

It is not appropriate to go into details tonight, but I will simply touch on a couple of points. This Government's policy has always been to try to ensure that all Victorians enjoy a good standard of living regardless of where they live. The Government has initiated policies positively orientated towards that end and those policies have included the provision of water and sewerage wherever possible throughout the State. As some areas have water literally on their doorsteps, and others find it costly to obtain, the Government provides a series of subsidies and loans to try to even up facilities available and the cost to the users. In many instances, the financial wizard would have decreed that water provision should never have gone ahead, but the political decision was to proceed, and as a country resident I applaud the political decision.

The interest subsidy, which is payable on all interest over 3 per cent on loans, has come under public fire. At a time when current interest rates are 15 per cent and upwards, that is understandable, and the Government is reviewing its policy. However, to base criticism on the fact that the subsidy is archaic because it was established in 1945, is to create a totally false impression. During the 50 years from 1924 to 1974, interest rates hovered between 3 per cent and 6 per cent, and the subsidy that the Government gave to trusts to maintain that 3 per cent has meant real stability in planning works and extensions. There is nothing archaic about stability.

Much has been made of the millions of dollars that the Public Bodies Review Committee has found lying idle in bank accounts throughout the State. However, a most inaccurate picture has been given to the people of Victoria simply because no one has explained what this money represents and what would be the effects of withdrawing it. One simple explanation that needs to be offered with regard to the oft-quoted \$80 million lying idle in the water industry is that that represented money invested late last year when the committee's questionnaire was circu-

*Mrs Chambers*

lated. At that stage every year, authorities all around the State borrow money for the coming summer work programme to ensure that the necessary funds are in hand and they invest their borrowings short term. Therefore, there was a considerable amount of money invested at the time when the questionnaire was sent to the various authorities. If that questionnaire had been circulated in May instead of October, the whole scene would have been completely different.

In this sessional period of Parliament, honourable members will be considering the final report of the Public Bodies Review Committee. The Parliament must recognize, in considering any proposals for restructuring, the tremendous contribution that has been made throughout Victoria by volunteers in water trusts and sewerage authorities, and it must recognize the benefits to local people in isolated areas of having water management right on the spot.

In calling us together today for the Third Session of the Forty-Eighth Parliament of Victoria, the Governor spoke of the many policy initiatives that the Parliament will be considering, and also the very favourable position that Victoria enjoys relative to the rest of the world. We, the members of the Legislative Assembly, endorse his expressions of faith and optimism for this State.

**Mrs SIBREE (Kew)**—It is my pleasure and privilege to second the motion for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Speech by His Excellency the Governor, and I congratulate the honourable member for Ballarat South on her interesting speech. I extend to Sir Henry and Lady Winneke the thanks of the people of Kew for the way in which they have carried out their duties in this State and I express the loyalty of the people of Kew to the Governor in his next few months in office. In fact, for some time His Excellency lived in the Kew electorate and I gather that he will be doing so when he retires. He will be familiar with the many fine institutions and developments in that electorate.

In his Speech his Excellency mentioned, when dealing with the problems of industrial disputes:

The Government reiterates however that the co-operation and assistance of all sections of the community must be forthcoming if our full potential for economic growth and development is to be realised.

This is a particularly significant statement in current times. Victoria and Victorians have potential to continue to prosper in all sections of the community, if there is a real sense of purpose, direction and co-operation in these matters.

It has been of particular concern to me, and certainly now as a new member of this Parliament, that within this nation the question of political debate and co-operation between parties has perhaps over the past five or six years been a vexed one, and political debate has become extremely difficult. Often there is too much rhetoric in what is said and no real address to the problems of the day and the future. I am committed to the process of Government in which there is a proper balance of power, principle and participation from all sections of the community. The challenges that face this State at present demand this type of involvement and co-operation. I am particularly pleased to note that this matter has been raised by His Excellency, not only in respect of industrial disputes but also in respect of many other vital areas of Government in this State.

In other areas of his Speech His Excellency talked, for instance, of consultation with parties prior to bringing in legislation. In particular I refer to the Building Control Bill which he foreshadowed and which will be introduced following comment and participation. Participation, of course, does not necessarily mean that all parties have all their points of view put forward in legislation. However, it does mean a real commitment by Government to understanding the needs of all sectors in the community in respect of legislation which will affect them in a wide variety of areas.

I welcome the initiatives of the Government in doing away with red tape and regulations surrounding new projects which are vital for Victoria and for the future of this State. It is a commitment which will have an effect which will not only create jobs and opportunities but also will flow through into sections where we will be able to care more fully for people in need through support family service programmes and programmes for the under-privileged.

Over the past few years some little debate has occurred concerning the matter of Government responsibility, and I am most pleased that the Government is taking steps to cut and assess regulations and to provide a flow through for developments in this State. However, I am concerned that in 1970 the standing committee of this Parliament on subordinate legislation issued a paper on ways of improving the processes of controlling and reviewing regulations and subordinate legislation. Last year the Confederation of Australian Industry issued a further paper on this matter, indicating that the cost to the private sector of complying with a large mass of Government regulations amounted to in excess of \$1 million. For every \$1 spent in enforcing Government regulations federally, \$3 was spent by the private sector.

No one argues that Government regulations and controls are not necessary. They are vital within our democracy. They range from controls on economic policies through the setting up of marketing and other boards and the establishment of various tribunals to control professions and occupations, and include social effect regulations, as in the example of consumer protection.

The confederation report indicates that over the past ten years in the Federal sphere there has been twice as much subordinate and regulatory material coming into being as there have been Acts of Parliament, and the indications are that in the Victorian area there is approximately three times

as much subordinate legislation as legislation. I am pleased to note that the Government is addressing this problem.

In addition to any direct costs which have been estimated, there are, perhaps more significantly, indirect costs to industry and to the community as a whole in respect of subordinate legislation and regulations. Regulations, of course, are demanded by industry and by the community. People demand protection of the environment through environment protection laws in respect of pollution, noise pollution and so forth. They also require consumer protection. The market situation is complex, and the Government is the best judge of whether regulations are necessary and the extent of the need for them.

However, in a society where needs are becoming more complex and where the impact of technological change means more rapid change, where the effects of unemployment are being felt by those who can least afford that situation, and where the need to protect our environment is pressing, the role of regulations and their costs and effects is also becoming more complex.

The same standing committee has recently recommended that there be a larger scope for intervention in the making of regulations. It is evident that many regulatory bodies are not able to produce to the public up-to-date copies of regulations which affect particular areas of enterprise. In a democracy this is most disappointing.

There is now room, in view of the Government's policy for cutting red tape to allow industry to develop and flourish further in this State, for a review of the regulatory process. At present Parliament has little intervention in this process. Victoria, for instance, is the only State in which both Houses of Parliament have to disallow regulations. All other States and the Commonwealth allow only one House to disallow them. The standing committee on subordinate legislation, as I understand, surveys and recommends on only about 10 per cent of such legislation. I look for guidance to Canada which currently is perusing eco-

*Mrs Sibree*

conomic impact statements on regulations of economic significance. There the Parliament is playing an important direct role in controlling regulations and standards of performance are set rather than guidelines for regulations being set down. I do not regard this as necessarily the way to go, but I believe, in the opening up and cutting of red tape, these are areas which the Government will be addressing.

This afternoon the Governor referred to changes in consumer credit legislation. As a former member of the Consumer Affairs Council of this State, I welcome with much interest changes to these laws. The credit Bills will be of positive benefit to all sections of the community, both commercial and private, as there will now be some uniformity between Victoria and the other States in these respects. This will be most important to industry in just addressing the problems and looking at documentation. It will also be of much benefit to the consumer who will be able to have some idea of what he is getting into in credit purchase agreements. I welcome these initiatives. In my place on the Consumer Affairs Council I have supported them and will continue to do so.

I will look also at the introduction of the system for computerized land use in Victoria. As a solicitor I welcome this introduction. Of course it will take time and money to get a system of this sort under way but it certainly is most important to have new methods of conveyancing and access to this sort of information in Victoria. I also welcome any changes in the market-place in the area because I believe a computerized system will allow the market-place to operate perhaps more openly.

I also look at the question of the new Ministry for Employment and Training, and welcome the initiatives there. Over the past few weeks there has been much public outcry because of the cutting of Federal financing to the Community Youth Support Scheme. I join with that concern because, of all groups where unemployment has been most significant, young female and overseas born have the highest

unemployment rates. The Government strategy for employment and training, coupled with new directions in education which place greater emphasis on training of young people for jobs of the future and on retraining currently unemployed people with unused skills, are most vital. This area should gain the support of all of the community. The Community Youth Support Service scheme was giving the opportunity to some young people to develop skills which they could use in the community and gain self-respect and potential for the future.

The cutting back of Federal funding in this area has made the State Government's job more difficult, as it has in areas of cutbacks of funding to our major colleges. The problem is further exacerbated by the fact that these cutbacks have been made without proper and real consultation, in many instances without any apparent knowledge of the ultimate effects of cutbacks in the long term. This matter is of great concern to me. In particular, I am thinking of the Institute of Early Childhood Development in my electorate and other similar institutes which carry out technical training in fields of future endeavour and jobs. Little time has been given to thinking about what will happen in the case of Federal funding cutbacks. I also think of the Hawthorn College of Technical Training and Development which is the area of jobs for the future.

The Governor referred to the need to determine the state of federalism in this country and I support all efforts made by the Premier in obtaining the best deal for Victoria and for Victorians.

A State Government is in a much better position to be able to judge the real needs of the people of this State and the long term effects of cutbacks which have been foisted upon supportive groups and institutions which have real long term roles to play in this State's development. The system of determining State spending priorities by imposing "tied" Federal funds does not allow this State to pursue its chosen preferences for spending and I refer particularly to the area of housing.

Continuing with the theme of employment opportunities, especially for the young and for families in real need, I am mindful of statistics recently published by the Institute of Family Studies in which a 1978 New South Wales survey found that the loss of a married woman's wage in a family in that State at the time would mean that one-third of families would not be able to cover basic family needs—in other words, they would be below the effective poverty line.

The Government's emphasis on economic development will bring with it better opportunities to support the family and to maintain the individual in need. I welcome and support all steps that have been taken in that direction. In particular, I think of the unemployed youth in this State. They must be given opportunities to develop their skills and to find a place in the work force. Economic policies will give opportunities. Another way of encouraging private enterprise to support these citizens is to look at the question at the current time of a minimum wage.

If it could be possible to give jobs outside a minimum wage structure I believe that private enterprise would respond. Perhaps some moratorium period on a minimum wage at this stage will create opportunities for jobs where young people can enter industries, discover about these industries and whether or not they are suitable for their skills and abilities. I believe there would be a real response to initiatives of this kind. I do not believe it would be exploitation of young people, but would set a climate which would encourage industry to take on now unemployed people and involve them in productive work.

Another aspect of employment in Australia at the moment is a question of part-time work, particularly as it affects women. Currently part-time work does not attract any real permanency. It does not assist in the employed person gaining status within that organization, it does not attract superannuation benefits and yet a large proportion of our working force is currently employed part-time and in fact

would find it difficult to be employed otherwise because of other family commitments.

I would support initiatives on the question of part-time work, not just from the point of view of the large section of the community of women who are employed in this way but also for students and other members of the work force who desire to scale down their involvement in the work force, but also because of a change to part-time work will lose status opportunity, superannuation and other benefits.

I see benefit in changing working styles and opportunity in the Public Service sector. I believe there needs to be a closer look at the question of permanency in this area, more opportunity for interchange between the public and private sector. There will also be great benefits if there is more outside study of new methods which can be applied within the Public Service area which would in the long term assist in the productivity and development of new techniques in our Public Service.

As I said at the outset, it is most important for all sections of the community in Victoria to look to the future of this State and the people in it. There is tremendous potential and opportunity. There are important future questions to be addressed and to be answered. I commend the programmes set out in the Governor's Speech and I look forward to playing my role in implementing the full potential of Victoria in the 1980s and beyond.

On the motion of Mr CAIN (Leader of the Opposition), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until next day.

#### **COMPANY TAKE-OVERS COMMITTEE**

**Mr THOMPSON** (Premier and Treasurer)—By leave, I move:

That Mr Collins, Mr Crabb, Mr Jasper, Mr McInnes and Mr Miller be members of the Company Take-overs Committee; and that the committee have leave to sit on days on which the House does not meet.

The motion was agreed to.

#### **CONSERVATION OF ENERGY RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**Mr THOMPSON** (Premier and Treasurer)—By leave, I move:

That—(a) Mr McClure, Mr McGrath, Mr Tanner, Mr Trezise and Mr Wilkes be members of the Conservation of Energy Resources Committee; and (b) Standing Order No. 208 be suspended so far as to allow the release of evidence and documents by the committee at its discretion during the course of its investigations into vehicle and engine design.

The motion was agreed to.

#### **HOUSE COMMITTEE**

**Mr THOMPSON** (Premier and Treasurer)—By leave, I move:

That Mr Crellin, Mr Edmunds, Mr B. J. Evans, Mr Hockley and Mr McClure be members of the House Committee; and that the committee have leave to sit on days on which the House does not meet.

The motion was agreed to.

#### **LIBRARY COMMITTEE**

**Mr THOMPSON** (Premier and Treasurer)—By leave, I move:

That Mr Speaker, Mr A. T. Evans, Mr Hann, Mr Mathews and Mr Williams be members of the Library Committee; and that the committee have leave to sit on days on which the House does not meet.

The motion was agreed to.

#### **PRINTING COMMITTEE**

**Mr THOMPSON** (Premier and Treasurer)—By leave, I move:

That—(a) Mr Speaker, Dr Coghill, Mr Ebery, Mr Hann, Mr Rowe, Mr Aurel Smith, Mr Whiting and Mr Williams be members of the Printing Committee; (b) the committee have power to send for persons, papers and records and to sit on days on which the House does not meet; (c) three be the quorum; and (d) the committee have power to confer with the Printing Committee of the Legislative Council and to jointly report thereon to the House.

The motion was agreed to.

#### **PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE**

**Mr THOMPSON** (Premier and Treasurer)—By leave, I move:

That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon complaints of breach of privilege referred to it by the House; such committee to consist of Mr Dunstan, Mr B. J. Evans, Mr Mackinnon, Mr Miller, Mrs Patrick, Mr Roper and Mr Templeton; and that the committee have power to send for persons,