

The Hon. Fred McKenzie: That is the only time you do it. You knocked back 21 Bills.

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: I have no reason to believe that we will not be acting with reason and propriety as we have always done.

I support the motion.

**THE HON. KAY HALLAHAN** (South-East Metropolitan) (9.25 p.m.): I wish to support the motion.

I congratulate you, Mr President, on your election to the position of President of this Legislative Council.

I am indeed pleased to be a member of the Burke Labor Government and I pay a particular tribute to the Parliamentary Leader of the Australian Labor Party in this State who leads a majority in another place.

I have been awaiting this opportunity in order to pay a special tribute to all the electors in South-East Metropolitan Province who voted for the Australian Labor Party in overwhelming numbers. The swing to Labor in my electorate, in excess of 10.5 per cent, was quite remarkable. I believe the vote reflected a demand in the community for open, honest and compassionate government.

I look forward to representing electors in an effective and energetic way, regardless of their political preference.

To those people who worked for the election of the Burke Labor Government I pay a special tribute. Residents in South-East Metropolitan Province supported the campaign in a magnificent and generous way. My own family and friends were wonderfully supportive, and also very hard working. I trust that the success we together have achieved is some reward for all the effort, and the sacrifice of other interests.

As the sitting member I see my role quite clearly to represent the whole electorate on every possible occasion. This will include a co-operative relationship with local government authorities in the province. My colleague, the Hon. Bob Hetherington, and I will work closely together to provide electors and community groups with an effective parliamentary voice.

The basis of my representations will be a strong belief in justice and equality of opportunity for all people regardless of their social, economic, religious, or cultural heritage. Where disadvantage or cultural expectations have been a discouragement to the seeking of opportunity on an equal basis, then I am in favour of policies which seek to encourage those people's participation; that is, policies for affirmative action.

Much of my work experience has been involved with people-centred services. I refer to past occupations—as a youth organiser over 20 years ago, to the position as a woman constable with the Western Australian Police Force, and more recently to positions as a qualified social worker. The knowledge I bring to this House will relate to the effect of legislation on electors as they live out their lives, and the means by which human experience is enhanced rather than diminished or suppressed.

I have seen at first hand the devastating effects of unemployment on individuals and families. The sudden drop in income, the inability to pay mortgage and hire-purchase commitments and the feelings of worthlessness and hopelessness are realities for many. I have worked with families where alcohol dependence has been a factor in violent and chaotic relationships. The desperation of people condemned to an income well below the poverty line has to be felt to be understood.

These are community issues which confront many of our citizens and they are issues confronting the electors and their families in South-East Metropolitan Province.

The question of unemployment bites painfully into electors and their dependants. Nowhere is there public debate which is questioning the means by which the benefits of our society are to be distributed, when work as we have known it, is no longer the means by which we can satisfactorily distribute the collective wealth.

It is my belief that as a nation one of our most urgent tasks will be to give our attention to the problems associated with the application of technological advances and the resultant job loss. How can our people secure an adequate income when paid work is not available? The present formula, to reduce large sections of our community to chronic poverty for the rest of their lives is to me quite unacceptable.

The matter of accommodating the variety of housing needs is a vexed question in some areas of the province. In times of economic recession and subsequent financial insecurity it is understandable that those who have been able to gain an improved standard of living, should want to hold on fast to what they have achieved. There is the dilemma that for others to obtain adequate housing, building of a more modest level must proceed. The threat to property values on the one hand and the urgency of need for adequate shelter on the other have to be seen in the broadest possible context. Large numbers of Western Australians will be denied one of their most basic needs if the Government does not proceed with its



promised building programme. This means that the State Housing Commission building programme must proceed. It is essential that it proceed with small developments and that the mistakes of the past are not repeated.

On these two matters of adequate income and adequate housing, the community as a whole will suffer if sections of our population find themselves left out of the distribution of resources. The lifestyle we all enjoy, and many of us take for granted, will be less secure in these circumstances, as people resort to less acceptable methods of ensuring their own and their children's well being.

The seat I represent is comprised of many localities with a clearly developed sense of community. The south-east corridor is a region in the metropolitan area which is undergoing rapid change. The establishment of a subregional centre at Armadale will see a new focus. The Government has given an undertaking to decentralise departments to the subregional centre, where this is viable. The necessity to travel towards the city for services will be replaced by readily accessible services in Armadale. The new law courts building opened on Friday, 27 May 1983 is an example of Government activity to be locally based. There will be immediate benefits in the number of jobs available to local people.

The area has not in the past enjoyed services which are taken for granted in other provinces. This year has seen the establishment of a family day care scheme under the auspices of the Roberta Jull Child Care Association. It has given me a great deal of satisfaction to be associated with the establishment of this scheme. Now 160 children per month have access to good quality child care.

The Armadale-Gosnells Women's Refuge is a much needed amenity in the two local government areas. All the preliminary work has been done and we now await the outcome of the forthcoming Budget to see whether the project will receive initial funding this year. There is, I believe, a greater role for local government in the provision of community services, in addition to its long established practice of providing sporting facilities.

In another locality of the province, Government members, State and Federal, are exploring every avenue available to ensure that the building of an urgently needed senior citizens' centre proceeds in Willetton. The plans are comprehensive and will serve the area well for many years. However, the capital required is a substantial amount and a mix of funds from a variety of grants may be necessary for the project to proceed.

The localities within South-East Metropolitan Province will be linked in an improved road system with the South Street to Ranford Road connection. Negotiations with the Federal Government are under way for funding. When funds are secured, planning will commence so that work can begin as soon as possible on this project. Access to the city centre and beyond, for residents in Armadale, Kelmscott, Gosnells, and Canning Vale will be greatly improved and pressure on Albany Highway will be lessened to some degree.

Local residents' groups can achieve a great deal in improving their immediate environment. They can also be very effective in ensuring that elected representatives, local, State, and Federal, are sensitive to the needs of their immediate community. I refer in particular to the energetic people who live around a neglected plot of land bounded by Tamarind Crescent and Willowmead Way in Kelmscott. This unsightly block which no-one can use, is about to be transformed into a playground and park for children and their families. It has given me a great deal of pleasure to see the enthusiasm with which residents have tackled the job, and their co-operative spirit in working together.

Children will have an alternative to riding their bikes on the road and families will have a recreational facility nearby, which they have themselves created.

There is one issue on which spirited debate is likely in the year ahead. I refer to the proposal by the council of the City of Canning to re-introduce the Spencer-Chapman Roads bridge into its planning scheme. Many people have already expressed concern about the river and foreshore, and the effect on the residential areas of Langford, Thorntic, and Gosnells. Public debate at the local level is one of the most effective ways of ensuring that decision-making commences at the level where it affects people most, and I therefore encourage residents likely to be affected to make their point of view known. Lack of foresight and planning in years past has led to the enormous pressure now on Albany Highway at Cannington, and the need to relieve that traffic problem is urgent.

Mr President, for almost three years I was a member of the Western Australian Police Force. When I decided to marry in 1972, it was not possible to remain in the Police Force as women were required to resign on marriage. This serves to illustrate the discrimination which women have faced and continue to face, particularly in the field of employment.



Given my past occupation it follows that I have a personal interest in police officers occupying a position of good standing in the community.

In a society such as ours, it is clear that the efficiency of law enforcement agencies will be related to the level of public co-operation they receive. The work is demanding and officers often feel that their position is not fully appreciated by the community at large.

It seems to me that there are two particular arenas in which changes will bring about better community-police relations.

The first is the way in which complaints against police, in the exercise of their duty, are handled. At present complaints are handled internally by senior officers and no doubt their attention to the complainant's concern is thorough. However, this is not the perception of the community at large and change to a more open and accountable system is desirable.

The Government has announced its intention to establish a procedure by which such complaints will be investigated by an independent authority. I feel confident that this measure will be welcomed by the community, and will significantly benefit the public perception of the Western Australian Police Force.

The second area of relevance to the police is their involvement in situations which are more appropriately referred to other agencies for follow-up work, once the offender has been dealt with or the volatility of the situation reduced. I refer particularly to domestic violence which is an area demanding on police time, and of a recurrent nature.

In the area of domestic violence I would like to pay a particular tribute to the work of the Hon. Lyla Elliott, a member of this House. Her speech to this House on 23 September 1981, was particularly well researched and presented members with accurate information on the difficulties in this area and of the terrible experiences faced by many women and children.

The changes she cited as being required to overcome some obvious difficulties, are in fact now being achieved. For example, an amendment to the Justices Act was proclaimed and came into effect on 20 May this year. There is a body of opinion that believes that changes to the Family Law Act would have been a more appropriate means of dealing with the problems associated with domestic violence; however, the Government is at present awaiting the report of the Anderson committee set up by the previous Government.

Emergency accommodation is an essential component in dealing with violence in domestic

situations, where members of a family have to leave the family home in order to avoid physical and/or psychological abuse. It is a disturbing fact that many victims of domestic assault have had childhood experience of domestic violence. It has been found also that many perpetrators of violence have grown up in families where violence was a means by which frustrations were expressed, or where it was frequently employed in conflict resolution.

Women's refuges have provided shelter for women and children who find their family situation too dangerous or damaging. It is a fact that refuge workers have provided this service without award coverage. Knowledge of the situation many women would face if a refuge closed its doors has kept dedicated workers at their job with inadequate funding and appallingly low wages.

The Federal Government's announcement early this month of a women's emergency services programme is recognition of inadequate Government support for the refuge programme. During 1983-84, \$4 million will be provided to phase in award wages for refuge workers and to allow urgently needed new services and the expansion of existing services. Western Australian refuges along with Queensland refuges have been the recipients of the lowest level of State Government funding in Australia. The Labor Government's further initiative in this area is therefore very significant.

On 20 June this year a long awaited service in Perth was officially opened. As a community we now have 24-hour, seven-day per week service provided by the Crisis Care Unit under the Department for Community Welfare. It is staffed by professional field workers, who are backed up by a band of very able volunteers. While this unit is available to meet any emergency, its field workers are specifically qualified to intervene in situations of domestic violence.

We have benefited by the experience gained in the South Australian Crisis Care Unit. In that State co-operation between police and crisis care workers has been very effective.

When South Australian police are called in, they restore order on arrival and then give those present the option of help from the Crisis Care Unit. The unit is then contacted by phone or radio and a mobile worker attends and assists in the resolution of the problem or makes a referral to the most suitable agency.

Police involvement and time is thereby minimised, freeing officers for other duties, and families in dispute have access to sensitive and supportive help at a time when they most need it.



The establishment of this new service and the further support for existing services, along with changes in legislation, can, I believe, be seen as a statement by the community at large, that violence in personal relationships is not acceptable. We are now saying quite clearly that there is no expectation that women have to tolerate violent and damaging situations and that their retaining care of their children is dependent upon their remaining in a situation which engenders fear and anxiety.

The potential now exists in this State for an integrated and comprehensive service. It must be available to all people in need, men and women, and will lead to a minimising of traumatic situations for many children.

Research shows that one in five police deaths while on duty occurs in the attendance of domestic disputes. The benefits to the Police Force are therefore quite significant. Police officers will be able to pursue their role of law enforcement, and refer to workers with the skills to deal with the causes of the dispute. This in turn will reduce the numerous return calls and protect police from one of their most hazardous duties.

I turn now to electoral reform and the South-East Metropolitan Province. The constituents in South-East Metropolitan Province, along with other metropolitan electors, have been robbed of a fair and equitable vote. They are the losers in the electoral processes of this State. More particularly the electors in the district of Murdoch have a vote which is worth less than any other vote when it comes to electing their member for the other place. They have the highest enrolment for any seat in the State, with 18 616 on the roll at the State elections in February this year. By comparison, Kalamunda had 8 956 electors and Murchison-Eyre 3 213.

Electors are well aware that in the sector through the south-east corridor their vote is worth half that of their neighbours who live on the other side of Albany Highway. The highway is the boundary drawn by the previous Government to separate country voters from city voters. It was not drawn by an independent panel of Electoral Commissioners.

The boundary serves the purpose of containing large numbers of Labor voters in a smaller number of metropolitan seats. It has nothing to do with the problems of country voters as we can see when we look at seats like Darling Range and Kalamunda. The Opposition's argument is that distance and disadvantage apply to electors in Kalamunda and Lesmurdie who enjoy a double vote in their country-designated West Province.

There is no principled or logical argument which can justify this arrangement of representation. Parcels of votes are bundled together by squiggly lines on a map to ensure conservative domination of this State's two Legislatures. It is an appalling situation when one considers our cultural inclination to a "fair go" and our commitment to democratic principles.

Antiquated electoral laws prevented me from representing my electorate until 22 May this year, following the 19 February general election. Queen Victoria's birthday has been legally enshrined in our State's Constitution as the date which determines the fixed term for this House, regardless of when elections are held. The fact that this Chamber is unable to reflect the mood of the electorate says volumes about the previous Government's commitment to democracy.

The cartoonist Le Page depicted the gag on me, very well in the *Comment News* on 22 March 1983. The gag, however, still does apply, but in another form. The Government is faced with the fact that the majority of members in this House reflect a minority in the community. The mandate for this Government to govern is threatened by members who would have no right to their positions, if democratic principles applied.

I represent 69 605 electors, the fourth largest constituency in this House. There are 20 members sitting in this House who represent provinces with less than 30 000 electors. I repeat that in South-East Metropolitan Province there are almost 70 000 electors. It is an incredible fact that Lower North Province has less than 7 200 electors and is represented by two Legislative Councillors. It is one-tenth the size of the province represented by the Hon. Bob Hetherington and myself!

On one other account I make an observation of this Council and its claim to represent the people of Western Australia. Prior to 21 May there were three women members who represented 9.3 per cent of the Council. From 22 May when the latest boundaries and enlarged membership applied, a number of changes occurred in the occupancy of province seats. In this new Parliament there are again three women members, but they now represent only 8.8 per cent of the membership in this House.

There is a great discrepancy between the 8.8 per cent of women represented in this Chamber and the 51 per cent of women in the electorate.

It is quite clear that the system of electing the Senate at the Federal level is infinitely fairer and is in keeping with democratic practice. It would mean electors having votes of equal value. This system is fair and straightforward. It has never

applied to our State's Legislatures. Reforms have been introduced in other Australian States and are seen to be working in the interests of a more just means of representation. Both major political parties can win under this system provided they get a majority of votes.

The proposal to reduce the number of members in this House to 22 does not mean less representation for electors. If we divide the number of votes cast at the last election by 22, the number of electors per Legislative Councillor would be 30 500. My constituents at present have one member per 35 000 electors so the quality of their representation would immediately improve by almost 17 per cent. I know my constituents would see the significance of this improved situation.

The underlying philosophy of equality before the law is relevant to this argument. Equality in making the law also applies. It will be possible for Western Australians to lay claim to this only when a system of one-vote-one-value is the basis of our electoral processes. Until that time Western Australians will not enjoy the benefits of a society based on equality and the value of its individual members.

It is my hope, Mr President, that this Thirty-first Parliament will be the last to have its membership based on bias, in favour of the privileged, and that future members will reflect this nation's commitment to democratic principles.

Government members: Hear, hear!

**THE HON. MARK NEVILL** (South-East) [9.50 p.m.]: I support the motion. I thank the electors of South-East Province for their support and for making possible the privilege I have to represent them in this Chamber.

Firstly, I shall deal with electoral reform. Australia is a democracy and if Western Australia is to be a true democracy, the electoral reform of this House must be effected without further delay to make democracy a fact and not a mere pretence.

The present gerrymander has persisted in this House for the best part of a century. At the recent State elections the Australian Labor Party polled 51.3 per cent of the formal Legislative Council vote; yet, despite winning the majority vote of the people, the ALP won only seven of the 17 Legislative Council seats.

The present electoral laws of the Legislative Council are not consistent with democracy. They would be illegal in the national Parliament; they would be illegal in every Australian State, with the exception of Queensland. To earn public credibility and to make this House a useful and positive force in guiding the future of our State,

this House—and its members—must have the courage and honesty to reform itself. A permanent, impartial electoral commission should achieve this.

The electoral reforms proposed by the present Government have the support of the majority of Western Australians and they will put behind us the last 90 years of political manipulation.

In the South-East Province, which I represent, 20 per cent of those eligible to vote in the recent State election were not on the roll. The ridiculous enrolment requirements and the refusal to allow co-operation between State and Federal Electoral Departments by the Liberal Government then in office, were a deliberate policy to minimise enrolments; whereas democracy in Government implies that the final authority rests with the people themselves and that the will of the majority shall prevail. This can be achieved only with full enrolment.

The Burke Government's proposal to reduce the number of Legislative Councillors from 34 to 22 will increase the ratio of representation from one member of Parliament to 14 657, to one member of Parliament to 16 883. Under fair distribution, this ratio is still very favourable when compared with Queensland which has a ratio of one to 29 500 people.

Further, the proposal to introduce a State-wide system of proportional representation counters the gross imbalances, such as where 7 000 voters in one area are granted representation equal to 85 000 voters in another area—as occurs in North-East Metropolitan Province.

The Government will move to provide a mechanism for the resolution of deadlock situations between upper and lower Houses of State Parliament. The present situation of "power without accountability", where this House can send the Legislative Assembly back to the people without facing an election itself, should end.

It is most urgent, particularly in these critical times, that the elected Government govern without obstruction and that the Opposition should be effective rather than capricious.

I turn secondly to the alignment of upper and lower House terms. Under the present ridiculous system, an upper House member such as myself who was elected on 19 February of this year, did not become a member until 22 May, some three months later. Simultaneously, members who had been rejected by the electorate still voted on a Bill during the last sitting of this House.

The Government's proposal to align the upper and lower House terms, makes good sense. Under the proposal, upper House members will take



their seats at the same time as Lower House members; that is, at midnight on the night they are elected.

Thirdly, I shall deal with the alignment of upper House electorates. The Esperance area is currently represented by myself as member for South-East Province until 1989. It is represented also by the member for South Province whose term expires in 1986. This causes great confusion. Members elected in 1980 should represent the new boundaries for their provinces and not the old boundaries as at present. Under the current legislation a constitutional amendment would be required to achieve this sensible proposition.

My fourth point relates to sunset legislation which I support strongly also. Under the Government's proposed legislation, departmental boards and committees will lapse after a period unless legislation is introduced and passed specifically to extend their terms, bearing in mind that there are over 400 of them and many had served their purpose long ago.

Fifthly, I turn to my electorate of South-East Province which covers the eastern goldfields and Esperance region of this State.

Healthy, profitable mining and agricultural industries are essential to the economy of my electorate.

Mining is the main industry in the eastern goldfields part of South-East Province. During the last 10 years I have been privileged to work with a very talented and dedicated team with Western Mining Corporation under Roy Woodall, A.O., who is a man of exceptional leadership and ability. He is now director of exploration with that company.

Those 10 years were spent in mineral exploration throughout the State, working on operating gold and nickel mines in the eastern goldfields. Included in this period was five years' underground experience at Kambalda.

The outlook for the mining industry is good. The gold price is healthy and most, if not all, of the indicators point to upward pressure on gold prices in the medium to long term.

The nickel industry at Kambalda is slowly emerging from the worst price slump since the Depression and is still intact, which is a tremendous reflection of the resilience and skill of the mining industry workforce in the goldfields. They have survived when many mines around the world have closed down or had large production cutbacks.

The efforts and productivity of the workforce in the nickel and goldmining industries have helped keep those industries insulated from closure. The unions have shown commendable restraint during the recession. This restraint should not be taken for granted; management has faced up to its social responsibilities during the recession without resorting to widespread retrenchments.

There are a number of practical ways in which we can provide the framework for the mining industry in this great region to develop and expand employment.

I want now to touch on areas where effort and/or reforms will assist the development of the eastern goldfields region and help improve the economy of this State.

I turn now to freehold mineral rights. Firstly, we should end all existing freehold mineral rights. All minerals should belong to the Crown. In the eastern goldfields some 84 000 hectares of prime exploration ground are held freehold with mineral rights by Hampton Gold Mining Areas and Hampton Trust Ltd. in 19 separate locations. These mineral and timber rights were granted to the Hampton Pastoral Company in 1881.

On the foundation of the colony, the Crown became the owner of all the land and, therefore, also became the owner of all the minerals. When the Crown commenced alienating land in the colony, the base metals were not reserved to the Crown as they should have been. This position continued until 1 January 1899, after which, by Statute, all minerals became reserved to the Crown.

Because of this anachronistic situation, mining companies such as WMC have to pay nickel royalties to Hampton Areas when I believe they should be paid to the Crown; that is, to all Australians.

All other Australian States have abolished private mineral rights and resumed those minerals to the Crown. Our Mining Act 1978-82, did not redress the situation in this State. These vast areas, immensely attractive to other mining companies and prospectors, are close to existing milling facilities.

Three years ago I recall Hampton Areas attempted to negotiate the sale of its rights to nickel royalties to a major insurance company. The sale fell through. However, I believe it is wrong that rights to mineral royalties can be sold off or transferred from the freehold.

The existence of freehold mineral rights is anachronistic and the legislation should be brought into line with other States, and the practice ended, to open up these areas to other mining companies and prospectors. Australian minerals

should be owned by all Australians. We cannot allow these anachronistic private mineral rights to continue to exist.

The Mining Act 1978-82 in its present form is unsatisfactory. The current inquiry will address itself to the areas of concern and hopefully will find a workable compromise between the various competing interests.

The principal aim of the Mining Act is to ensure ground is explored to discover and evaluate mineral resources. The amendments to the Mining Act must ensure that the ground held under tenement is worked. *Strict expenditure conditions only can ensure exploration is undertaken.* The genuine prospector with limited capital must be protected also under the Mining Act.

A further matter which should be addressed is the need for uniformity within the mining Acts of different States. Much of the exploration in this State is undertaken by groups and companies which work throughout Australia. Much of the confusion resulting from the difference between State Acts could be eliminated by consultation between the various State Ministers.

Another practical way we can assist and stimulate the mining industry in the eastern goldfields is to upgrade the exploration data base. The eastern goldfields is one of the most intensively explored mineral provinces in Australia. Much high quality geological and geophysical information has been generated in recent years, and I believe it is an opportune time to compile and publish the existing data in a more detailed form to avoid costly duplication of exploration. A good published data base will encourage more effective exploration.

The State Government should consider extending the national topographic mapping to the eastern goldfields at a 1:100 000 scale. We should consider providing compilations of reprocessed aeromagnetic data at 1:50 000 scale and commence compilation of more detailed geological maps of the region also at 1:100 000 scale.

If this information is available publicly in a compiled form, it will stimulate exploration and reduce much of the duplication in exploration which is ineffective and wasteful. The Western Australian School of Mines has the expertise and the staff to assist in these programmes, which could be undertaken as a joint venture with the Geological Survey of Western Australia.

The inland regional centre of Kalgoorlie-Boulder is linked to the east, south, and west by rail and sealed roads. The remaining link needs to be developed; that is, the building of an all-weather road north from Kalgoorlie to the

Pilbara. This imaginary concept has been long championed by local members of Parliament, business, local government, and the Mayor of Kalgoorlie, Mr Ray Finlayson. An all-weather road link will improve the viability of many mineral deposits *en route* and will strengthen the role of Kalgoorlie-Boulder as a regional centre, and enhance its tourism potential.

I now turn to the other major and contrasting region of South-East Province, the Esperance mallee region, which is dominated by agriculture.

The Australian Labor Party has always been the "light on the hill" for agricultural industries. Most if not all the durable reforms and initiatives in agriculture such as the Snowy Mountains scheme, the Australian Wheat Board, the Australian Wool Corporation, the Lamb Marketing Board, and many others, are initiatives of the Australian Labor Party. I cannot think of one durable rural initiative of the "do nothing" Menzies and Fraser Governments.

The Australian Labor Party is the only party committed to orderly marketing. Farmers, by a big majority, support orderly marketing, yet both the Liberal Party and Country Party policies on orderly marketing, and farmer thinking on this issue, are characterised by a philosophical chasm. Although our political opponents oppose orderly marketing, they have never disbanded these great ALP initiatives, nor would the farmers allow them to be disbanded.

Within Western Australia the Esperance mallee area has the highest level of farm debt. We must remember that WA has the highest average on-farm debt of any State in Australia; a debt which now totals a staggering \$1.12 billion and has grown at an annual rate of 16.4 per cent during the last six years. It can be seen from those figures that the Esperance mallee farmers in my electorate are one of the groups worst hit.

It is essential that farmland values reflect the potential rate of return from production. The high land values of a few years ago are responsible for part of the current debt. Three and in some cases four poor or non-existent seasons have also caused the debt situation to deteriorate, particularly in the mallee area.

Part of the answer, I believe, to the rural debt problem is the need for access to an adequate supply of long-term bank finance over 15 to 20 years at market rates of interest. By that I mean the bank rate for loans of less than \$100 000.

Long-term loans would enable farmers to survive the drought cycle. The long-term finance must be made available for both operating finance as well as for development costs. Most farmers



now in trouble are both efficient farmers and good managers who are being crippled by a combination of a succession of poor seasons and high interest rates on relatively short-term loans.

It is essential that these owner-operators are kept in our rural industries, and I believe long-term finance is the only answer. If foreign banks are allowed to operate in Australia, they should have a statutory requirement to provide long-term farm loans to cover equipment and operating expenses.

Rural adjustment scheme funds have been increased by 90 per cent this year, from \$18.4 to \$35 million, by the present Federal Government. These funds are welcome but go only part of the way to alleviating the rural debt problems. I note here that, in contrast, the previous Federal Government cut rural adjustment scheme funds by two-thirds in 1979.

I refer now to absentee owners. High rural land values in recent years have not reflected the ability of the land to service the cost of capital. Much of the buying has been from overseas or metropolitan bases and has resulted in prices being forced to unrealistic levels. Such speculative buying must be discouraged. We need to adopt policies to reduce foreign ownership of farms and discourage absentee owners.

The St. George's Terrace investors provided much needed capital to develop new land in the 1950s and 1960s, but I believe this capital does not in most cases serve a useful purpose where it purchases developed farms and increases the amount of land held by absentee owners. We have to encourage the sale of these properties to capable young farmers, who are being excluded in increasing numbers from the opportunity to establish a family farm.

On the subject of new land releases, I welcome the Government's review. New land needs thorough appraisal before release. The land releases are being made in increasingly marginal areas and we need to be very circumspect if we are not to pay the price later. If they fail we will have a repetition of the bankruptcies and walk-offs which occurred during the depression in the Grass Patch-Salmon Gums areas. Do not be fooled, this could happen again!

The releases should be made after a thorough study and when viability is established. Both the present detail of soil mapping and botanical studies are inadequate and zoological studies are non-existent. Our current studies are rudimentary compared with the Victorian Government studies of its mallee areas, studies which were completed 10 years ago. Their reports on similar types of

country provide a factual basis on which decisions can be made on the alternative use of public lands.

I want to make the point that Crown land is public land and there is no such thing as vacant or unused Crown land. It already has a use.

In Western Australia native vegetation is a declining resource of increasing value. Our decisions on alternative use of Crown land should be based on factual evidence from research.

Now that the System 2 environmental study, which covers the goldfields area, is almost complete, I will be strongly urging the Government to commence the System 3 study next. The System 3 area covers a 60 kilometre-wide strip along the south coast. With the System 3 study finalised we would have a complete regional study to guide our land use decisions.

The conditions under which new land blocks are allocated once Crown land has been recommended for agricultural use, need to be reviewed. There have been many undesirable consequences of the current conditions which urgently need to be eliminated.

The Government must seriously focus on the problems of rehabilitating some of the land already cleared as a significant portion of our productive farmlands have become sterilised and unproductive due to soil erosion and degradation, soil acidity, and soil salinity.

Known soil conservation techniques and soil conservation programmes will greatly increase the productivity of existing farmland. Accepted dry land farming methods at the end of this decade will be greatly different from what they are today.

In conclusion I wish to pay tribute to my predecessor, the Hon. Ron Leeson, MLC, a man with a great feel for and knowledge of the goldfields who loyally represented South-East Province and the Australian Labor Party in both Government and Opposition for 12 years.

I thank the staff of Parliament House for their kind help, and finally I wish to thank again the electors of South-East Province for the confidence they have shown in me and the Australian Labor Party.

[Applause].

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. R. J. L. Williams.

#### ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: SPECIAL

THE HON. D. K. DANS (South Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [10.11 p.m.]: I move—



That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, 2 August.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 10.12 p.m.*

### QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

#### EDUCATION: WESTERN AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

##### *Debt Collection*

5. The Hon. N. F. MOORE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is it a fact that the Western Australian Institute of Technology has employed debt collecting agencies to recover services and amenities fees from students attending the institute?
- (2) If so—
  - (a) how many students have been served notices by the debt collecting agencies; and
  - (b) what are the names of the debt collecting agencies employed by the institute?

The Hon. J. M. BERINSON replied:

- (1) and (2) (a) and (b) In view of the time factor involved, the Minister for Education has answered this question in writing to the member.

#### EDUCATION: PRIMARY SCHOOL

##### *Canning Vale: Replacement*

6. The Hon. P. G. PENDAL, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) In view of the Minister's commitment to provide a replacement new school for Canning Vale, can he say when this will occur?
- (2) If not, can the Minister say what arrangements he favours for the replacing of Canning Vale School upon its intended closure this year?

The Hon. J. M. BERINSON replied:

- (1) and (2) In view of the time factor involved, the Minister for Education has answered this question in writing to the Member.

##### *Point of Order*

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: I have a number of questions on the notice paper,

questions I consider to be of some importance. Would it not be a proper course of action to make sure the answers are recorded in *Hansard* by having the Minister read those answers? If the answers are not to be read out here, it would seem there is no purpose in reading out the questions. In addition, if any member were particularly interested in the matter, the answer should be read out so that he could make a comment.

The PRESIDENT: It is up to the Minister whether he answers the question in the House or in the form he decides to answer it. I rule that there is no point of order.

*Questions (on notice) Resumed*

#### INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS: AGREEMENT

##### *Builders Labourers' Federation and Multiplex Constructions Pty. Ltd.*

7. The Hon. G. E. MASTERS, to the Minister for Industrial Relations:

I refer to an agreement between the BLF and Multiplex regarding increased site allowances and reduction in working hours to a 36-hour working week.

The previous Government had arranged to take the matter before the State Industrial Commission believing the agreement contravened the terms of the wage freeze laid down by the Commission itself.

- (1) Does the State Government support a Wage Freeze?
- (2) Why did the State Government withdraw from the proceedings?
- (3) Do Multiplex and the BLF see the withdrawal of action as condoning the agreement?
- (4) Would support for the agreement lead to immense pressure by the BLF on other building companies for a similar agreement; i.e. a reduction to a 36-hour working week?
- (5) Why has the Government appeared to condone the agreement a few days after gaining power and then almost immediately condemned a 36 hour working week?