

Mr. DOUBE.—The Minister is wrong, Sir.

The CHAIRMAN (Sir Edgar Tanner).—Order! I call on the honorable member to keep to the division he is discussing.

Mr. JONA (Hawthorn).—I rise to a point of order. For the record it should be pointed out that the honorable member for Albert Park is misquoting the report of the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria. He has had recorded in *Hansard* something that the Anti-Cancer Council did not in fact say in its report.

The CHAIRMAN (Sir Edgar Tanner).—Order! The honorable member for Hawthorn is expressing a point of view and is not raising a point of order.

Mr. DOUBE (Albert Park).—Unfortunately, in recent years this Parliament has been cursed with a number of Ministers of Health who are not much interested in their portfolios. On this problem of health, it is clear that when the Minister talks of trying to preserve the concept of Federalism, he is avoiding the issue. As Minister of Health, what he should be preserving is the health of the community. The honorable gentleman is not a Minister for constitutional affairs. Twelve months ago a Bill was passed requiring the labelling of cigarette packets with information about tar content and a statement that cigarettes were dangerous to health. The Government has abjectly run away from its responsibility. It has not given one substantive reason why it has gone back on its decision of twelve months ago. The Opposition has been reinforced by the action of the Victorian Chief Health Officer, Dr. Farnbach, who made an attack on the Minister of Health. It is without precedent for a public servant publicly to make a comment of this type.

The CHAIRMAN (Sir Edgar Tanner).—Order! If the honorable member is to discuss cancer, he should relate his remarks to the Cancer Institute.

Mr. DOUBE.—The report of the Cancer Institute indicates that it is more afraid of lung cancer and its association with cigarette smoking than practically anything else. It also indicates just how serious is the problem of cigarette smoking. Dr. Farnbach, who is Victoria's Chief Health Officer, was reported in the *Age* of the 5th December, 1970, to have said—

As a public servant I have got to accept the decision of the Government and carry out its policies, but I am extremely disappointed because I regard smoking as one of the two major public health problems of our day.

Dr. Farnbach was strongly supported by the Victorian Branch of the Australian Medical Association and the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria. I have said sufficient to indicate that this is a guilty Government. When the Government put through this legislation, many honorable members spoke of the seriousness of this problem and agreed with views expressed by health officers that people who smoke should be given a reasonable warning that it is one of the dire problems of the present time. It is disgraceful that the Government should go back on what it said on the matter twelve months ago. It is even more disgraceful that the Minister is not prepared to make any reasoned argument to show why he has taken this action.

Progress was reported.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

The debate (adjourned from October 6) on the motion of Mr. J. A. Taylor (Gippsland South) for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech was resumed.

Mr. McCABE (Lowan).—I congratulate the mover and seconder of the motion for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech, the honorable member for Gippsland South and the honorable member for Gippsland West, who I am sure will make many further contributions to debates in this House in

the future. On behalf of the constituents of the Lowan electorate, which I have the honour to represent for the second time, I have pleasure in expressing loyalty and respect to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Having represented Lowan for three years in 1964-67 and then spending three years, to use a common phrase, on the outside looking in, I am confident that I now have a better appreciation of the problems which are causing much concern in rural areas. My electorate is a wholly wheat-growing area. The problems of wheat growers, which are reasonably well known, at least to some honorable members, have been pursued fairly closely. It is not my intention to repeat what has been said already on this question in the House. Many people have suggested ideas which they think will solve the wheat growers' problems, but most of the suggestions merely cover the immediate future and do not provide long-term answers.

One of the methods by which the wheat growers' problems could be solved on a long-term basis would be the creation of a rural industries board. Such a board would assist not only the farming community but all people in rural areas. The board should be set up on lines similar to the Tariff Board, with power to call evidence. It would be a body that could and would recommend to the Government appropriate action which, if adopted, would prove valuable for several reasons. Firstly, the recommendations would be those of an independent body—that is, independent of any political implications, in relation to both farmer organization politics and party politics as we know them in this House. This would answer the first cry of all economists and the like who consider that the rural community is being feather-bedded. The findings of the board, which should be made public, would reveal the true position of primary industry in relation to the rest of the economy.

Critics of this proposal claim that the findings of such a board would be unfortunate for primary industry, but if one believes that at present primary industry is financially disadvantaged, there is no reason to think that the board's findings will make the situation any worse.

The Victorian Government can rightly claim that it has given as much assistance as possible to the rural community within the limitations of the finance made available to it by the Federal Government. At present, another organization is endeavouring to influence the farming population in western Victoria. Possibly the motives of this organization are excellent, but its timing is essentially bad.

The Premier has given his support to the proposal I have mentioned. I hope that the honorable gentleman will apply pressure to bring a rural industries board into being. Positive action of this type is needed to reveal the true position of the primary producer in relation to the remainder of the economy. I also make it clear that I recognize that the position of the country businessman is tied closely with the farming community and that the whole rural population will sink or swim together. Primary production is still vital to this nation and it is still important that we maintain a good rural export income.

I appeal to all primary producers to attend their farming union meetings, to form a united front, and to forget their petty squabbles and internal politics. They should get on with the job of putting before all Governments what is necessary to restore the rural industries. Mr. Silcock of the Department of Agriculture has said that Australian farmers grow their produce at costs among the world's lowest; they are well educated, highly cost conscious, receptive to new ideas and were prepared to contribute large sums towards research and market promotion in their own industry.

It amazes me how people can proclaim in loud voices that they would be the saviours of the rural community and at the same time as part of their policy support a 30-hour week. It is beyond me! One does not need to have a great knowledge of mathematics to know that such a policy would mean that the cost of production would rise by at least 20 per cent. Perhaps the most odious word in the rural community today is "diversification". It is not used so much now because people have come to realize that it has caused a number of problems in primary industries. The wool industry diversified to wheat and this caused problems. The wheat growers switched to barley, and this caused problems. Fortunately, the Barley Board has sold last year's crop and this year's crop in advance. However, if it continues to rain as it did yesterday there could be less barley than expected.

Some producers have moved into the field of growing small seeds. The varieties of seeds sown in the Wimmera this year range from canary seeds to wheat. As a barley grower of long standing, at a later date I hope that I shall have the opportunity of discussing the problems of that industry in relation to barley grading. The pig industry is booming and is a reasonable proposition in the Wimmera. I recall the time when pigs were kept to clean up the crops and the offal around the farm, and they were housed accordingly. Today they are housed under conditions as good as their owners. Problems exist in the pig industry. I am glad that the Minister of Health is now in the Chamber.

I should like a close examination to be made of the operations of the offensive trade regulations, particularly as they relate to the pig industry. The uncertainty and the likely effects of some of the regulations in some areas are causing people to refrain from establishing new piggeries or expanding their present farms. Whilst good reason may exist for the control

of piggeries in towns, cities and in boroughs, there does not seem to be the same justification for control in extensive farming areas. I assure honorable members that I neither support nor condone any action that would constitute a nuisance or a health hazard. Therefore, piggeries should not be established within built-up areas. With the great expansion of the pig industry, piggeries should be licensed and registered by the Department of Agriculture.

The subject of subsidies for the farming communities has been mentioned. Direct subsidies will not solve any problems. The original subsidies are soon eaten up in increased costs, and their existence has often been used as an excuse for not tackling the real problem of rising costs. I should advocate the provision of long-term loans at preferential rates of interest for the reconstruction of the debts of bona fide farmers. A "farmer" could be defined as a person who obtains 50 per cent of his income from primary industry and has 50 per cent of his assets in rural property. For too long the term "farmer" has been loosely used. A rural loan insurance corporation should be established to administer such finance.

The abolition of Federal and State probate duty would be a major factor in keeping the rural community on their farms. It should be recalled that a recently appointed senator was elected in Western Australia on the platform for the abolition of probate duty. The Federal Government could assist rural communities by a deductible taxation allowance for expenditure on pasture improvement, fodder conservation and advice obtained from farm management consultants. However, this would not mean much to the farmer today, because his income is at such a low level, that he would not pay much income tax. Money obtained from loans must be spent wisely. The 85 per cent. of the people not engaged in primary production are entitled to expect that the money will

be spent to strengthen primary industry and not lead the rural communities to an ever-increasing dependence on public charity.

I should like to mention two aspects of local Government. I refer to the recommendation of the Subordinate Legislation Committee that all municipal by-laws should be subject to the scrutiny of that committee in a manner similar to the current statutory rules of Parliament. These by-laws are made by democratically elected representatives of the people, who have their answer through the ballot box each year. The ratepayers do not have to wait for three years to show their disgust. I see no reason why the Government or the Subordinate Legislation Committee should make such an unwarranted intrusion into the affairs of local government. I trust that the Government will reject the recommendation although it was made by an all-party committee.

Whilst I was preparing my notes for my contribution to this debate, I looked up *Hansard* to see what I said six years ago in a similar debate. On that occasion, I asked for something to be done to control underground water operations, which affected the area I then represented and again represent. I am pleased that during the past three years the Government has introduced legislation to control the boring and pumping of underground water. In conclusion, I quote a saying which I believe is attributed to Disraeli and which will answer many of the interjections which have been made. The saying is—

It is much easier to be critical than correct.

I realize my responsibilities as a member of Parliament and I shall do my utmost to uphold the traditions of this institution and to further the interests of those whom I represent.

Mr. MITCHELL (Benambra).—Like the honorable member for Lowan, I sincerely congratulate the mover and seconder of the motion for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to his Excellency the Governor.

Both honorable members were outstanding and demonstrated capable oratory as well as something which is not always evident—the warmth of sincere human sympathy. They projected this commendable personality into their words. I do not necessarily wish them a long sojourn in this House, but I hope that their ability earns them happiness and the feeling of worth-while achievement. They certainly enhance the prestige of this House.

I again place on record that the House did not adjourn as a tribute to the memory of the late Sir Wilfrid Kent Hughes. Honorable members will recall that when I raised this matter the Chief Secretary made some very nice remarks about Sir Wilfrid but the fact remains that a very fine Victorian and Australian was not paid the tribute of the House adjourning in his memory. When Colonel the Honorable Sir William Watt Leggatt, who had been Agent-General and had been out of the House for some time, died, the House adjourned in his memory and I was given the compliment of making the panegyric for him.

When Sir Wilfrid Ken Hughes passed away, the House was not sitting but I was telephoned and told that the House would be sitting an extra day so that it could adjourn as a gesture to his memory. When I arrived in Melbourne, the Leader of the Country Party asked me to make the panegyric for Sir Wilfrid Kent Hughes. I suggested that he should do it as Leader and cover Sir Wilfrid's career and that I would back him up with some comments on the personal aspects. However, the House continued its deliberations, discussed abortion, and Sir Wilfrid was forgotten. Something seems to have gone wrong. Sir Wilfrid had an outstandingly long record in this House; he served Victoria well both in and out of Cabinet, and also in the Federal Parliament. He served Australia in two world wars and had a distinguished record in the Olympic Games. I had the privilege of knowing