about the effect of these decisions, because undoubtedly the decisions to reduce the sales tax have been presented through the media, by the advertising companies working on behalf of the automotive industry, as real inducements for people in Australia to purchase motor cars to reduce the backlog of the companies that are carrying on. We ought to be able to obtain some information as to how the reduction in that backlog is progressing. It would seem to me that the reductions were effective from 29 January 1975 but that on 1 May the rate of tax on passenger motor cars will be increased to 17½ per cent and the tax on commercial motor vehicles will be increased to 7 per cent. Thereafter the rates will increase at monthly intervals by 2½ per cent and 2 per cent respectively until the rates of 27½ per cent for passenger motor cars and 15 per cent for commercial motor vehicles are restored on 1 September 1975.

I hope that the Treasurer will be able to advise the House that this rate of increase, which will be relatively gradual over that period of time, will be related to a diminution in the backlog of motor vehicles, for which the whole plan is designed. I hope that he will be able to give us some information as to the impact upon the companies and their problems of the decisions that he and his colleagues in Cabinet have taken. If on the other hand the inflationary pressures begin to become very difficult in Australia in August and September of this year there will be other pressures upon the motor vehicle companies which will hit them at or about the time that the sales tax returns to 27½ per cent. I bring this matter to the attention of the Treasurer and I would be grateful if he could give us any information on it. As my friend the honourable member for Fisher (Mr Adernann) said, we understand exactly why this was done. It was a very remarkable decision. We all applaud it. We support the Bills but we would appreciate some information from the Treasurer, if it is possible, as to the effectiveness of the decision.

Mr KING (Wimmera) (10.25)—I will not delay the House for any length of time and it is not my intention to go through all the ramifications of the problems of the motor industry but I want to refer to the Sales Tax Bill (No. 1), which deals with the alteration to the various rates. I will deal with Sales Tax Bill (No. 1) rather than
Sales Tax Bill (No. 2) because they both cover the same period. I was horrified when I heard the announcement by the Treasurer (Dr J. F. Cairns) to the effect that there would be a reduction in the sales tax and that as from a certain date the sales tax would again be increased. I am sure that the Treasurer is very conscious of the importance of the fact that when alterations to tariffs are made they are made virtually without notice. In my opinion the same thing should apply in relation to the sales tax rates.

The Government should be well aware of the problems it created by a premature announcement last year in relation to the superphosphate bounty. Surely it should learn from this that that created a lot of problems that would have been avoided had the Government not made an announcement that the superphosphate bounty would cease at a certain time. The same thing applies not so much to the reduction in the sales tax but rather to the increase as from 1 May. Perhaps it would be helpful if I read out the dates. On 29 January 1975 the sales tax on motor vehicles was reduced from 27½ per cent down to 15 per cent. On 1 May 1975 it will be increased to 17½ per cent, on 1 June to 20 per cent, on 1 July to 22½ per cent, on 1 August to 25 per cent and on 1 September to 27½ per cent. What this is really doing is telling people that they should go out and buy a motor car today if they are interested in buying one but for heavens sake they should not wait too long. This is very effective as far as sales are concerned. It will be very effective until 1 May.

The information that I have been able to secure from the trade is that there is now a waiting list in many areas because they cannot supply the vehicles. This will continue. The fortunate people will receive delivery before 1 May, the not so fortunate will wait until 1 June, those who are a little bit unlucky will wait until 1 July, those who are more unfortunate again will wait until 1 August and those who are dead unlucky will have to wait until after 1 September. What this will really mean—I make this forecast and remind the Treasurer of it—is that at the present time there is a demand for motor cars, and this is helping the industry a great deal. I compliment the Treasurer for taking this action. But to tell the people, to tell the world, that as from certain dates the Government will increase the price of motor cars means that they must rush in and buy now. My guess is—I do not think that I will be very far out—that between 1 September 1975 and, say, Christmas Day there will not be a motor car sold in this country. The long term effect on the motor industry will be far worse than the position today. In view of the fact that the Treasurer wants to have these Bills passed this evening I will conclude my remarks at this stage. But I repeat that it is too late, the Government cannot do anything about the matter. The Treasurer has made the announcement. But I caution him to avoid making such premature announcements as he has made on this occasion.

Dr J. F. CAIRNS (Lalor—Treasurer) (10.29)—I do not intend to enter into the debate on these measures now. All I want to say is that I have listened to the debate. I have taken note of what honourable members have said. These things will be examined and taken into account. In each case I will communicate the results to the honourable members concerned.

Question resolved in the affirmative.
Bills together read a second time.

Third Readings
Leave granted for third readings to be moved forthwith.
Bills (on motion by Dr J. F. Cairns) together read a third time.

SALES TAX (EXEMPTIONS AND CLASSIFICATIONS) BILL 1975

Second Reading
Consideration resumed from 12 February on motion by Dr J. F. Cairns:
That the Bill be now read a second time.
Question resolved in the affirmative.
Bill read a second time.

Third Reading
Leave granted for third reading to be moved forthwith.
Bill (on motion by Dr J. F. Cairns) read a third time.

APPROPRIATION (DEVELOPMENT BANK) BILL 1975
Bill returned from the Senate without amendment.

ADJOURNMENT
Whitlam Government Policies—International Women's Year—Australia's International Relations

Mr SPEAKER—Order! It being half past 10 p.m., in accordance with the order of the House of 11 July 1974, I propose the question:
That the House do now adjourn.

Mr LUCOCK (Lyne) (10.30)—I apologise to the House. When I spoke on the Remuneration
and Allowances Bill 1975 I intended to ask for leave to incorporate in Hansard at the conclusion of my speech a list of current salaries. I have spoken to the Leader of the House (Mr Daly) about the matter. I ask for leave of the House to have that list inserted in Hansard at the conclusion of my speech.

Mr SPEAKER—Is leave granted? There being no objection, leave is granted.

Mr CORBETT (Maranoa) (10.31)—Tonight I want to reply to some of the comments made by the honourable member for Bowman (Mr Keogh) when he was speaking in the adjournment debate last night. In the course of his remarks he referred to the Country Party, as my colleague the honourable member for Wimmers (Mr King) has said, in rather disparaging terms. He also referred to the disgraceful scene which took place in the House last Thursday when the then Speaker, the honourable member for Sydney (Mr Cope), was deserted by the great majority of his colleagues, including the honourable member for Bowman. The fact is that Mr Speaker Cope acted with great restraint on that occasion, and no fair minded person would disagree with the contention that he was left with no option other than to name the Minister for Labor and Immigration (Mr Clyde Cameron). It was not my intention to develop this subject again, and I would not be doing so if it had not been for the fact that the honourable member for Bowman tried to place all the blame for that scene upon the members of the Oppostion. While that sort of thing is being done, I hope that members of the Opposition will take up the challenge and throw it back into the teeth of the Government, with whom the fault really lies for the scene which occurred on Thursday and which is condemned throughout this country.

The conduct of the Prime Minister (Mr Whitlam) and those who followed him across the chamber, including the honourable member for Bowman, marked a new low in behaviour in this Parliament in relation to the recognition of the authority of the Speaker since the Labor Party defied the authority of Mr Speaker Aston when the honourable member for Wills (Mr Bryant) refused to obey the Speaker’s ruling. He was supported by his Leader and the members of his Party. They gathered around him to prevent the taking of the action which should have been taken under the authority of the Speaker’s ruling, namely, for him to be removed from the House. The situation was such that the Speaker had to leave the chair and adjourn the House.

Every Australian knows that the blame for the deplorable deterioration of parliamentary democracy that occurred here last Thursday rests fairly and squarely on the shoulders of the Prime Minister and those members of the Labor Party who accepted his ruthless dictation without question. The 4 members of the Labor Party who refused to be associated with the Prime Minister—one of those members was you, Mr Speaker—are the people who deserve credit. Those 4 members of the Labor Party—3 Ministers and you, Mr Speaker—deserve credit for their efforts to maintain the standards of democratic government which should be associated with our national Parliament. I regret very much the deterioration of the standards of conduct in this House. The blame does not rest entirely on one side of the House either. I will be fair enough to say that. I look forward—I am sure the Australian people look forward—to a lifting of those standards. It is regrettable that an honourable member should come in here and try to place on the Opposition the blame for what occurred. That has been the tactic of the Government. Such claims need to be refuted completely. When such matters are raised, as far as I am concerned, as I said, they will be refuted by honourable members on this side of the House.

There is no question at all about the situation. Why would 3 Ministers have dissociated themselves from the action of the Government if what I say is not true? Such an incident has not occurred in years, and it is not likely to occur again unless there is a very grave departure on the part of the Government from the normal proceedings in this place. We cannot do anything but condemn the Government in relation to this matter. While Government supporters try to keep alive the claim that we are to blame for what occurred, we are prepared to meet the challenge. I might say that the Prime Minister has lost the respect of the Australian people, and the people who were present in the Parliament and saw his reckless, ruthless demonstration of intemperate dictatorial authority can bear witness to the fact that he does not deserve to be Prime Minister of this great country.

Perhaps one should not be surprised to see the majority of the members of the Labor Party desert their colleagues because they are members of a government which in recent months has rejected practically every principle of socialistic philosophy. Why has the Government done that? It has done it to try to restore its failing popularity with the people of this country. The Government is now advocating the encouragement of private enterprise, which in the past it
has always deprecated and opposed. It is now allowing takeovers by multinational corporations, a practice which it claimed and has claimed consistently over the years to be detrimental to the welfare of the Australian people and to this country. Only today I read a newspaper article headed: ‘Government approves IAC deal’. The article which follows states:

Reversing the Federal Government’s much publicised ‘buy back the farm’ policy, the Australian Treasury has given First National City Bank the go ahead to acquire a majority interest in Australia’s second largest financier, IAC (Holdings) Ltd.

What a reversal of policy! Has the Government no shame at all when it is prepared to reverse the policies on which it was elected to govern this country? Surely it should stick to its principles and its ideas, even if they are not popular. Why does it not follow them through? It talks about having a mandate. We heard mention of that in the House today. I think the honourable member for Henty (Mrs Child) will agree—I see that she is agreeing with me—that the Government has a mandate to do some of the things that it was saying it intended to do. Let me say with all the gallantry that I have—I admire her conduct in the House; she does not deserve condemnation for her conduct in the House—that the Government has no mandate to reverse its policies. It is now trying very incompetently to implement the policies of the Opposition. It has been very ineffective in doing so.

I warn the Australian people that the Government is completely bereft of credibility and sincerity and is reversing its policies and its principles only in a vain and desperate attempt to regain some of the popularity that it has lost with the Australian people. It is taking this action having seen the devastating results of its policies as reflected in the public opinion polls. That is what has caused it to take the action it has; it has no concern for the people upon whom it is now trying recklessly to lavish funds, which it will have to try to finance when it draws up its Budget. During all the long years this country has had a Federal government, there has never been a more blatant and cynical sacrifice of a loyal member of any party by other members of the same party. All of the time honoured principles of the Australian Labor Party have gone by the board simply for the sake of expediency, as have the policies on which the Labor Party has said it was elected to office.

There is no doubt that if the Government succeeds in hoodwinking the Australian people—God forbid that it does—it will have a change of heart immediately it gains some security of tenure of office. It will again resort to the promotion of policies and principles that it has promoted over the years. We only have to look at the speech which the Deputy Prime Minister (Dr J. F. Cairns) delivered to the Labor Party Conference at Terrigal to find that this is so. In referring to the Labor Party’s Economic Committee he said:

The Committee is of the opinion that the events of the last two years have brought us to a time where the platform needs to be redrafted—not because our goals have altered but because we have gained experience in pursuit of our aims.

The Labor Party is prepared to wait a while because it is compelled to wait a while. The Gallup polls are not enabling it to do otherwise. The honourable member for Shortland (Mr Morris) does not like hearing what I am saying. He can go outside if he likes. That is where he was most of the day, anyway. There is no doubt that if the Government succeeds in hoodwinking the people in this it will shift ground. I have quoted a portion of the speech of the Deputy Prime Minister at Terrigal. I could cite many arguments on this reversal. I turn finally to the matter of the capital gains tax which the Government said it would not introduce. When the Deputy Prime Minister was asked whether business could count on this he said: ‘Yes, it can. We will not introduce this for 6 months or perhaps 12 months’. What on earth good is that for business people? It just goes to show that this is a temporary change of heart and we can look forward with great trepidation to a continuance of the socialistic policies which have ruined the economy of Australia and which have put 300,000 people out of work in the short time that Australia has been blighted by a Government of this standard.

Mrs Child (Henty) (10.42)—On Saturday next we will be celebrating International Women’s Day. It is a day set aside every year to commemorate a courageous group of women in the United States of America who campaigned in the streets, many years before it was accepted that one could campaign in the streets, for the rights of women. I thought it fitting to draw the attention of the House tonight to International Women’s Day as it is particularly significant in 1975, designated International Women’s Year by the United Nations and to be celebrated throughout the world as we will celebrate it here in Australia. International Women’s Year may be boring to the Australian Country Party but it will not bore most of the people who are taking part in it. It should be a period when we aim to broaden the minds of all those people whose minds are closed to change. This is especially
important in this time of accelerating community involvement and participation.

People are ready for change and in this important year, International Women's Year, the most important single contribution of lasting value that we can make is to try to broaden the minds of those who have closed their minds to change. It could be a tribute to International Women's Year that we took the year to help in changing entrenched attitudes of some people within our community, that we took the year to broaden the minds of those who have closed their minds to change, of those who cling to old prejudices, old accepted attitudes, old accepted roles. International Women's Year should be a year when we accelerate change, a year to look back on, a year of commencement and a year to start the long revolution to whittle away old prejudices. It will be a long hard battle to change attitudes entrenched over generations. It will even be a battle to make clear that it is fundamentally a people's battle and not just a battle for women's rights, but a struggle to proclaim that every section of society, all men, women and children born and unborn will benefit from sweeping changes in attitudes to women's rights. Once we accept this as a fact we leap quite a way ahead.

International Women's Year will not mean a thing if it consists only of meetings, seminars, conferences and celebrations dotted around the country completely unrelated and completely finished when the lights go out and everyone goes home after a successful function. What will herald success? First, the change of attitudes I have referred to; and secondly whatever money is spent or whatever functions are held it is the message to be conveyed, the intercommunication, the stimulus and the understanding that are so important. In the past society has defined what a woman might do and what she might expect from life. Today she wants to decide her role for herself and to find her own identity. She wants broader choices. Do not let us fall for the trap of saying that all women, for instance, want to carve a career for themselves or to take jobs. To do so would make those who choose to stay home feel guilty. That way one simply leaves women with the same narrow choice but in a different area.

We should investigate conditions leading to discrimination against women in education, in the work force and certainly in the credit facilities available to them. I am pleased to see some of the moves that this Government has made since coming into office towards eliminating the discrimination against women in the fields of pay and opportunity of employment. But these are still peripheral changes and it is the community acceptance of roles of men and women that has to be changed. Community acceptance or tolerance of inequalities is in revolt. As an example I point to the establishment of Halfway House in Melbourne, which has recognised the need for refuge for women and children forced to leave their homes. As well, I would cite the inquiries being carried out by the rape committee and the excellent counselling and referral work done by the Women's Health Collective at Collingwood. As well as their social value these and many other like organisations are particularly valuable as they have been started by voluntary groups recognising and moving to meet needs.

If International Women's Year raises women's consciousness into working towards equality, development and peace this year will be a vanguard for a new way of life. If the year breaks down barriers and starts us all talking and understanding each other it will also be a year well spent. In this year let there be concentration on statistical evidence so that sociologists may evaluate the areas where women most need help. And then let there this time be implementation through governments in carrying out those recommendations. I have a real fear that lip service could be paramount this year and that many will parade their involvement in International Women's Year recognising that there is some political benefit in doing so. Women cannot isolate themselves and their problems. We have to commit ourselves to all powerless minorities that need our help. These comprise the poor, the aged, the sick, prisoners and the mentally ill, the handicapped and the disabled. They also comprise, unfortunately, those who suffer from inadequate health care, who may be helped now that Medibank is coming in, and those who suffer from inequality within our education system.

We cannot survive as people and we cannot proudly claim success in the campaign to remove discrimination against women unless we remember too all other groups similarly disadvantaged. We will not survive unless we cooperate at a global level and help each other. In fact, we do not deserve to if we remain elitist, permitting nations to exploit those areas which desperately need encouragement, compassion and aid and giving instead alms paid for through economic gain and political strategy. There are all too many people, both men and women, who are still unaware of their vital responsibility to other people—people whose right to eat, breathe clean air, have shelter and freedom of choice and a future for their children is as valid as yours and mine.
Peace should have a place in International Women’s Year. To achieve peace in our time may be a gigantic task, but this year it is hoped that men and women will join forces against repression and work towards the liberation of all oppressed groups throughout the world. If International Women’s Year leads the way democratically, shaking us all up and prodding those who resist change, to lay the guidelines for dialogue for other needy areas both locally and internationally, it will be worthwhile. To women I say: Retain a sense of humour, you will certainly need it. Do not accept what the media tell you. Examine and evaluate all the facts yourself. Be tolerant and good tempered whatever the provocation, and there is plenty about. Perhaps this message should go to men and women. Remember that this is only a beginning. There must be a constant, continual challenge to the conservative institutions and the reactionary factions which hinder the progress of so many human beings in this International Women’s Year.

Mr Howard (Bennelong) (10.49)—My remarks in the adjournment debate tonight are directed to the behaviour of the Government which has led to the rupturing of sporting relations between Australia and South Africa in the area of cricket. I make no apology for raising this issue. I know that some people in this House and elsewhere will claim that in some way I am an apostle for apartheid, that in some way I am trying to embrace the policies of the South African Government. But I believe that the issues which are involved in this dispute go to the very heart of our attitudes towards relations with other countries. I also wish to express, as a keen follower of cricket all my life and as a person who has looked forward for a number of years to competition between Australian and South African teams, my great disappointment with what has happened.

The argument which has been advanced by the Government in support of the attitude it has adopted towards cricket contests between Australia and South Africa is that South African cricket teams are chosen on a racial basis, that is, that they are chosen on a basis which prevents persons of mixed and coloured blood from participating in South African teams which play against those of other countries. That is the basis. In other words, the Government refuses to have any contact with South Africa at a cricketing level because it disagrees with the process by which the persons with whom Australian teams come into contact are chosen. That is the principle involved.

Mr Cohen—That is right.

Mr Howard—The honourable member for Robertson agrees with me that that is the principle involved. I am very glad that both the honourable member for Robertson and the honourable member for Shortland (Mr Morris) agree that that is the basis upon which the Government has arrived at its attitude because if we apply that principle to the Government’s relations not only with the governments of other countries but also with bodies sent by other countries we find an alarming double standard. I ask: If it is fair for the Government, in respect to sporting contests with South Africa, to deny contact because it disagrees with the process by which the teams are chosen why does the Government not deny contact with the government of any country which is chosen by other than a democratic process? That is the principle involved. The honourable member for Robertson looks rather surprised. Perhaps I should explain it to him again. If the Government argues against contact with South African cricket teams because it disagrees with the process by which those teams are chosen it ought to be at least consistent and argue against contact with the governments of other countries in relation to which it disagrees with the processes by which those governments are chosen. I think that it is to violate a very important principle of our international relations to adopt such a double standard.

Why for example, in the face of a massive security problem and in the face of clear evidence that the people of Australia did not want the Yugoslav Prime Minister, Mr Bijedic, to come here shortly after the Government came to office, did the Government go ahead with the visit? It went ahead with the visit simply on the basis that even though we disagree with the method by which the Yugoslav Government was chosen and even though we disagree with the ideology of that country there is no reason in the world why we should not, in the interests of broadening our horizons and in the interests of having good relations with all countries irrespective of their regimes, still receive the Yugoslav Prime Minister. I, like all other honourable members on this side of the House, look forward to the day when apartheid in South Africa is relaxed. I abhor apartheid just as much as any member of the Australian Labor Party.

Mr Cohen—What are you going to do about it?

Mr Howard—What am I going to do about it?

Mr Cohen—You did not do a thing in 20 years.
Mr SPEAKER—Order!

Mr HOWARD—I ask the honourable member for Robertson what he and his Government propose to do about the unsatisfactory features of other countries throughout the world. If the honourable member for Robertson can explain to me why his Government remains absolutely mute and silent about the unsatisfactory aspects of other countries throughout the world, I will be prepared to concede in this House that my attitude is inconsistent. But until such time as the Government can explain away the inconsistency in its attitude towards sporting contests with South Africa, I believe that not only members of this House but also members of the Australian community are entitled to say that it is no business of the Government to deny those sporting contests. It is not going to assist the breaking down of apartheid to deny sporting contests between Australia or any other country and South Africa. I know that the South African regime is abhorrent to all honourable members in this House, but there are many other regimes throughout the world which are equally if not more abhorrent.

I can remember that when the Prime Minister (Mr Whitlam) was returning home from his recent visit to everywhere he called in for a few minutes to talk to the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr Bhutto. The same Mr Bhutto was the apologist in the United Nations Security Council for the action of the Pakistan Government in suppressing the independence movement, the national liberation movement—mark the words "the national liberation movement"—in Pakistan during the Pakistan civil war in 1971. If honourable members opposite argue that what happens in Indo-China is an expression of national liberation, equally I will argue that what happened in Pakistan during 1971 was an expression of national liberation on the part of the Bengali people. Of course, it led to the foundation of Bangladesh. It is apparently perfectly all right for the Prime Minister to go to Pakistan and to say to the Prime Minister of Pakistan: "We are your friends. We are keen to help you. We are keen to be friends with you"; notwithstanding the fact that 2 years earlier that man stood up in the Security Council of the United Nations, as the Foreign Minister of Pakistan, and defended every act of the then Pakistan military regime. Of course I think it is all right for the Prime Minister to do it, but what I want from honourable members opposite is some kind of consistency in their attitude towards relations with other countries.

I believe that it has become popular folklore throughout the world to single out South Africa because South Africa cannot do anything in retaliation. South Africa is in relative international terms a very small and insignificant country. But that does not alter the principle that if the foreign relations of this country are going to be conducted with any consistency and if we are ever going to achieve a situation in which the horrible racial discrimination which does occur in South Africa and which is probably a level of racial discrimination which is duplicated in many countries throughout the world is ever going to be broken down we are not going to break it down by hermetically sealing off South Africa from the rest of the world, we are not going to break it down by having no contact with the South Africans and we are certainly not going to break it down by preventing cricket contests between South Africa and Australia.

Mr COHEN (Robertson) (10.57)—I listened with interest to what the honourable member for Bennelong (Mr Howard) had to say. Unfortu­nately he has confused the 2 issues involved completely. The fact that we have diplomatic relations with hundreds of countries throughout the world does not mean ipso facto approval of those countries. It has nothing whatsoever to do with it. The fact that we have sporting relations with South Africa is in fact a form of approval. There is a great deal of difference. If an Australian team had gone to South Africa it would have been the only cricketing side in the world today which would have been continuing relations with South Africa.

Mr Sullivan—What is wrong with that?

Mr COHEN—We know the honourable member's fascist tendencies. We know his interest in the fascist countries throughout the world. Let me reply to what the honourable member for Bennelong had to say. The honourable member for Bennelong made the point that by retaining the bridges built between Australia and South Africa we would be able to change South Africa's attitude towards multi-racial sport. The history of what he has said is totally at odds with what has happened. The fact of the matter is that South Africa never tried to vary its external or internal policies on sport until the rest of the world decided that it had had a gutful of South Africa and was not going to cop it any longer. When the move was made in the mid-1960s to ostracise South Africa from one sport after another—from the Olympic Games, initially from the Davis Cup, from cricket and so on—it was the first time in something like 70 years that South Africa started to look inwards and make changes. It was also the first time that the sportsmen themselves started to protest. Adcock and
other cricketers walked off a ground in about 1970 or 1971 in protest. The fact that South Africa is now trying to make changes has been brought about because countries throughout the world—not Australia initially—said: 'We have had enough. We will not play with you again until you reform yourself internally'. It is quite erroneous for the honourable member for Bennelong to bring up the age old argument about the building of bridges. South Africa did not change its attitude and it was not going to change its attitude until the countries outside ostracised it.

The honourable member for Bennelong is not the only keen cricketer in the House. There are keen cricketers on both sides of the House. I notice that some keen cricketers are present in the Press gallery tonight. The point is, if one is to be pragmatic about the matter, that if Australia had gone to South Africa and played cricket against South Africa there is a very good chance that it would have lost the support of the other countries with which it now plays cricket.

Mr SPEAKER—Order! It being 11 o'clock, the House stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

House adjourned at 11 p.m.
The following answers to questions upon notice were circulated:

**Defence Science Board**  
(Question No. 1239)  
Mr Snedden asked the Minister for Defence, upon notice:  
(1) Who are the members of the Defence Science Board.  
(2) Who appoints the members.  
(3) For what periods are the members appointed.  
(4) When was each of the present members appointed.  
(5) How often does the Board meet.  
(6) What are its terms of reference.  

**Mr Barnard**—The answer to the right honourable member’s question is as follows:  
(1) The composition of the Defence Science Board is:  
Chairman:  
The Secretary, Department of Defence—Sir Arthur Tange.  
Members:  
Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee—Admiral Sir Victor Smith  
Chief Defence Scientist—Dr J. L. Farrands  
Secretary, Department of Manufacturing Industry—Mr N. S. Currie  
Deputy Secretary (Supply and General) Treasury—Mr R. Daniel.  
(2) Membership was invited by the Secretary Department of Defence.  
(3) The period of appointment is not applicable as the appointment is dependent upon designation.  
(4) The current members, with the exception of Mr Daniel who joined the Board on appointment as Deputy Secretary (Supply and General) Treasury in May 1973, were invited to join the Board on its inauguration in June 1972.  
(5) The Board has met annually since June 1972.  
(6) The terms of reference are:  
To consider, in the context of Defence objectives, major issues concerning the policy for defence science, including its relationship to other national interests. The structure and operation of all Committees in Defence are currently under review.

**Australian Post Office News**  
(Question No. 1805)  
Mr Garland asked the Minister representing the Postmaster-General, upon notice:  
(1) How long has the Australian Post Office News been published.  
(2) How many were published in each of the last 5 years.  
(3) What was the cost in each of those years.  
(4) Are there other indirect expenses involved in its production, distribution, etc; if so, what is an estimate of those costs.  
(5) What is the purpose of producing the publication.  
(6) Other than telephone directories, what other publications are produced by the Post Office and what, briefly, are the purposes for which they are produced, and to whom are they sent.  
(7) What is the approximate cost of direct and indirect expenses in the publishing and distribution of these publications, other than telephone directories.  

**Mr Lionel Bowen**—The Postmaster-General has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:  
(1) Three years.  
(2) 5,500,000 copies.  
(3) $112,904; $95,656; $95,656.  
(4) No.  
(5) The objective of APO News is to inform the Department’s staff and members of the business community of the developments and services provided by the Postmaster-General’s Department.  
(6) The Department also produces other publications, such as the Annual Report and sales promotion and information brochures which are aimed at providing our customers with a comprehensive knowledge of the services we provide.  
(7) The information sought is not recorded centrally and I am reluctant to authorise the time and expense which would be incurred in gathering it.

**Telephones**  
(Question No. 1947)  
Mr Killen asked the Minister representing the Postmaster-General, upon notice:  
(1) Were any telephone installations made to the Florida Hotel, Terrigal, New South Wales, in the last 2 months.  
(2) If so, what was the cost.  

**Mr Lionel Bowen**—The Postmaster-General has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:  
(1) Yes. Temporary telephone services were installed at the Florida Hotel, Terrigal, at the request of—  
the Australian Labor Party;  
the Australian Council of Trade Unions;  
the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet; and  
various Press, Television and Radio Broadcasting Organisations.  
(2) The charges for installing and recovering the temporary facilities totalled $3,125.12. Each of the applicants listed above is being charged in the normal way with their share of the total amount.

**Industrial Disputes**  
(Question No. 1954)  
Dr Klugman asked the Minister for Labor and Immigration, upon notice:  
What was the number of (a) working days lost and (b) employees involved in industrial disputes during each month of 1974.
Mr Clyde Cameron—I am informed that the answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

Statistics of industrial disputes are made available in monthly bulletins published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the latest of which, covering the month of October 1974, was released on 4 February 1975. This bulletin indicates that the numbers of (a) working days lost and (b) employees involved in industrial disputes in Australia in the months to October 1974 were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employees involved (’000)</th>
<th>Working days lost (’000)</th>
<th>Disputes beginning in month</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>418.1</td>
<td>407.8</td>
<td>414.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>2 011.3</td>
<td>144.0</td>
<td>492.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>936.1</td>
<td>248.2</td>
<td>607.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>559.6</td>
<td>172.6</td>
<td>317.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>235.1</td>
<td>92.8</td>
<td>98.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>526.2</td>
<td>216.0</td>
<td>227.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>816.3</td>
<td>227.5</td>
<td>314.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>255.1</td>
<td>176.5</td>
<td>189.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October*</td>
<td>238.6</td>
<td>145.9</td>
<td>179.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Subject to revision.

Pensioners: Hospital Charges
(Question No. 1967)

Mr Bourchier asked the Minister for Social Security, upon notice:

1. If a pensioner desires to use other than public or general wards in a hospital, is he or she forced to pay the full amount of hospital benefits to cover that intermediate or private section.

2. If so, will he consider allowing pensioners who elect to use the intermediate or private section a rebate or refund equivalent to the allowance for the general section.

3. Would such an allowance provide pensioners the opportunity to exercise this choice knowing they would only be paying the difference in cost.

4. Would the provision of such opportunities to pensioners relieve the demand on general hospital beds and therefore make available beds for the more necessitous.

Mr Hayden—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

1. Yes, but this is because State Governments make a practice of charging all patients in intermediate and private wards (other than those who may be eligible for workers compensation or third party damages) the appropriate fee set for the accommodation.

2. and 3. The existing arrangements for pensioners in public hospitals were inherited from the previous Government. The framework of the arrangements has existed unchanged since 1953. The present rate of benefit for pensioners in public wards of $5 a day has remained unchanged since 1963.

Rather than follow an ad hoc approach to the financing of health care as appears to be visualised in the honourable

member’s question, the Government has developed a program, Medibank, aimed at improving the position of all residents of Australia who need medical and hospital care, including pensioners. In view of the imminence of this program (Medibank) the Government does not propose any major reforms of existing arrangements.

The objective of Medibank is to provide every resident with the opportunity of receiving treatment as a hospital patient without charge, although achievement of this objective is dependent on the Government reaching agreement with State governments under the provisions of the Health Insurance Act. Private hospital insurance will be available to those persons who wish to be treated as private patients in intermediate or private wards and this insurance will be very much cheaper than at present as a result of the recent Australian Government hospital benefit being increased from $2 to $18 a day. Pensioners will be received as anyone else in the community and no special arrangements will be necessary for them. Their position will be very much improved, for example, under the medical benefits arrangements they will be free to go to any private doctor including specialists, and receive full Medibank benefits—in contrast to the present Pensioner Medical Service which rests in a limited way on general practitioners providing treatment under the Pensioner Medical Service.

(4) I am not aware of any situation where pensioners are hospitalised unnecessarily in a way that deprives the availability of general hospital beds for the more necessitous.

Government Advertisements
(Question No. 1976)

Mr Garland asked the Minister representing the Minister for the Media, upon notice:

1. Has the Minister noticed the new and apparently growing practice of Ministers to have their photographs appear in Government advertisements.

2. Has the Minister authorised this practice or is it a Cabinet decision.

3. Does this practice involve more expenditure for the Australian taxpayers.

4. Will the Minister have the practice discontinued.

5. Has the Minister received letters of complaint about the practice.

6. Did the Minister in particular notice a series of advertisements placed in Australian newspapers on or about 31 December 1974 with a large photograph of the Minister for Social Security which many regarded as having some political motive.

Mr Morrison—The Minister for the Media has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

1. Of the total number of Australian Government advertisements placed since October 1974 only five have been noted which included photographs of Ministers.

2. On the occasions on which photographs of Ministers have appeared in advertisements I understand this has been particularly specified by the originating departments.

3. No. In most cases the size of the advertisement is governed largely by the volume of text required. If a photograph or an illustration is also required, it would not be necessary to increase the size of the advertisement.

4. No. It is a matter for each originating Department.

5. As far as I am aware, I have not received one single complaint.
(6) The advertisement in question was the first major advertisement on relief to Darwin cyclone victims. The aim of the advertisement was to communicate the fact that emergency benefits were available to cyclone victims, who might more quickly respond to such a message if identified with the authority of the Minister concerned.

Postal Services
(Question No. 1982)

Mr Garland asked the Minister representing the Postmaster-General, upon notice:

What are the comparative costs expressed in Australian currency of the common (a) surface and (b) airmail envelopes sizes and/or weights in (i) Australia, (ii) the United States of America, (iii) the United Kingdom, (iv) West Germany and (v) New Zealand.

Mr Lionel Bowen—The Postmaster-General has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

When comparing the basic letter postage rates of Australia and those of other overseas countries, recognition must be given to the prevailing economic conditions and the local purchasing power of the currencies.

With the exception of New Zealand these countries are far more densely populated than Australia and this factor alone substantially reduces costs associated with the distribution of mail. Given Australia’s large area and scattered population, our postal charges compare favourably with those of the countries mentioned.

The comparative rates of postage are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Type of Service</th>
<th>Rate in National Currency</th>
<th>Weight Limit</th>
<th>Rate in Australian Currency (18.1.75)</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Surface (or airmail where this would speed delivery) Standard Size</td>
<td>10c</td>
<td>500 g max</td>
<td>10c</td>
<td>1.10.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Surface Non-Standard</td>
<td>11c</td>
<td>up to 50 g</td>
<td>11c</td>
<td>1.10.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Airmail Non-Standard</td>
<td>15c</td>
<td>up to 20 g</td>
<td>15c</td>
<td>1.10.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.A.</td>
<td>Surface</td>
<td>10c</td>
<td>up to 28.3 g</td>
<td>7.4c</td>
<td>25.3.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Airmail</td>
<td>13c</td>
<td>up to 28.3 g</td>
<td>9.6c</td>
<td>25.3.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.K.*</td>
<td>1st Class Surface</td>
<td>7p</td>
<td>up to 56.7 g</td>
<td>12.5c</td>
<td>17.3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd Class Surface (one day delay)</td>
<td>5½p</td>
<td>up to 56.7 g</td>
<td>9.8c</td>
<td>17.3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Germany</td>
<td>Surface Standard</td>
<td>50pf</td>
<td>20 g</td>
<td>16.1c</td>
<td>15.6.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>50 g</td>
<td>25.7c</td>
<td>15.6.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Airmail Surcharge</td>
<td>5pf</td>
<td>per 20 g</td>
<td>1.6c</td>
<td>15.6.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Surface</td>
<td>4c</td>
<td>28.3 g</td>
<td>4c</td>
<td>18.6.73</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Airmail</td>
<td>5c</td>
<td>14.2 g</td>
<td>5c</td>
<td>18.6.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Rates to operate from 17 March 1975.

Department of Overseas Trade: Grants
(Question No. 209)

Mr Snedden asked the Minister for Overseas Trade, upon notice:

When will he answer my question No. 1544 which first appeared in the Notice Paper on 13 November 1974.

Mr Crean—The answer to the right honourable member’s question is as follows:

The answer to question No. 1544 appeared in Hansard on 25 February 1975.

Devaluation: Effect on Neighbouring Countries
(Question No. 1229)

Mr Snedden asked the Minister representing the Minister for Foreign Affairs, upon notice:

(1) Can the Minister say what will be the impact of the devaluation of the Australian dollar on Australia’s trade with each of its neighbouring countries in the Asian and Pacific areas.

(2) Can the Minister also say what will be the impact, in each case, on the development and particularly on the employment programs of these countries.

(3) Has the Government received any response or representations on these matters from these neighbouring or other countries.

(4) Will the devaluation of the Australian dollar serve to further reduce the real value of Australia’s overseas assistance programs to developing nations.

Mr Whitlam—The answer to the right honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) It is not possible to give an exhaustive list of the effects of devaluation of the Australian dollar on trade with each of our neighbouring countries in the Asian and Pacific areas, but the overall effect is not expected to be great. The general situation would be that the price of goods imported into Australia would tend to increase. This should reduce demand for imports especially for goods that are produced in Australia. In the case of a number of important imported goods from the Asian and Pacific region such as tea, coffee,
rubber and particular wood and timber products, there are no close substitutes produced in Australia and the volume responses should be quite small. The devaluation will improve the competitive position of Australian firms exporting to the region but it will only partially offset the earlier appreciation in the value of the Australian dollar relative to most currencies in the region. A large proportion of Australian exports to the region are manufactured goods and in general are not competing with domestic industries in the countries concerned.

(2) The trade induced effects on development and employment in each of our neighbouring countries as a result of the devaluation would be likely to vary considerably. There would be positive effects for Papua New Guinea, which is operating on Australian currency, and for Fiji which devalued in line with Australia; as these countries’ export industries will be more competitive on world markets. The negative effects on other countries of the region will be small, as Australia is, in most cases, a very minor market for the exports of these countries.

(3) No.

(4) The devaluation will not significantly affect the value of our overseas development assistance to recipient countries. It will not affect that part of our aid program that comprises the provision of Australian goods and services. Neither will it affect that significant part of the total program which is provided to Papua New Guinea and not spent outside PNG or Australia. Australia’s official development assistance increased from $A260.3m in 1973-74 to an estimated $A341.3m in 1974-75, a rise of 31 per cent. Bilateral aid to countries other than Papua New Guinea, which will be most affected by the devaluation, will increase by an estimated 81 per cent, so the real value of Australia’s development assistance will increase considerably in 1974-75.