

NEW ZEALAND YOUTH PARLIAMENT

19 SEPTEMBER 1994

Speaker—Hon. PETER TAPSELL, MBE.

ELECTORATE	YOUTH MP	ELECTORATE	YOUTH MP
ALBANY	Margaret Browne	ONEHUNGA	Kato'one Kaho
AUCKLAND CENTRAL	Kara McDougall	ONSLow	Sara Johnson
AVON	Cathryn Simpson	OTAGO	Paula Hellyer
AWARUA	Desiree Wright	OTARA	Dorothy Isaia
BIRKENHEAD	Mark Barnard	PAHIATUA	Gillian Waite
CHCH CENTRAL	Aroha Eynon	PAKURANGA	Melanie Speer
CHCH NORTH	Sally Routledge	PALMERSTON NORTH	Julie Keenan
CLUTHA	Kirsten King	PANMURE	Lynne Tizzard
DUNEDIN NORTH	Bronwyn Sing	PAPAKURA	Anita Jardor
DUNEDIN WEST	Alison Helm	PAPATOETOE	Clare Marlitt
EAST COAST BAYS	Regan Thomson	PENCARROW	Sam Manu
EASTERN HUTT	Richard Adams	PORIRUA	Jessica Kohe
EASTERN MAORI	Anne Ross	RAGLAN	Joseph McLean
EASTERN BAY OF PLENTY	Tane Aikman	RAKAIA	Harvey Wood
EDEN	Nichollette Buddle	RANGIORA	Julie Kerr
FAR NORTH	Dylan Hohepa	RANGITIKEI	Andre George
FENDALTON	Lucy Scandrett	REMUERA	Carly Allbon
FRANKLIN	Rachel Brighthouse	ROSKILL	Helen England
GISBORNE	Maria Wynard	ROTORUA	Philippa Yardley
GLENFIELD	Sonia Kennedy	SELWYN	Bradley Stone
HAMILTON EAST	Rebecca Selby	SOUTHERN MAORI	Ana Gray
HAMILTON WEST	Gaynor Morgan	ST ALBANS	Sharon Campbell
HASTINGS	Wiki Maltón	ST KILDA	Cristen Lind
HAURAKI	Anne Hale	SYDNEHAM	Kris Fa'aoi
HAWKES BAY	Daniel Kerr	TAMAKI	James Doolan
HENDERSON	Mani Toailoa	TARANAKI	Craig Wisnewski
HOBSON	William Kaipo	TARAWERA	Craig Irison
HOROWHENUA	Darren Hughes	TASMAN	Laura Feasey
HOWICK	Joanne Watkinson	TAURANGA	Melinka Berridge
INVERCARGILL	Cushla O'Neill	TE ATATU	Deborah Pollard
ISLAND BAY	Phillip Schone	TIMARU	Michelle Heath
KAIMAI	Emma Dowdle	TITIRANGI	Karl von Randow
KAIPARA	Adelle Wintle	TONGARIRO	Maria Syme
KAPITI	Estelle Clifford	UPPER HUTT	Juliana Hutley
KING COUNTRY	Alison Weston	WAIKAREMOANA	David Gold
LYTTLETON	Jessica Martens	WAIKATO	Anna Kirk
MANAWATU	Paula Dixon	WAIPA	Miles McGill
MANGERE	Susan Amaru	WAIRARAPA	Timothy Dick
MANUREWA	Anthony Mills	WAITAKERE	Nicola Creamer
MARLBOROUGH	Michael Hope	WAITAKI	Delia Cassie
MATAKANA	Lucas Jacob	WAITOTARA	Nicky Proctor
MATAMATA	Michelle Brewer	WALLACE	Patricia Muir
MIRAMAR	Judith Fussell	WANGANUI	Amanda Hunt
MT ALBERT	Miranda Northey	WEST COAST	Kate McMillan
NAPIER	Tina Alexander	WESTERN HUTT	Kerry Milestone
NELSON	Celia MacKinnon	WESTERN MAORI	Riki Dodunski
NEW LYNN	Katherine Short	WGTN—KARORI	Angela Edgar
NEW PLYMOUTH	Shannon Austin	WHANGAREI	Gay Matthews
NORTH SHORE	Sacha Judd	YALDHURST	Anna Walkington
NORTHERN MAORI	Angela Cassidy-Elice	OBSERVER	Jonathan Darby

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS

Clerks at the Table .. M M McE Hollard (Clerk Assistant House)
 Fay Paterson

Serjeant-at-Arms .. Ipi Cross



NEW ZEALAND YOUTH PARLIAMENT

Parliamentary Debates

(HANSARD)

19 SEPTEMBER 1994

MONDAY, 19 SEPTEMBER 1994

Mr Speaker took the chair at 1.05 p.m.
Prayers.

Almighty God, humbly acknowledging our need for Thy guidance in all things, and laying aside all private and personal interests, we beseech Thee to grant that we may conduct this Youth Parliament to the glory of Thy holy name, the maintenance of true religion and justice, the honour of the Queen, and the future welfare of New Zealand, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**MOTION—ELECTORAL AMENDMENT BILL:
20TH ANNIVERSARY OF ENACTMENT**

DELIA CASSIE (Waitaki): I move, *That this House note that 19 September marks the 20th anniversary of the passing of the Electoral Amendment Bill, which provided for the lowering of the voting age to 18.*

Motion agreed to.

MOTION—WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE DAY: COMMEMORATION

NICOLA CREAMER (Waitakere): I move, *That this House note that 19 September 1994 also marks Women's Suffrage Day; that it has been 101 years since the passing of the Electoral Bill that enabled women to vote; and that this week also marks the 61st anniversary of Elizabeth McCombs, the first woman Member of Parliament, entering the House of Representatives.*

Motion agreed to.

QUESTIONS FOR ORAL ANSWER

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Employment—Young People

1. SALLY ROUTLEDGE (Christchurch North) to the **Prime Minister**: What advice has he received on the chances of young people obtaining permanent employment in the future?

Rt Hon. J B BOLGER (Prime Minister): The short answer is: "very good". Over the last 2 years strong growth in the New Zealand economy has led to an increase in employment opportunities and a decrease in unemployment. The details are that, in the household labour force survey for the June quarter 1994, the unemployment rate was 8.2 percent compared to 10.6 percent 2 years earlier. This decline in unemployment has been experienced by young people. In the June quarter household labour force survey, the number of unemployed 15-year-olds to 19-year-olds declined by 3,600 compared with the same period the previous year. The outlook for the next few years is for continued economic growth and an improving employment and unemployment outlook. Young people will gain from the increasing employment opportunities provided by the growing economy. The chances of young people finding employment will also improve as greater numbers of young people participate in further education and training.

Dylan Hohepa: As Northland holds the highest rate of unemployed people, what efforts is the Government putting towards Northland's plight?

Rt Hon. J B BOLGER: One of the main priorities of the Government has been to reduce unemployment throughout the country. The key element of this strategy has been the creation of an economic environment that encourages growth and the creation of jobs. Northland, specifically, has benefited from the recent growth with total employment in Northland increasing by 5,800—or 13.4 percent annually—in the June quarter of this year. That is the largest percentage increase in employment in any region. Unemployment has fallen in the same period. To support jobs in Northland a wide range of programmes are available that aim to help the unemployed. The New Zealand Employment Service runs programmes such as Taskforce Green, which provides work experience to the unemployed and enables projects of environmental and community benefit to be undertaken by community employers. The community employment group of the Department of Labour works with communities in Northland to facilitate employment opportunities and assist people to move towards self-sufficiency. Programmes such as the "be your own boss" scheme provide support funding to community-based groups that then deliver advice to unemployed people who want to explore self-employment.

Paula Hellyer: How does Government policy propose to find jobs for those students with learning disabilities when the funding for teaching these children has been cut by such a large degree?

Rt Hon. J B BOLGER: The level of resourcing for special education is unchanged. However, there is a process of continuous refinement to ensure the resources are targeted effectively. What happens is that the opening up of the opportunities for more young people to get access to special education support has meant that, in some instances, the amount of support going to an individual person may be reduced, but the overall amount of money we are spending in that area is unchanged.

While the finding of suitable employment is essentially a personal responsibility, the Government recognises that some groups require assistance in preparing themselves for employment and in finding suitable positions. To assist with training, the Government funds a range of skills training and work placement programmes, including the training opportunities programme, Taskforce Green and job-plus. These programmes are designed to teach vocational skills and to encourage employers to take on people who have some skills and who show a willingness to learn more in the work environment. It is important that employers are conscious of the contribution that people with special needs, and perhaps with some disability, can make to their place of work and their employment opportunities. That is something we need to spend a little more time in educating employers about and perhaps we have not done enough about that so far.

Secondary and Tertiary Industry—Promotion

2. SONIA KENNEDY (Glenfield) to the **Minister for Trade Negotiations:** With the latest GATT agreement making the trade of New Zealand's products easier, will there be less encouragement by the Government on the promotion of secondary and tertiary industry?

Rt Hon. J B BOLGER (Prime Minister), on behalf of the Minister for Trade Negotiations: There will be no lessening of efforts by Government to encourage the promotion of value-added production in the secondary and tertiary industry sectors. On the contrary, the considerable progress made in the GATT Uruguay round to cut tariffs and reduce tariff escalation will mean that we will need to step up efforts to export more processed versions of primary products. An example of this would be decreased tariff escalation in the forestry sector as a result of the elimination of tariffs on pulp, paper, and furniture products, which should provide an additional incentive to switch from log exports to the export of high value processed products such as panel wood products and wooden furniture. Increased export opportunities arising from the round should support rather than undermine the Government's efforts to encourage the development of secondary and tertiary industries.

The point raised by the questioner is important. I think there is a fear abroad that the Government and exporters might lapse back into old ways of just bulk exporting. The contrary will happen, in my view. What is essential is for us to continue to expand the

further processing in New Zealand so that we add value in New Zealand, create jobs in New Zealand, and earn more for the product when it is ultimately exported overseas.

Maori Language—Condition of Employment

3. ANDRE GEORGE (Rangitikei) to the **Minister of Maori Affairs:** What is the Government's policy regarding fluency in Maori language as a condition of employment in Government departments dealing with Maori issues?

Hon. JOHN LUXTON (Minister of Maori Affairs): The Government's policy regarding fluency in the Maori language as a condition of employment in Government departments dealing with Maori issues varies from department to department. Te Puni Kokiri probably has the most comprehensive policy. This policy is divided into three parts. When the staff are dealing with Maori clients face to face on a daily basis, fluency in Maori is a requisite skill for employment. This is a case for regional directors and kaitakawaenga working in Te Puni Kokiri's regional offices. Most of the employment contracts that staff work from include knowledge of the Maori language, and tikanga is one of the critical performance indicators against which an employee's performance is appraised. The weighting this performance indicator carries varies depending on the kind of work the individual does. Financial recognition is also given to individuals, depending on their level of fluency, by way of a Maori language allowance up to a maximum of \$2,500 per annum, that supplements their base salary. Similarly, Maori language learning is recognised as a component of staff development and classes are conducted at Te Puni Kokiri's head office for staff who want to attend.

Youth Suicide

4. SHARON CAMPBELL (St Albans) to the **Minister of Health:** In the light of statistics referring to youth suicide earlier in the year, what steps are being taken to address this problem?

Hon. JENNY SHIPLEY (Minister of Health): In June this year the Government announced a 10-year strategy for mental health. In addition, earlier this year we undertook a stocktake into mental health services, which demonstrated that we do not have enough specialised services for young people in New Zealand. The Government has agreed that the youth service will be developed as part of our comprehensive mental health strategy using a community-based mental health approach. This will help reduce youth suicide rates. However, it is also a social issue that society as a whole must take responsibility for. Thankfully, the youth suicide rate appears to be stabilising. The only suicide rates that are growing continue to be those of young males between the ages of 20 years and 24 years. The rates are falling for young males between the ages of 15 years and 19 years, and the rates are stable for young women between the ages of 15 years and 24 years.

Immunisation—Enrolment in Schools

5. MELANIE SPEER (Pakuranga) to the **Minister of Health:** Has she considered introducing legislation to prevent those children who have not been fully immunised against common illnesses from enrolling New Zealand schools?

Hon. JENNY SHIPLEY (Minister of Health): Currently, the Government is formulating a national strategy to improve the rather low rates of immunisation amongst our children in New Zealand. A public discussion document is currently being drafted, which sets out options, and will be released later this year. The issues to be canvassed will include whether parents should be required to make a firm choice as to whether their child will be immunised. This paper will raise the issue of incentives or penalties that could be used to encourage or, indeed, discourage parents so that they will make a proper choice. One of these options will include parents being required to provide proof either of immunisation or of having made the decision not to immunise before a child is enrolled at a pre-school or school in New Zealand. Many countries, including China—representatives of which were recently here visiting us—already require parents to demonstrate that their children have been immunised prior to going to either pre-school or school institutions.

Health—Patients from Isolated Rural Communities

6. TANE AIKMAN (Eastern Bay of Plenty) to the **Minister of Health**: How does the Government plan to assist patients from isolated rural communities who must travel an extra distance because their local hospital has been closed down or the necessary equipment has been relocated?

Hon. JENNY SHIPLEY (Minister of Health): The Government has made it clear to our regional health authorities—the organisations that have all the health money—that when they are reconsidering how they deliver services they must take transportation costs into account. Currently there is an assistance programme available to low-income families through the Department of Social Welfare. The Government also has further work going on that will lead it to consider whether an additional programme is required to fund transport and accommodation policy.

Parole System—Review

7. RICHARD ADAMS (Eastern Hutt) to the **Minister of Justice**: Given public concern that repeat and violent offenders are being released from prison before serving their full sentence, what steps, if any, is he taking to review the parole system?

Hon. D A M GRAHAM (Minister of Justice): Since an amendment to the Criminal Justice Act was passed in 1987, there has been provision for offenders to serve their sentences until the sentence expiry date if it is considered likely they will reoffend if released earlier. The Secretary for Justice has the authority to apply to the Parole Board for offenders to serve their full sentence, but certain criteria must exist before such applications can be made. The parole system itself was reviewed last year, and no further review is likely.

Anthony Mills: Would it be viable to privatise the prison system to reduce State expenditure?

Hon. D A M GRAHAM: I am unable to answer this question as no studies have been carried out to determine whether there would be economic cost benefits if the management of the entire prison system was contracted out to the private sector. The reason that no studies have been carried out is that the Government does not intend to contract out the whole prison system. It proposes to contract out the financing, design, building, and management of two new prisons—a 250-bed remand prison at Mount Eden, and a 350-bed minimum/medium security prison at south Auckland—to determine, amongst other things, whether there are cost savings to be made.

Tina Alexander: What is the future of the Napier Hospital—I am sorry, Napier Prison?

Hon. D A M GRAHAM: I am not certain about the Napier Hospital—it is very difficult to tell the difference—but the Napier Prison has been closed. Consideration as to its sale or other use has been deferred until a study has been completed on the future requirement for prison beds in the Hawke's Bay region. Depending on the outcome of the study, a decision may be made to build a new minimum security prison on the current site, within the current walls, or the department may seek to dispose of the site.

Sport—Young Athletes: Funding

8. MARIA SYME (Tongariro) to the **Minister for Sport, Fitness and Leisure**: How much money has been allocated to encourage young New Zealand athletes to reach their full potential?

Hon. JOHN BANKS (Minister for Sport, Fitness and Leisure): The Hillary Commission has a total budget of \$25 million this year, of which \$2.43 million is for developing modified sport for primary schools, KiwiSport, and sport activities in secondary schools, SportFit. These activities are designed to teach all young people a wide range of sports skills, to help them to achieve their potential.

The commission provides funding to national sports organisations. Some of these funds will be used to coach young sports people. In addition, the commission will invest \$850,000 in seven high-performance sports academies. These academies focus on

developing current and aspiring international competitors. The commission will also grant \$2.85 million to the New Zealand Sports Foundation that will in turn grant to young athletes something like \$7 million in total. All of these funds will go to developing the potential of our star athletes.

Judith Fussell: Does the Minister believe that increased Government spending on sport would lead to an increase in the number of medals won at international sporting meets?

Hon. JOHN BANKS: Not necessarily. It is interesting to note that, per capita, New Zealand won more medals at the Commonwealth Games recently held in Canada than any other country. However, increased Government spending on sport would lead to more medals being won only if the funds were carefully managed and spent in the right areas. Putting money into sport is an investment, but it is not a bottomless pit. The Hillary Commission has an investment programme in place to ensure New Zealanders' success in international competition. Indeed, the Prime Minister has set up a task force that is soon to report to the country about the potential for us in trade, tourism, and sport with the Olympic Games 2000 in Sydney. What I am really saying is that international results will depend upon how much money is invested and how it is invested. But, finally, the courage and commitment of New Zealanders right now will determine our success at the Olympics 2000 in Sydney.

Ministry of Rugby—All Blacks

9. TIM DICK (Wairarapa) to the **Minister for Sport, Fitness and Leisure**: Will there be a Ministry of Rugby set up and the All Blacks be paid civil servants in this ministry, if not, why not?

Hon. JOHN BANKS (Minister for Sport, Fitness and Leisure): My heart is not in rugby at this time. The main thing is the need to undertake development across the country and to reach the needs of young junior rugby players. I am one of only two Ministers of Sport, Fitness and Leisure in the entire world. The other one is in France. I am here and very pleased to be the Minister of Sport, Fitness and Leisure. If the honourable member would like to put down another question I would be happy to give it very careful consideration.

Timaru Girls' High School—Court Action

10. JOANNE WATKINSON (Howick) to the **Minister of Education**: Given that the recent court action between the principal and board of trustees of Timaru Girls' High School has left the school with a debt of some \$400,000, what steps is he taking to ensure that the students at the school do not suffer educationally?

Hon. JOHN LUXTON (Acting Minister of Education): I am advised that the commissioner at Timaru Girls High School, who has been appointed following the resignation of the board of trustees, has been able to resolve this matter with the assistance of the Ministry of Education. The board had financial reserves that enabled the commissioner to meet the board's own legal costs of \$163,000 and the damages awarded to the principal of \$62,500. However, the reserves were insufficient to cover the principal's legal costs of \$181,000 as awarded by the court. The Ministry of Education has therefore agreed to make an immediate payment to the commissioner of \$181,000 as an advance on the school's annual operational activity grants. This will be repaid at a rate of \$22,265 a year over 8 years, with the ministry making deductions from each quarterly instalment of the grant. The Commissioner, Mr Colin McIntosh, said that this interest-free advance means that the school's quality outcomes will not suffer. He is confident that there is no threat to the pupils' education and believes that the school will have no difficulty in meeting its yearly repayments from its operational activity grant, which is approximately half a million dollars a year.

Tertiary Assistance—Means Testing

11. CELIA MacKINNON (Nelson) to the **Minister of Education**: As a person who is 18 years of age is considered adult enough to vote and to fight for the country, on what basis is their eligibility for tertiary assistance judged by means testing their parents?

Hon. JOHN LUXTON (Acting Minister of Education): The member for Nelson is obviously referring to the student allowance scheme. This scheme provides assistance with students' living expenses to students from low-income families. The purpose of the scheme is to ensure that students from low-income homes are not deterred from participating in tertiary education and training because their parents are unable to provide financial support. Parents are expected to take some responsibility for supporting their children in tertiary education when they have the means to do so. The Government provides substantial assistance to all tertiary students, which is not means tested, in the form of tuition subsidies. At present, Government subsidies cover approximately 80 percent of all tuition costs, which works out at about \$8,000 per year per student in the tertiary sector. All students, regardless of their parents' incomes, have access to subsidised loans through the student loan scheme to meet the costs of their tertiary study. Students can borrow up to \$4,500 for living expenses under that scheme.

Gillian Waite: What is the rationale for the Government's policy of means testing the parents of tertiary students when others on the training opportunities programme and similar schemes are not subject to the same measure?

Hon. JOHN LUXTON: Historically, the training opportunities programme and similar schemes that preceded it were targeted at unemployed youth. The income support provided for those on these schemes was aligned with the youth unemployment benefit to ensure there was no disincentive in the income support system for unemployed youth to participate in these schemes. A current review of the relativities between different forms of income support for youth is currently being undertaken by officials. The Government will consider the officials' report shortly.

Joseph McLean: Is the Minister aware of any plans by Treasury to recommend fees for students attending primary and secondary school, and, if so, do such plans include income testing of families?

Hon. JOHN LUXTON: Under section 3 of the Education Act 1989, the Government is committed to providing free enrolment in education at any State school for students between the ages of 5 and 19 years. There are no plans to change the legislation, although if the member has some proposals I would be willing to listen to them.

Students—Debt

12. MIRANDA NORTHEY (Mt Albert) to the **Minister of Education**: As it is Government policy to relieve the national debt, why is the Government prepared to allow thousands of students to fall tens of thousands of dollars into debt?

Hon. JOHN LUXTON (Acting Minister of Education): Given the financial constraints the Government is required to operate under and the need to curb Government spending, it was necessary to reform the financial assistance available to the tertiary education sector. The Government has identified this sector as one in which greater targeting of support should take place. Students are expected to contribute towards the cost of their education. Those parents in the higher income sector of society are expected to contribute more to the cost of their children's further education. At the same time, the reforms are intended to protect and improve the position of low-income families. However, to ensure that no one is prevented from undertaking tertiary study because of financial hardship, the Government established the student loan scheme. This scheme is Government guaranteed and enables students to pursue tertiary study, regardless of their family circumstances, and to defer the costs until they are more readily able to pay. The Government expects to recover 80 to 90 percent of all loan monies. Given this situation, there will be a negligible effect on national debt levels. It is also worthy of mention that the demand in the tertiary sector has virtually doubled over the last decade, and this targeting approach by the Government has been required to meet the demand.

“Home Alone” Incidents

13. ANNA KIRK (Waikato) to the **Minister of Social Welfare**: Given the dramatic increase in “home alone” incidents and the human tragedy that this represents, what urgent steps is the Minister taking to deal with the situation?

Rt Hon. J B BOLGER (Prime Minister), on behalf of the Minister of Social Welfare: The New Zealand Children and Young Persons Service has endeavoured to capitalise on the recent news media coverage of these incidents by being as proactive as possible to raise public awareness of this issue. The service's officers have been making information available for parents and care-givers that clarifies the part of the Summary Offences Act that refers to leaving children without reasonable supervision and care. What we want is for parents, care-givers, and the community to understand that not only is it wrong and unacceptable to leave young persons without proper supervision, it is also against the law.

Immigration—Adoption: Bosnia and Rwanda

14. LYNNE TIZZARD (Panmure) to the **Minister of Immigration**: Will he consider relaxing the laws of immigration to allow orphans from Bosnia or Rwanda to be adopted by families in this country?

Rt Hon. J B BOLGER (Prime Minister), on behalf of the Minister of Immigration: Current immigration criteria for the entry of adopted children are set out in consultation with the Department of Social Welfare. Visas and residence will be granted to adopted children of New Zealand residents only when the criteria set by the Department of Social Welfare are met. In brief, the criteria are that the adoption is legally recognised in both countries, the adoptive parents have the qualities and characteristics that will allow them to be approved under the Adoption Act 1955, and the child has a need for home and family life that cannot be met within his or her own country. Once these requirements are met, entry and/or residence would be granted under normal family reunion policy as a dependent child of a New Zealand resident.

The Government is not considering further relaxation of the policy at this time, as the current policy works effectively and successfully provides necessary protection against the exploitation of children in war-torn or developing countries.

Importation of Cattle—Mad Cow Disease

15. PATRICIA MUIR (Wallace), to the **Minister of Agriculture**: Why does he continue to allow the importation of cattle semen and embryos from the United Kingdom when there is such a high risk of infecting New Zealand cattle with BSE, commonly called mad cow disease?

Rt Hon. J B BOLGER (Prime Minister), on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture: The decision to allow the importation of bovine embryos and semen was made by the chief veterinary officer of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and is based upon extensive overseas studies. The Minister of Agriculture has received no reports of BSE being introduced into a country through the importation of embryos and semen. New Zealand's chief veterinary officer, together with 129 other chief veterinary officers, considered studies that showed that BSE infectivity was restricted to the brain and the upper spinal cord. No cases of BSE have occurred in any country as a result of bovine semen or embryos from the United Kingdom, yet hundreds of thousands of doses of semen have been exported from the United Kingdom since the disease was first identified in 1986.

David Gold: Is the Government aware that semen and embryos could be taken from so-called disease-free stock but, because of the 4-year incubation period, may go undetected, in which time thousands of top New Zealand breeding stock could be infected; if so, when does the Government intend to reinstate the ban on these imports?

Rt Hon. J B BOLGER: Yes, the Government is aware of the incubation period for this disease. However, there is no evidence to suggest that BSE infectivity is transmitted through bovine semen. Technical studies indicate that BSE infectivity was restricted to the

brain and upper spinal cord. Infectivity has not been detected in any of the 45 other tissues collected from naturally occurring cases of BSE. In the absence of infectivity in lymph nodes, intestine, placenta, udder, ovaries, testes, and semen, together with no BSE infectivity agent being found in 850 embryos collected from clinical case of BSE, caused technical experts to conclude that it is unlikely BSE could be introduced through the importation of semen or embryos.

Maori Language in Government Employment: Funding

16. CARLY ALLBON (Remuera) to the **Minister of Maori Affairs**: Is the Maori language to become compulsory to obtain employment by the Government, if so, is the Government going to fund the teaching of it?

Hon. JOHN LUXTON (Minister of Maori Affairs): Since the Government has not considered making the language compulsory to obtain employment in the public sector, except in the specific instance referred to in question No. 3, the matter is largely hypothetical. However, the Government does fund the teaching of the Maori language through the kohanga reo movement and through the kura kaupapa Maori movement at primary and secondary schools and right across the tertiary sector.

Republicanism: Head of State

17. JULIE KEENAN (Palmerston North) to the **Prime Minister**: Has he been advised whether New Zealanders feel a sufficiently strong bond with Britain that New Zealand must retain the Queen as Head of State, or whether it is a relic of our monocultural past?

Rt Hon. J B BOLGER (Prime Minister): I should say that this is perhaps a predictable question to the Prime Minister. New Zealand for many historical and family reasons has retained linkages with the United Kingdom and has retained the Queen as its head of State.

As members will be aware, I have raised the question of New Zealand becoming a republic. In my view, following the vote for the mixed-member proportional representation system, which is a big constitutional change, it is also appropriate to consider whether New Zealand should have its own head of State. In my view, we now have the maturity and independence of outlook for New Zealand to plan seriously to complete the journey from being a British colony to being a truly independent nation by having our own head of State. That person would be a New Zealander and would reflect the totality of New Zealand's culture. I would like to invite young New Zealanders to consider this very important constitutional issue over the years ahead.

DEBATE—GENERAL

GAYNOR MORGAN (Hamilton West): I move, *That the House take note of miscellaneous business*. Firstly, I would like to thank the Minister of Youth Affairs and other MPs involved in organising the Youth Parliament. I feel that this participation will give us valuable insight into how the parliamentary system of Aotearoa is run.

I take my position today, as I am sure we all do, very seriously. We have been given a unique opportunity to speak not only on behalf of ourselves but also on behalf of the people in our electorates. What we say today is an opportunity for our voices to be heard by MPs and young people all over the country. Under the mixed-member proportional representation system (MMP) and the list system there are hopes that more young people—perhaps some of us here today—will be in Parliament by the next election.

I have chosen a topic that has been the focus of much debate in my electorate, and that issue is youth rates. The minimum youth rate of \$3.68 per hour was set by the Government on 31 March 1994. It was a deal done to keep rebel MPs—the member for Tasman, and the member for Hawke's Bay—happy, in a hung Parliament, and to stop them from crossing the floor. The deal that was done was, in the words of the member for Hawke's Bay "an interim arrangement until the reporting back of the multiparty

employment task force". Unfortunately, how long is it until the report comes back and new legislation can be brought in, and do we allow youth slave labour to remain until that time?

At first glance the figures seem chosen very much out of the air and on second inspection we realise how very cunning the Government has been. It has been able to keep the member for Tasman and the member for Hawke's Bay happy, without doing a darn thing for youth. Working a 40-hour week at \$3.68 per hour will result in \$124 a week. The dole is \$112.23 for no work, and, on the dole, people can earn up to \$50 more without jeopardising it, thus putting their weekly earnings up to \$162.23 a week. This is \$38 over and above the earnings of someone who works a 40-hour week at the minimum youth rate of \$3.68 per hour. So why work for little more than a benefit? There is not much incentive to go out there and seek gainful employment, is there?

No one yet has been able to tell us what research and consultation with youth were done to justify the low minimum youth rate and whether it is line with the actual wages that youth are being paid. The Minister did tell us that, prior to his intervention, some youth were being paid only \$2.50 per hour for their employment. So the member for Hawke's Bay was able to save these people by getting them an extra \$1.18 per hour.

To pause for a moment: how many of us here knew about the youth wage rate prior to today? It does not look as though there were many. Most of us did not know, yet we were sufficiently well informed about politics to know of the Youth Parliament. So how was the average teenager supposed to have found out about youth rates? The same people who were being paid \$2.50 an hour would have employers who would not have told them about the new wage rates and would have continued to exploit them by paying them only \$2.50 an hour.

ADELLE WINTLE (Kaipara): I would like to bring up the issue of speed cameras in the community. First, it cannot yet be proved statistically that speed cameras actually reduce the number of road accidents. So are they doing more harm than good? I can think of more examples where speed cameras are causing more harm—in particular, motorways. In particular, I speak of the Auckland area, as I know it. There is an area of roadway before approaching the harbour bridge where the speed limit is cut from 100 kilometres down to 80 kilometres. A speed camera is often situated 10 kilometres into the 80 kilometre zone. Unless the line of traffic cuts down to 80 kilometres the second that drivers pass that sign, then they will get flashed. If drivers see a speed camera up ahead obviously they will want to slow down to avoid paying a hefty speeding fine. So what do they do? They slam on their brakes. Is this not great potential for a stack up accident behind them, which could end up a lot worse off than a speeding fine?

I find speed cameras potentially dangerous at night time. Anyone who has seen a speed camera flash will know that it is quite bright. At night time, in an unlit area, it can be very blinding, and cause drivers to lose their bearings and, again, contribute to more accidents.

The money from speed cameras should go towards the maintenance of the roads—right! I live in Kaiwaka—a small town 45 minutes south of Whangarei. A speed camera often sits on the main road passing through. It is a 50 kilometre-an-hour zone. The speed camera flashes almost non-stop all day. The money coming in from this small area must be phenomenal. So why does Kaiwaka—and the rest of Northland for that matter, as we see it—have some of the worst roads in the country? I suggest that the money from speed cameras should go towards improving the roads in those various areas, and that would make travelling—especially in Northland—safer and more comfortable.

LAURA FEASEY (Tasman): I believe that the drinking age should be lowered to 18. Even though the drinking age is currently 20, studies in 1988, 1990, and 1991 have shown that people between the ages of 18 and 23 consume disproportionately high amounts of alcohol in relation to the size of their population. Already, 18 to 20-year-olds are consuming high amounts of alcohol, and the lowering of the drinking age did not have much of an effect. Many other countries have their drinking age set at 18. Lowering the age in New Zealand would simply bring us into line with other countries. For example, Norway's drinking age is 18, but it also has very strict rules, which is what would have to be implemented in New Zealand. In Norway people must show identification if they are

under 25 years of age. If they are caught drinking/driving they must spend 3 months in a working prison, and a licensee would lose his or her licence if caught selling liquor to a minor—not just fined and allowed to continue trading.

Already there is a substantial amount of illegal under-age drinking in New Zealand as shown by the studies I mentioned earlier. The concept of social drinking and not drinking to get drunk must be promoted and reinforced. Such is the campaign by the Alcohol Advisory Council. This is the rationale behind Germany's drinking age being 16.

Yet another reason for lowering the drinking age in New Zealand to 18 is that there are conflicting ages for becoming an adult here. Currently at the age of 18 a person is paying adult fares for transport services, he or she can buy cigarettes, have sex, get married, fight for his or her country, and vote. But, a person cannot drink alcohol at 18 years of age. When a person is given the opportunity to vote and have a say on how the country is run it is considered to be the ultimate adult privilege. Therefore he or she is an adult. People can influence the way their country is governed but still not be completely in control of their own lives as set down by law.

I believe that the drinking age should be lowered to 18 years, but with strict rules and guidelines. It would decrease the amount of under-age drinkers and also bring us in line with other countries. No matter what the drinking age is—whether it is 20 years or 18 years—there will always be a certain degree of illegal under-age drinking. So is it not better that it is to a lesser extent? Therefore there would be more emphasis on drinking socially, and I believe that this would make for a better New Zealand social scene overall.

RACHEL BRIGHOUSE (Franklin): The electorate I represent, Franklin, borders on the Manukau Harbour. Almost 200,000 people live in the catchment area and depend on the Manukau for fishing, swimming, and other recreational activities. The Manukau is also part of an important ecosystem involving breeding grounds for fish and other marine life.

But over the years the Manukau Harbour has been abused by the very same people who depend on it. From the late 19th century until 1960 raw sewage was discharged into the harbour. Since then the Mangere sewage treatment plant has been set up. But this means treated effluent from most of Auckland ends up in our harbour. Many industries have used the Manukau as a dumping ground, and freezing-works have been known to discharge more effluent into the harbour. Reclamation for agricultural use, the airport, roads, and so on, have caused problems, destroying tidal flats and, consequently, whole food chains. Other current pollutants include stormwater runoff, industrial spills, leaching from landfills, and rural waste discharge.

The nature of the Manukau compounds these problems. Because only 2.4 percent of the water is changed per cycle, pollutants will remain in the harbour for three or more weeks before they are flushed out to sea. Marine populations have declined due to both pollution problems and overfishing. Most people in the area realise something has to be done to reconstruct the harbour, and soon. In fact, just last weekend local fishermen took to the water in an effort to get commercial fishing banned from the Manukau.

The actual legislation involving the Manukau Harbour is not bad. However, since the clean up involves so many aspects the main problem has been that no single agency dealt with all the factors involved in the restoration of the harbour. It is obvious to me that this way of delegating control is not as effective as it could be. I would like to propose a possible alternative involving kaitiaki and decision making. Kaitiaki are tribal custodians or guardians. These people, appointed by the tribes of the Manukau, could work with existing local authorities and would tie together all the agencies involved. Being the first people to come to New Zealand, the Maori people have a natural obligation to protect their ancestral resources, and this is what is needed in our area. Kaitiaki could have duties, such as educating the public and declaring rahui, or temporary bans, on the fishing or gathering of depleted species until numbers increase. By involving these people, who have the best interests of the Manukau at heart, the harbour could become productive once more and be an example to other areas.

EMMA DOWDLE (Kaimai): There is an epidemic among the youth of New Zealand. It is called suicide. Research proves that New Zealand's youth suicide rate is the highest in the Western World, that suicide is the second-highest cause of death among

young people in New Zealand, and that it occurs in all areas of society. Because of the alarming figures it is time for New Zealand to stop and address what is wrong with our society when our youth are increasingly resorting to ending their own lives. There are many different pressures of modern life that contribute to youth suicide: pressure to succeed, uncertain futures, drug and alcohol abuse, physical and sexual abuse, and family breakups. It is highly likely that these pressures will continue to increase and that new ones will crop up for future generations. With so many diverse factors contributing to youth suicide it is unlikely a cure will ever be found. What is needed is prevention. It is no good pondering over depressing statistics. It is no good after death.

The Government needs to do some extensive research into youth suicide by looking at preventive strategies that set up further courses in schools and services in the community that will provide opportunities for young people to build self-confidence and assertiveness and to learn to cope with stress and depression. Only then can this tragic problem begin to be reduced. For where can depressed or suicidal people turn today?

Psychiatric services are only the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff, and they are at present totally overwhelmed with work. General practitioners usually refer suicidal patients to psychiatric services. These services often do not have the resources or the necessary training to deal with severe mental illness. Guidance counsellors in schools—on whose shoulders the job of identifying at-risk children often falls—have many other responsibilities, such as helping students with career choices, family problems, and peer conflicts. Guidance counsellors in large schools often do not have the time or the resources to deal with the growing numbers of at-risk students.

Is this the best the Government can offer the youth of New Zealand in terms of support? Let us hope that by addressing this issue now—not next year, not in 10 years time, but now—through setting up confidence-building programmes, allocating more resources in the form of funding, extra staff, and retraining programmes for guidance counsellors, general practitioners, and mental health services, and setting up free centres for young people to seek help, we can begin to curb this epidemic of self-inflicted death among the youth of New Zealand now and in the future, for the young people are New Zealand's future. With increasing youth suicide we are losing New Zealand's greatest asset.

SAM MANU (Pencarrow): Sport today in New Zealand has become a very important thing for our youth. Many people in our schools are not academically inclined. Why will the Government not do more to promote sport as a profession for our youth? In my electorate I have asked many young people: "What would you do if you left school with no academic qualifications?". A lot of people answer: "I don't know." A lot of those people, however, are skilled in another thing: sport.

In the United Kingdom, America, and Australia sport is a big thing. People make a living from sport. People who play gridiron in America are paid millions of dollars to perform what they are good at—sport. Not all of them, however, are academically inclined. This would help those people, who are less advantaged, by bringing their skills out in sport and enabled them to make a living for themselves. Many people who play sport also find jobs afterwards. What about after sport? Promoting that sport can help people continue their life after their physical ability to perform that sport expires.

The people in my electorate, Pencarrow, believe that the Government should do more to promote sport for our youth. We believe the Government ought to promote sport so that people who play rugby—that is, people in the All Blacks—are not pinched by league scouts. Many league scouts are pinching our promising young athletes. Why are our athletes going overseas? It is because they are paid. In New Zealand this opportunity cannot be obtained by young, professional athletes, so they are leaving the country. We believe that if the Government did more to promote sport, more people would be interested in New Zealand—not only as people but as a culture and as a sporting nation.

ANNA WALKINGTON (Yaldhurst): Today a large percentage of students work. A sample study at a Christchurch high school indicated that 69 percent of seventh formers surveyed have paid employment outside school. There are two major concerns facing some students who work and their teachers: one, the pay rate the students receive per

hour; and second, the hours they work and how that affects their school grades and extra curricular activities.

There are a number of reasons that students work. Forty-two percent of students surveyed work because they need to either for family financial reasons or to save for tertiary education. Employers seek students because they can work odd hours. Business can also pay students less, which makes them more attractive to hire. In some cases the rate of pay is based on age, so adults who are doing the same job are paid more. This is a frustrating concern for students who believe they should receive equal pay for equal work.

The minimum wage for students is not always complied with. Sixteen percent of students surveyed are paid under the minimum wage. In many cases the jobs students do are not suitable for full-time employment, so again, employers seek students.

The hours students work per week can be substantial. Fifty-two percent of students surveyed work between 11 hours and 35 hours per week. As a result, their school work is suffering. Fifty-five percent of students say their school grades have been affected and they have had trouble finding time to do their homework. While trying to cope with senior workloads and working—in the extreme, up to 35 hours a week—only the most superbly organised student could cope. But if students were paid at least the minimum wage they may not have to work such excessive hours. Extracurricular activities can also be given up. Fifty-eight percent of students said that they have had to give up a sport or a cultural activity. Some employers appear to be inflexible about rearranging hours and place unwritten demands on student employees to stick to their assigned hours.

Suggested solutions for these problems have been educating students in skills about the minimum wage they should be receiving, raising the minimum wage, which may decrease the number of hours individual students have to work, and, it could be argued that there should be a limit on the number of hours a student can work on a week night, which leaves sufficient time for homework to be completed.

REBECCA SELBY (Hamilton East): First, I would like to back up the statements concerning youth rates made by the member for Hamilton West. Young people are more easily exploited in the workforce due to their inexperience of employment and the pressure to gain work in an economy of high unemployment. The minimum youth wage has been set at the exceptionally low rate of \$3.68 per hour. This will inevitably lead to the exploitation of young workers. We are not saying that all employers will pay all their young employees the wage of \$3.68 per hour, but our concern is that employers will find this wage an acceptable rate rather than a minimum rate. The youth rate put in place earlier this year does not affect young people alone. Young workers will become particularly attractive to employers, and hiring workers over the age of 20 years will become undesirable. How will the same young workers feel when their hours are severely cut before being made redundant on the eve of their 20th birthday?

Why is it that the age of 20 years was decided upon as the age that one officially becomes an adult as far as wages are concerned anyway? If one can drive a car at 15 years, have sex at 16 years, and die for one's country at 18 years, why is it that you are not protected—I use the term loosely—by the adult minimum age until you are 20 years.

Some people, and indeed some MPs, are under the misconception that young people work only for pocket money, but this is not true. Young people today are often saving for or supporting their education, contributing to family finances, or even trying to support themselves. By setting in place a rate of \$3.68 per hour the work of youth is undermined. We accept that the rate of \$3.68 per hour is only an interim arrangement until the employment task force reports back. Politicians need to know now that this rate is unacceptably low. Work should be judged not on age but on merit and on the ability to get the job done.

MELINKA BERRIDGE (Tauranga): New Zealanders are clearly fortunate to live in Godzone. We are one of the most naturally favoured countries in the world, with a small population, clean air and water, and a democratic system of Government. Surely this should suggest that the youth of New Zealand should be as favoured as our country. The reality suggests differently.

Facts tell us that New Zealand has the highest suicide rate in the Western World. Facts tell us that New Zealand rates second in unwanted teenage pregnancies. Facts tell us

that in 1991 more youth—people under the age of 25 years—committed criminal offences than those over that age. The reality is that many of our youth—and in clearly increasing numbers—are growing and developing in environments that are culturally, emotionally, and physically detrimental. Some people do not survive these environments. Those who do, need help. Yet in reality they are those who are most likely not to seek it, because they do not have either the means or the education.

The situation then remains that instead of providing a societal safety net New Zealand is standing back and watching our future—our youth—develop into misled criminals. Is not every cent spent on the New Zealand prison system money wasted? An individual in a New Zealand prison is a failure of a stable and emotional sensitive childhood. These criminals do not choose prison. They are there because their society—God's own society—has granted them no self-esteem. That self-esteem is vital in securing employment, education, and income. I ask the Minister of Justice whether it is not more constructive to provide money for early human development than to have it later thrown away into the prison system and on misled individuals—treat the cause of the problem and not the consequence.

The greatest tragedy, however, is not that the present situation exists but the fact that we can change it and we have not done anything about it. The remedies—the power of change—lie within our grasp. Every skill, every initiative, every personality this problem requires exists at some level here in New Zealand. The knowledge is there but at present the funding is not. To assure New Zealand's future our political system must listen to the 16 percent of New Zealanders who have no political voice. It is time for the Ministry of Youth Affairs to take a bigger slice of the nation's resource cake. It is time to recognise the cost-effectiveness of cheap, initial preventive care as opposed to later remedial and, at worse, custodial care. It is time to focus, to study, and to act.

CRAIG IRISON (Tarawera): I wish to speak today on behalf of all the youth politicians here and, indeed—as we are but representatives—on behalf of all the youth of New Zealand. I am asking the adults of this land and, indeed, their representatives—the politicians here—to grant us but one wish. We, as the youth of today, are inevitably the leaders of tomorrow following in your esteemed footsteps.

However, we as young New Zealanders are afraid that, as this world turns into the year 2000, financial gain is becoming an increasing priority for world Governments, as is the case here in New Zealand. While I do not doubt that financial growth is needed, I believe I speak for every New Zealand youth when I say that what sets this land of ours apart from others is the rich social, cultural, and environmental heritage that we have. We ask you to preserve this heritage, which we have taken for granted for far too long.

Socially, we have always been known as the welfare State. No matter what Government is in, we have been known for caring for those who are not able to care for themselves. Let us not take this for granted, rather realise what an esteemed title it is—the welfare State—showing the world that we as New Zealanders value people far above profit.

Culturally, we have a diverse tapestry of peoples—Maori, European, Polynesian, and Asian. We are also known as a tolerant country. When this country is passed to us to govern, we wish this tolerance of diversity still to be here. Through increased cultural awareness in schools we can sustain this.

Finally, we have our much-heralded environmental heritage, although, sadly, this is quickly becoming a memory of a better age. Representing the Tarawera electorate, I point out that we have a sad example of this back home. The once-proud Lake Rotorua has been humbled by a plague of lakeweed brought about by sewage-dumping up until the late 1970s. Now the clean-up, although existent, is seemingly far too little, far too late. The member for Franklin has already pointed out the problems in the Manukau, and they are evident all over New Zealand. Is this what is to become of our heritage? We need action now. With all respect to Queenstown, Rotorua is the heart of New Zealand's tourism business. By pouring money into the clean-up we are saving not only our heritage for the future but also our tourism industry. That is all we ask—that our heritage, especially our clean, green image, be kept intact.

Thank you for this opportunity to gather us all here today, for only when all the peoples of New Zealand, no matter what age, race or sex, come together—tatou tatou—will we save our heritage. For we are one people—he iwi tahi tatou. Thank you.

WIKI MALTON (Hastings): The youth are the generation in most need. Unemployment, violence, teen pregnancy, suicide, road deaths, gangs—the list goes on. We have all these pressures and daunting statistics of society surrounding us, and for anything to change these numerous problems need to be addressed by consulting with the youth and with their parents. The youth seem to be struggling with their identities and an excess amount of time. We seem to be leading the world in negative teen aspects. Something needs to change. To make that change, youth need more positive role models.

New Zealand communities need to place a higher emphasis on promoting us because we are the future leaders, otherwise we will have a generation motivated by television and video games, and we will have role models like Jake Heke of *Once Were Warriors* walking our streets.

With the closure of the Tomoana freezing-works Hawke's Bay youth and their families are struggling with the pressures of unemployment. The frustration will soon become apparent as crime levels rise. To counteract the ongoing situation we have at the moment with graffiti and street violence, our parents need to be re-educated to raise the first generation of Americanised youth. We need to prevent the 9-year-olds and 10-year-olds from walking the streets while their parents are at the pub or playing housie. We need to prevent our age group from dying through alcohol-related road deaths, we need to prevent and educate young girls about contraception to prevent teen pregnancy, and we need to make a change. For a change to begin, parental support and guidance is needed. We also need jobs, work, and employment so we can have self-esteem and something to work towards. If we have direction and something to do, a lot of negatives will disappear.

ANNE ROSS (Eastern Maori): It makes me very angry to have to bring this topic to you—extremely angry. The topic I wish to share with you all is Maori land development—three dirty words on the mind of the Government. I am glad the Prime Minister and Ministers are here today because I speak directly to them. I do not like being called lazy, and I am sure the Maori race does not like being called lazy, yet we make up roughly 80 percent of unemployed people in New Zealand. We are not lazy. We have not been given the opportunities to expand into work.

Here I have the way—Maori land development. I hereby say that the Government needs to set up a Maori land development fund. Why? Most Maori land is multiple-owned and, therefore, capital cannot be secured to develop it. Thus, in the area that I come from—the East Coast of the North Island—thousands and thousands of acres of prime farmland is going to waste while 80 percent of the population draw the dole every week. They live a hand to mouth existence, even buying their vegetables when there are thousands of acres of farmland surrounding them. No money and multiple-owned land is standing in the way of developing their farmland. Basically everyone's land is no one's land, and no one wants to work the land when everyone else will benefit from their hard work and sweat. Therefore they ask: "Why should I bother working on the land when there are 20 million others that own it as well? I will not bother." That is why, besides lack of funding, the land remains undeveloped and there is high unemployment.

As the member for Hastings has just stated, there is no employment. The solution is right in front of us. If we can get the money and funding to develop this land there is ready employment there for everyone, and not only Maori. Maori land—multiple-owned, as I have said—cannot gain capital from banks or any other lending institution as European-owned land can because of the fact that it is multiple-owned. No one is willing—should I say, take a chance—to give Maori money to develop their land.

DARREN HUGHES (Horowhenua): Ko te mea tuatahi, ka nui te mihi ki a koe, te rangatira o tenei Whare. Tino pai tou mahi. Haere tonu! No reira, tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa.

[Subsequent authorised translation:

First of all, to you Mr Speaker, I extend greetings. You do your job very well. Keep it up! I conclude by extending greetings to everyone.]

It is a real pleasure for me to be standing here today in the House of Representatives to take part in the general debate. I would like quickly to thank Judy Keall for giving me this opportunity, and Mike Moore for writing all those books so I could come here more knowledgeable about the country. I could not make my first speech to Parliament without mentioning Annette King and Lloyd Falck. They have been excellent role models, and I thank them both.

New Zealand is a country in trouble. Every day we are greeted with more news about the decay of our once proud-society. There are now three kinds of New Zealand catering for three different kinds of Kiwis. Things must change.

Now that the 10 years of economic reform has ended fiscal deficits, it is time to shift our attention to solving our most pressing crisis—the social deficit. We must invest the same energies, resources, and times into this battle that we did with inflation, interest rates, and chronic overspending. The social deficit is a funny thing because it cannot be measured in dollar terms. You cannot give an estimated value of it. But we all know that every time a worker loses his or her job, or a husband beats his wife, or a kid gets expelled from school, the social deficit goes up. There is nothing happening in this country to reverse or even reduce our crippling social deficit.

As a young person I am devastated to see the huge differences between the haves and have-nots. I want to know why, in a country rich enough in produce to feed the world, kids go to school hungry. I want to know why, in what was one of the strongest public health systems around, people with money and position can queue-jump ahead of those with the same health needs but fewer health dollars. I want to know why we even bother having a State housing system if we are intent on charging market rents for non-market homes for people on non-market pay-packets. Things are out of control.

I quote someone: "The pioneers built the welfare State to liberate people. It was to be a hand up, not a hand-out. It was to be about social security, not social welfare. It was to be about open roads, not closed cul-de-sacs." New Zealand is speeding down that cul-de-sac. The challenge for our generation is to put us back on to the open road. Thank you very much.

ANNE HALE (Hauraki): The Coromandel Peninsula has many attractions to offer tourists. Both domestic and international tourists flock to the region each year because of its great land, waters, and the clean, green image it portrays. This is jeopardised by the constant implications of gold-mining in the hills. As seen in Waihi, the home of the Marsden mine, this type of venture is detrimental to the environment, having economic, social, and physical consequences. The only people really benefiting from the Marsden mine are the investors, and they are overseas investors at that. Two hundred and fifteen million dollars has already left our country, and it will grow to \$1 billion for the life of the mine. This gold is virtually free. There are no royalties charged, and no goods and services tax is paid. The only tax that is paid is by the workers themselves. So, in the end, Waihi does not win in the long term, nor does New Zealand.

The mining company, Heritage Mining, talked to a local businessperson to exchange their differing views. The company had an answer for everything. It talked of totally rehabilitating the landscape, even restructuring the mine back into the mountain it once was. This is absurd. Companies with biased opinions towards their ventures have answers for everything, and they refuse to look past the short-term economic gains to the long-term ill-fated environmental drawbacks.

If only we learnt from scenarios overseas. An experienced touring company director, who has been dealing with overseas tourists in this sought-after peninsula, said that 80 percent of her clients are foreign, mainly Canadians, Germans, and Americans, and their message is: "Don't exploit a beautiful natural asset. Preserve it as it is. This will ensure it will always be a highly respected tourist stop."

Tourism is a major economic contributor to this country's income. To exploit our environment can, and will, cast an uncertain future on many beautiful natural resources.

To continue to let more mining groups exploit and ruin the most popular and beautiful regions such as the Coromandel is vastly stupid and detrimental. Mining has a by-product of a huge amount of environmental destruction and toxic waste. Do we want this to happen to our resources? We must not condone mining. The sooner we realise what it really means for our conservation, the sooner we will all be saying: "Stop the mining. Save the Coromandel."

MARK BARNARD (Birkenhead): Kia ora, koutou katoa. I will be speaking about the fiscal envelope. At school we have learnt just recently about this proposal by the Government to settle finally all Maori land claims with a \$1 billion pay cheque. This \$1 billion will go into Maori hands, and will be the final claim for all lands for ever. However, this \$1 billion means only \$10 for each Maori person. Ten dollars is expected to cover all the injustices and all the continual wrongdoings by the Government to the Maori prior to, and since, the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. This \$1 billion does not even scratch the surface of these wrongdoings.

Who in the Maori community or the European community has even heard of fiscal envelopes? I only learnt about it in a debate at school. It has not been publicised. Maori people do not know about it. Therefore how can they even lobby about it or argue about it? A few politicians are taking the entire destiny of the Maori into their own hands. However, the Treaty of Waitangi states that the Maori people will have total sovereignty over their own deals as long as they wish to.

I put it to the House that the Government should reconsider this deal and work further towards a New Zealand that is willing not to sweep this land matter under the mat, as it is extremely important for the growth of the Maori people.

SARAH JOHNSON (Onslow): I wish to speak on two of the most important social issues facing us today. The first issue is the treatment of redundant workers. If a worker receives no redundancy pay-out, as in the case of the Fortex and Weddel workers, there should be no stand-down period. At the moment these people receive a double punishment. They are kicked in the guts by their employer and the State. Fortex and Weddel employees were forced to endure a 10-week stand-down period before they received the dole. The majority of these redundant people are young with mortgages and little savings. The stand-down period takes away the little security these workers have left by devastating any savings they had. I would like to see how the Minister of Social Welfare would survive with no income for 10 weeks. Then maybe the Government would show some compassion for these people.

The Government has already shown a degree of pity in revoking the law regarding mortgage insurance being deducted from the dole. It is not a large step further to abolish the stand-down period for those with no redundancy pay-out. The money paid out to these workers could be easily compensated for by means testing superannuitants. It is estimated that the Government is saving about \$5 million with its 10-week stand-down policy.

However, it spends a whopping \$5 billion on superannuation—one thousand times more on superannuation each year. At the moment those over 60 must pay a super tax on their pension. This super tax raises \$350 million in revenue for the Government. However, it amounts to only 7 percent of the \$5 billion spent on national superannuation. Superannuitants fought tooth and nail against this tax. What they forget is that they are receiving a significant income, to be taxed in the first place. Many of these so-called hard-done-by superannuitants use their pension as extra revenue to fund overseas trips and the like. Travel clubs for over-60s testify to the fact that there are many wealthy retired people living off the blood, sweat, and toil of younger generations. I propose that all superannuitants be means tested.

Harvey Wood: I raise a point of order, Mr Speaker. The honourable member has mentioned that retired people—

Mr SPEAKER: That is not a point of order. That is a matter of debate. The member can raise a point of order about the member infringing the Standing Orders, but he cannot enter into the debate.

SARAH JOHNSON: I propose that all superannuitants be means tested. This means that those who are already earning a considerable income will not be given a hand-out by

the Government. At present, every other benefit is severely means tested, with the cut-off point for receiving aid being set at a very low level.

There is such a vast gap between the haves and the have-nots that the huge amount of money saved by means testing could bridge the wide expanse between poverty and wealth. The abolishment of blanket superannuation would mean a fairer distribution of wealth and, ultimately, economic recovery for all. Superannuation, like all other benefits, should be targeted and not be a blanket hand-out.

KRIS FA'AFOI (Sydenham): I would like to supplement the speeches made by the member for Kaimai and the member for Tauranga. I would like to bring up the nagging problem of New Zealand's high teenage suicide rate. I would like to ask all members of the House, but especially the Minister of Education, the Minister of Youth Affairs, the Minister of Health, and the Minister of Social Welfare, why New Zealand has the highest teenage suicide rate in the Western World when we have a beautiful country, a quality education system, a clean, green environment, and an abundant supply of clean water—apart from Auckland. With so much that is good in New Zealand, why do so many young people opt out of life?

I suggest that the Minister of Education, the Minister of Youth Affairs, the Minister of Health, and the Minister of Social Welfare get together and create a policy to combat this problem. I understand that the Minister of Health has already stated that the rate of some sections of the youth teenage suicide rate is falling, but the Ministers who are accountable cannot be complacent with just this decrease. Policies must be put in place to get the numbers of teenage suicides lowered to the absolute minimum.

DANIEL KERR (Hawke's Bay): I am from Karamu High School in Hastings, and I am here to represent the people of Hawke's Bay. Hawke's Bay is the home of the Ngati Kahungunu people. It is a province of approximately 150,000 people, stretching from the southern area of Poverty Bay, westwards to the Kaweka Range in the central ridge of the Ruahine Range, and down south to a point just below Cape Turnagain. It surrounds the main cities of Hastings and Napier, forming the fourth-largest urban area in New Zealand, as well as several smaller towns. It is a rural-based region of very fertile productive plains and is used predominantly for orcharding and viticulture, as well as for urban settlement. The rolling hill country is used for agriculture and forestry.

A particularly noteworthy and unique aspect of the people of this electorate is that they have shown they can be united in support of one another. It is the sign of a mature and compassionate society that it seeks solutions for the weak, the poor, and the powerless. I believe that this has been, and will continue to be, a major benefit to the region. An example of this can be seen in the recent freak hailstorm that the area experienced. The damage caused by this incident was horrendous, and much money and many jobs were lost as a result. Orchardists were devastated and many orchards were in ruins, but the people of Hawke's Bay revealed their true nature by helping orchardists to strip-pick the ruined apples and clean up the mess. People from the city volunteered their help and many voluntary agencies, such as Rotary and Christian Lovelink, gave tremendous support to the victims of this disaster. We have heard of this same sort of support following the 1931 earthquake and, more recently, following cyclone Bola.

Another case in which there is potential for people to work together is the recent closure of the Hastings Tomoana freezing-works, where a total of 1,500 people have lost their jobs. This has had, and will have, major effects on the region and its people, who require a great deal of support and help. But the people, strong as they are, need the help of the Government to sustain this blow. They need help by way of financial assistance, in finding new jobs, and with a more flexible approach to their qualification for benefits. Leaving people to be the prey of the open market is to allow the law of the jungle to crowd out our obligations and responsibilities to each other.

A potential threat to the unity and co-operation of the people of Hawke's Bay is the disagreement over the site of the regional hospital. Some people feel angry and bitter over the decision to make Hastings the focal point for the hospital. But, again, everyone needs to work together to support the regional hospital for it to be successful in meeting their needs. People must take account of others and their needs in order to have the best facilities for everyone.

In conclusion, I challenge both the Government and the people of my electorate. I challenge the Government to resource properly the aid to the victims of the freezing-works closure, and I challenge the people of Hawke's Bay to bury their prejudices of the past and to resolve to work together with a spirit of co-operation and unity to attain what is in the best interests of the whole community.

KATHERINE SHORT (New Lynn): I have elected to talk on Auckland's water crisis because it is on the minds of everybody at the moment. Recently a water crisis was discovered in Auckland. Now, because of positive response by the public, businesses, and educational institutions, a saving of over 25 percent has been made. With such water savings being made, is the situation still urgent? Why is it so urgent? Panic decision-making has proved to be bad decision-making and we have to pay for the decision.

The planned solution for Auckland's water crisis is to use the Waikato River as a source of water. A big question is being asked about the safeness of the water supply. There are 2,792 permits for the discharge of waste into the Waikato River. Effluent from at least 12 sewage plants are also discharged into the water above the proposed intake point. These waste products contain harmful heavy chemicals, including dioxins that are toxic. It is said that they are all diluted. Dilution is not the solution to pollution. If it is like this now, imagine what it will be like in the future with supposedly more waste being discharged. This might not affect your future, but it will surely affect future generations if water from the Waikato River is used.

I am quite shocked at the lack of consultation with the public in Auckland. The mayors were the decision-makers. There is a lack of discussion with councils, for the matter is urgent, or is it? Watercare Services Ltd is a business organisation. It is required to act in the interests of the people of Auckland. By law, Watercare Services is not able to return a profit to the owners, although it is not expected to lose money. However, there are the limits mentioned to the surplus money and this will become a big factor in the urgency of the pipeline.

Natural resources need to be treated with respect. However, this Bill is setting aside the Resource Management Act, which controls protection of the environment and resources. It should be remembered that the putting aside of this Act means that people's rights are being put aside. Handing over water care to Watercare Services, which is not accountable to anybody, gives it the power of a dictator. I put this forward to you as a member of our country's future generation, especially that of Auckland. It is our future that could be changed for better or for worse. For me, as a youth, to put forward my ideas is a step in the right direction.

[The time allowed for the debate having expired, the motion lapsed.]

URGENT QUESTION

Procedure

Mr SPEAKER: Leave has been sought for the member for Lyttelton to ask an urgent question and she will need to do that by sign language. Is there any objection? There appears to be none.

Interpreters for Deaf Students

JESSICA MARTENS (Lyttelton) to the **Minister of Education:** Why is there no provision for interpreters for deaf students so that they can remain in mainstream education throughout high school?

Hon. ROGER McCLAY (Acting Minister of Education), on behalf of the Minister of Education, who is overseas, and on behalf of my colleagues—all of whom have gone back to Cabinet and I hope are not listening because this is a question without notice, which we normally do not do in our New Zealand Parliament very often, although it is done in the British House of Commons. Unfortunately, I cannot give the answer correctly

at this time but would want to indicate that it could be that mainstreaming in education is a relatively new initiative in New Zealand and it is only in recent years that parents have had the ability to have their children, or students, mainstreamed in schools irrespective of the student's disability. It could be that it is a matter for education to address and it could also be a matter for the Department of Social Welfare and the health-welfare interface to address.

I would like to tell the honourable youth member for Lyttelton that, speaking as an Associate Minister of Education and also as an Associate Minister of Social Welfare, I will undertake to speak with the Minister of Social Welfare later today and will raise that matter with both the Department of Social Welfare and the Ministry of Education and if I cannot get an answer today, which is unlikely, I will undertake to get a full written answer to the honourable youth member in the next week or so.

Craig Irison: When is the Minister likely to do this?

Hon. ROGER McCLAY: I will endeavour to speak with the member for Lyttelton this afternoon, and then during the week I will make it my business to meet with my other colleagues, the Minister of Education and the Minister of Social Welfare, and their departments, to get some information. So I hope that we can deal with it this week.

SALE OF LIQUOR (LOWERING THE DRINKING AGE) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

Hon. ROGER McCLAY (Minister of Youth Affairs): I move, *That the Sale of Liquor (Lowering the Drinking Age) Amendment Bill* be introduced. In speaking very briefly to this legislation, it is proposed that this Youth Parliament discuss the ramifications of lowering the drinking age to 18. This Bill—of which members should have a copy; if they have not, a copy is available at the Clerk's desk—lowers the age at which liquor can be purchased, sold, or consumed by any person on or from any licensed premises from 20 years down to 18 years. It is hoped that the introduction of this Bill will be approved. We will bypass the select committee stage and today we will have a substantive debate on the second reading with members who are prepared to do that. It is probable that at the end of that debate there will be a division, and members will have the opportunity to cast their votes either in the Ayes lobby or the Noes lobby.

Without getting into the detail I put it to the House that members might like to consider this legislation which would change the law pertaining to 20-year-olds, as it is now, to law pertaining to 18-year-olds, and what goes with that. I have pleasure in moving the introduction.

Bill introduced and read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. ROGER McCLAY (Minister of Youth Affairs): I move, *That this Bill be now read a second time.*

JULIE KERR (Rangiora): In my opinion lowering the drinking age from 20 years to 18 years would be one of the biggest mistakes New Zealand could make. We all know that many 17 and 18-year-olds are already served alcohol, so surely lowering the legal age to 18 years would make it easier for even younger teenagers to purchase and abuse alcohol.

New Zealand has the highest female suicide rate and the third highest male suicide rate of youths among the 23 OECD countries. Overseas research has proved that an increase in the use of alcohol has been the most significant social change to impact on these suicide rates.

Alcohol also has a huge influence on driving fatalities. Road accidents are the single biggest killer of those aged between 15 to 24 years. In 1992, 69 percent of fatally injured drivers in this age group had consumed alcohol beforehand. We, the youth of New Zealand, make up only 8 percent of the driving population. Yet as a group, we account for

nearly 20 percent of fatal road accidents in New Zealand. We want to lower this statistic, not encourage an increase by lowering the drinking age.

Other countries have already taken a step to lower the drinking age but the results have proved disastrous. In three Australian states, making it legal to purchase alcohol at the age of 18 led to increased injuries among young male drivers. In Michigan, United States of America, the increase in road fatalities among youth rose by 35 percent. Six years later in America the legal drinking age was put back to 21 years.

Surely the only sensible decision we have to make is to learn from others mistakes and to remain with the status quo. The law we have is there for a reason. Because it is not being obeyed by a large majority of teenagers does not mean we should change it. We need to look at how we can police it in a more effective way.

Before New Zealand as a country even considers lowering the drinking age from 20 to 18 we need to re-educate society and change its social values and attitudes towards alcohol. Until this matter has been addressed effectively, lowering the drinking age to 18 would be a dangerous step, and would have the ability to create serious problems for our society.

NICOLETTE BUDDLE (Eden): The difference between individual responsibility and responsibility for the community is one major reason that the drinking age should not be lowered from the age of 20 years to the age of 18 years.

An Hon. Member: Rubbish!

NICOLETTE BUDDLE: I shall tell you why in a minute. The right to vote, the right to smoke, and the age of consent are rights that are legally available to 18-year-olds. They rely on individual responsibility. These acts, and the abuse thereof, affect primarily that individual alone.

Michelle Heath: Smoking?

NICOLETTE BUDDLE: Yes. It is only over a period of many years that passive smoking actually affects others, whereas the effects of alcohol on others can be instantaneous. The right to buy alcohol is a right that relies on responsibility for the community as well as for the individual.

An Hon. Member: Then what about voting at the age of 18 years?

NICOLETTE BUDDLE: What can one vote do? One vote does not make a big difference—[*Interruption*] Theoretically it is supposed to, but in practice it does not.

Youth and abuse of alcohol contribute to drinking/driving fatalities, an increase in domestic violence, and an extreme loss in productivity for the community. At 18 this awareness of the effect of one's actions on the community is not ingrained, thus the present period between the ages of 18 and 20 years allows for gradual exposure to alcohol and time for responsibility towards the community to develop.

An Hon. Member: If people are not given responsibility they will never learn?

NICOLETTE BUDDLE: That is not true. In New Zealand we do not have the kind of community in which responsibility is given. In European countries where alcohol is part of society and children are given it from an early age, it is allowable for the drinking age to be lower. But in New Zealand, where alcohol is made a big thing of, it is a status symbol. It is still a rebellion thing to get drunk, and that is just part of peer pressure. So in New Zealand we should not be compared to other countries.

Basically, the drinking age should not be lowered from the age of 20 years to 18 years because we do not have a consideration for the community that is equal with the consideration for the individual.

Mr SPEAKER: I shall just explain that if you respond to an interjection the interjection is recorded in *Hansard*. If you do not respond, the interjection is not recorded and is lost. So if a person interjects and you think you have a good reply that you would like recorded in *Hansard*, you can stop and make the reply. If you do not think you have a good reply then you are better to steamroller on without stopping.

JAMES DOOLAN (Tamaki): It seems I am to speak in an increasingly vociferous Chamber. However, I will now attempt to placate it. I stand before members in this place neither to bemoan what some might call a denial of basic human freedom nor to bandy about statistics on alcohol use and abuse that might prove we now have more

responsibility. For although these are highly admirable arguments in favour of the Bill at hand, they are really avoiding the main issue.

If we accept as of right the Government's arbitrary powers to decide when a young New Zealander in fact becomes an adult, the question remains whether we should also accept the alarming inconsistency in the ages that are applied to us. What better way is there to assess this proposed Bill than to compare it with the other benchmarks of adulthood that we already have in the statutes?

It is, in my opinion, alarming—very alarming—that we would release 15 and 16-year-olds out into the streets of our country in 1.6 litre turbo-charged cars when we would not let them into a pub for a small glass of beer. It is equally alarming that at the age of 17 one becomes an adult in the eyes of the law enforcement agencies. However, despite having adult intentions in theft, in violence, and in disorder, one is not yet an adult when swallowing fluid. Of most concern is the patently unbelievable contention that a New Zealander can be responsible for the health and livelihood of another human being yet not be able to handle a Kahlua and milk.

When compared with the age of consent—16 years of age, and not a day above—a drinking age of 20 years is quite patently ridiculous. It is a legal anachronism. For the age of consent, unlike the present and proposed drinking age, is based on some—

Mr SPEAKER: I am sorry but your time has expired.

SACHA JUDD (North Shore): I join with the member for Tamaki in speaking for this Bill. I believe it is important to view this amendment, not so much as the granting of a right but as rectifying a largely inconsistent and, indeed, ineffective law. It is a waste of police resources, and, as the member for Eden stated, it is a law that gives very little credit to the ability of our young people to take responsibility for their own lives.

Currently, as we are all probably aware, the law is largely ignored by people aged 18 to 20 who find themselves in a situation of being granted all the legal rights of adults, bar the right to purchase alcohol. The sections that this amendment will repeal define specific areas in which alcohol is consumed as "restricted" or "supervised" and, therefore, off limits to 18-year-olds. This draws unnecessary and somewhat arbitrary distinctions between those of 18 to 20 years of age, who are alone or with friends, and those accompanied by a spouse or a guardian, who are consuming a meal or are employed in a licensed area. Indeed, perhaps the most glaring contradiction in this law is contained in section 153 of the principal Act that allows for the consumption of alcohol on private premises but not in the public arena.

The only argument in favour of retaining the status quo is the statistics regarding the deaths on our roads. However, the statistical profile of the Ministry of Youth Affairs cites figures that show the problem clearly lies with those aged 25 to 29, and not with those in the younger age bracket. As the member for Tasman stated, in other nations such as Australia, Great Britain, and certain states in North America, the drinking age stands at 18 with no significant corresponding increase in alcohol related social problems or driving related accidents. The member for Rangiora gave no overwhelming evidence to the contrary. If, on the one hand, we are empowering our youth to make decisions about their lives and their bodies—

Mr SPEAKER: Your time has expired.

ALISON HELM (Dunedin West): I am pleased to speak in favour of the Bill. My main argument is that young people will drink, anyway. We are better to have supervised conditions, which means lowering the age. There is no question that excessive drinking by teenagers can cause problems. This can be a nuisance, like vomiting or urinating in a public place, or it can be a tragedy. It was alcohol that caused the tragic death of the young woman in the Wairarapa last week.

We all know drinking and driving do not mix and can have tragic consequences. These problems do not occur just with young people, but we do not have laws against adults drinking. That is because the laws would not work. Prohibition was tried in the U S A and made an opening for gangsters like Al Capone. Prohibition does not work for New Zealand teenagers, either.

The current law does not stop 18-year-olds from drinking. No—they just drink in an unsupervised way. That means they are more, not less, likely to abuse alcohol and get into

trouble. How much better it would be if young people could go in a civilised way to a pub or a club and enjoy themselves by drinking in moderation. The law does not allow them to be served as drunks, so they would be protected in a way they are not at present. This is the crux of my argument: controlled drinking is what we should aim for, and lowering the age will help achieve this.

Also, I would like to point out how illogical our current laws are in relation to age. At the age of 10 a person can be convicted of a very serious crime. At 15 a person can drive a car. At 16 a person can get married, have sex, and buy cigarettes. At 18 a person can go to war. At 18 a person can vote. But when can a person go to the pub? Not until that person is 20. This is ridiculous. It is time the law was changed.

CLARE MARFLITT (Papatoetoe): We all live in a system. A change in one part of the system causes change in another. Lowering from 20 years to 18 years the age at which liquor may be purchased, sold, or consumed by any person will in turn cause many changes. The life in New Zealand survey conducted in 1989 and 1990 by the Hillary Commission for Sport, Fitness, and Leisure asked what factors respondents felt made the greatest contribution to well-being. Thirty-two percent of people aged 15 and over said little or no alcohol was a factor that contributed to well-being. By lowering the drinking age the well-being of people is at risk.

The major cause of death for men and women aged 15 to 24 is motor vehicle accidents. A high proportion of drivers aged 15 to 24 who are fatally injured were intoxicated. By lowering the drinking age these figures will increase. A national study conducted in 1988 found people in the 18 to 23-year age group consumed a disproportionately higher level of alcohol in relation to their population size.

At 18 years we are old enough to vote. We are old enough to fight for our country, but these statistics show that we are not old enough to purchase alcohol. There are already many provisions under the existing Act that make exceptions for persons of or over 18 years of age, allowing them to purchase or consume alcohol. Why give them more reason to make these changes?

I am therefore against this Bill, which would lower the age at which liquor may be purchased, sold, or consumed, by any person on or from any licensed premises from 20 years of age to 18 years of age.

JULIANNA HUTLEY (Heretaunga): I am for the Bill because, as was stated before, when people are 18 years of age they can vote a person into office to run this great and beautiful country of ours. Why can we not have the same freedom to choose whether to drink a beer or a coke? The courts state that at the age of 18 years a person can be imprisoned, meaning that they are mature enough to be accountable and responsible for their own actions. At 16 years we can be legally married, have a family, and raise children. Is that a great responsibility? Is that a big decision? People can choose to drink a coke or a beer, or have a child, and at 18 years of age people can join the armed services and die for their country. Why not have a beer before dying for this country?

My point is that if we are considered mature enough to be responsible for all the above, why do we not have the choice to make the decision whether to drink.

MICHELLE HEATH (Timaru): Why should we amend the Sale of Liquor Act? I will tell you why? So that we do not have to amend about six other Acts of Parliament. It is ridiculous to think that those not considered mature enough to decide whether they can drink are expected to make decisions that concern the future of not only their lives but the lives of others.

By the age of 18 years a person can indulge in sexual activity, therefore have and raise children, drive a vehicle, smoke cigarettes, leave school, die for their country, and make decisions pertaining to the future of this country and its Administration. The level of maturity required for decisions in these areas, I hope, should be deemed more important than whether or not a person can buy an alcoholic beverage. Surely after making all these decisions one would think anyone would deserve a drink! The amending of the Sale of Liquor Act should be seen as a positive move.

Ideally we would like to believe that people under 20 years of age do not drink, or do so under supervision. But in reality this is not the case. By the age of 18 years most people drink or have experimented with alcohol. Those who do not go to public places

legally—with an adult spouse or a parent, and so on—are left to their own devices. Here the crime problem becomes a factor. In the electorate of Timaru three youths—one aged 18 years and two aged 19 years—went on a drunken binge and decided to commit aggravated robbery at the local fish-and-chip shop. These youths were bored.

Let us eradicate the condition of being 18 years of age with a spouse, or being of 18 years in entertaining conditions. These 18-year-olds do not immediately change into immature and irrational human beings the minute they are left alone. Let us get the bored 18-year-olds off the streets, and encourage them to go to secure areas where crime can be prevented and safety can be preserved.

JESSICA KOHE (Porirua): I strongly disagree that the legal age for consuming alcohol should be lowered from 20 years to 18 years of age. Following a survey made by the Ministry of Health, on pages 44 and 45 of the youth statistics profile, it was found that the major diagnostic groups of admissions to public hospitals for men or women aged between 15 years and 24 years were alcohol dependent and abuse related. Admissions for men were 9 percent, and for women 23 percent. In major diagnostic groups for readmissions for the same ages and reasons, men were 11 percent and women 4 percent. Already some of the people who became part of the statistics are between the ages of 15 years and 20 years, and the legal age for consuming alcohol is 20 years.

There is also a high proportion of drivers aged 15 years to 24 years who were intoxicated, and killed in motor vehicle accidents, again in the old book. About 37 percent of deaths recorded were of people between the ages of 15 years and 19 years. Recorded deaths for 20-year-olds to 24-year-olds were 51 percent. This is an alarmingly high figure by any standards. If this number of people, particularly between the ages of 15 and 19 years, were being killed by other factors such as food poisoning, society would not put up with it. So why do we ignore this problem, and will the Bill not make it worse?

The Act allows 18-year-olds to consume alcohol as part of a meal under the supervision of a spouse 20 years of age or older, or a guardian or a parent. If the Bill is passed, will it lead to 16-year-olds or 17-year-olds applying pressure to also be allowed to consume alcohol?

Something should be done about the existing under-age drinkers. Change the laws. Face it—if a youth under the age of 20 years wants to drink, there is no doubt he or she can get it anywhere, any time, anyway. This will inevitably lead to more drinking/driving deaths and accidents, and to more young teens becoming alcohol abusers and dependents. The age does not need to be lowered. The laws need to be toughened to protect the future and health of young New Zealanders today.

ESTELLE CLIFFORD (Kapiti): The fact remains true that we already find that persons of 18 years of age and younger are purchasing and drinking liquor in New Zealand. There needs to be more control over these under-age drinkers. This is why a more realistic age restriction should be introduced that coincides with other age-restricted laws within New Zealand at this time.

By the age of 18 years, people are able to have sexual intercourse, have children, get married, live on their own, have a full-time job and pay tax to the Government, support themselves, hold a driver's licence, and, most important, be classed as adults especially when paying for things such as travel fares and entertainment activities, without—may I add—supervision from a 20-year-old. We can do those things already; we do not need their supervision. Why then should we still need their supervision to be able to have a glass of wine or a drink of beer? Why then should we not call our 18-year-olds "adults" when it comes to purchasing and consuming alcohol?

The lowering of the age from 20 to 18 years is a sensible one, although in such a case this restriction should be thoroughly controlled with strict identification demands. Another fact is that under-age persons do drink on licensed premises. With the age being lowered, under-age drinking should and can be much more controlled. Persons under 18 years of age can often not be mature enough to handle liquor or be in such areas of liquor sales and consumption. Strict ID control would help to enforce this changing of Parliament's law as a positive move.

At 18 years of age, people are able to control themselves and make the right decisions about alcohol situations. They are young adults, and considered so in most areas

of law, and therefore 18 should be classed as the age restriction for the sale of liquor and its consumption. We need to give our young adults responsibilities, as they are the future. They need responsibilities and recognition in our country.

CRISTEN LIND (St Kilda): Members of the House of Representatives, why is it that once people reach the age of 16 they can have sex, they can smoke, they can drive, and they can get married; and once they reach the age of 18 they are considered old enough to vote and old enough to go to war to fight for their country?

I have spoken to the youth of my electorate, and they support the lowering of the age for the consumption of alcohol from 20 years of age to 18 years of age. However, they believe that there should be strong guidelines in force on young people's behaviour on licensed premises, and after consuming alcohol. This privilege must carry with it certain responsibilities.

Anyone between the ages of 18 and 25 years of age should carry an identification card with his or her photo on it at all times while on licensed premises to consume liquor, to purchase liquor to take away, or to be in possession of liquor in a car or in a public place. They must be prepared to produce this identification card when asked by staff or police. Failure to produce this card should result in an instant fine of more than \$500 and immediate cancellation of their card. Young people over the age of 18 years who abuse the privilege of being permitted to consume alcohol and commit any offences relating to alcohol or violence after drinking should immediately have their cards cancelled.

KATO'ONE KAHO (Onehunga): To even consider lowering the drinking age from 20 years to 18 years of age is absolutely absurd. Not only will alcohol-related accidents on our roads increase but so will our crime rate and social problems.

Every year, about 40 percent to 50 percent of all fatal accidents involve alcohol. Evidence shows that the country spends about \$1 billion on road accidents each year. This does not account for the emotional cost to families and friends of victims as it would be too difficult to measure. Every year around 40 percent to 50 percent of all fatal accidents involve alcohol. If the drinking age is to be lowered the number of people able to obtain alcohol will increase, and so will the number of alcohol-related problems.

Similar changes will happen to juvenile crime. Earlier this year a group of young teenagers assembled at a property in my electorate where alcohol was readily available. Due to alcohol's negative effect on a person's judgment and self control, violence broke out and 17-year-old Don Whahanui died at the hands of a drunk 14-year-old. I am sure that no one here would like to encourage such behaviour.

If we all think about it that is exactly what lowering the drinking age would do. We must learn from the studies made in countries like Australia, where the drinking age has been lowered.

SHANNON AUSTIN (New Plymouth): Under New Zealand's existing law concerning the sale of alcohol people under the age of 20 years cannot buy or consume alcohol on licensed premises unless accompanied by a parent, guardian, or spouse over the age of 20 years of age. It is no secret that this law is broken by thousands of young New Zealanders every Saturday night. It is also no secret that if the legal age was lowered to 18 years of age this law would be broken by thousands of young New Zealanders—by 19-year-olds and by 12-year-olds—sometimes with the knowledge and consent of their parents and sometimes without. I do not believe that the issue facing us today is one of law. I believe it is a far more serious issue of life and death.

A week ago a 16-year-old New Zealand girl died when she drank a litre of whisky in half an hour. This girl probably knew that the whisky would have serious long-term effects on her brain and liver. She probably even knew that it would be dangerous to drive after drinking that much whisky. But did she know that alcohol is a poison? Did she know that alcohol in such high volumes can kill a person? I doubt it. This girl was 16 years of age, so even under the proposed new law she would have been drinking illegally. That, and many other cases, shows that young people, and often their parents, are disregarding the law.

It is well known that by law in most cases one has to be 20 years of age to consume alcohol, but because it is so easy to get around it, this law is virtually ignored. It is here I

believe, that the Government has to take a realistic look at the situation. No matter what the age limit, the under-age drinking law will be broken with disastrous effect.

I believe that the Government has to follow the examples of the car seat-belts, speeding, and drinking/driving campaigns in educating young New Zealanders about the dangers of alcohol, not only the long-term and secondary effects but the equally dangerous yet less well publicised immediate effects of alcohol-induced violence and death. A difficult to enforce law will not stop young people from drinking, but knowledge of the terrible effects of that drinking might.

I believe that by lowering New Zealand's legal drinking age to 18 years the Government will neither help nor harm our young people. By educating these young people as to the effects of drinking it could, however, stabilise.

ANGELA EDGAR (Wellington-Karori): We can have sex at the age of 16. The law states that we can raise a family. But how many females here, and the males—who would be the fathers—have the emotional maturity to raise a family at this age? Just because the law states something does not necessarily mean that the people have the emotional maturity to handle what is being said. We have to open our minds beyond "I can do this at 18. I can do this at 15, 16, or 17, therefore I should be able to drink alcohol.", because alcohol is a very serious issue. As we have learnt from the statistics it is a concern of life and death. People have died. It is more than saying: "I am 18, so I have to pay an adult fare on the bus." There are many more emotional issues involved in this.

Many people abuse the privilege of alcohol. Alcohol is not meant to be abused. We have had the example of the girl in Masterton. How many members have friends at school, top students, who go out in the weekend and, because they are so stressed out, get pissed off their faces on Saturday nights? They are using alcohol in the wrong way. This is an abuse of the privilege, and, surely, by lowering the age—

Harvey Wood: I raise a point of order, Mr Speaker. That is bad, inappropriate language for the debate.

Mr SPEAKER: I do not need any further assistance in ruling. I rule that the member for Rakaia is correct, and the member for Wellington-Karori should withdraw that comment.

ANGELA EDGAR: I withdraw my comment, but I am sure everybody here—

Mr SPEAKER: When you withdraw, you must withdraw without any embellishment whatsoever. You simply say: "I withdraw", and proceed on.

ANGELA EDGAR: I withdraw my comment. Everybody here should be aware of young people who drink alcohol for the wrong reasons. This is why the age is higher, because one has to consider all issues. Alcohol is something that affects one's behaviour. It influences judgment, and it affects relationships with other people. It is not a simple case of "I can do this. I should be able to buy alcohol."

People have mentioned that if we lower the drinking age we will have fewer people drinking illegally. Are we not giving the wrong message to young people if we lower the age by saying to them: "Look, alcohol is all right."? Are we not saying to people that alcohol is all right if one is 18 years old? We also need to tell them they need to have an emotional maturity to handle alcohol and not abuse it. We have obviously seen examples of this.

The House divided on the question, *That this Bill be now read a second time.*

Ayes 69

Adams	Fussell	Kirk	Scandrett
Alexander	George	Lind	Selby
Allbon	Gold	MacKinnon	Sing
Austin	Gray	Malton	Speer
Berridge	Hale	Martens	Thomson
Brewer	Heath	McDougall	Toailoa
Brighouse	Hellyer	McGill	Waite
Browne	Helm	McLean	Walkington
Cassidy-Ellice	Hughes	McMillan	Weston

Clifford	Hunt	Milestone	Wintle
Dick	Hutley	Mills	Wood
Dixon	Irison	Morgan	Wynyard
Dodunski	Johnson	Muir	Yardley
Doolan	Judd	Northey	
Dowdle	Kaipo	Pollard	
Eynon	Keenan	Proctor	<i>Tellers:</i>
Fa'afai	Kennedy	Ross	Jardor
Feasey	King	Routledge	Wright

Noes 30

Aikman	England	Manu	Tizzard
Amaru	Hohepa	Marflitt	von Randow
Barnard	Hope	O'Neill	Watkinson
Buddle	Isaia	Schone	Wisnewski
Campbell	Kaho	Short	
Cassie	Kerr D	Simpson	<i>Tellers:</i>
Creamer	Kerr J	Stone	Jacob
Edgar	Kohe	Syme	Matthews

Majority for: 39

Bill read a second time.

POINT OF ORDER—STRANGERS IN VOTING LOBBY

DYLAN HOHEPA (Far North): I raise a point of order, Mr Speaker. I seek clarification of the rule relating to the presence of strangers in the lobbies when voting. Are sign interpreters not considered strangers; if so, are voting results valid?

Mr SPEAKER: The member is quite correct. The Standing Orders do not permit strangers in the lobbies. However, I am quite certain the member was in error in seeing any. I am sure there were no strangers in the lobbies.

MOTION—YOUTH PARLIAMENTS

EMMA DOWDLE (Kaimai): I move, *That we, the Youth Parliament assembled to celebrate the reduction of the voting age from 20 to 18 years of age, wish to thank the Government and all those involved for the organisation of this day, and that the Government give consideration to this Youth Parliament reconvening approximately 12 months from now.*

I feel I speak on behalf of all of us by saying that it has been a valuable experience and a great honour to attend this Youth Parliament. I also think it has been very healthy for the Government to hear the views of New Zealand's youth. I know I share the opinion of all of the youth MPs here today that if we have a chance to attend Parliament again, whether it be as youth MPs or as the real thing, we would jump at the chance. Thank you.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

KARA McDOUGALL (Auckland Central): Mr Speaker, on behalf of the youth MPs of 1994 I thank you for sharing with us today the way in which the House of Representatives works. I hope that we, the youth MPs, have given you an insight into not what the youth of today want but what the youth of today need.

Please accept these flowers in appreciation of our thanks for your presence today.
[Applause]

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you for the flowers. It has been both a privilege and a pleasure for me to act as Speaker on this occasion. I am quite certain that much of the debate was infinitely superior to a lot I hear during the rest of the year.

The House adjourned at 3.22 p.m.

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