

House which have subsequently been adopted by the Government of the day and made part of the law of Victoria.

The adjournment debate at the conclusion of the proceedings of the day again offers an opportunity to members of raising matters of urgent Government business and of highlighting and bringing into public focus the actions of the Executive and the Government. I would venture to suggest that in recent years this House has sat for more hours, more days, debated more issues and fulfilled more than ever the function that as a House of Parliament it ought to fulfil of debating these important issues and exposing the questions to public disputation and, ultimately, therefore, of better informing the public and ensuring that all factors are taken into account.

In all of those circumstances, far from the decreasing use of the Parliamentary forum for these matters, there has been an increasing use and I believe that will continue. It is only if all parties of the House use the forms of Parliament and do not seek to use outside pressures to achieve results that Parliament will remain the important forum that it is. If Parliament debates and decides an issue, it is regrettable if a political party assists or starts action outside Parliament to frustrate the will of Parliament as expressed in legislation. It is this sort of action more than any other which can lead to the denigration of Parliament in the future.

The motion refers to the decreasing use of the forum of Parliament for debate leading to the ultimate destruction of democratic government. In view of the fact that Mr. Galbally has not been able to supply evidence of that, on a consideration of the forms of this House and the way in which they are used, it is apparent that far from there being a decreasing use of this forum, there is an increasing use of it. The motion therefore cannot be supported and the Government will oppose it.

The Hon. Haddon Storey.

The Hon. D. R. WHITE (Doutta Galla Province): It is my privilege to have the opportunity of representing the constituents of Doutta Galla Province in this Parliament. On Saturday, 16th October, the Labor Party recorded a two-party preferred vote in excess of 60 per cent. I note with interest that the Premier on that day congratulated my Liberal opponent on his performance. I look forward with pleasure to the Premier congratulating an increasing number of his Parliamentary colleagues on achieving a two-party preferred vote of 39 per cent.

It is also my privilege to have the opportunity of succeeding the late Jack Tripovich in this institution. Mr. Tripovich served this Parliament with distinction. He served the Labor movement in a full-time capacity for more than 30 years and I look forward to the challenge to match the example which he set.

I wish to refer to the Leader of the Labor Party in this Chamber and state that it is ironic that a man who has served this institution with the greatest distinction of any Parliamentarian since the second world war, is a member of a political party which has sought to abolish this House. It is ironic that Mr. Galbally should have done more than anyone else to enhance the standing of Parliament by the contributions that he has offered, and I look forward with pleasure to the opportunity of serving under his leadership.

I have gone on public record as a critic of the performance of this institution, the Legislative Council. I believe the public of Victoria is not receiving an adequate return for its investment. In 1975 the Legislative Council sat for only 39 days, representing a period of 230 hours, and yet the Attorney-General has claimed that it has met for a sufficient period of time. It is important to point out in this context that I believe insufficient work is being done by the committees of the Legislative Council. There are only ten committees

with 22 members of this House represented on them. Eleven members of the Legislative Council are members of only one committee. In other words, more than half the members of the Legislative Council are represented on no committees or are members of only one committee.

In my first week in the Chamber following my election on 16th October, I witnessed a filibuster by the Government on a Bill which was of little account. In my second week I witnessed the Government providing only one speaker on the main issue which was before the House. My third week of course was Melbourne Cup week. It is interesting to note that this is a period of the year when the House is renowned to be sitting and in business.

I wish to make it clear that as a member of the Melbourne City Council I spend more time attending council meetings and committee meetings, serving in an honorary capacity the 8,000 residents of the Hopetoun ward, than I do in a full-time capacity working in the Legislative Council.

I believe the Legislative Council has a lot to learn from the committee system of municipal councils. Most municipal councillors, irrespective of their political persuasion, are elected to at least two standing committees and it is those committees which consider and debate a wide range of issues. Although I am a critic of this institution, because I believe the public is not getting value for its money, I have a constructive contribution to offer. I should like to see in the Legislative Council standing committees for each portfolio that is represented. As there are six Ministers of the Crown in the Legislative Council, I believe there should be standing committees of the Legislative Council dealing with the specific issues before the House which concern those portfolios. I propose to justify the existence of those committees, dealing firstly with the portfolio of Chief Secretary.

In the past six years there have been more than three inquiries into the Police Force. I refer to the abortion inquiry, the St. Johnston inquiry and the Beach inquiry. I have the utmost respect for Mr. Justice Kaye, Sir Eric St. Johnston and Mr. Beach but it is apparent after the three inquiries in question that we still have not resolved the internal problems of the Police Force, nor does it appear that we will do so in the near future. The House has not given proper consideration to this matter.

I should like to offer constructive alternatives which might provide the solution but, unlike the Attorney-General, I do not believe we have the appropriate forms before the House which enable me to give due consideration to the constructive contribution which I have to offer. I do not believe an adjournment motion, a want-of-confidence motion, a substantive motion, a question without notice or a question on notice would enable me to deal with my suggestions.

One of the problems besetting the Police Force is the fact that there is not sufficient mobility between inside and outside the force. In other words, I consider that members of the Police Force in senior executive positions should have the opportunity to transfer to other sections of the Public Service and, likewise, members of the Public Service occupying senior positions should have the opportunity to transfer into the Police Force.

If it is fit and proper for this Parliament to recognize the head of the Premier's Department, Mr. Green, as the most appropriate person to hold the senior Public Service position in Victoria, bearing in mind that he transferred from the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission where he was an engineer, it is reasonable to expect members of the Police Force to hold administrative positions in other departments of the Public Service and equally for members of the Public Service to go into the Police Force.

The adoption of this policy would achieve something and go some way towards overcoming one of the major problems besetting the Police Force, which is probably cronyism which occurs because most of the men in senior positions are part of a big family. To put it frankly, they have been together for 20 or 30 years and, if misdemeanours occur, they are not so likely to "dob" each other in.

I believe a standing committee in connection with the portfolio of Chief Secretary could hear the views of the Victorian Public Service Association, the Victoria Police Association and eminent management consultant firms, such as McKinsey and Co. Inc., to ascertain whether a restructuring of the Police Force in this way would minimize the number of misdemeanours. Unfortunately, all that I can look forward to at present is the prospect of having a continuation of government of the Police Force by inquiry.

I turn now to the portfolio of State Development and Decentralization. In 1967 the Premier announced that there would be five centres for accelerated development, namely, Ballarat, Bendigo, Wodonga, Portland and the Latrobe Valley. Since 1967 the population in two of those centres has declined.

In September, 1972, the newly-appointed Minister for State Development and Decentralization, Mr. Murray Byrne, announced a ten-point programme for accelerated development. The programme made some impression but I still feel it would be fair to say that since September, 1972, the rate of population increase in the Melbourne metropolitan area has exceeded the rate of population growth for the remainder of Victoria.

In 1973, the Whitlam Government announced an accelerated development programme for Albury-Wodonga. As late as today honorable members have heard the State Minister for Planning announce that it is possible that the accelerated development project for Geelong will

not go ahead. Although three different and quite separate proposals have been advanced in respect to regional development, it is not clear which proposal has precedence today. It is not clear whether the five-point programme announced in 1967 by the then Premier is still working or operating. Furthermore, I do not know whether the former Minister for State Development and Decentralization, Mr. Murray Byrne, was able to have proposals adopted and if so, whether they are still operating. It is not clear whether the Government intends to proceed with the proposals outlined by the Whitlam Government in 1973. Therefore, there is a need for a Parliamentary standing committee in connection with State development and decentralization to determine what is the current policy of the Government in respect to development and decentralization throughout Victoria.

Every member of the Legislative Council has something to contribute in this area. Just as members of the National Party are concerned with the prospects of rural Victoria, so too are the members of the urban areas concerned over the continuation of unrestricted growth in Melbourne and how it may jeopardize the future of recreation areas in the Dandenongs and on the Mornington Peninsula. Therefore, there is a need for a standing committee in this area.

In connection with the portfolio of water supply, I point out that more than 26 municipal councils in Victoria have responded positively to the Nunawading resolution to conduct an inquiry into the operations of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works. As yet there has been no response from the State Government. It is of concern to me that there has been no response, because the Government saw fit to respond to a request from 60 unnamed and unknown persons to conduct an inquiry into the Sunshine City Council. The Government has since seen fit to appoint an administrator of the Sunshine City Council because of the fear that the

council could have an overdraft in excess of \$2 million by the end of November. However, the Government has not seen fit to respond to the request of the 26 councils to which I referred. These councils are not all Labor-dominated because they include councils such as the Brighton City Council. I believe ultimately we have the responsibility of looking into the activities of the Board of Works.

The problems of the Board of Works will not be rectified at the meeting on 18th November when there will be more than 100 councillors present. This morning I spoke with the Secretary of the Board of Works, Mr. Englesman, who informed me that the sole purpose of the meeting was to consider the implementation and the responsibilities of councils under section 7 of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Act. This section concerns representation on the Board of Works. The meeting will be unable to pass a resolution on whether there should be an inquiry into the operations of the Board of Works.

It is my subjective assessment that the commissioners of the Board of Works have not been sufficiently vigilant in carrying out their activities. It also appears to me, although I have not thoroughly checked it, that there is not one accountant or economist on the finance committee of the Board of Works, notwithstanding that its budget exceeds the South Australian State Budget.

Therefore, Mr. President, I believe they have not been vigilant. I am a member of the Finance Committee of the Melbourne City Council which in November, 1974, announced a 30 per cent rate increase. In November, 1975, it announced a 1.5 per cent rate decrease because it decided to introduce an austerity programme. It found that if it gave the administration proper instructions, instead of operating in an *ad hoc* way, it could do something about the rates and it has done something about them. I

do not believe it was a mere once-up result; the council could do it again this year.

Therefore, there is an analogy between what the Melbourne City Council has been able to achieve, namely, a 1.5 per cent rate decrease last year and a prospect of, at least, a minimal increase this year compared with the substantial increase we have witnessed from the Board of Works over the past five years, which has exceeded movements in the consumer price index and in average wage earnings.

What is required is vigilance, and if it is not forthcoming from the commissioners of the Board of Works, and I believe it is not, it could possibly come from the members of the Legislative Council by means of a standing committee which would be prepared to meet and consider at length the operations of the Board of Works. I see nothing wrong, given the fact that there are standing committees already, in restructuring those committees so that they can be used to consider the most significant and major issues before the community and before this House. Not one member of this House would disagree that the rate burden of the Board of Works is a significant problem, yet it concerns me that the Legislative Council has not so far given due consideration to the problem.

I turn to the Attorney-General's portfolio and to the establishment of the Commission of Corporate Affairs. I shall compare the operations of the Attorney-General's Department and the Commission of Corporate Affairs with the work that has been done in the Senate on the establishment of the Securities and Exchange Commission. The work was done by Senator Rae's committee and Dr. Rose, who set an example of the type of work that an Upper House can do. No one would disagree about the length of work and the involvement of that Senate committee and its activities in relation to the need for a Securities and Exchange Commission.

That arose as a result of what happened in Melbourne and in Sydney during the stock exchange boom in 1969 and 1970. It was the initiative of Senator Murphy and the work of Senator Rae that produced the result. It has been mainly because of the lack of activity by the Attorney-General's Department in this State that there has not been a proper restructuring of the stock exchange in Melbourne, or an introduction of a proper securities and exchange commission in Victoria. This lack of activity has done much to upset the structuring work that had been performed. In fact, it was not really the responsibility of the Senate to carry out that investigation.

The stock exchange boom took place in Melbourne and Sydney. This Parliament had the responsibility and power to deal with that issue. It should have been a committee of the Legislative Council, not a committee of the Senate, that dealt with the problem. There is still a need for a standing sub-committee on law reform and a need for the establishment of a securities and exchange commission to consider the Senate report and to ascertain what sections of it are worth implementing in Victoria.

Honorable members know of the Syme-Townsend report dealing with the Department of Health, which took a couple of years to produce. We also know that New South Wales and South Australia long ago proceeded with the restructuring of their Departments of Health. It gravely concerns me that we have procrastinated for such a long period in restructuring the Department of Health. The problems in connection with food poisoning of mental health patients and the allegations of the shortage of health inspectors in the Department of Health are related to the fact that it is an unwieldy department.

It is irresponsible for the individual members on the back benches of both sides of the Legislative Council not to consider in detail the recommendations of the Syme-Townsend

report, which once read is worth implementing. Action should have been taken to ensure that we get on with the job in that area.

In local government and planning a vast range of issues could be considered by a committee of the Legislative Council. I include planning because until recently it was the responsibility of the Minister for Local Government. There is a need for this House to give due consideration to the report prepared by the Public Interest Research Group on the Dandenongs. I do not believe it can be done by merely having a two-hour adjournment debate or a two-hour debate on a substantive motion. It is necessary, because that report was produced by an independent group of people from Monash University, for every member of the Legislative Council who becomes a member of the committee to have the advantage of hearing individually the people who contributed to the preparation of the report. This would enable them to ascertain the magnitude of the problem in the Dandenongs and to decide what sort of legislation ought to be introduced to ensure that the area should be preserved as a recreation area for the future.

Notwithstanding that an announcement was made by the new Minister for Planning shortly after the last election that the Melbourne City Council ought to get on with the implementation of the strategy plan and that the Town and Country Planning Board, the Board of Works and the council are working in consultation to prepare a strategy plan to amend the existing town plan, I am gravely concerned that little has been done. It is our responsibility and that of the Parliament to ensure that those organizations undertake this important work.

Members of the Legislative Council do not have sufficient opportunity, in view of the present form of debate, to ensure that that is happening. The public is not getting an adequate return on its investment. It is not sufficient that this House should meet

on only 39 days a year and that there should be so few standing committees. It is not satisfactory that since 1966 the Senate has set the example and not the Legislative Council of Victoria.

I firmly support the motion moved by my Leader, Mr. Galbally. I am dissatisfied with the reply of the Attorney-General. It did not do justice to the significant problem that is facing this House. I believe I made a constructive contribution in support of the need for more standing committees of this Parliament to consider the major issues that affect all the portfolios and to enable the backbench members on both sides of the House to make substantial contributions.

I reiterate that in an honorary capacity on two committees of the Melbourne City Council, representing 8,000 people in the Hopetoun ward, I spend more time and do more work than I do in a full-time capacity in the Legislative Council. I am not prepared to let that situation rest. Because I want to see it rectified, I support the motion.

The Hon. S. R. McDONALD (Northern Province): I should like to commend and congratulate our new colleague, Mr. White, on his maiden speech in this Chamber. Honorable members have learnt from his address today that he will make a valuable contribution to the deliberations of this Chamber in the future. I do not agree entirely with everything he said but he put forward some constructive proposals and I shall return to them at a later stage.

Mr. Galbally has moved another one of his thought-provoking motions. All honorable members will recognize that no member of the House and no member of the Victorian Parliament has a stronger desire than the Leader of the Opposition in this House to protect the importance, prestige and reputation of this Parliament and the Legislative Council. Mr. Galbally based his case on the fact that he

believes the importance of the Legislative Council in the Victorian Parliament has declined in recent years. I suggest that it is not the importance of the Parliament or the Legislative Council that has declined but rather its reputation and its standing in the community. I shall enlarge on that in a moment.

Mr. Galbally has previously moved adjournment motions concerning the predeliction of the Government to use commissions, boards of inquiry and committees instead of the legislative process. I acknowledge his gruelling remarks at the beginning of the debate and I do not intend to enlarge on that aspect. I feel that Mr. White's suggestion on the use of standing committees of the Legislative Council certainly merits investigation. I have always wondered why there are standing committees consisting only of members of the Legislative Assembly. One or two such committees are in permanent operation but there are none in the Council.

I well remember the occasion in 1968 or 1969 when Mr. Galbally was instrumental in setting up two committees of this Chamber to investigate the proposed restaurant in the Royal Botanic Gardens and development of the Little Desert. Any member who examines what happened on those occasions in an unbiased manner will agree that what was done by the committees was constructive and worth while.

The National Party is prepared to support Mr. Galbally's motion. I do not accept the Attorney-General's point of view that everything in the Parliament and in the Legislative Council is satisfactory. I believe there are areas in which there is room for improvement and I shall enlarge on those.

It seems to me—and I made this comment in an earlier debate—that in the nine years or so that I have been a member of this House I have seen the standard of debate and the handling of matters that are considered by the Chamber decline in an