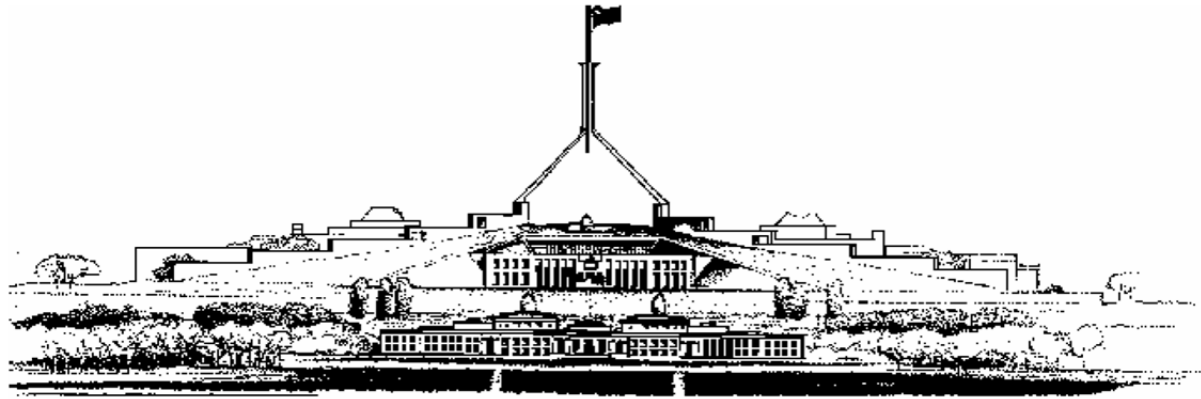




COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



Senate

Official Hansard

No. 119, 1987

Tuesday, 24 February 1987

THIRTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—FIFTH PERIOD

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE

THIRTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION—FIFTH PERIOD

Governor-General

His Excellency the Right Honourable Sir Ninian Martin Stephen, a Member of Her Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, Knight of the Order of Australia, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of St Michael and St George, Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian Order, Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Force.

Senate Officeholders

President—Senator the Honourable Kerry Walter Sibraa

Deputy President and Chairman of Committees—Senator David John Hamer, DSC

Temporary Chairmen of Committees—Senators Florence Isabel Bjelke-Petersen,

Ruth Nancy Coleman, Malcom Arthur Colston, Ronald Charles Elstob,

Patricia Jessie Giles, Donald Scott Jessop, Gerry Norman Jones (*to 24 February 1987*),

David John MacGibbon, Colin Victor James Mason, John Joseph Morris (*from 24 February 1987*)
and Michael Townley

Leader of the Government in the Senate—Senator the Honourable John Norman Button

Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate—Senator the Honourable Gareth John Evans, QC

Leader of the Opposition—Senator the Honourable Frederick Michael Chaney

Deputy Leader of the Opposition—Senator the Honourable Peter Drew Durack, QC

Senate Party Leaders

Leader of the Australian Labor Party—Senator the Honourable John Norman Button

Deputy Leader of the Australian Labor Party—Senator the Honourable Gareth John Evans, QC

Leader of the Liberal Party of Australia—Senator the Honourable Frederick Michael Chaney

Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party of Australia—Senator the Honourable Peter Drew Durack, QC

Leader of the National Party of Australia—Senator Stanley James Collard

Deputy Leader of the National Party of Australia—Senator Florence Isabel Bjelke-Petersen

Leader of the Australian Democrats—Senator Janine Haines

Deputy Leader of the Australian Democrats—Senator Michael John Macklin

Members of the Senate

Senator	State or Territory	Term expires	Party
Alston, Richard Kenneth Robert (4)	Vic.	30.6.91	LP
Archer, Brian Roper	Tas.	30.6.91	LP
Aulich, Terry	Tas.	30.6.91	ALP
Baume, Michael Ehrenfried	NSW	30.6.91	LP
Baume, Hon. Peter Erne	NSW	30.6.88	LP
Bjelke-Petersen, Florence Isabel	Qld	30.6.88	NP
Black, John Rees	Qld	30.6.91	ALP
Bolkus, Nick	SA	30.6.91	ALP
Boswell, Ronald Leslie Doyle	Qld	30.6.91	NP
Brownhill, David Gordon Cadell	NSW	30.6.91	NP
Button, Hon. John Norman	Vic.	30.6.88	ALP
Carrick, Hon. Sir John Leslie, KCMG	NSW	30.6.88	LP
Chaney, Hon. Frederick Michael	WA	30.6.88	LP
Childs, Bruce Kenneth	NSW	30.6.91	ALP
Coates, John	Tas.	30.6.91	ALP
Coleman, Ruth Nancy	WA	30.6.88	ALP
Collard, Stanley James	Qld	30.6.88	NP
Colston, Malcom Arthur	Qld	30.6.88	ALP
Cook, Peter Francis Salmon	WA	30.6.91	ALP
Cooney, Barney	Vic.	30.6.91	ALP
Crichton-Browne, Noel Ashley	WA	30.6.91	LP
Crowley, Rosemary Anne	SA	30.6.91	ALP
Devlin, Ray	Tas.	30.6.91	ALP
Durack, Hon. Peter Drew, QC	WA	30.6.88	LP
Elstob, Ronald Charles	SA	30.6.88	ALP
Evans, Hon. Gareth John, QC	Vic.	30.6.88	ALP
Foreman, Dominic John	SA	30.6.88	ALP
Georges, George	Qld	30.6.88	Ind.
Gietzelt, Hon. Arthur Thomas	NSW	30.6.88	ALP
Giles, Patricia Jessie	WA	30.6.91	ALP
Grimes, Hon. Donald James	Tas.	30.6.88	ALP
Guilfoyle, Hon. Dame Margaret Georgina Constance, DBE	Vic.	30.6.88	LP
Haines, Janine	SA	30.6.88	AD
Hamer, David John, DSC	Vic.	30.6.91	LP
Harradine, Brian	Tas.	30.6.88	Ind.
Hill, Robert	SA	30.6.88	LP
Jessop, Donald Scott	SA	30.6.91	LP
Jones, Gerry Norman	Qld	30.6.91	ALP
Kilgariff, Bernard Francis (1)	NT		LP
Knowles, Susan Christine	WA	30.6.91	LP
Lewis, Austin William Russell	Vic.	30.6.88	LP
MacGibbon, David John	Qld	30.6.91	LP
McIntosh, Gordon Douglas	WA	30.6.88	ALP
McKiernan, James Philip	WA	30.6.91	ALP
Macklin, Michael John	Qld	30.6.88	AD
Maguire, Graham Ross	SA	30.6.91	ALP
Mason, Colin Victor James	NSW	30.6.88	AD
Messner, Hon. Anthony John	SA	30.6.88	LP
Morris, John Joseph	NSW	30.6.91	ALP
Newman, Jocelyn Margaret (3)	Tas.	30.6.88	LP

Members of the Senate—*continued*

Senator	State or Territory	Term expires	Party
Parer, Warwick Raymond (2)	Qld	30.6.88	LP
Powell, Janet Frances (5)	Vic.	30.6.88	AD
Puplick, Christopher John Guelph	NSW	30.6.91	LP
Ray, Robert Francis	Vic.	30.6.91	ALP
Reid, Margaret Elizabeth (1)	ACT		LP
Reynolds, Margaret	Qld	30.6.91	ALP
Richardson, Graham Frederick	NSW	30.6.88	ALP
Robertson, Edward Albert (1)	NT		ALP
Ryan, Hon. Susan Maree (1)	ACT		ALP
Sanders, Norman Karl	Tas.	30.6.88	AD
Sheil, Glenister	Qld	30.6.91	NP
Short, James Robert	Vic.	30.6.91	LP
Sibraa, Hon. Kerry Walter	NSW	30.6.91	ALP
Siddons, John Royston	Vic.	30.6.88	Ind.
Tate, Hon. Michael Carter	Tas.	30.6.88	ALP
Teague, Baden Chapman	SA	30.6.91	LP
Townley, Michael	Tas.	30.6.91	LP
Vallentine, Josephine	WA	30.6.88	Ind.
Vanstone, Amanda Eloise	SA	30.6.91	LP
Vigor, David Bernard	SA	30.6.88	AD
Walsh, Hon. Peter Alexander	WA	30.6.88	ALP
Walters, Mary Shirley	Tas.	30.6.88	LP
Watson, John Odin Wentworth	Tas.	30.6.91	LP
West, Suzanne Margaret (6)	NSW	30.6.88	ALP
Withers, Rt Hon. Reginald Greive	WA	30.6.91	LP
Zakharov, Alice Olive	Vic.	30.6.91	ALP

(1) Term expires at close of day next preceding the polling day for the general election of members of the House of Representatives.

(2) Chosen by the Parliament of the State of Queensland vice Kathryn Jean Martin, resigned.

(3) Chosen by the Parliament of the State of Tasmania vice Peter Elliot Rae, resigned.

(4) Chosen by the Parliament of the State of Victoria vice Alan Joseph Missen, deceased.

(5) Chosen by the Parliament of the State of Victoria vice Hon. Donald Leslie Chipp, resigned.

(6) Chosen by the Parliament of the State of New South Wales vice Hon. Douglas McClelland, resigned.

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

AD—Australian Democrats; ALP—Australian Labor Party; Ind.—Independent;

LP—Liberal Party of Australia; NP—National Party of Australia

Second Hawke Ministry

*Prime Minister	The Honourable Robert James Lee Hawke, AC
*Deputy Prime Minister, Attorney-General, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Commonwealth-State Relations and Vice-President of the Executive Council	The Honourable Lionel Frost Bowen
*Leader of the Government in the Senate and Minister for Industry, Technology and Commerce	Senator the Honourable John Norman Button
*Deputy Leader of the Government and Manager of Government Business in the Senate, Minister for Resources and Energy, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister and Minister Assisting the Minister for Foreign Affairs	Senator the Honourable Gareth John Evans, QC
*Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Public Service Industrial Matters	The Honourable Ralph Willis
*Treasurer	The Honourable Paul John Keating
*Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, Leader of the House and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Multicultural Affairs	The Honourable Michael Jerome Young
*Minister for Finance and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Public Service Matters	Senator the Honourable Peter Alexander Walsh
*Minister for Foreign Affairs	The Honourable William George Hayden
*Minister for Education and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on the Status of Women	Senator the Honourable Susan Maree Ryan
*Minister for Trade and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Youth Affairs	The Honourable John Sydney Dawkins
*Minister for Primary Industry	The Honourable John Charles Kerin
*Minister for Housing and Construction	The Honourable Stewart John West
*Minister for Defence	The Honourable Kim Christian Beazley
*Minister for Community Services and Minister Assisting the Treasurer	The Honourable Christopher John Hurford
*Minister for Social Security	The Honourable Brian Leslie Howe
Minister for Transport and Minister for Aviation	The Honourable Peter Frederick Morris
Minister for Sport, Recreation and Tourism and Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence	The Honourable John Joseph Brown
Minister for Health	The Honourable Neal Blewett
Minister for Science and Minister Assisting the Minister for Industry, Technology and Commerce, and Minister Assisting the Treasurer on Prices and Minister Assisting the Attorney-General on Consumer Affairs (from 17 March 1987)	The Honourable Barry Owen Jones
Minister for Territories	The Honourable Gordon Glen Denton Scholes
Minister for Communications and Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence	The Honourable Michael John Duffy
Minister for Arts, Heritage and Environment and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Bicentennial	The Honourable Barry Cohen
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Minister Assisting the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs	The Honourable Allan Clyde Holding
Minister for Veterans' Affairs	Senator the Honourable Arthur Thomas Gietzelt
Minister for Local Government and Administrative Services	The Honourable Thomas Uren
Special Minister of State	Senator the Honourable Michael Carter Tate
*Minister in the Cabinet	

THE COMMITTEES OF THE SESSION

(FIRST SESSION: FIFTH PERIOD)

STANDING COMMITTEES

Appropriations and Staffing—The President, the Leader of the Government in the Senate, the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, Senators Coates (from 25 February 1987), Elstob, Harradine, Jessop, Macklin (from 26 February 1987), Mason (to 26 February 1987) and Robertson.

Disputed Returns and Qualifications—Senators Archer, Aulich, Peter Baume, Bolkus, Colston, Haines and Robert Ray.

House—The President, Senators Bjelke-Petersen, Knowles, McKiernan, Reynolds, Townley and Zakharov.

Library—The President, Senators Aulich, Devlin, Harradine, Puplick, Robert Ray and Walters.

Privileges—Senator Childs (*Chairman*), Senators Aulich, Bolkus, Jessop, Macklin, Puplick and Robert Ray.

Publications—Senator Elstob (*Chairman*), Senators Archer, Brownhill, Devlin, McKiernan, Morris and Townley.

Standing Orders—The President, the Deputy President, the Leader of the Government in the Senate, the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, Senators Cook (to 25 February 1987), Gareth Evans (from 25 February 1987), Kilgariff, Macklin, Robert Ray, Robertson and Vanstone.

LEGISLATIVE SCRUTINY STANDING COMMITTEES

Regulations and Ordinances—Senator Cooney (*Chairman*), Senators Coates, Giles, Lewis, Vanstone and Withers.

Scrutiny of Bills—Senator Crowley (*Chairman*), Senators Michael Baume, Cooney, Haines, McKiernan (from 25 February 1987), Newman and Tate (to 25 February 1987).

LEGISLATIVE AND GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEES

Constitutional and Legal Affairs—Senator Bolkus (*Chairman*), Senators Alston, Cooney, Hill, Puplick, Reynolds (from 25 February 1987) and Tate (to 25 February 1987).

Education and the Arts—Senator Colston (*Chairman*), Senators Knowles, McKiernan (to 18 February 1987), Newman, Reynolds, Teague and West (from 18 February 1987).

Finance and Government Operations—Senator Coates (*Chairman*), Senators Black, Reynolds, Short, Vanstone and Vigor.

Foreign Affairs and Defence—Senator McIntosh (*Chairman*), Senators Aulich, Black, Boswell, Sir John Carrick and Hamer.

Industry and Trade—Senator Childs (*Chairman*), Senators Brownhill, Cook, McKiernan, Parer and Short.

National Resources—Senator Zakharov (*Chairman*), Senators Boswell, Crichton-Browne, Devlin, Richardson and Townley.

Science, Technology and the Environment—Senator Jones (*Chairman*), Senators Black (to 25 February 1987), Foreman, Jessop, Townley, Vigor and West (from 25 February 1987).

Social Welfare—Senator Elstob (*Chairman*), Senators Bjelke-Petersen, Crowley, Giles, Messner, Morris, Sheil and Walters.

SELECT COMMITTEES

- Animal Welfare—Senator Georges (*Chairman*), Senators Brownhill, Cooney and Sanders.
Human Embryo Experimentation Bill 1985—Senator Tate (*Chairman*), Senators Sir John Carrick, Crowley, Harradine, Macklin, Walters and Zakharov.
Private Hospitals and Nursing Homes—Senator Giles (*Chairman*), Senators Brownhill, Crowley, Haines, Walters and Zakharov.
Television Equalisation—Senator Richardson (*Chairman*), Senators Aulich, Giles, Lewis, Powell, Puplick, Robert Ray and Sheil.
Video Material—Senator Jones (*Chairman*), Senators Crichton-Browne, Elstob, Harradine, Walters and Zakharov.
Volatile Substance Fumes—Senator Robertson (*Chairman*), Senators Kilgariff, Reynolds and Walters.

ESTIMATES COMMITTEES

- Estimates Committee A (Parliament; Industry, Technology and Commerce; Prime Minister and Cabinet; Trade; Science)—Senator Richardson (*Chairman*), Senators Alston, Cook, Jessop, Robert Ray and Short.
Estimates Committee B (Resources and Energy; Attorney-General; Immigration and Ethnic Affairs; Foreign Affairs; Defence)—Senator Black (*Chairman*), Senators Aulich, Michael Baume, Elstob, MacGibbon and Watson.
Estimates Committee C (Finance; Employment and Industrial Relations; Treasury; Primary Industry; Communications)—Senator Childs (*Chairman*), Senators Boswell, Brownhill, Devlin, Hill and Maguire.
Estimates Committee D (Education; Housing and Construction; Sport, Recreation and Tourism; Arts, Heritage and Environment; Aboriginal Affairs)—Senator Cooney (*Chairman*), Senators Morris, Newman, Puplick, Teague and Zakharov.
Estimates Committee E (Veterans' Affairs; Transport; Aviation; Territories; Local Government and Administrative Services)—Senator Foreman (*Chairman*), Senators Hill (to 6 April 1987), Lewis (from 6 April 1987), McKiernan, Reid, Vanstone and West.
Estimates Committee F (Special Minister of State; Community Services; Social Security; Health)—Senator Reynolds (*Chairman*), Senators Peter Baume, Crowley, Dame Margaret Guilfoyle, Giles and Sheil.

JOINT STATUTORY COMMITTEES

- Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings—Madam Speaker (*Chairman*), the President, Senators Coleman and Watson, and Mr Brumby, Mr Ronald Edwards, Mr Hicks, Mr Jull and Mr Maher.
National Crime Authority—Mr Griffiths (*Chairman*), Senators Archer, Bolkus, Crowley, Jessop and Macklin, and Mr Brumby, Mr Duncan, Mr McGauran and Mr MacKellar.
Public Accounts—Mr Tickner (*Chairman*), the Chairman of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Expenditure, Senators Cooney, Georges (to 24 February 1987), Giles (from 24 February 1987), Dame Margaret Guilfoyle, Maguire and Watson, and Mr Conquest, Mr Downer, Mrs Kelly, Mrs Mayer, Mr Nehl, Mr Price, Mr Ruddock, Dr Theophanous and Dr Watson.
Public Works—Senator Foreman (*Chairman*), Senators Jones and Sheil, and Mr Andrew, Mr Halverson, Mr Hollis, Mr Keogh, Mr Millar and Mr Saunderson.

JOINT COMMITTEES

- Australian Capital Territory—Mrs Kelly (*Chairman*), Senators Giles, Lewis, Morris and Reid, and Mr Langmore, Mr McArthur, Mr Sharp, Mr Snow and Mr Wright.
- Foreign Affairs and Defence—Mr Bilney (*Chairman*), Senators Bolkus, Crichton-Browne, Elstob, Hill, Jones, MacGibbon, Maguire, Morris (from 25 February 1987), Sibraa (to 25 February 1987) and Teague, and Mr Baldwin, Mr Beddall, Mr Campbell, Mr Charles, Mr Coleman, Mr Cross, Mr Gayler, Mr Hicks, Mr Jull, Mr Katter, Mr Kent, Dr Klugman, Mr Lindsay, Mr MacKellar, Mr Peacock, Mr Ian Robinson, Mr Shipton and Dr Theophanous.
- New Parliament House—The President and Madam Speaker (*Joint Chairmen*), the Minister for Territories, Senators Colston, MacGibbon, Reid, Reynolds, West and Withers, and Mr Dobie, Mr Dubois, Mr Lee, Mr Lloyd, Mr Leo McLeay and Mrs Sullivan.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEES

- Australia Card—Senator Aulich (*Chairman*), Senators Haines and Puplick, and Mr Blunt, Mr Robert Brown, Mr Brumby, Mr Porter and Mr Saunderson.
- Electoral Reform—Senator Robert Ray (*Chairman*), Senators Sir John Carrick, Harradine, Macklin and Richardson, and Mr Blunt, Mrs Jakobsen, Mr Lamb, Mr Lee, Mr MacKellar and Mr Scott.
- Telecommunications Interceptions—Mr Martin (*Chairman*), Senators Archer, Black, Cooney and Vigor, and Mr Duncan, Mr Lee, Mr McGauran and Mr Ruddock.
- Video Material—Dr Klugman (*Chairman*), Senators Harradine, Reynolds, Walters and Zakharov, and Mr Adermann, Mr Grace, Mrs Jakobsen and Mr Jull.

PARLIAMENTARY DEPARTMENTS

SENATE

Clerk of the Senate—A. R. Cumming Thom
Deputy Clerk of the Senate—H. Evans
Clerk-Assistant (Committees)—A. Lynch
Clerk-Assistant (Table)—P. N. Murdoch
Clerk-Assistant (Management)—T. H. G. Wharton
Clerk-Assistant (Procedure)—J. Vander Wyk
Acting Usher of the Black Rod—C. J. C. Elliott

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Clerk of the House—A. R. Browning
Deputy Clerk of the House—L. M. Barlin
First Clerk Assistant—I. C. Harris
Clerk-Assistant (Procedure)—B. C. Wright
Clerk-Assistant (Committees)—J. W. Pender
Clerk-Assistant (Table)—I. C. Cochran
Clerk-Assistant (Administration)—M. W. Salkeld
Serjeant-at-Arms—B. L. Simons

PARLIAMENTARY REPORTING STAFF

Principal Parliamentary Reporter—J. M. Campbell
Assistant Principal Parliamentary Reporter—B. A. Harris
Leader of Staff (Committees)—K. Shearwood
Leader of Staff (Senate)—M. A. R. McGregor
Leader of Staff (House of Representatives)—K. B. Ryder

LIBRARY

Parliamentary Librarian—H. de S. C. MacLean

JOINT HOUSE

Secretary—M. W. Bolton

Tuesday, 24 February 1987

The PRESIDENT (Senator the Hon. Kerry Sibraa) took the chair at 2 p.m., and read prayers.

TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES

Appointment

The PRESIDENT—Pursuant to standing order 28A, I lay on the table a warrant withdrawing Senator Jones, at his request, from the panel of Temporary Chairmen of Committees and appointing Senator Morris to the panel in his place.

PETITIONS

The Clerk—Petitions have been lodged for presentation as follows:

Queensland State Elections

To the Honourable the President and honourable members of the Senate assembled.

The petition of the undersigned in the State of Queensland sheweth that the electoral system in Queensland, based on a 4 zonal weighted system, is an affront to democracy. The National Party under the leadership of Sir Johannes Bjelke-Petersen is always returned to Government with no opportunity for the voting public to bring about change.

Your petitioners point out that under the Queensland voting system the National Party at the State Elections on 1 November 1986 managed to achieve 55 per cent of the seats with only 39 per cent of the votes. This demonstrates that 61 per cent of Queenslanders do not want a National Party Government yet, received one.

Your petitioners therefore earnestly pray that the Federal Government legislates as a matter of urgency to bring about a democratic system of voting in Queensland State elections based on the principle of one vote one value.

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray,
by **Senator Jones** (from 53 citizens).

Petition received.

Independent and Multicultural Broadcasting Corporation Legislation

To the Honourable the President and members of the Senate in Parliament assembled. The petition of the undersigned citizens of Australia respectfully sheweth:

That there is a need for an independent and Multicultural Broadcasting Corporation to give a firm legislative and financial basis for the SBS Network.

Your petitioners most humbly pray that the Senate, in Parliament assembled should

Pass Senator Vigor's Bill with all expediency.

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray,
by **Senator Vigor** (from 22 citizens).

Petition received.

Aboriginal and Islander Languages

To the Honourable the President and members of the Senate in Parliament assembled. The petition of the undersigned citizens of Australia respectfully sheweth that whereas:

- (a) Aboriginal and Islander languages, which numbered approximately 260 when Europeans first arrived, are even more seriously endangered—already 145 have become extinct.
- (b) English-speaking population expansion and English-speaking mass media expansion threatens the survival of the remaining languages of Australia.
- (c) Aboriginal languages reflect an ethos that is truly Australian and unless steps are taken to implement language maintenance, this ethos will be lost not only to Aborigines but to non Aboriginal Australians, and to the world.

We humbly pray the Government to:

1. Through the Prime Minister's Department, provide \$300,000 per annum for a guaranteed period of ten years to enable the Aboriginal community of Australia to establish a co-ordinating body to implement steps to prevent the extinction of the remaining languages, and to introduce programmes which will enable these languages to continue into the future for the sake of all Australians. This body will enable us to maximize existing financial, material, and human resources, and is the least expensive way of implementing urgently needed maintenance programmes.
2. Through the Prime Minister's Department, provide finance for the establishment of Regional Language Centres—ten are urgently needed—cost \$200,000 each.

and we pray you may be conscious of God's sovereign purposes for our Nation and your petitioners in duty bound will ever pray.

by **Senator Childs** (from 16 citizens).

Petition received.

Australia Card Legislation

To the Honourable the President and the honourable members of the Senate in the Parliament assembled. The humble petition of the undersigned electors of the Commonwealth of Australia respectfully sheweth that:

(1) Australians are offended by taxation evasion and welfare fraud which has the effect of increasing the taxation burden of honest Australians.

(2) The community has shown its overwhelming support for the Government's decision to proceed with a national identification system known as the Australia Card.

Your petitioners therefore pray that your honourable Senate will: continue the fight against taxation evasion and welfare fraud and restore fairness and equity to the tax and welfare systems by supporting the Australia Card Bill.

by **Senator West** (from 63 citizens).

Petition received.

Identification Card Legislation

To the Honourable the President and members of the Senate in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned concerned Australian citizens hereby petition the honourable members and senators to totally reject the current proposals for an I.D. Card and the proposed Data Protection Agency.

We believe that they represent potentially undesirable interference in the lives of honest Australians. Provisions for protection of privacy cannot be guaranteed as statutes are easily altered by future governments.

We believe that there are more efficient methods to prevent fraud in the areas of social security and taxation without the use of these two proposals, which go well beyond the reach of the true role of democratic government, i.e. that citizens may live quiet and peaceable lives. The I.D. Card and Data Protection Agency have strong potential under this or future administrations to interfere with the quiet and peaceable lives of its subjects.

We your humble petitioners in duty bound ever pray.

by **Senator Robertson** (from 17 citizens).

Petition received.

Family Allowances

To the Honourable the President and members of the Senate in Parliament assembled. The humble petition of the undersigned citizens of the Commonwealth of Australia respectfully sheweth that:

Despite the Universal Declaration of Human Rights statement that 'the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State', the present Australian tax system penalises families with children at every level of income.

The tax system discriminates in particular against families with large numbers of dependants. This may be one reason why, according to Professor Bettina Cass, only 27 per cent of married couple families with children had three or more children in 1985, in contrast to almost 35 per cent in 1969.

Fair levels of family allowances and taxation benefits are the reasonable entitlement and expectation of parents. Such a change in government policy may help to arrest the sharp decline in Australian births with beneficial results for our country.

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

by **Senator Macklin** (from 114 citizens).

Petition received.

Uranium

To the Honourable the President and members of the Senate in Parliament assembled. The petition of the undersigned citizens of Australia respectfully sheweth:

that the only activity now taking place in the South Pacific which the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty bans is the testing of nuclear weapons by France at Mururoa and that the export of uranium by Australia to France undermines the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty.

Your petitioners most humbly pray that the Senate in Parliament assembled, should:

urge the Government to adhere to the Australian Labor Party's policy, as set out in the Customs Amendment (Prohibition of the Exportation of Uranium to France) Bill which prohibits the supply of uranium to France until France stops testing nuclear weapons in the South Pacific.

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

by **Senator Macklin** (from 11 citizens).

Petition received.

Constitution Alteration (Democratic Elections) Legislation

To the Honourable the President and members of the Senate in Parliament assembled. The petition of the undersigned citizens of Australia respectfully sheweth:

1. that the result of the recent Queensland State Election, when the National Party received a comfortable majority in Parliament with a bare 39% of the votes, violates the rights of a majority of citizens to elect a government of their choice.

and

2. that consequently there is an urgent need for electoral and constitutional reform at Federal and State level.

Your petitioners most humbly pray that the Senate in Parliament assembled, should:

Support the Constitution Alteration (Democratic Elections) 1985 Bill

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

by **Senator Macklin** (from 104 citizens).

Petition received.

Fringe Benefits Tax Legislation

To the Honourable the President and members of the Senate in Parliament assembled:

We, the undersigned are seriously concerned about the impact of the Fringe Benefits Tax on the following grounds:

1. It is unjust for any person to be liable for tax on benefits received by another person.
2. Compliance with FBT will increase administrative costs for all employers, including Local, State and Federal Government Departments.
3. FBT is an inefficient tax, which will require the Tax Office to employ an army of bureaucrats.
4. FBT is inequitable because liability arises regardless of capacity to pay.
5. The FBT laws are extremely complex.

We therefore most earnestly petition you to repeal the Fringe Benefits Tax Legislation forthwith.

Your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.
by **Senator Peter Baume** (from six citizens).
Petition received.

Sand Mining on Moreton Island

To the Honourable the President and members of the Senate in Parliament assembled. The petition of the undersigned citizens of Australia respectfully sheweth that:

Moreton Island is an invaluable natural resource for Queensland and the world and that mining on Moreton would gravely compromise its unique flora and fauna and its outstanding recreational, archaeological and scientific values.

Your petitioners most humbly pray that the Senate in Parliament assembled, should:

urge the government to use its proven constitutional powers to halt sand mining on Moreton by supporting the Moreton Island Preservation Bill.

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.
by **Senator Macklin** (from 20 citizens).

Petition received.

NATIONAL CRIME AUTHORITY AMENDMENT BILL 1987

Notice of Motion

Senator ARCHER (Tasmania)—I give notice that, on the next day of sitting, I shall move:

That leave be given to introduce a Bill for an Act to amend the National Crime Authority Act 1984.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

ECONOMIC STATEMENT

Senator CHANEY—My question is to the Leader of the Government in the Senate. I refer the Minister to today's announcement by the Treasurer of the planned 14 May statement on expenditure savings measures. I preface my question by welcoming the fact that the Government has finally acknowledged the need for such a statement, as was called for by the Senate in September of last year and again last week. I note that the Treasurer seems to have developed a liking for the date of 14 May. That was the day on which the Treasurer last year made his banana republic prediction and I hope he will do a bit better this year. I ask the Minister: Is it the Government's intention to confine the statement to cost cutting measures? Does the Minister agree that in order to make maximum economic impact the statement should also address the taxation system and, in particular, the disincentives that this Government has imposed through measures such as the fringe benefits tax and the capital gains tax?

Senator BUTTON—It is true that I and other Ministers have been asked various questions as to whether there will be a May statement. In answer to those questions I have repeatedly said that the Government will consider that matter, and when it makes a decision it will announce it; that happened this morning. I draw the Senate's attention to the fact that, even though the Opposition may have called for a statement in September of last year, it is very difficult to have a May statement before May. It does not matter particularly when one makes the decision about it so long as one makes a decision about it and makes a statement.

Senator Michael Baume—Why don't you make it when we are sitting?

Senator BUTTON—Oh, be quiet! The honourable senator should go back to his weight watching and do a bit of exercise at lunchtime. Of course, the Government, the regime of which has been characterised by wage restraint, restraint in a variety of areas and indeed restraint in fiscal policy compared with previous governments, will be making a statement designed to produce the maximum economic impact given the circumstances. I was very surprised that Senator Chaney did not ask me today what would be in the May statement.

Senator Chaney—That is tomorrow's question.

Senator BUTTON—That is tomorrow's question? Yes, I would have assumed that. Instead, what Senator Chaney has done today is to suggest what might be in it, which I suppose is always helpful. He asked: Will it involve the consideration of taxation issues? What the May statement will involve will, like the timing of the statement, be considered by the Government and an announcement will be made at the appropriate time.

Senator Macklin—On 14 May.

Senator BUTTON—I suspect that Senator Macklin is better on these matters than many of us and that he is probably right, that it will be on 14 May. The question as to whether we will consider taxation matters is not one that I can answer at present, but I think it most unlikely. I am surprised, however, that the Opposition should have asked a question about whether we would be considering taxation issues in the May statement. The community waits with bated breath for a coherent statement on taxation policy from the Opposition. Last week three of the folk heroes of the last Government, Mr Anthony, Mr Nixon and Mr Fraser, were up here giving words of wisdom to the Opposition about

its problems. What a great trifecta they would be to give the Opposition advice about taxation issues! This year is the anniversary year of the 1977 election in which the Opposition—then the government of the day—went into the election with a 'dial a tax cut' program, promising tax cuts following that election.

Senator Dame Margaret Guilfoyle—Are you going to change—

Senator BUTTON—I am surprised that the honourable senator would chirp up at this time. She was one of the Ministers who were party to that. Four months after they made that promise to the Australian people, they abandoned it. You abandoned it, did you not, Senator? As we are having a little interjection time, you abandoned that promise four months after you had made it. Senator Withers was there at the time—or had he been sacked then? I do not recall but I think he was there at the time. Senator Chaney was not then in the Ministry and, of course, Senator Messner was the latest arrival of all. Of course, Senator Sir John Carrick was there and he will recall that great statement that they made about tax cuts in 1977 and how they then totally dishonoured that promise. In the whole period of the Fraser Government regime, marginal tax rates were not lowered in Australia.

Senator Chaney—I take a point of order, Mr President. It is quite clear that the Minister is now debating the question. I asked a very simple question: Will he tell us whether the May statement will include measures relating to taxation? His answer to that has already been given. It was that the Government is yet to make up its mind on that subject. From then on he simply engaged in a debate on the history of tax cuts in this country, and I suggest that you call him to order.

The PRESIDENT—There is no point of order. Senator Button, I would suggest that it has been a long answer, and that maybe you should bring your answer to a close.

Senator BUTTON—Mr President, I was not debating the history of tax cuts; I was debating the history of non-tax cuts under the Fraser Government, which is a very important and different issue. The point I was simply making is that, in terms of credibility, Senator Chaney's question contains the suggestion that we should consider tax cuts in the May statement. By the most incredible collection of non-tax cutters this country has ever known, the most incredible collection of people who had dishonoured promises on this issue, who did nothing about marginal rates and about incentivisation, as it is called,

in the whole seven years of their Government, we are asked whether the May statement will include consideration of changes to the taxation regime.

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

Senator ELSTOB—My question is directed to the Minister representing the Minister for Defence. I ask: What steps is the Government taking to ensure that the Royal Australian Navy is appropriately equipped with high quality ships for the defence of the continent? Does the Government's program constitute the largest naval shipbuilding effort in Australia's peacetime history and, if so, what will be the benefit of this to local industry and to the economy in general?

Senator GARETH EVANS—I doubt that Senator Elstob will be surprised to hear me say that the Government has paid and is continuing to pay very close attention to ensuring that the RAN is equipped with high quality ships to meet the needs of the 1990s and into the next century. In October 1983 the Government reinitiated the building of warships at Williamstown Naval Dockyard by placing the order for the first of two Australian frigates. These frigates are similar to the four FFG-7 class guided missile frigates that were then in the process of being built in the United States of America. With the arrival of the final United States built frigate—HMAS *Darwin*—in 1985, all subsequent naval shipbuilding has been and is planned to be done in Australia.

In particular the Government has placed increased emphasis on the vital but neglected area of protecting shipping and our strategically important harbours from mining. The second prototype minehunter catamaran is due to be launched later this year from Carrington Slipways at Tomago near Newcastle. The Navy has been directed to complete the necessary trials and evaluations of those quite revolutionary glass fibre vessels as quickly as possible to allow early construction of production vessels. Honourable senators will also be aware that it was this Government's decision, commencing in the 1990s, to construct six new submarines at an estimated project cost of about \$2.6 billion at April 1985 prices to replace the aging Oberon class. All six of these submarines are to be constructed in Australia and an announcement as to the selected design and building site will be made shortly.

On 20 January 1987 the Minister for Defence announced that the Government had initiated what is undoubtedly the largest naval shipbuild-

ing program in Australia's peacetime history by inviting companies around the world to submit established designs for a new class of eight frigates for the RAN. These new ships, estimated to cost around \$3.5 billion at April 1986 prices, would be built in Australia, and the acquisition strategy has been designed to maximise Australia's involvement in all phases of the project with Australian companies as prime contractors.

Senator Hill—Where are you building them?

Senator GARETH EVANS—That is yet to be resolved, Senator Hill. Australian companies have since been invited to register their interest in the project and before the end of the year tenders will be sought from Australian companies capable of undertaking the prime contractor role. The possibility of building the ships in more than one shipyard will be considered. I conclude by saying that it is evident that the Government's direction is, wherever possible, to construct naval vessels in Australia, to maximise Australian industry involvement and to maintain and develop the necessary shipbuilding skills to equip the RAN with high quality ships to meet the needs of Australia's defence. This policy, with all its separate elements coming together, provides a very substantial return to the Australian economy from the defence outlay, as well as providing and retaining jobs at home.

TAXATION

Senator SHEIL—My question is directed to the Minister for Finance. Will the Minister please explain why a pensioner who has a small share portfolio should have to pay tax on any bonus shares issued before those shares are sold?

Senator WALSH—I am not familiar with that area of taxation policy. I will refer that to the Treasurer for an answer. But I will observe in passing that if the policy of the Premier of Queensland is ever implemented—that is, that all income be taxed at 25c in the dollar—any pensioner who has any sort of income at all will be paying 25c tax in the dollar.

WIND POWER

Senator COLEMAN—My question is directed to the Minister for Resources and Energy. I draw his attention to a report submitted to the United Kingdom Department of Energy which said that wind turbines could produce electricity significantly cheaper than coal or nuclear power stations in the United Kingdom. I ask: Considering that Australia is possibly the best situated nation in the world to exploit wind power, what federally funded programs are currently under

way or proposed for the near future to support research, development and possible commercial implementation of this promising energy technology?

Senator GARETH EVANS—I am uncertain of the report to which Senator Coleman referred, but it is the case that a study conducted by the United Kingdom Central Electricity Generating Board in 1985 concluded that wind turbines could produce electricity at a cost competitive with that obtained from coal fired power plants. However, it must be said that the cost of coal used in those power plants in the United Kingdom is approximately three times the current cost of coal used to generate electricity in New South Wales, Queensland, and Victoria. Accordingly, those United Kingdom figures, on their face, should be treated as, I think, inappropriate in the Australian context.

Quite a deal of money has been spent on wind energy programs through the national energy research, development and demonstration program. A total of \$1.4m has been committed to wind energy since 1978, including \$160,000 during the most recent 1986 round. The supported areas include research on wind generator technology, site-specific wind resource measurements, a theoretical study on the integration of wind power into State electricity grids, and performance monitoring of wind systems supplying electricity to small communities and homesteads.

Recently, my Department completed a review of the wind energy sub-program of the NERDD program. The main finding of the review was that wind turbines appear to be economically viable propositions for remote homesteads and communities in areas where average wind speeds exceed four to five metres a second. The most likely prospect for wind in the electricity grid system in Australia is Tasmania. However, it must be said that a recent Tasmanian Hydro-Electric Commission study, again sponsored under my Department's NERDD program, found that that would be uneconomic at the moment. It is not a matter of abandoning the interest in wind programs, but I think many of the expectations that have been developed about the utility of wind, particularly for grid systems, are exaggerated and cannot be sustained by the results of research in the Australian context at present.

STATE GOVERNMENT BORROWINGS

Senator MACKLIN—My question is addressed to the Minister for Finance. I refer him to the fact that, since 1982-83, Federal net bor-

rowings have fallen from 3 per cent to 1.9 per cent of gross domestic product, while State net borrowings have remained at about 2.8 per cent, representing an increase of about 45 per cent for the States over that period. I ask: First, to what extent has the continued high level of State government borrowings contributed to Australia's overseas debt? Secondly, will a reduction of the Federal deficit to the levels demanded by some business groups; namely, at or below \$2 billion, inevitably force continued high levels of borrowing by State governments? Thirdly, what would be the likely effect on State Budget and State borrowing requirements of a transfer of responsibilities back to the States?

Senator WALSH—I am not sure whether I noted all the parts of the question. The initial figures that Senator Macklin gave—that the Federal Government net borrowing requirement had fallen from about 3 per cent to 1.9 per cent, expressed as a percentage of GDP in the last few years—sounded correct to me. It is now apparent that the State governments have been borrowing in excess of their actual needs for a number of years and have accumulated a very large amount of money—a ball park estimate would be \$5 billion lying around in hollow logs. It would appear that a significant amount of money will be withdrawn this year, thereby making the net State government sector borrowing requirement greater than the gross requirement.

I cannot, off the top of my head, give figures for all the previous years in the way that Senator Macklin has requested. He asked whether borrowing by State government authorities should be lumped in with that as well—whether they have made a significant contribution to the accumulation of overseas debt. The answer is that they have made a significant contribution. The Queensland State Electricity Commission alone has \$1.1 billion in foreign borrowings and over \$4 billion borrowing in total. Even if those State authorities do not borrow directly from overseas there is always the possibility—indeed, under recent circumstances, the likelihood—that ultimately the demands on the domestic market made by those authorities will cause somebody else to borrow a greater amount overseas than would otherwise have occurred.

State government and State government authority borrowings took off in the early 1980s when Mr Howard was Treasurer and Mr Fraser was Prime Minister, when all stops were pulled out for borrowing by State government authorities, including the green light for borrowing over-

seas. That was in response to the perceived needs of the resources boom which never happened. The Fraser Government effectively removed all financial discipline on borrowings by the States because it, too, had a vested political interest in trying to beat up expectations about the resources boom. Largely because of that, in the financial year 1981-82 the current account deficit as a proportion of gross domestic product hit more than 6 per cent, the highest level it has ever been, in expectation of the resources boom which did not happen but the hangover of which afflicts us still.

GOVERNMENT REGULATION OF BUSINESS

Senator WEST—Is the Minister for Industry, Technology and Commerce aware of criticism expressed by business, particularly small business, about the degree of government regulation imposed on Australian business? Could he report on progress being made in cutting red tape and especially on progress with efforts to co-ordinate Commonwealth and State initiatives?

Senator BUTTON—Mr President, Senator West has been here for only a couple of weeks and already she is displaying in her questions a degree of astuteness which has never been displayed by the Opposition. The Opposition has cluttered Question Time with questions about all sorts of peripheral issues but has asked none of the real questions which go to the heartland of the changes which are taking place in this economy. Senator West is an example to all honourable senators. I commend her example to honourable senators opposite for future Question Times.

I am aware of the criticism which takes place from time to time about excessive regulation in business. It has been a longstanding complaint of the business community against all governments and will continue to be so, I suspect. It is not always identified in a very specific form in terms of the regulations which are claimed to be detrimental to business activity, although I have no doubt that there are plenty of them. It is an issue which the Government is addressing. We have established the Business Regulation Review Unit to look at these questions. It has had some success already in significant areas.

Senator Boswell—How many public servants does that require?

Senator BUTTON—It requires seven, I think. The honourable senator might note that down and give it to Senator Michael Baume of the Waste Watch Committee, and perhaps he can

make something out of it. Unlike the former Government, which always talked about cutting red tape—I remember that the famous razor gang, of which Senator Dame Margaret Guilfoyle was a member, deliberated for months on end about these issues—

Senator Dame Margaret Guilfoyle—Wait until we see your May statement.

Senator BUTTON—The honourable senator can look at any of the May statements since we have been in government. They all did better than the famous razor gang.

Senator Chaney—What about the banana republic?

Senator BUTTON—Senator Chaney is at last getting on to the issues of 1986. Senator Chaney is at last hopping on to the real issues. He is up to 14 May 1986. I can answer that only by saying: What about the banana republic indeed? It would be much worse off under an alternative government in Australia. This Government has taken major steps, wherever action is justified, to minimise the regulatory burden. There are plenty of examples of that which have been—

Senator Boswell—What about the fringe benefits tax paperwork? It is driving everyone crazy.

Senator BUTTON—I can see that it has worked with Senator Boswell. One could say, with a fair degree of success, that Senator Boswell is a living example of a victim of paper work. I can understand the difficulties that Senator Boswell would have with it. In answer to Senator West's question, one of the problems is co-ordinating Commonwealth and State initiatives. Progress in that respect has been quite satisfactory. Most States have co-operated in cutting unnecessary red tape but, unfortunately, that is not without exception. For example, in Senator Boswell's State there has been considerable difficulty in getting co-operation with the Queensland Government. Only last week a committee of inquiry in Queensland complained about the regulatory burden in that State. It discovered enormous inefficiencies. The committee, which was chaired by Sir Ernest Savage, made recommendations in about 19 areas and called for speedy reform in Queensland. It was very critical of the commercial practices of Queensland Government departments. Among other things, it said:

Commercial undertakings by government agencies are advantaged competitively, not only by the general backing of the Government, but also by tailored privileges.

The Government prescribes laws and regulations for the private sector but does not always impose similar requirements on its own statutory authorities.

That view of Sir Ernest Savage and his committee was supported by the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Alderman Sallyanne Atkinson, who accused the Queensland Government last week of throttling free enterprise with red tape and regulations. She claimed that the State Government had set a record for the greatest number of regulations passed by any government in Australia and that economic development in the State was suffering as a result. Senator Walsh at Question Time on numerous occasions has pointed to the economic performance of the Queensland Government generally. The view of Alderman Sallyanne Atkinson is that one of the causes of the poor economic performance in Queensland is the fact that free enterprise has been throttled by red tape and regulations.

Senator West, it is of the utmost importance that we get co-operation between the Federal Government—which has a sense of direction and purpose and record runs on the board in respect of deregulation and red tape—and the State governments. It is most important that in a federal system we get co-operation with other governments, including the Queensland Government, which is so well represented here, if I might say so, by Senator Boswell.

WHITE PAPER ON DEFENCE

Senator MacGIBBON—My question is addressed to the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Since Cabinet approved and accepted the defence White Paper yesterday, will the Leader of the Government undertake to table the paper immediately in the Parliament, which is the correct and honourable course to follow, rather than continuing down the path it has started on of leaking selective parts of the report in a futile attempt to condition the Australian public to accept it?

Senator BUTTON—The White Paper on defence will be tabled at an appropriate time, when the Government so decides and, if I might say so, when it is printed. That would be of assistance even to Senator MacGibbon, so that will be done.

AID TO NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS: OPPOSITION POLICY

Senator BULKUS—I refer the Minister for Education to an article in the *Canberra Times* of 21 February 1987, entitled 'Opposition to aid private schools'. Is the Minister aware of this and other reports to the effect that a coalition government would immediately restore the basic grant to non-government schools and provide supplementary funding according to need? Has

the Minister also seen claims that Government policy ensures that non-government schools are allowed to raise only 3 per cent of their funding needs from private sources? Is this last allegation factual? What would be the cost of restoring the basic grant to non-government schools as promised by the Opposition? What would be the cost to fund the 42 new non-government schools which have not been approved for funding in 1988?

Senator RYAN—I did see some accounts of Mr Shack's statement along the lines outlined in Senator Bolkus's question. I have also seen a statement which purported to have come from his office, so my comments are not based solely on what has been reported in the Press but on a statement from his office. His statement contained a number of errors as well as a number of rather preposterous proposals. In terms of the errors let me be quite clear that it is not the case, as he claimed, that non-government schools are allowed by the Commonwealth to raise only 3 per cent of their funds privately. In fact, they raise in the vicinity of 45 per cent of their funds privately and are expected by the Commonwealth, under our funding policies, to maintain that effort. They are not expected to drop their private effort suddenly in order to attract more Commonwealth funds.

One of the understandings we have reached with the non-government schools is that they will retain their efforts. So that was the first and very major blunder in Mr Shack's understanding of schools funding. Also, he seems to be advocating that any school proposal that comes forth ought immediately to be agreed to regardless of any planning or other deficiencies in that proposal, and that all potential students in those schools should immediately attract a grant. He does not say how much that grant should be—so it is quite difficult to work out the costing of this proposition—nor does he say, of course, speaking as a member of a shadow ministry that is committed to real zero growth in public expenditure, at whose cost this extra funding would be made available. He does not say whether the extra funding would be taken away from the needy non-government schools—the parish schools or the independent Aboriginal schools. He does not say whether the funds would be taken away from special schools which are funded by the Commonwealth. He does not say whether the funds should be taken away from the disadvantaged schools program. Perhaps they would be taken away from recurrent funding to government schools.

Senator Teague—Because they won't be taken away from any of them.

Senator Walsh—Oh, you have done some mental arithmetic as well.

Senator RYAN—As my colleague Senator Walsh has pointed out, there seems to be not so much a suspension of disbelief but a suspension of arithmetic from the other side of the chamber, where shadow Ministers are running around promising to give more and more to groups they imagine might be persuaded to vote for them by these promises. At the same time their beleaguered temporary leader, Mr Howard, is saying 'No, no, no, we won't increase public expenditure'. So if there is to be no increase in the Commonwealth education budget but there are to be new areas of funding, obviously something will have to go. I am waiting with great interest for Mr Shack to tell us which of the various Commonwealth programs he will cut in order to make way for these unplanned, non-approved new schools. I point out to the Senate that those new schools proposals which were not accepted by the Commonwealth in the recent round of announcements have been afforded a very low priority—in some cases the lowest priority available—by State committees comprising State education departments and non-government school authorities. So in the assessment of their own peers and of the State governments which have a constitutional responsibility to provide schools, these schools proposals were not such that they could attract support. These are the schools proposals that were not agreed to by us; these are the schools proposals which Mr Shack magnanimously offered to fund; these are the schools which had not received the support of their own systems, schools whose planning was at this stage so defective that they had not received the support of their State government. These schools, nonetheless, would attract funding from Mr Shack. At what level it is hard to say, since he talks about a basic right but he has refused to this point to say what amount that grant would be.

One of the great achievements of our Government has been to settle the longstanding divisions between the government and non-government sectors. We have done this through a number of measures: First, by giving both sectors long term planning stability. If there is anything that has been welcomed by the non-government system in Australia it has been the four-year funding plan which allowed schools for the first time to plan the appointment of teachers, the development of curriculum, and so on.

Mr Shack would shatter all that if he ever got the chance by destroying our funding plan and replacing it with a renamed voucher system. What does that mean? Instead of schools knowing over a four-year period the level of Commonwealth grant that they would receive—

Senator Chaney—I raise a point of order, Mr President. The introduction to that question was out of order, but the questions actually posed were within the Minister's responsibility. She has now begun to debate various elements of what she claims to be Opposition policy, and I suggest that she is out of order. The points she is dealing with now have nothing to do with the direct questions she was asked. She is simply making a wide-ranging attack on the Opposition. I suggest that that is not part of the answer to the question.

The PRESIDENT—The Minister cannot accept responsibility for matters that are contained in or are alleged to be contained in the policies of the non-government parties. I remind her of that fact and ask her not to debate the issue but to answer specifically those questions raised.

Senator RYAN—Certainly, Mr President. I can understand why Senator Chaney wishes to resile from the statement Mr Shack put out yesterday. In conclusion, our funding of government and non-government schools has been needs based. The great increase in funding has been to the needier schools, the schools that serve the neediest communities, and of course there has been a significant percentage increase in funding going to government schools as well as to our maintenance of various special purpose programs. It is not our intention to throw this stability, security and planned growth to the winds and proceed along the kinds of libertarian, almost anarchistic lines proposed by other commentators from whom Senator Chaney wishes to dissociate himself.

TELEPHONE ACCOUNTS

Senator TOWNLEY—I direct my question to the Minister representing the Minister for Communications. I remind the Minister that at one stage the Auditor-General listed some 24 causes of a telephone account being incorrect. Does the Minister admit that, until all telephone accounts list details of subscriber trunk dialling and international subscriber dialling calls—including the number called, the charge for each call and the duration of calls—as well as local calls, subscribers will not be able to ensure that the accounts they are forced to pay if they want to keep their telephones are in fact correct? Finally, does the Minister also admit that the technology is avail-

able to give the details that subscribers are entitled to, as is the case in most countries? When will the people of Australia be given a telephone account that they can satisfactorily question in any dispute with Telecom Australia?

Senator WALSH—I frankly do not know whether the equipment necessary to record all the details that Senator Townley would like recorded is available, let alone how much it would cost and what addition to telephone charges would be required in order to get full cost recovery if such equipment were installed. He did, however, make a reference to guaranteeing that accounts are correct. I doubt very much whether, even if such equipment were available and installed, we could guarantee absolutely that the details on an account were correct. I will refer the question to Mr Duffy to see what additional information he can provide.

DRAFT NATIONAL POLICY FOR WOMEN'S SPORT

Senator CROWLEY—My question is to the Minister representing the Minister for Sport, Recreation and Tourism. Further to the establishment last November of the Task Force for Women's Sport, headed by Mrs Margaret Pewtress, it has proposed a draft national policy for women in sport. Can the Minister tell us when such a policy might be available and how widely the policy document will be distributed? In addition, will there be discussions with interested parties prior to the implementation of the policy, and what prospects are there for women in the sporting community to contribute? Can the Minister say what other initiatives the Task Force for Women's Sport is proposing?

Senator RYAN—As Senator Crowley will be aware, the Task Force for Women's Sport was established by the Australian Sports Commission on 2 November 1986 and is a direct outcome of the working group's report entitled 'Women, sport and the media'. That working group was ably chaired by Senator Crowley. The Task Force has been working diligently and has prepared an action plan which I table for the perusal of honourable senators. Central to this action plan is the preparation of a national policy for women's sport. Such a policy will act as a framework for future activities by government, sporting bodies and sportswomen in Australia.

The Task Force will complete a draft policy at its next meeting on 11 March 1987. As soon as possible after that date the policy will be circulated widely for comment to national and State sporting organisations, women's groups and

interested individuals. The Task Force believes that this kind of consultation is vital to ensure that the policy reflects the views of those whom it is intended to assist. After this consultation, the national policy will be put to the Australian Sports Commission for consideration and endorsement. I congratulate the Commission for its initiative in establishing the Task Force for Women's Sport.

BADGERYS CREEK: LAND ACQUISITION

Senator PETER BAUME—My question, to the Minister for Finance, concerns the financing of land acquisition for Sydney's second airport at Badgerys Creek. I remind the Minister that one year ago a letter from the Minister for Aviation to residents of Badgerys Creek affected by the new airport stated, *inter alia*:

You can sell your land to the Commonwealth right now and I . . . guarantee that you will get a fair market price as determined by an independent government valuer.

I remind the Minister further that the Government has reneged on that promise and is now limiting the acquisition to those with whom firm arrangements had been entered into before July 1986. Further, the Government cannot finance even those acquisitions. I ask the Minister: Was a letter written to him as Minister for Finance by Mr Uren, the Minister for Local Government and Administrative Services, dated 20 January 1987, pointing out that funds available were insufficient for the Commonwealth to meet its obligations even under that narrow commitment and indicating that there were cases of hardship among the landholders at Badgerys Creek to which the Minister, Mr Uren, could not respond? When will the Government play fair with the landholders at Badgerys Creek in the site of the new and second Sydney airport? When will the Government honour its specific promise contained in the letter from Mr Peter Morris, the Minister for Aviation, one year ago and when will the Government purchase the properties of people who cannot sell except to the Government and who cannot move until the Government keeps its side of the bargain which it made?

Senator WALSH—I note for the record that the Opposition seems to be anxious to increase Government expenditure in this area, as in many other areas.

Senator Reid—You made the promise.

Senator WALSH—There is talk about promises. Senator Button was telling us earlier today about the fistful of dollars and the dial a tax

cut, the promises that most of the members who remain in the Opposition today made in government in 1977 when they cancelled the cuts four months after they took effect. I do not know whether the letter was written on 20 January but I have received a letter from Mr Uren about this matter. I have replied to it and I do not have the slightest intention of telling Senator Baume what I regard as confidential Government and Cabinet business.

Senator PETER BAUME—Mr President, I have a supplementary question. I ask whether I should take it from the Minister's answer that he resiles from the Government's commitment contained in the letter from Mr Peter Morris to landholders:

You can sell to the Government right now and I—that is, Mr Morris—

can guarantee that you will get a fair market price . . .

Senator WALSH—I am telling Senator Baume that I do not have the slightest intention of making known the details of what I regard as confidential inter-ministerial correspondence.

HOUSING INTEREST RATES

Senator CHILDS—Does the Minister representing the Minister for Housing and Construction endorse the view of the spokesman from the National Australia Bank indicating that housing interest rates should increase?

Senator RYAN—I understand the National Bank is talking of lifting the current rate on housing loans from 15½ per cent to 16 per cent and it also wants the present 13½ per cent ceiling lifted. It is necessary to point out at the outset that no other bank is pursuing this line. In fact, the Commonwealth Bank—Australia's biggest housing lender—has indicated that no increase is needed. The manager of retail banking at the Commonwealth Bank, Mr Brian Stott, has indicated that he has no intention whatsoever of lifting home loan rates at present. He said that at the moment with the market as it is he saw no need to adjust home loan rates. Westpac bank has, I understand, also indicated no need to put up rates. It should be realised that, at present, housing lending rates are at a very strong level. The savings bank annual level is over \$8 billion. The Government will be looking at the situation as it is crucial that adequate housing lending be available. But we can give an assurance that we will not be lifting the 13.5 per cent ceiling. Of course, in this area, as in most other areas, the Opposition has no policy at all. The Government is willing to take hard decisions to

ensure that there is no undue emphasis on monetary policy and interest rates.

ORANGE ROUGHY FISHING QUOTA

Senator WATSON—I direct my question to the Minister representing the Minister for Primary Industry. I ask: Will the Minister justify the imposition of a large 20,000-tonne quota on the orange roughy fishery and, having in mind the overcapitalisation of this little understood species, could he detail upon what scientific data he has based this quota figure?

Senator WALSH—I wish the Tasmanian non-Labor senators could get their act together on this question. It was only last week that I, as the representative of the Government on this issue, was being berated by Senator Sanders for allowing the ruthless, uncontrolled exploitation of this valuable Tasmanian natural resource in such a way as would destroy a valuable Tasmanian industry. Now apparently Senator Watson is objecting to the——

Senator Chaney—He is agreeing. He is saying it is too big.

Senator WALSH—I am sorry, I misunderstood. I thought he said that it was too small and that there should not be a quota. Last week I gave the essential details of this to Senator Sanders, that a limitation—contrary to what Senator Sanders said—has been applied to this. There is little hard evidence available about this species and the situation is under continuous monitoring.

Senator Watson—Why 20,000 tonnes?

Senator WALSH—Why not 30,000? It is a judgment that has been made necessarily——

Senator Watson—It was plucked out of the air.

Senator WALSH—Perhaps Senator Watson wants to ban orange roughy fishing until all the technical and other information is available. Short of doing that, a judgment has to be made about an interim figure that will be allowed until more information is available.

ASSETS TEST

Senator COOK—My question, which is to the Minister for Finance, is about John Howard's favourite expenditure promise, the abolition of the assets test. The savings to expenditure of the assets test were first costed by the Government as \$140m in 1985-86 values. In addition to changes in this figure due to the indexation of pensions, are there any demographic factors

which would increase the cost to expenditure if the assets test were abolished?

Senator WALSH—When the assets test was introduced the original estimate of the savings to government expenditure was, I think, \$140m, as Senator Cook said. That figure has since been revised upwards and I believe is in need of very substantial further upward revision. I say that for this reason: For many years prior to 1983 age and service pensioners, as a percentage of the total population in that age group, remained fairly constant at about 84.5 per cent. In the period since that figure has fallen to 78.5 per cent. So if the number of people in receipt of pensions, as a proportion of the total number of people in that age group, had remained constant, some 123,000 additional pensions would now be paid and the cost of that would be of the order of \$580m.

It is correct that that \$580m figure should not be taken as being absolutely correct because, as well as the introduction of an assets test an over 70s pension income test was introduced, to operate some time after the 1983 Budget. There is some interaction between the two policy changes. However, that is a distinction which over time would disappear because, as new entrants came into the pensioner age cohort, it could be expected, in the absence of an assets test, that they would arrange their affairs so that their assets yielded capital gains rather than income. Although the figure of \$580m cannot be taken as completely accurate—I believe a figure closer to \$500m would be a more realistic estimate of the cost of abolishing the assets test than the present estimate revised upwards from 1983—this is a matter that I shall be taking up through the Government. But, of course, it is very clear that the abolition of the assets test, as promised by the watered down snake oil salesman on the non-Labor side of politics—we have the genuine snake oil salesmen such as the Queensland Premier, and the peddlers of the watered down version of his snake oil such as the present Leader of the Opposition—would entail a very substantial increase to Commonwealth outlays, after a short period, probably of the order of \$500m a year. This is just yet another example of the yawning credibility gap between the rhetoric of the Opposition Leader and the policies that he has actually spelt out.

PRICES AND INCOME ACCORD

Senator MICHAEL BAUME—I refer the Leader of the Government in the Senate to the Government's propaganda booklet issued 18 months ago at public expense, called 'The Ac-

cord—The First 2 Years', which boasted that, in having the accord as the centrepiece of its economic policy, Australia was the only nation in step as—I quote from the booklet—'in contrast to many other countries, the Australian Government is determined not to revert to the orthodox response to devaluation of using contractionary economic policies to reduce inflation' and that, as a result, the accord had achieved 'record growth, falling inflation and dramatically rising employment'. I ask the Minister: To what extent has the Government consciously abandoned these out of step policies that brought about Australia's worst ever relative inflation rate compared with our trading partners, which is now about twice as bad as in the last year of the Fraser Government? I further ask him whether the Government has now belatedly adopted the contractionary economic policies it rejected between 1983 and 1985, and will this be confirmed in its May economic statement—or is the present collapse of economic growth, lack of investment, record real interest rates and continued high unemployment in Australia simply the inevitable consequence of the Government's excessive, overlong and mistaken commitment to the accord?

Senator BUTTON—First of all, let me say to Senator Michael Baume that he cannot have it all possible ways, as he tries to do. I begin by pointing out to him that it is the policy of his Party, the Liberal Party of Australia, and has been for several years, to have a wages freeze. His Party then luxuriates in accusing this Government of lowering living standards as a result of some deliberate strategy. He cannot have it both ways. It is extraordinary that this man, upon whom so much public money has been lavished in giving him a tertiary education—this product of public sector expenditure who appears in the Senate today—asks a question of this calibre. If Senator Baume does not know, everybody else does know that since that booklet was published there have been significant changes in the circumstances of the Australian economy as a result of declining commodity prices and a fall in national income.

Senator Michael Baume—We warned you about that.

Senator BUTTON—Senator Michael Baume says: 'We warned you about that'. That was very big of him and very nice of him. It is a pity that his Party did not heed the warning in its seven years in government because all the signs were there when people such as him were talking up the resources boom. All the warnings were there

but they did not heed them for one moment. Let us talk about the last three years of those seven years, in which wage increases were 14 per cent, 16 per cent and 12 per cent. Inflation was over 10 per cent, government expenditure in the last Budget was enormously up and unemployment was up. All those things happened. If the warnings were not there then, I do not know when the honourable senator had to get them.

Senator Michael Baume has asked a question and he is endeavouring, by interjection, to ask a few supplementaries already. I have not finished with the first one yet. For his benefit let me make it absolutely clear that under the accord, as referred to in the document to which he made mention, the Government had embarked upon a policy which produced significant wage restraint in the Australian community—a very significant wage restraint compared with what existed in the years under the Fraser Government, when I understand the honourable senator was an adviser as well as a member.

Senator Michael Baume—You benefited from our wage freeze.

Senator BUTTON—Do a bit of work, Senator, and do not come in here mouthing that sort of cliché. In the last 12 months the Government has quite deliberately in response to the terms of trade and the fall in national income endeavoured to slow the rate of growth in the Australian economy. We have said that a hundred times and probably a thousand times.

Senator Messner—But inflation keeps going up.

Senator BUTTON—Yes, Senator, inflation has been going up in the last few months, and that has been because of the devaluation effect. Everybody knows that except perhaps the Opposition spokesman on finance. The original question was whether the Government has consciously abandoned its policies which are dealt with in the accord document to which Senator Michael Baume referred. The answer to that question is no, because that document is basically directed to establishing a degree of wage restraint in Australia to which people were totally unused under the performance of the previous Government. That has been successful and that was the central thrust of the accord. The accord, as renegotiated, has been devoted to the same purpose. In respect of that matter about which the document was primarily concerned, the answer is no.

QUEENSLAND: UNEMPLOYMENT

Senator FOREMAN—My question is to the Minister representing the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations. As the coalition is buckling under Sir Joh's pressure to impose his economic agenda on Federal politics, can the Minister provide an assessment of the success of the Queensland Premier's policies for employment in that State?

Senator WALSH—The present unemployment rate in Queensland is 10.3 per cent, some 2 per cent above the national average and the highest of any State other than Tasmania. In only three of the 40 months since the National Party was elected as the Government of Queensland has the Queensland unemployment rate been below the national average; and that was quite a long time ago—indeed, three years ago, in February 1984. Last year Queensland had the highest unemployment rate of any State in no less than seven months. When the policy speech of the National Party was made prior to the 1983 election, 14.9 per cent of Australia's jobless lived in Queensland. That figure has now gone up to 18.7 per cent. Sir Joh promised then to deliver the style of leadership that generates business and investment confidence and that creates jobs and job security. The delivery, of course, was completely in conflict with the rhetoric which preceded it. Queensland, which presently has only 16 per cent of the nation's labour force, has, as I said before, almost 19 per cent of the nation's unemployed and has more people on unemployment benefits than the State of Victoria, even though the State of Victoria has about 65 per cent more population. It is sometimes claimed in response to those figures that the reason is that the southern dole bludgers have all moved up to Queensland to loaf in the sun. The facts, however, contradict that claim because in recent years there has been a net migration out of Queensland of people in the prime working age group cohorts.

ECONOMIC STATEMENT

Senator CHANEY—My question is directed to the Leader of the Government in the Senate and follows his rather excited reply to the earlier question on the proposed May mini-Budget. Can the Minister give an unequivocal assurance that the July tax rate reductions will take place as at present legislated for?

Senator BUTTON—Legislation has already been passed in respect of that matter. I suppose that Senator Chaney can give the assurance as

well as I can, and it would have to be unscrambled here.

Senator CHANEY—Mr President, I ask a supplementary question. The May mini-Budget will involve making a whole lot of decisions which will involve legislation. My question relates to whether we can have an assurance at this stage that the July tax rate reductions which are legislated for will be left in place so that they do occur.

Senator BUTTON—The July tax reductions which have been promised by the Government will remain in place. They will come into force from 1 July. They will be quite distinct from the tax concessions offered by the Fraser Government in 1977. The only major tax concessions offered by the Fraser Government in its seven or eight years in office were offered in 1977 and taken away in April 1978. I remind the Senate that during the entire period in which the Fraser Government was in office it made no impact on marginal tax rates in this country, and no significant tax reductions except those which were promised and dishonoured. This Government is not in that business. The tax reductions to marginal rates promised by the Government will take place on 1 July 1987.

Senator Walters—Are you sure?

Senator BUTTON—Senator Walters can ask me on 2 July.

PUBLIC TELEVISION BROADCASTING

Senator POWELL—My question is addressed to the Minister representing the Minister for Communications. In view of the commitment by the Special Broadcasting Service to providing public access windows to public television and Australian film makers, and the development of organisations—such as Television Unlimited, Melbourne; Ace TV, Adelaide; and Metro TV, Sydney—which are able to transmit on low-powered television transmitters, I ask: When will the Government complete the drafting of guidelines on public television broadcasting which commenced in 1981, and when will it implement Australian Labor Party policy which supports public television broadcasting? Further, what is the Government's timetable for the provision of suitable broadcasting facilities for those dedicated community-minded groups so that they can start transmission?

Senator WALSH—Some warning of this question was given to my office at about one o'clock, but I am afraid that I have not yet been able to get a reply to it. I will seek one from Mr Duffy and forward it on.

CAM RANH BAY

Senator GARETH EVANS—Senator Sir John Carrick asked me, on 18 February, about the interpretation of the photograph purporting to be of the Cam Ranh Bay naval installation and followed it up with a further enthusiastic request for such information during a debate yesterday. The Prime Minister dealt with this matter in an answer to a question in the House of Representatives today and I respond in similar terms. The Government does not intend to discuss in detail, for reasons that I hope are well understood, Australia's assessment of intelligence material. The Government does accept that Cam Ranh Bay has been developed by the Soviet Union since 1975 as a significant air and naval base. The forthcoming White Paper on defence, when it is published, will fully address the issues which the development of Cam Ranh Bay poses for Australia's strategic defence planning.

AUSTRALIAN SAFEGUARDS OFFICE

Senator GARETH EVANS (Victoria—Minister for Resources and Energy)—I lay on the table a copy of an Australian Safeguards Office letter which was requested by Senator Durack during the recent consideration of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation (Safeguards) Bill 1986, together with a list of addresses of that letter. Copies of the letter and the list are available from the Senate Table Office.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO MENZIES REPORT ON NAZI WAR CRIMINALS

Ministerial Statement

Senator GARETH EVANS (Victoria—Minister for Resources and Energy)—by leave—On behalf of the Attorney-General (Mr Lionel Bowen) I present the Government response to the Menzies report on Nazi war criminals and seek leave to incorporate the statement in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The statement read as follows—

In April and May of 1986 a series of serious allegations were made concerning claims that Nazi war criminals, who had evaded justice after the end of the Second World War, had managed to obtain entry into Australia and were resident here. As a consequence of these allegations, and the widespread public disquiet aroused by them, the Government announced on 25 June 1986 a review of material relating to the entry of suspected war criminals into Australia. The Review was conducted by Mr Andrew Menzies, a retired senior public servant. His Report was presented to the Special Minister of State on 28 November 1986, and, except for a small confidential part, was tabled in the Senate on 5

December 1986, and in the House of Representatives on 17 February this year. Mr Menzies also presented to the Special Minister of State on 28 November a sealed envelope containing details of allegations relating to some 70 named persons, allegations which he recommended should be the subject of further investigation.

As part of the conclusions of his Report Mr Menzies made a number of factual findings. Given the wide public concern over allegations made in 1986, and the attention they attracted both in this country and overseas, I think it is important that I give further emphasis, in the Parliament, to these findings.

Mr Menzies found:

It was more likely than not that a significant number of persons who committed serious war crimes in World War II, have entered Australia, and some of these are now resident in Australia.

While endeavours were made to prevent the entry into Australia of persons responsible for war crimes, there were serious limitations, particularly in early years, in both the staff available for checking, and the data relied upon for those checks.

It is important to remember that the number of persons suspected of serious war crimes who have been able to enter Australia, would have been a minute proportion of the enormous number of persons who migrated to Australia in the post-war years.

No evidence whatsoever has been found that an Australian officer had knowingly allowed a war criminal to migrate to Australia, nor do the facts establish the existence of any policy by any Australian Government to allow or assist the entry of known or suspected war criminals into Australia.

No person admitted into Australia under arrangements with U.K. or U.S. intelligence agencies, to the knowledge of Australian authorities, appears to have been the object of charges or allegations as to commission of war crimes although there is a possibility that, particularly before 1956, former employees of such agencies may have entered Australia without the knowledge of Australian authorities.

A.S.I.O. officers in a number of cases had contact with persons some time after their entry into Australia in respect of whom the Review has recorded allegations of commission of war crimes and obtained information from them for A.S.I.O. purposes not related to the war crimes allegations but there is no evidence that A.S.I.O. was involved in the entry of any of these persons into Australia.

The Government accepts the conclusion that some persons, against whom the most serious allegations have been made, are likely to have entered Australia after the Second World War, and to be still resident here today. However, as Mr Menzies has found, their entry was achieved in the circumstances of the urgency and intensity of our post-war immigration program. Given that background, there is no value in continuing to examine the past with the idea of apportioning blame, or endeavouring to sheet home responsibility. Instead, our attention must be concentrated on the steps to be taken to ensure that suspected war criminals involved in serious crimes are brought to justice.

On 22 March 1961, the then Attorney-General, Mr Barwick, speaking in this House, said in regard to the

prosecution of war crimes committed in the course of the Second World War, that the chapter should be regarded as closed. Where serious War crimes are concerned this Government does not regard the chapter as closed. This Government will take appropriate action under the law to bring to justice those persons found in Australia who have committed serious war crimes. We do not intend that there should be any reduction in our normal standards of justice when dealing with such cases, or in the safeguards now available under Australian law to persons accused of serious crimes. We will take action against individuals only where charges are serious and fully supported by evidence.

It is important to understand that the Government's determination to investigate allegations of war crimes, and, where appropriate, to lay charges, is not action directed against ethnic groups, and is not to be regarded in any way as a slur upon any particular ethnic group. Our actions will be taken in relation to individuals, and will be based, not on their ethnic origin, but upon their behaviour.

The first recommendation in the Menzies Report is that the Government should make a clear and positive statement on its attitude to the prosecution of serious war crimes. That statement I have just made.

The Report recommends that the Government establish a small unit in the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions along the lines of the United States Office of Special Investigations, to conduct investigations of allegations of war crimes. The Government will be setting up a Special Investigations Unit within my portfolio, reporting directly to me. It is normal practice to separate the investigation and prosecution functions. The DPP will, of course, conduct any prosecutions in the ordinary way, and it will be the DPP who decides whether the results of an investigation justify the bringing of a prosecution.

The unit will have responsibility for investigating, in the first place, the allegations listed and detailed by Mr Menzies and contained in the sealed envelope handed to the Special Minister of State. That envelope will be handed over to the head of the Unit. The Unit will also have responsibility for investigating any other allegations that persons resident in Australia, either now or in the future, committed war crimes during the Second World War, including the allegations received by the Government from the Simon Wiesenthal centres in the United States and Israel.

Mr Menzies, in his recommendations, placed emphasis on the possibility of extradition where investigations showed that serious charges of war crimes should be brought against particular individuals. The approach preferred by the Government is to conduct war crimes prosecutions in Australia. I would be concerned at the prospect of making special arrangements to extradite persons to countries with markedly different judicial systems. However, should there be a request for the extradition of an alleged war criminal within the context of Australia's normal extradition arrangements, it will be dealt with by me in the ordinary way, with assistance, where appropriate from the Special Investigations Unit.

If extradition was not appropriate, Menzies recommended that consideration be given to revocation of citizenship and deportation in appropriate cases, but he specifically declined to recommend legislative change.

The Government will consider those possibilities within the context of present legislation and policy.

As a result of its inquiries, the unit may be recommending the bringing of prosecutions. Mr Menzies has recommended that only the more serious war crimes are worthy of attention now, more than 40 years after the events. The Government agrees and the work of the unit will be directed accordingly. For example, allegations as to membership of, or demonstrated sympathy for, various fascist organisations in Nazi controlled Europe, and allegations as to production of fascist propaganda, do not warrant attention. The Menzies Report sets out the types of crimes which would always be of concern, no matter how long ago they were committed:

participation in police or so called 'security' units which had the task of deporting, ill-treating or murdering persons on racial or political grounds; in some cases these people worked under German orders, in other cases they operated largely independently;

participation as guards or administrators in the operation of German established concentration camps or prisons at which large numbers of people were murdered or ill-treated;

participation in national or local puppet governments under Nazi German direction at an executive level, allegedly involving direct responsibility for the deportation, ill-treatment or murder of persons on racial or political grounds.

So that prosecutions may be brought in Australia, it will be necessary to make amendments to the War Crimes Act 1945. The principal amendments will be:

To provide for the trial of war crimes before State courts exercising federal criminal jurisdiction or where appropriate, Territory courts, instead of before military tribunals as is presently the case.

At present, the Act arguably does not apply to serious crimes committed in the course of hostilities in Eastern Europe, in that the extraterritorial application of the Act is restricted by reference to countries allied with His Majesty. An amendment is needed to encompass war crimes committed in the course of hostilities known as the Second World War. The Act would only be applicable to persons resident in Australia, either now or in the future.

Evidentiary and procedural provisions which would be inappropriate for criminal prosecutions before civil courts will be repealed.

These changes will necessarily involve amendments to the criminal law having retrospective operation. The circumstances are, however, sufficiently serious to justify this course. I will be introducing amendments to the War Crimes Act as soon as possible.

Mr Menzies also recommended that the Australian Security Intelligence Organization Act 1979 should be amended to permit ASIO, in relation to persons seeking entry into Australia, to obtain and communicate information concerning the commission of war crimes. Overseas investigation may be made by the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. Once the amendments to the War Crimes Act have been made, the present provisions of the ASIO Act will allow communication of any information the Organisation has in its possession.

This Government shares the abhorrence felt by all civilised nations for the serious criminal activities committed in the course of the Second World War, and considers that justice must be done, no matter how much time has passed since the events in question. We commend Mr Menzies, and those who worked with him, for the Report. The Government will ensure that investigations are conducted with seriousness and dispatch, and that, within the normal standards of our criminal justice system, suspected war criminals will be brought to trial.

Senator GARETH EVANS—I move:

That the Senate take note of the statement.

Senator DURACK (Western Australia) (3.05)—On behalf of the Opposition I wish to address a few remarks to the statement put down by Senator Evans on behalf of the Attorney-General (Mr Lionel Bowen) concerning the report by Mr Menzies on nazi war criminals in Australia. The Senate will recall that the report was tabled in this chamber on 5 December last year and that, on behalf of the Opposition, I made some comments. I will now adopt and repeat what I said then. However, since the statement was discussed in the Senate, although not debated at any length, the Government has given further consideration to the Menzies report. The statement today indicates the decision the Government has made and what steps it intends to take following the report.

The Opposition agrees with the view of Mr Menzies and the Government that the mere fact that war crimes may have been committed 40 years or more ago is no reason why we should now close the chapter, as was argued by Sir Garfield Barwick on one occasion many years ago when he was Attorney-General. The view expressed by Sir Garfield Barwick in the early 1960s is not a view which the Opposition or the Government holds. The recommendation of Mr Menzies has bipartisan support in this chamber. The only question now is as to how one defines 'war criminals', which is a very difficult question. A very fundamental distinction is drawn by Mr Menzies in his report which I referred to in this chamber on 5 December, namely, the mere fact that a person may have been a member of the nazi party, may have served in German forces or forces allied to Germany, or collaborated with German occupying forces, or may have even held racist views is no reason why that person should be classified as a war criminal. Even though we may feel abhorrence at views which may have been expressed or at activities of the kind I have mentioned, they do not amount to war crimes. Mr Menzies indicated what he regards as war crimes. They have been defined in many international instruments in recent years.

In the statement the Attorney-General sets out and adopts the Menzies recommendations about what would be regarded as war crimes. The statement says:

The Menzies Report sets out the types of crime which would always be a concern, no matter how long ago they were committed:

Participation in police or so called 'security' units which had the task of deporting, ill-treating or murdering persons on racial or political grounds . . .

Participation as guards or administrators in the operation of German established concentration camps or prisons at which large numbers of people were murdered or ill-treated;

Participation in national or local puppet governments under Nazi German direction at an executive level, allegedly involving direct responsibility for the deportation, ill-treatment or murder of persons on racial or political grounds.

The definitions of 'war crimes' recommended by Mr Menzies and adopted by the Government draw a very clear distinction. For instance, mere participation in a local puppet government under nazi direction would not in itself be sufficient; it would have to involve direct responsibility for conduct such as ill-treatment, murders or deportation of persons on racial or political grounds. Those broad distinctions are very well drawn by Mr Menzies in the statement and the Opposition is in agreement with that approach.

The second matter which has been of great concern to the Opposition throughout this matter, which I believe the Government has also recognised in this statement, is that we in Australia have received into our country in the years immediately following the war over 170,000 displaced persons, almost entirely from Europe. We were second only to the United States of America in our participation in that great humanitarian program. Not only are we as Australians proud of that program and all those who made it possible, but also we have welcomed into our society that vast number of people who have been settled here for, in some cases, 40 years. Over that period those people have become very valuable citizens, very active members of our community and have made a magnificent contribution to the development of Australia, not only in an economic sense but also in a social and political way. We all remember our former colleague, Senator Lajovic, who served with distinction in this chamber until recently. Former Senator Lajovic was an excellent example of the type of person who came to Australia after the war and made that notable contribution to our social and political life.

We are very concerned that those 170,000 people and their descendants should not feel threatened as a group because of our concern about war criminals who may be here, who may have come here under that program. Those people should not be concerned because out of that 170,000-odd people who came here, Mr Menzies has found only 70 names which he has given to the Attorney-General of persons about whose wartime activities there is a case for investigation. There are only about 70 names out of 170,000 people, so those figures should allay the very real and sensitive concerns felt by many people in our ethnic communities who came here under these programs.

The exercise that Mr Menzies was asked to embark upon—he has now reported to the Government and the Government is now responding to that report—refers to only a very tiny proportion of those people. Mr Menzies has not found that any one of the 70 people is a war criminal; he simply said that there is sufficient evidence in regard to those 70 names to justify investigation. On this aspect of sensitivity the Government has been even more understanding than Mr Menzies, because Mr Menzies said that before any proceedings are taken against these people, whether they be within Australia or subject to extradition proceedings, a strong case should be made against them. He said that they should not be charged unless there is a case against them and that the evidence is sufficient to justify that. The Opposition would go further and say that no action should be taken against these people unless there is a case of sufficient strength to justify a finding of criminality under our ordinary legal system.

The Government seems to be more or less saying in this statement the same thing. Mr Menzies was somewhat attracted to the idea that where there was such evidence against any one of these people, and where there was not an extradition treaty, the Government may seek to enter into some extradition arrangements with the country from which they came. In this report the Government has rejected that recommendation, and the Opposition agrees with that. I made the point when I spoke on 5 December that we did not think that the Government should be taking any positive steps to return these people, even under extradition arrangements that were properly entered into.

The Government has also indicated that it will vet very carefully a case that is under an existing extradition agreement. It certainly ought to do so, and the Opposition believes that even

where there is an extradition arrangement, special rules should apply to cases in which there are allegations of war crimes because of the concern that after a period there has to be proper evidence on which to found such a charge. Of course, there has to be total satisfaction on the part of the Attorney-General of the day that these people will get as fair a trial in another country as they would get here. So the general tenor of the Government's response to Mr Menzies—certainly the Opposition would encourage the view that when one considers the countries from which these people have come, almost all of them are now under communist dictatorships—is that the proper course is for these people to be tried in Australia under our ordinary legal system, which Mr Menzies recommended should apply if a trial were to be held here, and that the War Crimes Act should be amended to enable that to be done and not under the court martial procedures which is the only course available under the War Crimes Act.

The Opposition believes that the proper course is for the War Crimes Act to be amended—the Government has said it will do that—to enable criminal trials alleging war crimes to be conducted in Australia in accordance with our procedures and, of course, before an Australian jury. The Government has not gone quite as far as that in its response, but we believe that that is the proper course to take. We hope that the Government will apply that course generally in this situation if—and it is still a big if—investigation reveals war crimes and prosecution is decided upon. Many steps have to be completed before we come to that, but the Opposition thinks it is wise that the Government should amend the War Crimes Act so it will be ready when any prosecution of this kind is brought about.

The Government has decided not to accept Mr Menzies' recommendation to set up a special unit in the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. I raised some doubt about the wisdom of that recommendation on 5 December. The Government, in deciding to set up a special unit in the Attorney-General's Department to carry out these investigations, is taking the right course. If as a result of that investigation it is thought there is sufficient ground to prosecute, the evidence will be turned over to the Director of Public Prosecutions and he will have to make the decision whether to prosecute.

I conclude by saying that the Menzies report is a most valuable document, largely because of the context in which it expresses the problem.

Mr Menzies rejected the outlandish accusations being freely bandied about by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and in the New South Wales Parliament by a Labor Minister in relation to war crimes and war criminals in Australia and serious aspersions against dedicated Commonwealth officers who worked in Europe amongst displaced persons in the horrific conditions of the post-war years.

Of course, the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation also had to get a serve in all these accusations going around. Mr Menzies has found that there was no substance in any of those allegations. He has presented the Government with a manageable problem and I am pleased that the Government is tackling it in a sensible and sympathetic way. Of course, the Opposition will co-operate with the Government in the sensible steps it has outlined. Finally, we wish again, as I think we have done already, to assure the Government that we do not believe that this is by any means a problem of the magnitude that has been suggested. Suspicion is cast upon only a relatively tiny number of people who came here after the war. We do not believe that people should be handed back by any Australian government to a communist dictatorship for trial under its system. Such trials would be largely political. Those against whom there is a *prima facie* case should be tried in Australia in accordance with our criminal standards of proof, under our system of justice.

Senator MASON (New South Wales) (3.22)—On behalf of the Australian Democrats I indicate our pleasure that the Government is following up this matter with some resolution. There is not a great deal in what Senator Durack has said that we take exception to, but I would like to make a few additional points. I noted when I was in Israel last year that there is natural and considerable interest in that country in these inquiries, seeing that Jews were the principal victims of war crimes during World War II. Perhaps more to the point, while in Brussels I was told by officials of the European Economic Community that evidence given to the EEC inquiry into the rise of fascism in Europe could contain material which bears on this topic. I raise that point because, as I understand that that material is not in the report of that inquiry but appears in the evidence, the Special Investigations Unit set up by the Government within the Attorney-General's Department may like to follow that up if it is not already aware of the situation.

I agree with Senator Durack in regard to methodology. It is quite right and proper that these people, most of whom will be fairly elderly now, in their 60s or 70s, and many of whom would have been residents or citizens of Australia for a long time, ought to be tried here. One point of some significance arises in the last finding of Mr Menzies:

ASIO officers in a number of cases had contact with persons sometime after their entry into Australia in respect of whom the Review has recorded allegations of commission of war crimes and obtained information from them for ASIO purposes not related to the war crimes allegations . . .

That is not a matter that can be left up in the air completely. I know the Government is always nervous about any statements or revelations about what ASIO does, even if it might have committed a crime or an injustice against citizens. I strongly disapprove of that policy. I can see a need for some secrecy where security is concerned but I disapprove thoroughly of a blanket secrecy which presents, at best, a temptation to use it as a screen for concealment. If it is found in this case that these people gave material to ASIO at certain times in the past and that as a result citizens of this country were unfairly accused or in some way treated unjustly—that must be a possibility, I suggest—I would ask the Government if not at least to reveal that to the Senate then to follow it up, to go back and make sure that there were not injustices committed at that time which were brought to light as a result of information given to people who may well as a result of this inquiry be convicted as war criminals. I hope that the Government will take that up and not overlook it, because I think it is a matter of justice which is enormously important.

We ought to be a little more independent from what has happened in the past in our definition of war criminals. A war criminal from the perspective of this country in 1987 might be rather different from what was considered a war criminal from the perspective of the very heated emotional atmosphere in a country that suffered during and after the war. That is not an unjust assumption although perhaps it could be regarded as such. If there is any discretion in this matter the Government ought to tip the balance towards a more compassionate and merciful view. However, I would certainly not recommend that course of action where people appear to have caused actual loss of life or liberty or even any major loss of property. That point needs looking at because war criminals were associated, especially in Germany and especially where the Jews

were concerned, with a very major confiscation of property. That ought not to be overlooked even at this stage. Senator Durack made the point that Mr Menzies' investigation revealed just 70 people. He appeared to impute that this might be the lot. I do not think so. Page 4 of the Minister's statement in the second paragraph states:

The unit will have responsibility for investigating, in the first place, the allegations listed and detailed by Mr Menzies and contained in the sealed envelope handed to the Special Minister of State.

There is no reason to be so complacent as to believe that that is as far as it should go. I mentioned the avenue in Brussels of the European Parliament's evidence on its inquiry into the rise of fascism in Europe. There may well be other areas and it would seem to me to be almost inevitable that any investigation of the initial 70 people could quite likely involve others, some of whom could be in Australia. I do not think we need to have just a token effort here as that in itself would be unfair. If for want of further investigation there is any suggestion or any course of action which brings justice to some people and not to others who may have committed an even worse crime, I believe that further investigation ought to be carried out. We should make no judgments as to the actual number of war criminals here or what their influence is on our society—of course, that is an important matter—until this investigation has been carried out. I would stress, finally, that last point. One of the best possible reasons for going ahead with this investigation is our national self-interest. If there are people here who, as it subsequently turns out, were involved in war crimes—and one must recall that the crimes of World War II were extremely unpleasant and grim—I think it would be a good exercise simply in the interests of purging our society of influences which are bad, harmful and unhealthy.

Senator HARRADINE (Tasmania) (3.28)—I rise not to go over the ground that has already been covered by the Minister for Resources and Energy (Senator Gareth Evans), Senator Durack and Senator Mason, but simply to refer to page 6 of the ministerial statement before us. It refers to certain amendments to legislation that the Government is proposing. It states:

These changes will necessarily involve amendments to the criminal law having retrospective operation.

I note that the amendments refer to placing the issues before State jurisdictions on behalf of the Commonwealth and also in the civil jurisdiction rather than having military tribunals deal with the cases. The statement deals with whether or

not serious crimes committed in the course of hostilities in Eastern Europe are able to be covered and with one other point. I would point out to the Senate that it would be a very grave issue indeed for the Parliament to consider retrospective criminal legislation. Of course the issue of war crimes is a very grave issue. The war crimes committed by those involved with the nazi regime, or indeed others who may have committed war crimes against other populations—I include here those who were operating at the behest of the Stalinist regime—are very grave issues indeed. It will be interesting to see whether the definitions of war criminal cover those aspects as well.

We must give the retrospective operation of whatever legislation is coming before us very detailed consideration, because one of the foundations of a democratic society such as ours is, of course, for its citizens to have certainty before the law, particularly where that law is criminal law. It should not be forgotten that many of the crimes perpetrated against the Jews by the nazi regime were by the institution by that regime of the retrospective operation of legislation. Those honourable senators who are aware of the history of that period will know the circumstances to which I am referring. I have raised these matters so that they also may be taken on board. Senator Durack, by implication and directly, has adverted to the questions that need to be considered. The Minister, in his paper, has done so. I simply wish to add those few remarks.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

ADDITIONAL COMMERCIAL RADIO SERVICES IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

Ministerial Statement

Senator GARETH EVANS (Victoria—Minister for Resources and Energy)—by leave—On behalf of the Minister for Finance (Senator Walsh), representing the Minister for Communications (Mr Duffy), I present a ministerial statement entitled 'Additional Commercial Radio Services in Regional Australia'. I seek leave to incorporate the statement in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The statement read as follows—

Honourable Members will recall that on 22 August 1986 I tabled three important documents relating to broadcasting in Australia. The first, a report by the Forward Development Unit of my Department on Ownership and Control of Commercial Television, remains open for public comment until 31 March 1987 although Honourable Members will know that the Government has already taken some important decisions on matters discussed in that report. I intend to introduce

initial legislation on cross-media ownership and related matters later in the Autumn Sitzings.

The second document, a Draft Indicative Plan for equalisation of regional commercial television, has since developed into a final Indicative Plan and the relevant legislation is now being considered by a Senate Select Committee. I hope that body completes its work quickly so that regional Australians may look forward confidently to enjoying television services as good as those enjoyed by their cousins in the capital cities.

Today, I want to announce Government decisions on the third document I tabled in August, the Forward Development Unit's final report *Future Directions for Commercial Radio*, as well as on the FDU's interim report on the possible conversion of AM radio licences to FM.

Apart from announcing decisions on the FDU's radio reports I will announce a program to plan over the next three years additional commercial radio services to nearly thirty areas outside the mainland State capital cities. And by the time planning is under way in the first of the areas I announce today I will be able to announce services to be planned in later years.

I will also give details of streamlined planning procedures developed in my Department which will help to bring new services on line as quickly as possible.

To commence the program, I shall call in April this year for applications from people interested in providing new, competing services on FM in Geelong, Gold Coast, Gosford and Shepparton.

At the same time, I will refer to the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal supplementary licence applications from 8HA Alice Springs and 2VM Moree.

I have also recognised the need for a new commercial radio service to the West Moreton area, based on Ipswich, and I will make a further announcement on this market in the middle of the year.

Streamlined approach

I turn now to the details of this initiative. The Government wants to speed up the delivery of new commercial radio services to regional areas, and to do so by introducing competing services wherever possible.

It is clear that some areas or markets are capable of supporting new and competing services. It is just as clear that other areas cannot support competition.

With that in mind, we needed to find a way of speeding up the provision of additional services. This meant streamlining the planning and inquiry process as far as possible. It is widely agreed by the industry, including potential licensees, that it is unnecessary to burden all areas with all stages of the often costly and time-consuming ABT inquiry process. We also intend to make our service planning run more smoothly.

Accordingly, we are not asking interested groups to submit lengthy and expensive planning proposals. Instead, we will just ask them to comment on draft Service Areas and draft technical specifications released by my Department. This approach will enable us to move quickly to invite applications. Thus, before calling in April for formal applications for the new services in Geelong, Gold Coast, Gosford and Shepparton, I shall be asking interested parties in these areas to provide comments to the Department of Communications on

the draft Service Areas and technical specifications which I shall table today.

I have a statutory obligation to consult licensees as I plan the development of broadcasting services but I want to hear also from prospective licensees and members of the public.

The documents I intend to table give more details of the planning program and procedures for new services.

Competition

The streamlined approach to planning will work differently according to whether an area, or market, seems *prima facie* able to support a new, competing service.

In markets where it seems to me *prima facie* that competition can be supported, the crucial choice which needs to be made is among the various applicants for the new licence.

In these areas I shall dismiss applications received from the existing licensees for a supplementary licence. (Section 82A (4) (b) of the Broadcasting Act gives me the power to dismiss supplementary licence applications for a reason to do with "the planning or development of broadcasting services".) It will then be unnecessary in these areas to hold an inquiry into the grant of a supplementary licence. Instead, I shall invite applications for new licences and the Tribunal will hold hearings to decide which new applicant should be granted the licence.

In areas where there is doubt whether competition can be supported, the ABT inquiry process will continue, although the Government has decided to have the Broadcasting Act amended to clarify my powers relating to inquiries. This legislation will ensure that it is possible for me to have the ABT consider simultaneously the claims of supplementary licence applicants and potential new operators—rather than have to hold successive inquiries—and it will be a significant improvement.

Thirdly, in areas where it seems clear that competition cannot be supported current inquiry procedures will continue for the time being. I am concerned to give applicants for competing services, even in relatively small markets, the opportunity to have their case heard. Our presumption all along has been in favour of competition and this remains the case. But if current procedures do not produce new services smoothly over the next two years, we will consider legislation to allow for the automatic grant of supplementary licences in these areas.

Finally, I have asked my Department to look at ways in which listeners in small and isolated areas now receiving only one commercial service can be given additional services. This examination will consider, for example, the provision of services through Remote Commercial Radio Services (RCRS).

Priority areas

The planning program for the first three years—both the areas nominated and the sequence—has been developed by looking at whether a frequency is available in the area (or soon will be when television frequencies are cleared from Band II) and by looking at demand for FM services.

We have also taken into account the results of extensive consultations with industry, together with the nearly

fifty submissions received on the FDU reports. This material covers everything from technical specifications to projected revenues.

Of the areas on the program for 1987, Geelong has a current (1987) Service Area population of 240,000 which makes it the most populous area with only one local radio station. Gold Coast (220,000) Gosford (200,000) and Shepparton (145,000) are not far behind. Bringing commercial FM services to these four areas alone will benefit over 800,000 people.

Supplementary licence applications in these areas will be dismissed and the ABT will consider the claims of the independent applicants.

We are thinking also of smaller areas, areas where it seems unlikely that competition can be supported. I will soon pass on to the ABT the supplementary licence applications from Moree (46,000) and Alice Springs (25,000).

Information from hearings in these relatively small markets will be useful both to me in my planning role and to intending applicants for competing licences in similar markets.

Market groups approach

I want also to refer to Government decisions on a number of approaches canvassed in the FDU's final report. A planning approach outlined in this report has been adopted by the Government because it promises to achieve the streamlined approach we are looking for. Under this approach I shall allocate markets into groups as follows:

Group A: markets where I find a *prima facie* case that a new, competing licence would be viable;

Group B: markets where I am in doubt;

Group C: markets where I am satisfied that a new, competing licence would not be viable; and

Group D: markets so isolated and/or small that special measures must be taken.

It will not be possible to develop this approach fully until I have more information about the circumstances of particular markets. Thus I have not yet attempted to allocate the 1987, 1988 and 1989 markets into groups.

I shall be seeking from the ABT financial information on individual markets to assist me to place them into groups and I shall announce allocations for each 1988 and 1989 market when I announce the calling of applications.

I recognise the sensitivity of financial information and I undertake that it will not be used in any way that publicly identifies the performance of individual stations.

Finally, I stress that allocations to market groups will be *prima facie* only.

The Tribunal will still make the final decisions on independents or grant the supplementary licences. It is quite open to it to make a decision about a market which does not accord with my *prima facie* judgment about that market. That is its right as an independent body.

Service Areas

It might be necessary in some cases to determine service areas for new services which differ from those of existing AM stations.

In looking at this question we have been conscious of the important role which regional radio stations play in bringing local programs to local people. New interests in the industry want to play a similar role.

I recognise the concerns of existing licensees that significantly larger new Service Areas could take away some national advertising revenue from the existing service—although I do not believe it is beyond the wit of imaginative managements to meet this challenge.

It seems unnecessary to devise a different Service Area for the new service where the existing Service Area is quite capable of supporting competition. Thus, different Service Areas for new services will be proposed in future only where (i) it is not possible for the existing Service Area to support competition and there is no application for a supplementary licence or (ii) where existing Service Areas overlap substantially.

It will still be possible, as it is at present, for existing licensees to seek to vary their Service Areas if they wish to take this approach to meet competition.

I am aware of the time which can be taken up in negotiations between my Department and licensees or potential licensees over Service Area boundaries. This is why I have decided to nominate draft Service Areas when calling for applications. It is, of course, open to interested parties to nominate a proposed Service Area for consideration. Likewise, minor differences between existing and new Service Areas might be proposed for technical reasons.

Other decisions on FDU report

There are some other Government decisions on the FDU report which I wish to announce today as well.

It is not possible or sensible to consider in isolation from other questions of media ownership such matters as whether to remove or relax the prohibition on owning more than eight radio stations. Possible modifications to the ownership and control rules in radio will be taken up as part of the current study of ownership and control, particularly cross-media matters, being undertaken in my Department.

Similarly, the possible need for a review of the viability provisions of the Broadcasting Act and for revision of the provisions relating to the confidentiality of financial information will be taken up as part of a continuing review in the Department of the role and powers of the ABT.

The FDU report raises the possibility that it might be necessary to categorise licences by program format or introduce some other means to ensure diversity of program choice if diversity did not follow the introduction of new services. I would much prefer to leave programming to station managers and their view of the market and leave regulation to the ABT and its monitoring of "adequate and comprehensive" services. This Government will steer well clear of any other approach.

AM/FM conversion

Finally, I want to address issues raised in the FDU's interim report on the possible conversion of AM licences to FM.

I have some sympathy for the argument that regional AM stations competing head-to-head with a new FM station should be able to convert to FM, provided this

does not lead to loss of service to audiences of the previous AM service. However, my first priority is provision of new services.

Any decisions on conversion will be influenced by the capacity for high-power services, to be identified in the National VHF-FM Radio Frequency Allocation Plan, and by the demands for FM frequencies from each of the broadcasting sectors.

These considerations apply also to conversion in metropolitan areas. When we know how many frequencies are available in metropolitan areas under this plan, it will be possible to make a decision for these areas, too. In some cases, however, the availability of frequencies may depend upon the clearance of Band II. I will be in a position by the end of March to announce a final timetable for the first three years of Band II clearance.

West Moreton—Ipswich

While our main concern has been to provide additional commercial radio services, it has come to our notice during this process that there are some quite populous areas which have no service at all.

The public responses to the FDU report have shown evidence of a significant area of inadequate radio services in the West Moreton region, around Ipswich.

While Ipswich itself receives some services from Brisbane there are some fifty thousand people in the rural areas north and south of Ipswich who have lacked a technically adequate commercial radio signal since the old Ipswich station 4IP moved to Brisbane and became station 4IO.

I believe this historical service to the West Moreton region should be restored and my Department is examining the possibility of either an AM or FM service in this area. I expect to make a further announcement in the middle of this year.

Conclusion

The planning program I have announced today will provide FM services to enhance greatly the diversity of choice available to radio listeners in regional Australia.

As Australia has developed, the number of commercial radio services has not kept pace. Since 1940, only a handful of new AM services has been introduced in regional areas and the number of FM services is only now beginning to expand.

Newcastle, where the ABT has completed its inquiry, should be the first regional area to receive its own commercial FM service. Canberra and Mildura will follow when current legal action is resolved. Once services also come on line in the areas I have listed today, more than three million Australians outside the mainland State capital cities will be able to listen to commercial FM radio—and by the time services in these areas have commenced we shall have begun to plan further services as we develop our rolling program.

The first full year of this planning program will be 1988 and it is fitting that our bicentennial year should see this development.

My statement today effectively sets the future course for commercial radio in regional areas but there is clearly a great deal of planning work yet to be done to fill in the details.

With the measures I have just announced in place, I am confident that the log-jam that had developed in the supplementary licence process will be cleared away quickly so that additional commercial radio services will soon be on air. Together with our plans to expand ABC services to regional areas through the Second Regional Radio Network, we shall have taken great strides to provide diversity of choice to those who live outside the metropolitan areas.

Senator GARETH EVANS—For the information of honourable senators I table two documents—‘Planning Program 1987-89’ and ‘Outline of Planning Procedures for New Commercial Radio Services’. I move:

That the Senate take note of the papers.

Senator LEWIS (Victoria) (3.36)—The Senate has at last before it the statement of the Minister for Communications (Mr Duffy) in regard to additional commercial radio services in regional Australia and the two supplementary documents ‘Planning Program 1987-89’ and ‘Outline of Planning Procedures for New Commercial Radio Services’ referred to by the Minister for Resources and Energy (Senator Gareth Evans). It is not until we get to the second last page of the ministerial statement that we finally get to an admission by the Minister for Communications that a log jam has developed in the supplementary licence process. That very simple admission at the bottom of page 12 is in fact an admission as to what a disaster there currently is in commercial radio services in regional Australia. For example, the report indicates:

. . . fifty thousand people in the rural areas north and south of Ipswich . . . have lacked a technically adequate commercial radio signal since the old Ipswich station . . . moved to Brisbane . . .

On page 12 the Minister says:

My statement today effectively sets the future course for commercial radio in regional areas but there is clearly a great deal of planning work yet to be done to fill in the details.

It is in fact the so-called planning, the bureaucratic interference, which has created this situation. Indeed the Department of Communications really has been saved on a number of occasions by the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal. One wonders what would have been happening around Australia without the Tribunal. The areas of Geelong, the Gold Coast, Gosford and Shepparton have been in need of at least one additional commercial station for many years. Finally the Minister has said that they will now receive some priority of planning. In other words, in 1987 they may get an additional commercial station, but then again they might have to wait until 1988 or 1989 for the inquiries which the Minister refers to in this statement to be com-

pleted. Of course all of this is nonsense. Indeed, much of the report is nonsense, as the Minister regurgitates the bureaucratic arguments for the regulation and control of the media. I suggest that the Minister should look at what his colleague, the Treasurer (Mr Keating), did in relation to the provision of additional banking facilities in this country. If the Minister could demand that his Department adopt a similar approach to the quagmire which holds back the provision of commercial radio services to regional Australia, something would be done and done with haste. The Minister also says in the statement that the Government wants to speed up the delivery of new commercial regional services by introducing competing services wherever possible, but in fact all he says in the statement is that he will introduce further regulatory controls for regional services. Indeed he does make reference in the statement to the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. He talks about the variety of services which the ABC will be able to provide, but of course we now know that what the ABC will provide throughout the evening will be rock and roll. I suggest that the Minister should ask the ABC to have a look at providing some decent alternative services around Australia.

Senator Puplick—Rock and roll is decent.

Senator LEWIS—I am not complaining that rock and roll is not decent for those who want to listen to it, but there are plenty of rock and roll stations around Australia. Why the ABC wants to get on to that bandwagon, I really do not know.

Senator Reid—Not in Canberra.

Senator LEWIS—My colleague from Canberra says: 'Not in Canberra'. All right, let the ABC, through one of its stations, play rock and roll, but what about through the other one broadcasting, for example, Radio Australia? Then at least those of us who want to listen to some intelligent programs throughout the evening might be able to listen to a sensible program and not simply to some form of music which we can get on commercial radio. As I say, if we read the report from the Minister with the hindsight of what has been happening in the Department since this Minister took over, we will realise, as I said earlier, that all he is doing is regurgitating the bureaucratic arguments for the infinite control over every step which is taken in regard to the radio and, indeed, the television media throughout the country.

I do acknowledge that there is a need for control of the spectrum to ensure that one serv-

ice does not interfere with another service. But I ask: Why is there a need for all of these other controls which the Minister not only continues but expands? I also acknowledge that after inordinate delays and confusion the Government appears finally to have resolved a plan for the next three years for additional commercial radio services for nearly 30 regional areas. I am sure that the industry will welcome that at last the Government has a plan for the future expansion of regional radio and has indicated some direction for the future, something that has been so sadly lacking since it took office.

Senator VIGOR (South Australia) (3.40)—I rise to commend the Government in some part for having eventually come up with an apparently acceptable solution to some of the problems facing commercial radio in Australia. The Government's announcement in relation to the provision of new commercial radio services in regional Australia is, as Senator Lewis has said, long overdue. There has been quite a scandalous maladministration of the supplementary licence program since this Government indicated in 1983 that it would go ahead with the plans of its predecessor. Until now, there has been a lot of finger pointing from the responsible policy people in the Department of Communications, but very little in the way of action to provide services for regional Australia. I believe that the actual engineering staff should be commended for what we have at this stage. They have worked as hard as possible within the instructions that have been given to them. This is despite the poor morale in the Department, which is due to the large number of vacancies that exist at any one time and the enormous work load with which those engineers have to cope.

It is little wonder that there has been a high turnover of professional expertise within the Department of Communications. This was exacerbated when the Department jumped ahead of the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal in planning for relocation to Canberra ahead of the Tribunal's relocation to Sydney. Many of the Department's most experienced engineers were lost in that process and the Department has really not recovered from the consequences of these internal bureaucratic machinations. In the interim, it has lacked the political and administrative oversight to force it to focus its available resources effectively. The Efficiency Scrutiny Unit, set up with great fanfare by the Government last year, would do well to examine this aspect of the Department's operations. I hold that a lot of extra revenue has been denied the Government because new services have not been provided.

It is very important to sound a cautionary note about the ability of the Department to deliver on the Government's intentions. There are a lot of fine thoughts in the statement. There is a proposed fast track method of getting new licences for certain areas, as has been mentioned by Senator Lewis, including Geelong and Shepparton. But we will still have to see how the Department actually performs in terms of delivering these licences.

Senator Lewis—How fast is a fast track?

Senator VIGOR—Senator Lewis asks: 'How fast is a fast track package?' Certainly with this Government all of the fast track packages we have had, whether they have been in this area or in transport, have been very slow in coming about.

In this area I would like to draw the Senate's attention to the buzz words that always appear in such statements—buzz words such as 'streamlined planning procedures'. They appear very early in the ministerial statement. I remind the Senate that back in 1982 the relevant Senate Estimates committee was told by Mr Westerway of the Department that new streamlined planning procedures would see 100 or more licences being processed each year. Those enthusiastic predictions were not borne out in practice and there is still an enormous backlog in the pipeline. The people of regional Australia have not got the extra services. We will wait with bated breath to see whether the Government can deliver now. It is our duty in this place to remain vigilant so that there is no repetition of the supplementary licence shambles that we had just recently. Millions of dollars have been wasted by current radio and television licensees and by prospective applicants for new licences. All the Department's planning work produced the reference of only the Mildura and Canberra situations to the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal. In this statement they get only a minor mention at the end of the statement, where the Minister for Communications (Mr Duffy) states that no action will be taken until the legal proceedings associated with those two areas have been sorted out.

Even then the Minister for Communications improperly interfered with the workings of the Tribunal by suggesting that it discontinue its television supplementary hearings because of new Government policy in the pipeline. It is indeed unfortunate that both the Minister and sections of the Department are unable to accept that the Broadcasting Tribunal has statutory duties. The Tribunal must act according to the law as it stands, and not according to how the Govern-

ment or anybody else thinks things might be in six months' time. I hope that this regional radio statement will mark a change in approach towards the Tribunal. I hope that in future there will be no broadcasting industry rumours that senior officers of the Department have been seeking to influence the Tribunal in the discharge of its duties. I hope there is no substance to these rumours because otherwise it would indicate a perversion of the Westminster principles of government.

Where this statement differs from the Government's approach to television is that the interests of the public have determined the priorities. Deficiencies have been recognised in the current legislation, and I believe sensible remedies have been proposed. I refer, for instance, to the consolidation of the public hearing process where there is doubt about the viability of a competing licence in a particular area. This will certainly expedite the whole process, particularly under the new inquiry procedures available to the Tribunal. The prospect of changes to the Administrative Decisions (Judicial Review) Act will allow a much faster processing of licence applications in this area. There will not be the opportunities for delay that have been used so effectively to make it impossible for people to get licences. There will not be the ready opportunity for the entry into legal processes which has exacerbated the work load of the Tribunal and of the Department. There are also useful signs that the Minister proposes to use some public hearings of the Tribunal as a benchmark for decisions about the type of notice he will issue in relation to a particular area which might be similar to one in which the Tribunal has already made a finding. I believe this procedure will also expedite the availability of new commercial services in regional areas.

A more sensible approach to planning is proposed, with the Department doing the technical work before the involvement of the current licensees or of the potential applicants. I believe that will save the enormous amount of time wasted by duplication of effort that has been carried out in the previous process and during the supplementary scheme. This has kept the Department continually going around in circles looking at material that it itself has provided. I believe that we should keep the process under continuous scrutiny and see that it does not get bogged down as before.

It is unfortunate that the Government still has not sorted out just what it will do in relation to

radio under its cross-media ownership provisions. The statement states:

It is not possible or sensible to consider in isolation from other questions of media ownership such matters as whether to remove or relax the prohibition on owning more than eight radio stations. Possible modifications to the ownership and control rules in radio will be taken up as part of the current study of ownership and control, particularly cross-media matters, being undertaken in my Department.

The statement shows clearly that the Government has not taken a completely concerted view on this whole issue. Rules will be made on the run. But I commend the Government for having put the public interest first in this issue and I hope that it will try to do the same in the area of regulating television and that, with the speeded up processes, it will soon be able to tackle the enormous backlog of licence applications from community, public and educational radio stations that would like to get on air. Currently there is still a backlog of something like 150 applications in this particular area and the Government has made no statement as to how it is going to clear this backlog. If this plan is put into effect I hope the Department can concentrate more on providing licences for community services in all our cities and in the areas where they are most needed. I commend the statement to the Senate.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

JOINT COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Government Response to Report

Senator GARETH EVANS (Victoria—Minister for Resources and Energy)—On behalf of the Minister for Defence (Mr Beazley), I present the Government's response to report 254 of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and seek leave to incorporate the statement in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The statement read as follows—

On 25 September 86, Report 254 of the Joint Committee on Public Accounts was tabled. It reported the Committee's findings and recommendations on proposed computer acquisitions for Department of Defence. I report today the Government's response to the principal recommendations.

The committee recommended that the computer requirements of the Office of Defence Production should be tendered for separately from those of the rest of Defence. This is accepted and action is in hand.

It also recommended that a separate contract for small systems be not proceeded with. That recommendation too is accepted.

In respect of the major proposal for standardised equipment to be bought under project DESINE, the Committee supported the strategy but not the proposed method of acquisitions in pursuit of that strategy. It was concerned that there was insufficient opportunity for Australian industry, and that a prime contractor for five years was too restrictive.

The Government notes the Committee's concern for Australian industry. My colleagues, the Minister for Industry Technology and Commerce, the Minister for Local Government and Administrative Services and I have arranged that the request for tender for project DESINE should make it clear that the prime contractor can be an Australian company, and that Australian content will be monitored throughout the life of the contract.

Because of the urgency of Defence's needs, the Government has now agreed to the issue of the Request for Tender for the range of hardware and software products for project DESINE.

Senator GARETH EVANS—I move:

That the Senate take note of the statement.

Senator MacGIBBON (Queensland) (3.51)—The statement by the Minister for Defence (Mr Beazley) is the response to the Joint Committee of Public Accounts report 254, a publication which would be 200 or 300 pages long. The response from the Minister for Defence takes about two-thirds of one column of *Hansard*. The recommendations alone in the Committee report run to 12 pages. It is rather sad that such a detailed report—and a report which is very important in a narrow technical sense—was treated so briefly by the Minister. In essence what the Minister is saying is that he rejects the findings of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts on the central part of its investigation—project DESINE, a project greater than \$300m in capital costs. The Committee recommended that project DESINE be split up into two parts to minimise the cost of technical risk to the Commonwealth and also to maximise the Australian content. Indeed, one part of the proposal calls for the setting up of an international defence communications net. The Committee says on page 82:

while the use of international standards called Open Systems Interconnection remains a goal of the DESINE strategy, no such international standards yet exist in complete form and there is considerable uncertainty about when they will be fully developed and agreed;

In other words, one of the essential goals of project DESINE is in a sense hypothetical—it has not yet been developed and it may not be capable of being developed. But the Minister has locked us into a system of having bought the Department of Defence plan and rejected the submission from the Public Accounts Committee. I would like to quote from pages 83 and 84

of the report on three relevant points in relation to the Committee's recommendations. The report states:

The Committee recommends that the procurement arrangements and implementation schedule for Project DESINE be designed to minimise the risk and cost consequences of delay and disruption to the project.

The two points the Committee is making there are that it is a high risk program, it is a new program and there are big costs to the Commonwealth if it starts to go wrong, and furthermore that the delays that will come if it does not develop according to plan will be considerable for the Department of Defence. A second recommendation the Committee makes is:

a part tendering arrangement for the supply of implementation quantities of equipment and software for Project DESINE will provide better prospects for Australian industry participation than a single prime contractor arrangement;

Later on, it recommends:

given the magnitude of the acquisitions proposed under Project DESINE, special measures are justified to ensure a satisfactory level of Australian industry participation in the DESINE contracts.

It is asking there for special preference for Australian computer companies, and that is a very valid consideration. I will come back to that in a minute. The Minister does accept the Public Accounts Committee's recommendation that the Office of Defence Production computerisation be tendered for separately from the rest of the Department of Defence and, later on, that separate contracts for small systems not be proceeded with. But I want to come back to the Australian involvement in the provision of computerisation equipment for project DESINE because we are now locked into a system where we are going to have a prime contractor who will almost certainly be an overseas contractor and who will run the program for five years. The response by the Minister is a very weak response. I quote from his statement:

The Government notes the Committee's concern for Australian industry. My colleagues, the Minister for Industry, Technology and Commerce, the Minister for Local Government and Administrative Services and I have arranged that the request for tender for project DESINE should make it clear that the prime contractor can be an Australian company . . .

That is a very weak assertion, that it 'can be an Australian company'. The Minister went on to say:

. . . and that Australian content will be monitored throughout the life of the contract.

That is not doing very much for Australian industry. That leads me to another part of the

report of the Committee, where the Committee recommended:

the Department of Defence provide an annual progress report to the Department of Finance and this Committee which summarises progress to date on Project DESINE and its component projects against agreed plans. This report will detail:

The benefits achieved in comparison with those initially asserted at the time of project approval;

The costs incurred to date in comparison with those initially asserted;

The degree of Australian industry participation achieved;

In other words, the Public Accounts Committee called for an annual report on the degree of Australian industry participation. While the Minister says that the Australian content will be monitored, he is not giving us an undertaking that it will be done on an annual basis. This Government—particularly the Minister for Defence—has patted itself on the back and made quite a big thing out of Australian content. Its record in this has been very sad. It is a record of total non-performance.

We have had the business of the new rifle for the Australian Army—the Steyr rifle. If ever there was something which could have been built in Australia it was a rifle for the Australian Army. There was no hurry about this. Designs were available in the country, yet this Government went ahead and bought an Austrian design. This contract initially is around the \$180m mark and in the life of the service of this rifle—with re-orders—we might be looking at anything up to \$400m or \$500m. True, it will be produced in Australia, but there will be licence payments and a considerable cost involved in this purchase of an overseas rifle which was not necessary in any way at all.

Then we had the business of the trainer for the Royal Australian Air Force. The Australian Aircraft Consortium was proceeding with the A10 and the A20 designs. We had already invested \$190m of the Australian taxpayers' money and, through bungling by this Government and by the Department of Defence, that project died. We bought the Pilatus PC-9, which is a very fine aircraft. Again, while it will be assembled in Australia and some of its components built here, we have picked up very many hundreds of dollars in the purchase of this aircraft when again we could have had an Australian designed and built aircraft.

Senator Messner—Hundreds of millions.

Senator MacGIBBON—Yes, hundreds of millions of dollars on that. The Government

inherited Project Waler—the provision of a new armoured personnel carrier of Australian design for Australian conditions and for Australian forces. That was also abandoned and we now have to buy armoured personnel carriers from overseas at a cost of hundreds of millions of dollars, or we have to modify our present inadequate ones by buying modification kits in the United States of America to modify the M113s we have. Those three big ticket items alone run into hundreds of millions of dollars—not a bad record for only 3½ or four years in government. It really gives substance to the slogan that we are buying Australian! Regrettably, the Minister's response means that the same ambivalent standards are being followed with respect to this computer program.

In conclusion, I would just like to say something about computerisation in the Department of Defence and in the Australian Public Service because it is a very vexed question. Simplifying it, with all the risks that are involved in that, I believe that there is too narrow a technological base both within the Services and the Public Service with respect to computer technology. In the case of the Services that is compounded by the two-year posting system of putting people in, sometimes people with no experience at all in the post they go into, and never having them in a post long enough to learn about it, to control it and to see a program through. This was well demonstrated in another Public Accounts Committee report some years ago when the Committee was chaired by Senator Georges, on the building of HMAS *Tobruk*.

His Committee showed very clearly the great price we pay of putting service personnel in as project managers and never having them in a job long enough to be able to see it through from start to finish. Regrettably, this applies very much in the Services with respect to computer programs, because the programs are often very complex; they are often innovative, they are of original design; they break new ground, and they are on the forefront of technology. People who do not have as much experience as they should have come in and, by the time they have learnt a little about it, are posted somewhere else. It is very difficult to control a system under such managerial practices.

I think it is rather sad that in Australia we do not have as high a technical level of competence in the Services. The Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force, or the Japanese navy, is a very fine service. Many of the officers on the ships are technically trained in electronics and modern

technology. They actually fix the equipment and do the things that would, in Australia, be done by non-commissioned personnel. Inevitably, the way the society is going, we must upgrade the level of technical competence and expertise in our Services.

We regret that the recommendations of Public Accounts Committee in its report were not followed. Inherent in the Minister's decision is the fact that we are exposed to high technical risks and, if those risks are not coped with quickly and competently, there will be very high costs to the Australian taxpayer. There will be delay and the inevitable confusion that comes in the Department of Defence from that delay. We are concerned that the lessons illustrated in the Auditor-General's report of November 1986, which reported on PISCES—an Army computerisation program—do not seem to have been learnt by the Department of Defence and the Minister.

Senator VIGOR (South Australia) (4.03)—I rise to support some of the points which have been made by Senator MacGibbon. The proposal by the Department of Defence to buy computer equipment for project DESINE—the defence electronic data processing systems integrated network environment—plus computing systems for specific defence requirements for the services offered to manufacturers by the Office of Defence Production and small office general computers was referred to the Joint Committee of Public Accounts for assessment. The Public Accounts Committee reported its findings to the Minister for Defence (Mr Beazley) who has, as Senator MacGibbon said, reported very briefly to the Parliament in the ministerial statement that we are debating.

I differ from Senator MacGibbon in agreeing, generally, with the Minister's response as far as it goes. I believe that it could have gone a lot further in areas such as Australian content. I take this opportunity to express my admiration for the careful and time-consuming assessment that the Committee made. However, I must say that some of the premises on which it based its recommendations do not accord with my technical assessment of the problem.

The reality of the computer industry in Australia is that it is pretty unrealistic at this time to expect local manufacturing capacity to meet the requirements for such a large computer system as is envisaged by the Department of Defence, especially as many of the features of such a system are unique to the Defence Department. The market for computer systems of this size in

Australia is far too small to support a viable Australian enterprise specialising in such computer systems. Even with the best will in the world to support local industry, it is a fact that many small systems do not perform in an equivalent way to large ones.

At this stage I take as an analogy the transport area, which is much better understood and which will perhaps make this matter clearer to honourable senators. While it would be possible for 1,000 Minis to transport a load of sand from place A to place B, it is much more efficient to do so with a truck. However, it would be completely impossible for these same 1,000 Minis to transport one large power generator which the same truck could do with ease equal to that of transporting the sand. Minis and trucks, while being transport vehicles at the small and big end of the market, are not built for the same purpose.

One must realise that all computers are not the same. We have a whole range of computers which are highly specialised for specific tasks and Australian computer manufacturers have, very reasonably, concentrated on supplying micro- and mini-computers to meet the mass demands in the Australian market. To split the purchasing contract for the DESINE system into smaller parts would not necessarily achieve the objectives that the designers would be looking for.

I support the Minister's conclusion that the request for tender for the DESINE project should go ahead as planned. At the same time, I share the Committee's concerns about the possible failure of the contractors to meet the specifications, possible blowouts in price and other such problems which always beset large computer projects in Australia. In particular, I am deeply committed to encouraging local industry through government purchasing policy, since the long term interests of Australia depend on having a strong local industry. In defence, as perhaps in no other area, it is vital that we secure our lines of supply in both components and know-how.

I recommend that the Department include a performance clause in the contract which would allow the Department to cancel the contract outright at the end of the proving phase for network architecture if performance, price, or Australian content proves unsatisfactory. The Minister is silent on this subject. Should the contract be cancelled at that stage, it should be put out again to open tender but modified so as to take account of new developments and technologies available at that stage. Under those circumstances, I believe that the successful ten-

derer would be successful in keeping costs contained while taking every advantage of the latest technology which will be needed to meet the performance requirements.

Another recommendation of the Committee which the Government has endorsed is the separation of the tender for the Office of Defence Production manufacturing computer system from that for the DESINE project and other Defence Department purchases. Manufacturing information systems are quite different in nature and requirements from other defence systems. In fact, they are similar to those required in the manufacturing industry, and there is a market in Australia. The computer suppliers and manufacturers specialising in this area are different from those who specialise in the defence area. It makes good sense to treat this purchase individually and to make certain that the standards of intercommunication are followed through.

The Committee also recommended that the contract should be tendered in parts with no prime contractor. The Government has chosen to ignore this part of the Committee's recommendation. I believe, again, that it is probably correct. Even though software and hardware systems may be manufactured in parts and in many different places, it is no longer sensible to buy components and build up a whole. To use another analogy, one would never buy a washing machine or a car in parts and assemble it oneself. A prime contractor which has assembly experience, preferably in an assembly line for mass production, is likely to be the most successful supplier of such a system.

The other major system which the Department of Defence requires is a computer system to handle the supply and manpower systems redevelopment projects. The Committee questions the fact that there has not been an adequate cost-benefit appraisal of this project. In an Estimates committee hearing last year and again in the debate on the Defence Department's finance appropriations for the year I raised the problem of inadequate control of spares and stores in the Army in the PISCES system. In particular, I raised the problem of 62,076 usage-based items which the present computer system has identified in Army stores as being inactive, that is, which nobody is using. Apparently, none of these items had been used for 3 years or more. An explanation given was that these items would be used only in time of war but no answer could be given as to how many items had lain idle for a large number of years and how many had lain idle for the last year only.

In view of the enormous turnover of surplus Army equipment and the horrendous examples I have raised over the last couple of years concerning the reordering of equipment already disposed of at auction as obsolete; the ordering of spare parts for such obsolete equipment; the ordering of several years supply of uniforms, for example, when the decisions had already been made to change the uniform in 12 months; and the purchase of contracts for supply which differ in detail in their Australian and United States versions by detailing out some type of kickback on the United States version, I cannot but hope that the new system for control of stores at depots and bases which is the proposed first phase of this project will greatly improve the control in this area.

I endorse the Committee's remarks that it would be useful to get a full cost-benefit study of this investment were it possible to do so. However, I am unfortunately only too aware of the scandalous lack of control which is apparent in the management of stores and spares and am sceptical whether the Department would even be prepared to hazard a guess as to the savings which can be achieved through tighter control over stores and spares.

I reiterate my concern about the split responsibility for purchasing and disposals between the Army and the Department of Local Government and Administrative Services which I believe the Government needs to tackle and which is not mentioned in the ministerial statement. Currently there is no control over loss or profit on disposal, nor apparently is there feedback from disposal to purchasing of the items now declared to be obsolete.

According to the last report of the Auditor-General, 1985-86, nearly \$52m was written off by the Department of Defence as 'lost, deficient, condemned, unserviceable or obsolete stores'. This is a substantial sum of money and obviously quite a lot of savings are to be made from efficient control in this area. The capital cost of the computer system proposed is \$30m over 6 years. It is expected that operational costs will be around twice the capital costs over the same period, based on experience. This produces an annual cost of \$15m a year, which is a feasible saving of just over 25 per cent of the write-offs in this area. I do not believe that anybody, even if a full cost-benefit study were done, could do much better than that thumbnail sketch in determining the savings, given the current state of stores management in Defence.

I come lastly to the small, stand-alone systems contract proposal. The Government has accepted the Committee's recommendation that this proposal not be proceeded with. Once again I find myself in agreement with both the Committee and the Government. In particular, there is a mass market for standardised office computers which are available from a myriad of manufacturers. Most of them are reasonably compatible with one another, within certain limits, because of the requirements of the mass market. It is in this area that Australian industry has a real place. I commend to the Department the Committee's concern that preference be given to Australian industry where possible in this area.

I wish to raise a matter which I believe to be utterly scandalous. It is mentioned right in the middle of the very large report by the Committee but is a matter which the Minister fails to address in his statement—the inadequacy of planning and/or procurement processes for computer accommodation. I believe that it is scandalous that the Department of Defence should have a computer sitting idle in a warehouse because the Department of Local Government and Administrative Services is unable to accommodate it and that Defence should, at the same time, envisage paying \$1.85m for the use of a Commonwealth Bank computer which is housed by the Bank to carry out the same type of process. This underlines the cost of such apparent administrative inefficiencies and I believe is worthy of comment by the Minister. I shall be following up this matter in Estimates committee hearings if no further statements are made by the Minister on this matter. I look forward to further investigations by the Committee of the circumstances surrounding this problem.

Although the Minister's statement is very short, it is to the point. If we are going to have effective computer services we have to act now. I would have been much happier if the Minister had responded at greater length and shown much greater consideration for the Australian content which must be contained in all these projects. It is only by politicians and Ministers showing their determination that departments should buy Australian that the public servants in those departments will take up the banner and give up the cultural cringe which over the years has meant that we have bought overseas goods in preference to buying Australian made goods. I commend the statement to the Senate.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE ARTS

Interim Report

Senator COLSTON (Queensland)—On behalf of the Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts, I present an interim report on the amalgamation of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and the Special Broadcasting Service.

Ordered that the report be printed.

Senator COLSTON—by leave—I move:

That the report be adopted.

The interim report of the Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts which I have tabled today sets out the Committee's interpretation of the reference from the Senate on the planned amalgamation of the ABC and the SBS. Honourable senators will recall that on 5 December 1986 the Senate asked the Committee 'to report on the Government's reasons for proposing to amalgamate the ABC and the SBS'. A strict construction of the words of the reference might require the Committee merely to report to the Senate the reasons the Government has already outlined for the proposed amalgamation of the ABC and the SBS. I doubt, however, that this was the Senate's intention.

The Committee's reading of the speeches made during the second reading debate on the ABC/SBS Amalgamation Bill 1986 indicates that some honourable senators may have had in mind a wide-ranging inquiry. For example, there were references in these speeches to the concerns of ethnic communities and an implication that the Government had not given the real reasons for the amalgamation. The Committee does not support the idea of a wide-ranging inquiry. It does not believe that the terms of reference would justify such an approach. Moreover, a wide-ranging inquiry would necessarily cover much of the same ground as the Committee of Review of the Special Broadcasting Service, the so-called Connor report. Instead, the Committee has decided on the following interpretation of the reference:

The impact of the Government's proposed amalgamation of the ABC and the SBS, with regard to:

- (a) financial savings;
- (b) administrative arrangements; and
- (c) possible advantages or otherwise of a single national broadcaster in Australia.

The Committee suggested that our approach would allow the Committee to consider the reasons given by the Government for its decision. This approach would also allow the Committee

to inquire into factors affecting the proposal, such as terms and conditions of employment and transfer of assets.

The Committee recommends that the Senate should adopt this interpretation of the reference. Although the Committee has agreed unanimously to the interpretation I have described, it does not wish to commence public hearings on the reference until the Senate confirms that this interpretation accurately reflects its intentions. The Committee, therefore, has resolved to present this interim report to seek the Senate's endorsement of this approach to the inquiry. I commend the motion to the Senate and seek leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

SENATOR BJELKE-PETERSEN: LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Motion (by **Senator Sheil** for **Senator Kilgariff**)—by leave—agreed to:

That leave of absence be granted to Senator Bjelke-Petersen for the period 20 February 1987 to 26 February 1987, inclusive, on account of ill health.

BILLS RETURNED FROM THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The following Bills were returned from the House of Representatives without amendment:

Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation Bill 1987.

Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (Transitional Provisions) Bill 1987.

Atomic Energy Amendment Bill 1987.

JOINT COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Membership

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Coleman)—The President has received a letter from the Leader of the Government in the Senate requesting a change in membership of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts.

Motion (by **Senator Gareth Evans**)—by leave—proposed:

That Senator Georges be discharged from further attendance on the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and that Senator Giles, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Accounts Committee Act 1951, be appointed a member of the Committee.

Senator WATSON (Tasmania) (4.23)—When Senator Georges notified the Joint Committee of Public Accounts last Wednesday of his decision to stand down as Chairman and as a member of that Committee, he had completed over seven years of service on that Committee and was

Chairman for approximately three of those years. As Vice-Chairman of the largest parliamentary committee, I would like to take this opportunity to express my feelings on the important contribution Senator Georges made and the significant work he performed in his capacity as both Chairman and a member of the Committee.

From the early days Senator Georges's participation was always that of a very hardworking and interested member. I recall on several occasions, when he first joined the Committee, he often was urgently called to a meeting merely to fill a quorum but stayed for the rest of the day or the rest of the discussion because he found the work so challenging. Senator Georges was not only a great member of the Committee but also a great parliamentarian. Despite our different approaches to solving Australia's problems and providing platforms for the future, Senator Georges's chairmanship was always completely objective and constructive. He was always consistent in his approach and was kind and considerate to witnesses, particularly when they were in difficulty. However, on occasions when they sought to withhold information from the Committee or mislead the Committee we were all familiar with the full wrath and scorn that Senator Georges could unleash on such people. Senator Georges used the Committee because he believed that it was a very valuable mechanism of parliamentary scrutiny of the activities of the Executive. As both a Committee member and its Chairman he was rather concerned about the growth of the Executive's powers and influence in recent years. He therefore sought to uphold the institutions of parliament, parliamentary procedures and all the checks and balances this place provided to ensure that Parliament was supreme.

Senator Georges presented about 60 reports to the Parliament on behalf of the Committee, dealing with a broad range of issues. One of the Government's responses to a Public Accounts Committee report was debated in this chamber today. Those reports included reports on medifraud and overservicing, *Tobruk*, defence project management and several reviews of major computing systems. My personal experience of working with Senator Georges on the Joint Committee of Public Accounts brought to my attention the value of the long-standing service he has offered which is worthy of this recognition. I also take this opportunity to welcome Senator Giles, the new member, to the Committee.

Senator MACKLIN (Queensland) (4.26)—The Joint Committee of Public Accounts is a

very important committee of the Parliament. I would like also to join with Senator Watson, and others I am sure, in commending the work that Senator Georges has done over the years on that Committee. It is a committee which in my own State—along with other committees which maintain the accountability of the Executive to Parliament—is obviously missed. The Committee has been very important. If one wanders around the corridors here and looks at the various photographs of committees, it is fairly obvious that the Public Accounts Committee has always been considered to be one of the prestigious committees of the Parliament. That is with very good reason as it is the prime committee to try to keep tabs on the purse. Of course, it is the power of the purse which has provided Parliament with its effective power over the years. Whether that power has been used or abused in Australia's parliamentary history, I do not want to enter into at the moment.

I raise another item in terms of the nominee whom the Government has put forward for the Public Accounts Committee. We had raised with the Government and the Opposition, although we have had no word back, that we wished to present a nominee to that Committee. The last time we raised this matter with the Government, the response we had was that the next time there was a vacancy we would be considered. The vacancy occurred and we therefore wrote to both the Opposition and the Government on this matter. However, no response was received, yet this motion has been brought forward.

Senator Gareth Evans—To whom did you write?

Senator MACKLIN—I wrote to the Whips in the initial phase, in terms of the discussion that went on. We got no response and we were unaware that the nomination would be made today. No word was provided to us that that would be the case. Given the importance of this Committee, the Australian Democrats support the way in which the various nominees to the Committee are normally accepted without demur. It is a reasonable tradition that the discussions take place outside the chamber, so that committees are not in any way polarised and do not become part of the political debate. The Australian Democrats totally support that objective and we would have hoped that this matter would have been dealt with in that way. I leave it at that. It would be useful if the Government could adjourn this matter for some time so that we may be able to have those discussions and the matter can be settled outside the chamber in

the normal way, then a motion brought forward. I had no idea that this motion was coming on, hence I was unable to find out how our request had been dealt with by the Government and Opposition parties.

Senator GARETH EVANS (Victoria—Manager of Government Business in the Senate) (4.30)—in reply—I lack any knowledge of or briefing on this particular matter. Under the circumstances I think it would be appropriate to accede to Senator Macklin's request to adjourn this matter.

Senator Lewis—Perhaps I could assist you.

Senator GARETH EVANS—I yield to the honourable senator.

Senator Lewis—Senator Watson could assist even more than I.

Senator WATSON (Tasmania)—by leave—There are 15 members of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts. The Senate will recall that some time ago when the numbers were increased the Government had a majority of nine members to six from the Opposition. This caused some difficulty. At the last change of membership of the Committee it was agreed that that membership be changed to an 8:7 basis—eight Government members and seven Opposition members. If Senator Macklin's proposal is carried and if we do not proceed with Senator Giles's nomination, the Government technically could be in a minority on this Committee. I do not think that would be very acceptable to the Government or even to this Parliament. So under the circumstances we should proceed with Senator Gareth Evans's suggestion and accept the nomination of Senator Giles from the Labor Party.

Senator GARETH EVANS (Victoria—Manager of Government Business in the Senate)—by leave—I am indebted to Senator Watson for that explanation.

Senator Lewis—And to me. I helped you out of the hole. You never acknowledge anything, though.

Senator GARETH EVANS—I am sorry, I did not hear about the honourable senator's role in the whole thing—I feared the worst. To the extent that this is the crucial number in determining the Government's majority on the Joint Committee of Public Accounts in the normal way I think the point is well taken that any further consideration of this by the Government would be with only one final result. Perhaps the point could be made again in the context of a vacancy occurring in the non-government ranks of the Committee. Maybe Senator Macklin might

reasonably devote some lobbying skill to achieving a more satisfactory outcome in that particular context rather than this one.

Senator Macklin—It would have been useful to have a response before the motion came in—that's what I was saying.

Senator GARETH EVANS—I am now told that the letter was sent on to me this morning after the matter came up. I am sorry, I had simply not caught up with it. The realities of the situation are as they have been described and under the circumstances the Democrats had better hold their fire until the next vacancy occurs. We certainly will talk about it in the context of other future vacancies that arise, provided that balance can be maintained.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

PLACING OF BUSINESS

Senator GARETH EVANS (Victoria—Manager of Government Business in the Senate)—I move:

That intervening business be postponed until after consideration of Government Business, Order of the Day No. 16 (Defence Initiatives in the South Pacific—Ministerial Statement).

Perhaps I should say that I so move on the principle that if rape is inevitable one might as well, if not enjoy it, at least succumb with such grace as one can muster in the circumstances.

Senator Haines—A rather graceless analogy.

Senator Ryan—I think some in the Senate could be offended by it.

Senator GARETH EVANS—If one is offended by that one is offended by just about anything.

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (**Senator Coleman**)—Order! I suggest that the Minister address his remarks through the Chair. It might stop the interjections.

Senator GARETH EVANS—I do so in the further hope that honourable senators will bear in mind not only the pressures of government and parliamentary business on which the Opposition has been fully briefed through its leadership, but also that this is not the only opportunity that they will have to debate a basic defence policy. Honourable senators will have another opportunity as soon as tomorrow.

Senator Lewis—It is a good lesson to you, though, isn't it, Gareth? One more speaker we wanted yesterday, that's all; but you wouldn't give it.

Senator GARETH EVANS—That is not what the honourable senator told me. If he had told me that I would have succumbed with even more grace than I mustered today. But there was no communication of any kind, so let us not open up that argument again. I just want to make the point that honourable senators will have an opportunity in the context of yet another ministerial statement which the Minister for Defence (Mr Beazley) feels the urge to make tomorrow and, of course, in the context of the defence White Paper on which the Government will, as I have already indicated, provide an opportunity for a lengthy debate when that White Paper is brought down, which subject to logistic considerations is expected to be in the first week of our return here. So against that background I ask for appropriate self-restraint on the part of honourable senators, but move the motion, nonetheless, in the terms I have.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

DEFENCE INITIATIVES IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC

Ministerial Statement

Debate resumed from 23 February, on motion by **Senator Gareth Evans**:

That the Senate take note of the statement.

and on the motion by **Senator Gareth Evans**:

That the resumption of the debate be an Order of the Day for the next day of sitting.

upon which **Senator Durack** had moved by way of amendment:

Leave out 'the next day of sitting', insert 'a later hour of the day'.

Senator GARETH EVANS (Victoria—Manager of Government Business in the Senate) (4.35)—Because of the fact that we still have other absurdly irrelevant motions on the books I move:

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent debate resuming forthwith on the motion. That the Senate take note of the statement.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Senator MacGIBBON (Queensland) (4.36)—The Opposition supports the statement by the Minister for Defence (Mr Beazley) on Australia's actions in the South Pacific. This is a long overdue action on the part of the Government and it has very modest objectives. Nevertheless, we support it. The statement really is a declaration of increased military involvement in the South Pacific region in the form of patrolling and of increased military support to the countries in that region. In a general sense the report

can be criticised for the fact that it lacks any supporting text to it for the decisions that have been arrived at. There is no definition of what Australia's interests or objectives are in following this policy. It is not quite fair to call it a knee jerk reaction by the Minister, or even to say that it is gunboat diplomacy—but it is bordering on it. The rationale behind why these decisions were taken was not thought out and therefore is not displayed.

The basic Australian national interest, of course, is our security, and security is not a matter of defence forces alone. It has to be supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs working with and supporting the national security of the country. It is not the purpose of the Department of Foreign Affairs just to represent Australia around the world; it has a vital role in Australia's essential security. I repeat a call I made in this chamber last year that however imperfect the report of the Dibb Review of Australia's Defence Capabilities might be on the defence of Australia, the Government should do the same thing with the Department of Foreign Affairs. There is time now for a similar report to be made on the requirements of Australia's Foreign Affairs Department in serving the national interest. We might find that if that were done there would be a good case for merging the Department of Foreign Affairs into the Department of Trade, for example. I am tired of going around the world and seeing the Australian Department of Trade, which is vitally important to us given the balance of payments problem this Government has got us into, fighting with conflicting policies coming out of the Department of Foreign Affairs. Those two departments should be combined. It is not unusual to find the Department of Foreign Affairs with a different policy view to the Department of Defence.

This Government has been guilty of neglect in the South Pacific. Despite some very clear warnings that have been on the horizon for years there has been a failure by this Government to maintain Australia's essential interests in this region. There have been very few visits, for example, by the Minister for Foreign Affairs (Mr Hayden) to the region. It is true to say that the esteem with which Australia is held by the island nations of the South Pacific is lower than it was in former times. This has been exacerbated, of course, by the funding cuts that have been introduced by the Government, particularly in relation to Papua New Guinea—the cuts were heavy to PNG—and the very insensitive way

these cuts were brought about; it was with very little warning at all to the countries involved.

The South Pacific is now quite different in many ways from what it was a decade or two ago. The rabidly pacifist anti-nuclear policies of the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Mr Lange, have destroyed one of our basic defence alliances. We have the secessionist movement in New Caledonia, where a large proportion of the community, although admittedly a minority, has genuine aspirations for some independence. While I personally believe that the independence of New Caledonia is not necessarily the only solution—I think that a peaceful resolution could be arrived at by other means—there has to be some accommodation by France of the legitimate aspirations of that very large section of the community. But France, with all the sensitivity, intelligence and experience that it showed in the seven years of the Algerian war, is re-running the same program in New Caledonia today. We have grave fears as to what long term effects on Western interests the French actions will have in the South Pacific. There are difficulties within the nation of Vanuatu, and Australia has a changing relationship with New Guinea. It is becoming fundamentally different from what it has been in the past as New Guinea emerges to a point, maybe in five or 10 years' time, where it is economically independent. There is a new generation of politicians emerging in New Guinea with different outlooks and different aspirations for that country. Again that is not being reflected and accommodated by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs.

Overlying these various national problems we have specific political issues, for want of a better term, including the development of the Melanesian bloc of New Guinea and Vanuatu and the Kanaks in New Caledonia and the Solomon Islands putting forward a point of view based on a Melanesian position. We have the interference in this area of France, which persists with its nuclear testing in the South Pacific although it is opposed by every nation south of the equator. The argument is not against the French possessing nuclear weapons or having a nuclear deterrent; rather, the argument is that far too much testing has been done in the Pacific region and, if the French wish to test their weapons, they should either do it in metropolitan France or use the American underground test facilities available to them.

Another destabilising political influence in the region is the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty which was foisted on us by this Govern-

ment—a Treaty which, quite correctly, was not signed by the United States because it denies options that we may well need in the future to preserve the deterrent for the Western democracies. Another political influence, of course, is the travels of Mr Halfpenny through the area, putting extreme left Australian trade union views into Fiji and other countries in the South Pacific and fomenting troubles which will probably exist for generations where none existed before.

Over and above everything else, we have the penetration of the Soviets into the South Pacific, in both a military and a commercial sense, to a degree that we have not seen before. A question that troubles all of us on this side of the chamber is: Why has the Government taken so long, in the face of such clear evidence, to respond to this threat? The Soviets have always had an interest in the South Pacific to develop or gain a port facility and to gain an airfield and landing rights in the area. Well over a decade ago they sought port facilities at Nuku'alofa in Tonga, and diplomatic activity by Australia and New Zealand prevented that taking place. More recently, in 1984, negotiations took place between the Soviets and Kiribati which led to a fishing agreement being signed to operate for 12 months from October 1985. It expired in October last year. We heard the Gorbachev Vladivostok speech of 28 July 1986 in which he outlined very clearly Soviet intentions in the South Pacific region. Of course, only last Christmas, in December 1986, the fishing agreement was signed with Vanuatu to give the Soviets greatly increased access to that which they formerly enjoyed at Kiribati.

There has been a strange reluctance on the part of this Government to recognise the obvious. Yet I believe that it has recognised the problem to some degree because the statement is in part a response to it. The sad thing is that there is concrete evidence that a large number of Government members still do not recognise the problem. Only yesterday in this chamber we heard Senator McIntosh telling us—to quote from *Hansard*:

... some members opposite who hear the words 'South Pacific' and immediately start shouting 'the Russians are coming'. This scaremongering tactic has continued unabated for more than 30 years.

Well, Senator McIntosh, the Soviets are real and they are a threat to Australia's interests. Later he goes on to ridicule the Soviets' occupation and base facilities at Cam Ranh Bay. He refers to 'one of the other magic scare terms, "Cam Ranh Bay"'. Then he quotes what a Mr Hastings has to say about it, and concludes by saying:

I have given up hoping for a more balanced assessment from Opposition members on the Soviet Union . . .

It is not balanced to neglect Soviet actions and activities in this region. The details of Cam Ranh Bay have been on the public record for many years, ever since the North Vietnamese takeover of South Vietnam. The Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence Sub-committee on Defence Matters, in its report in October 1984, made reference to Cam Ranh Bay:

The Soviet Pacific Fleet has also been steadily increasing in size and strength since the mid-1960s and currently comprises some 810 vessels, which is approximately one-quarter of the total Soviet naval strength.

Later, in relation to Soviet activity in Vietnam, the report states:

In return it has acquired the right to use naval and air facilities at Danang and Cam Ranh Bay, from which Soviet naval vessels (between 20 and 26) normally operate and where facilities for nuclear submarines have reportedly been constructed. Tu-95D Bear long-range reconnaissance and other aircraft carry out regular patrols.

Last week the Chief of the Defence Force, General Bennett, took a line similar to that taken by Senator McIntosh—that the Soviets were no threat in this region. I hope that when General Bennett goes into retirement in a month or two he follows a political career because he has actively supported this Government on matters which really were not within his premise to comment on. His area of authority, as for every other person wearing a uniform in the Australian defence forces, is to serve Australia and the Australian Government in a professional defence sense, not to become involved in controversial political issues.

Regrettably this support for a Soviet presence is not confined to Senator McIntosh. On 16 October last year the Minister for Resources and Energy, Senator Gareth Evans, who represents the Minister for Defence in this place, in reply to a question from Senator Teague said:

The Government has no evidence that the Soviet Union has deployed weapons systems in Vietnam which directly endanger Australia. That is just another re-run of some outdated theories and neuroses which do not deserve wider currency . . .

That is a quite astonishing statement because I imagine that all members of the Ministry are briefed on the security risks to this country. But the week before last the American naval commander for the Pacific region, Admiral James Lyons, held a Press conference here. He torpedoed all these myths about Cam Ranh Bay being a fishing village or a seaside resort when he tabled irrefutable photographic evidence of So-

viet military involvement there. It is intriguing that Admiral Lyons felt the need to do that. What has been going on in the military intelligence services and the foreign affairs services that are advising the Australian Government? Why does the Ministry not know those things that have been in all the relevant publications for years and years? How could Senator Evans get up on 1 October last year and dismiss the charge that Cam Ranh Bay was a Soviet base with the statement that it was just another rerun of out-dated theories and neuroses? There are very troubling consequences of that statement. How can we take notice of Mr Dibb's report telling us that we will have a 10-year warning of any attack on this country when we have the evidence in Cam Ranh Bay not being accepted? It is all very intriguing.

Another speaker in this debate, Senator Mason, went on with the customary anti-American line that substitutes for foreign policy with the Australian Democrats today. He made a particularly strong attack on Admiral Thomas Hayward, a former Chief of Naval Operations of the United States Navy—the head of the US Navy—who is a very intelligent, very well informed person in foreign affairs as well as in his military skills. The point that Admiral Hayward was making, as reported in the *Australian* yesterday, was that ANZUS was being weakened by this Government. That was the point that Senator Mason objected to. Admiral Hayward related his statement to the Dibb report. As I have made clear, my view of the Dibb report is that it is an isolationist, insular document which prescribes a fortress Australia. Admiral Hayward made the point that by accepting the Dibb report we were weakening ANZUS. I would like to quote two parts of the Dibb report in relation to ANZUS. They contain the most mercenary appreciation of the Treaty I have ever read. At one point Mr Dibb said:

The presence of the joint facilities, together with the access that we provide to visits by United States warships and the staging through Australia of B-52 bombers, are a sufficient tangible contribution to the Alliance.

Later on he said:

United States warships visit this country, although they have no home-porting here, and unarmed B-52 bombers stage through Australia. The access we provide this way, together with the presence of the Joint Facilities and political support is a sufficient tangible contribution to the Alliance, from the perspective of both parties.

In the light of such statements, which have never been refuted by the Government, by the Minister or anyone else on the other side of the

chamber or in the other House, it is perfectly valid for Admiral Hayward to assume and to state that there is a weakening of our commitment to ANZUS.

I turn to the Minister's statement. One of its central parts is the proposal that we provide 12 patrol boats to the nations of the South Pacific. Basically, that is a good idea which has the support of all of us on this side of the House. There are some technical questions in relation to this, though. The design accepted was off the drawing boards; it was not a built design. There were very tight constraints. The boats had to be delivered to a very tight schedule. The successful tenderer was accepted on the basis of cost. We know that the contract has slipped badly. It is more than six months late; it might well be 12 months late. The first boat is now in the water undergoing trials. We do not know how good the design is, what its sea-keeping properties are like or whether it meets with its design speed, which in any case was very low. From memory, I think it was about 20 knots. All international freighter traffic is travelling considerably faster than that these days, as are quite a few fishing boats. Be that as it may, we do not know how late the contract is. It is quite critical to the Minister's statement because Papua New Guinea is now faced with increased and unbudgeted expenditure in refitting some of its patrol boats. These are boats that it intended to retire and replace with the new boats, but because of the slippage in the program it will be involved with an expenditure of millions of dollars. We do not know how much the contract will cost but we will explore that at the relevant time at the Estimates committee hearings.

The second point made by the Minister concerns the doubling of long range maritime reconnaissance flights by the Royal Australian Air Force and the PC3 Orions. It is interesting that the statement that was tabled in the Senate is different on this particular point from the statement that the Minister made in the House of Representatives. In the House of Representatives statement the Minister extended the relevant paragraph to say:

This is a significant increase when one considers the many other duties we assign to those long range maritime patrol aircraft, including operations out of Butterworth in the South East Asia and South China area and the very important role the aircraft play in coastal surveillance associated with fishing activity off the Australian coast.

The Minister may have got carried away with his usual exuberance but those words quite plainly mean that the doubling of patrol activity

in the South Pacific by the Air Force is in addition to the present duties of the Air Force. That raises some problems. Basically, we are very understaffed with respect to air crews for the maritime reconnaissance squadrons. Nos 10 and 11 Squadrons have 10 aircraft each—20 aircraft in total—and we have at best only seven trained crews in each squadron, fourteen crews all told. With problems such as sickness and the inevitable business of crews being away on training courses we are lucky to be able to find more than five crews at any one time, maybe six, and to increase the load on them by doubling it on a long operation—as the Minister said, they are out there for at least five days—strains the resource very much. The long range maritime patrol crews fly far more hours per year than other air crews in the Air Force because the nature of their operations is such that they are out for probably ten hours at a stretch. When they go out on operations such as these they might be flying for three or four days consecutively. These are very long hours and a very long time in the air. It is not easy work. It is not sitting in a 747 going from here to San Francisco. All the operations are between 10,000 feet and sea level because every target that comes up on the radar must be physically identified by its markings and numbers. The crews are going up and down through the weather. They are never above the weather; they are punching through it at best at 6,000 to 10,000 feet. It is long, fatiguing and painstaking work.

It is not easy for the Department of Defence to increase the number of crews we have. There simply is no surge capacity. If we got into any sort of defence emergency the first thing we would require would be continuous ocean surveillance. We simply do not have the crews to fly the number of aircraft we have. The training time for a crew would, I imagine, be a year to 18 months. There are difficulties, because of the arduous nature of the activities, in recruiting people and getting volunteers within the Air Force to be air electronics officers, technical air crew officers or pilots for these aircraft. They would much rather either fly in the strike command or in the transport squadrons than fly in this way. The very long hours of duty, the postings to Butterworth and being away for a week at a time have a great effect on family life.

That leads me to another point. We are picking up an increased commitment for the defence forces here, yet there is not one word from the Minister about the appalling state of conditions under which the Services operate at present. We have record rates of resignation from the serv-

ices. We have never had such a high rate or such a worrying and costly rate with respect to experience as are going on at present. There are many factors relating to this but the fundamental point is that the Minister, the Government and the Department do not care. They sit in their air-conditioned offices at Russell; they get their pay cheques every week and everything is nice and simple for them. But for the people wearing a uniform times are tough and they are not looked after in a commensurate way for the effort and dedication that they put into their work. There is a lack of re-enlistment bonuses. There is a lack of money for live firing exercises, steaming time and flying time. These are all the things that people join the services to do, but they cannot do them because there is no money for them. Service personnel have poor housing conditions. Despite the Hamilton report entitled 'Supporting Service Families', nothing effective has been done on that. It is no wonder that people are leaving the Services. Unless something is done we will not have the people to fulfil these tasks that the Minister has stated in his paper.

I would like to refer to another task that has been accepted, and that is the provision of charting and survey services for some of the South Pacific islands. This is a very necessary and very laudable thing. We have to have charts and maps for a variety of reasons. But I would argue that in this case charity begins at home. On at least three occasions over the years in which I have been present at different committees, evidence has been given of the 50 year lag in providing modern charts around Australia for the Australian defence forces. That is an intolerable situation. It is a matter that should be addressed because charity begins at home. If we do have an emergency, our own charts and our own land maps really have to be up to date. The Opposition does support this move. We do believe that it is a very small commitment. We believe it is very late, but nevertheless it is very necessary.

Senator HILL (South Australia) (5.01)—The Senate is debating the statement of the Minister for Defence (Mr Beazley) on Australia's defence initiatives in the South Pacific. In foreign policy and related Defence Force activities a principal responsibility of Australia, in our interests and in the interests of the Western Alliance, must be the goal of continuing peace and security in the South Pacific. The statements of the Government which acknowledge the fact and which look to some practical ways in which we can contribute to that goal are obviously welcome,

but particularly welcome after the Fortress Australia report of Paul Dibb which was so warmly received by the Government only some months ago. It seems that now at least, in some modest ways, the Government has responded to the wide expressions of public concern that Australia is not going to contribute to a safer world by withdrawing behind the barriers of perceived isolation.

The South Pacific area is rapidly changing. With few exceptions the island states have become independent. The exceptions that come to mind are: American Samoa, New Caledonia and French Polynesia. Of course I am leaving aside the North Marianas, Guam, the Palau Islands and other states which I would really describe as being in the North Pacific. They are not economically strong. In fact many of the small Pacific states are impoverished, wrestling with all the problems that arise therefrom. They are still developing foreign policies. They are forging new links other than their traditional colonial ties, so we see new blocs developing, one of which was mentioned by the previous speaker, Senator MacGibbon—the Melanesian bloc of Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. We see such groups growing in strength and relevance and in fact determining group positions for important meetings such as the South Pacific Forum. This becomes important in all sorts of ways, not least in the case of the Melanesian bloc, because of its support for the Melanesians in New Caledonia. This in turn enables the group to place pressure on Australia. It is particularly so with Papua New Guinea in that group, its being a major recipient of Australian aid and being in our largest defence co-operation program, as we are reminded in this particular report and, of course, because of the special relationship that comes from former colonial ties. Because of it Australia can find itself locked into positions that might not always be in its best interests.

Let us take, for example, the New Caledonian position. The South Pacific Forum voted for reinscription of New Caledonia on the list of colonial states yet to become independent. Australia at previous meetings had opposed reinscription, but the Melanesian bloc in this instance came to the Forum with a fixed position. At the United Nations reinscription debate the Australian Government did not want to be seen as taking the lead. That was the responsibility of Fiji, as the Chairman of the Forum. Nevertheless, Australia, not Fiji, was condemned by France, because in the South Pacific lake, the lake of the Forum countries, we are the big

power. We are seen as having a responsibility to take a lead and we have to pay the price of a leader. As a result our relationship with France, a major power—of course a nuclear weapons power—an important trading partner and a country still with enormous influence in the world, has been seriously damaged. If anyone doubts France's influence, they need reflect simply on the refusal of the United States of America to sign the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, because as far as I am concerned the principal reason for the refusal of the US was the enormous pressure that was placed upon it by France. It is simply not worth offending France to please small Pacific states and Australia. I am not saying that the position that was adopted on reinscription was wrong. In fact I think it was right. In the South Pacific we have a responsibility to see that minorities are treated fairly, and one way of doing that is to look to the United Nations' oversight of acts of self-determination.

But the Australian Government of course goes further and says that its policy is for independence for New Caledonia; also no doubt due to pressure from the Melanesian bloc. I do not think that is the correct policy. The correct policy, as far as I am concerned, is for New Caledonia to have a proper choice. Our responsibility, both directly and through the United Nations, is to see that the question of whether or not New Caledonians wish to be independent, is put to them in a fair way. So we get to questions of: Who comprises a satisfactory constituency; what is the form of the referendum; and how is France going to look to the interests of the minority Melanesian grouping that was referred to by the previous speaker? As far as I am concerned, that is the responsibility of Australia in that particular debate.

What I am saying is that at times we must lead the South Pacific and at times we must support it. But in meeting that responsibility we must beware of being locked in because of being concerned about being locked out. In other words, I do not think it is surprising that Australia, because not only of its perceived position in the South Pacific but also of its real position, becomes concerned about the prospect of being locked out of South Pacific wishes. We must remember that we have a very important responsibility in that lake and that requires at times a need to lead as well as to support.

The question of France is left out of this statement, as are the other difficult questions facing the South Pacific region, such as the So-

viet intentions, the role of New Zealand in defence and ANZUS. I think Australia should be rebuilding its relationship with France. It will not be easy and it will not be easy particularly in the South Pacific, because France will continue its nuclear testing program. As the Senate would know, I am as opposed to that program as much as anyone else in this place. But the level of misunderstanding that now exists between Australia and France—both members of the Western alliance—is not in our best interests.

I was probably the last Australian parliamentarian who was permitted to visit French officials in Paris just before Christmas. What they said to me came as a shock and roughly it was: 'We cannot understand why Australia is being so unfriendly towards France'. They went on to say: 'Why cannot France be trusted to do the right thing in New Caledonia?'. I have to say that, after putting up with the vicious French propaganda distributed at the United Nations General Assembly against Australia for three of the last months of last year, and remembering the not too subtle exercises of diplomacy in a New Zealand harbour with the destruction of the *Rainbow Warrior*, the temptation when we hear such arguments put to us is simply to throw up our hands and walk out. I suggest to the Senate that in many ways that has been the approach of the Labor Government in this country. To throw up our hands and walk out notwithstanding such frustrations I suggest is not in Australia's best interests. Rather, it is important to keep in the debate and keep working on the relationship.

I mentioned the Soviet role in the South Pacific. The Soviet Union presently has a negligible presence in the South Pacific. For the time being that is likely to remain, for obvious reasons. The major reason is its low priority; the Soviet Union does not have major interests in the region. It is already overextended and it does not have the resources to waste. In other words, it is low priority stuff. If we were talking about Asia or the North Pacific—centres of super-power rivalry—I would be saying something very different. Cam Ranh Bay gives the Soviets an increased potential to project power into the South Pacific, but it is much more relevant to a debate on South East Asia.

What the Soviet Union is doing in the region was foreshadowed by General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev in his much quoted speech in Vladivostok last year. The Soviets wish to extend their influence in the region through aid, trade, commercial exchanges, scientific exchanges and dip-

lomatic means—what we might refer to as traditional Western methods of extending influence. Of course, it is not surprising that they wish to extend their influence into the region; as a super-power that is what we would anticipate they would do. Greater influence in the region benefits the Soviets in all sorts of ways, not least at the United Nations and other international forums.

There is no doubt that the Soviet Union is anxious to legitimise its status in the world as a super-power other than simply through projections of power; besides, it is cheaper. We in Australia may see the dangers of economically vulnerable Pacific states getting into bed with the Soviets, but I remind the Senate that it is hard to lecture these specific states when we are already in that bed. In fact we are becoming quite dependent on Soviet trade, as honourable senators will be aware, particularly in relation to wheat. So more Pacific states will enter into trade agreements with the Soviets, as Kiribati did, which lasted for a while, and as Vanuatu has now done. Of course, negotiations are currently taking place with Fiji, and are likely to take place with Papua New Guinea.

As the Soviet economic and other interests in the region grow, a projection of military power will follow. It inevitably follows. That is the way with super-powers. It is regrettable but inevitable. It is therefore obviously in our interests to close the windows of opportunity that are presented to the Soviets by the economic impoverishment of small Pacific states. I must say that in those circumstances I was astounded by the Australian Government's decision to cut aid to the Pacific, which was simply playing into the Soviets' hands. I am pleased to say that that aid has now been reinstated, at least in relation to the small Pacific states, although not to Papua New Guinea. But by such policy mess-ups, prestige and influence is lost. It is simply a bad application of foreign policy. But money is not the only way to keep the Pacific peaceful. The Japanese answer to increased super-power rivalry in the region is to plan huge aid programs. I suggest that that will buy only short term influence but it will change the face of the Pacific forever. Yes, we should be advocating Pacific support; but economic domination, no.

I want to say something about the American role, which also is not mentioned in the Government's statement. The American record has not always been good in the region. The record of the American Tuna Boat Association, which was of course supported by American law, lost the

United States both respect and influence. American attitudes to the law of the sea are also at odds with those of Pacific states. However, I suggest that in more recent times credit is due. A new tuna boat treaty has been concluded, which is pleasing. There has been some modest increase in aid. Similarly, there has been a modest increase in United States diplomatic representation in the region. In other words, the United States response to the growing Soviet influence in the South Pacific has been much more gentle and more subtle than perhaps we would have expected. I suggest that that is good because it gives the Pacific states the chance to grow and develop without necessarily losing all the benefits of the Pacific way. But it does mean that, if the United States is prepared to leave much of the responsibility in the region to Australia—which I submit is good—Australia must adequately meet that responsibility. I suggest that what we have had to date, particularly in relation to the aid debacle, has been a failure of that responsibility on the part of this Australian Government.

Lastly, I cannot leave a discussion of defence in the South Pacific without mentioning New Zealand. The policies of the New Zealand Government, such as its ban on United States ship visits, undermine the strength of the Western alliance. A loss of resolve, as demonstrated by such policies, serves only to encourage an increase of Soviet influence in the region. Chinks in the armour are exploited. In other words, over time it encourages only expressions of super-power rivalry in the South Pacific, which we have been able to avoid in the past. Australia could have done, and still could be doing, much more to convince New Zealand of the benefits of the Western Alliance. For reasons of security in the region, I hope that New Zealand does return to a full alliance position. I might say that I have urged the United States Government to keep the door open and, despite its feelings of frustration and disappointment at New Zealand policy, not to drive the wedge in further.

This Government statement restates a few existing defence programs and announces modest extensions of several other programs which are welcomed. However, it is disappointing in avoiding all the major defence issues in the region. It is superficial and contributes little to debate. Hopefully, that might come with the Government's White Paper, although, on the basis of precedent, there is reason for doubt. All in all, this statement adds up to a pretty poor effort.

Senator KILGARIFF (Northern Territory) (5.18)—The statement by the Minister for Defence (Mr Beazley) on Australia's defence initiatives in the South Pacific covers a very wide subject. The subject has even wider horizons as far as Australia's future is concerned. In commenting upon the statement by the Minister, my support for the positive elements of the statement is tinged with concern about what has been left unsaid by the Minister. The sentiments of the Minister and the thrust of the paper, in its recognition of the fact that Australia's future security is closely linked with the future of our South Pacific and South East Asian neighbours, are to be commended. I agree with the Minister's view that closer defence relationships with the countries of our region should be complemented by equally supportive trade, aid and immigration policies. Indeed, I have spoken before on this subject in the Senate.

I believe that, despite our economic problems, we cannot cut back on aid to our neighbours who are so in need of such aid. We have an obligation to see them through their very troubled times. Indeed, the future existence as democracies of a number of countries in our region will depend upon the support given by countries like Australia.

The Philippines is a good example of this. There President Aquino faces communist insurgents of the New People's Army on the left and the Marcos loyalists on the right as she attempts to rebuild her country. The New People's Army is very highly trained, very well equipped and numbers about 30,000-plus. The New People's Army is very active now and many Aquino troops have been killed recently since the recommencement of fighting. Marcos troops are still in the countryside under the warlords and some of the governors of the various provinces, so I do not think we have heard the last of the Marcos loyalists. That is all the more reason why President Aquino must be given not only Australia's sympathy but also considerable support.

In spite of Mrs Aquino's popular support, as evidenced in the overwhelming vote for her new constitution, she faces an uphill battle. The legacy of the Marcos years will take time to overcome. It will not be easy to restore the country's economy in the wake of the hijacking of billions of dollars—I mean billions of dollars and not millions of dollars—out of its coffers by Marcos and his so-called cronies. If Mrs Aquino and her Government are to survive they will need both our moral and practical support.

There are other Pacific nations which are at risk. Recently Vanuatu negotiated an agreement granting the Soviet Union fishing rights in its waters and the right to dock fishing vessels. This has been seen as an attempt by the Soviets to extend their influence in the Pacific, which we are very well aware of when we look at the broader scene. It is reported that the Crown Prince of Tonga is in Moscow to discuss diplomatic and defence arrangements, and so the tentacles stretch out. It cannot be ignored that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is becoming increasingly active in the Pacific. That it is intent on strengthening its presence in this region is quite obvious. It has built up its largest naval base outside the Soviet Union at Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam. It seems that a lot of people do not understand the size and significance of this base. The installation at Cam Ranh Bay provides a base for Bear and Badger strike bombers equipped with nuclear armed cruise missiles which are capable of reaching Australia and other Pacific countries. Soviet naval presence in the waters of the Pacific has increased alarmingly over recent years and, as I say, overtures are being made by the Soviet Union towards some of the smaller island nations like Kiribati and Vanuatu. They are not the only island nations receiving overtures.

It is quite clear that the Soviets are going to exploit the financial and political problems of smaller Pacific island nations to pursue their wider strategic interests. The people of Vietnam already know only too well the price which must be paid for the assistance which the Soviet Union provides. As I said the other day in another debate, Vietnam has already paid dearly for the millions of dollars worth of Soviet support—about \$4.8 billion since 1979—required to keep the Vietnamese armed forces operational in Indochina, Laos and Kampuchea particularly. At Cam Ranh Bay the Soviets have at least 26 ships, as well as a squadron of MiG 23s and a considerable number of the latest large continent-spanning reconnaissance bomber aircraft such as the Bear and Badger bombers which I have mentioned previously. The Soviets maintain about six to eight sophisticated warships at the base and as many support ships, as well as about five or six submarines amongst which are the Victor-class nuclear powered attack submarines. It is obviously no small base. As I said before, it is the biggest base outside the Soviet Union.

Only two years ago the huge Soviet battle cruiser *Frunze* entered the Pacific Ocean. This vessel is a 35,000 tonne nuclear armed and nuclear powered cruiser and its entry into the

Pacific represents a major escalation of Soviet forces in the region. The Vietnamese have been systematically excluded from the area of Cam Ranh Bay and the naval, communications and intelligence facilities established there are operated exclusively by the Soviets. There should be no doubt that the Pacific has become an increasingly important part of Soviet military strategy.

A United States admiral indicated the other day the strength of the forces at Cam Ranh Bay. I thought it rather surprising, he having made that statement, that here in the Senate the Government is still not prepared to recognise or acknowledge the strength of the Soviets at Cam Ranh Bay. As information is available to the Australian Government from reconnaissance aircraft that operate throughout this region, it is even more surprising that the Minister representing the Minister for Defence here in the Senate is not able to make a more positive statement than he has been prepared to make up to now, particularly over the last two weeks. There should be no doubt that the Pacific has become an increasingly important part of the Soviet military strategy. Australia should be aware of this, in planning for our own defence and our role in the defence of the region.

While the paper before the Senate does indicate some of the initiatives being undertaken by the Australian forces to liaise with and assist in the defence of the South Pacific region, there are, as I mentioned earlier, some aspects of our South Pacific defence considerations which apparently have been neglected. I refer to our alliance with the United States under the ANZUS Treaty. Senator Hill had much to say about that, particularly in regard to New Zealand. I draw the Senate's attention to an article which appeared in yesterday's *Australian*. The article was headed 'US Admiral concerned over Dobb proposals', and it told of the concerns of the former Chief of United States Naval Operations that 'a big policy shift in Australia's defence policy, detrimental to the ANZUS alliance, was being shaped by the Hawke Government'. I prefer to believe that this is not the case, but I must say that I am concerned that this statement of defence initiatives in the South Pacific does not even mention the role of the ANZUS alliance. I hope that that is not a forerunner of what is to come in the Federal Government's White Paper in response to the Dobb report that has been forecast by Senator Gareth Evans. Any response in similar terms would certainly warrant the concern of the United States that our defence policy is being realigned away from the ANZUS alliance.

This White Paper is due in some two to three weeks and in it, hopefully, we will see the Government move away, to some degree, from Dobb's recommendations, which certainly would have made Australia more isolated from its neighbours. I will await the Federal Government's full response to the Dobb report with great interest, as will my colleagues and many other Australians who desire to see that Australia adopts a realistic approach to defence requirements in the future. One aspect of the Federal Government's response to Dobb and its overall defence policy which will be critical for the future defence of Australia, and our armed forces, will be the measures taken to build up our forces in both physical numbers and morale. The forces have been suffering great losses of personnel in recent years, as outlined by Senator MacGibbon, and we have now reached the situation where the armed forces have been so hard hit by resignations that the forces could be said to be made up of chiefs, with very few indians. The fact is that Australia has insufficient troops to have an effective front line of defence either in Australia or further afield.

For all the Government's grand plans, whatever they may be, it cannot ignore the reality that, without men and women to carry out Australia's defence policy, that policy is useless. There has been a mass exodus from the forces of highly skilled, experienced personnel who just cannot be replaced by raw recruits. It takes many years to train the professionals who now make up the Army, the Navy and the Air Force. Recruitment is not keeping up with attrition rates in the forces, which are exceptionally high. They are going backwards at a very disturbing rate.

Our Navy, which it appears is equipped to carry out only a coastguard role—that is no criticism of the Navy but, the way it is going, it seems that it will have only a coastguard role—does not have sufficient weight of numbers to carry out any real role as called upon in the defence of Australia. It is not that those serving in the forces are not up to the job; it is simply that there are not enough of them. It is a physical impossibility to carry out the tasks without the manpower.

Other senators will have received a paper dated 13 February from J. Whitelaw, the National President of the Regular Defence Force Welfare Association. The paper, which is headed 'Pension Discount', pleads with parliamentarians to note the problems that beset those in the defence forces, whether they are the 106,000 pensioners

or the 400,000 superannuation contributors affected. I look at the paper with considerable concern. The patron of the RDFWA is His Excellency, the Rt Hon. Sir Ninian Stephen, our Governor-General. The paper states:

I bring to your attention that there is a growing mood of exasperation and resentment among pensioners and serving members at the Government's action now that the long term effects are being understood.

That was in response to the changes to the defence forces superannuation scheme. That is one of the main reasons so many are leaving the forces these days. I have shown the letter to the Special Minister of State (Senator Tate). I seek leave to have it incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The letter read as follows—

REGULAR DEFENCE FORCE WELFARE
ASSOCIATION

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A.C.T. 2604
(062) 73 3642

Patron: His Excellency the Right Honourable
Sir Ninian Stephen, AK, GCMC, GCVO, KBE
Governor-General of Australia

Dear Senator Kilgarriff,

PENSION DISCOUNT

During the Parliamentary recess, which I trust you have enjoyed, this Association together with other organisations with an interest in Commonwealth occupational superannuation schemes, has taken stock of the situation resulting from the passage during the Budget session of the Superannuation and Other Benefits Legislation and Amendments Act 1986.

I feel it proper to advise you briefly of the widespread concern about the Act. This concern is not limited to pensioners; it is echoed by contributors and their dependants. It is not confined to Defence Force schemes; it is shared by contributors and pensioners of the Public Service Superannuation schemes included in the Act. In all, some 106,000 pensioners and 400,000 contributors are affected.

Our considerations covered a range of subjects. Inter alia we looked at: rights and trust, the need for certainty, the wage/pension nexus, cost savings, Government integrity, bi-partisan action, the handling of supply legislation and permanently reduced base for future adjustments to pensions.

This last is the matter of most enduring and general concern. The Government has averred we face a short term economic crisis. Sacrifices were called for and indeed imposed, such as the "one time" deferment of the social security pension increase. Defence and Public Service pensioners would no doubt accept a similar "one time" sacrifice with reasonable equanimity despite a generally held belief there has been a breach of trust. But they are called on to suffer a permanent reduction of their pensions from October, 1986 until death, or the death of their spouses—and the reduction is compounded as the years roll on.

This is patently unfair. We submit that urgent legislation is needed to ensure the 1987 pension increases be based on the pension applicable as at 9th October 1986. Thus pensioners will have made equitable sacrifice in 1986-87 but will not be required to make a continuing contribution for the rest of their lives.

I bring to your attention that there is a growing mood of exasperation and resentment among pensioners and serving members at the Government's action now that the long term effects are being understood. We commend to you the need for legislation now to obviate life long effects from 1 July, 1987.

Yours sincerely,

J. Whitelaw,
National President

13th February 1987

Senator KILGARRIFF—I thank the Senate. One of the major problems before us concerns the welfare of the men and women in the forces. As I have said earlier, it is pointless having arms in the Navy, the Army or the Air Force without having in the Services professional people who make a career of their work. The problem that faces the Federal Government in implementing any defence policy will be to have people to carry it out. That hurdle has to be overcome. It will require changes to conditions of service which will make a career in the Services just that—a career; a rewarding career which can compete on equal terms with those on offer in the civilian world, which is poaching so many of the forces' professionals with its offers of better working conditions, better pay, et cetera. That very basic but critical issue must be addressed urgently.

To return to the direction which the Federal Government will be taking on defence in general, I refer to developments in the north. The continued development of bases such as Tindal and Derby is to be commended. But, harking back to the personnel problems, there is concern at the suggestion that we do not have the air crews and sufficient technical personnel to use our front line aircraft to full capacity. I refer to what Senator MacGibbon said. One would have to say to those who are responsible for the security, the defence, of Australia that surely they must face a charge of criminal negligence if they allow air crews to erode to such an extent that there are insufficient crews to allow our maritime aircraft to be flown in a way that is in the interests of Australia's security. When one considers the fact that there are now insufficient crews to man reconnaissance aircraft, which range far out into the eastern ocean, one wonders what the future of the FA18s will be. It has been suggested that the training programs are such that there will be insufficient young fighter pilots to man the FA18s in the defence of Australia.

I now refer to the Jindalee over-the-horizon radar, which is to be made operational. Plans for further stages to increase and extend its offshore capacity surveillance are in the pipeline. Having watched the development of Jindalee in the outback over the years, I believe that it is an excellent support to Australia's security. However, it does not identify the vessels or aircraft it locates. Additional aircraft are required to seek out and identify any threat or intruder. It indicates that there is an aircraft or a vessel, say, in the Indian Ocean, but air crews from the Army or the Navy—whichever service is in the area—are required to go there and identify that aircraft or vessel. The development of Jindalee is an excellent thing, but it certainly needs the back-up of our defence forces to ensure that they work together in the best interests of Australia. While some of the initiatives of the Labor Government are ones with which I would not take issue, I believe that there are some very fundamental problems which must be addressed in looking at Australia's future defence requirements.

Senator HARRADINE (Tasmania) (5.38)—I welcome the statement by the Minister for Defence (Mr Beazley) on defence initiatives in the South Pacific. In doing so, I would point out that it is apparent from the statement that the Minister is attempting to distance himself from the main thrust, the essential thrust, of the report of the Dibb Review of Australia's Defence Capabilities. I acknowledge that Mr Dibb, in his report, paid specific attention to the need for the type of co-operation required with our South Pacific country neighbours as is envisaged in this statement. However, I refer honourable senators to a couple of paragraphs in the statement which I believe give weight to the conclusion that I have just reached about it. Page 2 of the document states:

It is absolutely vital to Australia that we do not forget the strategic lessons taught by the Pacific war. Paul Dibb has said that a self-reliant defence posture demands that we shape our defence capabilities to suit our environment. Likewise, it requires that we pay great attention to maintaining and strengthening the congenial features of that strategic environment.

Later, to back up that statement, the Minister makes this very important statement on the top of page 4:

The island countries lie across important lines of communications between Australia and Japan, our major trading partner, and the United States, our major ally. They also lie across important trade routes and approaches to Australia's east coast, where many of our major population centres are located. An unfriendly maritime power in the area could inhibit our freedom

of movement through these approaches and could place in doubt the security of overseas supply to Australia of military equipment and other strategic material.

The references in that statement are almost identical to references in a speech I made to the Australian Defence Association in ANZAC House in Sydney on 17 July last. I am happy to say that the Minister has so focused attention now in an official statement that one needs to ask: Where do we go from here? If one analyses the document that is before us today, with its limited terms of reference, one will see that the significance of the statement is not so much in its defence detail because its defence detail goes to the question of brown water co-operation. The statement does not go in defence detail, as distinct from policy detail, to the development of blue water naval co-operation and other Defence Force co-operation which is required to protect the very sea-lanes which the Minister in his statement says are vital to this nation's security. So the significance of the Minister's statement is not so much in its defence detail but in its political message. The clear political message is this: We have sent an unmistakable signal to friend and potential foe alike that Australia regards the Pacific area as of vital strategic importance to it and that it intends to act accordingly. I am confident that that is the message. I hope that it is the message. If it is the message, the Minister deserves to be commended for this statement.

Our sea-lanes of communication are important not only because through them come the strategic materials that are necessary for our defence but also because through those sea-lanes come and go the materials upon which our economy and the economic life-blood of this nation depend. The Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) said last year that we are facing the greatest economic crisis since World War II. The Treasurer (Mr Keating) has said, and has repeated as late as today, that this is because of the collapse in the value of our overseas trade. What are the political and strategic implications of those statements? The strategic implication clearly is that if a potential enemy can interdict our trade it will present Australia with an economic crisis the like of which we have not seen since World War II. The Minister acknowledges this clearly on page 4 of the document. The document does not seek to deal with the full implications of that. It says that our close defence relations with Papua New Guinea, which have been continuous since World War II, are reflected in our largest defence co-operation program.

What I want to put in the pipeline now, as I have done previously, not in this chamber but elsewhere, is that the Government should take up the keenness within Papua New Guinea to enter into a firm defence treaty. Currently bilateral talks are taking place with Papua New Guinea on economic and defence co-operation between ourselves and Papua New Guinea. In my view these talks provide an ideal opportunity to conclude a formal defence treaty with the Papua New Guinean Government. The need for such a defence treaty was referred to by Sir Julius Chan a couple of weeks ago at the National Press Club in Canberra. He was speaking on behalf of the Papua New Guinean Government.

It is my view that because of the importance of the vital sea-lanes in and around the area that the defence treaty should provide for joint defence facilities on Papua New Guinean territory. Those bases would provide a cost-effective way of defending Australia's most important trade sea-lanes, such as those referred to in the Minister's statement which we are debating, and those which pass through the Solomon and Bismarck Seas, which are the most important sea-lanes when it comes to trade. Clearly, the sea-lanes which pass through the Pacific island nations are most important when it comes to defence supplies from the United States. It is my view that such a defence treaty should form part of a network of formal and informal arrangements, including the type of arrangements which go on in the Pacific island countries, between Australia, Association of South East Asian Nations neighbours and Pacific island countries, for the mutual defence of regional waterways from extra-regional threats.

One thing which has not been mentioned during this debate, because it is not directly related to the document, although it is indirectly related to it, is the situation in the Philippines. I crave your indulgence, Madam Acting Deputy President, to mention it. Let us consider the situation if the NPA, for example, took control of the Philippines and were supported by the Soviet Union. A map of that part of the world would show Vietnam, Cam Ranh Bay and the Philippines which surround the South China Sea and through which a large part of Japan's supplies pass. If a potential foe of Japan, or any of the other countries through which vital oil and other supplies flow through the South China Sea, were to interdict trade in the South China Sea, there would need to be a rerouting of vessels around Australia and up the east coast of Australia. That is an eventuality which should come into

the calculations of our defence planners and should and does come into the calculations of some other countries. I certainly hope that that never occurs, but we should be aware of it.

I conclude by saying this about Paul Dibb: If Paul Dibb has done something, he has developed a report which is clear, concise and has a logical sequence. Unfortunately, it is a strategy structured for a country other than Australia—I think the Government now acknowledges that—but at least it has put defence in the forefront of public debate. It has put defence before this chamber as it has not been put for a number of years. What I do not like about it is that the Minister, instead of coming in here and laying on the table the statements, as has been done on this occasion only, previously has had leaks to the Press. I withdraw that. It may not have been the Minister, but leaks have been made to the Press before the statements have come to this chamber. I do not think that that is fair on this chamber or the people we represent. Imagine Churchill going into the wartime parliament of the House of Commons two weeks after things had appeared in the Press that he wanted to speak about to the House of Commons. Even with non-wartime matters defence is such an important question that the first group of people who should know about the Government's plans for the defence of the nation is the nation's representatives in Parliament. Thus democracy would best be served.

Senator MICHAEL BAUME (New South Wales) (5.54)—The one really cheering feature of the statement of the Minister for Defence (Mr Beazley) on the South West Pacific is that at least it goes part of the way down the road to accepting the views that the Opposition has strongly expressed about its concern at the direction of defence policy under this Government, particularly after the Dibb report on the Review of Australia's Defence Capabilities. The reality is that this Government has yet to recognise that the best defence force in the world is the one which is never involved in fighting, because it is so well and highly regarded by its potential enemies that it is never taken on. In other words, deterrence must be the number one priority of any defence policy. Apparently, deterrence is not the number one priority in this Government's defence policy, nor does it appear to be in the Dibb report. To the extent to which this latest paper by Mr Beazley goes beyond the Government's original position and recognises that there is more to the defence of Australia than simply being concerned about a fortress Australia policy—repelling boarders as they come ashore—it is welcomed.

This Government has a long way to go to recognise and respond to the reality that deterrence must be our first priority. I do not want to argue at length here and now the clear need for the Government to look in the direction of mobile platforms at sea for maritime aircraft. The Falklands war demonstrated how effective such mobile platforms are. Whether for traditional aircraft carriers, converted bulk carriers, jump jet carriers, or whatever, they have a clear and effective role, particularly for an island nation such as Australia and in defending those ships or shore-based establishments which are at or towards the end of the range of either land-based or sea-based attacking aircraft. I mention in passing that supersonic attacking aircraft, when carrying missiles, do not have the capacity to outperform subsonic aircraft such as Harriers. Those supersonic aircraft which are right at the end of their range can be very vulnerable to attack by Harriers, as was shown clearly by the incredible ratio of successes in the Falklands war from carrier-based British aircraft. The Government's statement says:

An unfriendly maritime power in the area—that is, the South Pacific—

could inhibit our freedom of movement through these approaches and could place in doubt the security of overseas supply to Australia of military equipment and other strategic materiel.

That is an important first step by the Government towards the Opposition's views on the need for a more outward looking defence policy than the one that this Government has been attracted to and the one which was presented to it in the Dobb report. I am certainly keen on the Government's decision to assist island countries to upgrade their national maritime surveillance systems, to deploy Royal Australian Air Force long range maritime patrol aircraft to the region, which is obviously required, and to increase the number of Royal Australian Navy ship deployments to the island countries, which will also go part of the way. But the reality is that we do not have the capacity, nor is there an intention to provide the capacity, to do an effective job in the South West Pacific. There is nothing in this paper to indicate that this Government has the will to set out to do an effective job in this area.

The Government, having established what the problem is, has no solutions. This is perhaps the most serious element that emerges from Mr Beazley's paper. How serious is the problem that is emerging? I commend to the Senate a most interesting article written by a man who was an adviser to the Hawke Government in 1983-84

and who is currently a member of the Australian Labor Party's Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee in Victoria, a Mr Michael Danby. An article which appears in this month's copy of the *IPA Review* has such significant material in it that I want to read some of it into the record because it is of enormous importance and I believe it sums up the problems we face. I only wish that Mr Danby had the capacity to convince his colleagues in the ALP of the merit of the points he is making, at least to the extent that they would, with much more enthusiasm, whole heartedly embrace the defence proposals and policies that the Opposition has been stressing strongly for many years. Part of Mr Danby's article reads:

In a speech at Vladivostok in July 1986 Mikhail Gorbachev announced Moscow's intention to expand its connections with the nations of the South Pacific. The visit of Soviet Foreign Minister, Eduard Shevardnadze to Australia and the region underscores Moscow's determination to put Gorbachev's words into practice. Acting via trade unions, churches, political parties, peace fronts, youth groups and finally commerce, the Soviet Union is steadily strengthening its influence in our region.

That summarises one of the reasons why it is absolutely vital that Australia pays so much more attention in the area of defence to the South Pacific region. The article continues:

Foreign Minister Bill Hayden recently warned that an ostensibly commercial arrangement between Vanuatu and the Soviet Union could open the way for Moscow's political manipulation of the South Pacific Island state. Until recently this sober evaluation was against much of the received expert opinion, and down-played by some observers in the foreign affairs bureaucracy and the media. George Negus epitomised this attitude in introducing a segment on the USSR deal with Vanuatu: "It's a long time in this country since we've had a good 'commie' scare but one looks to the building up over the growing Russian presence and influence in, of all places, the South Pacific".

For the benefit of Senator Sanders—and I hope he is interested in the reality of the South Pacific rather than in the fiction he perpetrates—the article continues:

However, if anything, Australian perceptions of the drift in the South Pacific have lagged behind developments. Most Australians were caught unawares by the election of the anti-ANZUS Lange Government and the subsequent virtual defection of New Zealand from the Western alliance. Vanuatu's increasing radicalisation, the Soviet fishing deal with Kiribati and the possible election of an anti-Western government in Fiji, are all elements of a new unwelcome slide in the South Pacific.

A slide of course which is unwelcome to those of us who are concerned with democracy but which is clearly welcomed by Senator Sanders. The article further states:

Of recent Soviet initiatives fishing deals are the most public and best-known—unlike the equally significant patient political cultivation of the Pacific islands' small elites. Moscow's aim has been to discredit the United States and the Western alliance while simultaneously upgrading its own presence. It is in this context that Moscow's fishing offers to the various micro-states in the region should be viewed—enhancing Soviet intelligence and communication capacities, increasing abilities to interdict vital sea lanes and increasing mobility and political leverage in the region.

The article then deals with the situation in each of our neighbouring countries in the South Pacific area. It quotes Mr Frank Corner, a former permanent secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs in New Zealand who headed the recent Defence Policy Review, who bluntly claimed that—and I quote this for the benefit of Senator Sanders:

. . . New Zealand's defence policy has effectively been hijacked by a small anti-nuclear lobby.

It is the sort of thing we face in Australia, by the way. We face the problem of vocal and disastrous minority groups having the capacity to influence, to our detriment, our defence posture.

Senator Sheil—That is very dangerous.

Senator MICHAEL BAUME—Yes, it is very dangerous, as the honourable senator says. The article points out that in Vanuatu Father Walter Lini's announcement that he would, in return for \$1.3m, grant Moscow not only fishing rights but shore access to Port Vila's deep water harbour and also landing rights for Aeroflot has naturally raised alarms in other Pacific islands. In Fiji the leader of the Labor Party Opposition has said that on election he would 'recognise the Soviet Union and ban port visits by American nuclear war ships'. In other words he accepts the sorts of policies that Senator Sanders finds incredibly attractive and which are part of the thrust of the Soviet Union as recognised by this incredibly sensible member of the Labor Party in this article. Mr Danby concludes the article in these terms:

Australian policy makers may well want to reconsider the rigid recommendations of the Dibb Defence Review which would limit our aerial and naval intervention capacity to 1,000 miles, described as "the area of direct military interest". Australia should at least have the military capacity, including amphibious aircraft refuelling and basing rights, to intervene and militarily prevail to an area of 2,000 miles encompassing most of the South Pacific which Dibb describes as "the sphere of strategic interest".

There is no doubt that this kind of sensible thought in the Labor Party has clearly had some influence along with, of course, the rational,

coherent and sensible points being made by the Opposition. To this extent, the modest steps that the Government has taken in that direction in this statement must be welcomed.

We also see in the statement the other influences that have been brought to bear to make this Government see at least a little sense on defence. We are aware that only last month there were top ministerial talks in Canberra with the Japanese in which the Foreign Minister, Mr Kuranari, participated. Clearly, the Japanese used these talks as a method of conveying their fears of Soviet expansion in the South Pacific. I have here a transcript of a discussion on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation radio program *A.M.* with Dr Paul Keal, a Research Fellow in the Department of International Relations at the Australian National University. In response to a question about whether Japan was concerned about Soviet fishing agreements in the region he said that Japan was certainly concerned that perhaps Australia and New Zealand had become a little bit soft in what they saw as Soviet expansion and perhaps had a different perspective on the Pacific than Australia and New Zealand. It sees for instance Australia as having been far too soft in terms of its involvement with the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone and it sees some kind of dangerous portents in that and would like to see Australia taking a stronger line. There were reports in local newspapers. The *Australian* reported much more directly. It read:

. . . Mr Kuranari warned that Soviet intrusion in the South Pacific would be "very bad" for regional stability and security.

He said Japan and Australia had to co-operate, and remain in close contact, to ensure the Soviet Union did not gain a strong foothold in the region.

Let us see to what extent Australia's trade is threatened by this kind of intervention. To what extent does the development, as Senator Sir John Carrick has pointed out, at Cam Ranh Bay, pose an enormous threat to Australia's shipping lanes? How many shipping movements do we have that are under threat? A recent article by Brigadier Speed in the *Army Quarterly* of July last year lists these as an illustration of the extent to which we are exposed. From Australia there are nearly 5,000 sailings a year to and from Japan and other Asian ports; 800 with the Americas, 1,450 to and from the Middle East and beyond, and 300 via the Cape of Good Hope. We have clearly an enormous dependence on our sea lanes, all of which are basically now becoming vulnerable to attack from the Russian expansion in our region. The Cam Ranh Bay situation is, of

course, of major concern. Let us have a look at the torpedo armed diesel submarines that are there, at least according to an article in the *Pacific Defence Reporter* of August 1986 by Captain Jack V. Roome of the United States Navy, a member of the US Defense Intelligence Agency. He notes:

In all there are 55 such submarines in the Pacific Fleet. In addition, aircraft operating out of Vietnam could be especially threatening to any merchant ships in the South China Sea.

The three or four attack and cruise missile submarines operating from Cam Ranh conduct patrols in the South China Sea The naval facilities at Cam Ranh also service the 20-25 Soviet ships stationed there and provides support for Soviet ships transiting to/from the Indian Ocean.

These Soviet military forces and capabilities indicate the increasing reach of Moscow's military power and the consequent potential political/military influence of the USSR on regional decisions.

He says, and it is important that the Senate recognise this:

Moscow's use of all the instruments of foreign policy—military assistance, diplomacy, trade, aid, propaganda, and overt and covert activities—demonstrates a determined effort to extend Soviet power and influence and to promote the USSR as the dominant world force. To this end, it is becoming more apparent that the Soviets are also building a military force in the Far East which surpasses any reasonable defensive requirements.

We, of course, are among the closest of America's allies to that area. The serious problem we face is that these aircraft based in Vietnam have a very long range. The Bear reconnaissance aircraft, with a range of some 4,000 nautical miles, can operate as far out into the Indian Ocean as the entrance to the Red Sea and as far south as the Coral Sea. The Badger aircraft has a strike range from Cam Ranh Bay which covers not only regional states but also the Philippines, Guam, and Palau and Yap, as well as the western portion of Micronesia. If long range bombers such as the Backfire were deployed there—and there is no reason why the Russians at some stage will not do so—they could strike targets as far south as Darwin and Perth. Perth would be within the range of that kind of aircraft stationed at Cam Ranh Bay. This is one of the reasons, it seems to me, that it is absolutely vital that Australia not adopt the sort of fortress Australia defence posture predicated by Dibb but take an alliance posture, an involvement with our American allies. We should be developing a Defence Force which can operate in conjunction with our allies, which will boost and support their capacity. That is one of the reasons

that I am most concerned that we have no mobile seagoing platforms, for example, to counter this enormous threat, because while we are within range we are at the extremities of that range and it seems to me very important indeed that we do everything we can, within the constraints of our economic problems, to set out on a course which will lead to our having a Defence Force which is an ideal one to fit in with the forces of our allies, rather than standing alone against such a massive buildup of power as is evidenced by Soviet activities in our region.

While I recognise that the Government has moved slightly away from what I believe to be its misguided fortress Australia style of defence policy, I regret that the current statement on defence initiatives in the South Pacific is only a first tentative step towards reality. I urge the Government to increase the size of the step and make certain that it is in the right direction.

Senator Sir JOHN CARRICK (New South Wales) (6.15)—The Senate is debating a statement put down by the Minister for Defence (Mr Beazley) entitled 'Defence Initiatives in the South Pacific'. I think honourable senators would agree that that subject is an important one indeed. The statement itself says that the South Pacific is very important. Unfortunately, if one studies the statement—I hope to analyse it in the next few minutes—one comes to the conclusion that it is a very disappointing statement. It acknowledges the problem; it acknowledges that the region is of immense importance to Australia; but when one examines the initiatives one sees that they are almost non-existent. In the opening paragraph of the statement we learn:

The islands of the South Pacific have always been regarded as fundamental to Australia's strategic well-being.

So they are fundamental to our strategic well-being. On page 3 the statement says:

This Government is concerned to explore and develop the opportunities for defence co-operation among our island neighbours.

I remind the Senate that the Government is exploring and developing defence co-operation. We will see whether there is any such co-operation. The next paragraph says:

Naturally the specific nature of our defence co-operation with the South Pacific requires careful adjustment to the needs and wishes of the countries themselves.

We will see as we go what the initiatives are. On page 4 it is stated:

An unfriendly maritime power in the area could inhibit our freedom of movement through these approaches and could place in doubt the security of overseas

supply to Australia of military equipment and other strategic materiel.

Of course that is so. Everyone of us would surely recognise that except, I fancy, Mr Dibb because his report, with its fortress Australia concept, with its defence by denial, did not see us having a primary role in preserving peace in our region. He did not believe that that was imperative to our own survival. But—here we go—page 5 states:

In the future, as in the past, our international security will be inextricably bound up with that of our island neighbours . . .

Our international security is bound up with that of our island neighbours, so if we are to have defence initiatives those initiatives will have to be strong and keep the region strong. On page 7 the statement reads:

. . . our position as a natural partner to the island countries in defence matters.

We are a natural partner, so one presumes that there is some kind of a defence pact, some kind of a defence understanding, and that there will be some kind of help provided by us if there is a defence need in the islands. No one would deny that the region is imperative to us and no one would deny that if there is a threat to the region it is a threat to Australia—except, if I may say so, the Dibb report. We await with great interest the White Paper which, depending upon the newspaper one reads, either supports or rejects the Dibb report. The statement says:

The Government has recently decided upon a number of initiatives to help protect and extend the strategic interests we share with our island neighbours.

It then goes on to say that the initiatives include four matters, which I will deal with. We must keep in mind when we deal with these initiatives that they are to help protect and extend the strategic interests we share, so clearly they are fundamental defence initiatives that will show that if there is some kind of a threat we will collectively deal with it. The first initiative is that we are moving to help island countries to upgrade their national maritime surveillance systems by providing patrol boats, naval advisory assistance and training. No one could deny that patrol boats are useful for the area, but patrol boats are what their name suggests; they are surveillance surface craft. They are very puny in their ordinary military capacity. Essentially, they are to see whether there is an intrusion and, if so, the nature of the intrusion. They are quite incapable within themselves of dealing with the intrusion. At best, the patrol boats involve surveillance.

The next initiative is the deployment of Royal Australian Air Force long range maritime patrol aircraft to the region. Again, who is to deny that it is important that our patrol aircraft should do more surveillance of the region? What would be the purpose of that? It would be to identify intrusion, to identify a threat. But there is no suggestion that they will carry out other than a patrol. The next initiative involves increasing numbers of Royal Australian Navy ship deployments to the island countries—for what purpose? Nothing is said. Is it to sail around to show the flag? It is good stuff but for what purpose? That is not stated. Finally, defence co-operation activities providing technical support to island and defence security forces are mentioned.

These are the initiatives. They are good in themselves but they are small beer in terms of defence. They are initiatives which, of themselves, if well done would locate some kind of threat, intrusion or aggression. Nowhere in the statement is there any suggestion of how the Australian defence forces, the Australian nation, would co-operate in the defence of the region. In other words, we would be very expert and vigilant to locate a potential enemy but, according to the statement, that is the end of it. The statement deals basically with surveillance. I do not want to be cynical. Co-operation in training with our colleague nations in the Pacific and co-operation in intelligence are good things but, when it comes to the crunch in the end, what is the message that those nations want to hear and that we must give them if we are responsible? It is that if there is a real threat in the region Australia will do something in terms of co-operative defence; not simply that we will observe the threat but that we will take action. This statement, of course, does nothing in that regard.

This is a very real problem because the Dibb report, which now has been very largely condemned by military experts, saw Australia as not having a primary function in this area. The extraordinary situation—it has been suggested by Dibb proponents that it is not a fortress Australia policy—is that the report states that there is no need for Australia to make any defence preparations for a primary or secondary role outside the continent. Lest anyone should think I am misquoting the report, it states:

The Review also recognises a sphere of primary strategic interest encompassing South East Asia and the South Pacific generally. Developments here can affect our national security, but any military threat to Australia would be indirect. Our defence activities and projection of military power in this wider region should

not determine our force structure, as they do in our area of direct military interest.

In other words, Dibb says—and it has not been rejected—that we should not structure any part of our defence hardware or troops to deal with this region outside, the region of 'indirect' military threat. How do we relate the Dibb report to this statement? Dibb says that the developments can affect our national security but any military threat to Australia would be indirect. But what does the Minister who has applauded the Dibb report say? He says that our international security will be inextricably bound up with that of our island neighbours. In page after page of his statement he rejects Dibb on this. But, of course, he does not do anything about it. Clearly how, the concept of defence by denial must go out the window. It is a concept which the Government must have nurtured but which I hope it will find untenable in the White Paper. How can we as Australians support a concept that we will wait till a potential aggressor comes within the boundaries of our seas and then decide that he is an aggressor and try to defend ourselves? The whole aim of defence is to stop any kind of aggression before it sets out on its journey. The fundamental point is that the Dibb report and the Government policy—and no doubt the White Paper—are based on utter fallacies. They are based upon the fallacy of the doctrine of the perceived threat. That doctrine has bedevilled everyone from William Pitt the Younger and Lloyd George to John Curtin.

Senator Button—All contemporaries of yours.

Senator Sir JOHN CARRICK—I remind Senator Button, who has cheerfully interjected, about the doctrine of the perceived threat and about a man who is well respected for his contribution to Australia. On 2 November 1938, 10 months before World War II and with the whole of the nazi tyranny clear to the world at large, John Curtin, in another place—I read from page 1095 of *Hansard* of that date—said:

Defence expenditure must depend entirely upon the conditions which prevail in the world from time to time. Obviously that must be the position. I say that any increase of defence expenditure after the Munich Pact so far as Australia is concerned appears to me to be an utterly unjustifiable and hysterical piece of panic propaganda.

The Minister at the table, Senator Button, laughed at this. Does he now believe that John Curtin understood the theory of perceived threat? Does he know what happened? Does he know that step by step in every one of the major wars that have occurred the theory of perceived threat has been an absolute failure? Nobody predicted

the development of the Korean War or the Japanese war.

Senator Button—In every major war the Australian people have always got rid of your lot to stop you selling pig iron to Japan.

Senator Sir JOHN CARRICK—The Minister, now finding himself embattled, is calling out because he has no other defence. He has made a cheapskate interjection. I say this so that it is put in *Hansard*. On one of the most important subjects that can be discussed in the Senate Senator Button sits there grinning cheerfully and making inane remarks. After all, 40 million people died in World War II because the Senator Buttons of this world did not understand the threat.

Senator Button—Sit down. Don't be such a silly old thing.

Senator Sir JOHN CARRICK—Oh, he gets cranky and irritated now because he does not like being attacked. Forty million people died in World War II and 20 million have died in wars since then because the people of the world have not understood this matter. Not one example in human history can be pointed to in which the theory of perceived threat has worked. After the resumption of the sitting I will point that out further. And here are a government and a Minister putting forward such a policy. It is an impossible situation to have a Minister sitting laughing and jeering in one of the most important of considerations. Who was right? Was Mr Beazley right in saying that this area is of immense security importance to Australia, with a possibility of real threat, or is Senator Button right in his jeering? This is a nonsense situation. The government of the day has always tried to show that the defence of this country did not matter, that it was irrelevant and that in fact there was no threat.

Sitting suspended from 6.30 to 8 p.m.

Senator Sir JOHN CARRICK—Prior to the suspension of the sitting for dinner I was pointing out the difference between the assertions in the paper before us tonight on the defence initiatives in the South Pacific and those in the Dibb report. I was also pointing out the tremendous fallacy of the theory of perceived threat. I said that not in human history is it possible to point to conflicts that have been perceived and anticipated. I remind the Senate that nobody had perceived the German thrust of Hitler when he came to power in 1933. Nobody had perceived the danger of the Japanese war. There was no significant warning of Korea, of the

Malayan emergency, of the Iran-Iraq conflict or of the invasion of Afghanistan. There was no real warning of the escalation of the Vietnam War and the present developments there. I had pointed out that perhaps understandable, but nevertheless important, message of John Curtin 10 months before World War II—in which 40 million people were killed—when he, like so many others, could see no threat at all.

The fact of the matter is this: The theory of perceived threat is an impossibility for the simple reason, firstly, that no enemy signals his punches and, secondly, the length of time to build up the arms and train the troops is longer than using a telescope to perceive the threat. In other words, the important thing that people must understand is this: Australia's defence potential six to eight years from now is the actuality of our defence at this moment, plus the plans that we have put in action to train troops, to acquiring aircraft or naval vessels or other armaments. In other words, it takes a lead time of six to eight years to get any kind of real change in defence and of course nobody can predict that far ahead.

I am sorry to say this, but I have to say it: The Government has misled the people of Australia and the Senate as to the nature of any threat in the Indian and Pacific oceans. Over the months and recent years the Hawke Government and its Ministers have indicated that they did not believe that there was any significant military Russian base in Cam Ranh Bay. In fact when this question was raised the Government and its members would always argue that we were exaggerating the situation. That assertion has continued, with Senator Gareth Evans, the Minister representing the Minister for Defence, repeatedly saying that there was no evidence of significant Russian involvement there. Only two weeks ago I posed the question—which today has had a somewhat wintery answer—of whether those satellite photographs that the Americans have taken of Cam Ranh Bay, and the analysis made by them, are true or false, because those satellite photographs show that there is an immense buildup, a buildup of significant importance of very modern and long range Russian armaments at Cam Ranh Bay. They show the modern long range aircraft that are capable of carrying nuclear missiles. They show nuclear submarines and they show major and modern surface naval craft in Cam Ranh Bay.

Today for the first time, and only because we have flushed the truth out, the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) and the Minister representing the

Minister for Defence here, admitted that there is a significant Russian air and naval base at Cam Ranh Bay. The Prime Minister sought to bedazzle the people of Australia with the nonsense that he would not go into details, that he could not reveal the intelligence secrets of these photographs; as if the interpretation of aircraft on the tarmac, or submarines in the pens, or ships at dock, is of intelligence importance and as if their recognition is something that should be denied to the Australian people. But now the whole basis of things is altered, because the Prime Minister himself has said that here is a major significant warm water port for the Soviet Union. That warm water port is, of course, in a sphere or region of Australian concern and influence. So let us not have any nonsense spoken in the future that there is no development or growth of Russian influence in our region. That has now been flushed out, but it took two questions on my part, over a week, to get even an answer. The hedging that went on—when in fact it must have been quite clear that as soon as the photographs were published the Hawke Government and the Department of Defence must have known whether it was true or false—shows that the left wing of the Australian Labor Party still haunts the Labor Party, and the Labor Party talks to its left wing and not to the people of Australia.

The reason that this was not disclosed is that the Labor Party is more frightened of its left wing than it is of the Senate. There is no reason at all why this Government should not have instantly reported to the people of Australia what those satellite photographs of Cam Ranh Bay revealed, no reason at all; except that it would have blown the gaff. It would have shown that everything it has said in the past has been wrong, that it has in fact misled the people of Australia as to the nature of the defence system being set up in Cam Ranh Bay. It also would have shown that all its soft words about Vietnam and its arguments that Vietnam with its new communism offered no threat, were of course wrong, and that it would reveal that the whole circumstances had changed.

In this chamber we have groups of people who take a pacifist line to defence, in the worst sense of the word. We have the Australian Democrats, who are pledged to oppose the ANZUS Treaty which is regarded by most of us as the most important defence treaty with Australia. They not only oppose the ANZUS Treaty, but they oppose the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Nobody could be so way out as that. We have to get a telescope to see

how far to the Left they are on that. Significant elements of the Labor Party would want to undermine the ANZUS Treaty. Indeed, one of the significant things about the Dibb report—which we were not allowed to debate in this chamber, and well we should be reminded of that—is that Dibb himself, throughout his report, sees the ANZUS Treaty as an intelligence gathering and tea party arrangement. There is no mention at all in the whole of the document on Australia's defence of what military role, what defence role and what co-operation role Australia has to play with America. Indeed he says that all the hardware, all the training of troops and the nature of the troop formations shall be for the continental defence of Australia. There is no mention at all of what our commitment is towards ANZUS, towards the naval, military or air manoeuvres in the situation. Dibb has emasculated ANZUS in his text, as indeed the left wing of the Labor Party and the Democrats have tried to do.

If we pick up this statement on the proposed initiatives in the South Pacific, we cannot find where the ANZUS Treaty would, in this region, be one of co-operation. How can we have defence initiatives here without teamwork? We are committed to ANZUS in this region and yet nowhere in the statement is there any kind of discussion about that. We can look at what a very distinguished American admiral, Admiral Thomas Hayward—a number of us have had the occasion in the past to get to know Admiral Hayward very well indeed—has said about American concern over the weakening of ANZUS. One cannot look at this defence initiative without wondering what is happening to ANZUS. A newspaper article states:

A big shift in Australian defence policy detrimental to the ANZUS alliance is being shaped by the Hawke Government, says the former chief of United States naval operations Admiral Thomas Hayward.

Admiral Hayward says developments in Australian defence policy under the influence of the Dibb report "portend a far more serious problem" for the United States than New Zealand's policies or Soviet gains in the South Pacific.

The article also states:

The concepts of the Dibb Report "if allowed to prevail, could set in motion a strategic retrenchment unlike any seen since the days of (1930s) isolationism in the United States," Admiral Hayward says.

So what we have in this statement is a series of information which represents, first of all, a serious misleading by the Government about the Russian buildup in the Indian and Pacific oceans and, secondly, a serious weakening, as seen by

America, of the ANZUS pact. We have a series of platitudes on the South Pacific initiatives. Let me recall what I said at the beginning: This is a document that gives a new meaning to the word 'bland', a new meaning to the word 'platitude', because it says in the first place that this is an area of immense strategic importance to Australia's safety and defence, that we need to co-operate fully with our neighbours, those eight nation states, and that we have some defence initiatives.

But I will read out four initiatives. They are that we should build some patrol boats so that we will know who is moving around the area, that we should have some Royal Australian Air Force reconnaissance flights as reinforcements, that we should send a few ships out to look around and that there should be talks and co-operation. But there is not a word in the statement about what is to happen if there is a detected threat or if something should happen. Do we say that we would go to the aid of our neighbours? Let us look at this in terms of our neighbours. What they want to know is whether they are among friends and whether they can rely upon help. We know that our ability to manoeuvre in this area would be very limited. The Dibb report says that we should not take any particular notice of what might be required outside Australia in building up hardware and armaments because the primary situation is the defence by denial of Australia.

This statement has been brought down a few days before the Russian Foreign Minister, Mr Shevardnadze, is coming to Australia. We also know that Russian diplomatic officials have said in recent days that there is no Russian military base in Cam Ranh Bay. But did the Government, which knew that that was wrong, deny that? Did the Government say that the Russians had misled us on this? No. The only reason that we know today that there is a significant build-up by the Russians in Cam Ranh Bay is that, by force of repeated questioning and debate in the Senate, we flushed out a very unwilling answer which shows that the Government has been misleading the Senate. It is no use the Government bringing before us a paper full of platitudes if the whole scenario is based on a falsehood. It is no good bringing forward a paper unless it tells us what the Government would propose to do if our friends in the Pacific were under threat. The statement says nothing about that. It says: 'We will go out and look and tell you if there is a threat. But, after that, boys, you look as though you are on your own'. I cannot think of anything

more likely to drive our friends away rather than to grapple them to us. I regret the paper.

Senator SHORT (Victoria) (8.15)—I welcome the opportunity to speak in this debate. I am sorry that this debate did not take place yesterday and that we lost the time that we did last night in a futility exercise by the Government. But, to come to the substance of the statement by the Minister for Defence (Mr Beazley), which is a very important statement, I raise at the outset the question of why the initiatives outlined by the Minister in relation to the South Pacific have taken so long in coming. I raise a much more important question: Why are they so weak? The provision of a few extra patrol boats—a decision which had already been announced—trials by patrol boats off Fremantle, some more maritime surveillance and the provision of technical assistance will naturally do some good. But, when we look at the totality of the Minister's statement and strip it of its rhetoric, how seriously can we take that statement in terms of the Government's intent towards the South Pacific? I proffer the view that we cannot take it very seriously at all. If 'the islands of the South Pacific have always been regarded as fundamental to Australia's strategic well-being'—to quote the Minister—why did it take this Government so long, in fact three years, even to send its Minister for Foreign Affairs (Mr Hayden) to the South Pacific?

In the limited time available tonight, I want to look at some of the recent developments in the region and at their political and strategic import in the context of what the Minister has announced. In that context, one can come to only one conclusion, which is that the initiatives that have been announced are very lacking in substance. They are really phoney. They show a complete lack of sincerity in terms of the Government's intentions towards strengthening our relationship with the South Pacific countries. I can outline a few statistics that will prove that.

But, of course, the real rationale for the Defence Minister's statement, although he failed to mention it in his speech—he did not use the word once—was the Soviet Union's encroachment in the South Pacific. Honourable senators may recall the strong words of the Japanese Foreign Minister, Mr Kuranari, during his visit to Australia and the South Pacific at the end of last year. Following that visit, the research fellow in international relations at the Australian National University, Dr Paul Keal, in a radio interview—I am sure this is an accurate description of the situation—said:

It—

that is, Japan—

certainly is concerned that perhaps Australia and New Zealand have become a little soft on what it sees as Soviet expansion and perhaps has a different perspective on the Pacific than does Australia and New Zealand. It—

that is, Japan—

sees for instance Australia as having been far too soft in terms of its involvement with the South Pacific nuclear free zone and it sees some kind of dangerous portents in that and would like to see Australia taking a stronger line.

I am sure we will all recall that it was a disagreement over the strength of Australia's role in the South Pacific region and our defence arrangements that prevented a joint communique from coming out of the ministerial meetings that the Japanese Foreign Minister had when he was in Australia. It was to Fiji that he had to go to outline the strategic importance of the South Pacific nations and Japan's intentions to step up its aid activities in this region. I do not think I would be misquoting the Japanese Foreign Minister by saying that in essence he was accusing Australia of not pulling its weight in the region in the light of the subtle but nevertheless very real changes in the stability of the region over the past decade.

This failure on the Hawke Government's part to come clean and admit that the Soviets are threatening stability in this region may be summed up by the confusion within the ranks of the Australian Labor Party on the question of the Soviet Union and on the cornerstone of our defence policy, the ANZUS agreement. Senator Sir John Carrick described that fundamental weakness and vacillation in the Australian Labor Party's attitude towards the ANZUS agreement in his remarks tonight.

We have witnessed great hopes of Russia's new leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, transforming the Soviet Union from a grizzly bear to a cuddly bear; yet if one looks at the record one realises that the release of some political prisoners and talk about decentralisation and democracy are hardly the necessary ingredients for real and sustained change. Somehow we in Australia seem to have forgotten about the atrocities being committed by the Soviets against their own people and against the people of other nations. In Australia there seems to be no longer any spectre of Afghanistan, a place which is still suffering dreadfully from the Soviet occupation and from a dreadful deprivation of human rights. We seem to have forgotten the situation in Vietnam. We seem to have forgotten that the Soviets have

committed human rights violations which outstrip anything else seen around our globe today. The *Economist*, the distinguished British magazine, has recently cautioned:

For all his personal force, Mr Gorbachev is still not making much headway where it counts, in the Communist Party itself.

In fact, very little of substance has been achieved in Gorbachev's Russia. Mr Gorbachev's First Secretary to the Soviet Embassy here in Canberra, in a letter to the *Australian* newspaper earlier this year, even denied reports that the Soviets had established a military base at Cam Ranh Bay. Instead, he claimed that it was a marina. The well-known journal of the Australian Peace Movement called *Peace Magazine in Australia* gave a similar description. I wonder why. That description was:

It looks more like a yacht marina than a naval base.

So why are warships there? The short answer, said the author of that *Peace Magazine* article, Owen Wilkes, is that, 'it seems to be that they are saving fuel. The Soviet navy always seems to be having to scrimp on fuel'. That was the explanation that he gave for Cam Ranh Bay.

That this base in Vietnam is the Soviet's largest naval base outside the Warsaw Pact countries was incontrovertibly confirmed by aerial photographs published in the Australian Press a few weeks ago. The base is located in Vietnam, which receives Soviet military aid at the rate of \$3.6m a day, as well as the services of currently over 2,500 military advisers. Theoretically Cam Ranh Bay has the capacity to strike anywhere in our region, including the northern part of this continent, and much of the South Pacific as well. But the significance of Cam Ranh Bay does not lie only in its military significance; indeed, it is probably unlikely that it would pose a military threat during war time because, being situated below the Sea of Japan, it is likely that its vital servicing source of Vladivostok would be cut off by swift action by the Japanese and the United States in concert and so render it impotent. The significance of Cam Ranh Bay lies in its political and strategic importance. It is a bargaining chip and will be, and is being, used accordingly.

In his now famous Vladivostok speech last July the Soviet leader, Mr Gorbachev, made no bones about his country's imperialistic intentions in our backyard—the South Pacific. Writing in the latest *IPA Review*, Michael Danby, a respected commentator and, indeed, a member of the Labor Party's foreign affairs committee in Victoria, illustrated the extent and the nature of Soviet encroachments in our region. Of the re-

cent developments, I suppose the fishing deals are the most public and the best known. For a mere \$1.3m, Father Walter Lini's Vanuatu has agreed to provide to the Soviet Union not only fishing rights but also shore access to Port Vila's deep water harbour and landing rights for Aeroflot. It is also reported that Vanuatu was prepared to offer additional on-shore facilities. In addition, Father Lini has opened up relations with Soviet clients Vietnam, Nicaragua and Libya. Non-resident Cuban diplomats from Japan and Australia regularly visit Vanuatu and Barak Sope, the General-Secretary of the ruling Vanuatu Party, visited Cuba in September last year as Castro's guest. It is worth reminding the Senate that Prime Minister Lini, only last May on the *Carleton-Walsh Report*, told Australians 'we do not consider Libya a terrorist nation' as no one had 'proven it in a court of law'. They are some of the developments and thinking taking place in our region of the world that ought to be of the greatest concern to this country.

Developments in New Zealand echo these slow but steady Soviet successes in our backyard. The consequence of that country's anti-American, anti-nuclear stance has been Australian participation in costly separate military exercises with it. In fact, things have become so bad that during his visit to New Zealand a couple of months ago the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Bill Hayden, explicitly warned Prime Minister Lange that Australia could not continue to subsidise Wellington's defence; and nor should Australian taxpayers subsidise the defence of New Zealand. A cosy relationship has developed between Moscow and New Zealand radicals—that group which Frank Corner, a respected former Permanent Secretary of Foreign Affairs, has described as the hijackers of New Zealand's foreign policy. So the situation in New Zealand obviously also requires the most careful monitoring by Australia, as does the situation in New Guinea, about which time prevents me from going into detail tonight.

In essence, Moscow's aim has been to discredit the United States and the Western alliance while at the same time upgrading its own presence in our region. These developments point to the very real possibility of a Cuba developing in our own backyard. It is salutary to note that last year—I think for the first time in our history; certainly since Castro came to power—the Australian Government, through the world food program, gave Cuba just short of \$1m worth of aid. How any country such as ours can do that and not receive any publicity about it as yet absolutely escapes my comprehension. It is

symptomatic of the problem and of the slow drift towards an anti-Americanism and pro-Sovietism that is posing very grave problems and risks for our country. These things highlight the very real potential for the South Pacific region to be transferred from a friendly Western democratic sphere of influence to a Soviet one. It is this gradual erosion of Western influence in our region that has prompted many Australians—I dare say including the Minister for Defence—the Japanese, the New Guineans, the Cook Islanders and other South Pacific islanders to impress upon our Government the urgent need for Australia to put on a friendlier face towards our vulnerable yet friendly neighbours and to uphold our responsibilities in this region.

The irony of the Defence Minister's so-called initiatives—through the statement last week—in our backyard, the South Pacific region, is that those initiatives appear to be contradictory to some of his fellow Ministers' policies in other areas. In Australia we have experienced an increasing trend to anti-Americanism and pro-Sovietism. John Halfpenny's Pacific Trade Union Forum's activities have been aimed at abetting the Soviet thrust into the South Pacific. Fomenting anti-Americanism in the Pacific is another well-known activity of that Forum. Often, it is at the Australian taxpayers' expense. This is the same John Halfpenny who recently won Australian Labor Party Senate endorsement in Victoria, my own State, for the next election; the same John Halfpenny whose union, the Amalgamated Metal Workers Union, has been the happy recipient of the ALP's litany of payola over the past 34 years of the Hawke Government. To date, nearly \$100,000 of Australians' hard earned tax dollars has been diverted to Mr Halfpenny's AMWU for various so-called worthwhile activities. The sorts of things that that \$100,000 has gone to include banner making projects, union workshops, art classes for unionists and paying unionists on visits to a range of dubious countries. It is the same union whose leadership has called for an immediate halt to aid to the Philippines and a boycott on French products.

Then there is the open letter to Mr Hayden from Pat Clancy, the Chairman of the International Department of the Building Workers Industrial Union of Australia, calling for mutually beneficial trading policies in the Pacific between Australia and the Soviet Union. Mr Clancy, in his letter to Mr Hayden, an open letter which has been published, rapped the Foreign Minister over the knuckles for daring to be concerned—I acknowledge that Mr Hayden was concerned—

at the agreement entered into between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Vanuatu. Mr Clancy said:

We question both the wisdom and propriety of your statements.

Despite this glaring interference by an extreme left wing union leader into this nation's foreign policy, Mr Clancy's own union is yet another to have received taxpayers' funds of well over \$100,000 since the advent of the Hawke Government.

In the area of aid to foreign countries, this Government's record is nothing to write home about. For instance, aid has been lavished on a range of Soviet proxy states, including Vietnam, Afghanistan, Nicaragua and Kampuchea. Latest statistics from the Australian Development Assistance Bureau reveal that we are even giving funds, as I said earlier, to Cuba. On my reckoning, Australian aid to Soviet proxy states during the Hawke Government's term of office now exceeds \$20m in constant 1979-80 dollar terms and, of course, much more in current dollar terms. Those are truly amazing figures. Bilateral aid to Soviet proxy states, excluding any aid to Ethiopia, in the first three years of the Hawke Government amounts to almost \$12.5m in constant 1979-80 terms, and multilateral aid amounts to an additional \$7.3m—a total of \$20m, excluding various other figures.

During those three years, total aid to Soviet proxy states has shown a progressive increase. Quite frankly, the Government must change direction on these unconscionable aid flows. Such aid must be seen as counter-productive to the policy of countering the influence of the Soviet Union in our region which the Defence Minister's statement implies but which he has not had the courage to articulate for fear of upsetting the left wing of his own Government and his own Party.

Not only has aid to Soviet proxy states been on the increase but also, on the South Pacific front, the opposite picture emerges. Whereas bilateral aid to South Pacific nations for each of the Fraser years averaged \$263m, in 1979-80 dollar terms, over the past three years of the Hawke Government that figure has fallen to \$237m—a fall, in real terms, of 10 per cent. That fall has occurred despite a real increase under the Hawke Government of about 10 per cent in total bilateral aid to all destinations. In other words, the South Pacific's share of Australia's total bilateral aid has fallen since the advent of the Hawke Government from 65 per cent of our total bilateral aid to only 54 per

cent. So much for the Government's claims of interest in and concern for the South Pacific. What hypocrisy the Government shows in its statements that it intends to strengthen our relations with our South Pacific friends and neighbours. The Government's statements on these matters, like most of its other statements, are not worth the paper on which they are written.

There are many other things that one should say in a debate of this importance. Time precludes me from going into them in detail, so I will conclude by saying some of the things that this country ought to be doing if we are really serious about strengthening our relations with our South Pacific friends and neighbours and increasing the security arrangements and security umbrella that encompass all of us in this region. Nowhere in the Defence Minister's statement are any solutions or suggestions given. There are just a few old, tired decisions, most of which were announced previously.

There is a lot which the Government could be doing to ensure the long term stability of the region but which, it seems, it has not even bothered to think about let alone act upon. For example, the Government ought to take immediate steps to increase aid to the nations in the South Pacific. We should also be offering military and police training to the nations of the South Pacific, just as the Libyans have offered to train Vanuatuan police. Why on earth are the Libyans interested in training the Vanuatuan police? It is because they have a subversive attitude and approach towards the region. We are leaving a great gap there for them to fill.

We should be making totally clear to the Soviet Union our concern at its encroachments and not engage in the silliness of consensus and the denial of those encroachments. We should be forging stronger links with our greatest ally, the United States, and other friendly Western democratic states, and not promoting ludicrous treaties, such as the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, which only the serve the interests of the Soviet Union at the expense of our allies.

We should stop bankrolling groups and activists whose sole purpose is to undermine the United States alliance and either advertently or inadvertently promote the expansion of the Soviet Union. We should also stop bankrolling Soviet proxy states such as Vietnam, or at the very least insist that any aid be conditional on a major improvement in human rights in those states—states in which the whole question of human rights has been almost totally forgotten. We should increase the funds to countries with

which we have genuine strategic interests and which share our broad values and democratic traditions.

It is a matter of the gravest concern that the statement by the Minister for Defence alludes to none of these possibilities, despite its rhetoric and hype. Perhaps the White Paper on defence which we are all awaiting will do better. However, on the basis of what we have seen to date and on what we have heard to date from this Government and this Defence Minister, I very much doubt it. I am sure that few, if any, honourable senators on this side of the chamber will be holding their breath.

Senator VALLENTINE (Western Australia) (8.39)—I commend the recognition in the statement by the Minister for Defence (Mr Beazley) that economic security is seen as paramount by the islanders themselves. On page 7 of the statement he states:

... the island governments believe, quite correctly in my view, that in their current and foreseeable economic and strategic circumstances, economic development is their main national concern.

On page 8 of the statement he continued:

... our civil aid programs and trade and commercial policies will play the main role ...

He went on to talk about defence policies. The question which must be asked at the outset is why our military aid to the countries in the South Pacific region has increased by 9 per cent and our overall economic aid to those countries has decreased by 30 per cent. In that respect, probably the only aspect on which I would have to agree with Senator Short, the previous speaker, the extent to which the proportion of our funding to the South Pacific nations has decreased does not seem to be justified if our concerns for the area are real.

The patrol boats which the Government is going to provide to the South Pacific nations will be mainly used to look for foreign vessels fishing illegally. To date this has affected United States fishing vessels. A United States boat, the *Jeanette Diana*, was detained by the Solomon Islands in 1984. Immediately the United States slapped a boycott on the Solomons. The question we must ask in this respect is whether the Australian Government would back an island nation or the United States if such an embarrassing situation occurred again involving a patrol vessel we provided under our military aid program.

Obviously, from the debate so far, the main security risk in the region is seen as being the Soviet Union. Yet no surface combatants have

been seen in the South Pacific this century. That is something which perhaps members of the Opposition need to be reminded about. The Kiste and Herr report, commissioned by the United States Department of State in 1984, stated that the main security threat to the South Pacific was posed by the United States and France, not the Soviet Union. I repeat that this report was commissioned by the United States State Department. We need to get the threats to the region into perspective.

I commend Senator Hill, one of the Opposition spokespersons who make some sense in this area, for addressing the issue of the presence of France in the region. Obviously, France is a great threat because it continues its nuclear testing program in the South Pacific and also because of the influence it is wielding over the United States. I would agree with Senator Hill that we need to keep working on our relationship with France. Very strong action is needed on the part of this Government as far as France is concerned because of the possibility of France moving its testing site from the Pacific, having completely polluted that ocean, to the Indian Ocean. So some strong measures need to be taken. The French are not very likely to take note of international pressure from the usual diplomatic channels. It is time that our Government started to think in much stronger terms, such as the imposing of boycotts on French products. Imposing sanctions on France might get to the French Government and make an impact on it where the diplomatic niceties are often ignored.

I commend the Australian Government for helping to get New Caledonia back on the United Nations decolonisation list. But if it wants to reduce the Kanak contacts with Libya, which is a concern, surely the priority would be to get independence for Kanaky. In that light it is distressing that the United States has refused to sign the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty. It is alleged that this is because the French Secretary of State for the South Pacific, Monsieur Gaston Flosse, claims that it was his influence which persuaded the United States to back France rather than the member states of the South Pacific Forum. Once again United States priorities are not with Australia or the South Pacific island states, yet we persist with the myth of common interests in the region through the ANZUS alliance, or whatever it is now called.

It is crucial to see the South Pacific within a North-South framework and not an East-West framework if we are to live up to the fine words

of this ministerial statement. In terms of our aid allocation it is obvious that we are not listening. As the Minister conceded, our Pacific island neighbours have made it quite clear that they see their prime security requirements in economic terms. I find it tragic that in the current Budget we were prepared to slash economic aid to the region while boosting military aid. We consider the islands far too much through eyes blinkered by East-West considerations instead of North-South perspectives, which is one of the main penalties of being part of a military alliance which sees the world only in East-West terms and expects us to do the same. Consequently, we trouble ourselves with Kiribati and Vanuatu making commercial agreements with the Soviet Union in their attempts to seek just payment for their fishing resources and see these agreements from an East-West perspective rather than concerning ourselves with the economic security and well-being of these nations.

The Opposition keeps on saying that the Russians are coming and that we must deal with this bogey and the very real threat which the Soviet presence poses in the South Pacific. However, I believe that the Opposition has it out of all perspective. It has nothing positive whatsoever to say about the possible Soviet threat. One wonders what kind of response the Opposition wants us to make to the Soviet Union—to ignore it, to invite more American military presence in the region or to goad the Soviets into further repressive actions, which we would not like, by whipping up more anti-Soviet fervour in this part of the world. As the West German Foreign Minister said recently, we must deal with and listen to the Soviets, particularly now that Premier Gorbachev is attempting some liberalisation of relations.

In order for conditions to improve for people within the Soviet Union and for there to be an improvement in the Soviets' relations with other countries, there needs to be a positive response from the West. This will encourage the much needed reforms to continue. In the case of the 18-month long moratorium on nuclear testing, which was self-imposed by the Soviet Union, credit should have been given where it was due. The moratorium should have been taken seriously. The only way to see whether it was mere propaganda was to call the Soviets' bluff on the question of nuclear testing. The West should have challenged the Soviets on it, instead of ignoring it. The United States ignored it. Our Government ignored it. Now the Opposition has nothing better to say than: 'The Russians are coming, the Russians are coming'.

The Opposition seems to miss the point entirely that we live in one world, a fragile planet which we must learn to share not only with the Soviets but with all the world's people. We must learn to think beyond the nuclear power blocs. The world is not divided merely into two heavily armed camps with nuclear weapons posing a threat to all humanity. Others need a say. The non-nuclear nations need a say. Australia should be in the group of 'others', the non-nuclear group. It is very regrettable that we are not in the non-nuclear group. We are in a very pro-nuclear group by virtue of our alliance with the United States.

We need to redefine what security really is, both globally and in our region. Security should not be tied to military might. We have to think beyond weapons if we are to ensure the survival of this planet. Martin Luther King put it very clearly indeed. I have said this before but obviously the message has not been heard in this place. He said that we have a choice—thank goodness we still do have a choice—but that the choice is no longer between violence and non-violence, but between non-violence and non-existence. This means that our notions of security need to be reviewed, as do our threat perceptions and Australian attitudes as to which countries pose a threat to this region. We have a history of relying on great and powerful friends because we are bedevilled with a colonial client state mentality. This has been a great negative influence in the Australian community. I believe that Australians have been gripped by fear, much of which is unfounded. Of course we need to have an awareness of dangers and possible flash-points. We need to be aware of global strategic geo-politics. But we must deal constructively and positively with these spheres instead of fuelling further fears, as the Opposition wants to do by continually calling: 'The Russians are coming'.

With regard to the Soviet threat in this region I must make a number of points in response to things which have been said in this debate so far. It is true that the Soviet fleet on this side of the world, in the Pacific as a whole, is increasing; but it must be pointed out that only 15 per cent of the Soviet Pacific fleet is out at sea at any given time unless there is an exercise on, while the United States Seventh Fleet is 55 per cent operational, keeping up a round of port visits and exercises by virtue of its 517 bases and facilities in the Pacific region, including 119 in Japan alone and 23 in the Philippines as well as those here in Australia.

We must examine the types of ships that are referred to. A British Press article in *The Independent* on 6 February this year quotes a North Atlantic Treaty Organisation admiral who described the Soviet Navy as a load of 'rusty old buckets'. Indeed, most of the Soviet Pacific fleet is small coastal vessels and the new Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet fleet, Admiral Vladimir Chenavin, has been obliged by the political leadership in Moscow to curtail a major shipbuilding program. There has not been a major Soviet global exercise since 1975, the high point of Admiral Gorshov's expansion. Contrast this with the modernisation drive by the United States to achieve a 600-strong navy by 1990, with half the new ships in the Pacific, including seven Trident submarines now on station. I remind the Senate that the United States keeps 55 per cent of its strategic warheads on submarines, compared with the Soviet Union, which keeps only 25 per cent of its strategic warheads on submarines. Also the United States, on its own estimate, is five to ten years ahead of the Soviets in anti-submarine warfare.

I want to deal with the assertion of Senator Newman last night that the Soviet Union has two out of its three aircraft carriers in the Pacific. I make the point that the Soviet Union has no proper aircraft carriers whatsoever, apart from one under construction in the Black Sea which will not be ready until the next decade. The two aircraft carriers to which Senator Newman referred are in fact tactical aircraft carrying cruisers and they carry helicopters and vertical take-off and landing aircraft only. In terms of tonnage, they are less than half the weight of the latest United States aircraft carriers in the Nimitz class which have a nasty habit of descending on Fremantle. Just recently we had the bonus of the *Carl Vinson* which came for Christmas—200 nuclear weapons in our port to celebrate the birthday of the prince of peace. We should contrast these two Soviet carriers of limited size in the Pacific with six full United States aircraft carriers, equipped with between 75 and 90 planes, many loaded with nuclear weapons. Altogether the United States Navy has 13 aircraft carriers with two more under construction, and six of these are in the Pacific region.

It is fundamentally dishonest of the Opposition to keep on about the two Soviet carriers when in fact they are not proper aircraft carriers at all. The Opposition never mentions the six full scale aircraft carriers in the United States Seventh Fleet. This kind of distortion is precisely what fuels the Cold War, as both sides do it. One side points to where the other side is ahead

and keeps quiet about where it is superior. Another example relevant to the Pacific is the marines; well-trained, tough young men whose job it is to invade someone else's country from the sea. The Soviet naval infantry total 17,000 men, with less than half of those in the Soviet Pacific fleet. The United States Marine Corps has 190,000 men. I suggest that when it comes to interventionism the United States has a record of using its marines on a far greater scale than the Soviet Union, but for the record I absolutely condemn Soviet interventionism in Afghanistan and Soviet support for the Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea, just as I will continue to criticise the United States for having its troops all over the Asia-Pacific region, particularly in the Philippines, South Korea and the bases in Australia. Both super-powers claim that they were invited by the governments concerned, yet there was never any debate—certainly not in Afghanistan or Kampuchea, nor in Korea, the Philippines or Australia.

At what level will the coalition admit that the Soviet Union is a Pacific power and that there are 270 million Soviet citizens who constitute the third largest nation in the world? Our farmers would be in a mess if they could not sell wheat to the Soviet Union, and the United States sells wheat to it, so why the uproar and hypocrisy when poverty-stricken Kiribati or cyclone-ravaged Vanuatu decides to sell fish licences to the Russians? Many Opposition members cannot even pronounce Kiribati, including Senator Baume, who I heard mispronounce the name of it. How dare these people say that they have the interests of the Pacific islands at heart when they cannot even pronounce their names? I would be very angry if I were one of those island nations and heard that sort of arrogant paternalism coming from the coalition benches.

As I have said—I need to state this again because some members of the Opposition have now come into the chamber—the Kiste and Herr report of December 1984, which was commissioned by the State Department of the United States, pointed out that the French and United States were more of a security threat in the region than the Soviets. We must address the issue of Cam Ranh Bay. It is stupid for the Soviets to suggest that they do not have a base in Cam Ranh Bay. Of course there is a base in Cam Ranh Bay. But we need to get this into perspective. I have called for the withdrawal of that base in Cam Ranh Bay here in the Senate. I am against all foreign bases in the region. The argument revolves around the definition of a base. We could call the base in Cam Ranh Bay

a supply or storage depot or a marina for Soviet warships, but it is nothing like the United States presence at Subic Bay. I hope that the Minister for Foreign Affairs (Mr Hayden) will speak of these concerns to the Soviet Foreign Minister, Mr Shevardnadze, when he visits next week. Mr Hayden should call for the closure of Cam Ranh Bay. Of course he should also call for the closure of all United States bases in the region in the best interests of Australian security.

It is indeed useful for the Soviet Union to have that base in Cam Ranh Bay, but we must recognise its vulnerability. It takes between 20 and 25 ships, but it is surrounded by the United States Seventh Fleet at Subic Bay and Guam; the Chinese Navy; the ASEAN navies which are expanding fast; and the ANZUS navies. ANZUS is, unfortunately, not dead. It is simply in cold storage until a National Party government in New Zealand defies New Zealand public opinion, now running at about 72 per cent against nuclear warships visits, and lets them back.

It is important for people in Australia to know that a concerted campaign of destabilisation is occurring in New Zealand at the moment. Of course, the hope is, with a re-run of many events which could be paralleled with what happened here in 1975—a loans scandal, all sounding very familiar—that the National Party would be returned to government in New Zealand. That is exactly what the United States Government is hoping for, so that ANZUS can be resumed. It is important to point out that New Zealand never quit ANZUS—the only way it could do that is to give 12 months notice to the other members. New Zealand certainly did not do that. It was the United States which refused to go to the annual meeting of the ANZUS Council last year.

Nothing in the ANZUS Treaty commits any of the partners to hosting ship visits. New Zealand still considers itself to be a member of ANZUS and continues to have United States facilities in its country, such as Black Birch, Tangimoana and Operation Deep Freeze. New Zealand would take conventional non-nuclear warships, but the United States persists with this silly policy of neither admitting nor denying, when any literate person can look up *Jane's Fighting Ships* to see whether or not a ship has nuclear weapons on it. The Russians know and I suspect even the Opposition should know that there are nuclear weapons on visiting warships. Yet the Australian public is expected to swallow that pathetic 'neither confirm nor deny' policy.

I believe that our position in South East Asia and the South West Pacific region means that we need to re-think our alliance mentality. We do not live in Western Europe or North America, much as we would like to maintain our cultural links with those countries. We straddle the Indian and Pacific oceans. From an Australian perspective, one could say: 'The Asia-Pacific—you're standing in it'. Our best hope of peace and stability in this region is to build better relations with our Asian and Pacific neighbours, many of whom do not want to be associated with either nuclear camp. We can never consider ourselves an integral part of our geographic region until we are independent and nuclear-free and unless we listen much more carefully to the concerns of our neighbour in this region.

Senator JESSOP (South Australia) (8.58)—I have listened with great interest to Senator Vallentine, who is increasingly becoming an apologist for the Soviet Union.

Senator Vallentine—Rubbish! I don't like their being here any more than you like their being here. That is misrepresentation and you know it.

Senator JESSOP—It almost appeared to me, on hearing Senator Vallentine's speech, that it could have been written by the Russian Ambassador, but I will give her some credit for some embellishment from her own resources. It seems to me that the paper we are discussing is very serious. I heard Senator Vallentine talk about the Indian Ocean. Certainly the Indian Ocean is of very great interest to the Soviets. The African continent, from Libya down to South Africa, is dotted with countries which have definite Soviet influence in the form of marxist governments. Looking at the Pacific on the other side, with which we are dealing tonight, it is important that we discuss the question of Australia's future defence in a very rational way. I was pleased to note in the paper that the Minister for Defence (Mr Beazley) at least pays lip service to the holistic nature of security in the Pacific by claiming that 'our policies must encompass aid, trade, immigration and a host of other issues'. One would hope that he includes foreign affairs among the other issues, although having regard to the capricious nature of our foreign policy under the Minister for Foreign Affairs (Mr Hayden) I can understand the reluctance of the Minister for Defence to include foreign affairs specifically in his statement.

The Minister for Defence is now paying for the nonsense of relegating his responsibility by giving two academics tasks that he and his De-

partment should have undertaken. Dibb's isolationist outlook, together with his benign view of the Soviet Union and its aspirations, have been reflected in this report. I await to see, with some anxiety, whether the defence White Paper overcomes those deficiencies. The report of the Dibb Review of Australia's Defence Capabilities stresses the concept of self-reliance and emphasises that the forces he recommends are not designed to intervene in Asia or the Pacific, or to fight with its allied units in a global conventional war. Dibb saw the Australian Defence Force as primarily a deterrent to an attack on continental Australia. In other words, Dibb opted, as has been stated by my colleagues on this side of the Senate, for a fortress Australia. Moreover, although the Government continues to fulminate about its support for ANZUS, it increasingly looks upon that Treaty not so much as an alliance prepared to fight a war, but as an alliance designed for mutual ongoing support, primarily in technological and intelligence matters.

The Dibb report has had a depressing effect among the ASEAN nations, which viewed the ANZUS Treaty as an umbrella for peace within the South East Asian and South Pacific areas, and saw Dibb's isolationist views as effectively destroying what was left of the ANZUS Treaty. Tonight, with Senator Kilgariff and a few others, I was able to talk to some of the Association of South East Asian Nations leaders, and I noted their very grave interest in the subject about which we are speaking at this time. I was in South Korea last year, before I had the chance to examine the Dibb report in full, and the Ministers and the foreign affairs people that I spoke to expressed concern—even though they had received the Dibb report only a day or so prior to my arrival in Seoul—at the isolationist policy that was implicit in that Dibb document. So it is not only people in the Pacific island states who have a great concern about the defence of the region; it is also the people further to the north. I referred to the ANZUS Treaty, and I saw some comfort from the belated recognition by the Minister that:

An unfriendly maritime power in the area could inhibit our freedom of movement through these approaches and could place in doubt the security of overseas supply to Australia of military equipment and other strategic materiel.

On the other hand I cannot but wonder why the Minister at no stage mentions the Soviet Union, the one and only unfriendly maritime power that could possibly do that. Perhaps it is because he is not sure from one day to the next how his

Government views the penetration of the Soviet Union into the Pacific.

The Minister for Defence also stated that our defence policies and activities in the South Pacific are being developed in close consultation with our allies, the United States and New Zealand. There is no mention of France, as though France had no presence in the Pacific. The Minister mentioned in the report that 'as long ago as the middle of the last century, Australian leaders recognised that events in the islands to our north and east could have a decisive effect on our security'. In those days France and imperial Russia were seen as a main threat to the Australian colonies, but neither represented then the threat that the Soviet Union does today. Recently, much has been said about Mr Gorbachev's statement in Vladivostok last July, which declared the Soviet's intention to extend its power into the Pacific. Senator Durack and others from our side of the House have mentioned Cam Ranh Bay and the fact that that Russian presence would represent approximately 30 per cent of its total fleet. In fact, as early as 1981 in the Soviet Union at the Sixth International Seminar of Youth Researchers, the theme was 'Problems of Co-operation in the Pacific Region'. The principal conclusion, which was agreed to by the Australians present, was that 'matters in the Pacific could not be finally determined without the participation of the USSR'. One of our representatives at that forum was Professor Ted Wheelright, a none-too-youthful researcher, but a close associate of Mr Halfpenny and his Pacific trade union forum, which Senator Short mentioned in his speech not so long ago. The other Australian attending that Soviet seminar is now employed by the Attorney-General (Mr Lionel Bowen), so the Government does not lack for a certain type of advice on Soviet intentions in the Pacific.

At the time of Federation, the newly formed Australian military forces sent Major William Throsby Bridges, under a pseudonym, to New Caledonia as a spy to investigate invasion points of entry and routes to the capital, and the first military plans made by the Commonwealth as a nation was to invade New Caledonia. That did not eventuate but it pointed to the concern of the Australian Government of the day of the problems and the strategic significance of the Pacific islands in our region of the world. I am sure that no such plans exist today, of course, but we do seem to be doing everything in our power to undermine the position of the French in the South Pacific. Why invite the Soviet Union and freeze out the French? The action of the

New Zealand Labor Government in undermining the security of the Pacific by proceeding with its New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone, Disarmament and Control Act has done more to open the way to Russian penetration of the Pacific than any other single event. What has the Government done to counter this among the Pacific states? The Cook Islands, Tonga and Fiji have all expressed their fears about the effects of New Zealand's actions and, of course, those effects have been reinforced, by any analysis of the Dibb report.

I visit the Pacific region on occasions. I was there last year for a regional seminar run by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. Most of the island states were there, including New Zealand. The topic of conversation around the dining tables and at the social functions was quite clear to me. They rely on Australia and New Zealand for advice, support and encouragement in what they are doing in their particular countries. They rely on us through the Australian Development Assistance Bureau and other organisations to provide aid to them to build infrastructure, ports, and so on. They all expressed grave concern about the fact that New Zealand had withdrawn from the ANZUS Treaty. I believe that is a very important consideration in the minds of our Pacific island neighbours.

The proposed ship visits that have been mentioned in the statement might be of some value as a flag waving exercise, but none of these ships have extensive fighting capability or range and the citizens of the nations of the region will not feel more secure unless our small ships are seen as the foremost tangible part of the greater Western alliance. The patrol boats Australia is giving to those nations—those, of course, that can afford to operate and maintain them—will add much to the surveillance of the fishing activities within each nation's exclusive economic zone, but they have little fighting capability. Moreover, they will hardly counter the presence of the Soviet fishing and scientific ships which are an important extension of the Soviet navy. In fact, during a conference in Fiji a couple of years ago a retired commander of the United States Seventh Fleet expressed his concern about the Russian infiltration into the Pacific region and he made the comment that, once the Russians established a fishing base in the islands of the Pacific, that would become a *de facto* naval base. These ships now have a legitimate reason for being in the region subsequent to the fishing agreement Russia has made with Vanuatu. That was mentioned earlier in the debate. These ships

will possess a wide range of ancillary intelligence and communications monitoring capacities, and political and cultural opportunities will be provided by the Aeroflot landing rights which go together with the port access for Soviet naval vessels.

Doubling our Royal Australian Air Force long range maritime aircraft patrols around our coast in the Pacific region will still leave over 300 days in which no such surveillance is maintained. I suggest that this will not match the continual surveillance from the Soviet fishing and scientific fleet operating out of Vanuatu. I congratulate the service men and women who have been deployed to help these nations under our defence aid policy, including providing aid during emergencies such as the recent disasters in the Cook Islands and Vanuatu. I believe that planned defence aid, given as part of the Defence Force training program, has many beneficial aspects, both to the recipients and to the Australian Defence Force.

Such actions, although helpful, do not replace the general area security which once prevailed in the Pacific. I refer to the long period after the Second World War during which Australia and New Zealand, as parties to ANZUS, maintained a benign Western influence throughout the region. In the meantime the colonial powers, quietly and in an orderly fashion, withdrew from the region and since 1970 most of their island possessions have become independent politically, in accordance with their wishes, but remain generally economically weak and defenceless. Although fiercely independent, they remain extremely vulnerable. Australia must do everything in its power to bring New Zealand back into the ANZUS alliance. However, Australians must realise that, while most New Zealanders want this, many cannot accept the fact that the US navy is both nuclear powered and nuclear armed. They do not seem to worry too much about the fact that the Soviet fleet at Cam Ranh Bay is largely nuclear armed and nuclear powered. With New Zealand effectively neutralised through its own internal weaknesses, Australia must not alienate France simply because it does not agree with its policies on nuclear testing or the internal affairs of New Caledonia. That does not mean that we should not be concerned that what the French are doing is not damaging the environment in this part of the world. As with the Dibb report, the return from the considerations of Dr Cooksey has proven to be of very little real value. It is time that the Foreign Affairs and Defence departments took control and effectively co-ordinated foreign affairs and

defence policies, enabling the other departments concerned with economic and defence aid to make their contributions. Under the Hawke-Hayden Administration foreign affairs policy is in a shambles and I feel some sympathy for the Minister for Defence, who is trying to reinforce such a mixture of expediency and opportunism. We need as a matter of urgency a foreign policy which fits our long term national interest.

Senator GARETH EVANS (Victoria—Minister for Resources and Energy) (10.10)—in reply—I will say something very quickly in reply not because I want to occupy any more time but because the debate has occupied such an inordinate and unnecessary amount of the Senate's attention.

Senator Watson—What about some appreciation of those who went off the list?

Senator GARETH EVANS—Just play back what I have said. If honourable senators expect me to congratulate them all on their co-operation, they have another think coming. Had there been any sign of that co-operation I would have been very grateful. While most senators have welcomed the statement of the Minister for Defence (Mr Beazley), the reality is that so many Opposition speakers, finding little to criticise and nothing to add to the Minister's initiative, wandered off on a variety of tangents which ended up with the Philippines, Indo-China—or more precisely Cam Ranh Bay—and conditions for Defence Force personnel or some other issue of importance which nonetheless is simply not especially—

Senator Durack—You don't believe Cam Ranh Bay is relevant to the South Pacific? Is that what you are saying?

Senator GARETH EVANS—No, I agree with what Senator Hill said in that respect, and I will come to that in a moment. Those and other issues of importance were simply not relevant to the matter at hand. I do not want, with the exception of Cam Ranh Bay, to say anything more about that now, but rather will wait for the debate on the White Paper which will be upon us shortly, as I have constantly said, and which is clearly the proper time to address those particular issues.

As to Cam Ranh Bay, it must be supremely evident that that is very far distant from the South Pacific, which is the region dealt with by the Minister's statement. Operations from Cam Ranh Bay focus on the South China Sea and assist transits to the North Pacific and Indian

Ocean area. The reality is that there is no significant Soviet presence in the South Pacific. There is one fisheries agreement with Vanuatu but that agreement provides for no more than eight vessels to operate at any one time, obviously making monitoring a comparatively easy business. There is restricted port access to three locations which are clearly designated. There are no on-shore facilities; no aircraft landing rights; no access to territorial waters—that is to say, the 12 nautical mile limit—and there are no Soviet naval deployments to the South Pacific. The reality is, as I think Senator Hill said, that the Soviets have a negligible presence in the South Pacific. While Cam Ranh Bay is obviously extremely relevant to a debate about regional security generally and on South East Asia and the North Pacific, it is essentially in that area that it is relevant and not in the area of the South Pacific. It is regrettable that such a gigantic amount of the time devoted to this unnecessary debate was spent on dealing with matters of that kind.

The third thing I want to say concerns the relationship of this document to the report of the Dibb Review of Australia's Defence Capabilities because there have been a great many misrepresentations made which I think need to be quickly corrected. The Opposition has presented a classic self-serving argument. In the past Opposition spokesmen or speakers in this area have deliberately misread, misinterpreted or misrepresented the Dibb report. Then when presented with clear evidence, in the form of this statement, that the Government does not favour an isolationist approach of the kind that is alleged to be inherent in the Dibb report, they simply say that the Government is walking away from the Dibb report. The truth is that the Opposition has got it completely wrong.

The final thing I want to say is this: In the South Pacific we are talking about eight independent countries. We have to adjust ourselves to this reality. The countries are very conscious of their own sovereignty, and the paternalistic and often patronising approach which was evident in this debate in so many contributions from the other side and which may have been in fashion when the region consisted of colonies and protectorates of friendly external powers is simply no longer appropriate. Unfortunately, the critics—there are many of them—who claim that the Minister's statement does not go far enough, seem unable to adjust to those present realities in the South Pacific. In this statement we are talking about an approach to the development of Australia's defence relationship with the in-

dependent countries of the South Pacific which concentrates on identified areas of common interests that lend themselves to practical co-operation, in particular, maritime surveillance—the central theme of this statement. What we are about is action, not words. That is what the Government is doing. I fear we have had nothing but the latter from the Opposition in its extended contribution to this debate over the last two days.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

Fourth Report for Sixty-second Session

Consideration resumed from 20 November 1986.

In Committee

Motion (by Senator Gareth Evans) agreed to:

That the proposed Sessional Orders, as contained in Appendix 1 of the report, be considered in the following order:

1. Time Limits to Speeches
2. Notices of Motion
3. Adjournment of Senate
4. Proposals pursuant to Standing Order 64.

Senator GARETH EVANS (Victoria—Manager of Government Business in the Senate) (9.22)—I move:

That the following proposed Sessional Order be agreed to, viz.:

That, notwithstanding anything contained in the Standing Orders—

- (a) a Senator shall not speak for more than 20 minutes in a debate in the Senate, but in respect of a speech a Senator may move that that time be extended for not more than 10 minutes, and such a motion shall be put and determined without debate;
- (b) where a right of reply is allowed in a debate in the Senate, a Senator speaking in reply shall not speak for more than 20 minutes;
- (c) in debate on the first reading of a Bill which the Senate may not amend, a Senator shall not speak for more than 10 minutes; and
- (d) in Committee of the Whole a Senator shall not speak for more than 10 minutes at a time on a question, but where the speech of a Senator is interrupted by this provision and no other Senator rises to speak, the Senator so interrupted may speak for a further 10 minutes but no longer on a question.

Having moved that motion, I say no more than that the Standing Orders Committee recommends a reduction in time limits for individual speeches in general debates, first reading debates—to the extent that we still have them—

and in the Committee of the Whole. The proposed time limits are a reflection of the increased numbers of senators in this place competing for scarce available time. As we will have a free vote on this issue, I do not speak on behalf of the Government but I think most people on this side believe that the proposed time limits would encourage a welcome economy in the presentation of arguments and afford sufficient time for all senators who may wish to speak on a particular matter. Accordingly, I commend that proposal to the chamber.

The CHAIRMAN—Before I open the subject for debate I think I should draw the attention of the Committee to the fact that in the document before us the Standing Orders Committee merely recommended these proposals for consideration; it did not endorse them. I think the Committee should be clear about that.

Senator MACKLIN (Queensland) (9.24)—A long time has elapsed between the writing of the report of the Senate Standing Committee on Standing Orders and today. We are not debating the first report, which was even further back. There have been considerable discussions about the time limits for speeches. I think that most senators realise that the situation confronting us cannot be easily solved. Indeed, if one looks at the total time allocation with regard to what goes on in the Senate one comes up with some rather interesting information. For example, in the 1985 Budget session 95 Bills were considered, there were 244 speakers and the total time devoted to those speeches was 59 hours and 53 minutes. The average time per speech was 14 minutes and the average time per Bill was 37 minutes, with the average time per debate being one hour and 15 minutes.

Senator Peter Baume—That was the present 30 minutes limit, was it?

Senator MACKLIN—Yes. In the Budget session of 1986, 81 Bills were brought in. The number of speakers was 260, the total speech time was 74 hours and seven minutes, the average time per speech was 17 minutes, the average time per Bill was 54 minutes and the average time in a debate was one hour and 35 minutes. In other words, the average times—which, of course, should not be taken as the mean times—came within the limits proposed by the Standing Orders Committee. At the time the proposals were considered I was of the opinion that the 20 minute time limit was reasonable and the 10-minute time limit for a speech in the Committee of the Whole was reasonable in comparison with the 20 minutes in a second reading debate. How-

ever, since that time I have had discussions with a number of senators from the Government, the Opposition and my own Party. It would seem that the reduction that has taken place within the last six years, from one hour to 30 minutes, is the limit that most people seem to want to accept. I think it has been fairly evident from the debates in this place that unless there is a reasonable agreement on these types of matters time will not be saved by moving to a new standing order that substitutes a time limit that people are unwilling to accept. However, interestingly enough, whereas there seems to be almost total lack of support for moving from 30 minutes to 20 minutes, there seems to be a great deal of support for moving from 15 minutes to 10 minutes in the Committee stage. I believe that those of us who are on the Standing Orders Committee would be well advised to look more at that item in the recommendation than at the first one. I say that the second recommendation can be more easily accommodated because senators have a second, third or fourth bite of the cherry in the Committee stage. The only time that opportunity is likely to be reduced is when no other senator wishes to intervene. In those circumstances the total time available to a senator in the Committee of the Whole would drop from half an hour to 20 minutes.

In the six years that I have been here I can remember only one occasion when a senator was teetering on that possibility. Another member of his party was able to leap to his feet in time to say that he was so fascinated by what the honourable senator was saying that he would like him to continue. The person making the speech actually went on to speak for three hours, as I remember it. I do not think that there is an actual reduction in any senator's ability to contribute to a debate in the Committee stage. By and large, the speeches of most senators in the Committee stage do not go over 10 minutes; most of them probably do not go over five minutes. I believe that the proposal is reasonable. However, I am also conscious of the fact that it is likely to save us almost no time whatsoever, and that after all is the whole point of the exercise by the Standing Orders Committee.

This item has not been dreamed up as an opposition or government proposal. Quite frankly, the major parties in this place want to see some reasonable movement of legislation, on the understanding that the opposition parties, when in power, will want at least a reasonable movement. At most times governments believe that that movement is unreasonable. At most times the Opposition believes that it is overly reason-

able, and a compromise is generally struck by the end of the session whereby we manage to put through all sorts of Bills in the last couple of days in debates which do not bring any credit to this place. Therefore I believe that in most matters concerning these Standing Orders if we are to get any progress—I am also mindful of the last debate we had on this when we spent six hours of debate on whether or not to read our speeches—

Senator Haines—Most of which contributions were not read.

Senator MACKLIN—In fact the best contributions were not read, particularly those from people who were saying that they should be allowed to read. There were also people reading from copious notes who said they should not be allowed to read from notes at all. Mindful of that, and the time I have already spent on this item, I would urge the Committee to look at what we might be able to achieve. In my discussions with various honourable senators I believe that the most that those of us on the Standing Orders Committee can look forward to is probably getting the 15 minutes down to 10 minutes.

Senator Gareth Evans—Multiples of 10.

Senator MACKLIN—I am possibly being optimistic, but as I read the numbers around the place, the ability to reduce the time from 30 minutes to 20 minutes is not on. I therefore believe that we should try to wind up this debate as rapidly as possible to get through as many of these items that are before us as we can. I believe we should leave out the first item and concentrate only on the second item and see whether there is a consensus to look at it.

The CHAIRMAN—There are four questions before the Committee on the time limits to speeches. With the agreement of the Committee I will put the four questions separately later. The debate should continue on all four questions for the moment.

Senator CHANEY (Western Australia—Leader of the Opposition) (9.31)—Mr Chairman, I respectfully agree with your suggestion that in voting terms we should deal with those suggestions separately. This debate is, of course, a free debate in the sense that there is no pre-determined party position on the matters which we have before us, each honourable senator being free to exercise his or her own judgment. The various suggestions which were brought forward by the Standing Orders Committee, as you correctly pointed out Mr Chairman, are not recommendations as was suggested by the Minister

for Resources and Energy, Senator Gareth Evans, but rather are simply matters which are put forward for consideration by the Standing Orders Committee without the usual recommendation. All of these matters are matters which have received some consideration in the Opposition party room.

I think it would be helpful to the shape of the general debate if I gave some indication of the general concern which I do not claim is universal, but which is widely shared within the Opposition parties, about the general effect of the matters which have been put forward for consideration. Mr Chairman, I hope you will not hold me too strictly to the rules of debate if I very quickly say that there are certain common concerns with respect to the different matters which are contained in the appendix to the fourth report of the sixty-second session of the Senate Standing Orders Committee.

I will commence with the matters which are squarely before us for debate at the moment. Fundamentally we see this as a reduction in the rights of non-Executive senators—that is, private senators, non-Ministers on the Government side and on the Opposition side of this chamber—and there is considerable concern that we should not further diminish the entitlement of senators to put views on matters which come before the Senate. I will come back to that a little later. It is fair to say that the concerns which many Opposition senators have on the other matters which are going to come before us in this debate relate to that same area, namely, that what is proposed does diminish the rights of senators to use the existing forms of the House to get their points across.

Recommendation two, or the second suggestion which is contained in the schedule, relates to the fact that notices of motion would be treated in the same way as petitions. This means that the existing right of senators to express in a notice of motion a viewpoint which, whilst they are unable to be likely to have it debated in the short term, at least is one that they can put before the Senate, would be diminished by the fact that the notices of motion are to be treated as petitions in some summary form, which would be outside the control of the senator moving or giving the notice of motion, and would be read out to the chamber. We see that as a step which would further reduce the capacity of individual senators to bring matters before the Senate in the form which they choose.

The first matter which is contained in the schedule, and which the Government is suggest-

ing would be the third matter that we would consider in this debate, relates to limiting the rights of senators to speak on the adjournment. I think that any examination of the statistics on the use of the adjournment debate would suggest that it really is drawing a rather long bow to suggest that there is any constant problem in the Senate about the overuse of the adjournment debate by senators. But from time to time senators do raise matters which they wish to air and they want to go beyond the 60-minute limit which is proposed. Again, it amounts to a restriction on an existing right of senators to bring forward matters which are in their constituents' interests.

The last proposal, which I am certain it is unlikely we will get to debate tonight, is one that we might limit matters of public importance and urgency motions to broadcast days. That suggestion flows from the practice, which is common in this place, in fact to bring forward matters of public importance and urgency motions only on broadcast days. But in fact what days might be chosen as broadcast days can be changed from time to time. It is also a fact that there may well be matters of great political significance and importance which may warrant the attention of this chamber and which might occur on a day other than a broadcast day. We see that as a very substantial diminution in the rights of senators and I think many of us would be particularly violently opposed to that proposed limitation.

I come back to the matter which is squarely before the Committee at this stage: The proposal that there should be a limitation in the time that a senator may speak in a normal debate in the Senate, which is the first of the four propositions that are before us. I simply wish to reiterate some of the points which were made by Senator Macklin who, I must say, I had thought was in support of this general proposal. Like Senator Macklin, I sought from the Procedure Office of the Senate the records showing just how long people do take in general debates which take place in this chamber. I find that in the Budget session of 1985 the average time per speech was under 15 minutes. In the autumn session of 1986 the average time per speech was 17½ minutes, and in the Budget session of 1986 the average time was only fractionally over 17 minutes. If we look at those three sessions overall, the average time for a speech was about 16½ minutes.

Senator Button—There is considerable largess in the Committee recommendations.

Senator CHANEY—What that points out is that in terms of the general debates which take place in the Senate there would be few restrictions. On the other hand I would remind the Committee that from time to time we do debate matters where, in the judgment of senators, there is a need to use the existing amount of time. Someone remembered the rather horrible occasion some time ago in the Senate when Senator Gareth Evans was in full flight. We all recall that he actually took something over an hour of the Senate's time to mount an attack on the then Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia, Sir Garfield Barwick. It was not a particularly edifying speech, as I recall it, but it was of a slightly higher standard than the one in which I think he made an attack on Sir Garfield Barwick when he was long past retirement and indeed in very poor health. I point out that it is certainly not peculiar to the Liberal Party that senators make a judgment that they require a more extensive time to present a particular case. I would certainly be voting against any such proposal and I suspect so would many other senators from this side of the chamber.

Senator Button—We have not had a debate for 20 minutes, so 20 minutes would be welcome to you.

Senator CHANEY—It is very good to hear Senator Button take an active interest in this debate—

Senator MacGibbon—I take a point of order, Mr Chairman. Would the Leader of the Government sit in his seat if he is going to interject? If he is going to interject, will he follow Standing Orders? He is tedious.

Senator CHANEY—Well, I have been standing here quite enjoying the fact that Senator Button is sitting on the back bench. I was hoping that I would read in the paper tomorrow that it is a permanent shift. That would no doubt be a very good thing for Australia and for the Senate, but I fear that that is just a bit of optimism on my part.

However, to get back to the serious matter of the proposal that we should have limitation of time on speakers in general debates, I can only say that I think that is an unwarranted restriction on the rights of senators. It is unwarranted because the existing practice clearly is such that the average is less than 20 minutes. Indeed, I am sure that if we took out the same figures for Committee debates, we would find that the same situation applies. So, in terms of saving the Senate's time, which I think Senator Macklin has correctly divined as the reason that this matter

was put forward for consideration by the Standing Orders Committee, I join with him in saying that I do not believe that it would save time. On the other hand, I believe that, on those occasions where honourable senators do wish to put down a substantial case, whether for or against the Government, it would be a pity to reduce the existing right of senators to speak for 30 minutes. I make it quite clear that I will be voting against the first of the four recommendations which would impose greater limitations on the time for speaking.

Senator PETER BAUME (New South Wales) (9.42)—It is not necessary to repeat all the arguments put forward by Senator Macklin and Senator Chaney but I wish to raise a couple of matters. It is quite clear that sooner or later the government of the day will become the opposition of the day and that the opposition of the day will sooner or later be in government. The only question is when. Certain people, now Ministers, will become part of the opposition again and certain people will go into the Executive. So this is not really a debate about the rights of us as Opposition senators but about the way in which the Senate could operate most effectively. I am not sure that these proposals would operate to the benefit of government Ministers, individual government senators or non-government senators.

Senator Macklin made some important points. First, it may be that the average length of time that people take in second reading debates is less than 20 minutes. But that provides absolutely no logical reason to change the Standing Orders to enshrine that as a standing order of the Senate. The fact is that the practice in the Senate is that people tend to speak for less than 20 minutes. Senator Chaney has adverted to a theme that a lot of us would like to follow, which is that senators are sent here to do a job. It may not be thought that they do it very well, but they do it according to the way they see that the job should be done. That involves their speaking at all stages of debate on Bills. It involves Ministers responding, sometimes after long and difficult debates. This proposed new set of Standing Orders would abridge those rights in several ways.

It may be that on a difficult or complicated matter senators may need or wish to speak for longer than 20 minutes. I cannot see any real reason for changing that standing order as proposed in (a). The proposal regarding the right of reply is likely to impinge most upon Ministers responding at the end of second reading debates,

although they are not the only ones who wind up debates. I cannot see why a Minister should not be permitted to take 30 minutes to reply after a complicated debate on a difficult matter. After all, Ministers have a job that they want to carry out to the best of their ability.

As for propositions (c) and (d), proposition (c), which relates to first readings, goes to the right of honourable senators to exercise, as it were, a capacity to raise grievances. No real reason has been given why senators should be limited to 10 minutes in first reading debates. On Thursdays, when the debate on matters of public interest takes place, and which by agreement now takes the place of most first reading debates, we are allowed 15 minutes. There is no proposal that that should be reduced. In raising grievances, honourable senators often require 15 minutes. No case has been made out to show that the constituencies we serve could be served as well if proposal (c) were agreed to. The last clause of proposal (d) states:

... the Senator so interrupted may speak for a further 10 minutes but no longer on a question.

If that clause were not in that proposition (d), I would find the proposal inoffensive. If it were proposed to vary our present standing order so that, instead of being able to speak in committee for 15 minutes, we could speak for only 10 minutes at a time but for any number of 10 minutes for as long as we needed, I would find that inoffensive. If I could not finish my speech in 10 minutes and someone else intervened, I could finish what I had to say some time later. But the proposition is that we could speak for 10 minutes, then another 10 minutes, but no longer on a question. I want to know what the words 'no longer on a question' mean. Does that mean that one can have two 10-minute interventions only? I see that the Chairman is indicating that it does not mean that. If it does not mean that, I submit that the proposed standing order is not clearly written.

If what is proposed is that we merely reduce the time from 15 to 10 minutes and that we can proceed as we do now—that is, if there is an intervening speaker, one can come back and speak again and, if there is no intervening speaker, one can carry on—I do not find that inappropriate. But, if those last couple of lines serve the purpose of limiting honourable senators in Committee to only two interventions of 10 minutes, I do not want to have a bar of it. Perhaps we can get that clarified. As it is written, that is the way that I read it as operating.

Senator BUTTON (Victoria—Leader of the Government in the Senate) (9.48)—I want to contribute very briefly to this debate. The contributions that have been made so far have been very fulsome, reflecting the gravitas with which this House and the Parliament are regarded by the people of Australia. The Standing Orders Committee has met interminably over the last two or three years. The expressed wish of the Committee is to facilitate the getting through of the business in the Senate. We are all agreed about that.

Senator Walters—It depends who has the majority.

Senator BUTTON—The honourable senator does not know what she is talking about. She was not there. I am telling the Senate what the feeling of the Standing Orders Committee is.

Senator Chaney—We are getting a bit of the gravitas, aren't we?

Senator BUTTON—Yes. The purpose has always been described as getting through the business as quickly as possible and as efficiently as possible. So far, we have been able to come up only with these proposals in the fourth report for the sixty-second session of the Standing Orders Committee.

There are only two issues that I want to address. I must say that I think these things have to be seen in the context of the current account and the national debt. We should be disciplined and stringent in our approaches to these things, particularly in the way that we spend the Senate's time. The first proposal that I want to talk about relates to notices of motion and provides for a change that the Senate has already made in another form in relation to petitions, ultimately by agreement. The proposal from the Standing Orders Committee is for a device to prevent notices of motion being turned into speeches. There are always complaints about Ministers giving speeches in answers to questions; sometimes legitimate complaints, sometimes not. But there can be legitimate complaints about very lengthy notices of motion with comments made on a party political basis. These could be summarised by the Clerks and dealt with in the manner suggested in the proposed amendment to the Standing Orders.

The second matter relates to the limitation on time in debates to 20 minutes. In my view, Senator Chaney made the case in a sense by saying that senators do not use 20 minutes, except the dreadful Senator Gareth Evans who once used a hour, which Senator Chaney did not

like. Nothing in the proposed Standing Orders would prevent granting an extension of time. That would still be available to the Senate, if required. Indeed, there is a provision in the proposed Standing Orders to provide for an extension of time.

Senator Peter Baume—But only 10 minutes.

Senator BUTTON—Yes, only 10 minutes. If I might conclude on this note: The view I take about this is that if senators, in the sorts of debates we have here in the chamber, cannot say what they have to say in 20 minutes, I think we have a real problem.

Senator Crichton-Browne—But that is what Government senators do.

Senator BUTTON—I concede that we have a number of real problems. Brevity is the soul of wit, something which has eluded many of us, I suppose.

Senator Crichton-Browne—This is not a chamber of humour; it is a chamber of deliberation.

Senator BUTTON—I think deliberation is a different thing from discursiveness. Seriously, if a senator cannot make a contribution to a debate in 20 minutes, I think it is a very serious situation. Senator Chaney's figures indicate that all senators can make a contribution to a debate in 20 minutes.

Senator Peter Baume—That is without the Standing Orders being changed. Under the present Standing Orders they do it in less than 20 minutes.

Senator BUTTON—I understand that, but the point I am seeking to make is that in those circumstances the change should not be objectionable, because a law which is not used falls into disrepute, just as a standing order does. People ought to be able to say things in 20 minutes—with the exception of Senator Puplick, who I understand has a particular problem. But we would always be prepared to grant Senator Puplick an extension.

Senator Puplick—Put that in writing.

Senator BUTTON—If Senator Puplick votes for this amendment to the Standing Orders, I will move what I would call the Puplick concession which would enable him to talk as he usually does—ad infinitum. I would be happy for there to be that sort of provision for Senator Puplick if we could get this amendment to the Standing Orders which is sought by the Standing Orders Committee.

Senator GRIMES (Tasmania) (9.53)—I rise as a voice from the past. I would like to remind honourable senators, including Senator Button and Senator Walters, that when I came into this place, not that long ago, the Standing Orders said that on non-broadcast days honourable senators could speak for an hour and on broadcast days could speak for half an hour. When I came into this place most people did that. Those who had been here before that famous class of 74, as Senator Peter Baume would know, did that. On the first day a couple of us, when we had to move and second the Address-in-Reply and spoke for only 20 minutes, caused considerable consternation in this place, not only amongst some of the senators who had been here for a long time but amongst some of the Clerks who believed that, if one had an hour, one used it and that, if one had half a hour, one used it.

Senator Newman—And some use more than half an hour, like Senator Evans.

Senator GRIMES—I make no bones about the fact that people who suffer from what I understand people in the honourable senator's profession call prolix and people in my profession call waffling exist on both sides of the place, and I have been as guilty of it as anybody else. I just rise in this debate because the argument used by Senator Macklin and by Senator Chaney is that, if we take out the average figures, we find that the average time of speaking is less than 20 minutes, and therefore we do not need to reduce the time to 20 minutes. I suggest that another exercise should be done. If we take out the people who always speak for half an hour, no matter what the subject is, how important it is or how trivial it is, and then we average it out, we will find that the average will come down considerably. There are people in this place who cannot give the time of day in under half an hour.

Senator Walters—And you are one of them.

Senator GRIMES—It does not matter which side they are on. The simple fact is that in this place we have more and more senators, we have more and more legislation, and people talk more often than they used to. Everyone's complaint in this place is that we do not get enough time to deal with legislation, papers and everything else. I suggest that that terrible place over there where they sit on green couches has managed to cope with 20 minute speeches for a long, long time.

Senator Walters—Don't let us get like that.

Senator GRIMES—Most of us in this place, including Senator Walters, usually speak for 20

minutes or less. The problem is that there are some people on both sides who speak for half an hour every time they speak. If we gave them an hour they would take an hour, and if we gave them two hours they would take two hours.

Senator Haines—They would not say anything more.

Senator GRIMES—And they do not say any more, as Senator Haines says. They indulge in all sorts of thespian tactics. They indulge in the sorts of tactics that have been often used in this place of using the 'indeed' method, saying: 'Mr President, it is a fine day. Indeed, the sun is shining. Indeed, there are no clouds in the sky. Indeed, there is no water falling out of the sky. Indeed, the temperature is quite warm'. And they go on and on like that to fill the time. If we limit the time to 20 minutes, as Senator Button said, most of the people in this place could get their point across in that time. If someone needs extra time, they can have extra time—10 minutes, and another 10 minutes, I suppose. But we either limit the time to a reasonable time of 20 minutes or we extend the hours and days of sitting until there will not be enough weeks in the year. With due respect to Senator Chaney, I think it is a very phoney argument to say that because most people speak for 20 minutes or less we do not need this amendment. I urge him to go and use some other statistics—that is, to exclude those senators who always take half an hour. He would then find that that time comes down considerably. I think, therefore, that it is a sensible amendment. I do not think that the standard of debate will diminish; in fact, I think it will improve because it will sharpen people's capacity to get their point across in a few minutes. Believe me, in the case of some people in this place, that is well worth doing.

Senator WALTERS (Tasmania) (9.58)—I find hearing Senator Grimes trying to be reasonable for once a bit hard to take. Really it is asking a bit much.

Senator MacGibbon—It is a cultural shock.

Senator WALTERS—It is a cultural shock, yes. I am used to him abusing us.

Senator Macklin—What are you going to do when he has gone?

Senator WALTERS—I have no idea. I am sure that Senator Grimes will remember a few of our colourful colleagues, Senator Cavanagh and Senator Wright who, indeed, used to speak for half an hour—

Senator Grimes—An hour.

Senator WALTERS—In our day, an hour. They did speak for an hour. Reg Wright used to get out from his place and wander around. I would not give up the opportunity of seeing someone else as colourful come into this place and would not deny him the right to speak for at least half an hour. If I had the opportunity, I would allow them to speak for an hour. I will even put up with garrulous Gareth. I will even put with Senator Evans, who, as I have said before—

Senator Button—I rise on a point of order: The back bench senator described Senator Evans as 'garrulous Gareth'. We cannot have that. That is not respectful to a member of the chamber, a Minister of this House.

The CHAIRMAN—Order! I think 'garrulous' would be a reflection on Senator Gareth Evans and that you should withdraw.

Senator WALTERS—I will withdraw, Mr Chairman, and say that he is intoxicated by his own verbosity, which is often what the Minister is.

Senator Button—Senator Evans would object more to the familiarity of being called 'Gareth' rather than 'Senator Evans'.

The CHAIRMAN—Senator Walters, you should address Senator Evans either by his title as a Minister or by 'Senator Evans', not by his first name.

Senator WALTERS—The point is made, Mr Chairman. I am very willing to listen to Senator Evans as he goes on and on in his verbose way. I have never heard the Minister speak in the Committee stage for less than quarter of an hour. Tonight he stood up and said that he did not want to add to the debate on the defence statement and would speak for only a couple of minutes, but he spoke for 10 minutes. I feel that we should not limit him, and I would be opposed to limiting anyone else in this chamber.

As Senator Grimes said, we used to be able to speak for an hour. Some of the speeches made by Senator Cavanagh and Senator Wright were gems. This place is the worse for the fact that such speeches are no longer made. The proposal is no great asset. The Standing Orders Committee, under the Government, is all too willing to cut back the time of anyone who wants to speak in the Senate. It is particularly anxious to cut the adjournment debate right out. It does not like notices of motion much either. It wants us to hand all these over to the Clerks. Does it want us to write out a few speeches for the Clerks to make on our behalf? That is what the

Government is getting to. It is ridiculous to say that we should no longer speak, off air, for more than 30 minutes when we are debating a detailed Bill and wish to make certain points. Indeed, many senators would need the full time to do so, if they were to do so competently.

Senator Macklin mentioned the reduction of the 15-minute limit to 10 minutes. Let us not kid ourselves; it will not save time. If we speak for 10 minutes and we obviously want more time, one of our colleagues will get up and say 'It's a nice day' so we can continue speaking for a further 10 minutes. It will not save time, so why go into all this stupidity of trying to cut down the speech times without any hope at all of saving time in the long run? As for notices of motion—

The CHAIRMAN—Order! We are not dealing with that at the moment. We are dealing only with the length of speeches.

Senator WALTERS—Mr Chairman, I am happy to leave my remarks there and speak later on the question of notices of motion.

Senator BUTTON (Victoria—Leader of the Government in the Senate) (10.03)—I wish to make a point that I should have made in my earlier contribution. I suppose I was reminded of it by Senator Walters. There are two parties involved when a speech is being made—the person who makes the speech and the person who has to listen to it. The 20-minute limitation is beneficial to those who have to listen to it, I would suspect, as well as to the person who has to make it in the form of a discipline. Attention spans are falling rapidly. I think one must consider that aspect of it also.

Senator Chaney—What did you say again?

Senator BUTTON—I said 'attention spans'. It was a very good joke. I must say that I enjoyed it more when I read it in the *News of the World* 15 years ago. The point is that one probably gets a better debate if the contributions are shorter; they may even be sharper.

Senator PETER BAUME (New South Wales) (10.04)—A few moments ago I raised the concern about the wording of paragraph (d). The Clerks have been very helpful in talking to me since then. The standing order as it is presently written, and the sessional order as it is presently written, contain an extra word—the word 'continuously'—which has been left out of the proposed standing order. The existing standing order reads:

. . . the Senator so interrupted may continue his speech for a further quarter of an hour but no longer continuously on any one Question.

The sessional order says the same thing. I suggest that if the word 'continuously' were added the objection I have raised would fall. I seek leave of the Committee to add that word as it will help me in considering paragraph (d).

Leave granted.

Senator PETER BAUME—In relation to proposed new paragraph (d) I move:

After 'longer' insert 'continuously'.

Senator GARETH EVANS (Victoria—Manager of Government Business in the Senate) (10.05)—I am happy to accept that amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

Senator COONEY (Victoria) (10.05)—On listening to the debate, it seems to me that the question is not so much how long a contribution ought to take but the relevance of it. I would have thought that standing order 419 ought to be looked at. Presently it states:

No Senator shall digress from the subject-matter of any Question under discussion; nor anticipate the discussion of any subject which appears on the Notice Paper:

It seems to me that there can be a good speech of half an hour or an hour and a poor speech of five minutes. The real question is whether the speech is pertinent, coherent or repetitious. Many speeches simply repeat what has been said before. Again, it seems that we are pursuing the wrong trail—

The CHAIRMAN—Order! The honourable senator raised the question of relevance. What he is saying now is not relevant to the matter before the Chair.

Senator COONEY—Mr Chairman, I am saying that it is not a question of whether a speech goes for half an hour or 20 minutes; it is a question of whether it is relevant, repetitious or coherent. That is the point I want to make. It is not a matter of whether we speak for half an hour or 20 minutes but whether what we say is relevant, coherent and repetitious. The President and those acting on his behalf ought to have, in my view, more power to pull up an honourable senator whose speech does not fulfil that test. A further point is this: It is said that most honourable senators should be able to say what they want in 20 minutes. It seems that we are going in for shortness and preciseness and are denying the precincts of this chamber to those who are less than perfect. If we pursue the line of saying that a senator must say what he has to say in

20 minutes we may be denying those who are not quite as eloquent as others the capability of speaking their minds.

Senator CRICHTON-BROWNE (Western Australia) (10.08)—I will speak briefly. I am totally opposed to the proposal. It seems to me that the single ambition of successive governments, not least the present Government and the previous Government, is to provide us with more and more legislation. Of course, there are those who have provided us with more senators. In their view the primary concern is to get legislation through as quickly as possible, irrespective of whether it is debated in an articulate, fair and understandable way. The parameters of the Government's consideration seem to be to get the legislation through. It does not matter whether it is debated intelligently. As long as the Bills become Acts of Parliament, it does not matter whether the views of honourable senators are recorded in *Hansard*. That is a pretty inadequate way of considering the functions of this chamber.

It seems to me that we are moving away not only from the right of honourable senators to express their views in a fulsome way, but also from their responsibility to explain to the opposing party, their colleagues, the public at large and their constituents where they stand on any given piece of legislation. As I recall, there was a limit of an hour and then the last Government reduced that to half an hour. I argued against it in the party room then and I argued against it in the chamber.

Senator Robert Ray—It was a conscience vote. It should not have been in the party room.

Senator CRICHTON-BROWNE—Those matters are debated in the party room so that one is likely to get someone else's point of view; not that one is caucused. We are not caucused on anything. Nobody gets expelled from our Party for crossing the floor, as I have done on many occasions.

Senator Robert Ray—What about Francis in Victoria or Jennings in Victoria?

Senator CRICHTON-BROWNE—They were not expelled for crossing the floor; they were expelled because of their conduct. Senator Ray knows that that is quite true. It is my view that a fundamental responsibility of all honourable senators is to say what they have to say and, if that takes an hour, so be it. If it takes three quarters of an hour, so be it. If one looks back at the record one will find that very few senators take longer than is required. It just so happens

that some require a longer time than others. But I believe that the vast majority of senators who get to their feet to put a point of view put it in the best way they are capable of doing and in the shortest time possible.

We live in a day and age when governments provide us with more and more legislation, which is not necessarily in my view desirable, but it is a reality, and much of that legislation is complex. Many of the issues are complex and touch upon contemporary social judgments which governments make and which oppositions are required to contemplate. Very often one cannot put down in a detailed way why one represents one point of view without taking some time to work through all the arguments so that ultimately somebody reading a speech which might be 30 minutes long at least understands in a definitive way why one is arguing the way one is. Very often a vote is no reflection on a person's attitude towards legislation.

On the rare occasions I have bothered to consult the House of Representatives *Hansard* looking for a glimmer of inspiration, a moment of truth, a gem of fact seeking to persuade me to one point of view or another, I have found nothing but rhetoric. As I recall, the speeches of members of the House of Representatives are a maximum of 20 minutes. They find that in that time they are limited to generalities. So the House of Representatives *Hansard* reeks of generalities. There is no precision, no detail and no persuasive argument. Frankly, one has to listen to the debate and be moved by the emotion because one is certainly not moved by the logic. I would hate to see the day when the same is true of the Senate. Yet that is the direction in which we are heading.

The fact is that on average the length of time taken by senators is slightly less than 20 minutes, so most senators speak for less than half an hour. But there are those who speak longer. Obviously, those who speak longer feel the need to do so. The fact that the average speech is slightly less than 20 minutes in my view adds weight to the argument that there is no filibustering in second reading debate speeches or in the adjournment debate, but rather that people in their own way seek to put down their points of view so their colleagues, their constituents and the wider public can understand their arguments.

I take the view that freedom of speech is denied if the time to express one's freedom of speech is denied. That is exactly what this is all about. It is not good enough to say that a

senator is entitled to come in here and say what he wishes without providing him with the time to say what he wishes to say. We are moving inexorably towards the position where, because of the amount of legislation that is presented to us in this chamber by governments, the contribution we all make is becoming less and less material, less and less important and less and less relevant.

One has to ask: If the Government increases the amount of legislation by another half in the next five years, do we take it that we will have 10 minutes, and then five minutes, to speak, until we get to the point that all that is important is to have the legislation on the statute books, in which case the chamber becomes redundant and irrelevant and we lose the essential traditions and the essential reason that we are here and, in many respects, the cornerstone of democracy. Senator Grimes yawns at that proposition, but what those who support this proposal are saying is that what a senator has to say is irrelevant; that the emphasis is on getting the legislation through and if getting the legislation through means that one cannot speak, so be it, one shall not speak. What is important is that one gets the legislation through.

Senator Grimes—No, we want more people to speak. Incidentally, I supported this in opposition and the people over there know that.

Senator CRICHTON-BROWNE—I know that Senator Grimes's motives are altruistic. I do not suggest for a moment that his motives on this occasion are devious but the truth of the matter is that the result is exactly the same. If we gag people, if we close people off from debate, the result is the same. We all know what decent people in this chamber think about gags; they are symptomatic of the denial of the right to speak. I believe that is a reflection of the majority of senators' views about being denied a reasonable right to speak.

The proposal before us, as I say, subjugates the rights of senators in the interests of expansive government which wishes to give to us more and more legislation and does not want to be inhibited, interrupted or in any way interfered with by the normal functioning of a democratic chamber such as the Senate. I sincerely hope that this proposal is defeated.

Senator ROBERT RAY (Victoria) (10.17)—I always enjoy Standing Orders debates because they bring out the pomposity of honourable senators more than any other debate. There are two propositions before us. The second proposition is probably more important than the first, that

is, that speaking time in Committee stage debates be limited to 10 minutes. In my experience anyone who speaks for more than 10 minutes in the Committee stage—let us remember that one can have repeated goes at it—tends to get back into a second reading debate speech. This is one of the things that have debased what should be a fundamentally good approach to the Committee stage. Suddenly, after five minutes, when people have asked questions they wanted to ask or have made the points they wanted to make, they realise that they have another 10 minutes, especially if they have had some legal training, and so they lift another 10 minutes from their superb speech on the second reading and blast us all with that—and on and on it goes. So we listen to many second reading debate speeches with a variation on the theme each time. I cannot understand the opposition to the second part of the proposal, which is to limit speaking time in the Committee stage to 10 minutes rather than the present 15 minutes.

As for the 20-minute proposition, I think I was here when we reduced the hour time limit on speeches to half an hour. I remember hearing the same doom and gloom speeches from people such as Senator Crichton-Browne—about how people could not adjust and how they needed an hour. I do not recall anyone needing an hour since we cut back the limit to half an hour. The real problem, apparently, is that senators cannot compress their thoughts into a 20-minute speech. I suppose that it ultimately goes back to an analysis of what a speech is and what purpose it serves. Senator Crichton-Browne, apparently, is worried about all the people reading the speeches. Frankly, it would be a lot cheaper to give each one of those people a free holiday overseas than to have to extend speeches by 10 minutes for the 20, 30 or 100 people who read them.

Even by Senator Crichton-Browne's own admission—the admission of a professional politician—he rarely even reads the House of Representatives speeches. He reflects the rest of the community, who do not often read *Hansard*. The only value in speeches in terms of the public—2 per cent I might add—is on broadcast days, which is three days in eight sitting days, in each two-week block. What happens? We rate about 2 per cent of the radio audience and 50 per cent of that audience gets very upset if there is a Test match on and it demands that we go off the air. Nevertheless, I am a defender of broadcasting Parliament because it enables the public to understand what politicians are saying. But what purpose does a speech have in this chamber? Certainly people do not read speeches,

in my view. Speeches really are just a tug of war across the chamber. It is important for an opposition to trot out its abilities and points of view, but I believe that speeches could be compressed into 20 minutes.

Nevertheless, in the end this debate tonight will be a farce. We are not going to get a resolution; we are not going to gag it; and the Opposition will talk it out, like all Standing Orders debates have been over the last five and a half years. It is a condemnation of this chamber that we cannot manage and rationalise our own Standing Orders, yet we strut around the country saying that we govern it. We cannot govern our own chamber. The debates become a shambles. The rights of senators are reduced consistently, not because their speaking times would be reduced from half an hour to 20 minutes but because senators cannot get on a speaking list to put their points of view. This has nothing to do with the expansion of the Parliament. No one can tell me that an extra 12 senators have created all these problems. It is absolute garbage to suggest that.

In my view we have a real problem with the Standing Orders. They need a total review. One of our colleagues, Senator Macklin, who is present in the chamber, has pressed that point very firmly to the Standing Orders Committee. He has often made the point that the Standing Orders should have a total review. He probably does not think much of me and others who have said: 'Why bother? You would spend months or years doing that review and it would come to this chamber and we would never have the will and application to apply those changes because it would get talked out'. Everyone who is in opposition, whether it is us or senators opposite, knows that at a certain point of time a government has to dump a debate from the agenda and go to the banana Bill or the pig slaughter levy Bill so that it can get through the essential legislation. So we cannot have a rational discussion of Standing Orders in this chamber. A lot of recommendations have come out of the Standing Orders Committee, but I doubt that even one will be put through in this session because the Opposition will talk until it knows that the Government has to cave in and move the debate off the agenda to make way for more essential legislation which affects the rest of Australia.

Even if we do not reduce speeches from 30 to 20 minutes, I would like to hear the rationale of those people from this side of the chamber or the other side who oppose speeches being limited

to 10 minutes in the Committee stage. Basically the Committee stage is a to and fro process, with Opposition and Government senators directing questions to Ministers and seeking responses. It should not be a de facto second reading debate. In view of the fact that I have said that one can compress a brilliant speech into about five minutes, I will resume my seat.

Senator MacGIBBON (Queensland) (10.23)—There is a case to be made for saying that we are tackling this matter the wrong way around. There is a real feeling in the Opposition—which I hope we will be shed of shortly when we assume government in a month or two, or whenever the Government has the courage to go to the polls—that we do not get enough time to debate important issues. If one looks at the statistics for the Australian Parliament and compares them with the statistics for the parliaments of Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, one sees that we do not sit for enough days or weeks during the year. Reports which come before this Parliament, which have been put forward with a great deal of thought, care and deliberation, simply are not given the courtesy they demand. Every year hundreds of reports never get fully debated in this Parliament. There is really no point in having committees set up to make these reports because they suffer the same fate as petitions which come before the Parliament.

There is a very real case to be made for increasing the sitting time of the Senate by at least 25 or 30 per cent in the first instance. I am not concerned with the House of Representatives. It operates like a rugby league grand final, with the Whips using their numbers to gag debates the whole time and I do not think the House of Representatives needs more time for the business it has before it. I believe that this chamber, as the States House and the House of review, has a legitimate claim for more sitting time.

With respect to the reduction of speaking time to 20 minutes, that is fine for most Bills. I have great sympathy for what Senator Cooney said. When we have long speaking lists inevitably all the ground has been covered and there is not really much point in speakers getting up and rehashing the arguments which have been run. But what do we do if people feel strongly about something? If people feel that they need to make a position clear on the public record, we cannot very well deny them the right to do so. I do not really know what we should do about that. My personal view is that both sides of the chamber

could put up two or three speakers in rotation and the rest of the time could be spent on the Committee stage. I have had a note passed to me that the Government needs to introduce a Bill, but before I sit down I would like to say that Senator Robert Ray—I am sorry that he has gone—has a real point in claiming that there is some validity in reducing the speaking time to 10 minutes at the Committee stage. I see no point in having 15 minutes. My personal view is that, like the Magic Pudding, we can have multiple cracks at speaking on the Committee stage, and 10 minutes is sufficient. I seek leave to continue my remarks later.

Leave granted.

Progress reported.

AUSTRALIAN PROTECTIVE SERVICE BILL 1986

Bill received from the House of Representatives.

Ordered that the Bill may be taken through all its stages without delay.

Bill (on motion by Senator Gietzelt) read a first time.

Second Reading

Senator GIETZELT (New South Wales—Minister for Veterans' Affairs) (10.27)—I move:

That the Bill be now read a second time.

I seek leave to have the second reading speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The speech read as follows—

The purpose of this Bill is to give statutory recognition to the Australian Protective Service and its officers and to clarify its powers. This will make the performance of protective security duties much simpler from a legal viewpoint. The Bill will also resolve a number of administrative problems which have been caused to the service by the lack of a statutory identity. It will not give rise to additional costs to the Government.

In October 1984 the Australian Protective Service was created. Most of its members were transferred from the Australian Federal Police into the Public Service where they formed the core of the new body in the then Department of Administrative Services. They went on operating as uniformed, disciplined and, where necessary, armed officers but they were no longer police and did not have police powers.

The Protective Service was a new departure in Commonwealth security arrangements. As a first stage the Government agreed that property protection functions only would be handed over to APS. As the Service has proved its effectiveness it has been given a wider range of responsibilities.

Besides its regular property protection work it now provides all the custodial staff for immigration detention centres and performs routine security duties at the official residences of the Prime Minister and the Governor-General.

Its services are also available to meet ad hoc requirements for guarding people and property either in conjunction with police or where the risk level does not justify a police presence. Some such tasks have included escorts for art treasures and protection for visiting foreign VIPs.

Of course, there will continue to be a need for police services in the personal protection area.

The Protective Service is not equipped to carry out close personal protection duties but it is now clear that it, too, has an on-going role to play in personal as well as property protection.

Because of these developments, the Government decided it was time to take stock of the Service's legal position. When the Service was set up questions of legal powers and duties were less urgent than the practical problems involved in building a uniformed and disciplined service.

In October 1984, speaking for the Opposition on the Australian Federal Police (Amendment) Bill, Mr Steele Hall raised the question of possible legislation for the Service and my colleague the then Special Minister of State indicated to the House of Representatives that consideration was being given to the question.

As the Service's role has grown it has become increasingly clear that relying on existing law is not really satisfactory. Commonwealth law on protective security has been built up on the assumption that the only major government body working in this area will be a police force.

Provisions to give appropriate powers to Commonwealth officers outside the police are generally very cumbersome when used for a body of over 600 people. And the law is unclear about just what powers of arrest are available to such officers and how they should exercise them.

Now, in the Government's view, that situation is administratively inefficient and unfair both to the officers and to members of the public who may have to deal with such officers. So the Bill I am now presenting is intended to do two things.

First, to make sure that officers of the Australian Protective Service have all the powers they genuinely need to perform their full range of duties. Second, to ensure that the private citizen is protected against abuse of those powers. Because of this my colleague the Minister for Local Government and Administrative Services has obtained advice from outside the Public Service on the human rights issues involved so as to ensure that this Bill provides adequate protection to the rights of individuals.

The Bill is divided into four parts, two of which deal with definitions and mechanical matters.

Part II provides a legal identity for the Protective Service and its officers, sets out its functions and provides appropriate controls over the way in which it operates.

Part III deals with the powers and duties of Protective Service officers. It sets out the circumstances in which a Protective Service officer can make an arrest. It provides a code of conduct and procedure on the way in which an arrest is to be carried out and the arrested person is to be dealt with afterwards.

Briefly, the effect is that a Protective Service officer can exercise much the same power of arrest as a police officer can in immediate response to any of the listed offences. However the Protective Service officer must put the arrested person into police custody as soon as possible. The officer has no special power to arrest a suspect some time after the offence has been committed. This is because the Service does not have an independent investigating or prosecuting role. It merely responds to immediate needs associated with its protection role.

Part III also provides for proper identification of officers on duty. It releases the service from State and Territory licensing and registration requirements which are not aimed at the Commonwealth and merely cause inconvenience to both sides. This release concerns such things as firearms and handcuffs, use of which is strictly controlled by the Service.

Honourable senators may notice that there is no reference in the Bill to custodial powers. I will just note here that my colleague the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs is planning regulations under the Migration Act to cater for the needs of immigration detention centres, including a code of custodial powers and duties.

As for the present Bill, I believe that it provides a good balance between providing for efficient and reasonable security and protecting the citizen against unreasonable use of government powers. I commend the Bill to the Senate.

Debate (on motion by Senator Peter Baume) adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Badgerys Creek: Sydney's Second Airport— Death of Alderman Gordon William Ravell

Motion (by Senator Gareth Evans) proposed:

That the Senate do now adjourn.

Senator PETER BAUME (New South Wales) (10.30)—Earlier today I asked a question concerning the problems facing people at Badgerys Creek. Following what was an unsatisfactory answer, it is necessary to set out the events surrounding the Badgerys Creek decision and the failure of the Government to honour the promises it made to the residents. Some time after December 1985, probably early 1986, the Government announced its decision that Badgerys Creek would be the site of the second Sydney airport, and a glossy brochure was issued outlining the decision and setting out the area of land involved. In that glossy brochure the Government said, *inter alia*:

The Government will need to acquire all properties within the site. This will be done initially by the method

known as "acquisition by agreement". Existing property owners or business owners will be invited to sell their properties at a time which is convenient to themselves, their families, or, where appropriate, their business partners.

The people in the involved area then received two pieces of correspondence: One dated 24 February 1986 was issued on the letterhead of the Minister for Aviation (Mr Peter Morris) and signed by him—the appropriate Minister. That letter set out to the people involved in the area the circumstances surrounding the choice and the consequences for them. Page 2 of that letter reads:

It is the Government's wish that, as far as possible, the acquisition of land in the airport site will be voluntary. In other words, you can sell your land to the Commonwealth right now and I guarantee that you will get a fair market price as determined by the independent government valuer.

What Mr Morris was saying in that letter dated 24 February 1986 was that people in the affected area could sell their land right now and that the Government would purchase it at a price to be determined by the valuer. The following day a letter was sent by the Department of Local Government and Administrative Services, which is the line department involved in the purchase of the land, signed over the name of 'A. Gallery, Chief Property Officer for New South Wales'. This letter set out the means by which land would be acquired and it said at page 2:

In effect this means that there are three options available to you—

- (a) immediate sale by agreement;

I stress the word 'immediate'. Then there was set out the two other means by which land could be acquired. Many of the residents in the affected area accepted the fact that the Government had made a decision. They were aware of the fact that they could sell their land to no one else but the Government since it was now designated as part of the site of the new Sydney second airport. They could not borrow on it or carry out long term improvements, and many of them determined that they would sell. What transpired then was that the Government, having told them in two letters, one from Mr Morris and one from the Chief Property Officer, that they could sell now—and in Mr Morris's words 'right now'—could not pay for the land that it had promised to buy. What happened was that the Government discovered that it just did not have enough cash.

During July, before the Expenditure Review Committee which was helping the Government

determine its Budget, the Government reversed its decision and decided to limit its acquisitions to only a class of the property owners within the airport site—that class which had entered into firm agreements by that date or which had undertaken firm commitments to purchase other properties. This was in spite of the fact that the Government, in writing from two departments of state, had told 241 title holders in the site area that they could sell their land right now; it would be an immediate sale. The Government, through the Executive arm in the Budget preparation, now determined otherwise. In this year's Budget \$9.5m was set aside for the purchase of properties in the Badgerys Creek area. The Minister for Aviation issued a news release on 25 July 1986 which did not make clear that the Government was reneging on its promise. It said:

The Federal Government is continuing to provide money to meet its commitments to buy properties for the second Sydney airport at Badgerys Creek.

It did not say that it was providing a quite inadequate amount of money; not nearly as much money as was required to purchase the properties of the people who are now locked into this area of the new airport, and who wanted the Government to buy the properties, and who wanted the Government to honour what it had told them in writing. Of course, that much money was not provided. From August, after the Budget appeared, the Government started writing letters to many of the people who hold land in the affected airport area in the following terms:

As you may be aware from recent press reports or other sources, the Government will continue to provide funds for the purchase of properties in the nominated Second Sydney Airport site at Badgerys Creek in the financial year 1986/87. The level of funding will, however only enable us to proceed with the purchase of properties from those people to whom we have already made a firm offer and from a limited number of people who had, on or before 25 July 1986, entered into a firm commitment for the purchase of another property as a direct result of the Government's announcement of Badgerys Creek as the site for the development of a Second Sydney Airport.

The Government goes on to say to these people:

On the information presently available to us, you do not appear to fall into either of the above categories and on present indications we will not be in a position to purchase your property in the current financial year.

And the letter goes on. That letter went out to a large number of the property holders. Let us consider the position of these people: They are locked into an area of land; they know it will be acquired from them either by agreement or compulsorily later on; it is virtually unmarketable; many of them need to get out and start to

reorganise their lives elsewhere; the Government has promised that it will buy the property right now—to use the Government's words immediately—and it is now clearly reneging on the agreement it made with these residents, my electors and Senator Gietzelt's electors. The Government reneged on the agreement that it made to them. I have letters to several of the people to whom the Government wrote in these terms.

Not only that, but the amount of money provided in the Budget, \$9.5m, is insufficient even to allow the Government to do what it promised in those post-Budget letters. It cannot even buy all the properties that fall into that narrow class that it decided would be eligible. I have before me a copy of a letter, written over the signature of Mr Tom Uren, the Minister for Local Government and Administrative Services, dated 20 January 1987, written to the Minister for Finance (Senator Walsh), which was the source of the question I asked the Minister today. I will read the letter as it will not take long. It reads:

20 Jan 1987

Dear Minister

I am writing to you concerning the funds required for the acquisition of properties for the second Sydney airport site at Badgerys Creek.

You will recall that in July the Expenditure Review Committee decided to limit the acquisition of properties in 1986/87 for this project to those properties on which firm offers had been made, and those properties whose owners had entered into a firm commitment to purchase another property on or before 25 July 1986. For this purpose a total of \$9.5m was provided in the Budget.

At the time, it was not known whether all of the offers made by the Commonwealth would be accepted or how many property owners had entered into a firm commitment before 25 July 1986 to purchase another property.

The situation now is that fifty-four properties with a total acquisition cost of \$10.25m (includes costs of private valuations, conveyancing and resettlement expenses) have now been identified. To date this financial year, offers have been made to 50 owners and agreement reached with most of these. As the \$9.5m appropriated for the purpose is fully committed, my Department is unable to make offers to the remaining four owners agreed to by Government. Consequently, I seek your agreement to the provision of up to an additional \$750,000 cash in 1986/87. If you agree to this request I propose that cash be sought as required, depending on the timing of acceptances of owners of offers made to them, at Departmental level.

I would also like to advise you of two other matters related to this project. The first concerns a number of approaches from owners claiming particular hardship arising from their need to sell their Badgerys Creek property. These cases are not covered by this submission or by the Government's previous decisions. The Prime Minister has suggested that a submission be presented to Cabinet on hardship cases early in 1987.

The second matter concerns the current estimate of the acquisition cost for this project. The Taxation Office valuers have now provided a revised estimate of cost for the acquisition of all the land required for the second Sydney airport. The new estimate is \$60m (in 1987 dollars) and includes a provision for costs associated with private valuations, conveyancing and resettlement expenses. Note however that the eventual requirement is likely to exceed this figure with the amount of the increase largely dependent on timing of the actual acquisitions.

That involves the simple fact that in current dollar terms the amount might be higher. The letter concludes:

I am sending a copy of this correspondence to our colleagues the Prime Minister and the Minister for Aviation.

It is signed by Mr Uren. For the Government to keep the promise it made to the residents in the acquisition area of Badgerys Creek would require \$60m this financial year. This Government, far from providing the money to keep its promise, has provided \$9.25m and if Mr Uren is successful we may get another three-quarters of a million dollars, which will bring it to \$10.25m.

Senator Kilgarriff—They should be sued.

Senator PETER BAUME—One wonders whether the two letters that came to the residents with written offers from the Government saying that they could sell right now constituted an offer in legal terms. They probably did not. But whatever the legal situation, the Government has a moral and political duty to honour the promise it made. These are little people; their life savings are committed to these properties and they can do nothing with their lives until this Government meets its obligations—the obligations it made, the promises it made and the promises it has not kept and is not keeping. I have some absolutely pathetic letters from people living in the area outlining the kind of difficulties they face. I have a letter from a Mr Eckhardt who lives in Elizabeth Drive, at the edge of the acquisition area. I quote one paragraph of the letter:

For seven years my partner and I have struggled to establish a business capable of supporting ourselves on this site. During this period we have had to sacrifice some basic living conditions in the belief that those forebearances would be rewarded in the long term. As an illustration my family (until recently) together with my partner have lived in a single house on the property with the intention of building a proper family home when the income from the business could pay for it. That goal was becoming realisable when the airport decision was handed down. In view of the sacrifices my wife made for the long term ambition of a home of which she could be justifiably proud the announcement was a bitter and insufferable assault on her pride and belief in rewards flowing to those who work for them.

For the Department of Local Government and Administrative Services to offer in place of the right to a personal home, leased accommodation in the area was cold, callous and intimidating. As a direct consequence of the matrimonial pressures flowing from the thwarting of our personal ambitions my wife has now left the matrimonial home with my child. Despite appeals to the responsible Minister there has been no response at this human level and I am forced to believe that the Government does not care that such human problems are a cost which it is not concerned about avoiding.

This is a very simple matter. We are looking at a problem involving \$60m. The Government has an enormous national debt. The Government made two offers in writing to the people in this acquisition area and these people are entitled to have the Government make good those offers.

Senator Michael Baume—They were just a political stunt.

Senator PETER BAUME—It was a political stunt and the proof of the Government's intentions will be in its actions. It said: 'You can sell right now'; and some people were foolish enough to believe that the Government meant just that. What concerns me is that there is an immense amount of human suffering by people who are now in a position where they cannot sell their properties. They cannot develop them, they cannot move away and they cannot make a living where they are. The Government is entitled to acquire land for its airport—that is all right—and the Government is entitled to have made the offers it did, but it is required to make good those offers and it has failed to do so. People who are my constituents—more than that, people who are citizens of this country—are suffering today as a direct consequence of this Labor Government action which is disgraceful, unnecessary and quite callous. I ask the Government to please reconsider its position and do nothing more than make good the promises it made to ordinary and vulnerable citizens of New South Wales.

Senator MICHAEL BAUME (New South Wales) (10.45)—I want to draw to the attention of the Senate the untimely death at the age of 54 of Alderman Gordon Ravell, former President of the Shoalhaven Shire Council, who was accidentally killed when his vehicle plunged off the road out of Nowra. Alderman Ravell spent 12 years on the Shoalhaven Council, or whatever council covered that area under different names during that period. He was a former member of the Royal Australian Navy and an oyster farmer at Greenwell Point. He had a very close association, as long term patron, with the Nowra-Culburra Surf Life Saving Club, was a member of the Returned Services League, and the Naval

Association, and of course was heavily involved in many activities in the Shoalhaven area. So dedicated a member of the Shoalhaven Council was he that in those 12 years he missed only two meetings of the Council and that was because he was on official business associated with the gas industry elsewhere in his role as President of the Local Government Association's Gas Advisory Committee.

He was first elected to the Council in 1974 and was Shire President in 1978-79. In 1976 he was elected to the Local Government Association's Gas Advisory Committee before becoming Vice-Chairman in 1981 and Chairman in 1982—a position he retained until his most untimely death. On the Council he served on just about every conceivable standing committee and had a basic philosophy that I certainly supported, which of course was that ratepayers' funds should be spent on tangible and traditional local government issues such as bridges, roads, kerbs and gutters, and not on some other things which might have had some publicity value but which did not in fact serve the best interest of the ratepayers.

I worked for many years in conjunction with Gordon Ravell when I was the member for Macarthur and had my electorate office in Nowra. He was a man who was very highly regarded. He served for many years on the Country Executive of the Local Government Association and he was Country Vice-President in 1983. As the present Mayor of Shoalhaven said in his funeral oration:

The citizens of this city owe the late Alderman Gordon William Ravell a tremendous tribute for his contribution toward the city's development and I pay homage to him.

I echo those words and I am certain there are many people in both chambers of this Parliament who are only too well aware of the enormous contribution Gordon Ravell made to local governing in New South Wales. I take this opportunity to extend my condolences to his family.

Senator GIETZELT (New South Wales—Minister for Veterans' Affairs) (10.49)—Senator Peter Baume has raised a number of matters which require the attention of the Minister for Local Government and Administrative Services (Mr Uren). I can appreciate the concerns raised by Senator Baume. They are matters which unfortunately come within budgetary considerations. The rights of a number of people have obviously been affected by an insufficiency of funds allocated. I suppose that in defence of the Government's position I could say that it may

have anticipated that there would be some reluctance on the part of residents to sell and therefore limited funds would have been made available in the first financial year. However, having spent many years in local government, I know that when governments decide to take courses of action people decide, perhaps reluctantly, to accept the government's wishes and make other plans. In those circumstances, governments have an obligation to respond. All I can do in these circumstances is to make representations to the Minister and suggest that he be strengthened by the case that Senator Peter Baume has put on this matter so that in the

current financial year, as we prepare for the next Budget, sufficient funds will be available at least to alleviate the major part of the problem, having regard to the tight budgetary problems that obviously are still with us.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Senate adjourned at 10.51 p.m.

PAPERS

The following papers were tabled:

Acts Interpretation Act—Correspondence relating to extension of specified period for presentation of the Phosphate Mining Corporation of Christmas Island Annual Report 1985-86.

Public Service Act—Determinations 1987 Nos 2, 7.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The following answers to questions were circulated:

Attorney-General's Department: Grants to Trade Unions

(Question No. 1132)

Senator Michael Baume asked the Minister representing the Attorney-General, upon notice, on 3 June 1986:

Has the Attorney-General's Department, or any statutory authority or organisation for which the Attorney is responsible made available any grants or funds to any trade union body or related organisation in the financial years 1983-84, 1984-85 and 1985-86; if so—

- who received those funds;
- for what purpose;
- what amounts were involved; and
- when were these funds granted or given.

Senator Gareth Evans—The Attorney-General has provided the following answer to the honourable senator's question:

- Trades and Labour Council Emergency Welfare Foundation Inc., Western Australia.
- Funds were allocated under Appropriation Division 819 Item 01 to supplement legal aid services provided by a community based legal aid organisation. These grants were made to a large number of community legal centres following recommendations to the Attorney-General by Legal Aid Commissions under the guidelines for the Commonwealth Funding Program for Community Legal Centres.

- and (d) Payments were made on a calendar year basis as follows:

	\$
1983	10,000
1984	17,000
1985	24,000
1986	42,000

I mention that although the Attorney-General may authorise financial assistance for a number of types of proceedings under the Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1904, no payments were made to trade unions or related organisations in the year specified. Section 141B provides that organisations are not eligible for assistance under that section and the Attorney-General takes the view that organisations are not intended to be eligible for financial assistance under other sections of the Act.

Extradition Orders

(Question No. 1242)

Senator Archer asked the Minister representing the Attorney-General, upon notice, on 19 August 1986.

- How many extradition orders were issued in the years 1983, 1984, 1985 and for 1986 to date.

- Is it appropriate to release the names involved; if so, what are the names of the people who are the subjects of these extradition orders.

- Which of these orders have not yet been dealt with by the relevant courts overseas.

- Which of these orders have been dealt with by courts overseas but have failed to achieve the desired result, namely the return of the suspect to Australia.

Senator Gareth Evans—The Attorney-General has provided the following answer to the honourable senator's question:

I have assumed that the honourable senator's question refers to the number of formal requisitions made by Australia for the return of fugitives from other countries. On the basis of this assumption the answers are as follows:

As the honourable senator has requested statistics on a calendar year basis, the statistics provided cannot be accurately compared with those provided in the Department's Annual Reports—the latter are compiled on a financial year basis. In addition, the Annual Reports do not give separate statistics for formal requisitions. Formal requisitions are subsumed under the general heading of "Requests", which includes all extradition cases in which a substantive approach (often a request for provisional arrest) has been made to another country.

- The number of requisitions made by Australia to other countries since 1 January 1983 is listed below. It should be noted that not all fugitives returned to Australia have been apprehended in the foreign country or returned to Australia as a result of a formal requisition by Australia to that country. 1983—6; 1984—7; 1985—7; 1986—8.

It is emphasised that the number of formal requisitions does not reflect the Commonwealth's extradition caseload because ordinarily formal requisitions are only made when a fugitive has been located and arrest is considered possible or has already taken place. Considerations relating to the existence of an extradition treaty with the relevant country and the probability of satisfying the legal requirements governing extradition from that country must also be taken into account before an extradition requisition is made. As most extradition cases involve persons whose whereabouts are unknown or persons who seek refuge in countries considered to be inaccessible to Australian extradition, the majority of outstanding extradition matters involve persons who are not at present the subject of formal extradition requisitions.

A significant number of extradition matters do not proceed to the formal requisition stage for reasons which include:

- the Attorney-General, the department, or the agency originating the request determines that a formal requisition should not be made because of evidentiary or other difficulties;
- the fugitive, upon being apprehended under the provisional arrest procedure or upon becoming

aware of Australia's intention to seek extradition, waives his or her right to formal extradition and returns to Australia voluntarily; or

- (3) ordinarily Civil Law countries will not extradite their own nationals and in such cases the possibility of prosecution in that country in lieu of extradition is considered.

(2) It is appropriate to release only the names of those fugitives who have been apprehended for the purposes of extradition. It is, of course, inappropriate to release the names of fugitives who are still being sought by police authorities. Listed below on a calendar year basis are the names of persons who have returned to Australia following extradition action. Some of these persons returned voluntarily and in some cases no formal requisition for extradition was ever made by Australia to the overseas country concerned.

Fugitives returned to Australia

1983—H. S. Fuller (USA), Kim Kon Set (Malaysia), T. A. Nicholson (Hong Kong).

1984—H. N. Hayes (Switzerland), Choo Cheng Kui (Singapore), Wong Chi Po (Hong Kong), Y. I. Wong (Hong Kong), T. J. White (USA), C. D. Disney (USA), J. P. Kamrin (USA), M. J. J. Casey (Hong Kong), J. P. Connell (USA), M. N. O'Sullivan (USA), G. L. O'Meagher (USA).

1985—J. A. Karam (USA), J. W. Shepherd (USA), V. Andrade-Pereira (Switzerland), G. A. Dittford (FRG), P. A. Twining (USA).

1986—W. Levinge (USA), H. Millar (USA), J. M. D. Gomez (New Caledonia—France), R. G. Kidner (France), B. R. Cornwell (UK), B. R. Bull (Austria), D. P. Tiffany (USA).

(3) (a) In the following cases the relevant court(s) in the foreign jurisdiction have commenced to deal with a formal extradition request from Australia but the usual legal processes, including appeals, have not been concluded: V. A. Barron (USA), P. Watson (UK), S. Oskar (UK), N. P. Butani (Sri Lanka), P. G. J. Benwell (Sri Lanka); (b) In other cases the courts in foreign jurisdictions have not dealt with an Australian requisition because the fugitive can not be located, has fled the jurisdiction or has absconded whilst on bail.

(4) Since 1982, overseas courts have dealt with and refused a formal Australian requisition for extradition in the following cases:

1985—Trimbole (Ireland),

1986—Jolly (UK).

Research: Artificial Sweeteners and Sugar

(Question No. 1547)

Senator Colston asked the Minister representing the Minister for Science, upon notice, on 26 November 1986:

What research has CSIRO conducted during the last 10 years in relation to (a) the development of artificial sweeteners and (b) the production, manufacture or any related matters associated with sugar production in Australia.

Senator Button—The Minister for Science has provided the following answer to the honourable senator's question:

(a) None. The recently-announced discovery by CSIRO of a cheaper way to produce aspartame than the methods now used commercially was an unplanned spin-off from a biotechnology research program on peptide synthesis.

(b) CSIRO has been involved in 14 research projects involving six different Divisions, relating to some aspect of sugar production or manufacture in Australia. The projects have covered the following topics:

Development of variants of sugar cane resistant in the laboratory to the toxin of the eyespot disease organism (*Helminthosporium sacchari*) using tissue culture techniques.

Assessment of the fertility of soils used to grow sugarcane.

Studies of the properties and mapping of the distribution of the soils of the wet coast of north Queensland.

Investigation of the contributions of earthworms to the maintenance and improvement of soil structure under sugar cane.

Determination of the chemical reactions underlying the problem of darkening of raw sugar and examination of ways to separate out the dark chemicals.

Development of an instrument to measure the concentration of sugar in solution during processing.

Development of a computer-based process control for scheduling batch crystallisation of raw sugar.

Examination of factors limiting sucrose crystallisation from molasses under simulated mill conditions.

Investigation of materials to reduce the rate of wear of the tips of shredder hammers.

Investigation of materials for the construction of the shells of sugar mill rollers and for the addition of the rough surface on the shells.

Development of methods for determining the degree of roughness and hence the extent of wear on sugar mill rollers.

Development of methods for measuring large gears used in sugar mills.

Consultation on the production of prototype machinery for the sugar industry.

Studies on bagasse for the production of chemicals and materials.