AUSTRALIA

TWENTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—THIRD PERIOD

Governor-General

His Excellency the Honourable Sir John Robert Kerr, Companion of the Order of Australia, 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 Counsel learned in the law, Governor-General of Australia and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Force of Australia from 11 July 1974.

Formation of Government

At 2.34 p.m. on Tuesday, 11 November, the honourable member for Wannon (Mr Malcolm Fraser) notified the House that ‘this afternoon the Governor-General commissioned me to form a government until elections can be held’.

The Parliament Dissolved

PROCLAMATION

Australia

By His Excellency the Governor-General of Australia

JOHN R. KERR
Governor-General

WHEREAS by section 57 of the Constitution it is provided that if the House of Representatives passes any proposed-law, and the Senate rejects or fails to pass it, or passes it with amendments to which the House of Representatives will not agree, and if after an interval of three months the House of Representatives, in the same or the next session, again passes the proposed law with or without any amendments which have been made, suggested, or agreed to by the Senate and the Senate rejects or fails to pass it, or passes it with amendments to which the House of Representatives will not agree, the Governor-General may dissolve the Senate and the House of Representatives simultaneously:

AND WHEREAS the conditions upon which the Governor-General is empowered by that section of the Constitution to dissolve the Senate and the House of Representatives simultaneously have been fulfilled in respect of the several proposed laws intituled—

Health Insurance Levy Act 1974
Health Insurance Levy Assessment Act 1974
Income Tax (International Agreements) Act 1974
Minerals (Submerged Lands) Act 1974
Minerals (Submerged Lands) (Royalty) Act 1974
National Health Act 1974
Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1974
Conciliation and Arbitration Act (No. 2) 1974
National Investment Fund Act 1974
Electoral Laws Amendment Act 1974
Electoral Act 1975
Privy Council Appeals Abolition Act 1975
Superior Court of Australia Act 1974
Electoral Re-distribution (New South Wales) Act 1975
Electoral Re-distribution (Queensland) Act 1975
Electoral Re-distribution (South Australia) Act 1975
Electoral Re-distribution (Tasmania) Act 1975
Electoral Re-distribution (Victoria) Act 1975
Broadcasting and Television Act (No. 2) 1974
Television Stations Licence Fees Act 1974
Broadcasting Stations Licence Fees Act 1974

NOW THEREFORE, I Sir John Robert Kerr, the Governor-General of Australia, do by this my Proclamation dissolve the Senate and the House of Representatives.

(L.S.) Given under my Hand and the Great Seal of Australia on 11 November 1975.

By His Excellency’s Command,

MALCOLM FRASER
Prime Minister

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!
Frase Caretaker Ministry
(From 12 November 1975)

Prime Minister
Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Overseas Trade and
Minister for Minerals and Energy
Treasurer
Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Northern Aus-
tralia
Special Minister for State, Minister for the Capital Terr-
itory, Minister for the Media, Minister for Tourism and
Recreation and Vice-President of the Executive Council
Attorney-General and Minister for Police and Customs
Minister for Manufacturing Industry and Minister for
Science and Consumer Affairs
Minister for Transport and Postmaster-General
Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Environment
Minister for Social Security, Minister for Health and
Minister for Repatriation and Compensation
Minister for Defence
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Minister for Adminis-
trative Services
Minister for Housing and Construction and Minister for
Urban and Regional Development
Minister for Labour and Immigration
Minister for Education

The Honourable John Malcolm Fraser
The Right Honourable John Douglas Anthony
The Honourable Phillip Reginald Lynch
The Honourable Ian McCahon Sinclair

Senator the Honourable Reginald Greive Withers

Senator the Honourable Ivor John Greenwood, Q.C.
Senator the Honourable Robert Carrington Cotton

The Honourable Peter James Nixon
The Honourable Andrew Sharp Peacock
The Honourable Donald Leslie Chipp

The Honourable Denis James Killen
Senator the Honourable Thomas Charles Drake-
Brockman, D.F.C.
Senator the Honourable John Leslie Carrick

The Honourable Anthony Austin Street
Senator the Honourable Margaret Georgina Constance
Guilfoyle
THIRTIETH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—FIRST PERIOD

Governor-General

His Excellency the Honourable Sir John Robert Kerr, Companion of the Order of Australia, 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 Counsel learned in the law, Governor-General of Australia and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Force of Australia from 11 July 1974.

First Fraser Ministry
(From 18 December 1975)

Prime Minister
Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Overseas Trade and
Minister for Minerals and Energy
Treasurer
Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Northern Aus-
tralia
Special Minister of State, Minister for the Capital Ter-
ritory, Minister for the Media, Minister for Tourism and
Recreation and Vice-President of the Executive Council
Attorney-General and Minister for Police and Customs
Minister for Manufacturing Industry and Minister for
Science and Consumer Affairs
Minister for Transport and Postmaster-General
Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Environment
Minister for Social Security, Minister for Health and
Minister for Repatriation and Compensation
Minister for Defence
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Minister for Adminis-
trative Services
Minister for Housing and Construction and Minister for
Urban and Regional Development
Minister for Labour and Immigration
Minister for Education

The Honourable John Malcolm Fraser
The Right Honourable John Douglas Anthony
The Honourable Phillip Reginald Lynch
The Honourable Jan McCahon Sinclair

Senator the Honourable Reginald Greive Withers

Senator the Honourable Ivor John Greenwood, Q.C.
Senator the Honourable Robert Carrington Cotton

The Honourable Peter James Nixon
The Honourable Andrew Sharp Peacock
The Honourable Donald Leslie Chipp

The Honourable Denis James Killen
Senator the Honourable Thomas Charles Drake-
Brockman, D.F.C.
Senator the Honourable John Leslie Carrick

The Honourable Anthony Austin Street
Senator the Honourable Margaret Georgina Constance
Guilfoyle

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Second Fraser Ministry
(From 12 January 1976)

*Prime Minister
*Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for National Resources and Minister for Overseas Trade
*Treasurer
*Minister for Primary Industry and Leader of the House
*Minister for Administrative Services, Vice-President of the Executive Council and Leader of the Government in the Senate
*Minister for Environment, Housing and Community Development
*Minister for Industry and Commerce
*Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister in Public Service Matters
*Minister for Transport
*Minister for Education and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister in Federal Affairs
*Minister for Foreign Affairs
*Minister for Defence
Minister for Social Security and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister in Child Care Matters
Attorney-General
Minister for Business and Consumer Affairs
Minister for Post and Telecommunications and Minister Assisting the Treasurer
Minister for Health
Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Minister for the Northern Territory and Minister Assisting the Minister for National Resources
Minister for Post and Telecommunications and Minister Assisting the Treasurer
Minister for Construction and Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence
Minister for Repatriation
Minister for Science
Minister for the Capital Territory

The Right Honourable John Malcolm Fraser
The Right Honourable John Douglas Anthony
The Honourable Philip Reginald Lynch
The Honourable Ian McCahon Sinclair
Senator the Honourable Reginald Greive Withers
Senator the Honourable Ivor John Greenwood, Q.C.
Senator the Honourable Robert Carrington Cotton
The Honourable Anthony Austin Street
The Honourable Peter James Nixon
Senator the Honourable John Leslie Carrick
The Honourable Andrew Sharp Peacock
The Honourable Denis James Killen
Senator the Honourable Margaret Georgina Constance Guilfoyle
The Honourable Robert James Ellicott, Q.C.
The Honourable John Winston Howard†
The Honourable Ransley Victor Garland
The Honourable Ralph James Dunnet Hunt
The Honourable Michael John Randal MacKellar
The Honourable Robert Ian Viner
The Honourable Albert Evan Adermann
†The Honourable Eric Laidlaw Robinson
The Honourable John Elden McLeay
The Honourable Kevin Eugene Newman
Senator the Honourable James Joseph Webster
**The Honourable Anthony Allan Staley

*Minister in the Cabinet
†Resigned 6 February 1976
‡Minister for the Capital Territory from 12 January 1976 to 16 February 1976. Appointed Minister for Post and Telecommunications and Minister Assisting the Treasurer 6 February 1976
**Appointed 16 February 1976
THE COMMITTEES OF THE SESSION

(FIRST SESSION—FIRST PERIOD)

STANDING COMMITTEES

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS—Mr Ruddock (Chairman), Mr Bryant, Mr Calder, Mr Drummond, Mr Les Johnson, Mr McLean, Mr Wallis, Mr Wentworth.

ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION—Mr Hodges (Chairman), Mr Baillieu, Dr Cass, Mr Fisher, Dr Jenkins, Mr Simon, Mr Wilson, Mr Young.

EXPENDITURE—Mr Garland (Chairman), Chairman of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts or his nominee, Mr Kevin Cairns, Mr Crean, Mr Fife, Mr Hurford, Dr Jenkins, Mr Lusher, Mr Macphee, Mr Stewart, Mr Sullivan, Mr Willis.

HOUSE—Mr Speaker, Mr Abel, Mr Donald Cameron, Mr Holten, Mr Innes, Dr Klugman, Mr James McMahon.

LIBRARY—Mr Speaker, Mr Armitage, Mr Baillieu, Mr Bryant, Mr Garrick, Mr O'Keefe, Mr Wentworth.

PRIVILEGES—Mr Bowen, Mr Donald Cameron, Mr Hodgman, Mr Jacobi, Mr Jarman, Mr Lucock, Mr Nicholls, Mr Scholes, Mr Viner.

PUBLICATIONS—Mr Hodges (Chairman), Mr Bungey, Mr FitzPatrick, Mr Martyr, Mr Millar, Mr Wallis, Mr Antony Whitlam.

ROAD SAFETY—Mr Katter (Chairman), Mr Cohen, Mr Falconer, Mr Goodluck, Mr Charles Jones, Mr James McMahon, Mr Ruddock, Mr Short.

STANDING ORDERS—Mr Speaker, the Chairman of Committees, the Leader of the House, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Mr Anthony, Mr Bryant, Mr Fife, Mr Giles, Dr Jenkins, Mr Keith Johnson, Mr Scholes.

JOINT STATUTORY COMMITTEES

BROADCASTING OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS—Mr President, Senator Sir Magnus Cormack, Senator Douglas McClelland, and Mr Speaker, Mr Donald Cameron, Mr Corbett, Mr Graham, Mr Scholes, Mr Antony Whitlam.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS—Mr Connolly (Chairman), Senator Baume, Senator Colston, Senator Messner, and Mr Armitage, Mr Crean, Mr Dobie, Mr Lusher, Mr Martin, Mr Short.

PUBLIC WORKS—Mr Kelly (Chairman), Senator Kilgariff, Senator Melzer, Senator Young, and Mr Bungey, Mr James, Mr Keith Johnson, Mr James McMahon, Mr Millar.

JOINT COMMITTEES

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY—Senator Knight (Chairman), Senator Archer, Senator Georges, Senator Ryan, and Mr Bungey, Mr Crean, Mr Fry, Mr Hailem, Mr MacKenzie, Mr Sainsbury.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENCE—Senator Sir Magnus Cormack (Chairman), Senator Bishop, Senator Durack, Senator Scott, Senator Sibra, Senator Sim, Senator Wrenn, and Mr Armitage, Mr Beazley, Mr Brown, Mr Bryant, Mr Fry, Mr Garland, Mr Hamer, Mr Jacobi, Dr Klugman, Mr Neil, Mr Ian Robinson, Mr Shipton, Mr Short, Mr Sullivan.

NEW AND PERMANENT PARLIAMENT HOUSE—Mr President and Mr Speaker (Joint Chairmen) and the Minister for the Capital Territory, Senator Drake-Brockman, Senator McIntosh, Senator Melzer, Senator Missen, Senator O'Byrne, Senator Young, and Mr Kevin Cairns, Mr Garland, Mr Keith Johnson, Mr Keating, Mr Lloyd, Mr Scholes.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE SYSTEM—Senator Sir Magnus Cormack (Chairman), Senator Gietzelt, Senator McAuliffe, Senator Mulvihill, Senator Rae, Senator Tehan, and Mr Cadman, Dr Jenkins, Mr Peter Johnson, Mr Morris, Mr Ian Robinson, Mr Yates, Mr Young.

SELECT COMMITTEE

SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES—Mr Cadman (Chairman), Mr Beazley, Mr Falconer, Mr Hyde, Mr Innes, Dr Klugman, Mr McVeigh, Mr Shipton.
AUSTRALIAN CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

Delegation from the Australian Parliament

Members appointed by the Senate:

*Liberal Party of Australia*—Senator Withers and Senator Greenwood.
*National Country Party*—Senator Webster.

Members appointed by the House of Representatives:

*Liberal Party of Australia*—Mr Malcolm Fraser, Mr Ellicott and Mr Wilson.
*National Country Party*—Mr Anthony and Mr Sinclair
*Australian Labor Party*—Mr E. G. Whitlam, Mr Lionel Bowen, Mr Jacobi, Mr Scholes and Mr Antony Whitlam.
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—L. M. Barlin and I. C. Cochran
Serjeant-at-Arms Office—D. M. Piper

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—FIRST PERIOD)

Acts Citation Act 1976 (Act No. 37 of 1976)—
An Act relating to the Citation of Acts.

Air Navigation (Charges) Act 1976 (Act No. 5 of 1976)—

Apple and Pear Stabilization Amendment Act 1976 (Act No. 44 of 1976)—

Apple and Pear Stabilization Export Duty Amendment Act 1976 (Act No. 45 of 1976)—

Apple and Pear Stabilization Export Duty Collection Amendment Act 1976 (Act No. 46 of 1976)—

Appropriation Act (No. 3) 1975–76 (Act No. 38 of 1976)—
An Act to appropriate a sum out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, additional to the sums appropriated by the Appropriation Act (No. 1) 1975–76, for the service of the year ending on 30 June 1976.

Appropriation Act (No. 4) 1975–76 (Act No. 39 of 1976)—
An Act to appropriate a sum out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, additional to the sum appropriated by the Appropriation Act (No. 2) 1975–76, for certain expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 1976.

Australia–Japan Foundation Act 1976 (Act No. 18 of 1976)—
An Act to establish a Foundation for encouraging a closer Relationship between the Peoples of Australia and Japan, and to Provide for related Matters.

Australian Security Intelligence Organization Act 1976 (Act No. 2 of 1976)—


Commonwealth Teaching Service Act 1976 (Act No. 23 of 1976)—

Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1976 (Act No. 3 of 1976)—
An Act to permit an additional Judge to be appointed to the Australian Industrial Court.

Conciliation and Arbitration Amendment Act 1976 (Act No. 64 of 1976)—
An Act relating to Conciliation and Arbitration.

Customs Amendment Act 1976 (Act No. 41 of 1976)—

Customs Tariff Amendment Act 1976 (Act No. 40 of 1976)—
An Act relating to Duties of Customs.

Customs Tariff Validation Act 1976 (Act No. 65 of 1976)—
An Act to provide for the Validation of certain Collections of Duties of Customs.

Dairy Adjustment Amendment Act 1976 (Act No. 77 of 1976)—

Dairying Industry Research and Promotion Levy Act 1976 (Act No. 78 of 1976)—
An Act relating to a Levy on Whole Milk and Butter Fat.

Dairying Industry Research and Promotion (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 1976 (Act No. 79 of 1976)—

Defence Force Retirement and Death Benefits Amendment Act 1976 (Act No. 33 of 1976)—

Defence Force Retirement and Death Benefits (Pension Increases) Act 1976 (Act No. 34 of 1976)—
An Act to make Provision for and in relation to Increases in Pensions payable to or in respect of former Members of the Defence Force.

Dried Fruits Levy Amendment Act 1976 (Act No. 11 of 1976)—

Dried Fruits Stabilization Amendment Act 1976 (Act No. 12 of 1976)—
An Act to extend the Operation of the Dried Fruits Stabilization Act 1971 for a further Season, and for other Purposes.

THE ACTS OF THE SESSION—continued

An Act to approve an Agreement between the Commonwealth and the States amending the Financial Agreement, and for related purposes.

Health Insurance Amendment Act 1976 (Act No. 59 of 1976)—

Health Insurance Commission Amendment Act 1976 (Act No. 61 of 1976)—
An Act to amend the Health Insurance Commission Act 1973 to make provision for Medibank Contributors.

Health Insurance Levy Act 1976 (Act No. 54 of 1976)—
An Act to impose a Health Insurance Levy upon certain Incomes.

Health Insurance Levy Assessment Act 1976 (Act No. 53 of 1976)—
An Act to amend the Law relating to Income Tax in relation to the Imposition, Assessment and Collection of a Health Insurance Levy.

Income Tax Assessment Amendment Act 1976 (Act No. 50 of 1976)—
An Act to amend the Law relating to Income Tax.

Income Tax Assessment Amendment Act (No. 2) 1976 (Act No. 56 of 1976)—
An Act to amend the Law relating to Income Tax.

Income Tax (Individuals) Act 1976 (Act No. 58 of 1976)—
An Act to impose a tax upon Incomes, other than Incomes of Companies and of Superannuation Funds.

Income Tax (International Agreements) Amendment Act 1976 (Act No. 52 of 1976)—

Income Tax (International Agreements) Amendment Act (No. 2) 1976 (Act No. 55 of 1976)—

Income Tax (Rates) Act 1976 (Act No. 57 of 1976)—
An Act to declare the Rates of Income Tax payable upon Incomes, other than Incomes of Companies and of Superannuation Funds.

Industrial Research and Development Incentives Act 1976 (Act No. 85 of 1976)—
An Act to make provision for and in relation to Industrial Research and Development, including the payment by the Commonwealth of Incentive Grants.

Live-stock Slaughter Levy Amendment Act 1976 (Act No. 42 of 1976)—

Live-stock Slaughter Levy Collection Amendment Act 1976 (Act No. 43 of 1976)—

Loan Act 1976 (Act No. 6 of 1976)—
An Act to Authorize the Borrowing and Expenditure of Moneys for Defence Purposes.

Loan Act (No. 2) 1976 (Act No. 7 of 1976)—
An Act to Authorize the Borrowing of Moneys for the purpose of Supplementing the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

Loans (Australian National Airlines Commission) Act 1976 (Act No. 22 of 1976)—
An Act to authorize the Borrowing by the Commonwealth of a certain sum of Money and to authorize the Commonwealth to make certain Moneys available to the Australian National Airlines Commission, and for purposes connected therewith.

Loans (Qantas Airways Limited) Act 1976 (Act No. 21 of 1976)—
An Act to authorize the Borrowing by the Commonwealth of a certain sum of Money and to authorize the Commonwealth to make certain Moneys available to Qantas Airways Limited, and for purposes connected therewith.

Maritime College Act 1976 (Act No. 84 of 1976)—
An Act to make provision for the Establishment of an Australian Maritime College.

Meat Export Charge Amendment Act 1976 (Act No. 8 of 1976)—
An Act to terminate the Charge imposed by the Meat Export Charge Act 1973.


National Health Act 1976 (Act No. 1 of 1976)—
An Act to amend the National Health Act 1953–1975.

National Health Amendment Act 1976 (Act No. 60 of 1976)—
An Act to amend the National Health Act 1953–1975, as amended by the National Health Act 1976, and for purposes connected therewith.

Nitrogenous Fertilizers Subsidy Amendment Act 1976 (Act No. 20 of 1976)—
THE ACTS OF THE SESSION—continued

Northern Territory (Administration) Amendment Act 1976 (Act No. 66 of 1976)—

Papua New Guinea (Staffing Assistance) Termination Act 1976 (Act No. 69 of 1976)—
An Act relating to the Termination of the Staffing Assistance provided by Australia for Papua New Guinea.

Phosphate Fertilizers Bounty Amendment Act 1976 (Act No. 19 of 1976)—

Public Accounts Committee Amendment Act 1976 (Act No. 70 of 1976)—

Remuneration and Allowances Amendment Act 1976 (Act No. 83 of 1976)—
An Act relating to the Remuneration and Allowances payable to the Judges of the Family Court of Australia.

Repatriation Acts Amendment Act 1976 (Act No. 27 of 1976)—
An Act relating to Repatriation and related Matters.

Road Safety and Standards Authority (Repeal) Act 1976 (Act No. 81 of 1976)—
An Act to repeal the Road Safety and Standards Authority Act 1975, and for related purposes.


Social Services Amendment Act 1976 (Act No. 26 of 1976)—
An Act relating to Social Services.

Social Services Amendment Act (No. 2) 1976 (Act No. 62 of 1976)—
An Act relating to Child Endowment.

States Grants (Advanced Education) Act 1976 (Act No. 15 of 1976)—
An Act relating to the Grant of Financial Assistance to the States in connexion with Advanced Education.

States Grants (Advanced Education) Amendment Act 1976 (Act No. 16 of 1976)—

States Grants (Air Quality Monitoring) Act 1976 (Act No. 82 of 1976)—
An Act to provide Financial Assistance to the States for Purposes connected with the Monitoring of the Quality of the Outdoor Atmosphere.

States Grants (Capital Assistance) Act 1976 (Act No. 4 of 1976)—
An Act to grant Financial Assistance to the States in connection with Expenditure of a Capital Nature and to Authorize the Borrowing of Certain Moneys by the Commonwealth.

States Grants (Fruit Canneries) Act 1976 (Act No. 9 of 1976)—
An Act to make Provision for the Grant of Financial Assistance to New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia to enable those States to make Loans to certain Canneries of Fruit.

States Grants (Hospital Operating Costs) Act 1976 (Act No. 80 of 1976)—
An Act to grant Financial Assistance to the States in relation to the Costs of Operating Hospitals.

States Grants (Housing Assistance) Act 1976 (Act No. 10 of 1976)—
An Act to Authorize Advances to the States of Financial Assistance in connexion with Housing and to Authorize the Borrowing of Certain Moneys by the Commonwealth.

States Grants (Schools) Act 1976 (Act No. 35 of 1976)—
An Act to provide Financial Assistance to the States for and in relation to Schools, and for related purposes.


States Grants (Universities) Act 1976 (Act No. 13 of 1976)—
An Act to make provision, in respect of the Year 1976, for the grant of Financial Assistance to the States in connexion with Universities.

States Grants (Universities) Amendment Act 1976 (Act No. 14 of 1976)—

Stevedoring Industry Charge Amendment Act 1976 (Act No. 49 of 1976)—
An Act to extend the operation of the Stevedoring Industry Charge Act 1975.


Superannuation Act 1976 (Act No. 31 of 1976)—
An Act to make provision for and in relation to an Occupational Superannuation Scheme for persons employed by the Commonwealth, and for certain other persons.

Superannuation Amendment Act 1976 (Act No. 32 of 1976)—
An Act to amend the Superannuation Act 1922–1974, and for related purposes.
THE ACTS OF THE SESSION—continued

Superannuation Amendment Act (No. 2) 1976 (Act No. 51 of 1976)—

Supply Act (No. 1) 1976–77 (Act No. 67 of 1976)—
An Act to make interim provision for the appropriation of moneys out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the service of the year ending on 30 June 1977.

Supply Act (No. 2) 1976–77 (Act No. 68 of 1976)—
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 1977.

Wheat Export Charge Amendment Act 1976 (Act No. 29 of 1976)—

Wheat Industry Stabilization Amendment Act 1976 (Act No. 28 of 1976)—

Wheat Products Export Adjustment Amendment Act 1976 (Act No. 30 of 1976)—

Wool Industry Amendment Act 1976 (Act No. 71 of 1976)—

Wool Tax Amendment Act (No. 1) 1976 (Act No. 72 of 1976)—

Wool Tax Amendment Act (No. 2) 1976 (Act No. 73 of 1976)—
An Act to amend the Wool Tax Act (No. 2) 1964–1975.

Wool Tax Amendment Act (No. 3) 1976 (Act No. 74 of 1976)—
An Act to amend the Wool Tax Act (No. 3) 1964–1975.

Wool Tax Amendment Act (No. 4) 1976 (Act No. 75 of 1976)—
An Act to amend the Wool Tax Act (No. 4) 1964–1975.

Wool Tax Amendment Act (No. 5) 1976 (Act No. 76 of 1976)—
An Act to amend the Wool Tax Act (No. 5) 1964–1975.
BILLS OF THE SESSION
(FIRST SESSION—FIRST PERIOD)

Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Bill 1976—
Initiated in the House of Representatives. Second Reading.

Aged Persons Hostels Amendment Bill 1976—
Passed by the House of Representatives. Transmitted to the Senate.

An Accidents (Commonwealth Government Liability) Amendment Bill 1976—
Passed by the House of Representatives. Transmitted to the Senate.

Audit Amendment Bill 1976—
Passed by the House of Representatives. Transmitted to the Senate.

Australian Capital Territory Electricity Supply Amendment Bill 1976—
Passed by the House of Representatives. Transmitted to the Senate.

Australian Heritage Commission Amendment Bill 1976—
Initiated in the House of Representatives. Second Reading.

Civil Aviation (Carriers' Liability) Amendment Bill 1976—
Passed by the House of Representatives. Transmitted to the Senate.

Crimes (Aircraft) Amendment Bill 1976—
Passed by the House of Representatives. Transmitted to the Senate.

Crimes (Internationally Protected Persons) Bill 1976—
Initiated in the House of Representatives. Second Reading.

Defence Forces Retirement Benefits Fund (Distribution of Surplus to Pensioners) Bill 1976—
Passed by the House of Representatives. Transmitted to the Senate.

Export Finance and Insurance Corporation Audit Bill 1976—
Passed by the House of Representatives. Transmitted to the Senate.

Extradition (Commonwealth Countries) Amendment Bill 1976—
Initiated in the House of Representatives. Second Reading.

Extradition (Foreign States) Amendment Bill 1976—
Initiated in the House of Representatives. Second Reading.

Foreign Takeovers Amendment Bill 1976—
Passed by the House of Representatives. Transmitted to the Senate.

Homes Savings Grant Amendment Bill 1976—
Passed by the House of Representatives. Transmitted to the Senate.

Ombudsman Bill 1976—
Initiated in the House of Representatives. Second Reading.

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (Financial Support Fund) Bill 1976—
Passed by the House of Representatives. Transmitted to the Senate.

Psychotropic Substances Bill 1976—
Passed by the House of Representatives. Transmitted to the Senate.

States Grants (Aboriginal Assistance) Bill 1976—
Passed by the House of Representatives. Transmitted to the Senate.

Trade Practices Amendment Bill 1976—
Passed by the House of Representatives. Transmitted to the Senate.
THE PARLIAMENT CONVENED
THIRTIETH PARLIAMENT—FIRST SESSION

The Parliament was convened by the following proclamation (Gazette No. S22 of 1976):

PROCLAMATION

Commonwealth of Australia
JOHN R. KERR
Governor-General

WHEREAS by the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia it is, amongst other things, provided that the Governor-General may appoint such times for holding the sessions of the Parliament as he thinks fit:

Now therefore I, Sir John Robert Kerr, the Governor-General aforesaid, do by this my Proclamation appoint Tuesday, 17 February 1976, as the day for the Parliament of the Commonwealth to assemble for the despatch of business:

And all Senators and Members of the House of Representatives are hereby required to give their attendance accordingly at Parliament House, Canberra, at 11 o'clock in the morning, on Tuesday, 17 February 1976.

Given under my hand on 4 February 1976.
By His Excellency's Command,

MALCOLM FRASER
Prime Minister.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!
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Petitions

Tuesday, 30 March 1976

Mr SPEAKER (Rt Hon. B. M. Snedden, Q.C.) took the chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

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

Overseas Development Assistance
To the Speaker and the House of Representatives in Parliament assembled. The petition of the undersigned citizens of Australia respectfully showeth that many Australians are concerned at the announced decision by the Australian Government to reduce the 1975-76 Overseas Development Assistance vote by $21m, and by the abolition of the Australian Development Assistance Agency.

We your petitioners do therefore humbly pray that the Australian Government:

1. as a matter of urgency, reverse the decision to cut the 1975-76 Overseas Development Assistance vote, so as to ensure that the full amount appropriated by Parliament for Overseas Development Assistance is spent this financial year to meet the pressing needs of those in the developing countries;
2. reaffirm Australia's commitment of Overseas Development Assistance being a minimum of 0.7 per cent of GNP, and
3. establish a fully independent statutory authority to administer Australia's official Overseas Development Assistance.

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

by Mr Viner and Mr Aldred.

Petitions 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 showeth:

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 Hodges and Mr Jarman.

Petitions received.

National Employment and Training Scheme
To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives assembled. The humble petition of the undersigned citizens of Australia respectfully showeth:

That whereas from 1st October, 1974 the National Employment and Training System came into operation;

and that at the time the then Government Agreed that 'widow' pensioners and recipients of Supporting Mothers Benefit will be in no way disadvantaged . . . .' under the National Employment and Training System;

and that 'for all trainees over 21 years and Junior trainees with dependants a full-time training allowance equivalent to the average adult male award wage, which will be adjusted quarterly—at the present time approximately $90 per week', is to be provided;

and that there is strong objection to the reduction in training allowance to trainees under the National Employment and Training System, to be effective from 1st April, 1976, as this places these trainees at considerable financial disadvantage.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that the Members in the House assembled will take the most urgent steps to re-adjust the payments under the National Employment and Training System so that they are equivalent to the average adult male award wage.

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

by Mr Bungey.

Petition received.

Income Tax: Land and Water Rates
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 showeth: That the undersigned persons believe that:

The $300 limit on income tax deductibility in respect of personal residential land and water rates is unrealistic and is a discriminatory income tax penalty.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that the Government will take steps to see that the aforesaid limitation is removed entirely or substantially increased.

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

by Mr Connolly.

Petition received.

Australian Heritage Commission
To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives in Parliament assembled. The petition of the undersigned residents of the Hastings Shire, Port Macquarie and Camden Haven area respectfully showeth that:

There is a growing interest and concern in all sections of Australian society for the conservation of the environment, natural and man-made.

That there are also rapidly growing pressures by powerful forces tending towards the destruction of the Australian heritage.

That it is therefore urgent to appoint the Australian Heritage Commission, which was approved by both sides of this Parliament and to give the Commission sufficient independent staff, resources and funds.

That Technical Assistance Grants and Administrative Support Grants to community organizations are needed to partially redress the gross imbalance in technical expertise
and resources suffered by community groups in pressing the
community’s case against the exploiter.

That a proper balance between the Governments program
of public austerity and the need for action in conservation
would be a modest increase in the budget allocations in these
areas over that of 1975-76.

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

by Mr Lucock.

Petition received.

Cadet Corps
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 the three service cadet forces have great value in the
development of the youth of Australia.

That the disbanding of the cadet forces will disperse
accumulated expertise and interest of those involved, and
in some cases negate the efforts of many people over many
years.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that the Govern-
ment will reconsider its decision and that the Government
will reinstate the cadet forces.

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

by Mr McVeigh.

Petition received.

Cadet Corps
Petition to the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the
House of Representatives in Parliament assembled. The humble
petition of electors of the Division of Leichhardt
respectfully sheweth that both the School Cadets and the
Naval, Army and Air Cadets provide character building and
disciplinary training for the future citizens of this
Commonwealth.

The Cadets also provide some basic team training for our
youngerst which must be considered to be valuable in these
times of vandalism and drug taking. The estimated cost of
the Cadets is only a fraction of the cost to our community (i.e.
the Australian community) from vandalism and drug
problems.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that the govern-
ment will immediately rescind its intention to disband the
Cadets.

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

by Mr Thomson.

Petition received.

Fraser Island
To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the House
of Representatives assembled. The humble petition of the
undersigned citizens of Australia respectfully sheweth:

That whereas the natural environment of Fraser Island is
so outstanding that it should be identified as part of the
World Natural Heritage, and whereas the Island should be
conserved for the enjoyment of this and future generations,

Your petitioners humbly pray that the Members, in the
House assembled, will take the most urgent steps to ensure:

1. that the Australian Government uses its constitutional
powers to prohibit the export of any mineral sands from
Fraser Island; and

2. that the Australian Government uses its constitutional
authority to assist the Queensland Government and any
other properly constituted body to develop and conserve the
recreational, educational and scientific potentials of the
natural environment of Fraser Island for the long term
benefit of the people of Australia.

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

by Mr Millar.

Petition received.

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

That the existence of a system of double taxation of per-
sonal incomes whereby both the Australian Government
and State Governments had the power to vary personal
income taxes would mean that taxpayers who worked in
more than one State in any year would:

(a) be faced with complicated variations in his or her
personal income taxes between States;

(b) find that real after-tax wages for the same job would
vary from State to State even when gross wages were
advertised as being the same; and

(c) require citizens to maintain records of income earned
in each State.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that a system of
double income tax on personal incomes be not reintroduced.

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

by Mr Morris.

Petition received.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

URANIUM

Mr KEATING—I ask the Minister for National Resources a question. I refer him to his
speech last night to the Australian Mining Industry Council in which he said, inter alia, that
the future of Australia was threatened if Australia did not export material obtained through the ex-
tractive industries. If he believes that uranium involves the security of Australia, why has he
eradicated all Government involvement in this industry, leaving the exploration for and process-
ing of uranium to private companies, many of which have foreign content and many of which
have very small amounts of paid-up capital?

Mr ANTHONY—I think this is fairly typical of the approach we can expect from the Aus-
tralian Labor Party; it believes that all production must be in the hands of the Government
and that that is the only way Australia’s security can be looked after. What the honourable mem-
ber has overlooked is that the Government has complete control and charge of conditions of
development and export. If there is to be
Questions Without Notice

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development, we hope it will proceed in an orderly manner. If there are to be exports, they must be in accord with international safeguard conditions which are being laid down by countries throughout the world. To imagine that the Government has to do this to ensure security is just ridiculous. It only means that there would be more inefficient production where there is no competitive spirit and where the latest in technology need not be applied. If private enterprise is doing this basic work where no real strategic material of a harmful nature is involved, I fail to see why the Government should be involved. We will, of course, ensure that a high degree of Australian ownership is involved in this sort of project, as in other resources development projects.

URANIUM

Dr RICHARDSON—My question is directed to the Prime Minister. Has the Government made a firm and final decision concerning uranium exports, thus pre-empting the Ranger uranium environmental inquiry that is being conducted by Mr Justice Fox?

Mr MALCOLM FRASER—The Government certainly has not taken any decisions that would pre-empt the inquiry by His Honour Mr Justice Fox; but it is well known, I think, that the inquiry was suspended some days ago because His Honour wished the Government to put certain information to him. The Government has put itself in the position of being able to put that information before His Honour, and it will do so.

MINERAL RESOURCES

Mr E. G. WHITLAM—I ask the Foreign Minister a question. Has the Government any ground to believe that other nations might be provoked to use force to get access to our mineral resources, including our vast deposits of uranium, if, because of its policies on Aboriginal rights, environmental factors or overseas ownership, the Government did not make those resources available to other nations? In particular, have Australian officials, such as the former Chairman of the Australian Atomic Energy Commission, ever reported that they have been threatened by senior Japanese officials that if their country could not get uranium they would be entitled to come and get it?

Mr PEACOCK—There is an appropriate time for an announcement to be made on such policies. Question time is not the appropriate time. Nevertheless, I remind the Leader of the Opposition of his own words. I refer to a speech by the Honourable E. G. Whitlam on 30 September 1974—the extraordinary speech to the General Assembly—as published in the Australian Government Digest. He said:

There is no place in our thinking for 'economic nationalism' in its crudest sense ... Australia recognises its duty to co-operate with such nations in obtaining fair and reasonable return for our products. And we are co-operating. Equally however we in Australia accept our responsibility to reassure countries which depend upon our resources that they shall have steady, secure access to those resources at fair prices.

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for giving me the opportunity to remind him and the House of his words.

PUBLIC SERVICE APPOINTMENTS

Mr SAINSbury—My question is addressed to the Prime Minister. Has the Prime Minister seen reports in the National Times, the Sunday Press and the newsletter Inside Canberra suggesting that major changes are to be made in senior positions in the Public Service affecting the Treasury, his own Department and the Department of Foreign Affairs? Are those reports correct?

Mr MALCOLM FRASER—Since my return from New Zealand reports or rumours in relation to this matter have been running around the Press Gallery. A number of journalists—in a proper sense—approached my Press Secretary who was able to assure them that the reports were completely and absolutely without foundation, only damaging and could, on occasions, be hurtful to the individuals involved. I am advised that the particular journalists who wrote those stories did not check with my Press Secretary. If they had, they would have been told of the truth.

GROWTH CENTRE: ALBURY-WODONGA

Mr UREN—Is the Prime Minister aware of Sir John Overall’s report on the Albury-Wodonga growth centre? If so, does he agree that the growth centre is of national significance, should have not only the support of his Government as a national endeavour but also should have the Prime Minister’s personal backing?

Mr MALCOLM FRASER—There are many matters of national significance in Australia which this Government will recognise. What happens in Albury-Wodonga is, of course, of great significance. We make decisions. We are advised by certain people. The Government, however, will make its own decisions.

BEEF EXPORTS

Mr CORBETT—The Minister for Overseas Trade will recall my asking him recently about the progress in negotiations with the United
States concerning Australia's beef shipments for 1976. Have these negotiations been finalised? If so, what was the outcome in view of the fact that the beef industry is so urgently needing to know the full circumstances regarding beef exports in the near future and for the continuing beef season?

Mr ANTHONY—Negotiations were finalised yesterday between the American Administration and exporting countries. It is unfortunate that voluntary restraints are continuing to be applied this year, as they were last year. The figure with which we will start is substantially higher than that with which we started last year. In fact, the figure is 7700 tons greater than that for last year. Although we are disappointed that it is not even greater, it is certainly an improvement on last year's figure. It is not fitting that the Australian Broadcasting Commission should report this morning that it was very disappointing that we got such a poor deal and that the figure was lower than that applying to actual exports to the United States last year.

What will be the eventual outcome for the year is anybody's guess, but the fairly normal practice which is followed is that shortfall is redistributed to Australia. If we get a shortfall similar to that which we have had in previous years our total exports to the United States will be well in excess of what they were last year.

INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES

Mr KEITH JOHNSON—Is the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations aware that as of Friday of last week members of the Transport Workers Union of Australia employed to service domestic airlines, members of the Storemen and Packers Union employed in some wool stores, nurses in New South Wales, members of the Storemen and Packers Union employed by drug suppliers and a large retail store in New South Wales, members of the Australian Meat Industry Employees Union supplying supermarkets in Sydney, train guards in New South Wales, brewery workers in Darwin, workers in the Vehicle Builders Employees Federation of Australia and the Amalgamated Metal Workers Union at the General Motors-Holden's Pty Ltd plant in South Australia, employees at soft drink plants in Perth and members of the Municipal Officers' Association of Australia in Western Australia employed by the State Energy Commission were either on strike or were threatening strike action? Will he now tell the House what action the Government will take to honour its pre-election statement that less time would be lost through industrial action with a Liberal-National Country Party coalition Government?

Mr SPEAKER—Order! The question inquires into a matter of policy. I shall leave it to the Minister to decide whether he will proceed to give an answer.

Mr STREET—I cannot vouch for all of the dismeanours which the honourable member for Bourke has outlined, but if he is satisfied that they are all in progress at the present time, I accept that they are. Many of the strikes to which the honourable gentleman refers are in clear breach of awards. In one instance at least—that involving the Storemen and Packers Union and the wool bale dispute—it is in clear breach of an agreement which was signed by the Australian Council of Trade Unions, to which the ACTU was a party, and to which the union, brokers and other people were also parties. That dispute has succeeded in tying up about $100m worth of Australian wool. It has delayed payments to growers and has threatened Australia's reputation as a reliable trading partner.

I cannot remember all the disputes the honourable gentleman referred to but in relation to the Transport Workers Union and the airlines dispute I am advised that the members of that union will be back at work from midnight tonight and that the question has been referred to the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission, the proper body to hear disputes of that kind. If the honourable member would like advice on what action the Government has taken in some of the other disputes he mentioned I would be happy to provide it although I am not sure whether or not he wants it. If he does want information on action that the Government has taken I am offering to provide it to him, where I can. That is all. The Government will be considering the wider question of policy in the course of this year.

INVITATION TO ARCHBISHOP MAKARIOS

Mr JULL—Has the Minister for Foreign Affairs completed the review of the outstanding invitations extended to overseas leaders which were left by the previous Government? In particular, has the Minister been able to give any further consideration to the visit to Australia by Archbishop Makarios?

Mr E. G. Whitlam—Hear, hear!

Mr PEACOCK—I am glad for the endorsement and I hope it will happen daily.

Mr Whitlam—Bless you.
Mr PEACOCK—Thank you. I have not quite finalised the review of the outstanding invitations to which I referred last week. However I emphasise that there was no question of cancelling the invitation to the President of Cyprus. As I recall the situation, I emphasised last week our hope that it would prove possible to arrange a visit at a later date. I am pleased to say that should a time be found which is mutually convenient the Government would welcome a visit by Archbishop Makarios before the end of this calendar year; if not, early in the new year would certainly be satisfactory from our point of view. Accordingly I have instructed officials to contact the President’s officials and advise him of the Government’s attitude. I hope he might be able to visit Australia later this year.

GROWTH CENTRE:
ALBURY-WODONGA

Mr UREN—My question, directed to the Deputy Prime Minister, is supplementary to that which I asked the Prime Minister. Will the Deputy Prime Minister honour his election promise on Albury-Wodonga and ensure that the Albury-Wodonga growth centre is aided by continued Commonwealth involvement? Will he urge his colleagues to introduce the proposed Australian Government Public Service transfer program as well as urging them to establish a university in Albury-Wodonga in 1978-79, these being particular commitments he made to the people of Albury-Wodonga during the recent Federal election campaign?

Mr ANTHONY—It seems that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition enjoys putting his own interpretation on statements I might have made during the course of the campaign. It is rather flattering to know that he studies my statements so closely. Of course I am a great believer in growth centres, I would like to see them continue and will do what I can to see that they continue, but all these things must be measured against the total financial situation of a government and this Government will have to do that. As regards a university, during the course of the campaign I said in Albury-Wodonga that it was an ideal place for an open university. A site had been chosen and planning had been undertaken. I hope that in the course of time an open university will be established there.

FEDERALISM

Mr PETER JOHNSON—I address my question to the Prime Minister. Has the Leader of the Opposition in New South Wales made statements that would indicate non-co-operation with the Federal Government’s federalism policy?

Mr MALCOLM FRASER—The Leader of the Opposition in New South Wales has certainly indicated in statements that he would not want to accept the responsibility that our federalism policy would make available to State Premiers. In other words, he wants to continue the circumstance in which he would be able continually to blame the Federal Government for his own mistakes. I do not think that it is going to matter very much because he is not going to get a chance to do that at any time. In addition, of course, it is worth remembering that in a famous—if it can be called that—Chifley Memorial Lecture, titled The Constitution v. Labor, by the present Leader of the Opposition in this House, the present Leader of the Opposition in this House said:

Much can be achieved by Labor members of the State Parliaments in effectuating Labor’s aims of more effective powers for the National Parliament and for local government. Their role—

That is the role of State Labor politicians—

to bring about their own dissolution.

I think one of the interesting things that is going to be seen in New South Wales in forthcoming months, or years or whatever it may be, is the extent to which Mr Wran seeks to dissociate himself from this Iraqi Leader of the Opposition.

MINING ON ABORIGINAL LANDS

Mr E. G. WHITLAM—My question, which is directed to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, arises from the Minister’s statement that prospecting and mining can be carried out on traditional Aboriginal lands against the wishes of the Aboriginal people if there are appropriate circumstances and if it is in the national interest to do so. I ask the Minister: Will he assure the House that the safeguards provided for the rights of Aboriginal people will be at least those proposed in the Aboriginal Land (Northern Territory) Bill 1975, namely, either the joint consent of the Minister and of a land council representing the Aboriginal people to the granting of the mining interest, or the declaration by the Governor-General, by proclamation, that it is in the national interest that such a grant be made, with this Parliament having the right to disallow the proclamation?

Mr VINER—This is a matter of policy which I have under consideration at the moment. I have had a great number of consultations with a great number of people and there will be a submission going forward to the Government on this matter.

I can, however, assure the honourable gentleman
and the House that whatever form the legislation takes there will be adequate protection for the interests of the Aboriginal people.

**MOTOR VEHICLES: LEAD EMISSIONS**

Mr GOODLUCK—Is the Minister for Health aware of the article in this morning's Press in which it is alleged that metropolitan dwellers, especially those connected with motor vehicle transport, are exposed to hazard due to high levels of lead in their bodies? What assurance can the Minister give the House that adequate steps are being taken to protect the health of persons in metropolitan areas from this lead hazard?

Mr HUNT—I can well understand the honourable member for Franklin's interest in this matter, as he is a former President of the Australian Automobile Chamber of Commerce. I know he has been very interested in the problem for some time. I can assure him that both my Department and the National Health and Medical Research Council have for some years been aware of the possible health hazards from lead in metropolitan areas. The hazard referred to in the Press article pertained mainly to lead absorbed from petrol or motor vehicle emissions.

The Health and Medical Research Council made 2 recommendations, one in May and one in November 1973, specifically related to lead. One was in relation to the biological effects of lead; the other recommended maximum lead levels in petrol. Furthermore, I understand that the Australian Environment Council considered lead emissions in November 1973 and recommended similar but not identical standards requiring progressive reduction in lead content of petrol over several years. In New South Wales, for instance, the progressive State Government introduced legislation, to become operative as from 1 January 1975, to try to overcome the problem. The honourable member for Franklin and other honourable members can be assured that the National Health and Medical Research Council, the Department of Health and a great number of other bodies have been working towards trying to achieve standardisation in legislation to ensure that lead does not injure health any more than cannot be avoided.

**CLOSURE OF AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY IN LEBANON**

Mr STEWART—My question is addressed to the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. I refer to the answer given by the Minister to the honourable member for Sydney on Wednesday last on the subject of Lebanese immigrants. I ask why the Minister did not inform the House of the imminent closure of the Australian Embassy in Lebanon. Was his action deliberate or inadvertent? Was the closure decision made by him, by another Minister or by some official? If he did not know of the closure of the Embassy as late as last Wednesday, can this be taken as an indication of a gross lack of communication between Ministers and departments? Most importantly, what action does the Minister or the Government now intend to take to have processed all immigration applications from the war-torn country of Lebanon?

Mr MacKELLAR—When I gave my answer in the House to the honourable member for Sydney last week I did not have information that the Embassy in Lebanon was about to be closed down or would be closed down. I informed the House at that time that the Embassy had moved from its official quarters to a hotel in the middle of Beirut and that the persons dealing with the immigration inquiries there were doing so at some considerable risk to themselves. I want to make it quite clear to the House and to all those people of Lebanese extraction that of course I have the utmost sympathy for those people who are waiting to have processed their applications for migration of relatives to Australia. This has been a difficult situation. We have sought to do everything in our power to give priority to spouses, dependent parents and of course children of Australian residents of Lebanese extraction. There was certainly no misleading of the House by my answer last week. I was informed of the closing down of the Embassy on Sunday last. As to those people who manage to leave Lebanon whilst these present troubles continue, should they be able to reach Australian posts they will be able to make application to come to Australia. Again, priority will be given to those who have close relatives within Australia. However, the broader question is being considered by my Department at the moment and I will be placing a submission before the Government in the very near future.

**COST OF NAVY FRIGATES**

Mr MARTYR—Has the attention of the Minister for Defence been drawn to reports in the Australian newspaper dated 13 March and the Sydney Sun newspaper of 25 March of this year that the costs of the two FFG frigates for the Royal Australian Navy have soared to $500m—an increase of $170m—since his announcement of about a month ago? The Australian report went on to say that the order for the ships—
Mr SPEAKER—Order! The honourable gentleman will be out of order if he quotes the newspaper reports. I think he has based his question well enough to proceed.

Mr MARTYR—Will the Minister inform the House whether these reports are true?

Mr KILLEN—Yes, my attention was drawn to the 2 reports to which the honourable gentleman referred. When I announced the Government’s decision regarding the patrol frigates in February of this year I used a figure of $330m. As presently advised, I see no reason to modify that figure in any shape or form. But I make it quite clear to the House that the future has a measure of uncertainty about it. This is particularly so with respect to inflation. That is the reason why the Government led by the right honourable the Prime Minister takes such a stern view towards inflation. If I may illustrate the point, I can recall a speech having been made some 3 years ago by the honourable member for Melbourne Ports. He said that if a rate of inflation of 13 per cent a year were to continue to the turn of the century, it would mean that a modest cottage costing $20,000 in 1973 would cost $1m by the year 2000. If I may say so, that was a splendid piece of preaching. The response from those around him was dismal. That is the reason why the Treasurer, the Prime Minister and those of us who sit in the Government with the Prime Minister are determined to bring inflation under control.

EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES

Mr ARMITAGE—I direct my question to the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations. I preface it by pointing out, as an example, that the figures of the Commonwealth Employment Service offices which cover my electorate show a total unemployment as at the end of February of 7655 people whereas as at the end of June last year, when the Regional Employment Development scheme ceased, the figure was 6295 people. I therefore ask: Has the Government given consideration to the introduction of a scheme, such as the RED scheme, which would provide employment for unemployed people on projects of worthwhile value and enable them to do something useful for the community, instead of continuing the wasteful exercise of maintaining them on unemployment relief?

Mr STREET—The figures quoted by the honourable member for his electorate in June last year and last month, of course, do not necessarily reflect the cessation of the Regional Employment Development scheme. The difference between the figures could be due to factors other than that. The administration of the RED scheme under the previous Government was nothing short of a disaster. The previous Government budgeted for $135m for the financial year 1975-76. In September, just about a month after the Budget was presented, the previous Government realised that it had either spent or committed all the money for which it had budgeted for the financial year. As a result, some 4000 projects which had been put forward and which met the criteria established by the previous Government had to be cancelled. With respect to some 900 projects which had been approved, as a result of the previous Government’s poor administration that approval had to be withdrawn, even though many sponsors of projects had spent money in assembling materials and so on prior to labour being engaged. As a result of all this maladministration the previous Government had to cancel any further involvement in the RED scheme and it announced its winding-down as from about September or October last year.

With this record in mind, quite clearly the present Government would not wish to be involved in something of equally disastrous proportions. As far as employment-creating schemes are concerned, the Government will have to operate within the financial constraints imposed on it by a record deficit of $7,000m accumulated in 2 years of Labor government.

DRUG SMUGGLING

Mr SHIPTON—I ask the Minister for Business and Consumer Affairs a question concerning a customs and narcotics matter. Is the Minister aware of the recent discovery on a Victorian beach of a suitcase containing drugs estimated to be worth in excess of $50,000? Does the Minister have evidence that smuggling is occurring on the Victorian and New South Wales coasts? Is adequate surveillance, including naval patrols, taking place to see that smuggling does not occur?

Mr HOWARD—I am aware of such an occurrence. I am advised that during the past 9 months there have been 2 similar occurrences—one, I think, off the Western Australian coast and one, I think, off the New South Wales coast near Newcastle. The investigations which followed the discovery to which the honourable gentleman referred revealed a considerable quantity of cannabis. The Bureau of Customs, in conjunction with the Department of Defence, has maintained a significant surveillance, both by air and by sea,
of the coastline to prevent this type of occurrence. I am advised that during the past 14 days two such surveillance exercises have been carried out with the co-operation of the Department of Defence.

**FILM AND TELEVISION SCHOOL**

Mr E. G. WHITLAM—Since the Prime Minister administers the Film and Television School Act, I ask him: Why has the position of chairman of the school been left vacant for nearly 5 months? Why has the Government not either reappointed the foundation chairman of the school, whose period of office actually expired on 11 November last, or appointed a new chairman? Is Sir Henry Bland investigating the merger of the school with some other institution?

Mr MALCOLM FRASER—It is only a short while ago that I visited the Film and Television School. I was impressed by what the school is doing. I think it is a very worthwhile addition to activity in Australia and its graduates ought to be able to contribute significantly to the quality of film and television making in Australia. The particular matter that the honourable gentleman has mentioned is under consideration. Sir Henry Bland is looking at a wide number of areas of Government activity but, as has been indicated, matters of importance to the nation certainly will be continued at viable and proper levels.

**URANIUM**

Mr O'KEEFE—I direct my question to the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for National Resources and Minister for Overseas Trade. It has been reported that Japan is anxious to purchase Australian uranium and that an early meeting with uranium producers is being sought by that country. Can the Minister state the Government's policy on the export of uranium to Japan and where the meeting with Japanese officials will take place? Are supplies of uranium in this country required for power generating and industry purposes?

Mr ANTHONY—Prospective uranium project developers are free to talk with prospective purchasers of uranium around the world but nothing can be finalised until the Fox committee reports on its environmental inquiry. It is known that there will be a relatively limited market up to 1980, which is about the first period when any production could come from these projects, and that the demand will increase up to 1985. Various organisations around the world have indicated a demand up to 1980 ranging from zero to a slight increase on their present requirements but most organisations show that up to 1985 there will be a quite substantial demand.

If Australia's uranium projects are developed those demand figures mean that the projects would need to be conducted in an orderly manner so that the world market would not be over-supplied. At the moment the price of uranium is considerably higher than it was a few years ago. Spot sales are being made for as high as $40 a pound, and to over-supply the market naturally would depress prices. So we want to try to bring on projects which will maintain a fair and reasonable price for producers. Specific developments in this area will depend upon the results of the Fox inquiry and until those are received I do not think the Government will make any firm policy statements.

**AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY IN BEIRUT**

Mr MARTIN—My question is directed to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. When did the Australian Embassy at Beirut in Lebanon close and cease operations in that country? Was there any lack of liaison between the Minister and the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs in regard to notification of the closure? What discussions, if any, were held between the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs in regard to the closure? In view of the closure of the embassy at Beirut, what steps are being taken to protect young Australian children who are temporarily residing in Lebanon with grandparents or other relatives?

Mr PEACOCK—Firstly, the Embassy was closed last Sunday, 28 March. Secondly, there was no lack of liaison either between myself and the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs or between my department and his department.

Mr Stewart—Why did he not know on that day?

Mr PEACOCK—Why did he not know about it? That just reveals your understanding of the matter. As I recall, the question was asked earlier in the week. My recollection also advises me that in fact the cable from the Chargé was received by me either on Thursday or Friday recommending that the Embassy be now closed. The decision was then taken on Friday subject to his latest assessment on the Sunday when he advised that it be closed on the Sunday, and we left the final decision to the Chargé because he was the man on the ground. We do not believe in controlling all matters from Canberra. That decision was taken then and my colleague, the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, was advised. In
regard to the fourth part of the question, I would advise that a general warning has been issued continuously to Australian citizens in the Lebanon since December last year. They are well aware of the dangers. To sum it up, the Embassy was temporarily closed on Sunday, 28 March, because of the fighting in Beirut. Members of the staff of the Embassy, as would be well known, had been facing very real personal danger for a long period of time and this obviously reached an unacceptable level last week when heavy artillery began bombarding the suburb in which our people lived and worked. I want to say how much I have appreciated the valuable work carried out by the staff of the Embassy under the most trying and demanding of circumstances. To seek to allege that there are differences between me and the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs would just not stand up.

Mr Stewart—It is everywhere.

Mr PEACOCK—Oh no, you are still living in 1975. The Government has changed, my friend, since then. We speak with one voice and we act with one voice. We were in close co-operation over this matter. I think that this answer adequately deals with the charge that there was no liaison. It certainly ought to be borne in mind that as this matter was under continuous review from the time when the Embassy was moved—my colleague the Minister referred to this last week—from its normal site to a hotel site we have been not only keeping it under review but also warning the general population. This one will not just run if honourable members oppose seek to pursue this.

IMMIGRATION APPLICATIONS FROM LEBANESE NATIONALS

Mr ABEL—In directing my question to the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs I preface it by complimenting him on the assistance I have had from him and his Department in processing applications for immigration to Australia from Lebanese nationals. Will the Minister advise how many applications for migration to Australia from Lebanese residents were approved by the previous Government and then cancelled due to the economic and unemployment crises caused by Labor’s bungling and mismanagement? How many applications for migration to Australia from Lebanese nationals were refused by the previous Government?

Mr MacKELLAR—Not surprisingly, I do not carry in my head the figures that the honourable member has asked for but I will take a great deal of pleasure in finding them out and communicating them to him. I would like to point out, in view of the questions which have been asked in the House today, that as soon as I arrived in Canberra yesterday I received a telephone call from the Ambassador for Lebanon in Australia. I received him yesterday afternoon and spent quite some time with him discussing the situation in the Lebanon and what we may be able to do in terms of looking after those people who may decide to leave that country. I would reiterate my sorrow that this situation has come about because I do understand the very real fears that a great number of people in Australia do hold for their relatives in that war torn country.

URANIUM

Mr CONNOR—I direct a question to the Minister for National Resources. How does he reconcile his answer to the honourable member for Paterson with the statement which he made last night apprehending aggression in respect of the sale of Australian resources of uranium? When did he first form the opinion that there was a possibility of aggression? From what countries will it come? Does he include amongst them Japan with its constitutional restrictions on the possession of atomic weapons? Has he considered the inhibiting effect that such a craven, low-postured approach will have in the future marketing of uranium on Australia’s ability to secure proper world parity prices on proper conditions?

Mr ANTHONY—The question is a bit hard to follow. It is a little confusing when the honourable member ties up prices with aggression and what have you. My statement last night related to Australia’s huge resources of raw materials, particularly uranium. I pointed out that we have a responsibility to mankind to see that these are shared, at the same time looking after Australia’s own national interests in ensuring that we get a fair and adequate price and also that there are adequate supplies to meet our own needs. But if we take a stance that we will not develop these resources, that we will hoard them, that we will leave them in the ground while the world is crying out for energy supplies to maintain its standard of living, to develop, to feed, to clothe and to house its people we will not be able to face the rest of mankind, and ultimately we will reach a situation of great tenseness between countries. Countries would start looking to Australia and wondering what we were going to do about the position. I am not talking about today or tomorrow but, in the case of uranium, I am talking about a decade or two from now.
We know that by the year 2000 more than 50 per cent of the world's power generation will come from uranium fuel unless other sources of energy are found. In the meantime, no other sources of energy are known. Therefore we have a responsibility to see that uranium is developed sensibly and responsibly, meeting all the safeguard requirements and not allowing it to get into the hands of people with no regard for the proprieties of developing a strategic raw material which can be used for military purposes. I am pleased to see that the world is moving to a stage of enforcing rules and bringing down regulations to see that this material does not get into the wrong hands and that all members of the human family get the benefit of it as well as protecting themselves.

NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Dr CASS—My question is directed to the Minister representing the Minister for Environment, Housing and Community Development. When will the National Parks and Wildlife Service be able to take up the responsibilities recommended for a national body by the House of Representatives Select Committee on Wildlife Conservation established in 1970 and provided for in the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974?

Mr MACKELLAR—The question requires a detailed answer. I will make sure that it is referred directly to the Minister and I will seek to have him refer the answer to the honourable gentleman.

NIMMO COMMISSION REPORT

Mr HODGMAN—In view of recent Press reports which have appeared in Tasmania, will the Minister for Transport please make it quite clear that the entire Nimmo report is not now official Government policy. Secondly, will he indicate whether the early implementation of freight equalisation legislation is still a major priority of the Government?

Mr NIXON—The Nimmo Commission was established by the previous Government on its election to office, following its extravagant promises prior to 1972 to solve the Tasmanian transport problems. The previous Government looked to the Nimmo Commission as a means of finding the answers. During its 3-year life, while awaiting the Nimmo report, it increased freight rates by some 65 per cent, which did not help its cause in Tasmania. The Nimmo Commission's report contains some 300 pages. It is quite complex. I was fascinated by the immediate response from the Tasmanian Government and many people in Tasmania—comments that it ought to be shelved or thrown into the waste paper basket and remarks of that nature. I have not studied the 300 pages of the report in detail but I have looked at the findings and the Government is considering them. We announced a policy of freight equalisation during the course of the election campaign. I will be taking to the Government as soon as practicable a submission on that issue. The other recommendations of the Nimmo Commission are being put to study in order to see what can be made of them. In the meantime, the undertaking which I gave to the Minister for Repatriation about freight rates stands. There will be no change in freight rates until the freight equalisation proposals which I have and which the Government has announced as policy are considered by the Government and proper decisions are taken.

COMMONWEALTH SERUM LABORATORIES COMMISSION

Mr HUNT (Gwydir—Minister for Health)—Pursuant to section 44 of the Commonwealth Serum Laboratories Act 1961-1973, I present the annual report of the Commonwealth Serum Laboratories Commission for the year ended 30 June 1975.

SOCIAL WELFARE COMMISSION

Mr HUNT (Gwydir—Minister for Health)—Pursuant to section 16 (2) of the Social Welfare Commission Act 1973, I present a progress report by the Social Welfare Commission entitled Social Welfare Manpower.

REPORTS BY THE INTERIM ABORIGINAL LAND COMMISSIONER

Mr VINER (Stirling—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs)—For the information of honourable members I present 4 reports by the Interim Aboriginal Land Commissioner. Perhaps I should identify the land in respect of which each of these reports is made. The first concerns land known as Goondal at Emery Point, Darwin. The second is a report of a land claim known as the Kulaluk land claim. The third is on Lot 5027, Town of Darwin, commonly known as the Railway Dam land. The fourth is on a land claim for Supplejack Downs. A reference copy of each of the maps accompanying these reports has been placed in the Parliamentary Library.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr YOUNG (Port Adelaide)—Mr Speaker—

Mr SPEAKER—Does the honourable gentleman claim to have been misrepresented?
Mr YOUNG—Yes, I do. With reference to the misrepresentation, Mr Speaker, I draw upon your experience in the House and ask you perhaps to give some consideration to the way in which the House was used. I draw your attention to the last paragraph on page 1056 of the Hansard of 25 March 1976. The honourable member for Riverina (Mr Sullivan) made the following statement

The honourable member for Port Adelaide (Mr Young) is either ignorant of the facts, an apologist for the Communist Party or he is a member of the Communist Party. Sooner or later he has to come forward and declare his hand.

Normally I do not get involved in the petty statements that might be made by some of the reactionary spokesmen in Australia.

Mr SPEAKER—Order! The honourable gentleman will not debate the matter.

Mr YOUNG—Things said under privilege, of course, can be repeated outside the House. I do not want to deny that I am honourable. I do want to deny that I am ignorant. Most people would say that I am quite an authority on the matter raised by the honourable member for Riverina and that I take a very humanitarian approach to the subject of South East Asia and our involvement in Vietnam. I am not an apologist for the Communist Party; nor am I a member of the Communist Party. Mr Speaker, I ask you to look at such statements which can be made in the House.

Mr SPEAKER—I have had the opportunity to look at the matter. The honourable member for Riverina made the statement while I was in the chair. I did not stop him at that time because the honourable member for Port Adelaide who was also in the chamber made no protest. Since then I have considered it. I have come to the conclusion that the way in which the argument was put did not exhaust the possibilities. In fact there were not just 2 alternative categories into one of which the honourable member for Port Adelaide had to fit. If the point had been made at the time, it would have been proper to call upon the honourable member for Riverina to withdraw. The event having occurred, I do not proceed to that course now; but I make it clear to honourable members that, if they put things as alternatives and if those things are offensive and exhaust the possibilities, I will rule them unparliamentary and ask for them to be withdrawn.

Mr YOUNG—I should just make the point that, as a matter of fact, I was in the House at the time but I did not object because I could not remain in the House to hear the rest of the ravings of the honourable member for Riverina.

Mr SPEAKER—Order! The honourable gentleman will not debate the matter.

Mr YOUNG—that is the reason why I did not take objection. I wanted to look at the full speech and I was expected at the Chinese Embassy for dinner.

POPULATION POLICY
Ministerial Statement

Mr MacKELLAR (Warringah—Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs)—by leave—At a time when we have more than enough economic and social problems to keep us fully occupied, it may seem untimely to ask the Parliament and the Australian people to give some thought to longer term population goals and growth rates, including the desirable size and composition of our population at various stages up to the end of this century. Yet, notwithstanding our immediate problems, we should not bury our heads in the present. There are demographic trends at work which require us to give serious thought to the sort of Australia we wish to see at the beginning of the next century. Demographic events cast their shadows and lights far ahead. Changes in the direction of the present demographic patterns of this nation and of others will largely determine the size and composition of our population for decades ahead.

It took 70 years after 1788 for the Australian population to reach 1 million. The second million took a further 19 years. Our thirteenth million—reached in September 1972—took 4½ years. In the 3½ years since then our population has increased by less than 600 000. In line with the pattern in most other industrialised, developed countries, we are in a period of significant fertility decline. For demographic purposes, fertility is a measure of the actual numbers of children born, not the ability to bear children. Immigration to Australia has also declined dramatically. As a consequence, the rate of increase in our population has dropped considerably.

The most useful measure of fertility is the net reproduction rate. A net reproduction rate of unity will in the long term yield zero population growth. According to the first report of the National Population Inquiry—page 302—if fertility stabilises at around 1975-76 at net reproduction rate = 1 the population to be expected by the end of the year 2001 would be 15.9 million in the absence of immigration and 17.6 million if net immigration averaged 50 000 a year. Taking the higher projected figure, the population would increase by 4 million in the
next 25 years. In the 25 years to June 1975 it grew by 5.2 million.

In these preliminary comments there are two important points to be emphasised. Firstly, on the basis of preliminary birth statistics for 1975, it seems likely that fertility has already fallen to the level producing a net reproduction rate of one and that it is still falling. Secondly, net immigration is currently running at well below 50 000 a year. In 1975-76 the gross migrant intake will probably be just below that figure. Even that figure, however, probably gives a false impression of the overall change in population resulting from migration. For purposes of projection, the National Population Inquiry used ‘the net balance of all arrivals less all departures’ as the total for ‘net migration’—page 259. Using this definition on the basis of provisional and unofficial figures, it appears that there was a net migration loss of about 5000 in calendar year 1975. That is a remarkable situation. I do not know whether it has anything to do with the final year in office of the Labor Government. There has been no other year since 1947 when the net excess of recorded arrivals over departures has been less than 28 000. Indeed in all but 2 years in that period the net migration gain was at least 40 000. I am making this statement on population policy against the background, especially the decline in the net reproduction rate and in net migration to below the level of the assumption which was the basis for the National Population Inquiry’s projection of a population of 17.6 million in the year 2001.

It was in the context of the need for long range perspectives on population and immigration that the Liberal-Country Party Government, on the strong recommendation of the then Minister for Immigration, the Hon. P. R. Lynch, commissioned the National Population Inquiry in 1970. The Inquiry was headed by Professor W. D. Borrie, O.B.E. and inquired into the size, composition and distribution of Australia’s population at various stages up to the year 2001. Honourable members are well aware of the first report of the National Population Inquiry to which I have already referred. It was tabled in this House in February 1975. The report shattered previous expectations of an Australian population in excess of 20 million by the year 2001 and brought to attention a significant fertility decline in Australia.

In so far as Australia has had a population policy in the post-war period it has been in terms of immigration rather than policies designed specifically to increase births to achieve desirable population policy goals. Of the three major population variables—fertility, mortality and external migration—external migration is the only one by which government can directly and significantly influence population. It would be unthinkable, even if it were possible, for government to attempt to manipulate fertility or mortality rates to achieve particular population growth rate targets or to determine the composition of the population. Government policies which influence mortality are posited primarily on the desire to enhance the health, safety and welfare of the community and their effect on population growth is incidental. It would be quite unacceptable for such policies to be used as a means of regulating population growth rates. There seems to be little scope for extending life expectancy significantly so that the mortality variable became a major influence on population trends in the last quarter of this century.

There are people who suggest that Australians should be encouraged to have more children as a substitute for immigration. There is little evidence that human fertility can readily be manipulated by Governments to serve specific goals. In developed countries such measures, where they have been tried, generally have been pro-natalist and have had little, if any, success. According to the National Population Inquiry report: ‘The likely effects of Government measures to encourage or discourage childbearing cannot be anticipated until much more is known about the causes of fertility changes’ (NPI report page 726 18.39). It must be doubtful whether there would be acceptable and feasible means whereby an Australian Government could seek to increase fertility even if it were the community view that our natural population growth rate was too low.

Therefore, external immigration will continue to be the only major instrument available to government to influence the level and composition of our population. We have to recognise that the population factor is a key element in most government policy decisions. This applies both to policies involving government services to the Australian people, such as education or social welfare, and to policies in which population is treated as a resource, such as the gearing of manpower to economic development.

The importance of population considerations becomes apparent when one examines specific areas of policy. For example, if Australia’s teacher training programs are to meet but not exceed future schooling needs, likely future school enrolments at the various levels must be known. Future demands for obstetric and geriatric medical facilities and personnel will depend
heavily on the age composition of the future Australian population. The volume and nature of investment in both the public sector and private enterprise are linked with the expected demand for the services of goods to be provided through such investment and the volume and composition of such demand are dependent on the size and composition of the future population.

Urban development planning by State and local governments and any regional growth centre policies introduced or continued by State and Commonwealth governments are other examples. These must be closely geared to future population developments. If not, we court the serious risk either of massive, wasteful investment in providing capital works well beyond the needs of future populations or inappropriate to those populations; or of serious shortfalls in infra-structure to service the population of the future. The range of examples is very extensive but those I have mentioned provide an indication of how vital, far-reaching and economically significant the population variable is to policy making for all levels of government and private enterprise associated with physical and human resource allocation and development.

Some aspects of our demographic future can be predicted with confidence. For example, the number of people in Australia aged over 20 years in 20 years' time, or aged over 5 years in five years' time, can be determined today with sufficient accuracy for most of the purposes of policy formulation and implementation. The same is true, in general, for numbers of aged people. In the case of those developments which depend on trends in fertility, however, knowledge at this stage is insufficient to predict future birth levels with certainty. What can be done is to project such levels on the basis of the trends in fertility already evident.

The decline in the number of births recorded in Australia in each year since 1971 is now generally accepted as the continuation of a long-standing decline in family size, not so clearly evident before 1971 because of the intervention of such factors as soaring rates of marriage. In some quarters it has been suggested that the decline in fertility since 1971 is a temporary phenomenon due largely to a recent marked change in attitudes towards starting families. The argument is that couples have deferred the birth of their first child for several years, perhaps in response to economic circumstances or to changed attitudes towards women working. While there is some evidence of deferment of first births in some families, this in itself seems to have been only a minor factor in the severe fall in fertility since 1971. What this argument overlooks is the long-standing decline in completed family size in Australia from an average of over 6 children in the 1880s to about three in the 1940s and to below three more recently.

Moreover, there has tended to be a lag between demographic trends in comparable countries overseas and those in Australia. Significant fertility decline is continuing in most developed countries overseas. In Western Europe, England and Wales, Scotland, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland to name only some, are experiencing high rates of marriage, yet fertility is declining. All of these countries have a net reproduction rate close to, or below, unity and still falling. Italy is just outside that situation. Outside Western Europe, the United States is in the same category as the list of countries I have mentioned and Canada is just outside. According to a recent report of the Economic Commission for Europe, if these recent trends were to continue indefinitely, it is an extreme though not unreasonable conclusion that by the year 2030 quite rapid declines in population would have set in in all major regions of Europe.

For Australia there are two main points to be gathered from current demographic trends in other developed countries. The first is that we face further declines in fertility. The second is that the rate of population growth in most of our traditional source countries for immigration is decreasing and, if current trends continue, will do so to a much greater degree from early in the next century. This second point should not be put too high. There is considerable potential for further migration from most of these countries, at least for the next 2 decades.

The first report of the National Population Inquiry provides insights into the likely path our population will take up until the year 2001, given certain assumptions. What we now need to consider is whether Australia's projected population growth, including its likely composition, is appropriate to national objectives. If not, what should it be and why and how are we going to achieve any population goals we set ourselves? What population goals should immigration be directed towards in the medium and long term?

The first dimension of what should be encompassed within a national population strategy is the constant monitoring of demographic trends. This would involve the analysis and interpretation of their apparent implications for the future and ensuring that this information is available to
policy and decision makers, inside and outside government. That is a major developing task of the Population Policy and Research Unit of my Department working in close association with the Australian Bureau of Statistics and other agencies. This first dimension is a passive one to the extent that it accepts demographic trends as given, and attempts to adjust other programs and policies accordingly.

There can be a second, active dimension to a population strategy. This involves making decisions about desirable growth rates and taking action to achieve them. A precedent is the 2 per cent population growth rate policy following the Second World War and the introduction of annual immigration programs. Australia's difficulties in defending itself during that war and the need for manpower to encourage and support industrial and economic expansion combined to produce a national consensus that Australia needed a much larger population. The agreed policy was that Australia's population should increase by an average of 2 per cent per annum, approximately 1 per cent resulting from natural increase and the balance from immigration. The 2 per cent population growth rate policy was consistently exceeded in the period 1948-49 to 1960-61.

One only has to consider that since 1945 some 3.3 million migrants have come to Australia and that one person in five in this country is a migrant to appreciate the impact of post-war immigration. It has supplemented shortfalls in our nation's age structure, particularly in the working ages, and has been an important factor in the youthful age structure we have in Australia today. If we include the children born to migrants after arrival, some 3.7 million of the total 6.2 million increase in Australia's population since World War II is due directly to migrants. It is almost universally agreed that the immigration program has been of enormous benefit to Australia. This is a tribute to our massive development potential, the good sense of Australian-born people and migrants in avoiding community tensions and the industry of our migrants. There have been pressures on the infrastructures of our major cities and there have been ethnic problems of very minor dimensions, in comparison with the comparable problems of many other countries. This situation was reached without scientific assessment of the implications of pursuing and achieving the high rates of population growth of the post-war years.

I want now to pose some of the issues involved in developing a future population policy strategy for Australia. It is no longer acceptable to set a figure virtually arbitrarily as a rate of future population growth and then use it as the basis of a population policy. We are a larger and more diverse nation than the one which set out on the large-scale post-war immigration program.

One possibility is to do nothing. There is a body of opinion which sees population growth as unnecessary and, indeed, undesirable. There are groups who see our standard of living rising by upgrading the skills of our work force and developing our natural resources without the assistance of further immigration or even population growth. One of the inevitable consequences of that approach is, if present fertility and mortality trends continue, that our population will age. In 1973 the proportion of our population aged 65 and over was 8.4 per cent. Assuming a constant net reproduction rate of 1 from 1975-76 on, a substantial increase in the retired component of society can be expected in 2001. With no migration, 10.31 per cent would be in the 65-plus age group. This means that the proportion of our population of retirement age who are dependent on those of working age would increase by one quarter. Far from improving our standard of living and improving the quality of life, this approach with its result of an ageing population will require the transfer of resources away from education and training and investment in productive processes to the needs of a proportionately increasing population of aged persons.

In almost all conceivable circumstances a net migration gain has the effect of increasing the proportion of the population below the age of 65. If the community sees some cause for concern in an ageing population, it may even be desirable to direct immigration in such a way as deliberately to have a 'younging' effect on the population—for example by lowering the general age eligibility limits or by giving preference to younger applicants.

Another related argument is that with the acute population pressures in many parts of the world, Australia should not be increasing its own population. This assumes that increases in Australia's population will have a significant impact on the rate of increase in the world's population or that what we do will be an example for more populous countries. Such assumptions are so unreal that they do not require close study. Nobody can reasonably argue that there is any prospect that Australia itself will become over-populated even in the long-term. On the other hand, however concerned we may be about the population problems of other countries, these are problems to be resolved by those
countries and peoples themselves. Our example, and even massive immigration from them, will not have any significant effect on the scale of their problems. It is not my purpose to advocate a particular set of objectives at this stage. For its part, the Government maintains its position as stated in its election policy statement on immigration and ethnic affairs:

Immigration is an essential instrument of Australia's population policies and of the broader national strategies and objectives to which those population policies are directed.

That is a commitment to population growth, with immigration as the prime factor in that growth. But—and I emphasise this—it is not a commitment to immigration simply to add to our population without any assessment of the effects of doing so and what is needed to meet those effects.

The Government believes that Australia's population and immigration strategies must not be a numbers game but must have a sound basis which takes account of the medium and longer term implications of various growth options. However, the exact extent of the population growth to be aimed at, and the composition of the increment, are matters on which we require informed advice. They affect our whole community. They determine the future of Australia as a nation into the next century and beyond. In a liberal democracy the views of all levels of Government and of the community should be sought and taken into account in taking such decisions.

In my capacity as Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs with responsibility for matters of population policy, I now announce initiatives which will assist the development of future population policy. My Department is now actively engaged in the analysis of basic statistical data on fertility, mortality and migration and population developments and policies in other countries. Proposals to increase further its capabilities in this regard are receiving consideration. We are fortunate in Australia that through the efficiency of the Australian Bureau of Statistics we have long-standing and detailed statistical series on population and related matters. My Department will work closely with the Australian Bureau of Statistics and other bodies to ensure that changes in demographic patterns are made available for policy and decision makers as soon as they are verified and analysed.

In addition, I have reconstituted the Australian Population and Immigration Council which was originally established in February 1975. The reconstituted Council will advise me on such matters as regular monitoring of, and research into, population change; major developments and research in Australia and overseas concerning population and immigration; the longer term implications of changing patterns of immigration intakes; ways in which future immigration intakes can be planned to complement other policies; and implications of population change for various aspects of resource allocation. The functions of the new Council indicate the importance which the Government attaches to population policies and show its determination to base immigration policies and programs on a range of considerations, including the population objectives to be developed with the assistance of the Council.

A distinguished group of people with wide experience and exceptional personal qualifications has agreed to serve on the Council. I am sure that each will make a valuable contribution to the work of APIC in the years ahead when many vital decisions will need to be made.

I seek leave to incorporate in *Hansard* the names and designations of the members of APIC.

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

*(The document read as follows)—*

The members of the new Council are, in alphabetical order:

- Professor W. D. Borrie—Professor of Demography, Australian National University, and Director of the National Population Inquiry
- Dr Lisa Brodribb—Managing Director, M. Brodribb Pty Ltd, Victoria
- Mr David Cox—Director, International Social Service
- Mr J. A. Gobbo—Lawyer, Melbourne
- Mr R. J. Hawke—President, Australian Council of Trade Unions
- Professor W. P. Hogan—Professor of Economics, University of Sydney
- Mr J. A. Kiosoglous—Scripdiary Magistrate, Juvenile Court, South Australia, and President, Good Neighbour Council, South Australia
- Mr G. Lapaine—Lawyer, Member, Ethnic Communities Council and Good Neighbour Council, N.S.W.
- Professor J. D. B. Miller—Professor of International Relations, Australian National University
- Dr G. M. Neutze—Professorial Fellow and Head Urban Research Unit, Australian National University
- Mr George Polites, M.B.E.—Executive Director, Australian Council of Employers' Federations
- Mr J. F. Rich—Executive General Manager (Finance), and Director, BHP Ltd
- Dr A. Richardson—Reader in Psychology, University of Western Australia
- Mr H. J. Souter, A.M.—Secretary, Australian Council of Trade Unions
Professor R. J. Walsh, O.A., O.B.E., Dean, Faculty of Medicine, University of New South Wales

Mr MacKELLAR—As Chairman of the Council I am gratified that I shall be able to draw on the wide range of experience embodied in its membership. I shall be asking APIC to proceed with preparation of a Green Paper on population and immigration policies. It will provide available data as a basis for informed and logical discussion and canvass policy options, together with arguments for and against particular options. The purposes of the Green Paper are to stimulate interest in, and debate on, vital population issues and objectives; to create a better informed public opinion; and to lead to the development of policies in accord with present day values and foreseeable national needs.

There is not one set of answers or solutions to these issues and questions. It is instructive to compare the recent approaches of Canada and Australia. In the years 1973-74, 1974-75 and 1975-76, the total numbers of settler arrivals in Australia totalled 112 000, 88 000 and it is estimated 50 000 respectively. Total landed immigrants in Canada in the years 1973, 1974 and 1975—the 1975 figures are provisional—were 184 000, 218 000 and 218 000 respectively. During these periods, unemployment in Australia rose from 1.6 per cent in June 1973 to 4.2 per cent in February 1976, seasonally adjusted, and inflation, as measured by the consumer price index, by 14 per cent in the 12 months to the December quarter 1975. In Canada the annual average rate of unemployment in 1973 was 5.6 per cent and in 1975 was 6.4 per cent. Inflation, as measured by the Canadian consumer price index, was 9.5 per cent in the 12 months ending December 1975.

Taking account of the problems of comparing statistical series and the different time periods, it is apparent that the high levels of immigration into Canada during the past 3 years have not had a significant effect on the level of unemployment. On the other hand, Australia has sharply reduced immigration during a period of rapidly increasing unemployment. Over the same period the Canadian inflation rate has been well below the Australian inflation rate. Canada has sought to achieve a consistent approach to population growth and to immigration. The question of consistency in immigration programs is a most important matter for us all to consider.

It has been suggested that resource limitations, especially shortage of water supplies, will severely restrict Australia's capacity to absorb additional population. It is notable, however, that in his study of Australian water resources for the national population inquiry, Professor J. W. Holmes indicated that water supplies would be adequate to support a national population of 280 million. Other studies of resource availability confirm that these do not represent constraints on population growth at any feasible rate in the foreseeable future. There is no doubt, therefore, that Australia has the natural resources, as well as the technological capacity and the political, economic and social structures to enable population increases during the rest of this century of at least the levels of the post-war period.

The constraints on our potential for population growth are not so much those of our natural resources as of the need to ensure a continuing improvement in living and working standards, the avoidance of short-term pressures on our infra-structures, the preservation of the environment, the avoidance of pockets of disadvantaged persons and groups, the need to ensure the retention of a cohesive Australian community with scope for cultural, ethnic and individual diversity and the availability of the sorts of migrants the Australian community requires and wants. There is also the great question of creating new job opportunities in the emerging post-industrial society, though there is evidence that immigration itself helps to create jobs and to generate economic development. Even making full allowance for these constraints, it is the wishes of the community, rather than the potential to absorb population growth, that set the limits on our population objectives.

I accept that this statement does not provide answers or solutions. My intention has been to highlight the questions and issues that we as a nation must consider in determining our population objectives and the means of achieving them. The Government has set in train action to enable full consideration of these issues and questions with the object of setting objectives and developing policies to meet them: I hope that this statement will encourage debate on these matters. I present the following paper:


Motion (by Mr Newman) proposed:

That the House take note of the paper.

Debate (on motion by Mr Innes) adjourned.

STATES GRANTS (FRUIT CANNERIES) BILL 1976

Assent reported.
UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT AND THE WORK TEST

Ministerial Statement

Debate resumed from 23 March, on the following paper presented by Mr Street:

Unemployment benefit and the Work Test—Ministerial Statement, 23 March 1976——

and on motion by Mr Sinclair:

That the House take note of the paper.

Mr WILLIS (Gellibrand) (3.41)—The statement which is the subject of this debate was the second announcement this year by the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations (Mr Street) of alterations to the work test which is applied by employment officers in his Department to determine whether or not an applicant for unemployment benefit is genuinely seeking work. It is clearly a matter which looms large in the minds of the Minister and indeed of the Government. It reflects the Government’s preoccupation with the need to eradicate ‘dole cheats’, as the Minister called them in his Press statement of 16 January, or ‘dole bludgers’, as they have been referred to by the Press and various honourable members opposite.

Let me make it clear at the outset that the Opposition does not support or encourage the process of people ripping off the Government by way of making false claims for unemployment benefit or claiming it whilst they are working or doing all in their power to avoid work of any kind while living off unemployment benefit. But having said that, I want to make it just as clear that we deplore and depurate this Government’s acceptance and encouragement of what we might term the ‘dole bludger syndrome’. In opposition, and now in government, the Liberal Party and the National Country Party have totally accepted the veracity of allegations of large scale attempts by unemployment benefit claimants to defraud the Government—allegations that have been screeched from the headlines of the Press generally, and the Murdoch Press in particular. There is surely no greater example of the need for an effective Press Council to impose ethics and standards of journalism on our newspapers than the reportage by our daily Press of this matter. For the fact is that despite the screaming headlines about dole cheats, the sensational stories about unemployment benefit recipients taking Gold Coast holidays or living in communes in luxurious houses with swimming pools, there is no evidence whatever to substantiate the express or implied allegations that such behaviour was widespread or indeed anything more than very exceptional.

Indeed, what evidence there is about so-called dole cheats indicates that they are an extremely small proportion of the total number of persons receiving unemployment benefit.

Before coming to that, however, I ask the House to note the way in which the dole bludger syndrome arose. Probably it has always existed in the minds of some people who regard the unemployed as shiftless layabouts who could get a job if they really tried, but certainly it received increased currency in 1973 after the Labor Government increased unemployment benefit to the luxurious level of equality with the age and invalid pensions. Previously under Liberal-Country Party Governments, the unemployed received $3 less than the age pension in the case of a single adult and $9.50 less than the age pension in the case of a married couple. In addition to raising unemployment benefit the Labor Government also liberalised the guidelines for interpretation of the work test in 1973, though the main traditional provision remained as before. The changes announced at that time related mainly to treating the unemployed with more compassion than had hitherto been the case.

During 1973 and into 1974 the employment market tightened, vacancies became higher than the number of registered unemployed and labour shortages began to develop. Employers began to complain about labour shortages, and newspapers began to pick up their complaints. Accusations that the unemployed were to choosy and were now content to live on unemployment benefit became prevalent. Typical of the gathering hysteria was the comment by the ‘Modest Member of Parliament’ writing in the Australian Financial Review in August 1973, that as things were now, the ordinary citizen ‘pays extra taxes as bludgers sit on their tails scratching themselves, being paid by mugs like me for doing nothing’. I accept his description of himself in that statement.

The campaign of denigration continued and became an issue in the 1974 election, with the Opposition alleging the existence of vast numbers of dole cheats. All this was perhaps understandable in the circumstances of full employment that prevailed until mid-1974, but that it should have continued as unemployment mushroomed in the latter part of that year and into 1975 is incredible. It therefore says much for the power of the Press that its build-up had been such that at the 1975 election one of the important issues of the campaign was the supposed existence of droves of so-called dole bludgers, despite the fact that there were at that time,
185,000 people on unemployment benefit but only 28,000 registered job vacancies.

One of the most scurrilous episodes in this process of beating up stories on dole cheats was the treatment by the Press of a Department of Social Security survey released in September 1975, which showed that, in one area, of 14,462 unemployment benefit recipients who were investigated 30 per cent were found to be ineligible for benefits. This attracted Press headlines such as 'Dole Cheats' Cheques Stopped' and 'The Great Dole Rip-Off'. However, as the then Minister for Social Security, Senator Wheeldon, said in his Press statement when releasing this survey, the number of people found to be not entitled to the benefit did not mean that people were cheating. Most of these cases occurred because of administrative problems. Such factors accounted for 3753 of the 4451 people found to be ineligible. The remaining 878, who had their benefits lapse for other reasons, included an unspecified number who failed the work test.

If it was assumed, quite unjustifiably, that all of those 878 had failed the work test, they would have represented 6.1 per cent of the total survey. But, further to that, the records show that many of those who have their benefits removed following investigation by the Department of Social Security field officers win them back on appeal. Indeed, from February to September last year 71 per cent of appeals were upheld. So, if we apply that proportion to the 6 per cent we find that less than 2 per cent of those surveyed could be classified as work-shy. Furthermore, the then Minister made it clear that the area surveyed was one where a relatively high number of persons not entitled to benefit was expected to be found, so no conclusions about the national average could be drawn from that survey. The treatment of that survey by the Press, particularly the Murdoch Press, was utterly disgraceful. Mostly the Press ignored all the qualifications in Senator Wheeldon's Press release and completely misled the people as to what the survey showed. When the then Minister explained it fully in answer to a question in the Senate on 9 October last year, the Murdoch Press printed not one word of his answer.

This brief outline of the development of the dole bludger syndrome describes a shameful episode in our history. To sell newspapers or to gain political advantage people in a position to influence members of the public have played on their fears that they as hard workers and substantial taxpayers were being sponged on by lazy ne'er-do-wells or scheming cheats. The accusers never let themselves be dissuaded by the lack of proof of their allegations; nor did they pay any heed to the damage and suffering that their actions caused to the unemployed. The statement of the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations represents a continuance of that policy. The statement is full of implied suggestions of wide scale rip-offs but no facts. On page 1 of the statement the Minister repeats the technique used in his January Press statement announcing the first tightening-up of the work test. He referred to 'the cost to the taxpayer' of unemployment benefit. Does the Government use that terminology in referring to the superphosphate bounty or the investment allowance? Of course it does not. Then, without explanatory comment the Minister raised a number of points that he said should be noted. The same points were contained in his January Press statement. In January he said that these points were not generally realised. I shall go over those points. In January he stated:

In February 1972 about 30 per cent of unemployed registered with the CES received unemployment benefit and this had increased to 70 per cent in February 1976.

There seems to be an implication here that this increase should never have happened and that it proves that people were cheating. There is no mention in this context of the great increase in the level of unemployment over that period and the obvious fact that if there are no jobs the unemployed eventually will apply for unemployment benefit. So, a higher proportion will be on unemployment benefit when unemployment is high. The January Press statement also stated:

About 70 per cent of male recipients at the latest analysis last year were unmarried.

Here again the Minister seems to be implying that unmarried people cheat more than married people do. The Press statement also stated:

Some two-fifths were under 21 years.

Again there is the implication that an unemployed single young person is even more inclined to be work-shy than is an unemployed single adult. The statement also stated:

Three-quarters of them had been on benefit for more than one month.

Again the implication seems to be that the longer the period of unemployment the more evidence there is that no effort is being made to obtain work. If these points are supposed to build a case for toughening the work test, they fail miserably to do so. There is no discussion of other factors, such as the growth of unemployment generally and the especially high level of unemployment amongst the young. In this regard it is relevant to note that the latest survey of unemployment by the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows that in
February the rate of unemployment among persons aged 15 years to 19 years was 13.3 per cent, compared with 3.2 per cent for those aged 20 years and over and 4.5 per cent overall. It is no wonder that there is a high preponderance of young unmarried people receiving unemployment benefit. The fact that there is such a high proportion proves nothing whatsoever about dope bludgers or the like.

The Minister’s statement refers to 112 000 beneficiaries being investigated by the Department of Social Security field officers between May 1975 and January 1976. As a result of these investigations 30 per cent of cases were terminated. The Minister added that there is no suggestion of deception or fraud in every case. This is a colossal deception. The Minister appears to be implying that many of those in the 30 per cent of 112 000—that is, 33 500 people—were cheating; but, in fact, very few people were prosecuted in the period mentioned. Between March and December last year the total number of prosecutions for fraudulent dope claims was only 97. In 1974-75 the total number of such prosecutions was only 67. The Minister’s statement said that in cases where there was blatant misrepresentation a prosecution was considered and in many cases action was taken. Yet the total number of prosecutions in 10 months was less than 100. If we relate all these prosecutions to the 112 000 beneficiaries investigated between May 1975 and January 1976, they amount to less than 0.1 per cent. Surely, then, we are entitled to conclude that the number of people who attempt to defraud the government by falsely claiming unemployment benefit is exceedingly small. The problem is certainly nothing like as serious as the number of persons who are prosecuted each year for defrauding the government by evading income tax. But what publicity is given to that? In the year ended 30 June 1974, 32 800 persons were fined for understatement of income for income tax purposes. In total they understated their incomes by $35m and evaded tax of $15m. Surely this is evidence of a much greater problem of people ripping off the government than is to be found in the area of dope cheats.

Part and parcel of the hysteria about dope cheats has been not only the development of community antagonism towards the unemployed but also the development of hostility towards the Labor Government. By the time of the last election many people must have had the impression that under Labor obtaining unemployment benefit was like taking candy from a baby. This, of course, was anything but the case; but it explains the need of the present Government to toughen up the work test. I ask the House to compare the guidelines used in administering the work test as set down under the Labor Government with those announced by the Minister in January. There is in fact very little difference. The guidelines announced by the Minister in January are remarkably similar to those contained in instructions regarding the unemployment and special benefits No. 2/F/3 issued in May 1974 by the Director-General of Social Security. I seek leave of the House to have those instructions incorporated in Hansard.

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

(The document read as follows)—

2/F/3 CLAIMANTS MUST BE CAPABLE AND WILLING TO WORK

(a) A claimant must be capable of undertaking, and willing to undertake, work of a class which he normally follows or of an equivalent kind,

(b) Where a person is prepared to accept only part-time work, although capable of performing the duties of a full-time position, unemployment benefit should not be paid as the claimant cannot be regarded as satisfactorily fulfilling the requirements of the work test.

(c) Applicants will be considered not to have satisfied the work test if by their own actions they indicate they are not genuinely seeking employment, for example—

(i) they deliberately choose to make themselves unavailable for work by moving to a location where no such work is available;

(ii) they deliberately make themselves unacceptable to employers;

(iii) they seek only occupations for which they are not qualified or which are extremely rare and in which vacancies would rarely, if ever, be available in their area of residence. (There have been reports of people seeking to register for example as a wine taster in Cairns, a poker machine mechanic in Victoria, a hospital orderly where there is no hospital or a customs agent where there is no port or airport).

(iv) they adopt a style of presentation (e.g. dress) which is clearly inappropriate for the employment sought. If such applicants persist in this attitude they are to be referred only to employment to which their presentation is appropriate. However, in order that they may not be subject to undue prejudice by certain employers they are to be given a second opportunity and if they refuse the second referral they will not be accepted as having satisfied the work test.

Mr WILLIS—I thank the House. Thus it appears that at that stage, in respect of the guidelines for the work test, the Government was making a great song and dance about toughening up but was not doing a great deal more than had already applied under Labor, although at that time it also announced that it would reintroduce the postponement provisions of the
Social Security Act which enable the Department to postpone benefit payments where a person is voluntarily unemployed. The Minister assured us that the Government would make greater use of income tax records from the Australian Taxation Office to crack down on cheats. Compare that with the attitude of the Liberal and National Country Parties to the possible use of Medibank records for other purposes.

The latest measures regarding the work test and conditions of eligibility for unemployment benefit announced by the Government represent a substantial change from what was applied by the Labor Government. They indicate the determination of this Government to pursue its vendetta against the unemployed. The measures may overcome some cheating, but they also will have the effect of denying unemployment benefit to people who, in our view, have a right to receive it. School leavers, for instance, who under previous Liberal governments received unemployment benefit from the time they made application, now will be denied the benefit until the school year begins. The Government’s amendment of the ‘suitable work’ definition, to extend the range of employment that can be offered so that a skilled person can be offered a quite unskilled job after 6 weeks, is nothing more than a harassment of the unemployed. It will certainly do nothing to fill up job vacancies. From this provision one would think that the vast numbers of unemployed are skilled people and that comparatively few unskilled people are unemployed. But the fact is that the picture is totally the reverse. The unemployed are overwhelmingly either unskilled or semi-skilled, with precious few vacancies for them.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Jenkins)—Order! The honourable member’s time has expired.

Mr FALCONER (Casey) (3.56)—The honourable member for Gellibrand (Mr Willis) in his blistering speech against the Government mentioned that this is the second occasion on which the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations (Mr Street) has made a statement relating to unemployment benefits. The honourable member omitted to say that the first statement which the Minister made in January was in fact the result of a review which was initiated by the honourable member for Hindmarsh (Mr Clyde Cameron) when he was the Minister for Labour and Immigration in the previous Government. Therefore one wonders why the honourable member for Hindmarsh did not come in for some implied criticism as well. Perhaps that partly explains why he was removed from his office as Minister for Labour and Immigration to another position in the previous Government.

The honourable member for Gellibrand also said that dole cheats are an extremely small percentage of those on unemployment benefits. The Minister has readily conceded that. The Minister in his statement to the House pointed out that the 3 surveys conducted between May 1975 and January 1977 covering 112 000 people showed that about 30 per cent of those receiving benefits were not entitled to do so. This does not mean that all of those people were dole cheats, although some of them were. But the results of the surveys indicate that there is a need for tightening up the administrative procedures to ensure that so many people cannot receive unemployment benefits when they are not entitled to do so. The Minister’s statement is in fact a very moderate one. It is a balanced statement which seeks to tighten up the administrative procedures without in any way disadvantaging those who have some claim to unemployment benefits.

The honourable member for Gellibrand went on to make a number of claims about what the Labor Government had done for the unemployed. But he forgot to mention—and it is strange that he did so—that the Labor Government created most of the unemployment of this country. While we have crocodile tears from honourable members opposite they seem to forget that the last Labor Government during its period of office created the highest level of unemployment since the depression. It implemented, for example, a precipitate, across-the-board tariff cut of 25 per cent which created in decentralised areas major pockets of unemployment which should never have occurred. It never would have occurred had the then Government taken the advice of many of its trade union leaders and practical businessmen who knew exactly what would be the result of those policies. With one stroke of the economic theorist’s pen the Labor Government created drastic unemployment in many areas. It destroyed or crippled large parts of the private sector and discouraged private investment. That is one of the major reasons that many school leavers had difficulty in finding employment at the beginning of this year. Members of the Opposition have criticised every move we have made to try to restore confidence in the business sector and to restore private investment. One would have expected some contrition, some statement of regret from the other side. Instead we heard bluster to hide their own lack of performance in the past.
We on this side of the House concede that we have contributed to unemployment in only one respect. I and other members on this side of the House are proud to say that on 13 December we added to the unemployed a number of redundant Labor politicians. The people, as the share-holders of Australia, recognised that Labor politicians represented a wasteful and unnecessary overhead in an Australia made near bankrupt by their management. That certainly was one of the major reasons for the level of unemployment.

The criticisms made by the honourable member for Gellibrand indicate that he, and I assume other honourable members opposite, have not read the Minister's statement, which was a balanced statement with an eye to reasonable administrative efficiencies and carefully considered safeguards for human rights and dignity. It is part of the continuing process of the evaluation and review of the work test and the associated guidelines. For example, in early 1973 the former Government announced a number of new provisions for the work test and guidelines. In April 1974 the provisions were reviewed, the rules were changed or refined and anomalies were corrected in the light of experience and the circumstances of the time. Another review took place in May 1975 in which again some anomalies were corrected. In that month the honourable member for Hindmarsh, who was the Minister at the time, asked the interdepartmental working party further to examine the work test and guidelines. The changes announced by this Government in January of this year arose out of that very review. So it is not right to compare this Government's actions with the previous Government's actions as if everything was fine under the previous Government and everything is black under this Government. We have seen a continuing review being conducted. It is quite proper that this should happen. The Minister in his statement made in the House last week said that the Government had decided:

The definition of 'suitable work' be amended to allow the CES to extend the range of jobs to which beneficiaries may be referred after they have been in receipt of benefit for a reasonable period;

The honourable member for Gellibrand was not too specific about many of his criticisms. He accused us of trying to create some atmosphere of resentment against so-called dole bludgers. In terms of actually analysing the statement he was light on for facts. I ask the House: What is wrong with the Minister's statement that I have just read out?

Mr Baillieu—There is nothing wrong with it.

Mr FALCONER—As the honourable member for La Trobe says, there is nothing wrong with it at all. It is reasonable to make sure that people who receive unemployment benefits are in fact those who cannot find any other form of suitable employment. The Minister in his statement went on to explain:

In the future, where after a reasonable period it has not been possible for a person to obtain employment in his usual occupation or work of an equivalent kind, the range of suitable jobs to which he or she may be referred will be extended to all which are within the person's capacity and available to him or her even though a change in status or wages may be involved.

What is so terrible about that? If that provision is to be criticised, I point out that many people who have lost a job in fact readily accept other work. They do so because they want the income, they want to keep busy and they do not want to get into a state where they are losing the work habit. They want to keep involved in the work force. In my experience when interviewing many such people I have found that those who are more choosy about the sort of employment they wish to fill are often resented. The people whom I have interviewed felt that in some way those people who are a little more choosy are taking advantage of people who are prepared to accept other forms of work.

There are many benefits to be gained by requiring people to look at alternative forms of employment perhaps beyond their own narrow preferences. They can learn something of other jobs. They can develop new interests which in many cases lead them to take up new occupations. In many cases temporary stop-gap work leads to full-time employment within a company and to a higher position when the employer has seen that the employee can really produce, the goods. In many circumstances there can be advantages in people being required to go back to the grass roots of their profession. For example, a systems analyst can benefit by being required to do some computer programming work. Often people in this profession can get out of touch with the sort of work done by those who have to implement the systems that they design. Similarly an architect can be advantaged by having to do some drafting work from time to time because architects quite often get out of touch with the sort of work that the people under them, the people who have to construct the buildings they design, have to do. So there are many benefits that can flow from this requirement, and it is not reasonable to decry every instance of a person's being required to accept work which perhaps does not accord with his initial rather narrow preferences. I should point out that there
are safeguards in the Minister’s statement. It is not an absolute requirement. The Minister went on to say:

The Government has decided that a period of 6 weeks after registration for employment will constitute a reasonable period.

That is a reasonable period to find work directly within the area of preference specified by that person.

However, this period may be extended up to 3 months in total where to do otherwise would be detrimental to the person finding employment in his usual occupation.

In that circumstance, someone who has been looking actively for work and has had an interview and perhaps been placed on the short list for a job within his area of preference and is going for his final set of interviews in a week or two obviously could put that forward as a reason why he should not be required to take some other form of work. He ought to settle that job application first. I believe that there is ample flexibility in the Minister’s statement to allow people to look around first and canvas the market properly to see if a job is available within their area of personal preference. I instance the example of a woman who came to see me recently. She was a Sri Lankan who had just arrived in the country and her husband had found very good employment. However, this woman wanted a job to take her mind off some personal problems relating to her family in Sri Lanka rather than for economic reasons. She expressed great surprise to me that she was able to go to the Commonwealth Employment Service and be referred to a process working job in a factory which initially she felt was well below the teaching job she had had in Sri Lanka. However, realising that jobs were scarce, she accepted that employment and started work the next Monday on $140 a week. I think that is a highly responsible attitude. Surely it is better for many people to take $140 a week for a job which they may not prefer in the first instance but which does keep them active in the workforce and provide them with a more than adequate income, certainly more than the unemployment benefit.

The Minister in his statement also referred to those who resign voluntarily from their work and then seek other employment. I believe it is reasonable to say that such people should be required to wait for a few weeks before receiving unemployment benefits. After all, a person who resigns from a job in order to seek other employment surely has taken into account that he or she will have to look around for two or three weeks, go to a few interviews, find a few job possibilities and then perhaps wait for another few weeks before having final interviews and arranging a starting date. I believe it is reasonable to say, as the Minister pointed out in his statement, that people who resign their jobs because they feel they would like to try something else, that another job would suit them better or that the circumstances in their present employment do not suit them, do so in the knowledge that in all probability there is going to be a gap of several weeks and they take the decision with that in mind. I do not believe that it represents any hardship on such people to require them to wait 6 weeks before being paid unemployment benefits.

I should refer also to what the Minister had to say about school leavers and the fact that, unless there are special circumstances which can be considered, unemployment benefits will be paid only at the commencement of the new school year. It is one of the facts of life that students before they leave school are advised now to register for unemployment as soon as they leave. Indeed, it is often put around the schools that if a student intends to go back to school the next year he ought to register for unemployment benefits so that he can get the extra money over the holiday period. I believe that we are facing a situation where school leavers are being encouraged to look first to the Government for support and not to their own efforts. The Minister’s statement is a balanced one which prevents that misuse of the system but provides that unemployment benefits can be paid to those who are genuinely seeking work and cannot find it. I will give another example of a school leaver who came to see me who was actively seeking work but if he could not find it, was going to go back to school for another year. When filling out the form provided by the Commonwealth Employment Service, in answer to the question: ‘Will you be going back to school next year?’ he wrote: ‘No, unless I cannot find a job.’ Of course, he was ruled out of unemployment benefit. Friends who he knew full well were going back to school, but had not stated so as honestly as he, had obtained unemployment benefits. He was penalised for telling the truth.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Jenkins)—Order! The honourable member’s time has expired.

Mr HAYDEN (Oxley) (4.10)—The Labor Government did not encourage abuse of unemployment benefits. Indeed, it introduced a number of measures aimed at effectively regulating access to those benefits by people who wished to claim upon them. On the other hand, it
is true that the Labor Government did take humane steps aimed at recognising realistically the very severe problems which arise for people who are unemployed through no fault of their own. I confess freely that a high level of people who are unemployed today in Australia are unemployed through no fault of their own, as generally happens when the business cycle moves down. That is a problem which affects this country in common with most industrialised countries in the world. But it is not terribly crucial to the discussion at this time. The Labor Government did ease conditions somewhat in a more humane way, and the problem that always exercised my mind as Minister for Social Security was that while it is true that some people will abuse entitlements—a very small proportion of people, I might add—any really determined effective effort to clamp down on them by and large does not bring about a greatly improved result in detecting them and bringing them to book for their offences. It tends to discriminate severely against legitimately unemployed people who have a clear need for these sorts of benefits.

This Government is seeking to create a rather nasty atmosphere of intolerance and stigma in relation to unemployment benefits. It is trying to capitalise on a feeling in the community which almost borders on the hysterical about people, especially young people, who draw unemployment benefits. Intolerance is being directed by the rest of the community towards the increasing numbers of people forced into unemployment through no fault of their own. Such people have a great enough sense of stigma, of unpleasantness and unworthiness without the Government generating these fires of intolerance. That is very important because it exposes a degree of immorality conduct on the part of the Government in the light of the action it has taken so far in this area, which I believe exposes it to the most severe condemnation by the public. I assert that, on analysis, there is very little evidence of any significant change in the administration of the work test required by the last Government and by this Government.

The honourable member for Casey (Mr Falconer), who spoke a few moments ago, deliberately sought to restrict in one area the interpretation of the work test outlined by the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations (Mr Street). In this speech the Minister said:

In future, where after a reasonable period it has not been possible for a person to obtain employment in his usual occupation or work of an equivalent kind, the range of suitable jobs to which he or she may be referred will be extended to all which are within the person's capacity and available to him or her even though a change in status or wages may be involved.

The honourable member for Casey restricted that interpretation. He said that an architect may slip down the rung and become a draftsman, but then there is a full stop. Presumably that is the interpretation which can be extended from what he said. Of course, he did not deal with the situation of a skilled toolmaker. Perhaps he has to accept a job as a ditch digger, or does a skilled architect have to accept that job? In any case, the interpretation given to the House by the honourable member for Casey is a modification, and a very significant one, of that given by the Minister. I would like the Government to clear this point up because members of the Government do rush about the countryside giving these rather modified versions before selective audiences responding to what they anticipate are the expectations of their audiences.

Let me deal quickly with the so-called changes which have taken place. The 3 key ones which occurred in January this year affected people who placed themselves in positions where employment prospects were poor, people whose appearance was unacceptable to an employer and people who sought positions for which they were not qualified. The Minister refers in his statement to the need for identity checks—something that is not new—and to the provision that single people under 18 years of age who refuse to travel to take up employment will lose their entitlement to unemployment benefits. He has, he says, expanded the definition of "equivalent work" and he talks about voluntary severance of employment and a 6-weeks obligatory period without unemployment benefits before such benefits are payable. By and large, with some very slight variation, those provisions have applied consistently for years. Let me quote just some sections from the handbook for members of the Department of Social Security as at May 1974, about the work test. Paragraph 2/F/3 reads:

(c) Applicants will be considered not to have satisfied the work test if by their own actions they indicate they are not genuinely seeking employment, for example—

(i) they deliberately choose to make themselves unavailable for work by moving to a location where no such work is available;

(ii) they deliberately make themselves unacceptable to employers;

(iii) they seek only occupations for which they are not qualified or which are extremely rare and in which vacancies would rarely, if ever, be available in their area of residence.

Some illustrations are then given—

(iv) they adopt a style of presentation (e.g. dress) which is clearly inappropriate for the employment sought. If such applicants persist in this attitude they are to be
referred only to employment to which their presentation is appropriate. However, in order that they may not be subject to undue prejudice by certain employers they are to be given a second opportunity and if they refuse the second referral they will not be accepted as having satisfied the work test.

I challenge the relevant Ministers—the Minister for Social Security (Senator Guitfoyle) and the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations—to table in this Parliament the extracts from the handbook which guide officers of the Department of Social Security and the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations in terms of applying the work test, because it will then be discovered that the variations are quite moderate indeed and the only really new ones which I see from reading the Minister's speech provide for the postponement provisions of unemployment benefits, the prohibition of unemployment benefits for a school-leaver during a vacation period, and of course the requirement of the personal lodging of income statements every 2 weeks by an unemployment benefit recipient. That is quite a radical departure. My recollection is that the Labor Government required a statement every third week, and the reason we did that and the reason the Government is not introducing the old requirement of the lodging of a statement personally every week is simply that the work load on the Department of Social Security in processing claims and in checking the legitimate eligibility of applicants is so great that the personal lodging of claims overwhelmed the staff and prevented a full and efficient discharge of the obligations on them. I always marvel that the officers of the Department did discharge their duties as well as they did and, by and large, as cheerfully and as dedicatedly as they did with the heavy work load that was imposed upon them.

The situation the Government is trying to create is one of blame the victim; unemployment becomes the fault of the unemployed. The out of work are not out of work because of an epidemic of laziness which has suddenly sprouted forth in the community, but regrettably because of the worst unemployment in this country since the great Depression. The Minister's statement and the general behaviour of Government spokesmen and the support they receive from substantial sections of the media are thoroughly reprehensible in the way in which a very emotional response is sought from the community for crude, shallow political gain.

Let me deal with the evidence that the Minister adduced in support of his assertion that there needs to be some sort of toughening up. I repeat that the degree of toughening up which was reported in the newspapers is scarcely evident from his statement in comparison with the guidelines which have been laid down and followed in previous years. He says that in February 1972 thirty per cent of the unemployed were receiving unemployment benefits, and that in February 1976 the proportion has risen to 70 per cent. I am not sure what conclusion he is trying to draw from that because he has never at any stage indicated what his conclusion is, but if he is implying that there should be only 30 per cent of those unemployed on benefits at the present time he is proposing a reduction of nearly 102 000 in the number of unemployed at the present time. I am rather curious to know how he intends to achieve that because all of the leading economic indicators are now showing that the economy is turning down after slight evidence of a recovery towards the end of last year. The figures for January and February confirmed by the sort of intelligence one gathers from personal contact with business people show clearly that the economy is turning down again at least into stagnation if not into perhaps a deeper trough of recession.

The Minister says that 70 per cent of the unemployed are unmarried. I do not know what evidence that is unless the implication is that if a person on benefits is unmarried and unemployed he is, ipso facto, bludging on the dole. I do not believe that that sort of confused thinking can be sustained at all, but what it means if he is asserting that that 70 per cent of unmarried people on unemployment benefits should not be unemployed—that it is their own fault—then he is talking of reducing unemployment by 178 000. More significantly, while he is considering that he might like to explore the difficulties of removing these people from the unemployed numbers in the community and providing them with work opportunities because on the basis of figures from his own Department it is quite evident that there were more than six unmarried people seeking a job for every vacancy which was unfilled during February.

The Minister says that 40 per cent of the unemployed are under 21 years. There are approximately four of these people seeking each unfilled vacancy at the present time. How does he propose to reduce unemployment by reducing the number of people under 21 years of age who are currently receiving benefits? The Minister says that 75 per cent of the unemployed, if I understood his figures correctly, have been on benefits for a month or more. Clearly that ought to be evidence to any thinking observer that
these are the people who are the hard core unemployed in the community, and that is evidence of the deep-seated nature of the unemployment which exists in the community at the present time. I am afraid that the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations uses statistics very much as a drunk uses a lamp post, for support rather than illumination.

I am concerned at the general atmosphere that the Minister has unleashed with his comments from time to time, backed by the general attitude expressed by members of the Government. I am concerned that the atmosphere they have unleashed may well lead to injustice and intolerance within organs of the public service which have to deal with those who are unfortunately unemployed. For instance, since his statement it has been reported in the *Courier-Mail* of 27 March as follows:

An unemployed labourer claimed yesterday that a Commonwealth employment official told him he would have to go home and put on a shirt and tie before he would be considered for any vacancy.

So I guess wharf labourers out of work will have to turn up with manicured nails, and coal miners with curled eyelashes. This is completely unreasonable and unfair. I would suggest that the fever of intolerance towards the unemployed is a product of much dishonesty. The Brisbane *Sunday Sun* of 7 December 1975 published an article written by a gentleman—so I describe him with careless regard for the meaning of the word—named Sharman. It was headed: ‘Six Girls on the Dole. Home with pool—plus Valiant—a beach house and $40 a week in the bank account’. The Australian Broadcasting Commission later interviewed the girls. Only two were on the dole. Only five of them lived in the accommodation referred to. One was visiting and was asked by the photographer to stand in to make the number up to six, and both the photographer and the reporter well knew the facts of the case. Such is the dishonesty that we run into.

It is nonsense to talk about people registering as brain surgeons or lion tamers and seeking unemployment benefit, believing that they will not or cannot be directed to jobs of that nature because in the former case they are not qualified or in the latter case there are no vacancies. The Department of Social Security, when I was Minister, and the Commonwealth Employment Service tracked down all these sorts of cases. First of all, it was clear that anyone registering as a brain surgeon would have to be qualified before he could be considered and there is no shortage of vacancies for such highly qualified people. Then, as the honourable member for Hindmarsh (Mr Clyde Cameron) pointed out on one occasion, lion tamers would be eaten up faster than they could be replaced; so there is no problem in obtaining employment in that field.

What of the white collar bludgers on the public payroll, such as doctors under the old pensioner medical service ripping off nursing homes by going along on Wednesday morning before golf and having every pensioner-patient in the nursing home sign a form so that they would be able to obtain benefits from the Australian Government? What of the export incentives provided for businessmen who took their paramours overseas?

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

Mr CONNOLLY (Bradfield) (4.27)—We have just heard two of the Opposition’s leading exponents in the field of unemployment. Australia has a record rate of unemployment for which they alone in this chamber must accept the fundamental responsibility. While that rests in the unfortunate recent history of this nation, it is still the fundamental responsibility of this Government and of this Parliament to make sure not only that these problems of unemployment are solved but also that in solving them we apply adequate work tests and programs to ensure that those people who need employment will be given every assistance to gain it and those who wish to bludgeon the community—to use the words of the honourable member for Oxley (Mr Hayden)—will not be assisted to do so.

It is, in fact, symptomatic of the Opposition bankruptcy that the Government has been accused of allegedly fanning the fires of intolerance against the alleged dole bludgers, of being immoral for so doing and, in the words of the honourable member for Oxley of propounding that ‘employment becomes the fault of the unemployed’. It is very easy to talk in glib terms about a state of life which is, undoubtedly, the worst calamity that can befall any person in this country. We believe the vast majority of our people are willing and able to work. It is because we have inherited a situation in which so many,—in fact some 300 000—are unable to obtain employment that we are forced to take these measures and debate this matter today in this chamber.

The 4 changes to the unemployment benefit system which were outlined by the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations (Mr Street) and the Minister for Social Security (Senator Guilfoyle) both in January this year
and again last week can be defined as follows: Firstly, the definition of ‘suitable employment’ is to be widened after a reasonable period of time; secondly, unemployment beneficiaries will be required to lodge income statements personally at Commonwealth Employment Service offices each fortnight; thirdly, unemployment benefits will not be paid to school leavers during the long vacation period; and fourthly, persons who become voluntarily unemployed will not be paid unemployment benefit for a period of 6 weeks after registration with the Commonwealth Employment Service.

What has been totally ignored by the Opposition in this debate is the precise role of the Government in terms of supporting the unemployed members of the community. We believe that the Government has a responsibility to support those who, through no fault of their own, cannot provide support for themselves and for their dependants. This is the basis upon which all debate on this subject should be founded, not on arguments about questions of intolerance, immorality or definitions of an unemployed person. The new requirements we are initiating are not unjust or unduly harsh. The only substantial effect will be on those who are unwilling to work, and that is precisely the area in which we are directing our amendments.

Since the economy is in recession, it is neither practicable nor possible to satisfy everyone’s requests for specific employment. It is necessary, however, to offer jobs which actually exist, rather than those which may exist but at present are merely in the imagination of those who wish to have them. The reality of the economic situation requires that those receiving benefits must take work that they are capable of performing when it is offered to them. As the economy improves there is every expectation that, as a result of the Government’s measures, skilled people will be helped through the CES to take jobs which are within their capacity and which utilise their skills fully. The honourable member for Oxley took exception to this and referred to a report which appeared recently in the Courier-Mail about a person who applied for a job in Brisbane. He took exception to the way this person was treated. Apparently, he did not turn up in shoes, a collar and a tie. What the honourable member failed to tell the House was that in this particular instance—I might add that the facts were given to the newspaper which, for its own reasons, decided not to publish the full story—the person was offered a job as a storeman in a major retail store in Brisbane and the requirements of this job were that he should wear shoes, a collar and a tie.

To suggest that the Government will ask waterside workers or people in any other special classifications to dress for a type of employment for which they obviously are not fitted is an aberration, to say the least.

What has also been ignored totally by the Opposition in this debate is the fact that for many years the Social Services Act has provided adequate means for appeal in any cases in which people feel that they have been wrongly treated by the CES. In order to remedy these specific cases, appeals have been going on for some years. We certainly will not do anything to limit in any way right to appeal. It is fundamental to our philosophy that individuals must have a final arbiter against decisions of the bureaucracy and the only way they can do that effectively is by appealing to tribunals to which applications for reconsideration of decisions may be made. In addition, section 124 of the Act provides for special benefits to be paid in cases of extreme hardship or of mental or physical disability, or because of domestic circumstances. This is a very elastic provision both for the Department of Social Security and for the Government to apply policy in order that those people who have a case and require assistance most certainly will receive it.

We were told by the honourable member for Gellibrand (Mr Willis) of the vast number of appeals—some 62.6 per cent—that were upheld by the Department without reference to the Social Security Appeals Tribunal. He said that this indicated that there was hardly much point in going ahead with the exercise if so many people were to be passed on this basis. Let me say at this stage, for the benefit of the honourable gentleman, that in the last 3 years there has been a tendency for the appeal system to become so generous as to raise some doubt about it achieving its objectives because so many appeals were upheld and only 29.1 per cent were, in fact, dismissed. That point was brought forward in another place last week in answer to a question from a member of the Opposition. While we will continue to use the appellate system to protect the rights of the individual, we also will expect the Appeals Tribunal to be more realistic and effective in the task before it and not simply to pass people just because an appeal has been made.

I now turn to the question of the work test itself, which is undoubtedly the centre of the problem as seen by the Opposition. The central criterion is the concept of reasonableness in the
application of this work test. If someone genuinely wants to work, we believe that it is our responsibility to help that person find work. Furthermore, as individuals are responsible for their own lives they should take the necessary steps to ensure that they have employment if available. For those who complain and worry about whether somebody with a specific qualification should have to take a position of a lower status in their area of training, I make the point that there are very few, if any, jobs available in Australia today which do not give to the person who is employed a higher return than the unemployment benefit. While we are not suggesting for a moment that an architect, which was the example given by the honourable member for Oxley, should be forced to go on the clean-up trucks, the principle which we are applying is that the architect, if he cannot be so employed, should be prepared to work as a draftsman.

The same thing goes for the skilled tool maker. He should take a position as a fitter and turner if it is impossible to get an exact position related to his skill. The basic principle is that we want people to be employed. There are vacancies, and those vacancies must be filled. It is ridiculous that people should be expected to sit on the sideline, watching the Australian economy go by and presuming that because they have paid taxes in years gone by they can now sit back and enjoy the fruits of their lack of activity. The objective of the exercise is that if this country is to work itself out of the present extremely serious economic malaise we need the full co-operation of every Australian citizen at all levels of the Australian economy. That simply means that we cannot tolerate a rate of unemployment of 300,000 people. Every opportunity must be taken to ensure that figure is reduced by reasonable government action and ensure that those who remain unemployed are truly those who require the maximum degree of government assistance.

Let us examine the history of changes in the work test since 1972. I was rather surprised to hear the honourable member for Oxley, who was shortly after that the Minister responsible for this area of policy, use, as is not uncommon in this House, selective facts. It is worth noting, for example, that in December 1972 the critical paragraph of the Commonwealth Employment Service instruction concerning the application of a work test stated:

A claimant for unemployment benefit will be regarded as having refused or failed without good and sufficient reason to accept an offer of employment if he is unwilling to accept and perform work offered to him which having regard to his abilities and qualifications is considered to be suitable in its nature, conditions and location to be undertaken by him.

Some months later, in early 1973, Mr Clyde Cameron and Mr Hayden agreed to vary this instruction most significantly because it weakened the basic definition which we were told by the honourable member for Oxley had no major difference from the proposals which we have put before the House. In their weakened form the work concept was:

Work of a type or nature in which the person usually engages and in which the person’s experience, qualifications and training would be used.

What a glorious concept, if one could say at any moment of time that for every specific applicant there is a specific job exactly tailor made for that person. Regrettably that Government of compassion and concern, which has now left us and is now on the Opposition benches, was comprised of people who failed utterly to apply realism in this area. While the appropriate vacancies do not exist and while we have a record rate of unemployment, the luxury of saying that every person need take only the job he wants because of his specific background and training, regrettably cannot be achieved. It is this Government’s responsibility to ensure that the unemployed are helped to find adequate opportunities for employment. I believe that there is nothing worse for the morale of a man or a woman than to wish to work and to know that the opportunities simply are not there. During the months preceding the change of Government the definition of the work test was further changed. In June 1974 another attempt was made by the previous Government to tighten up the definition because by then it was realised that it had gone too far.

There was a record rate of unemployment, combined with a record number of persons receiving unemployment benefits. Suitable employment, in terms of the Government’s new definition, will require that when:

- After a reasonable period it has not been possible for a person to obtain employment in his usual occupation or work of an equivalent kind, the range of suitable jobs to which he or she may be referred will be extended to all which are within the person’s capacity and available to him or her even though a change in status or wages may be involved.

This is a realistic application of policy to meet a very severe economic and social problem.

Mr KEITH JOHNSON (Burke) (4.40)—To hear the previous speaker, the honourable member for Bradfield (Mr Connolly), espouse his theories on economics and on those people who are having difficulty finding work was like listening to something from the beginning of the last century.

Mr Clyde Cameron—Certain previous members of this House were even worse than the honourable member for Bradfield.
Mr KEITH JOHNSON—I have been reminded by the honourable member for Hindmarsh that certain previous members of this House were even worse than the honourable member for Bradfield. The speech by the honourable member for Bradfield showed a complete lack of understanding on his part and on the part of the Government which he supports of the reason for the high degree of unemployment in industrialised countries throughout the world. I remind the House that the Labour Ministers of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development met in Paris on 4 and 5 March. Rather regretfully our Minister did not think that meeting was very important, and he did not attend. Reports coming from that meeting show that there was great concern among members of that august body about unemployment in the Western world. In fact the reports indicate that the OECD Ministers were very pessimistic about recovery in the near future. They suggested very strongly a strengthening of programs and recommended a development of programs and schemes to encourage employment in the various countries. The Government would interpret that, I believe, in its whole business of greater investment, as employment at private level by private employers. The whole structure of the world is changing. What we see in the world at the moment, I believe, is only the tip of an iceberg. As time goes by and technology catches up with the traditional methods of working, the unemployment problem will become greater unless more humane policies are adopted.

Of all the actions taken by this Government in the name of austerity, the meanest and most despicable must be the labelling as dole bludgers those who are forced to exist on unemployment benefits. Even the coining of that phrase shows the depths of depravity to which a human mind can sink to gain political advantage at the expense of unfortunates. The Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations (Mr Street) has always struck me as a pretty reasonable sort of chap, intelligent enough to comprehend changes occurring in our society. He must have been very embarrassed to stand in this chamber last week and read to us his document headed 'Unemployment and the Work Test'. It would have been better titled 'A Liberal-Country Party manifesto on how to divide a community'. The statement was not prepared out of a spirit of resolving the unemployment problem besetting Australia or of easing the burden of those who are bearing the full cost of technological advance and uncertainty among consumers. It ignores the broad issue of unemployment as experienced by every industrialised nation. It ignores the continuing uneasy relationship between those who employ and those whom they employ. It ignores the frustration of those who wish to enter the work force but cannot because no position exists. It shows no understanding of the plight of those who now find it impossible to enter the work force, who have had difficulties in the past or who will in the future. These people are labelled dole bludgers. Those who are in work and who are paying taxes are incited to hate and despise the bludgers because it is said that the workers are keeping the bludgers.

Apart from this inhuman grouping of unfortunates as lepers in our society, the language in the statement is calculated to inflame our society and to divide it. Expressions such as 'need to eliminate widespread abuse' are used. Neither the document nor this debate has shown any widespread abuse. Another expression used is 'tighten the unemployment benefit work test'. It seems to indicate that the work test at the moment is very slack, and that is a slight on the people who are administering the present scheme. The remark in the Minister's statement that unemployment is costing in the vicinity of $480m per annum is another remark on which I wish to comment. I do not think that the volume of money that is involved in this respect is of very great significance. There would be some honourable members in this House who can remember back to an earlier time when unemployment was also very great, but at that time people were standing in bread lines and at soup kitchens in order to gain sufficient food just to live. That is not happening in Australia at the moment. Therefore the collective wealth of Australia is such that it can afford to keep off the breadline—not far above it; just above it—those who for a variety of reasons none of which is their own fault are unable to find employment.

The lulu of them all was the following comment:

This Government will not tolerate these devious devices to have the taxpayers support indolence.

If the use of that expression is not more appropriate to the 19th century it would surprise me greatly. Many other expressions were used that were obviously designed to bring into ill-repute in their communities those who, for any reason at all, are unable to obtain employment. After making those exaggerated, inflammatory and unsupported statements the Minister made no attempt to show them to be true or to apologise for them when they were found to be wrong.
After the elections in December the Government set about, at great public expense, instituting a witch-hunt to find those people who are allegedly making a rort of the system. In his statement to this House the Minister claimed that 30 per cent of the recipients of unemployment benefit were disqualified as a result of the campaign to find the bludgers. He then went on to explain that the great majority of this number were found to have legitimate reasons for cancellation and in fact would have been cancelled when the recipients sent the information to the Department. He conceded that they were in the process of doing so. Again we have another half truth in this statement.

After this marathon exercise in crass stupidity the Minister lamely said:

Of course, in some cases there is blatant misrepresentation. In these instances a prosecution is considered and in most cases appropriate action is taken.

The Minister has been very indefinite about the whole thing. Nowhere has he told us in how many cases action has been taken. Nowhere has he admitted that the Labor Government was vigilant against those who misrepresented their circumstances. Nowhere has he had the good grace to admit that the Government's understanding of the situation is wrong. The attitude expressed in the statement is not to seek out those who misrepresent, as the ordinary machinery will catch up with them anyway; it is merely a smokescreen for a far more sinister purpose than that.

Taken in isolation this statement could be interpreted as being an effort to run a clean ship and to ensure that those who are recipients of unemployment benefit are in fact in dire circumstances. However, when read in conjunction with other outbursts by the Government on industrial matters, the statement is seen as an insidious attempt to prevent unions from fighting for the rights of their members. It is a blatant attempt to cow those who are in employment and to discourage the taking of any action which may be regarded as being an assault on the established way of doing things or more likely a threat to the holy cow of profit. The new 'guidelines', as I think they are referred to, place an enormous and terrible power in the hands of employers and can place an intolerable burden upon those who are employed or who seek employment. For example, the Government sees nothing wrong with an employee being required to spend 3 hours a day travelling to and from work. Travelling time of one-and-a-half hours a day is regarded as being reasonable. Travelling time of 3 hours a day, 5 days a week, means that an employee is required to be away from this home and his family an extra 15 hours a week but even more ridiculous is the fact that a worker from Sunbury, Broadmeadows, Keilor or anywhere else could be offered a job at Castlemaine, which is about 1½ hours drive from the outskirts of Melbourne, and, if he refused it, be denied unemployment benefit.

Who decides whether unemployment benefit will be paid? The Director-General does that. If people move house for any reason other than to be nearer employment they will be denied unemployment benefit. The fellow who lives in rented accommodation and who for environmental reasons—say, for the sake of argument, the presence of a noxious industry or an airport, which is affecting his family—and who can obtain alternative rental accommodation only in an area where, in the opinion of the Commonwealth Employment Service, there are little or no employment prospects is rewarded for caring for his family's welfare by having his unemployment benefit terminated.

The statement refers to the term 'voluntarily unemployed' as being a ground for the refusal of such a payment. Nothing could be more directly designed to cow those in employment. Nothing could give a greater power to one person over another. Nothing could encourage the industrial bully more. Very few, if any, people like being unemployed and most will go to extraordinary lengths to retain their employment. If there is no prospect of alternative employment or the receipt of unemployment benefit the employee is completely at the mercy of his employer. Any employer who has a sadistic streak can heap indignity upon indignity until the employee's life becomes a misery. To where does the employee turn for relief? If he resigns he is not eligible for unemployment benefit. If he complains to his employer or—even worse—to his union, further indignities will be heaped upon him. He can be reduced to doing the most menial task at the lowest rate of pay and have to live with it.

The Government has used the term 'dole bludgers' to camouflage the most infamous assault on our society ever perpetrated by any government of any political persuasion. With most disarming hypocrisy the Minister attempted to justify his heinous actions by saying:

It will be evident from what I have said that the Government is not making changes to the unemployment benefit system to the disadvantage of genuine work seekers.

Honourable members will note again that the inference there is that most of the unemployed are bludgers anyhow. The Minister went on to say:
Not is its aim to compel people to work—
That is a rather curious insertion after the bit to which I have just referred—
that would be forced or compulsory labour, which is not acceptable in Australia or elsewhere—
Here comes the punch line—
quite apart from the fact that it would be contrary to the International Labour Organisation conventions on forced labour which Australia has ratified.
The whole document is an indictment of this Government. It shows again its complete bankruptcy in this area and its determination to crush people with its own might.

I spoke earlier about the reasons for the unemployment. If the Government were sincere it would initiate a debate in this chamber as to why in fact there is unemployment in the Australian community rather than go through this exercise. Arising out of that debate suggestions and ideas would come forward. Not all wisdom resides on the government benches—front, back, in between or anywhere else. In fact very little of it does. Arising out of that the House would come to grips with the problem. Through it I believe that the Government would make itself informed on the reasons for the unemployment in this country and, indeed, in all of the industrialised countries throughout the world. If this country is to continue as a mixed economy in which people are encouraged to make goods or provide services and if it is to prosper then it is obvious that those goods and services must be sold. It seems to me that there is a limited market in Australia because of our rather small population. We seem to be supplying ourselves with as many goods and services as we need and as we can pay for. Still there is surplus money in the community. It is lying in savings bank deposits. Therefore we must look to other places to sell the goods that the Government believes we should be manufacturing to use up our surplus work force.

In my view there are 2 markets for those goods. Firstly there are the countries which can afford to pay for them. Those countries, if one cares to examine them, already have their own unemployment problems. Secondly, there are the countries which need the goods or services that we can provide but which are not in a position to pay for them. I am wondering whether the captains of industry in this country are prepared to set themselves up as philanthropists and provide to those needy countries the goods and services that they want, that we can provide and for which they cannot afford to pay. The Government should talk about that economic conundrum. If it were to do so it would get closer to the reasons why we have an unemployment situation. The Government has instituted an investment allowance to encourage industry to buy new machinery. Each piece of new machinery that is made is made with one thought in mind—to make the industry in which it is used more mechanised and therefore to require fewer operators to increase its output—otherwise there is no point in making a new machine. If that sort of situation continues, more commodities will be provided in the community but fewer people will be required to provide them. That is the sort of situation to which the world is coming, and coming very rapidly. However, this Government, still following its understanding of the economic theories of Adam Smith, is never going to come to grips with the problem.

Mr Martyr—Hear, hear!

Mr KEITH JOHNSON—I hear an honourable member opposite saying: ‘Hear, hear!’ Clearly the honourable member who said that supports that sort of economic theory. If there are sufficient people as backward thinking as he is sitting on the other side of the House then the Government is never going to come to grips with the real problems that affect Australia. It will continue to do the things that are easiest to do; it will continue to beat those who are defenceless rather than to come to grips with the problem, understand the cause of it and take action which is in the best interests of the community. I refer not just to those unfortunates who have difficulty in finding employment. I can assure honourable members opposite that those people are not very happy at having to exist on the small unemployment benefit; it certainly does not put them in the Rolls-Royce purchasing category. They are having a struggle. What we are really talking about, what we should be talking about, is a better distribution of the wealth of this country amongst those people who reside in it—not only those who can find employment but also those who, for a very great variety of reasons, are unfortunate enough not to be able to find it. They should not be made the scapegoats for the rest of the community.

Mr LLOYD (Murray) (4.56)—One point that should be made quite clear at the outset in this debate is that the January 1976 changes to the guidelines were actually proposed by an interdepartmental committee working party which was established by the previous Labor Government in May 1975. Its deliberations took place during the term of office of that previous Labor Government and its report came down in January and its recommendations were accepted at that time. In other words, those guidelines
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were the work of a committee operating during the term of office of a previous Labor Government. That same committee continued on to the present March guidelines. I think one can quite rightly ask: Would Labor have accepted those guidelines? Labor had accepted the guidelines proposed by the committee on other occasions. Obviously it had not been completely satisfied with them and asked the committee to reconvene and keep working. So I think the Labor Party should say what its attitude would be if it were in government. I believe, following logically through the sequence of events, that it would have accepted those same sensible refinements to the work test and the other guidelines. I believe that the present guidelines, as outlined last week by the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations (Mr Street), represent a continuing refinement of the guidelines and indicate the sensible deliberations of the committee.

The honourable member for Burke (Mr Keith Johnson), who has just left the House—he obviously does not want to listen to the facts; nor did the honourable member for Oxley (Mr Hayden) who gapped out of the chamber the moment he finished speaking—referred to the matter of people being required to travel to work for one and a half hours as being one of the guidelines. I remind the honourable member for Burke in his absence that the matter of one and a half hours travelling time as a guideline was not instituted by this Government; it was instituted by the previous Government under the May 1975 guidelines. So if the honourable member wants to criticise anybody he should criticise his own Minister of the time. Let us have a look at the travelling time of ordinary working people who travel every day from Geelong to Melbourne. To my knowledge and belief the speed of the train travelling that route has not actually increased since 1905.

Mr Scholes—It has lost 5 minutes.

Mr LLOYD—I apologise to the honourable member for Corio. Also the travelling time of one and a half hours is accepted as an ordinary travelling time by those people who travel from the Blue Mountains to Sydney each day, by those people living on the Mornington Peninsula, and so on. So the honourable member for Burke is talking a lot of hooey.

Let us look at some of the decisions made by the Labor Government. It accepted the recommendations of the interdepartmental committee in April 1974 to toughen the guidelines. The then Minister, the honourable member for Hindmarsh (Mr Clyde Cameron), evidently was not satisfied with what was brought down in April 1974. He brought in more guidelines in May 1975. Still not satisfied he asked the committee to reconvene. Hence we have the results of its deliberations. Opposition members referred to the policy of the Labor Party. I would like to know what was the policy of the Labor Government. Was it the early April 1973 guidelines, the April 1974 guidelines, the May 1975 guidelines, or the guidelines that obviously would have been accepted if Labor had still been in power in January 1976 and March 1976.

However, I commend Labor on one of the decisions which it made in early 1973, and that was the payment to unemployed adults of the same benefit as was paid to other social security beneficiaries. I believe that was a wise and humane decision. However, by abolishing the lesser rate for unemployed juniors—that is those under 18 years—together with the early 1973 work test guidelines, it allowed to develop considerable abuses of the system by young people. Time after time the parents of young people complained to me about their sons or daughters, who were 16 or 17-year old children, entering the work force as apprentices, being useful Australians for the future of Australia, receiving actually less income than their friends who had gone straight on to the adult rate of the unemployment benefit and who were making a mockery of those people who were actually working and trying to do something for their own future and for the future of Australia. That was an intolerable situation. It is no use Labor supporters saying that that was not so, because Labor belatedly recognised the monster that it had created by allowing the differential rate to reappear in the 1975 Budget. The benefit was not increased on that occasion, and I understand that the differential will widen again when the May 1976 benefit increases come into effect.

Labor supporters claim that there has been little abuse of the system. It is acknowledged that general and accurate statistics are hard to obtain. I think perhaps that that is a reflection on the knowledge that honourable members on both sides of the House would like to have, but do not have, in this general area. The Department of Social Security conducted a survey of 112,000 beneficiaries, and one result of that survey showed that 30 per cent of payments to those people were terminated. I realise that those people were not necessarily dole cheats, as they have been called, but this does indicate a weakness in the general system. Doubts about this matter were confirmed by a private polling organisation which revealed that the general
figures we have on the unemployed appear to be considerably inflated. To me the real test as to whether there have been abuses of the system is indicated by the ordinary working people themselves. They know who is cheating. They know, when they go into the pub after work and see somebody who has been sitting there all day on his unemployment benefit money, who is cheating.

Mr Martyr—What else could he sit on?

Mr LLOYD—Perhaps I should rephrase that last sentence. Ordinary working people—the person who is living next door or one who lives further down the street—are the ones who have complained most bitterly about the other people who are bludging on the system. I believe that in the last election they were a significant factor in the swing to the Liberal and National Country Parties. In my own area we have had some absurd situations. At a time of record registered unemployed, or those registered for employment, in the Goulburn Valley area there has been a dearth of fruit pickers. I think that that in itself is a contradiction. I refer particularly to young people, who one cannot say are not fit and able to do such work but who felt that it was not essential to do such work—and the guidelines allowed that situation to develop.

However, I want to be fair to the many genuine migratory workers who go to areas of seasonal work, such as my own area, before work is actually available because of seasonal conditions. They have suffered real poverty because the departments involved—the Commonwealth Employment Service and the Department of Social Security—have been too slow in assessing their situation. No doubt some of the abuses of the system will end with this tightening of the guidelines and the work test. I still feel that other forms of abuses in the unemployment system will continue until there is such a thing as a national identity card arrangement. I believe that particularly those who are receiving double payments or triple payments and those who are working and also receiving an unemployment benefit will still not be picked up by these new arrangements. I have mentioned this matter before in this House. The honourable member for Hindmarsh may have mentioned it also, but he can dissociate himself from that remark if he wants to do so. I see nothing wrong with having a national identity card system. Forms of such a system are in use in Great Britain and the United States of America. I do not think that such a system is an infringement of individual rights of privacy, unless it is linked or is capable of being linked by computer to taxation records, Medibank records, bank accounts, driving records, etc., or unless unreasonable demands are made on its use. I do not see how we can identify a person accurately without some such system. If people are genuine in talking about these things they have to consider seriously that proposition.

I refer now to people who are voluntarily unemployed and who are to get no benefit for the first 6 weeks. I draw to the attention of the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations 2 problem areas which I see. I have faced a number of problems in these areas in my electorate. Consider the case of a breadwinner who for health reasons, related either to himself or his children, is forced to move from one area to another. This happens in my electorate. People from southern Victoria move north of the Great Dividing Range because they have asthmatic problems. I believe that there should be some flexibility in the system—perhaps it is there and I have not been informed of it—to take account of these people. The second problem area relates to a breadwinner who is forced to move for employment reasons, such as to continue in employment or to get promotion, and who has a family that includes a 16-year-old or a 17-year-old who should move with the family. If such a person moves with the family, to my knowledge he or she will be voluntarily leaving his or her work and will not be eligible for unemployment benefit for 6 weeks. If I am wrong in saying that, I will be pleased to be corrected. I believe that it is another case where there should be more flexibility in the system. The system should allow for the 2 problems I have mentioned.

I refer now to the general problem of the work test versus the income test for the unemployed. I believe that it is another indication of the unsatisfactory nature of the criteria in social service arrangements in this country. I believe that there is a reasonable system for wage and salary earners but not for self-employed people. An employer may retrench an employee to maintain profitability, and that person is picked up by the unemployment system. He is kept at some standard of living and also is available for that employer to re-employ at a later stage. In other words, society generally is supporting the maintenance of profitability of that employer. The self-employed person is not in that situation. He is not covered. He stays on and his income drops, because he has no alternative. On many occasions he cannot sell, whether he is self-employed in a town or an a farm. The question whether such a person’s departure is voluntary or forced has to be considered.
I will give honourable members an example of this which has occurred in my area. Because dairying is at a critically low level the average milk tanker driver earns more than the farmer whose milk he is carting. If the driver is put off seasonally he is eligible for unemployment benefit but the dairy farmer—this applies particularly to the poor share farmers who probably constitute the most depressed social group in Australia at the present time—is rejected time after time for unemployment benefit. I believe that is wrong. The work test applied for self-employed people in dairying areas—dairy farmers on this occasion—is arbitrary and wrong. I believe that the Department of Social Security and the Commonwealth Employment Service are not sympathetic in treating the self-employed. In my area quite contradictory criteria are used and I believe that the general regulations are unfair.

Finally, I refer to the standard of advice and service given at counters in Commonwealth Employment Service offices and Department of Social Security offices. I restrict my criticism to them only because of the limitations of this debate. I could mention the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, the war service homes people and quite a few others. Time after time people come to my office in tears or in confusion because they have been given incorrect information by people working at these counters. To be fair to the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, let me say that this happens more in the Department of Social Security offices than in offices under his jurisdiction. I believe that there is something wrong with the method of employing these people or with the method of promotion. It is critically important that we have humane, sympathetic and experienced people confronting people who go to these offices. I believe that we should consider seriously the idea of providing departmental counter employees with name tags or identity tags. Time after time such people refuse to give their names when requested to do so and, when one tries to check on what has happened and to follow up a complaint in order to find out who was giving the abuse or was being rude, there is no way of doing so.

Mr Ruddock—What about name tags?

Mr Lloyd—I agree. I think such employees should have name tags, as is the case now with many private companies, so that complaints can be handled properly. In conclusion, I support the sensible and reasonable developments in the work test. I believe that if the Labor Party were honest it would say that it would be doing the same thing if it were still in power.

Mr Scholes (Corio) (5.11)—The first thing we should recognise in this debate on the ministerial statement on unemployment benefit and the work test made by the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations (Mr Street) is that it is an economic measure designed by the Government to cut expenditure, not one aimed at toughening the work test and curing the problem created by the people whom the Government chooses to term 'dole bludgers'. We should recognise that a decision has been taken and if this work test does not meet the situation a new one will be introduced. The number on unemployment benefit has to be reduced by one-third. Some of the criteria look innocent enough. If the Government keeps on talking about 'dole bludgers' and impresses on people that someone is getting something that they are not getting, or something that they are paying for, it will find it easy to achieve community support.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Giles)—Order! Would honourable members in the National Country Party corner keep their conversation down? I am having difficulty in hearing the honourable member for Corio.

Mr Scholes—I suppose it is a little difficult when the honourable member for Riverina (Mr Sullivan) is interjecting.

Mr Deputy Speaker—He is not the only one who is speaking.

Mr Scholes—I know. The criterion generally accepted by too many people is this: 'I am the only person in our society who is genuine'. That is so in industrial disputes; it is so in the case of the recipients of unemployment benefit; and it is so in the case of recipients of social service and workers compensation payments. When considering one's own case one obviously is genuine, but when considering somebody else one believes, or is prepared to believe that that person is a cheat. That is an unfortunate fact of life.

The part of these criteria which concerns me is that young people must be prepared to leave their homes in order to obtain employment. This is not a new criterion; it has applied previously. The method of its application, the toughening up of that method of application, is what concerns me. There are some people aged 18 years who can leave home and there are others who are not sufficiently mature to do so. I, as a parent, and many other parents, would be loath to see an 18-year-old daughter sent to an area to do itinerant work where private accommodation is not guaranteed or where suitable accommodation is not guaranteed. Yet under the work test requirements it is mandatory that such a person
accept such a job if it is offered. That is wrong and it ought to be stopped. The criteria now laid down for the job acceptance gives the employer the right to fix conditions of employment and to make them such that no honourable person could remain in that employment. The employer is quite clearly able to tell that person that he will not be eligible for unemployment benefit if he does not accept the criteria. There are already instances on record of employers offering persons sent for employment less than the going rate for a job. It may be that in these circumstances unemployment benefit will be restored on appeal. It should not be necessary for a person to appeal. There are areas of employment where there are no going rates. Under the guidelines laid down by the Minister it is possible for a girl to be offered less as a wage than the unemployment benefit, in employment as a domestic where there are no employment rates, no awards. If the girl refuses that offer of employment she is not eligible for unemployment benefit either.

If we like to get to the tin-tacks of it, I have in front of me the most recent Victorian statistics on the unemployment situation. The honourable member for Murray (Mr Lloyd), who has now left his side of the chamber and moved to the other side was talking in justification of the unemployment situation and also mentioned the job vacancies in his area that could not be filled. For his information I point out that 350 females at the Shepparton district Commonwealth Employment Office were receiving unemployment benefits at the end of February.

Mr Lloyd—Caused by your 25 per cent across the board tariff cuts.

Mr SCHOLES—There were 20 job vacancies. I point out to the honourable member for Murray again that in the speech which he has just made he said that there were job vacancies that could not be filled. Where are they? There were 20 registered jobs with the employment office. Why are they not registered?

Mr Ruddock—Twenty-eight thousand registered.

Mr SCHOLES—There were 20 jobs registered for females at the Shepparton district office of the Commonwealth Employment Service at the end of February. There were 190 jobs registered for males. Three hundred and sixty-two people were registered for employment and 339 people were receiving unemployment benefits. I repeat, there were 190 registered vacancies. Anyone who takes the trouble to look down the list of vacancies registered, especially for females in non-metropolitan areas, will find a very low number of vacancies registered and a relatively high number of persons in receipt of benefit. The jobs for these people do not exist. It is now being said that they will get jobs in other areas. Where? The metropolitan area of Melbourne shows just under 3 000 female job vacancies. It also shows 12 500 people in receipt of benefit. Why would it be necessary for the Commonwealth Employment Service to send people to say, Ararat or Hamilton or somewhere like that when there are vacancies in the metropolitan area? Why would it require them to leave their homes when there are 4 people receiving benefit in the metropolitan area itself for each one vacancy? It seems to me to be a somewhat ridiculous situation. There are isolated cases of persons with particular skills who could meet the criteria of job vacancies in one area where vacancies exist, but they are isolated cases.

I believe that the application of the work test as now set out is purely an economic measure which completely discards the realities of the employment situation, whomever we may like to blame for it. It disregards human beings and their requirements and it seeks to apply an artificial test in order to reduce expenditure. It is in line with a number of other decisions that have been made recently.

I question the decision on school leavers and acknowledge that school leavers have falsely registered and been able to get away with it. I suggest to the Minister that it would be fairer and more proper if the school leaver, having left school in order to obtain unemployment benefit, and if a job could not be found for him, had to wait the 6 weeks or whatever it is for unemployment benefit; and if he were a genuine school leaver he should be entitled to his unemployment benefit, having completed his school year, in the same manner as he would have been had he left school at an earlier time and not completed the year. What the Government is doing by applying this test is encouraging students not to complete their last year of schooling but to leave earlier in the year so that they will qualify for unemployment benefit. The Government is saying to the parent ‘If your child would normally leave school at the end of November this year we shall require you to maintain him for a further 6 weeks, whether he can get a job or not, because it is more difficult to get jobs for school leavers at that time of the year than it would be if your child left school at an earlier time’. I think that is an unfair imposition on a section of the community in order to overcome what I acknowledge is a problem, but a
Mr Hodges—Why did you not try it?

Mr SCHOLES—We did not create the situation which the honourable member’s Government has just created. This is a new innovation by his Government. Whilst the honourable member may not be concerned about people, I am. The honourable member for Murray advocated an identity card system. It is a strange advocacy, because I recall the trenchant criticism which came from the then Opposition, the now Government, during the debate on Medibank, when it was suggested that such a card would be used in the Medibank system. I also note that tax records are to be more readily used by the Department in ascertaining the incomes and otherwise of recipients of unemployment benefit. This would seem to be an unwarranted invasion into confidentiality which is a further breaking down of what has been an area where people could confidently expect privacy. I am interested that the Government finds this an area for money saving. It is more interesting when one remembers that in the area where the Government’s supporters cheat the Government—tax dodging at a company level—a report was presented to this Parliament in 1962 and was never acted upon. It was conveniently buried.

Mr Donald Cameron—Where did you get this information about tax information being made available?

Mr SCHOLES—From the Minister’s statement. I suggest that the honourable member read it; it may be a great idea. The honourable member for Griffith has talked about telephone tapping; he may well talk about tax tapping.

Mr Street—This has been in operation for over 20 years.

Mr SCHOLES—The Minister has said in his statement that the practice will be widened. This is a matter which I consider serious. The Government has acknowledged that the present levels of unemployment are likely to last for at least another 2 years and may become a permanent feature. In these circumstances, to create a situation where substantial numbers of persons will be required to leave country and provincial areas to settle in capital cities in order to obtain a meagre unemployment benefit—which would make the move uneconomic in any case—is to institute a policy of demanding that every well educated person living in a non-metropolitan area will be required to expect that he will leave that area if he cannot find a job there. The basic problems of provincial areas throughout Australia—in every State of Australia—is that job opportunities do not exist for well-educated people. It is a fact of life that many people like to live in a situation in which they are surrounded by, and living in close proximity to, their immediate and general family. But the requirements of this work test mean a compulsory population shift to the capital cities which will be instituted on the threat of economic starvation. That this threat will be used is beyond question.

I return to the point that I made before. I do not believe that persons over 18 years of age should be unreasonably expected to leave their areas of domicile unless they can be guaranteed permanent employment in the place to which they are moved. I certainly disagree with the proposition that young girls should be forced to take itinerant jobs in areas in which accommodation cannot be guaranteed for them. I do not believe that any self-respecting parent would accept that proposition either. I do not object to the Government seeking out and dealing with those people who would beat the system. In every area where benefits are to be obtained there will always be people who will try to beat the system. It does not matter whether one takes the case of unemployment benefits, social service payments, repatriation pensions or income tax payments; there is always someone who is smart enough to beat the system. In the field of income tax, people make a fortune out of writing books on how to beat the system. Apparently that does not concern the Government at all. However, the Government is concerned to take steps to tighten eligibility for unemployment benefits which are politically acceptable and easy to sell to people in the community who, as I have said, believe that the other bloke is a cheat, not themselves. The Government believes that is can make political capital in this way.

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

Mr HODGES (Petrie) (5.27)—It is not normally my procedure to refer to the lack of numbers in the House but in a debate as important as this one I believe that it is quite significant to mention it. (Quorum formed). I remember an old friend of mine, who was incidentally an Australian Labor Party supporter, saying to me after he had scored a point in a rather tough debate: ‘It is an old dog for a hard road and it is foot-paths for puppies’. I accept that the illustrious honourable member for Hindmarsh (Mr Clyde Cameron) is the old dog and that I am the puppy
on the footpath. He scored a good point in drawing attention to the state of the House. I was about to make the point that there is so little interest in this debate on the part of the Opposition. I think this is an appalling state of affairs. Most members of the Opposition have now walked out of the chamber again: At no stage were there any more than 7 members of the Opposition present during this debate.

The Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations (Mr Street) treats this matter with the utmost sincerity of approach. He places a great deal of importance on this issue. To the best of my knowledge there were no debates on ministerial statements when the Labor Party was in government. If there were any—I cannot recall them—they were surely held on rare occasions. Even in the short time that this Government has been in office we have seen many debates on ministerial statements. I support the statement by the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations. There has been gross abuse of the payment of unemployment benefits. Of course the objective is to reduce the abuse by tightening the unemployment benefit work test. These abuses are not new. The problem was exacerbated by 3 years of Labor administration. To illustrate that these problems are not new I refer to the front page of the Brisbane Telegraph dated Friday 14 February 1975. The headline is:

Union Head Urges Dole Cut

The article states:

State secretary of the Transport Workers’ Union, Mr Arch Bevis, said some jobless people were bloated and did not want to work.

The article further said:

‘I think the Government should consider cutting back the existing benefits to make people want to get work,’ he said.

I remind the House that that was when the Labor Party formed the government. The article continues:

‘Some unemployed running around at the moment are the best-fed and the best-dressed among us.

‘They can afford to run a car, go to the theatre, and meet their drinking and putting commitments.’

Mr Calder—Who said that?

Mr HODGES—The Queensland secretary of the Transport Workers’ Union, Mr Arch Bevis. The article continued:

‘If my contention can be proved, and I believe it can, then the Government should reduce the present dole rates,’ he said.

I wish also to quote a passage from the West-Australian attributed to the honourable member for Hindmarsh who was then the Minister for Labour. The headline is:

Cameron’s Warning to Slackers

The article reads:

The Minister for Labour, Mr Cameron, warned last night that ‘ slackers’ might lose the right to unemployment benefits.

He said he was giving thought to reducing unemployment benefits for people who were out of work and refused to be retrained for other jobs.

The article continued:

‘I’ve got no sympathy for people who can be described as the professional unemployed person, who just won’t work and who treat unemployment benefits as being a suitable or satisfactory alternative to working.’

Later he is reported as saying:

‘I want to get rid of slackers.’

The work test was tightened in mid January. There was to be no unemployment benefit for those people who were not genuinely seeking employment, who decided that they would move to new locations. I suggest to the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations that people who come into this category—it is obvious when talking to managers of Commonwealth Employment Service offices that there are a number of people in this category—should be on listings of all such people compiled by the various Commonwealth Employment offices around Australia and sent to the regional offices for distribution Australia-wide. To illustrate I shall cite an example that came from one of these offices. In a matter of a couple of months 7 people from Tasmania, two from South Australia, six from Victoria and two from New South Wales registered at a particular office. In all cases these applicants, over a period of from one to ten years, had declined, refused referral to or left 10 to 118 jobs. In normal circumstances these people are taken on face value when they apply for unemployment benefits and invariably receive that benefit, sometimes for lengthy periods, before sufficient information can be passed to the department of Social Security to stop payment of the benefits. If this information were available per medium of these compiled lists on the day these people apply for benefits obviously in many instances they would not receive benefits.

I want to refer also to the manner of presentation for work of some of the applicants. When they apply for a job sometimes their language is foul, to put it mildly, and their dress is anything but neat and tidy. It is not necessary for applicants for all work to dress in suits, as has been mentioned today in this debate by members of the Opposition, but they should be neat and tidy. In many instances they have been known to attack other employees early in their work
period, to exhibit go-slow tactics and deliberately to make mistakes in their employment so that the employer will see fit to sack them at an early date. The unemployment benefit work test was tightened so that benefits would not be provided to those who sought occupations for which they were not qualified or in which vacancies would rarely if ever be available in their areas of residence. I thought that these were particularly sensible provisions in the changes which were made in mid-January.

I want to refer to the fact that many people have refused work because they will not travel. I have had many cases of this character referred to me. I have found on investigation that people have refused to accept satisfactory work because it has involved a 15-minute or 20-minute walk from a railway station. These people will not spend any more than perhaps half an hour in travelling to work when other people travel up to 2 hours to their place of employment. They also claim that the travel is too costly.

I believe that the Commonwealth Employment Service managers are helpful to people looking for employment and as such they are acting as employment agents. They go out of their way to find employment for applicants. They work with social workers, service clubs, ministers of religion and all manner of bodies in the community in their special efforts to obtain employment for most of the applicants. They are genuine people who, I believe, in the main act very fairly.

I want to make the point that people who voluntarily want to change their jobs and risk being unemployed can do so without any fear that they will not be entitled to unemployment benefits. It could be that a person might change his job because the work he is undertaking is too strenuous—in other words, he is running a health risk by continuing employment in his present job. A person might also be forced to change his job and place of employment because of special family circumstances. Let me assure these people that special consideration will be given to them and they will be able to receive unemployment benefits. I believe that single people should be prepared to travel a reasonable distance from their place of living to another place where abundant employment is available. I want to emphasise again, as has been done in this debate by supporters of the Government and by the Minister, that people who are genuine work seekers will not be disadvantaged by the new rules.

In the short amount of time left to me I want to point out that at the moment at the present rate of unemployment we have annual outgoings of some $480m which represents something of the order of 2.5 per cent of total government income. This amount of money is being paid at the moment to some 200,000 people or 3.3 per cent of the work force who are receiving unemployment benefits.

I submit that everyone should be prepared to work and not to sponge on the other fellow, should not be a burden on the community and should not want to live on handouts that come directly out of the pockets of other people. The standard rate of unemployment benefit of $38.75 is in actual fact almost the equivalent of the weekly tax that is paid by a person without dependants, after the rebate, who receives the average weekly wage of $172. A man, his wife and 3 children would require the equivalent of the weekly tax paid by 2 people on average weekly earnings. I submit to the House that dole exploitation is a multi-million dollar racket for which there are few prosecutions. I hope that the Minister will look at this matter because today there is very little deterrent to exploiters of the dole. Shoplifters can be prosecuted for the theft of goods worth a few dollars. In my view there should be more prosecutions for dole exploitation.

I want to talk a little about employees and employers because as an employer I know that many people are claiming that if it is not one person who will be employed it will be another. As an employer I can say that employers become fed up time and time again to see people leaving their employ after they have been trained for a job. When eventually an employee leaves, in many cases the employer will not be bothered to replace that person. I believe that the measure that has been introduced to deny unemployment benefits for 6 weeks to a person who has voluntarily left a job is a very good one.

It is a popular misconception that all employees who leave their jobs are replaced. Employers get sick and tired of training people only to find that these people walk out of the job. In many instances they do so at the end of their training period. However, the new measures will not adversely affect genuine employment seekers. Of course, little has been stated about the right of appeal. I want to make the point that there is a right of appeal to an appeals tribunal. A pamphlet entitled 'Your Right to Appeal' is available from CES offices. Everyone who has been refused unemployment benefits has that right.
I have had put to me the proposal—as no doubt have many other honourable members—that those who receive unemployment benefits should carry out some work in the community for local authorities or for State or Federal departments. It is proposed that these people should work for one or two days a week or perhaps one week in four, depending on what benefit they receive. I believe that if one talks to average Australians one finds that they want to work, that they want to produce something for the funds that they receive.

Mr CLYDE CAMERON (Hindmarsh) (5.42)—This is a very important debate which concerns a subject about which many people are worried. It is not only those who are unemployed who are worried but also those who fear that they may become unemployed and those who resent the idea that people who work should be forced to pay taxes to keep in unemployment benefits those who deliberately refuse to work. So this is not a black and white issue. I would commend to honourable members the speech of the honourable member for Murray (Mr Lloyd) who criticised everyone else for leaving the chamber as soon as they had spoken but who I notice has already left himself. The honourable member spoiled a fairly good speech by what he said in his concluding three or four sentences, although some of what he said earlier did contain an element of truth.

When I was Minister for Labour and later Minister for Labor and Immigration I publicly expressed great concern about the activities of some people, a very small number of unemployed, who were voluntarily unemployed. These people were unemployed by choice. They were not great in number but to have any is to have too many. On 3 occasions I sought to have the work test tightened in such a way that such would not be possible. There is nobody in the community who will support a Party that supports the dole bludger or the man who will not work. Let us get that clear: There are no votes in supporting people who deliberately will not work. At the same time honourable members opposite will find that there are no votes in going to the other extreme, in imposing penalties upon people who are out of work, just because they are out of work.

I repeat that when I was the Minister I made it clear that unemployed persons should not be allowed to leave a locality where work is available to live in a place where it is not. Some unemployed young men left Newcastle where they could have got work in the steel mills to seek jobs on the north coast of New South Wales and on the Gold Coast of Queensland. The number of men who did this in respect of the Gold Coast was not great; it was not nearly as many as the newspapers made out. I condemned their action in leaving a place where they could have got a job to go to a place where they knew they could not get one. I told officers of my Department that I wanted them to take special steps to see that this practice was stamped out. I said that people should not be permitted to behave or dress deliberately in such a way as to repel prospective employers from employing them. A few isolated cases occurred in which young men and women did behave and did dress and did arrange to smell in such a way as would cause people not to employ them. There were not many but there were some who thought it was smart to do exactly that, and the public will not support that sort of thing.

I said that people should not be allowed to refuse work similar to that which they had been accustomed to doing, but I did not take it any further. I did not say that they should be refused unemployment benefits because they would not take work to which they had not been accustomed. It is quite wrong, as proposed now, to make a toolmaker or a tradesman or a technician or a professional man take employment that is beneath his normal status and beneath the normal wages he would earn simply to punish him for being unemployed.

I said that single girls of tender age should not be compelled to leave their parental homes to work in localities away from home, and no fairminded person would take issue with me on that. I said that no married man should be required to work in localities where he would have to live away from home and away from his wife and family, and I hope that no one in this place will take issue with me on that.

I said that no one should be required to work for less than the going rate. If I may pause to explain what is meant by the going rate, it is the actual rate paid as distinct from the award rate. At the time of the minimum wage case in 1973, when the minimum wage was increased to $60 the going rate in some awards for an adult male was $47. The awards were never updated because once the award rate fell behind the minimum wage some of the unions concerned saw no point in having the award rates updated. It would not have been reasonable to say to a person who was out of work: ‘You have to take a job as a carriager cleaner for $47 a week’, when the minimum wage was $60 although the award rate for an adult male carriage cleaner was only $47. I
do not put that as a specific example of what actually happened, or of a particular award, but it illustrates the sort of point I am making. I do not believe that even where the award rate is above the minimum rate it should be possible to compel a person to accept it.

Let me give an example. The award rate a few months ago for a fitter and turner was $106 but in some industries the fitter and turner was entitled to a $60-a-week over award payment. Imperial Chemical Industries was one example of that; perhaps it was the only place where a fitter and turner received as much as $60, but in most of the metropolitan foundries and metal shops the going rate was very much higher than the award rate. Again, I hope that nobody in this Parliament would say that it is proper to push fitters and turners into a workshop where the going rate is $160 a week when the award rate is only $120. I hope that the award rate will not be treated as the cast iron criterion for determining whether or not a person will be put out of work. When I was Minister I always said that I would not have a person forced to take work in a place that was dangerous, in a place where the environment was injurious to his health or in an industry where there was an unresolved industrial dispute.

All of the things I have mentioned will indicate to the Government the intricacies and complexities of trying to fix guidelines that will be fair and will not cause a backlash against those people who believe that it can be done simply by altering the rules. It is true that I asked almost constantly for a review of the guidelines. I thought that it was quite wrong to have a dichotomy of control with the Department of Social Security making the final decision on whether or not a person would get unemployment benefits, and with my own Department being permitted to decide only whether certain guidelines had been complied with. It would have been much better for the Department of Labour and Immigration, as it then was, to be the only department administering unemployment benefits, with its decisions being binding on people in receipt of unemployment benefits or seeking them. The honourable member for Murray (Mr Lloyd) asserted that the Labor Government would have accepted the refinements to the guidelines recommended by the interdepartmental committee. I do not believe that it would have. I can certainly speak for myself and say that I would not have accepted them had I remained Minister for Labour and Immigration.

I have referred to the abuse of unemployment benefits that occurred on the Gold Coast. I arranged for a study to be made of unemployment there. The tripartite committee that was set up had on it a representative of the Queensland Trades and Labour Council, a representative of the employers and, if I remember correctly, the regional director for Brisbane, Mr Sharp. The committee made an on-the-spot investigation of the actual level of employment on the Gold Coast, and I was surprised to find that the level of abuse was nothing like the level that I personally believed existed and certainly nothing like the level of abuse said by the newspapers to exist. There is always a tendency to exaggerate these things. If one case is found it becomes ten; the next person makes it one hundred, and before you know where you are members of the Liberal and National Country Parties are talking about tens of thousands of people who are allegedly bludging on the dole.

In regard to referring people to work, there are 31,000 job vacancies in Australia today and only 9000 of those are for unskilled workers. When those 9000 jobs are taken up, what is going to happen to the balance of 216,000 people who are receiving unemployment benefits? Is the Government going to punish the first 30,000 who refuse to go away from home or accept lower wages or bad working conditions and then say to the others: 'There are no more jobs to offer you so you can go gaily on as you have in the past.' There have been plenty of examples of serious abuses of unemployment benefits, and I refer not only to the sort of abuse that occurs when one person gets unemployment benefits when he is not entitled to them or should not get them because he is voluntarily unemployed. There are not many of those cases—although there should not be any. But there are cases of people who fraudulently apply for unemployment benefits in several names. When I was Minister for Labour and Immigration instances occurred in Melbourne and in Sydney in which in isolated cases one person was drawing unemployment benefits in as many as 7 different names. The Collingwood office of the Commonwealth Employment Service had to call in an officer from another office to help out when somebody was sick and that officer happened to recognise a person who came in as being somebody who was already getting unemployment benefits at his own CES office. This goes on, and I do not know how the Government is going to stamp it out. I do not know how it will ever be able to stamp it out.

We are short of statistics, but that is not the fault of the Department. That is the fault of
governments—this Government, the Government before it and the Government before that. What we urgently need in the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations is an up-to-date, computerised method of keeping track of job opportunities and people who are unemployed. It also needs the kind of computerised assistance which in America and more enlightened countries is available to the people doing the sort of work that our people in the Commonwealth Employment Service have to do. Our people get virtually nothing at all to help them.

It is of no use for the honourable member for Casey (Mr Falconer) to say that change of status is unimportant. It may not be important to him because he thinks he will be in this place for the rest of his life, but he will find his status changed after the next election and then he will find that change of status is important. The speech that he made will do more towards guaranteeing a change of his status than anything else that he could possibly do. Is the Government really serious in saying that a toolmaker is to be made to dig trenches? Is it serious in saying that an architect is to be made to do labouring work? Perhaps in the case of an architect this Government will only make him become a draftsman? We cannot distinguish between different employment categories. We have to have a rule that is fair to everybody, a rule that applies equally to everybody.

Mr Sullivan—Labouring is honourable work.

Mr CLYDE CAMERON—Of course it is honourable work.

Mr Sullivan—There is dignity in any labour.

Mr CLYDE CAMERON—There is dignity in any labour, that is true; and there is more dignity in labour when one gets more money for it.

Mr Sullivan—But the architect is not being treated differently.

Mr CLYDE CAMERON—I agree with that. He is not. It is nonsense for honourable members opposite to say that it is better to take any job at $140 a week than to be on unemployment benefit. Under the same rules, this would permit a man—

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

Debate (on motion by Mr Ruddock) adjourned.
The general approach of the Government's policy is to phase down gradually the current very high local content production of the established manufacturers while gradually building up the local content of Toyota and Nissan vehicles. These 2 companies wish to have a stable long term future here and have for some time pursued the goal of entry into the Australian market as manufacturers. The plans in force in the 1960s and early 1970s required manufacturers to incorporate specified levels of local content, either 95 per cent or 85 per cent, in each individual model. This left manufacturers little freedom to vary their product mixes in accordance with changing market demand. At the 95 per cent level, costs of local componentry became so high that vehicles were non-competitive with imports. If we returned to that level now, the position would be even worse, because of the sharp acceleration in Australian costs of production in recent years. The industry's prospects for long term viability would be seriously jeopardised. The plan introduced on 1 January 1975 required participants, after a 4-year transitional period, to achieve 85 per cent local content on a company average basis. Vehicle builders thus have a greater degree of freedom to purchase components from the most economic source while still being required to obtain most of their requirements from local manufacture. In addition, the averaging provision allows the vehicle builders flexibility in determining the local content levels of each model, and in deciding which components—panels, engines, etc.—they will source locally and which ones they will import. These provisions will assist manufacturers to contain costs and prices, and in the longer term reduce the industry's present need for a high level of protection against imports. The local industry's ability to contain cost increases should also, in time, enhance the prospects for significant exports of automotive products. The industry would then be in a better position to participate in current developments towards production of so-called 'world' or 'regional' cars.

Two companies, Toyota and Nissan, applied to enter that plan. They had sought in 1972 to enter the former 85 per cent individual model plan, but the change of government in 1972 and the subsequent decision to review motor vehicle policy prevented those applications from being acted on. The 2 companies have secured a significant share of the local market, and they wish to have assurance of a stable and growing market here in the future. They see this as requiring a deepening of their involvement in the Australian
industry, in which they have been solidly established as assemblers for some years.

Because of the strong demand in the Australian market for Toyota and Nissan products, their exclusion from local manufacture would create a continuing need for import restrictions. This would be contrary to the GATT and could damage our relationship with Japan. On the other hand, their entry into manufacture would provide additional business for Australian component manufacturers and additional employment opportunities. It is therefore highly desirable that the two companies manufacture in Australia and become part of the local industry. To reach 85 per cent local content, Toyota and Nissan will need to procure 4-cylinder engines in Australia. At present there is no local manufacture of 4-cylinder engines, although General Motors-Holden’s Pty Ltd has one under test and announced on 4 March 1976 that it proposes to go ahead with its production.

The previous Government initiated discussions between Chrysler, Toyota, Nissan and the AIDC on the possible formation of a consortium to manufacture 4-cylinder engines at the Chrysler site in Adelaide. This was intended to make better use of existing resources, safeguard employment in Adelaide and achieve some Australian equity in the vehicle manufacturing sector of the industry. The assistance arrangements we have decided upon following our review are designed to achieve an appropriate balance between the competing objectives of maintaining a viable industry producing at high levels of local content and ensuring consumers access to reliable, economical and reasonably priced vehicles. However, if a viable motor vehicle industry is to continue in Australia considerable changes will be needed in the industry’s structure and the nature of manufacturing operations in Australia.

It is the desire of Government to ensure that necessary changes in the industry are brought about in a way that can be sustained by the economy. The Government’s policy has been developed to ensure change occurs in a manageable and controlled manner. Consideration is being given to appropriate structural adjustment measures to assist an orderly transition. The Government has decided that its long term objectives for the passenger motor vehicle industry can best be achieved by an 85 per cent company average local content plan supported by appropriate tariff arrangements. In order to ensure the stability required for industry planning, the 85 per cent plan will operate until 31 December 1984.

While deciding to support the industry by an 85 per cent local content plan the Government has decided to introduce some modifications to the plan recommended by the Industries Assistance Commission in its report of 31 October 1975 on Motor Vehicles—Import Restrictions. Specifically, the Government has accepted the IAC recommendations that duty concessions be available under the plan without the need to pursue complementation arrangements, that is, existing manufacturers’ basic by-law concession under the plan be increased to 15 per cent; that existing reversion control procedures for components be abolished on 31 December 1976; that local content of components be determined after a 2-year phase-in period on the basis of the cost to the vehicle producer less the value of any parts imported by the component manufacturer; and that plan participants should have the option of including exported vehicles in their calculations of local content or excluding such production from the plan altogether. In addition to these modifications to the plan, the Government has also decided that, as the basic by-law concession has been extended from 10 per cent to 15 per cent to cover all imported components, complementation concessions will no longer be available. Consistent with the decision to include actual content in local content calculations the Government has decided that component manufacturing programs would cease from 1 January 1978. The Government will also continue to encourage all moves by manufacturers designed to increase component commonality. The basic by-law concessions available to new entrants under the plan will be the same as those decided by the previous Government.

The Government has approved the applications of AMI Limited, on behalf of Toyota and Nissan (Australia) Pty Ltd to enter the 85 per cent company average local content plan, subject to these companies sourcing their 4-cylinder engines under arrangements that are acceptable to the Government. In relation to the proposed Adelaide engine consortium on which extensive negotiations have already taken place, the Government would like to see a rational development of 4-cylinder engine production in Australia rather than fragmented production in several locations. Consequently, the Government has authorised the Minister for Industry and Commerce to initiate discussions with both established and prospective new manufacturers to explore possible arrangements for production of all Australian requirements of 4-cylinder engines, including the proposal for their production in Adelaide.
The Government wishes to finalise these discussions as quickly as possible in order that the industry will be able to plan ahead. Accordingly the question of 4-cylinder engine production will be reconsidered by the Government by the end of April. The Government wishes to make it quite clear that the AIDC is free to decide on the basis of its normal criteria whether or not to participate in any 4-cylinder engine consortium that may be formed. The Government has also accepted the recommendation of the IAC relating to long term tariff arrangements applying to imports of passenger motor vehicles. From 1 January 1978 the tariff trigger mechanism will operate so that when the 12 months moving average of imported passenger vehicle registrations falls to 20 per cent, or below, of total registration of passenger motor vehicles, the duty rate on such vehicles will fall to 35 per cent. When the 12 months moving average of imports rises above 20 per cent of registrations, the tariff will rise to 45 per cent. A differential of 10 per cent between duties applying to completely built-up or c.b.u. vehicles and completely knocked-down or c.k.d. vehicles will be maintained in the long term.

To prevent any short term disruption in the passenger motor vehicle industry the Government has accepted the recommendations of the IAC in regard to short term arrangements. This means that quantitative restrictions on completely built-up passenger vehicle imports will continue at the same level as at present, that is, 90,000 units per annum, until 31 December 1976 at which time they will cease, and quantitative restrictions on light commercial vehicles will be lifted immediately. Imports of completely built-up passenger vehicles will be dutiable at a rate of 45 per cent up to and including 31 December 1977. The Government has also decided that tariff quotas and the 30 per cent tariff completely knocked-down vehicle imports will be retained until 31 December 1976. On 1 January 1977 the duty of completely knocked-down vehicles will be increased to 35 per cent and quotas will be removed. Existing arrangements in respect of New Zealand will not be changed pending completion of the present negotiations with New Zealand. Goods of Canadian origin will be dutiable at the general rates of duty except for those goods which currently receive special preferential treatment.

COMMERCIAL MOTOR VEHICLES

The Government has also decided the assistance arrangements to apply to commercial motor vehicles, including 4-wheel drive vehicles. Subject to maintaining commitments under the GATT, the Government has accepted the IAC’s recommendations in respect of most types of commercial motor vehicle over 2.72 tonnes gross vehicle weight or g.v.w. It has, however, varied the rates of duty recommended in respect of most assembled vehicles of 10.16 tonnes gross vehicle weight and heavier, and trailers for articulated vehicles. The Government’s decision will mean that assembled and unassembled general purpose vehicles from 2.72 tonnes to under 10.16 tonnes gross vehicle weight, assembled and unassembled prime movers under 10.16 tonnes gross vehicle weight, and any unassembled vehicles above 10.16 tonnes gross vehicle weight will be dutiable at 25 per cent. Assembled vehicles of 10.16 tonnes gross vehicle weight and above, and certain trailers for articulated vehicles, will be dutiable at 22 1/2 per cent.

In relation to certain special purpose vehicles, that is, dump trucks, dredging and excavating machines, the truck portion of mobile cranes, and air-cushion vehicles the duty will be 25 per cent. Crane superstructures when imported incorporated in a vehicle will be dutiable at the rate which applies to such superstructures when imported separately, namely 35 per cent. Four-wheel drive vehicles under 2.72 tonnes gross vehicle weight will be dutiable at 25 per cent and light commercial vehicles under 2.72 tonnes, not being passenger motor vehicle derivatives, will be dutiable at 35 per cent if imported assembled and 25 per cent if imported unassembled.

The by-law equity scheme principle will continue to be used to determine whether commercial motor vehicle components should be accorded by-law concessions. It has been decided that a rate of 25 per cent will apply to original equipment components. This rate will also apply forthwith to replacement components. Implementation of the Government’s decision will mean little change to the rates of duty currently applying to assembled vehicles between 2.72 and 10.16 tonnes gross vehicle weight or to unassembled vehicles. There will however, be an increase in the rates of duties applying to assembled light commercial vehicles under 2.72 tonnes gross vehicle weight and to most assembled vehicles over 10.16 tonnes gross vehicle weight. Import licensing in respect of used, second-hand and disposals commercial motor vehicles will not be extended in the manner recommended by the IAC but will continue to apply to used, second-hand or disposals 4-wheel drive vehicles.

In reaching its decision on the IAC’s report, the Government was aware that some sectors of the industry had expressed concern that in
present circumstances the rates recommended by
the Commission in September 1974 may not be
adequate to sustain local production of all types
of vehicles. In this regard, the Temporary Assist-
ance Authority machinery is available to any sec-
tor of the industry which can substantiate, on the
basis of normal criteria, a prima facie case for the
need for additional temporary assistance. I
present the following paper:
Motor Vehicle Policy—Ministerial Statement, 30 March
1976.

I move:
That the House take note of the paper.

DEBATE (on motion by Mr Scholes)
adjourned.

UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT AND THE
WORK TEST
Ministerial Statement

Debate resumed.

Mr RUDDOCK (Parramatta) (8.21)—The House is debating a statement delivered last
week by the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations (Mr Street) on the unem-
ployment benefit work test and the measures announced by the Government designed to
tighten up that test. Honourable members will
recall that in January of this year certain
modifications to the work test were announced,
particularly in relation to the work test itself, the
way in which people ought to present themselves
for employment and the wider occupations for
which people would be required to seek work.
The further measures that have now been
announced include the extension of the range of
jobs to which beneficiaries may be referred after
they have applied for this benefit, and before
they obtain it, the requirement of an unemployed
person to lodge an income statement personally
with a Commonwealth Employment Service
office before payment is made and the proviso
that the benefit not be paid to school students
during the long vacation. There is also to be a
requirement that a skilled person will not con-
tinue to receive employment benefit 6 weeks
after his registration for employment if he is not
prepared to accept a lesser job for which he is
thought to be suitable. A further amendment
provides that if people voluntarily relinquish
their positions they will not be entitled immedi-
ately to unemployment benefit. The question
which is being discussed is the reasonableness of
those amendments to the work test.

It has become quite clear during this debate
that the Australian Labor Party is divided and
confused in terms of what approach it ought to
adopt to the proposals that have been put for-
ward by the Government. The honourable mem-
ber for Oxley (Mr Hayden) indicated earlier in
the debate that his approach to the matter is a
moderate one and that the situation would have
been little different if he had been in Govern-
ment and had to make decisions on the same
question. The honourable member for Gellibrand (Mr Willis) and the honourable
member for Burke (Mr Keith Johnson) saw it as a
divisive matter. They saw it as a plot on the
part of the Government to try to bring about
differences in the community, to try to bring
about differences in the community, to try to cre-
ate divisions and to indicate that there were
people in the community who were not entitled
to this benefit, that the Government was calling
them names, and so on. In fact, in my view, the
honourable member for Burke almost tried to
resurrect the matter in old class warfare terms.
The honourable member for Corio (Mr Scholes)
saw the matter in economic terms. He saw it
merely as an instrument of economic policy
designed to try to save the Government money in
terms of its proposals to cut costs across the
board. Quite frankly, I do not think that the ap-
proach of the Government can be summed up in
any of those terms, but if I were to look for the
closest description I would probably plump for
that of the honourable member for Oxley, who
saw the amendments being made to the scheme
by the Government on the recommendation of
its officers and its departmental representatives
as being not unreasonable.

Mr Martin—Mr Deputy Speaker, I draw your
attention to the state of the House. There are
hardly any Liberals in the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Bonnett)—A
quorum has been called for. Ring the bells.

(Quorum formed)

Mr RUDDOCK—The honourable member
for Banks, who called for the quorum, voiced
some criticism about the number of honourable
members on this side of the House who were
present to hear my speech. Whilst I am grateful
for the large number of colleagues who have
joined me now, I would like to point out to them
that there were only 4 members of the Australian
Labor Party present when the quorum was
called for, although we are discussing an impor-
tant matter which concerns them and their con-
stituents, and that there are now only five
present. Only one more member of the Labor
Party has since joined us in the House to discuss
this important subject. I think it is a reflection
upon the state of this nation and the state of the
Labor Party and the way in which its members are divided amongst themselves that they cannot come into this chamber—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER—Order! I request the honourable member to confine his remarks to the subject matter of the debate.

Mr RUDDOCK—I will most certainly do that, Mr Deputy Speaker. It is very relevant to this debate, which concerns the work tests in relation to the unemployment benefit that is payable to certain people in Australia, to point out that the Government is endeavouring to ensure that only those who are entitled to the benefit should receive it. Nobody has disputed the reasonableness of this proposition. Regrettably nobody in this debate to date, except the honourable member for Hindmarsh (Mr Clyde Cameron), has endeavoured to discuss the conditions that apply to the receipt of this important benefit, and even he spent most of the time in his speech discussing the amendments that were made in January and not the amendments that were announced last week by the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and the Minister for Social Security (Senator Guilfoyle).

Many of the members of the Labor Party who have spoken on this important subject made reference to the campaign that they allege has been waged against dole cheats and bludgers. Except for the words I have just used in this debate, those terms have not been used previously by Liberal-Country Party speakers in this debate. These emotional elements have been introduced into the debate by Labor Party speakers who are endeavouring to create an emotional atmosphere about the amendments that have been made, and quite properly made, on the recommendation of the departmental officials who, at the request of the previous Government, had the opportunity to consider this matter.

The Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations has expressed a very moderate view. Anyone who goes through his speech—I challenge honourable members opposite to do so—will find that it is not couched in extravagant terms and that it is not couched in the terms that I would be liable to use in this debate but that it is a responsible speech and a reasonable approach to a very difficult problem. Whilst the Minister has been responsible in that way, I would like to draw the attention of honourable members to the sorts of terms used by honourable members opposite on the same subject. I refer to the approach of the honourable member for Oxley. When he was the Minister for Social Security the headline 'Blitz' soon to catch dole cheats' appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald. If one went through his statement one would find that he used terms which were designed to evoke an emotional response. The newspaper article reported the honourable member for Oxley as having said:

If any people are abusing the system, they will be brought to court.

The newspaper article continued:

If people were going to be irresponsible he had no reservations about taking serious action, unless there were extenuating circumstances, but he believed that—

I see that this report is not correct in the language used; quite frankly, there are some typographical errors. The honourable member for Oxley was there using this same form of emotional language designed to evoke a response for his own benefit.

Mr Newman—Who was that?

Mr RUDDOCK—It was the honourable member for Oxley, a former Treasurer, who made those remarks. Honourable members ought to recall the changes to the work test which were initiated in 1973. Before December 1972 the work test required that people take employment and perform work offered to them which, having regard to their abilities and qualifications, was considered to be suitable in its nature, conditions and location to be undertaken. These provisions applied even when work of the type for which the applicant possessed particular experience or for which he had a personal preference was not available. He also was required to transfer his union membership and, in the case of a tradesman, to accept work outside his trade.

They are the words used in the work test which applied prior to 1972. They were changed by the former Labor Government, when it came into office, to require people to be willing to undertake only work offered to a person in his usual occupation or of an equivalent kind. So we had this remarkable extension of the work test which suggested that people should sit back and wait until the type of job in which they had been working previously became available to them. Nobody would suggest that that is a reasonable point of view. In fact, if honourable members were to look at the French system, which includes an unemployment insurance scheme, they would find that benefits are available on a very limited range of conditions. Some of the conditions are:

Unemployment benefits are paid to jobless persons who (a) have not left their work without a valid reason, (b) have
worked a minimum number of days (91) or hours (520) during the year preceding their unemployment and (c) are registered as job applicants.

Those benefits are paid for only one year to persons under 50 years of age and for 609 days to persons 50 years of age and over. Payments terminate on conditions similar to those which apply here: If a recipient starts a new job or if he refuses an appropriate job offered by the National Employment Agency or ignores its notices, payments terminate. They are the sorts of tests which are applied in other countries, to which we are often referred, in order to establish proper working conditions. Often honourable members opposite are prepared to draw our attention only to those matters which are beneficial. Yet, if they were to look at conditions such as those which apply in France, they would find that the work test in France is much more stringent and benefits are much more likely to be taken away on conditions which are much more onerous than those applying here.

Clearly honourable members opposite are prepared to look at the employment benefit as a right. I do not quite see it in that way. I see the payment of benefits by governments in any circumstances as a privilege, and people ought to be grateful for the fact that others are prepared to allow their money to be taken away by means of taxation and used for that purpose. That money should be made available on proper conditions—conditions which government is satisfied are reasonable—so that when people are obtaining the benefit of a privilege of that type they are not doing so as an avoidance of social responsibility. Social responsibility does not mean rights in the hands of some people; it means that the privilege about which I speak is available. Genuine needs, not self-induced conditions, must be met. If one looks at the sorts of matters that have been mentioned in this debate and the conditions that are being brought in by the Government on this occasion, one finds that those conditions require people not to self-induce that state of unemployment, and I think that is a very reasonable approach.

I would like to draw attention to one more condition which is of particular concern to me and which has been mentioned in the newspapers to some degree. It concerns the elimination of students from the class of people who are eligible for the unemployment benefit when they are likely to go back to school or university in the following year. Although that will not apply until next year and will not induce any immediate savings, it is clear that there is a matter of principle which honourable members ought to consider. I believe that it is an important principle that during the school vacation people should not be able to enrol for the unemployment benefit and be kept by the state when they intend to go back to university or to school to pursue their studies. That is one of the most important matters to consider, and honourable members opposite have not referred to it during this debate. They have not canvassed the reasonableness of that condition or the reasonableness of the other conditions that we seek to impose by these amendments to the scheme and the work test. If honourable members opposite are going to continue throughout this debate to ignore the statement of the Minister and to ignore the particular matters that constitute the context of that statement and intend only to argue in emotive terms, I believe that they are doing Australia and their Party a grave disservice.

Mr CONNOR (Cunningham) (8.36)—I enter this debate with considerable emotion and with considerable sympathy for a gravely underprivileged group of Australian people. The young man who has just resumed his seat, the honourable member for Parramatta (Mr Ruddock), was not born when the last Depression occurred. As one of the oldest men in this House, I well remember it and the scars that it left on the body politic of the Australian people. Let us examine who are the people to whom the honourable member referred in such academic, rigid and sophisticated terms. I refer honourable members to an article which appeared in the National Times and which dealt with a study published by the Brotherhood of St Laurence, the best friend the poor of Melbourne ever had. It is an organisation honoured and respected even by the Liberals. The newspaper article states:

The most informed study to date was published in October, 1975, by the Brotherhood of St Laurence in Melbourne. Researched by Graeme Brewer and called, Workers without Jobs: A Study of a group of unemployed people, it tells us who the unemployed are:

More men than women are unemployed, but proportionate to their numbers in the work force, women’s rate of unemployment is higher.

Approximately one in three unemployed persons is under 21 years of age.

Most have left school early and have few work skills; one in three have had no secondary schooling.

Just over half of the unemployed are migrants, with southern Europeans disproportionately represented.

Almost two-thirds are unable to find work for at least two months.

Including spouses and dependent children of the unemployed, about 400 000 people rely on unemployment benefits as their only income.

From interviews with a sampling of 160 people registering with the CES, Mr Brewer was able to add information
about the financial situation of the unemployed which is not collected by official figures. He found that 83 per cent of unemployed people had earned less than $105 take-home pay at their last job, and that almost 40 per cent had earned $80 or less. (This is partly accounted for by the high representation of juniors among the unemployed.)

Mr Brewer found that 67 per cent of the unemployed had lost their jobs as a direct function of the downturn in the economy.

Later I will have something to say about who was responsible and is continuing to be responsible for that. The article continues:

Nearly 7 per cent had been dismissed, while the rest had resigned for reasons such as ill health, moving to another locality or family crisis. Very few of his sample could be described as voluntarily unemployed.

This picture does not fit readily with the popular image of thousands of bludgers avoiding work and living it up on the dole. Instead it suggests that to be unemployed is to be young or a migrant, to have few saleable job skills and to be forced to live below the poverty line on meagre unemployment benefits. No doubt, as Mr Brewer points out, generally speaking persons possessing job skills are untouched by the current unemployment crisis. I speak for my own area where, in the Wollongong and Warilla employment areas, there are 7801 people unemployed of whom 6630 are in receipt of the unemployment benefit. The national percentage of those receiving unemployment benefit is 73 per cent. In my constituency it is up around 88 per cent. That is the present situation.

Mr Abel—What did you do in your 3 years in government? What a disgusting record.

Mr CONNOR—We had to deal with the factory fodder that a Government that the honourable member for Evans (Mr Abel) supported brought in to unsatisfactory conditions in heavy industry and we still have those people there, marooned, who would leave if they could to get better jobs elsewhere, if they were available. The euphoria of this Government has passed. In the heady days when we were being bashed by the present Government in an election campaign, under circumstances that would not bear repeating, the present Prime Minister (Mr Malcolm Fraser) promised that there would be no Gold Coast holidays on the family earnings of Australians, no Gold Coast holidays for anyone. That was before the deceptions commenced, before the few promises that were made were welshed on, were reneged. Today history is repeating itself and the hungry '70s are now the shocking '70s. The same techniques are being used in a much more delicate and sophisticated way. The nastiest possible news is broken in the nicest possible fashion by this Government—of course it would be—but the hard and stern realities are the same as they ever were. The remedies being imposed by this Government are excessive. They are socially regressive and economically counter-productive.

We are told of the widespread abuses but there have been 103 prosecutions amongst over 300 000 unemployed. This debate is being commonly referred to by the people of Australia as the dole debate. I call it the dole bludgeoning debate. The dole is to be used as an economic and social bludgeon and weapon. This Government seeks deliberately as a means of controlling employment a pool of unemployed so that it can discipline and smash the trade union movement.

Mr Ruddock—Who created that?

Mr CONNOR—Professor Hytten coined the phrase. He was an economic adviser to the Bank of New South Wales before the honourable member for Parramatta was born. The unavoidable consequences of the misguided anti-inflationary policy of this Government are with us now. Its strategy is to have a long period of unemployment. It cannot do otherwise. But at the same time it can offer subsidies to factory proprietors who do not need them—a 40 per cent subsidy to factory proprietors who find that their equipment is being only 70 per cent utilised. There is no recovery in sight, despite the postponements and despite the recent jawboning of the Prime Minister in Melbourne. The fact is that the people of Australia have been shocked and belted. They are in a state of economic shock and have been that way ever since the former Opposition, which now holds the government benches, refused Supply. The problems are still with us.

Fundamentally it must be remembered that a quarter of the people of Australia depend upon government expenditure. You cannot curtail government expenditure and at the same time expect business to flourish in a normal way. It cannot and it will not. Only a government as obtuse, as backward and as benighted as this one would attempt to continue with the policy it has tried to foist on the Australian people. The scars will be there for a generation. This is in fact a divisive government. It is a union bashing government. It is a labour bating, labour hating government. I see the same people gearing up to use the same tactics as before.

I can remember men standing on the hill outside the steelworks at Port Kembla. The scene was like a Roman slave market. The foreman would say: 'I will take you and you and that fellow over there. The rest can go home until tomorrow'. Things are more enlightened today.
The men are treated better but the principles being applied by this Government are identical.

One-third of the employment in my city comes from heavy industry. It is a firm rule in that industry, and one of long standing, that it will not re-employ any man who has left the industry, for whatever reason. In addition to that, more than half the men are migrants and more than half of them still suffer from substantial language problems. What earthly chance do those men have of travelling one and a half hours daily to Sydney to seek employment? They can be employed only in groups under foremen who can speak their language. What hardships are they to suffer, what humiliations? What is their chance of leaving a job, knowing that if they do they will starve for 6 weeks? After that they will have to go cap in hand to a new employer, if they can find one, and they will be treated like cattle and prisoners. They know that if they leave that next employer they are out and will be on the economic and social scrapheap. It is a disgrace, it is a shame, it is a tragedy, that in the name of dole bludgeoning a government such as this can perpetrate a means test of the type it is imposing upon the people of Australia.

Mr Ruddock—Why do you not discuss the conditions?

Mr CONNOR—The conditions of the test are immaterial; what is important is to whom the test is applied. We are dealing with people without labour skills. I quote now from an article in The National Times of 1 March last which said:

In December, the largest groups of unemployed men were unskilled or semi-skilled, while the largest group of unemployed women were accustomed to or were seeking clerical and administrative work. Many of these jobless people are chasing work which no longer exists and which is unlikely to be revived in the future.

The unskilled and school-leavers with no job experience are both vulnerable. They cannot offer training or a work record—both qualities in increasing demand in a workforce relying more heavily on skill.

They are the victims of a technological age which requires education and work skills (or the ability to adapt to new requirements).

Unless they can be trained for a job in demand, then many of the people now unemployed are going to find that they have already embarked upon their life's occupation. Unemployment benefits are small compensation for having no job—and in the present bludgeon-bashing climate, are a stigma of social worthlessness.

Even the Sydney Morning Herald, in an editorial article last week, attacked this Government scathingly for what it was doing and said that the very unemployed that the Government's economic policy created deserved sympathy and assistance. Shame on this Government. It is a disgrace to Australia. It is a divisive government. It will divide Australia into 2 groups of people, one over-privileged and one under-privileged.

Debate (on motion by Mr Wentworth) adjourned.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S SPEECH
Address-in-Reply

Debate resumed from 25 March, on motion by Mr Sainsbury:

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

May it Please Your Excellency:

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

Upon which Dr Jenkins had moved by way of amendment:

That the following words be added to the Address: 'but note that:

(a) the Speech makes no acknowledgement of the financial pre-eminence of the House of Representatives;
(b) the Speech makes no reference to the need for action to ensure that there cannot be a recurrence of the Constitutional crisis which threatens the continuation of the Australian Parliamentary system, and
(c) the proposals outlined in the Speech are so framed as to cause a major transfer of resources from middle and low income families to those on higher income levels'.

Mr ARMITAGE (Chifley) (8.50)—I support the amendment moved by the Opposition in this debate. I support every paragraph of the amendment. I wish to deal particularly with paragraphs (a) and (b) of the amendment which state:

(a) the Speech makes no acknowledgement of the financial pre-eminence of the House of Representatives;
(b) the Speech makes no reference to the need for action to ensure that there cannot be a recurrence of the Constitutional crisis which threatens the continuation of the Australian Parliamentary system . . .

In this regard I should like to take the memories of honourable members back to the swearing-in, in another place, of the Governor-General. At that time I was sitting in the Senate, as were other honourable members, listening to the ceremony going on. It was a rather boring ceremony, but one thing has stuck in my memory. It was when the Governor-General came to that section which said that he was Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. He emphasised the point so greatly that I could not help but notice it. I think that this matter needs to be looked at in the context that the Governor-General—an appointed person, not an elected person—is the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. As such he is in a very sensitive position. He is an appointed person, not an elected person, as is the
Commander-in-Chief in other countries except the United Kingdom, where the Queen is the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. The Queen, of course, has made sure that she could never assume the powers—she would never do so—which the Governor-General has assumed here in Australia. She would not, under any circumstance, assume such powers. Yet the Governor-General of Australia has assumed the power to make sure that he could dismiss a constitutionally elected government. For this reason I believe that in this sensitive situation where the Governor-General is endeavouring to build the powers of his office, to increase the powers of his office as compared with his powers purely as the Queen's representative in Australia, we need to look very carefully at other powers which the Governor-General has, including that of Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. In this regard I point out that the amendment states quite clearly:

(b) the Speech makes no reference to the need for action to ensure that there cannot be a recurrence of the Constitutional crisis which threatens the continuation of the Australian Parliamentary system.

For that reason I say that it is well and truly time that the Constitution of Australia was revised to make it very clear that in the future no Governor-General can take the action of dismissing a constitutionally elected government. Furthermore, it should be made clear that in the future no Governor-General—an appointed person, not an elected person—shall hold the position of Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, a position which could be abused, a position which is very dangerous for an appointed person—not a person who has been elected by the people of Australia, a person who finally depends upon the confidence of the people of Australia, but a person whom frankly I do not trust—to hold.

For those reasons I believe that action is very necessary indeed to overhaul the Constitution of this country, to make sure that in future the Prime Minister, as the elected head of Government, is the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, not a person appointed. In other countries, of course, it is the President who is the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, but I believe that in this country, under the system we work under, and under the circumstances existing at present, the Prime Minister should be the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. For example, in the United States it is the President, an elected person, who is the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. He is the only person who can press the button. If there are demonstrations, only the President is responsible for that action. I should hate to see a situation in this country where we would have a Governor-General deciding, on his own volition, to bring in the armed forces to quell a demonstration, possibly against himself. Yet in accordance with our Constitution as it now stands that type of situation could be a reality. I ask honourable members opposite to give a little bit of thought to this at last, to forget the political side of things, to stop playing politics, to listen to my remarks and to consider the implications. I say to them: 'You may have a Governor-General and a Prime Minister in your favour today, but tomorrow it might be different. Remember that this could implicate you in the future just as it could implicate us today.' I think it is time that this question was looked at very seriously.

I repeat that the time is well and truly overdue for our Constitution to be revised. It is well and truly time to make sure that the Senate shall not have power over money Bills. The time is well and truly overdue to make sure that the constitutional convention of filling a casual vacancy in the Senate with a person of the same political background as the senator to be replaced is not broken. This convention was broken last year on 2 occasions by both Queensland and New South Wales. It is time that that convention was firmly established and written into the Constitution. It is time that the power of the Senate, which is elected every 6 years—with the exception of the case of a double dissolution, each senator is elected for a period of 6 years—was curtailed. The House of Representatives, the mother House, is the House which by convention provides the Prime Minister of this country. I remind honourable members of that. In the present Constitution nothing is laid down to say that the Prime Minister shall not come from the Senate. It is surely time that it was laid down very clearly that the House of Representatives shall be the only House which has power over money Bills. As I have said, there could be senators elected today who would hold office for 6 years, while a new government will be elected in the House of Representatives in 3 years' time. This sets an impossible situation where senators who have been in the Senate for 3 years since the last election—senators who are parliamentarily 3 years old—can refuse a money Bill. This right of the House of Representatives must be laid down firmly in the Constitution. That would mean that the constitutional crisis which this country suffered last year could never recur.

It should also be laid down formally in the Constitution that the Governor-General, an
appointed person, is not commander-in-chief of the armed forces. I am not opposing the office of Governor-General or Viceroy. Of course such an office is part of the system which we have. I believe that the Governor-General should have the same powers as the Queen of England. The events that took place in Australia could never happen in England. The Governor-General should not have the powers of commander-in-chief of the armed forces. At least 43 per cent of the population of Australia voiced their protest firmly at the last election. In other words, the issue completely divided this country and established beyond doubt that they did not trust the Governor-General. They did not agree with the action that he took. For this reason I believe that the Governor-General should not hold the office of commander-in-chief of the armed forces and I believe that action should be taken by the Government to ensure that an elected person is placed in that very onerous position. An elected person should make the decision as to whether the armed forces shall be used or, to use the vernacular, whether the button shall be pressed. We could see the day when the armed forces in Australia are used against our own brothers here. If that occurred I would not like to see a person not responsible directly to the people being given that responsibility.

Item (c) of the amendment states:

The proposals outlined in the Speech are so framed as to cause a major transfer of resources from middle and low income families to those on higher income levels.

In this regard I point out just a few examples of where this Government, with its emphasis on assisting the rich against the poor, has made its intentions very clear indeed. For example, the Attorney-General (Mr Ellicott) only last weekend gave a Press release on introducing a means test for legal aid, and it is a very restrictive means test for legal aid.

**Mr Birney**—It is long overdue.

**Mr ARMITAGE**—The honourable member says that it is long overdue. He is only a baby in the House. He is one of the oncers brought into this House. He will not last more than the life of this Parliament. He is one of those sitting on a fine majority and he is one of the oncers who will flash over the sky and flash out of it overnight. The honourable member will flash out of this Parliament as he flashed into it because he does not understand the ordinary people of this country. He does not understand their aims, their ambitions and their needs.

**Mr Birney**—I have been appearing for the same people for 20 years.

**Mr ARMITAGE**—I suggest that the oncers keep quiet. The honourable member for Phillip is notorious. Everybody knows about him now and knows what he used to get elected. There is so much sympathy around the electorate of Phillip for Joe Riordan—

**Mr Bourchier**—I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I do not think this is a speech on the subject before the House. It is a personal attack on a member of the House. I ask you to rule the honourable member out of order.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Martin)**—There has been a certain amount of provocation. I ask the honourable member for Chifley to come back to the subject of the debate.

**Mr ARMITAGE**—Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker. I am very seldom provoked but when honourable members insist on interjecting in an unruly manner in the way that the honourable member for Phillip interjected I feel I have to protect myself and particularly Joe Riordan, the member for Phillip.

**Mr Bourchier**—I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. The honourable member for Chifley needs to be corrected. Mr Riordan is no longer the honourable member for Phillip. He was soundly defeated.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER**—Order! That is not a point of order and the honourable member for Bendigo well knows it.

**Mr Scholes**—I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. The honourable member for Bendigo is deliberately using fallacious points of order to disrupt the speech of the honourable member for Chifley. I think you ought to warn him for such activity. If an honourable member is allowed to stand and deliberately interrupt with fallacious points of order there can be no order in debate in the House.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER**—I shall take note of that. I request the honourable member for Bendigo to observe the Standing Orders.

**Mr ARMITAGE**—I am aware that, as the honourable member for Bendigo said, Mr Joe Riordan is no longer a member of this House. However, as I said earlier, there is so much sympathy for him in the Phillip electorate that I have not the slightest doubt that he will be returned whenever the next election is held.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER**—Order! There is no necessity for the honourable member for Chifley to be provocative, either.

**Mr ARMITAGE**—I am just protecting myself, Mr Deputy Speaker. The very stringent means
test that has been applied by the Attorney-General to the legal aid service will deprive a large number of people of legal aid. I also refer to another question of legal aid which I raised with the Minister, as he will recall, by telephone. It was the matter of maintenance enforcement orders. He has given a Press release stating that maintenance enforcement orders are the responsibility of State governments. In other words, the Australian Legal Aid Office shall not handle maintenance enforcement orders. This could mean that any woman who has to go to court to obtain a maintenance enforcement order under the Family Law Act, which is a very complicated Act, will be placed in a situation of finally having to go to a solicitor and pay as much as $120.

The Attorney-General has stated that this is the responsibility of the States. I spoke to his predecessor, who advised me that the arrangement was that under the new Family Law Act the Australian Government was to fund the State governments to employ special officers in the Family Courts to handle enforcement orders. But, of course, this Federal Government has welshed on the proposition. I checked on this matter as late as yesterday. To prevent a husband from welshing, a woman sometimes has to go to court for an order over his property or for an order to garnishee his wages for maintenance payments. Because of the complications of the new Family Law Act—the protection is much greater than under the old Matrimonial Causes Act but the new Act is much more complicated and accordingly needs qualified legal opinion and legal assistance for interpretation—such a woman who may be on a deserted wife's pension, for example will be forced to go to a private solicitor and pay $120 to protect her legal rights. That is only one example of how this Government is helping the rich against the poor.

Another example is, of course, the decision to abolish the $40 funeral benefit for pensioners. Another example is the new guidelines put on what the Government calls dole bludgers. Of course, there are the urgers, but a big majority of the people whom the Government is going to hurt are not urgers; they are ordinary people who are being placed out of employment. Do not kid ourselves. With the economic policies of this Government a far larger number will be unemployed in the future.

The reason for that is this Government's decision to give short sharp knocks to the economy. This has been advocated far and wide by the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary of the Treasury, as is well known. We have heard them talk of it themselves. So for that reason there will be more and more unemployed as the months roll by, because of the short sharp knocks to the economy which this Government is giving. We have the example of the pharmaceutical benefits. A large number of important drugs have been struck from the list of those for which pharmaceutical benefits are paid—drugs such as antihistamines, for example, which are vital for the ordinary person. The rich can afford to pay for them but the ordinary average guy is not so well off, and the poor certainly cannot afford them. People on or below the minimum wage who obtained their prescriptions at half rates under the pharmaceutical benefits scheme have now had this assistance abolished altogether. So people on minimum income will now be forced to pay $2 instead of 75c for a prescription under the pharmaceutical benefits scheme.

The urban development program was set up deliberately to assist those areas in need so that people in those areas, such as in the outer western suburbs of Sydney, could enjoy a far better quality of life.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Martin)—Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

(Quorum formed)

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER—Before I call the honourable member for Brisbane I remind the House that this is the honourable member's maiden speech. I would ask all members on both sides of the House to extend to the honourable member the normal courtesies which are shown to a member making his maiden speech. I call the honourable member for Brisbane.

Mr PETER JOHNSON (Brisbane) (9.13)—Mr Deputy Speaker, I am greatly honoured to be called by you on this first occasion as the honourable member for Brisbane. Firstly I want to thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, all honourable members and in particular the officers and staff of the House for the courtesies and practical help you have all given me in the last few weeks.

In January 1974 Brisbane suffered the most damaging floods ever recorded in that city. Those floods damaged or destroyed some 12,000 homes and other buildings and caused terrible misery and financial loss to an estimated 70,000 people. Ministers of the Labor Government then in power in Canberra went to Brisbane and made a series of promises relating to flood mitigation and assistance to people who were left homeless, and gave assurances that work would be undertaken to prevent a recurrence of this disaster in the future. The flood victims of Brisbane
realised after many months of waiting that not much help would be forthcoming from Canberra while the Labor Government was in power.

Prior to my moving to Brisbane I experienced floods in northern New South Wales. Anyone who knows of the human suffering, the material damage and the prolonged disruption caused to industry and commerce by floods—as I know of it, and as many thousands of Brisbane people know of it—find such apathy in government impossible to understand. This sort of thinking goes beyond incompetence. As the Federal member for Brisbane I ask that this vigorous, responsible, new government of ours give top priority to a program of flood prevention and flood mitigation in Brisbane without further delay. I, as a newly arrived back bench member of this Government, ask this respectfully, fully aware of the enormous burden of other priorities and other major expenditures which the Government has to carry. But while I ask respectfully, my constituents—the citizens of Brisbane—are demanding that it be done. The electors, the taxpayers of Brisbane, are looking to us to ensure that the promises made by our Labor predecessors are carried out and are honoured.

In the short time that our new Government has been in power at least a start has been made. Surveys are being undertaken to determine the suitability of using the gravel in the beds of creeks around Brisbane for projects such as the foundations for the new Brisbane airport. If this survey is satisfactory the Ithica, Enoggera, Breakfast and Kedron Brook Creeks will be dredged and deepened and the run-off of flood waters through this natural drainage system around Brisbane will be accelerated. That is a start, but it is not enough. Adequate government finance and resources must be put to work quickly in a full scale co-ordinated program of flood prevention and flood mitigation to forestall a repeat of the 1974 catastrophe which in view of the recent cyclone season we have just experienced in Queensland and northern New South Wales could occur at any time. Surely it is false economy for government to do nothing until a disaster occurs at a cost to the nation of hundreds of millions of dollars and then to do nothing again until the same thing happens all over again.

It is estimated that the 1974 flood in Brisbane caused direct damage alone estimated at $142m. Add to that losses in wages and production and the cost of repairs and government payments in relief amounting to $36m and we have an astronomical bill of $178m to be met by the taxpayers, and this figure is for the Brisbane River alone. A program of flood prevention and mitigation in a capital city such as Brisbane will not be cheap, but can we afford not to have it? So far almost nothing has been done to protect Brisbane against another major flood. If this state of affairs continues it will be an indictment not only of the Australian Labor Party which must bear the initial blame for procrastination and delays, but also of government in Australia, which we must all share.

As the Federal member for Brisbane I do not intend to allow this Parliament to forget this important subject. At the risk of being accused of being a bore, I shall return to it again and again until I am satisfied that sufficient is being done. In my humble opinion the prevention of major natural disasters to our towns and cities wherever possible should be of the highest priority in our deliberations as parliamentarians. As a newly elected member of this Parliament I know that I have a lot to learn about government and I respect the greater experience which I know lies concealed under the grey eminences—and some not so grey—around me. I have asked myself many times: What do I believe in? What is my own philosophy within that of my own Party? What can I do best to fulfill the confidence of those 59 967 electors who put me in Parliament last December? First, let me say that I believe in Australia, our Australian public institutions and the Australian way of life. It is my intention to help in my small, humble way my country, those institutions of which this Parliament is one and the Australian way of life. If that sounds corny, sentimental or perhaps fatuous I make no apology because that is the way I feel and I believe that is why I am here.

One of our Australian institutions is the Constitution, and that Constitution provides that we have a Governor-General and sets out the legal parameters within which that Governor-General must work. I wish to make this point for the consideration of honourable members: Even though we may not agree with parts of the Australian Constitution or with the legal parameters within which the Governor-General works, we, as Australians, are obliged to go along with that situation as gracefully as possible until the people of Australia change that Constitution. While ever the Governor-General remains within the legal parameters of his job it behoves us as law-abiding Australians to support him. If we do not like the rules under which he is operating we should change the rules, not abuse the man operating under those rules.

It has struck me as grossly wrong that a personal vendetta has been launched against the
Governor-General for political reasons—and not only against him, but against members of his family. If the Governor-General had broken the Constitution by his actions of late last year in dismissing the then Prime Minister, I very much doubt that he would still be Governor-General today. The matter was much ventilated before the federal election in December and plenty of opportunity existed to take action against the man if he had acted illegally. The Labor Party could have instituted such action in the courts but has not done so. Therefore we must conclude that the Labor Party agrees that he acted within the law of this nation according to the Constitution. Of course, certain people may resent in principle what he did. But the greatest jury in Australia, the majority of Australian electors, supported what he did by defeating the Whitlam Government and putting a Liberal coalition Government in power. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr E. G. Whitlam) made his dismissal by the Governor-General a central issue at the elections, and he failed. But now, after all that, when I read in the newspapers that the Governor-General is still being subjected to personal abuse for having done his duty legally and as he saw was necessary, I am saddened and also concerned. If we condone that sort of public behaviour, we condone disrespect for the law of this country and disrespect for our institutions, and that is the first step towards anarchy. It has saddened me that in this House I have not heard one member of the Opposition come forward and say: ‘Stop! That man holds an office which makes it impossible for him to retaliate. He is operating within the restrictions of the rules of that office’. If we do not like the Constitution, let us change it. If we Australians do not like our Constitution, the remedy is available: We must change it. If we do not like the office of Governor-General we should set about eliminating that office; but we should not condone the present attacks against the holder of that office.

I have said that I am concerned with helping to defend the Australian way of life and our standard of living. In this field no more important work can be contemplated than fair treatment of the senior citizens of this country, who laid the foundations for our present affluent standard of living. I wish to say briefly that I support wholeheartedly the forthcoming action of this Government in introducing within the next few weeks legislation which will tie pension increases to the consumer price index. The first increase will mean an extra $2.50 for single pensioners and $4 for married couples, taking the single rate to $41.25 and the rate for married couples to $68.50—the highest pension payments in this country’s history. Many lies have been told by the Labor Party in the area of pensions, and I should like to give to the House just one example of the Labor deceit. This matter came to my attention the other day. It concerns a 75-year-old widow who is blind. Her tax before 1 January was $6.13 a fortnight, which netted her $90.50 a fortnight. Following the introduction of Labor’s high taxation scheme, she now pays $33.60 a fortnight, which leaves her with $63.03 a fortnight. That has happened to thousands and thousands of pensioners in Australia.

The electorate of Brisbane, which I represent, has a high migrant population. Therefore, in this Parliament I shall be taking a deep interest in all legislation which affects migrants, who have made such a valuable contribution to the advancement of this nation. I shall seek to influence Government decisions, if possible, based on my knowledge of the subject, learned from practical experience among my constituents. I congratulate the present Government on having divided the administration within the Public Service of the former Department of Labor and Immigration, ending an amalgamation instituted by the Labor Government. Whatever close liaison existed between the 2 former departments, what necessitated their amalgamation was beyond my comprehension.

It is part of our Australian way of life that we elect to this Parliament people from all walks of life. I am from the garment and textile industry, where I had some 12 years of business experience. This industry quite stupidly was given a hard time by the previous Federal Government. Because of the anti-industry policies of that Government and its advisers, many of whom seemed to have a socialistic bias against all forms of manufacturing in this country, the garment and textile industry went into a serious recession. Employment in the industry fell by more than 38 000 people, and by a total of 34 000 people in the 12 months from March 1974 to March 1975, mainly due to the 25 per cent tariff cut and other policy encouragements to importers. So-called economists were encouraged by the previous Government to persecute the garment and textile industry by endless public inquiries into its efficiency and the industry was called upon repeatedly to restructure itself—a fine touch of irony and hypocrisy when one considers the lack of efficiency and the need for restructuring within the Labor Government which was giving such advice.

The facts are these: Given our standard of living and wage costs, no Australian industry can
compete with cheap-labour countries, where sweat shop conditions are being exploited by foreign capital to produce goods which come to this country, disrupt our home market and put thousands of Australians out of work. I am happy that this Government now is doing much to protect the industry and the jobs of those within it, not only in the short term but also in the long term. The garment and textile industry employs some 41 per cent of the total female workforce in Australia. The industry is the keystone to prosperity for numerous support industries. If the garment and textile industry goes down it pulls down with it many other industries in a chain reaction. I estimate that if that were to happen a total of a quarter of a million Australians would be affected. The repercussions within the economy would go even further—into the retail industry, the transport and advertising industries, etc. I repeat that the advice the previous Government received and acted upon—that the garment and textile industry be treated in isolation and be reduced in size or even destroyed, without regard to the effect that would have on employment for women and without regard to the effect it would have on other industries—was quite stupid in the real sense of the word.

I know that this Government will give the garment and textile industry its full attention in its efforts to regenerate business confidence, business investment and the re-employment of the workforce to get the economy back to normal. It is an industry which can and will develop into a highly proficient section of our community, employing the female workforce throughout the world as it does, in a way in which no other industry can employ them. That applies to the graziers’ and farmers’ wives in country towns, who currently are being employed in the garment manufacturing section, and to the young girl who is looking for different hours of work which will ensure a greater flexibility in the use of her leisure time. The industry also includes a collection of individuals who through sheer expertise, hard work and dedication have managed in most cases to drag themselves up from nothing to something. Most people in the industry did not start off with great wealth. They started with the Australian ideal: Good, honest hard work is rewarding and is rewarded by a standard of living which is amongst the top in the world.

Before one attains the honour and privilege of being elected as a member of this House there are usually some people who hold public office and whom one hopes to emulate. I am very fortunate in having in my Federal division three such men. Tonight I would like to say thank you to them and also to ensure that this House knows of their calibre. I refer, firstly, to the member for Ithaca, Mr Col Miller, who would be one of the finest examples of integrity in political life. On numerous occasions he has stood for a principle, and for dedication to his electorate and to the State House in Queensland. It is my privilege to know that part of his electorate is within my Federal division. Next I would like to pay tribute to Mr Don Lane, the member for Merthyr. The migrant community has grown to love and respect him greatly. His dedication to them has meant an understanding and comprehension of people with different backgrounds from those of Australians. The honour and integrity of those people has meant a great deal to me and my colleagues in Queensland. Thirdly, I refer to Mr Bob Moore, the State member for Windsor, a man who has shown a single minded purposefulness and concern for the people in his electorate through his membership of the State House. I also congratulate my State colleague on his election as Deputy Whip in the Legislative Assembly. I take this opportunity to welcome to the parliamentary union the new Liberal aldermen on the Brisbane City Council—Alderman Denver Beanland of the Auchenflower ward, Alderman Syd McDonald of the Hamilton ward and Alderman John Andrews of the Gap ward. Those wards are within the Federal division of Brisbane.

I also thank the electors of the Federal division of Brisbane for the great honour and privilege of being their elected representative in Canberra. I will be doing my utmost to be worthy of them; for as long as they continue to place their confidence in me I will represent the people of the Brisbane electorate in all matters. I should also like to congratulate Mr Speaker and the Chairman of Committees on attaining their high offices, and again I thank my colleagues and all members of this House for the courtesy they have shown me.

Mr FitzPATRICK (Darling) (9.29)—Having spoken already in the Address-in-Reply debate, it is my intention tonight to support the amendment moved by the honourable member for Scullin (Dr Jenkins). On the previous occasion I took the opportunity to congratulate the Speaker and the Chairman of Committees on their appointment, and on this occasion I congratulate you, Mr Deputy Speaker, on your appointment. It is a pleasure to speak in this House while you occupy the Chair. I would also like to congratulate the honourable member for Brisbane (Mr Peter Johnson) on his maiden speech together with the other members who have made their
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maiden speeches. I thought the maiden speeches were of a high standard and in particular those made from this side of the House by the honourable member for Sydney (Mr Les McMahon) and the honourable member for Grayndler (Mr Antony Whitlam).

It is true that the Governor-General's Speech made no acknowledgement of the financial pre-eminence of the House of Representatives. It is equally true that what happened in relation to the financing of various departments of the Australian Government and the financial authority of Her Majesty's Twenty-ninth Parliament prior to 13 December 1975 has destroyed the confidence of millions of Australian electors in what was previously known as the people's House, what was previously known as our way of life, what was known as the people's system of government. Even today the overwhelming majority of Australians who supported or even opposed the Whitlam-led Labor Government are stunned and dumbfounded at the role the people's House plays in financial matters and at that power being usurped by the undemocratically elected members of the other chamber. Some might say that the members of the other chamber who took on themselves this power to block the supply of finance which is necessary to run the various government departments of this great country were democratically elected but when one remembers the appointments of Senator Field of Queensland and Senator Bunton of New South Wales it is hard to understand how anyone could come to that conclusion. Surely the result of subsequent elections following the unjustified sacking of the Whitlam Government would prove to anyone that both these senators were not the choice of the people of those 2 States. If they were not the choice of the people of those States, how could it be claimed that they were democratically elected?

The democratic system of this country has reached a very low level if people can be appointed to the Senate by State governments and then have the power to block the supply of finance approved by this House of Representatives a House in which each member is elected by the wishes and the votes of the people of Australia. The votes of the people of Australia give this House of Representatives the basic power, one might say the singular power, of total control over the appropriation of money from the Treasury and from the Consolidated Revenue Fund. The Governor-General failed to inform the nation why that singular power held by the House of Representatives was allowed to be sidetracked and subverted by an undemocratically elected Senate, a hostile Senate that constitutionally has no power to initiate money Bills or even to amend money Bills. In the absence of advice on this matter by the Governor-General the electors, in my opinion, are forced to assume that the people's House—the House of Representatives—has power relating to money Bills only on the basis of good faith by a Senate composed of senators not elected but nominated by State political leaders.

The Governor-General should have informed the nation why a precedent has been created whereby the Senate is able to refuse to consider the appropriation of funds passed for payment by this House. Why was he silent on this, the greatest departure from long-established precedents of the people's Parliament? Due to his silence on this point the people cannot help believing that he was part of a conspiracy—something which is better known and more often suffered in other countries—brought about, I believe, because of the Labor Government's opposition to and refusal to obey the multi-national companies, the money lenders and the money controllers of this country and other nations.

Is it not true that by judicial decision in the 1942 uniform tax case the Commonwealth was given the right to collect taxes? The High Court ruled that the Government could occupy the whole field of taxation and from that date the Australian Government has exercised that power clearly establishing its pre-eminence from the point of view of the nation's financial resources. It naturally follows that the Commonwealth has the responsibility to administer these financial resources in the best interests of the nation. The House of Representatives must have a pre-eminence in these matters. It is vitally important to the development of Australia. Australia has to speak with one voice. It cannot speak with the voices of 6 separate States through the people those States have appointed undemocratically and unconventionally to the Senate. The House of Representatives should have pre-eminence in this matter. If we have not got pre-eminence how can we plan ahead in defence, our foreign affairs policy, our trading policy and indeed in relation to our internal problems such as the announcement in Cobar that there are to be further retrenchments in the Cobar copper mines?

The House of Representatives should have the courage and the power to make decisions on these matters which are so vital to the welfare of the people we represent. The Labor Government
took this initiative under the Petroleum and Minerals Authority Bill. The Labor Government had the power to deal with situations such as that which exists in the Cobar copper mines at the present time. One might well ask: What has this Government done about monetary policies? When is the Government going to announce policies on the Industries Assistance Commission findings on the copper industry? Surely the people have a right to know these things. The failure of the Governor-General to provide information on these matters has put this House in a position in which financial debates are conducted on the basis that we do not have control of the economy. We are forced to debate on the basis that we have no right to allocate our financial resources. If we have not got this right we cannot really offer any policies. I believe we should be able to make these decisions because section 53 of the Constitution gives the House of Representatives this power. Why should we have to wait for the Senate to tell us that we can assist an industry such as the copper industry?

We are now in a position where, if the House of Representatives objects to the Senate's taking over the handling of the appropriation of funds, a government can be dismissed at the Governor-General's prerogative. It is a ridiculous situation in which a Senate can continually reject Supply Bills and the House of Representatives has to go continually to the people when the Senate itself need not go and cannot be made to go to the people. Democratic processes were never meant to be run on this basis. We will be failing in our responsibility to the people if we do not bring the danger of the situation to their attention. No future government can afford to risk having a majority in the House of Representatives and a minority in the Senate. No matter how good a government's policy or legislation is it can be thrown out of power at the whim of the Senate or the Governor-General because he believed, as he stated, that the previous Government had an inability to obtain Supply.

I remind all political parties that if they wish to have a democratic system in this country the means of achieving power is important. If political parties play a ruthless game to obtain and to keep power at any price democracy cannot be expected to survive. As the amendment of the honourable member for Scullin states, the Governor-General's Speech did not acknowledge the financial pre-eminence of the House of Representatives, but the Governor-General's actions are just as important in this regard as the actions of the Liberal-National Country Party coalition. Whatever his motivation was for doing what he did on 11 November last, there can be no doubt that he struck a crippling blow at the faith many Australians have in our democratic and parliamentary system. The Governor-General's Speech makes no reference to the need for action to ensure that there cannot be a recurrence of the constitutional crisis which threatens the continuation of the Australian parliamentary system as we know it. Yet the constitutional crisis shook the very foundation of the people's form of government. The people have some right to an inquiry into the Constitution to prevent this sad event from recurring. It is in the best interests of Australian democracy that we should continue with a system whereby the events of last year cannot be repeated, but I believe that the Governor-General wants them to be repeated. If he does not he should have informed the nation in his Speech.

The powers of the people's House in relation to money matters have been usurped. The powers of the House of Representatives are now so flimsy that the Senate can refuse to consider Appropriation Bills and force the Government to the people. Is that what the Governor-General stands for, or does he himself believe that he should have more power than the people's Parliament? The Governor-General's Speech does not tell us. It gives us no answer to these questions, but I believe the truth is coming home to the Australian public. They now know that the proposals outlined in the Governor-General's Speech are so framed as to cause a major transfer of resources from the middle and low income families to those on higher income levels. That is why I support the amendment moved by the honourable member for Scullin.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Martin)—Before I call the honourable member for Canberra I remind honourable members on both sides of the House that it is the honourable member's maiden speech. I would ask all honourable members to extend the courtesy that is usual on such occasions.

Mr HASLEM (Canberra) (9.43)—I introduce my maiden speech with 2 quotes which were powerful influences on my deciding to seek preselection for the seat of Canberra and hence on my being here tonight. The first is:

An individual's life is not always the same as society's. The collective does not always assist the individual. Each person has an abundance of problems which the collective cannot resolve. A person is a physiological and spiritual being before he becomes a member of his society.

The second quote is:

The basic principle which distinguishes liberalism from socialism is that Liberals believe maximum freedom from
dictation and regulation is essential to self-respect and self-fulfilment. People want self-respect above all. Without freedom there is no self-respect. They want freedom to strive and to achieve and to seek excellence—freedom to be different and freedom to conform.

I read both of these statements during 1975 at a time when I, like so many others in this country, was very worried about the direction in which we were heading. The first quote comes from Alexander Solzhenitsyn and the second from a statement on Liberal philosophy by the then Leader of the Opposition, our Prime Minister (Mr Malcolm Fraser). Both captured for me that cornerstone of man's very existence, the right of an individual to express himself. I ruminated on these words at a time when the dark shadow of arrogant Labor socialism was looming over us all, when increasingly we were being told what was good for us rather than being asked, when social causes were being confused with mindless vendettas and power-drunk men were thrusting the course of Australian life in a direction that their own prejudice dictated rather than in the direction that the Australian people wanted.

The election on 13 December demonstrated beyond question the contempt and revulsion that middle Australia felt for the abuse of power which was convulsing this lucky country. The record majority that the Liberal and National Country Parties have in government is not just a result of ham-handed economic mismanagement of a succession of Labor Treasurers. It is the result of a massive cry by middle Australians that they would not be told what was good for them by doctrinaire socialists and ivory tower academics. Those honourable members who have large migrant communities in their electorates, as I have in Canberra, will understand better than anyone else the fear that was abroad in this land. How many times did we hear the comments: 'I have seen it all before' and: 'Where can I go next'? These were not the pleas of so-called bloated capitalists but the cries of people who wanted to be left to themselves to strive and achieve, to be given the right to express themselves, to enjoy their families and not to be told: 'Give me your earnings. I will spend them for you. You don't really know what you want. Trust me. I know best.'

Middle Australia placed its trust in the Whitlam Government in 1972 and gave it a second chance in 1974. But the Labor Government did not learn from its mistakes. Instead it compounded them and the people poured such scorn upon it as has never been seen in our 75 years of federation. That is why the Government benches are filled to overflowing on a division and I suspect that the realisation by the Opposition of the correctness of the people's judgment is the reason that for most of the time in the last week or so we have had only one or two representatives of the Australian Labor Party in this chamber during debates. They are completely demoralised. For the first weeks of this Parliament they purged their collective conscience by vomiting bile and heaping scorn on the Governor-General. He was a convenient scapegoat for their stupidity and blindness but as time passes it is becoming abundantly clear from spokesmen for the Parliamentary Labor Party and some fellow travelling journalists that the only real criticism of the Governor-General they can muster is that they thought they had him in their pocket. They did not. No one did. His so-called crime was that he did not tell them what he was going to do.

I have enormous pride in being in this Parliament but I am somewhat overawed by the responsibility which rests on the shoulders of the Government Parties. The strength and experience of the front bench, coupled with an almost daunting depth of youthful vigour and drive on the back benches, must assure purposeful and workmanlike government. We must harness this power house for the whole of Australia. We must be a truly liberal Government. We must re-establish the economy of this rich and vigorous country and then carefully press forward with social welfare, health and education policies which will ensure that this country is second to none. We must not reel back from the last 3 years of social change. We must not be too proud to select and seize some of those numerous programs which the Whitlam Government innovated but mismanaged. We must take some of those programs forward with proper management and control and we must ensure that those who push the forces of conservatism operate only as a tempering influence on our youthful exuberance. As Alvin Toffler notes in his book Future Shock:

There is a danger that those who treasure the status quo may seize upon the concept of future shock to argue for a moratorium on change. Not only would any such attempt to suppress change fail, triggering even bigger, bloodier and more unmanageable changes than any we have seen, it would be moral lunacy as well. By any set of human standards, certainly radical social changes are already desperately overdue. The answer to future shock is not non-change but a different kind of change.

The changes we will have to bring will respect the right of the individual, will be managed properly and will be implemented only when our economy can safely underpin them and ensure their continued viability. We must mobilise the resources of this bountiful country for the good
of all and ensure especially that those who do not have the opportunity to achieve, because of deprivation, whether through accident of birth, intellect, health or plain bad luck, are assisted to a more fulfilling life.

Mr Speaker, I pass on to my electorate of Canberra. Before doing so, I congratulate you on being elected to your high and honourable position. I ask you to pass on to Mr Deputy Speaker my formal congratulations on his appointment. As honourable members would know, the seat of Canberra was created in 1974 when the former seat of the Australian Capital Territory was split in two. The Australian Capital Territory seat was first held by an Independent, Dr Nott, from 1949 to 1951, when it was won by Jim Fraser. Jim Fraser would be known to many members of this House. He was a man loved by all who had the good fortune to know him. He held the seat for almost 19 years. During that period he set an example to all parliamentarians on how elected representatives should look after their electorates. When he died in 1970 this city and the Parliament lost one of its great men. A city that has so many times been called soulless and cynical literally stopped. He was, I believe, the only Federal back bench politician ever to be accorded the honour of a State funeral. The then Prime Minister, John Gorton, said of him:

I know that there was no meanness or pettiness or spite anywhere about him. Though he was prepared to fight for what he thought was right, he was not prepared to bear malice. He will be sadly missed by members of this House.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr E. G. Whitlam) supported the then Prime Minister and said:

He had to act as Canberra's mayor, senator and ombudsman. Even more, it was in his character and part of his nature to believe that the problems of people—his people—were his own.

My honour in taking this seat comes not so much from having defeated the former Attorney-General who held the seat for 5 years but from following a man such as Jim Fraser. It is with much humility and pride that I will attempt to emulate his service to the community. I also take some pleasure in noting that I am currently sharing a room in the House with the honourable member for Eden-Monaro (Mr Sainsbury) who so ably led the Address-in-Reply debate and whose seat, as honourable members would know, was held for 26 years by Allan Fraser, the brother of Jim Fraser.

Now I pass on to a little history of this fair city of Canberra, for the benefit of those new members who do not know it well and of those members who regard it more as a place of work than as a second home. The first white men to see what is now the Australian Capital Territory were Dr Charles Throsby and his convict overseer, Joseph Wild. Throsby was an ex-naval surgeon turned grazier and explorer. He had a grant near Liverpool. With Hamilton Hume and Wild he did a large share of the exploration of the southern district. Wild was an illiterate Londoner who developed a quite extraordinary flair as a bushman. As long ago as 19 August 1820 Wild discovered Lake George. In October of the same year Governor Macquarie, accompanied by Surveyor-General Oxley and Bigge, made an excursion to the new discovery. While they were there, Throsby and Wild, with a constable named Vaughan, pushed on south in search of the Murrumbidgee, of which they had heard from the Aborigines. They failed to discover it but reached the Yass River, which the Aborigines called the Boongaroom, and probably passed over the northern end of what is now the Australian Capital Territory. Their reconnaissance was at once followed by the sending of Wild and Vaughan and a young nephew of Throsby's, Charles Throsby Smith, with a month's provisions, to locate the Murrumbidgee. They crossed a stony range separating Lake George from Canberra and reached a hill somewhere near Gundagai, whence they saw what is now the site of Canberra. They camped, probably near Duntroon. The next morning Smith and Vaughan went down the river and climbed Black Mountain. In the afternoon Wild and Smith followed the river up to Queanbeyan. The following day they started back, Smith being satisfied that the Murrumbidgee was imaginary. Throsby returned in 1821. After traversing the plains which are now the site of Canberra, he reported:

I am happy to report that the country in general is superior to that we passed through with His Excellency the Governor in November last; it is perfectly sound, well watered, with extensive meadows of rich land on either side of the rivers; contains very fine limestone in quantities perfectly inexhaustible, slate sandstone and granite fit for building, with sufficient timber for every useful purpose; And, from the appearance of the country, an unbounded extent to the westward.

The area was developed by many intrepid pioneers who enjoyed its pleasures and challenges.

There was then the historical squabble, about the time of Federation, as to where the national capital should be. In 1907 the Leader of the Labor Party, J. C. Watson, after an exploratory visit to the area, painted a glowing word picture:

There is the plain in the centre, and foothills all around, varying the general appearance of the country; and beyond that, after further rolling foothills, we have on the south-west
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and south the Murrumbidgee mountains, towering as a background and providing a most effective foil to the other scenery. In the vicinity there are mountain gorges, which afford every diversity of scenery, and I have been informed by trout fishers that there are most interesting places in the heart of the Murrumbidgee mountains, full of beauty, and within a short distance of the suggested site. I do not say that picturesqueness alone should decide the question; but, other things being equal, I think that the beautiful ought to turn the scale.

In 1908 the Yass-Canberra area was selected as the official choice for our national capital. In 1909 the Seat of Government Act was passed. Surveyor C. R. Scrivener was instructed to investigate the site. His orders noted:

The surveyor will bear in mind that the Federal capital should be a beautiful city, occupying a commanding position with extensive views, and embracing distinctive features which will lend themselves to the evolution of a design worthy of the object, not only for the present, but for all time; consequently the potentialities of the site will demand most careful consideration from an hygienic standpoint, with a view to securing picturesqueness, and also with the object of beautification and expansion.

He undoubtedly did his choosing well, and the present site was recommended and accepted. I do not intend to canvass in full the development of this fair city. However, I do note that the city is not only the national capital of Australia but also a growth centre experiencing many of the difficulties that faster than average growth can cause. This is the first and foremost city of Australia, and we should not forget that fact. Its special position is seen from the fact that over 175,000 proud Australians visited the city in 1975. It is a city of people, especially young people. It is not just a city of public servants but a city of shopkeepers, builders, tradesmen, motor mechanics, accountants and farmers. Contrary to popular opinion, only 25 per cent of the population is employed in the Public Service. I do not intend to speak tonight of the importance to Australia of a strong, vital and independent Public Service, as I will have a better opportunity to do so in the debate on the Superannuation Bill later this week.

Canberra is a modern city and, in the main, a new city. It has now reached the point of self-sustained growth, with a population approaching 200,000. Contrary to the public view of those who visit us, it is not a pampered, subsidised oasis in a desert of impoverished taxpayers. We pay rates in line with the average of other State capitals. I am advised that even in these difficult times of inflation and high wages the deficit on the municipal account is not great and is well in line with the performances of comparable local governments. At a time when the need to prune and control government expenditure is upon us, we in Canberra feel a little threatened, but we have taken great heart during the last few weeks that many of the dire predictions being made by mischief makers who have not heeded the lessons of the last 3 years and who seem oblivious of the needs of responsible government are not coming to pass. We see problems for Canberra, as for other areas of development and enterprise, over the next year or so; but I am confident that this period of enforced consolidation is what the people who elected me see as being needed.

Like the honourable member for Mackellar (Mr Wentworth), I have some fears of the power of the accountants and economists in the Treasury; but the people of my electorate and those millions of Australians who share my pride in the national capital may rest assured that I will keep a close watch on the 'Wheeler' dealers and leave no 'Stone' unturned in ensuring that the National Capital Development Commission has the right 'Powell' to see that this city is 'Engledowed' with proper community facilities and that there are no 'Blundinders' in our management. I support the motion moved by the honourable member for Eden-Monaro and oppose the amendment.

Mr Giles (Angas) (10.1)—I do not suppose that I will be the first member to congratulate the honourable member for Canberra (Mr Haslem) personally, but I do so from my present position and point out that there are many of his remarks with which members of this House will find themselves in agreement. I am thinking, for instance, of the words of my predecessor in the seat of Angas, Sir Alec Downer, who has travelled the world for many years now saying that Canberra is the finest city of its type in the world. He says that with great sincerity. There are many ways in which I support that very statement. I am sure that the honourable member for Canberra struck a chord with many people who have travelled overseas when he spoke of the beauty and the many desirable features of Canberra.

Mr Speaker, although I had the opportunity to do so on another occasion, with the wisdom of hindsight I would like to congratulate you very much on the marvellous job that you have done in this House as our Speaker. I regard your efforts and your competence very highly indeed. I think you have proved to the House that you will be a great Speaker who inspires confidence and has the support of the House in general. I would like to go on record as saying that. As your job keeps you so busy, Mr Speaker, I have found myself in many ways closer than ever to the honourable
member for Lyne (Mr Lucock). He is also a marvellous man to work with. I think that his experience is very greatly valued by honourable members on both sides of the House. It should be remembered that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr E. G. Whitlam) is on record as making a particularly glowing reference on another occasion to the honourable member for Lyne that will be a wonderful safeguard for him if times become troublesome.

In speaking to the Address-in-Reply to the Speech of the Governor-General I wish to comment briefly on some of the matters that have been raised in the debate. I refer, firstly, to the remarks of the honourable member for Chifley (Mr Armitage), who is now present in the House and who recently gave to the House a most incredible dissertation on his grave fears about the Governor-General being the chief of the armed forces in Australia. I do not know whether the honourable member for Canberra is correct in saying that the Opposition is trying to take the heat off its own position by finding some fall-guy whom it can attack, but I do know that there are many checks and balances in regard to the Governor-General being the chief of the armed forces. I am only surprised at the naivety of the honourable member for Chifley in believing it literally. If the bugle went tomorrow and the Governor-General said 'Turn out on parade', I do not know whether the honourable member would take his hands out of his pockets. I strongly suspect that he would not. I am pointing up this matter because I really was very surprised indeed to hear the honourable member for Chifley draw the inferences that he drew.

Mr Graham—He lives in another world.

Mr Giles—He does go into orbit on occasions. The honourable member set up his own target and then proceeded to argue in relation to it. However, I suppose that we can forgive him for that. From my own point of view, I have had the very greatest of pleasure in asking the Governor-General to attend 2 functions in my electorate in the next 9 months. I hope that he will accept my invitations. I know that he will be welcome in the electorate of Angas—and that is the way it should be. Party politics is one thing, but a deliberate attempt to drag down the authority of our own Constitution is another. I have not enjoyed some of the remarks that I have heard during this debate. I mention an exception. The honourable member for Melbourne Ports (Mr Crean) dealt with the subject in what I regarded as a proper manner. He drew the political side of the picture delightfully and as a matter of taste, which is what one would expect the honourable member for Melbourne Ports to do. Not once in his remarks was he derogatory to the Governor-General, but he did point up the political implications of the decision that was made, as indeed is his right. In passing I would like to comment in that way. I was sitting in the chair when he made his speech and I for one thought that he handled the position very properly and correctly.

The Government finds itself in a somewhat peculiar position at this stage. The House will remember back to October when the present Prime Minister (Mr Malcolm Fraser) put forward his economic package, his economic policy. Of course, at that time he was utterly correct. In fact, the electorate at large, which is not unimportant, has taken the same view as those who followed carefully the then Leader of the Opposition's economic package. I will not go over the various points he made, except to say that all of the points he made then are still part of our economic policy. Others have been added to it, but fundamentally it was that speech at that time that set the policy and gave the people of Australia the opportunity to strike a judgment between the two opposing political groups that was all-important. Of course, the then Opposition could not appreciate fully the fact that the Hayden Budget would be the tragedy that it has turned out to be. This unquestionably has produced areas of difficulty for the present Government.

Let me go over some of the problems that we have discerned since that day. There is a problem that has not even emerged statistically yet; that is, the awful problem facing rural areas. In fact, I am somewhat appalled by the fact that the available figures do not mirror the gut reaction I get from many of those areas. We are headed for a period when those rural areas and their local economies are in some instances about to experience real strife. Because there is usually one section of the rural community that is doing fairly well while others are not, perhaps I can exclude some of the wheat areas and the wheat towns. By and large, they are better off today than many other sectors of the Australian economy, but they are the glorious exception.

I have very real fear and a feeling of foreboding when I look at the economic situation of rural regions in relation to industries that affect people such as the honourable member for Riverina (Mr Sullivan) and myself. I am referring specifically to the horticultural industries. It is no secret that the dried fruits industry has more or less disappeared in many ways over the years. Most of the grape varieties that were used for
dried fruit have been snaffled up by the wine industry when it has been suitable for it to do so. We have seen in this House recently the need to introduce a grants Bill for loans to the canning industry. The canning industry, of course, is in very big trouble. I will come back to that. We are now faced with problems in the fruit juice industry. Imported citrus concentrate is taking up perhaps 30 per cent of the total sales in Australia. We are now running into problems in terms of decreasing numbers of case fruits in the citrus fruit industry that can be sold on the Australian market. We are running into problems in the vegetable industry and we are running into all sorts of problems in other areas such as the beef industry. It is no secret to the House that the beef industry, for instance, is in terrible trouble and, in spite of the optimistic tone that the Minister for Overseas Trade (Mr Anthony) took at question time today, frankly it looks to me as though the arrangement from the United States of America today will produce a lesser export component to the American market than on previous occasions. All of these are very real problems. One of the reasons that they are so real, if I can harken back to it once again, is this matter of the Hayden Budget and what it now transpires is happening to the Australian community. I said that when we came to government we found our position to be infinitely worse than we suspected it to be. So it is.

There was nobody at the table on the Opposition side previously for me to ask for permission to incorporate in Hansard one or two documents. May I seek the permission of the Opposition to have incorporated in Hansard the figures on the Australian Government Budget receipts from 1964 to 1976 and a table showing the Budget deficit as a proportion of the gross national product?

Mr SPEAKER—Is leave granted?

Mr Lionel Bowen—May we have a look at the documents?

Mr SPEAKER—The honourable gentleman at the table wishes to see the documents. Perhaps the honourable member for Angas could pass the documents down to him and leave can be sought later to have them incorporated.

Mr GILES—The documents are from a Treasury source. I shall certainly give them to the honourable member in a minute or two. I shall act on the presumption that the tables will be incorporated in Hansard. The purpose of mentioning them is to show clearly that in terms of the Australian Government Budget receipts from

1964 to 1976, the total taxation receipts as a proportion of the gross national product vary between 19.5 per cent and 23.9 per cent in 1974-75 and indicate a slightly increasing scale. I mention those figures—they are well known to the House—only to demonstrate the increasing proportion of gross national product in relation to taxation receipts.

The next thing I should say, of course, is that we are running into many of the problems as a direct result of the type of increased expenditure that has occurred over the last 2 years in particular. I think it is worth reminding the House, on frequent occasions if need be, of the 46 per cent increase in government expenditure in the 1974-75 Budget. In any language that is a colossal increase. One of the problems of the present Government is to take into account not only the devious effects that has on all sorts of small businessmen in small areas throughout the length and breadth of the country but also, as a matter of Treasury policy, to try to get down this huge increase in expenditure to somewhere near the current government revenue position. It is not necessary for me to remind the House of the methods by which such deficits can be financed. Honourable members will be well aware of the prime one which, in months gone by, the Press took to its heart, and that was winding the handle and turning out more money. That is the simple answer to make up the gap between government revenue, on the one hand, and government expenditure, on the other hand. Until those matters are brought into better correlation there is little hope for this nation in terms of cutting back on the inflationary rate that we are currently experiencing.

Mr SPEAKER—I interrupt the honourable member for Angas. He asked for leave to incorporate some documents in Hansard. I shall ask the chamber attendant to take the documents from the honourable member for Angas and deliver them to the honourable member for Kingsford-Smith so that he can decide whether leave will be granted.

Mr GILES—Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will keep him waiting 30 seconds longer so that I can deal with the second table. Then the documents certainly will be available to the honourable member. The second table I mentioned shows the Budget deficit in proportion to the gross domestic product. It shows from 1965-66 onwards the Budget deficit as a percentage of gross domestic product. It shows in 1970-71, for instance, it was nothing at all. It built up to 0.4 per cent in 1971-72, 1.7 per cent in 1972-73, 0.6 per cent in
1973-74, 4.4 per cent in 1974-75 and 6 per cent is the estimate for 1975-76.

Mr Armitage—Do you mean you understand what you are talking about?

Mr GILES—I am very sorry if the honourable member for Chifley has gone into outer space again, but there is not the slightest need for him to worry about whether I understand it myself. The problem always is whether the honourable member for Chifley understands anything other than what he says himself. The honourable member’s genial face describes him. I have watched him for many years now.

Mr SPEAKER—Order! An interjection from the honourable member for Chifley has led the honourable gentleman for Angas to make personal remarks about the honourable member for Chifley. It is not in the interests of this House that such passages occur. I call the honourable member for Angas.

Mr GILES—Mr Speaker, I was led to comment further, through you, on the matter of Budget deficits. If it is necessary perhaps I could just go back a little and backtrack for anybody who was not staying with me in relation to it. I would have thought that the point was well made. If a proportion of the gross domestic product of this nature shows a huge increase in the government deficit somebody has to come along sooner or later and do something about it. If the Hayden Budget did nothing about it and the increase in the deficit points to that so plainly as time goes by, in spite of the $350m and more that we have succeeded in cutting back on government expenditure in a matter of 6 months, we have got to look a little further and see what we can do to correct that situation.

There are many areas, I maintain, in which quite a lot of thinking and quite a lot of action can be important without undue government expenditure. Let me pose one of them. There is a method, for instance, of putting a younger group of people on the land today, which would not cost very much money. I think the land settlement schemes of the past have proved very expensive and, with dual responsibility between State and federal governments, they have made it difficult to find answers. I would not suggest land settlement schemes as such. If cities are going to be fed in the future, governments have got to act on the fact that the average age of the farming community today is 55, although somebody from New South Wales told me the other day that it is now fifty-seven.

In speaking about schemes that can be introduced without imposing huge costs on government revenue, in the few minutes left to me I would like to describe the position that now pertains in the State of South Australia. I do so because I was very much involved in years gone by in the setting up of the scheme embodied in what is now known as the RAGS Act—the Rural Advances Guarantee Act. The RAGS Act in South Australia does not comment on the honourable member for Hindmarsh (Mr Clyde Cameron) or anything of that nature; virtually all it does is allow the Department of Agriculture to take hold of a proposition put to it by a candidate. A candidate has to be young enough and bright enough and have enough agricultural experience to qualify. He then has to produce, of his own volition, a proposition—it may be a share farming proposition—which the Department of Agriculture then inspects. If that proposition is considered to have a good chance of being viable the Government of South Australia guarantees a loan from any private bank or any financial institution to the extent of 85 per cent. There are very few banks, for instance, that will not fully agree to go along with that sort of loan when it has been properly screened at both ends. In fact, the cash loss involved over a period of 12 years, speaking from memory, has been minimal. That is an example of how we can learn to think without it costing a great deal in terms of government revenue. It may well be that if powers of that nature are passed on to the States they would be encouraged also to operate along lines similar to those adopted by the Playford Government in South Australia in its time. I have wandered a bit away from the point. The point is that it is not always a matter of spending money in order to get results. This is very much the sort of position in which the current Government finds itself after the tragedy of the last 3 years of misrule.

Mr SPEAKER—The honourable member for Angas seeks leave to incorporate certain tables in Hansard. Is leave granted?

Mr Lionel Bowen—Leave is granted.

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

(The tables read as follows)—

1. Direct Government Spending on Goods and Services as a Proportion of GDP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Australian Government per cent</th>
<th>State and Local Government per cent</th>
<th>Total per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1964-65</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-72</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972-73</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973-74</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Australian Government Budget Outlays as a Proportion of GDP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1964-65</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-72</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>1972-73</td>
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<td>1973-74</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974-75</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-76*</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Rough estimate only.

3. Australian Government Budget Outlays, by Function

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Proportion of total 1970-71</th>
<th>Increase 1970-71 to 1975-76$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>per cent</td>
<td>per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>8.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>12.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Security and Welfare</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban and Regional Development</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture and Recreation</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Services*</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Public Services†</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unallocated‡</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

§ Based on current estimates.
† Includes: Legislative Services, Law, Order and Public Safety, Foreign Affairs and Overseas Aid, General and Scientific Research, and Administrative Services.
‡ Includes: Payments to or for the States and LGA nec and Natural Disaster Relief, Public Debt Interest.

4. Australian Government Budget Receipts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total receipts as a proportion of total outlays</th>
<th>Total taxation receipts as a proportion of GDP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>per cent</td>
<td>per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964-65</td>
<td>95.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>99.9</td>
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<td>1971-72</td>
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<td>1972-73</td>
<td>93.0</td>
<td>20.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>1973-74</td>
<td>87.6</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974-75</td>
<td>85.6</td>
<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mr ARMITAGE (Chifley)—Mr Speaker, I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

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

Mr ARMITAGE—I do. The honourable member for Angas (Mr Giles) said, if I recollect correctly, that he wondered whether I would take my hands out of my pockets—I think he should do so—and heed the call of the bugle. I am not one to blow my own bugle but I assure him that just as he heeded the call of the bugle so did I.

Amendment negatived.

Original question resolved in the affirmative.

Mr SPEAKER—I shall ascertain when it will be convenient for His Excellency the Governor-General to receive the Address-in-Reply and will notify honourable members accordingly.

BILLS RETURNED FROM THE SENATE

Mr SPEAKER—Order! I do not wish to name honourable members but while the Speaker is
reporting a message from the Senate it is customary to hear it in silence. I have received messages from the Senate returning the following Bills without amendment or requests:

Dried Vine Fruits Levy Amendment Bill 1976
State Grants (Housing Assistance) Bill 1976

ADJOURNMENT


Motion (by Mr Newman) proposed:

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr LIONEL BOWEN (Kingsford-Smith) (10.24)—I wish to raise a matter which concerns the Minister for Health (Mr Hunt). I appreciate the fact that he might not have had the chance to arrive in the chamber at this stage but I did indicate to his office that I would be raising this matter. It concerns the Bayer Pharmaceutical Company in my electorate which was very concerned to receive advice that certain of its products are no longer listed as being available on the national health scheme. The Bayer Company effectively points out a number of actions taken recently which seriously affect the production of its drugs as well as the economics of that business. It gives as an example the fact that the recent alteration in the patient contribution from $1.50 to $2 is having a serious effect in certain areas. For example, a product with a list price on the national health scheme of 70c formerly could have been dispensed at $1.77—less than $2. Now that the product is effectively dispensed the consumer price becomes $2.77. The reason is that the chemist’s mark-up is increased from 33-1/3 per cent once it is dispensed and becomes 66-2/3 per cent, and the dispensing fee is increased from 84c to $1.60.

The company also indicated to me the number of drugs that have been delisted. Included is a list of what are called the sustained release antihistamines. One of them, Fabahistin TR, is the product of the Bayer Company. I ask for permission to incorporate in Hansard a list of the antihistamines which are coloured on this sheet of paper.

Mr Hunt—I have no objection.

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

(The list read as follows)—

PHARMACEUTICAL BENEFITS

Advices to Chemists

Patient Contribution

As from 1 March, 1976 the amount of patient contribution for the supply of a pharmaceutical benefit is $2.00 for all persons other than pensioners. Concessions under the subsidised health benefits scheme are discontinued, but pensioners will continue to receive their pharmaceutical benefit free.

Advance Notices

The following items will be deleted from the Schedule of Benefits as from 1 April 1976 in addition to the items previously advised.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Name, form and strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2601X</td>
<td>Brompheniramine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tablet 12mg (long acting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2409T</td>
<td>Carbinoxamine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tablet 12mg (sustained release)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3032N</td>
<td>Chlorpheniramine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Capsule 12mg (sustained release)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1191Q</td>
<td>Brompheniramine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tablet 8mg (sustained release)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2921R</td>
<td>Carbinoxamine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tablet 12mg (sustained release)</td>
</tr>
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<td>Chlorpheniramine</td>
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<td>Capsule 8mg (sustained release)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2882Q</td>
<td>Chlorpheniramine</td>
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<td>Capsule 12mg (sustained release)</td>
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<td>Chlorpheniramine</td>
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<td>Cmelonamine</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tablet 1mg</td>
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<tr>
<td>3190X</td>
<td>Cyproheptadine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Capsule 8mg (sustained release)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1R</td>
<td>Capsule 8mg (sustained release)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1296F</td>
<td>Derchlorpheniramine</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Tablet 6mg (sustained release)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2518M</td>
<td>Dimethindene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tablet 2.5mg (sustained release)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2551G</td>
<td>Diphenylpyraline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tablet 5mg (sustained release)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1338K</td>
<td>Chlorpheniramine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Capsule 2.5mg (sustained release)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1339L</td>
<td>Chlorpheniramine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Capsule 5mg (sustained release)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2406P</td>
<td>Methylsalicylate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tablet 150mg (sustained release)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2775C</td>
<td>Pheniramine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tablet 75mg (sustained release)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mr LIONEL BOWEN—The Bayer Company makes the point that the sudden removal of these drugs will cause hardship to many allergy sufferers. It says that this view is supported by Dr Munro Ford. I understand that Dr Munro Ford wrote to the Chairman of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee on or about 15 March suggesting that this action be not taken at this stage but that it be deferred until the matter could be discussed with the Committee at its meeting in Melbourne on Friday, 14 May. Obviously that request has been refused. The point made by Dr Munro Ford was that the sudden removal of these antihistamines would present a tragedy to many patients who require them to control diseases which worry them, particularly in the early hours of the morning. In other words, the shorter acting antihistamines are just not sufficient to get these people through the night. It would be sad indeed if such sufferers were subjected to misery because of the precipitous
The Company goes on to indicate—it is something with which I agree—that it is undesirable to limit the clinical judgment of medical practitioners by specific financial concepts. The Company makes the point, in dealing with Fabahistine, formerly a listed product under the national health scheme, that the patient would pay $2 towards the cost of $3.87. Now that the drug has been removed from the national health scheme list the cost is $5.38, because of the increase in the mark-up and the dispensing fee, and the patient has to pay the entire amount.

The other point that the Company makes is that removing the long-acting antihistamines from the schedule will necessitate more frequent visits by patients to doctors, requiring long term treatment, with prescriptions to be filled in more often. This will lead to an increase in the cost of Medibank as a result of more visits to doctors, an increase in the cost of the national health scheme and an increase in cost to the patient. Another matter which the company raises is the costing of the products that it produces. It cites 3 products. One of them is baycaron, a product that it introduced in April 1973. It had a lot of delay in getting approval; in fact it makes the point that it did not get approval until December 1974. It has indicated that when it first introduced it, it was selling at $2.32 for a specific pack of 50 and that this has been marked back by the appropriate price fixing committee to $2.05. The same has applied to virtually all of the company’s products. I seek leave to incorporate in Hansard, a copy of the price movements of its products.

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

(The table read as follows)—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baycaron</td>
<td>25mg</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baycaron</td>
<td>25mg</td>
<td>250</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fabahistine</td>
<td>50mg</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>(0.40)</td>
<td>(8.9)</td>
<td>$4.70</td>
<td>0.60</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>50</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>150</td>
<td>7.30</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fabahistine TR</td>
<td>150mg</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>*(11.88)</td>
<td>10.65</td>
<td>*(1.23)</td>
<td>*(11.35)</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fabahistine Suspension</td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Osropol</td>
<td>50mg</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Osropol</td>
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<td>200</td>
<td>7.75</td>
<td>8.47</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Pack not available in 1965—price indicative of probable level in relation to the 50 pack.

# These increases caused by the removal of the bulk pack rate for chemist recovery on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

Prices listed are the recommended prices to pharmacist retailers on which the Health Department bases its calculations.

Adjournment

30 March 1976 REPRESENTATIVES 1153

removal of these agents from the national health scheme list. The first point, therefore, is that the sudden removal of these drugs will cause hardship.

The second point concerns the Bayer group specifically because of what it says is the inadequate notice it was given. It received a letter on 16 March, dated on or about 12 March, which stated:

In order to reduce inflation and in an endeavour to stabilise the economy it has become necessary . . . to implement a number of measures to reduce Government expenditure.

As part of the . . . program to reduce expenditure under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. . . . (Fabahistine TR) will be deleted from the Schedule of Pharmaceutical Benefits . . .

The Company makes the point that because it received virtually only 2 weeks’ notice it now is left with supplies of the drug which have, I understand, a stock value of from $250,000 to $300,000. It states:

One of the requirements of pharmaceutical benefits listing is that the product listed should be available through the normal wholesale and retail channels throughout Australia. Raw materials, packaging materials, labour requirements, equipment and space utility, production planning and testing procedures cannot be dispensed with overnight. It is normal business practice to budget and forecast such items over at least a 12-month period, particularly as many raw materials come from European sources. This departmental action will necessitate massive financial hardship involving inventories of finished stock and other materials built up to properly market the listed products. We at Bayer will have stock and materials representing approximately 6 months’ inventory of a product for which demand will be drastically reduced.

There will be virtually no demand for it. The Company continues:

Sales of Fabahistine TR in 1976 would have exceeded $500,000 had this de-listing not occurred, so you will appreciate the extent of the financial problem.
Mr LIONEL BOWEN—Honourable members will see that in the matter of baycaron, fabahistine and another drug called ospilot, the company is getting virtually no increases at all over a period of years. As it says, it is nowhere near a proposition for it to keep producing these particular products. It makes the point that these 3 products were responsible for 56 per cent of the company's turnover in Australia in 1974, and in the main are being sold at prices which in no way compensate the manufacturer for the alarming increases in costs being encountered. It makes this point in respect of costs: It is not at all satisfied with the appropriate committee—I am not raising this as a political matter, because obviously this committee has existed for some time—in the way in which it assesses those costs. The schedule clearly indicates that the costs are not assessed fairly. The company suggests that it would be only fair and reasonable that the drug companies have a right, to have an independent body, such as the Prices Justification Tribunal, to deal with these matters.

Finally there is the Drug Evaluation Committee. This company does produce new drugs, and it makes the point about a particular drug which it says is meeting extraordinary delay. It is a drug called canesten, for which a submission was lodged over 2 years ago. It is an anti-fungal component which has been approved in 80 other countries including Canada, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States. It now appears that Australia may be the last country in the world to gain any benefits from this new product. The company makes the point that there was over 2 years' wait trying to get this drug approved, and it is still not approved despite all other countries in the world having approved it. The criticism there is of the Drug Evaluation Committee, not of the Minister.

Finally the company makes the point that because of this continual interference and delay it has had to reduce its staff—staff in my electorate. It has been reduced by some 25 per cent. The company makes the plea: Why, in the interests of medicine and particularly of this industry, should not some common sense prevail, that is, that fair prices be permitted and certainly real speed be given to processing applications where drugs are needed in Australia and when they have been approved in countries overseas?

Mr SPEAKER—Before I call the Minister for Health I draw the attention of the House to the fact that there is approximately 26 minutes remaining in the debate. The time allotted for speakers is 10 minutes each. If all speakers restrict themselves to 6 minutes there will be opportunity for 4 honourable members to speak; otherwise only 3 honourable members may speak. I call the Minister for Health.

Mr HUNT (Gwydir—Minister for Health) (10.34)—I shall be very brief. I feel that I have a responsibility to respond to the honourable member for Kingsford-Smith (Mr Lionel Bowen) who was kind enough to inform me that he would be raising this matter in the House tonight. The great difficulty, of course, that I experience and that former Ministers for Health have experienced, is section 101 of the National Health Act sub-section (1) of which provides:

There shall be a Committee, called the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee, which shall, subject to the next succeeding sub-section, consist of—

(a) an officer, being a pharmacist, of the Commonwealth Department of Health appointed by the Director-General;
(b) six medical practitioners appointed by the Minister from among ten medical practitioners nominated by the Federal Council of the Australian Medical Association; and
(c) a pharmaceutical chemist appointed by the Minister from among three pharmaceutical chemists nominated by the Federated Pharmaceutical Service Guild of Australia.

Sub-section states:

The Minister may also appoint a pharmacologist to be a member of the Committee.

The current membership of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee is as follows: Dr M. V. Clarke (Chairman), consultant physician, Melbourne—this is a very prominent position—Dr K. C. Crafter, general practitioner, Adelaide; Dr M. J. Eade, neurologist, Brisbane; Dr J. L. Frew, consultant physician, Melbourne; Dr D. G. Hamilton, paediatrician, Sydney; Dr H. L. Thompson, general practitioner, Sydney; Professor J. P. Chalmers, clinical pharmacologist, Adelaide; Mr K. E. Thomas, retail pharmacist, Sydney; Mr A. E. Shields, pharmacist, Department of Health, Canberra.

This is a very expert body of people. I must, as former Ministers have done, defend the recommendations that they have made after having taken into account all the various medical evidence that is available to them in determining what drugs are or are not in fact put on the list. The truth of the matter is that the pharmaceutical benefits scheme is now costing Australian taxpayers no less than $300m a year. It was introduced originally by the late Sir Earle Page as a free drug scheme providing life-saving drugs and those drugs that were necessary for people suffering from chronic illnesses, to be made
available to the patient free of charge. Over the years this great list of drugs has expanded considerably. Pharmaceutical manufacturers have of course tried desperately to undertake research to ensure that their drugs were on the list. It is necessary to have an expert body of people who can make a balanced clinical judgment as to what drugs should or should not be on the list. The former Government adopted this principle wholeheartedly. In fact the former Minister for Health went to the PBAC in September of last year and made certain recommendations to it in the light of the current economic situation affecting the then Government. The PBAC went to work and made certain recommendations which ultimately came to me as the Minister for Health—recommendations which I approved. In the light of the economic review which took place in February of this year, recommendations were made to me as the Minister for Health. I did not adopt an arbitrary position as a Minister; I accepted the Committee’s recommendations in toto. The honourable member for Kingsford-Smith makes a case on behalf of Bayers and on behalf of a doctor, suggesting that the slow acting antihistamines should not have been removed from the list. This is a judgment that Bayers makes; this is a judgment that perhaps a doctor makes. But there has to be an arbiter. All I can say is that fortunately neither the Minister for Health, the honourable member for Kingsford-Smith, Bayers nor the doctor the honourable member quotes is the arbiter. We have an expert committee of people who are thoroughly expert in the field and make recommendations to the Minister. The Minister would be something of an egotist if he refused to accept the recommendations of a body that had no vested interest whatsoever in either accepting or refusing the recommendations of that Committee. So, as I said some weeks ago, I, as the Minister for Health, am very conscious of the great cost to the taxpayers of Australia of the pharmaceutical benefits scheme. I am also conscious of the reaction that some of the Committee’s recommendations have created among sections of the medical profession and also the pharmaceutical manufacturing industry. Nobody seems to be terribly happy with what has happened. As a consequence of the situation currently prevailing I have instituted a thorough going review of the whole of the pharmaceutical benefits system. I hope that in the near future policy options will be available to the Government. It could well be that the Government will be in a situation of considering whether in fact it should have a list as extensive as it has today or whether it should in fact have available to it a list consisting of life-saving drugs and drugs necessary for chronically ill people to be supplied free of charge to those eligible. But the one thing I want to make clear is that we will not in any circumstance be influenced by the pressures of various pressure groups in the community. We will take decisions in accordance with the best interests of the health care of the Australian people.

Mr SPEAKER—I call the honourable member for Bendigo.

Mr Armitage—I raise a point of order, Mr Speaker from this side of the House.

Mr SPEAKER—If the honourable member for Chifley wishes to draw my attention to the fact that I have called from my right successively, that is true. I am aware of it. I believe that in adjournment debates an honourable member is entitled to raise a point. If there is a Minister to answer it the point should be answered, but there should be a spreading between both sides of the House of the opportunity to bring up specific matters. I call the honourable member for Bendigo.

Mr Scholes—I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. It has always been the practice of this House that the call goes to one side and then the other. If a Minister replies he takes the turn of a speaker on the Government side. The departure from this practice is becoming prevalent in adjournment debates as honourable members on this side of the House are not being called first even when the motion is moved for the adjournment of the House.

Mr SPEAKER—The honourable member for Corio raises a point of order. I have exercised the discretion I have to call. As I made clear, I feel that the adjournment debate is an opportunity for the back bench members to make their points. I propose to call a meeting of the Standing Orders Committee for the purpose of discussing with it the way in which the adjournment debate should operate. I am tonight calling honourable members in this way so that the House can see the way in which the system would operate in these circumstances.

Mr Scholes—Mr Speaker, there is a long-standing recommendation of the Standing Orders Committee which has been before this House for some time. The present Government refused to adopt it when it was suggested by me during the previous Parliament. I think it is quite wrong that the departure from the practice of calling honourable members from alternative sides of the House should be made. I make that protest now.
Mr SPEAKER—I accept the protest and I understand the protest. While I understand the protest I should like the honourable member to understand the basis on which I am calling. I have made that clear I should like the honourable gentleman to consider that. If we take time discussing this point the honourable member for Chifley, who will be the next called, will not get the opportunity to make his point. I call the honourable member for Bendigo.

Mr James—Mr Speaker, will this procedure be adopted by you each night on the adjournment debate?

Mr SPEAKER—Yes, until such time as there has been an opportunity for me to receive the advice of the Standing Orders Committee.

Mr James—It was never done before by your predecessors, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER—I am aware of that. Let me just recapitulate. I believe that in the limited time for the adjournment debate back bench members should have the opportunity to bring up the points worrying them. The Minister for Health did not wish to enter the debate. I called him because the honourable member for Kingsford Smith (Mr Lionel Bowen) wanted answers to the questions that he had raised. I indicate to the honourable member for Chifley that I will call him next. I call the honourable member for Bendigo.

Mr Scholes—I raise another point of order, Mr Speaker. I think that this is setting a very serious precedent in this House, the Opposition being denied the call in its usual turn. The Standing Orders Committee has not ruled on the matter. You have determined that in future when a Minister wishes to enter a debate he will do so without penalty to the Government side but without penalty to the Opposition. That is a punishment of the Opposition for what is no misdemeanour of its own and, I think, a clear departure from the Standing Orders, which I understand recommend the calling of alternate sides of the House. It means that a Minister at any time, under your ruling, can enter a debate without having to worry about whether he is taking away the rights of one of his own supporters and can deliberately enter a debate when he wishes to prevent an Opposition member from speaking on the adjournment motion. That is setting a precedent which I think deprives members of this House of their proper rights in the Parliament.

Mr SPEAKER—I take the point. The honourable member for Corio has made a very strong point which I take into consideration. I ask the co-operation of the honourable member for Corio for the purpose of allowing me to proceed this evening with the course I have indicated. I call the honourable member for Bendigo.

Mr Scholes—I should like to have a ruling from you on this definitely tomorrow.

Mr BOURCHIER (Bendigo) (10.46)—Thank you, Mr Speaker. I started to feel like a lift for a while, going up and down all the time. I was prompted to join in the adjournment debate tonight by the rather startling revelation that we had in the House tonight at the end of the Address-in-Reply debate on the Governor-General’s Speech. After listening to the debate for the number of weeks that the Address-in-Reply has been before the House, and having heard the castigations by the Australian Labor Party of the Governor-General personally and of the Address-in-Reply, and having heard Opposition members point out all the problems and the faults of the Governor-General, we now find that they did not even—

Mr Scholes—I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. The honourable member is not entitled to raise a matter which has been before the Parliament previously.

Mr SPEAKER—I uphold the point of order. The honourable member for Bendigo is not entitled to revive the debate.

Mr BOURCHIER—Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will not continue the Address-in-Reply debate; I merely say with your indulgence, Mr Speaker, that I wish to draw the attention of the House to a rather strange circumstance. The Opposition was not prepared to stand up for its principles and vote. This will be recorded in the annals of Hansard and in the annals of Parliament to show that the Opposition has not got the strength of its convictions. Unfortunately I cannot mention the way that the person concerned in the Address-in-Reply was treated so I shall go on to another matter which has been drawn to my attention.

During the recent election campaign an honourable member who was a Minister of the previous Government allowed the use of the official pre-paid envelope for the circulation of election propaganda. These envelopes, Mr Speaker, which you are aware were introduced for the use of members of Parliament, were to be posted from Canberra. This former Minister apparently arranged to receive a batch of letters signed, and obviously took the envelopes to the source of the signatures, had them all addressed by the people concerned and then brought them back to Canberra for posting. The letters were signed by a Mr E. A. Costanzo, who I understand is one of the directors of an Italian newspaper.
The letters were used for promoting the Australian Labor Party in the last election campaign, and in fact were used to attempt to gain votes for that former Minister. I think that this shows a typically blatant disregard for the use of public funds and the use of parliamentary privilege that the Labor Party so readily indulged in, and which drew the wrath of the people down on its head.

I intend to ask that the Leader of the House (Mr Sinclair) or the Attorney-General (Mr Elicott) look into this matter and see whether any action should be taken in relation to a breach of privilege. In fact it may well be that it should be your decision on this matter, Mr Speaker. I advised the person concerned that I intend to mention this tonight. I think such an action on behalf of the former Minister was totally disrespectful and was certainly a flagrant breach of privilege by a member of Parliament, particularly by a Minister of the Crown, making use of these envelopes which were handed out in a very restricted manner by the former Speaker of the House who so often stands up in the House and apparently imagines that he is still the Speaker of the House.

Dr Kugman—You are a hypocrite.

Mr Speaker—Order! The honourable member for Bendigo will not reflect upon another member of the House, who is a former Speaker of the House. I heard the word ‘hypocrite’ used by one honourable member. I do not know who used the word, but I hope that I will not hear it again.

Mr Bourchier—Thank you, Mr Speaker. The person who said it would not have the strength of character to stand up and withdraw it either. I do not want to prolong the matter. I think the matter has been aired. I have the necessary papers here and I will hand them over to the right authorities. I had to draw this matter to the attention of the House—

Dr Kugman—Mr Speaker, I raise a point of order. Is it fair for the honourable member for Bendigo to raise these questions when he himself paid the deposit for a fictitious Country Party candidate so as to enable him to get back into this House?

Mr Speaker—Order! There is no point of order.

Mr Bourchier—Mr Speaker, that just shows how frightened they are about this matter. Perhaps the papers could be included in Hansard.

I seek leave to have the papers incorporated in Hansard.

Mr Speaker—Is leave granted?

Opposition members—No.

Mr Speaker—Leave is not granted.

Mr Bourchier—Strangely enough, Mr Speaker, I did not think it would be.

Mr Armitage (Chifley) (10.51)—I call upon the Prime Minister (Mr Malcolm Fraser) to give this Parliament an unequivocal undertaking that the Australian Government Centre in Parramatta will continue to be built. I call upon the Government to make it very clear that this proposal is not to be ditched and that the announced deferment of it will not stand. I refer to a copy of the Parramatta Advertiser, which I point out to honourable members opposite is one of the Murdoch newspapers. The contents of the newspaper in respect of this matter show how even the Government’s friends are beginning to get a little frightened about what it is doing. I will deal with the honourable member for Parramatta (Mr Ruddock), who is trying to interject, because there is a remarkable statement by him in this newspaper. A front page article in last week’s Advertiser, which as I said is part of the Murdoch Press, states that it has now been announced that the Government will defer the Australian Government Centre in Parramatta. The editorial points out that the Government is trying to have two bob each way, in effect; it is trying to say that it is deferring the project, but it will not say when it will finally go ahead. Let us face reality. Everyone is aware that what the deferment really means is that the Government is scrapping the whole proposal. That is what it is trying to do.

Let us look at a few of the statements in the newspaper. The editorial states:

Mr Fraser must give a clear statement on his Government’s intentions immediately, particularly in view of an assurance given before the 1975 election by the then caretaker Minister for Construction and Housing, Senator Carrick—

he is supposed to be very influential in the Government—

that the project would go ahead.

This is another example of the Fraser Government breaking a firm election undertaking given by one of its most senior spokesmen. An article in the newspaper reported what a local organiser of the trade union movement had to say. The article stated:

He said not only labourers but architects, consulting engineers and quantity surveyors had been thrown out of work.

‘When the time comes to recommence work, the industry will be unable to do so’ he said.
By June, 60 per cent of the building industry will be unemployed," he said.

He was referring to the building industry in the western suburbs. Surely this shows the great problem which has been brought about by this decision of the Government.

The newspaper also has an article on what was said by the President of the Parramatta Chamber of Commerce, who I assume is a friend of the Government forces. The article states:

Parramatta Chamber of Commerce president, Mr B. Edwards, said businessmen were very concerned because both political parties had promised the centre would go ahead.

Mr James—What is their member saying about it?

Mr ARMITAGE—Ah: that is the best of the lot. Out there they call him ‘little boy lost’. He usually goes to his daddy, who is a Minister in the State Liberal Government, for advice.

Mr SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member will address the Chair, not the honourable member for Hunter.

Mr ARMITAGE—I was only replying to him, Mr Speaker. The Parramatta Council got in touch with the honourable member for Parramatta—I do not know whether this was by way of letter or by some other means—to ask him what he knew about this matter, because he is supposed to be so influential in the Government and he is supposed to be always able to give an answer. As honourable members know, his father is a Minister in the State Government and a very influential person in the Liberal Party machine. Accordingly, it would be expected that the honourable member could answer this question. But what did the honourable member say in reply? He is reported in the Parramatta Advertiser as having said:

'I have been and am still seeking from the appropriate departments, an up-to-date statement of the situation and progress.

'I will write to you again as soon as I have something from the responsible Ministers'.

Apparently he cannot get anything from his Ministers. I doubt that he can even see the Prime Minister, who made the decision. It is very obvious that this is another one of the Prime Minister's decisions where, irrespective of what his Ministers have promised, he says 'You do that', and they go ahead and do it with gutless incapacity.

Mr Goodluck—He is bigger than we are.

Mr ARMITAGE—I know that he is bigger than you are. There is an admission by the honourable member that he is being stood over and is frightened simply because the Prime Minister is a little bigger than he is in height. I know that the honourable member is not very big; but I am amazed that he would make such an admission. However, you can understand, Mr Speaker, why I say that the honourable member for Parramatta is called 'little boy lost'. In a big issue like this—one of the most important issues affecting his electorate and probably the most important issue that has affected his electorate since he was elected—he cannot even get in touch with one of his Ministers, let alone the Prime Minister, to find out whether the project is to go ahead.

Is it any wonder that I have to stand up in this House tonight? Someone has to represent the electors of Parramatta. It is quite obvious that the honourable member for Parramatta is utterly inadequate in this respect. He is incapable of adequately representing the people of his electorate. That is why I have to stand up here tonight and call upon the Government and the Prime Minister to give an unequivocal statement, one way or another, on whether the Australian Government Centre at Parramatta will go ahead. What does the Prime Minister mean when he says that it is being deferred? Does this mean that it is to be deferred indefinitely? Does it mean that the project will go ahead after 30 June, or will it be deferred from this date, as the people suspect? We want to know the answers because this is one of the most important projects for the people in the electorate of Parramatta. The establishment of this centre will create a great deal of local employment not only in its construction but also in the large number of public servants who will work in it. These people will shop and work in Parramatta——

Mr Donald Cameron—Mr Speaker I raise a point of order. There is a standing order which requires honourable members not to indulge in tedious repetition. The honourable member for Chifley has spent the last 8 minutes trying to make something out of nothing. He is dull and boring in his approach and should be ruled out of order.

Mr SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member will not reflect on the honourable member for Chifley. As there is only a minute left before the House is adjourned, I am sure that the honourable member for Chifley will finish his speech so as to give the honourable member for Parramatta an opportunity to reply.

Mr ARMITAGE—Mr Speaker, he can do so tomorrow night. If the honourable member for Griffith had not taken up my time I could have
given the honourable member for Parramatta some time. I want to make this point: The Taxation Office has brought many public servants into the Parramatta area. These people will do their shopping in the area and therefore will increase the circulation of money in that area. In turn, local employment will flow to people in the outer western suburbs of Sydney. The same thing would happen if the Australian Government Centre were established. Local employment is a vital necessity for the whole of the area—

Mr SPEAKER—Order! It being 11 p.m., the House stands adjourned until 2.15 p.m. tomorrow.

House adjourned at 11 p.m.
The following answers to questions upon notice were circulated:

**Cigarettes: Prices and Consumption**

(Question No. 13)

Mr Lloyd asked the Minister for Health, upon notice:

1. Is it considered that there is a relationship between the consumption of cigarettes and their cost beyond a certain point as a percentage of average weekly earnings.

2. If so, what evidence from Australia or other countries is available to justify this relationship.

3. What was the average cost of a packet of 20 cigarettes in Australia in (a) 1955 (b) 1960, (c) 1965, (d) 1970 and (e) September 1975, and what was the Australian per capita consumption of cigarettes, and average weekly earnings in each of those years.

Mr Hunt—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

1. (1) and (2) A World Health Organisation Expert Committee which met in December 1974 stated (‘Smoking and its Effects on Health’, WHO Technical Report Series 568, Geneva 1975) that there are no consistent data available relating cigarette prices to their consumption.

The Committee reported however that ‘There is a growing conviction that the imposition of larger taxes might be used successfully to retard the growth of smoking among adults, to reduce adoption of the habit by children, and to move the consumer away from the more hazardous forms and brands of the smoking product’.

2. (3) I am advised by the Acting Commonwealth Statistician that he does not have statistics showing the average cost for the range of types and varieties of cigarettes sold throughout Australia. In December quarter 1975, prices of brands of filter tipped cigarettes in packets of 20 selected as representative for purposes of compiling the Consumer Price Index ranged between 56 cents and 82 cents in the State capital cities.

Price movements for the ‘Cigarettes and tobacco’ subgroup of the Consumer Price Index between 1954-55 and 1974-75 were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONSUMER PRICE INDEX</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Group: Cigarettes and Tobacco</td>
<td>Weighted Average of Six State Capitals (Base: Year 1954-55 = 100.0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954-55</td>
<td>1955-60</td>
<td>1959-60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1964-65</td>
<td>1969-70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1974-75</td>
<td>244.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Estimates of Australian per capita consumption of cigarettes and average weekly earnings in each of the selected years are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Per capita consumption of cigarettes (kg)</th>
<th>Average weekly earnings per employed male unit ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1954-55</td>
<td>1.271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959-60</td>
<td>1.755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964-65</td>
<td>1.953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969-70</td>
<td>2.029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974-75</td>
<td>2.156</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Includes trainee teachers which are now classified as being outside the labour force. The effect of their inclusion is to decrease the figures by approximately 30 cents.

**Drugs**

(Question No. 14)

Mr Lloyd asked the Minister for Health, upon notice:

1. (1) Was the National Health Act amended to allow prescription drugs to be dispensed in hospitals by other than doctors or pharmacists, excluding emergency situations in isolated areas.

2. (2) What safeguards, under Medibank, are there to prevent this happening.

3. (3) Has this already occurred in Queensland, or elsewhere; if so, what corrective action has been taken.

Mr Hunt—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

1. (1) No.

2. (2) The Medibank Hospitals Agreements between the Commonwealth and each State contain no special provision to prevent prescription drugs being dispensed in hospitals by other than doctors or pharmacists. Such a requirement is contained in respective State legislation.

3. (3) So far as my Department is aware, legislation in the States has not been amended to allow prescription drugs to be dispensed in hospitals by other than doctors or pharmacists. In Queensland, drugs are dispensed in accordance with the Poisons Regulations of 1973 under the Queensland Health Act 1973-75.

**Drugs**

(Question No. 18)

Mr Lloyd asked the Minister for Health, upon notice:

Has the percentage of National Health Scheme drugs dispensed in hospital outpatients departments increased since the introduction of Medibank; if so, by how much.

Mr Hunt—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

The information requested is not available to the Commonwealth. The Medibank cost-sharing agreements between the Commonwealth and State Governments include the cost of drugs purchased by recognised hospitals as one of the operating costs to be shared. No arrangements have been entered into with States for the provision of statistics of National Health Scheme drugs dispensed by hospitals as opposed to drugs outside the scheme. Such drugs, along with all other drugs dispensed, are provided free to patients.
Family Medicine Program

(Question No. 41)

Mr Lloyd asked the Minister for Health, upon notice:

1. Does the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners in its use of the $3.5 million grant for 1975-76 for the Family Medicine Program include any instruction on the early intervention of rehabilitation with respect to alcohol or other drug addicts and the handicapped.

2. Has any instruction been previously issued on this subject; if not, will one be issued in the near future.

Mr Hunt—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

1. Yes. In its vocational training and reorientation courses, the Family Medicine Program, sponsored by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, provides extensive instruction on early detection, intervention and rehabilitation with respect to alcoholism, drug addiction and the problems of handicapped persons. Using a wide variety of educational methods and resources, including written material, videotapes, workshops and seminars, the Program provides assistance in identifying these problems, and instruction on counselling, treatment and prevention.

2. No. It has not been policy under the Community Health Program to issue such highly detailed instructions on activities to be undertaken within funded projects. However, I know that, in its implementation of the Family Medicine Program, the College shares the Government’s concern in these areas and, in regard to family medical practice, has always sought to emphasise the importance of early detection, treatment and rehabilitation in relation to these problems.

GATT Agricultural Group

(Question No. 103)

Mr Lloyd asked the Minister for Overseas Trade, upon notice:

1. Who are Australia’s representatives at the GATT Agricultural Group talks which began in Geneva on 22 September 1975.

2. On what sub-groups, product groups and committees is Australia represented and what proposals have Australian members put to the respective groups.

Mr Anthony—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

1. The honourable member’s question presumably refers to the Multilateral Trade Negotiations which entered the substantive phase in 1975. The Australian delegation to the meeting of the Agriculture Group on 22-26 September 1975 was drawn from the staff of the Australian Delegation to the Multilateral Trade Negotiations based in Geneva and led by Mr G. Warwick Smith, Special Trade Representative.

2. The Trade Negotiations Committee, which oversees the negotiations, has established six groups to handle specific aspects of the negotiations, as follows:

(i) Tariff Group

(ii) Agriculture Group, with sub-groups on Grains Meat Dairy Products

(iii) Tropical Products Group

(iv) Non Tariff Measures Group, with sub-groups on Quantitative Restrictions

Subsidies and Countervailing Duties
Customs Matters
Technical Barriers to Trade (Standards)

(v) Safeguards Group

(vi) Sectors Group

Australia is represented on all these Groups and Sub-Groups.

At this point in the negotiations the various Groups and sub-groups are still engaged mainly in establishing the bases for negotiating. Broadly this involves collaboration on the necessary data collection to establish the facts, identifying the problems confronting international trade and seeking agreement on those which lend themselves to multilateral solutions.

In the Grains, Meat and Dairy Product sub-groups following the presentation and collation of a large volume of statistical data, there has been a preliminary exchange of views on the problems of world trade and country by country examinations of aspects of domestic production and trade. No agreed and specific negotiating propositions are yet under consideration, and in some cases progress may depend on developments elsewhere, such as in the case of grains, where the International Wheat Council is pursuing discussions on a new international grains arrangement.

In the MTN Agriculture Group itself progress has been slowed by basic philosophical differences between the U.S.A. and the EEC on the role of the Group and how trade in agricultural products is to be handled generally in the negotiations. An uneasy and somewhat vague compromise was reached in December 1975, which appears to give considerable ground to the EEC approach. This approach is based on isolating agriculture from the main stream of the negotiations, bilateralising negotiations and thus avoiding broad solutions to many of the most pressing problems of trade in agricultural products so that arrangements such as the EEC’s Common Agricultural Policy remain intact.

Australia has at this stage reserved its position on aspects of the compromise, in the absence of any clarification as to what it really means and the unwillingness of either the EEC or the U.S.A. to provide such adequate clarification at this stage.

Australia’s general position on trade in agricultural products in the Multilateral Trade Negotiations is that we would like to achieve a significant degree of liberalisation of world trade in agricultural products with improved opportunities of access to markets by efficient producers. In this respect our views are in line with those of the United States. However, unlike the U.S.A. we can see scope for international commodity arrangements which stabilise production, prices and trade in appropriate circumstances for some products.

Long Range Radio Paths Studies

(Question No. 101)

Mr Beazley asked the Minister for Defence, upon notice:


2. How many (a) Australian and (b) United States personnel were engaged in work (i) at Norfolk Island and (ii) in continental Australia under the terms of the Exchange of Notes as at (A) 31 January 1969, (B) 30 April 1969, (C) 31 July 1969, (D) 31 December 1969 and (E) the end of each quarter thereafter during which the Exchange remained in force.
(3) Did the work conducted under the Exchange involve the study of the earth's magnetosphere by means of whistling atmospherics; if not, what did the work conducted involve.

(4) Will he make available the results of work conducted under the Exchange.

(5) What was the total cost to Australia of executing her part in the Exchange.

Mr Killen—The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

(1) No. The Agreement expired on 1 April 1970.
(2) (a)—
  (i) Nil except for brief visits by Australian scientists.
  (ii) Nil.
(b)—
  (i) (A) to (D). No detailed records were kept but the number of regular operators was four. A few additional members were there during the building of the station only and two other members arrived in the latter part of the March (1970) quarter to assist in dismantling the equipment.
  (ii) Nil.
(3) The work involved the study of ionospheric propagation in relation to long-range radio paths.
(4) The results of the study are still classified. However, the data were made available to interested Australian government officials.
(5) The total cost of the project was borne by the United States.

Naval Patrol Boats
(Question No. 128)

Mr Lloyd asked the Minister for Defence, upon notice:

(1) How many patrol boats will there be on duty at any given time over the next 6 weeks off the north west coast and in the Gulf of Carpentaria.
(2) How many patrol boats in total will be required to maintain this number.
(3) Will this be sufficient to patrol adequately these areas during the prawning season and the period of greatest activity by Indonesian and Taiwanese fishermen.

Mr Killen—The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

(1) and (2) Surveillance of the north west coast and the Gulf is a joint effort by patrol boats, RAAF LRMP and RAN Tracker aircraft. The number of patrol boats on station at any time is dependent on operational commitments but it is presently planned to vary between a minimum of two and a maximum of five. These will be divided between the two areas. A total of eight boats will be required to maintain these numbers.
(3) The role of the Defence Force in coastal surveillance/patrol is to provide assistance to the responsible civil authorities on an agreed basis. The adequacy or otherwise of the assistance is a matter for those authorities to judge. My understanding is that my colleagues are satisfied that the appropriate level of Defence Force effort is being provided. The matter is being kept under continuous review.

Second-Hand Buses
(Question No. 179)

Mr Keating asked the Minister for Business and Consumer Affairs, upon notice:

(1) Are second-hand buses presently being imported into Australia.
(2) If so, will he indicate the (a) quantity, (b) type and (c) country of origin of vehicles (i) presently being imported and (ii) imported in the last 12 months.

Mr Howard—The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

(1) Yes.
(2)—
  (a) 16;
  (b) not available;
  (c) U.K. (15), Austria (1) for period March 1975 to February 1976.

The above figures have been derived from an examination of records of all buses imported into Australia. There is no separate statistical record of imports of second-hand buses.

Electoral Expenses
(Question No. 200)

Mr E. G. Whitlam asked the Minister representing the Minister for Administrative Services, upon notice:

(1) Which members of the present Ministry in the House of Representatives completed Form G under section 151 of the Commonwealth Electoral Act following the elections on 13 December 1975.
(2) Did the (a) Liberal Party of Australia or (b) National Country Party of Australia federally or in any of the States supply a declaration under section 152 of the Commonwealth Electoral Act following these elections.

Mr Street—The Minister for Administrative Services has provided me with the following answer to the honourable member's question:

(1) Every return made in pursuance of section 151 of the Commonwealth Electoral Act is open to public inspection upon payment of the prescribed fee of 50c.

As all returns lodged with the Australian Electoral Officers are available for inspection by members, it is not proposed to make information from the returns otherwise available.

(2) The returns to be made by political organisations pursuant to section 152 of the Commonwealth Electoral Act must be filed with the Australian Electoral Officer for the State in which the election took place, within twelve weeks after the result of the election has been declared. The twelve weeks period has not yet expired.