

# Mr Walker promises to prevent abuses

PA

Tauranga

The Minister of Social Welfare (Mr Walker) has promised that he will make major changes in three or four weeks to prevent abuse of the domestic purposes benefit.

He said the action would be taken after the release of a comprehensive report by the Domestic Purposes Benefit Review Committee, which had been set up under the chairmanship of a magistrate to investigate the situation.

Mr Walker was addressing a combined meeting of Tauranga, Greerton, and Mount Maunganui Jaycees at Tauranga.

Mr Walker said that the great majority of solo parents were good people caring for their families, but some were prepared to "rip-

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off" the system and live on benefits to which they had no legal entitlement.

"That had to stop," Mr Walker said. "Nobody in my book milks the taxpayer, and that comment applies to those spongers who claim any benefit to which they are not legally entitled.

"I can promise you that some strong lines of action will be taken as a result of this report."

The Jaycees regional governor (Mr W. Moultrie) suggested, in a question to Mr Walker, that from his own experience as a court lawyer it seemed it was not so much "the loafer on the beach" who was "ripping off" the system as the women who worked right up until they separated from their husbands and then found they could be better off receiving the domestic purposes benefit.

Mr Walker said he was well aware of the problem. "At present, it is far too easy to get the domestic purposes benefit," he said.

"I can promise you some major changes will be made after the report is published."

At present, it was far too easy for women to leave their husbands for no other reason than because they would be financially better off on the domestic purposes benefit, he said.

Mr Walker gave an instance, related to him by a magistrate, where a husband had gone to work on a South Island power project and the wife claimed the benefit, saying she did not know where her husband was.

When they had saved enough between them for a deposit on a house, the husband had returned.