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POWER ASSISTED PEDAL BIKES

The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON (14:38): I have a supplementary question. If someone is caught riding one of these bikes on the road, what offence are they committing? Does the minister believe that parliament should be legislating against these bikes?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for State/Local Government Relations, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Government Enterprises, Minister Assisting the Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Energy) (14:38): The honourable member makes a very good point. People are riding the bike around on roads and the vehicle is unroadworthy. They are exposing themselves to an offence of driving an unroadworthy vehicle and they would have to pay a fine for that.

We notified SAPOL as soon as we became aware of the circumstances around this particular case because we know that the police have discretionary powers. We attempted to make them aware of the problem so that they could be encouraged to use those discretionary powers. However, in our public warning we told people not to ride these vehicles on public roads and in public places because they could be found guilty of driving an unroadworthy vehicle.

We are not able to legislate against these vehicles because they are not of themselves illegal or unsafe. It is not like a particular product that is faulty and inherently unsafe. This vehicle is unsafe only if it is driven in certain circumstances. It is quite legal to sell one of these vehicles and it is quite legal to ride one of these vehicles, but just not in a public place. We cannot legislate against that: all we can do is ensure that the retailers selling these things are very clear with their customers about the limits around where this vehicle can be ridden.