

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 30 October 1985

THE SPEAKER (Mr Harman) took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

MINERALS: QUARRY

Bickley: Petition

MR SPRIGGS (Darling Range) [2.17 p.m.]: I wish to present a petition which reads as follows—

To: The Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned wish to petition in protest against the establishment of a Hard Rock Quarry in Hardinge Road, Bickley Valley, by Merman Pty. Ltd., or any other company. And further recommend the preservation of the Darling Scarp in its present natural state, to be kept from development at any time.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

I have omitted to indicate on the petition the number of petitioners.

The **SPEAKER**: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House once the member has completed that formality.

(See petition No. 24.)

ANIMALS: DOGS

Banning: Petition

MR DAVIES (Victoria Park—Minister for Conservation and Land Management) [2.18 p.m.]: I have a petition which reads as follows—

To: The Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned, wish to draw your attention to the fact that South Perth City Council's By-law totally banning dogs from Neill McDougal Park (Como), the South Perth Esplanade and Sir James Mitchell Park foreshores is a serious men-

ace to our Civil rights and accordingly hereby request that you reject this portion of the By-law.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

This petition bears 1 153 signatures, and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

The **SPEAKER**: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

(See petition No. 25.)

TRANSPORT: BADGEBUP RAILWAY CROSSING

Signals: Petition

MR OLD (Katanning-Roe) [2.19 p.m.]: I have a petition signed by 449 petitioners which reads as follows—

To: The Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned, respectively draw your attention to the urgent need of installing warning lights on the railway crossing at Badgubup on the Katanning-Nyabing Road.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly, and I have certified accordingly.

The **SPEAKER**: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

(See petition No. 26.)

ROAD TRAFFIC AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR CARR (Geraldton—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) [2.21 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The provisions of this Bill will honour an undertaking by the Treasurer in his 1985-86 Budget speech of providing aged pensioners with a free motor driver's licence.

This Bill will extend to those aged pensioners who currently receive a 50 per cent concession on the fee for their motor drivers' licences a total exemption from the prescribed fee.

All male pensioners who have attained the age of 65, and female pensioners who have attained the age of 60, and who hold a pensioner health benefits card, will be entitled to the 100 per cent concession.

The new concession will apply to the licences issued on or after 1 January 1986 and to renewals due on or after that date. Other eligible pensioners such as invalids, widows, and supporting parents, who currently receive a concessional motor driver's licence, will continue to receive a 50 per cent concession.

To obtain the issue or renewal of a licence subject to a concession, an eligible pensioner will merely be required to submit an application form and, upon receipt of an application, the Traffic Board will issue or renew a "free licence" or "concessional licence".

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Thompson.

ELECTORAL AMENDMENT BILL

Council's Amendments

Amendments made by the Council now considered.

In Committee

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (Mr Taylor) in the Chair; Mr Tonkin (Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform) in charge of the Bill.

The amendments made by the Council were as follows—

No. 1.

Clause 5.

Page 3, line 19 to page 7, line 31—To delete all words.

No. 2.

Clause 5.

Page 12, line 23—To delete "or".

No. 3.

Clause 5.

Page 13, line 4—To delete "expires." and substitute the following—

expires; or

- (g) the person is enrolled as an elector for a legislative assembly of a State or Territory of the Commonwealth other than this State or is enrolled as an elector under

the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 of the Parliament of the Commonwealth in respect of an address that is outside this State.

No. 4.

Clause 6.

Page 14, line 9—To insert after the word "sex" the word "occupation".

No. 5.

Clause 18.

To delete the clause.

No. 6.

Clause 19.

To delete the clause.

No. 7.

Clause 20.

To delete the clause.

No. 8.

Clause 21.

To delete the clause.

No. 9.

Clause 27.

To delete the clause.

No. 10.

Clause 34.

Page 31, line 1—To insert after the word "application" the following—

shall be made in person before an issuing officer and

No. 11.

Clause 41.

Page 36, lines 17 to 28—To delete all words.

No. 12.

Clause 44.

To delete the clause.

No. 13.

Clause 50.

To delete the clause.

No. 14.

Clause 56.

Page 42, lines 26 and 27—To delete "and 3".

No. 15.

Clause 56.

Page 43, lines 7 to 9—To delete paragraph (d).

No. 16.

Clause 56.

Page 43, lines 19 to 34—To delete all words.

No. 17.

Clause 56.

Page 44, lines 1 to 4—To delete all words.

No. 18.

Clause 57.

Page 44, lines 20 to 21—To delete the words "it does not indicate the elector's first preference for one candidate." and substitute the following—

it is not marked as prescribed by section 128 so as to indicate by numerical sequence the voter's preference as regards all the candidates.

Provided that if numerals in arithmetical sequence are placed opposite the names of all the candidates but one, the next following numeral shall be deemed to be placed opposite the name of the remaining candidates.

No. 19.

Clause 57.

Page 44, lines 22 to 35, and page 45, lines 1 to 24—To delete subsections (2), (3), (4) and (5) and substitute the following—

(2) Subject to subsection (3) of this section, a ballot paper shall not be informal for any reason other than the reasons enumerated in subsection (1) but shall be given effect to according to the elector's intention so far as his intention is clear.

(3) In particular, where there are only two candidates a ballot paper is not informal by reason only of the elector having indicated his vote or first preference by a cross instead of the numeral "1" but is informal if the elector places a cross against the name of one candidate and the numeral "1" against the name of the other candidate.

Mr TONKIN: I move—

That amendment No. 1 made by the Council be not agreed to.

The clause to which this amendment refers relates to itinerant electors. The Legislative Council has decided that it is not worth having a provision in the Act which might cover as few as 100 people. However, we believe that every Western Australian should be permitted to vote in an election if he or she has a right to that vote.

The position at the moment is that itinerant people who are not enrolled in respect of a particular address have great difficulty in getting onto the electoral roll. I understand that members of the Opposition in this Chamber and in another place have expressed their concern that someone might transport by truck or bus large numbers of itinerant voters to a marginal electorate. Of course, if that were possible it would be a matter for concern. The Government will therefore agree to Council amendment No. 3 which ensures that if a person is enrolled as an elector for another State, he or she cannot also be enrolled in WA. That was a legitimate concern raised, I think, by the member for Floreat and also by the Legislative Council. We intend to agree to the Legislative Council's amendment which will cover that situation. To paraphrase the member for Floreat's comments, the situation might have arisen that a person enrolled in Victoria could then enrol also in Western Australia.

Mr Jamieson: How could that be when the Commonwealth roll is computerised?

Mr TONKIN: I do not think it could happen, but we are very concerned to see that the roll is as close to perfect as possible, and free from any possible threat. The Legislative Council has written in an amendment which we do not think was necessary—that is my advice—nevertheless, it does no harm to the Bill. It makes absolutely sure of the situation, if one likes. It puts an extra nail in the bar across the door and it is therefore quite acceptable.

Mr Blaikie: You might also explain why the vote for the Electoral Department increased 2½-fold from what it was two years ago.

Mr TONKIN: What does the member mean by "the vote for the Electoral Department"? I do not understand him. Does the member mean the expenditure? I do not know whether the member understands the Standing Orders, but I certainly have a lot of respect for our Deputy Chairman (Mr Taylor) and I would be made to sit down by him if I chased such a red herring. The member should know the Budget debate is coming up and during that debate it

would be appropriate for him to discuss expenditure in the Electoral Department. I will be very happy to do so at that time.

Returning to the matter before the Chair, we do not believe that because people do not have a permanent address they should be guilty of committing an electoral crime. We accept that certain people do experience problems in enrolling because they are moving around. I will give members an idea of some of the people who would possibly be enrolled under this provision. These people are enrolled under the Commonwealth legislation. I might add that without this provision in the Act, these people could vote at Commonwealth elections but not at State elections.

These are the kinds of occupations those people may have—backhoe operator, baker, building trade assistant, carpenter, casual worker, chef, clerk, clerk typist, commercial pilot, community welfare lecturer, company director, construction engineer, contractor, deckhand, fabric cutter, farmer, foundry supervisor, fruit packer, gardener, and prospector—I wonder which is his chief occupation—grader worker. That is 21 occupations. Then home duties, hospital manager, itinerant worker, industrial spraypainter, labourer, landscape gardener, mechanic, meteorologist, and mobile ranger. Six were listed as “no occupation”; 12 pensioners, a photographer, a public servant, six retired, one shearer, one shopmaster, one soldier, one storeman, a student, a taxi driver, three truck drivers, and eight who listed their occupation as unemployed.

Those are the kinds of people who might be classed as itinerant. I did not have those figures available during the earlier debate.

Mr Clarko: How is a soldier itinerant?

Mr TONKIN: The member would have to ask the soldier that. The member for Karrinyup would be aware that people often put down the last occupation they had. Supposing one is discharged from the Army and is asked for his occupation. He says, “I am a soldier.” It is the same for people who are not working, or perhaps have lost their job. A person might say, “I am a schoolteacher.” A schoolteacher does not cease to be a schoolteacher because he or she is not working.

Mr Clarko: He would cease to be a soldier, but I accept that point.

Mr TONKIN: Those are the figures provided by the Commonwealth. There are many other safeguards apart from the one that the Legislat-

ive Council has written in. An itinerant's enrolment address is restricted. Perhaps I can refer to clause 5 on page 3 of the Bill. It states that a person will be enrolled for a district if he has a next of kin. For example, if a person has a sister, brother, or wife at a particular address and he is an itinerant worker who is not living there although he is married and goes away and comes back from time to time, the itinerant can use the next of kin's address.

Secondly, in regard to electoral districts, supposing someone was entitled to enrol for Morley-Swan, which is my electorate, and had then moved away to an itinerant life. For example, I know a person who works for some farmers from time to time—it is not a full-time job; he cannot get one—and who moves around. He possibly would enrol for the electoral district for which he was last entitled to be enrolled. Another provision enables enrolment in the district in which the person was born. I was born in the famous little hamlet of Kelmscott. I suppose if I was in an itinerant's situation, I could decide to enrol for Armadale, if that is the electorate, or Gosnells or Dale.

None of the cases to which I have referred would be classed as itinerant enrollees. They would be entitled to be enrolled in respect of their place of birth, their next of kin's address, or the last district for which they were entitled to be enrolled. So the situation is that if one could not enrol under any of those circumstances, or did not wish to enrol under those categories, one could be enrolled as an itinerant voter.

Itinerants must keep moving. They must never reside longer than one month in any one spot. Itinerants lose their enrolment status if they leave the State for longer than one month, so we cannot have a situation where someone leaves the State and is away for longer than one month and is still entitled to be enrolled as an itinerant.

I have to correct myself. I apologise to the Committee for misleading it unintentionally by referring to a Legislative Council amendment which was to refer to absentee electors and not itinerant electors.

We believe the Bill contains adequate criteria to cancel the enrolment of any itinerant who ceases to be entitled to such enrolment. I reiterate that we want to provide that every Western Australian who is entitled to vote should be able to vote. We do not believe that because a person has an itinerant occupation, or no occupation in the case of retired persons or

unemployed persons, he or she should be disqualified from voting. We do not believe it should be an electoral crime. Secondly, it would be absurd and unjust to say to those people, "You are entitled to vote at the Commonwealth election to decide the Government of Australia, but you are not entitled to vote to decide the Government of Western Australia."

I know the member for Floreat, perhaps because he is not a native Australian, very often attacks the concept of one Australia and says we only do what Big Brother tells us. I am proud to be an Australian. I see no reason for Western Australia to be different from the other parts of Australia purely to prove we can be independent. Someone who feels independent does not have to prove it; it is only those who suspect they are not independent who are forever banging the drum and saying they are independent of mind. The fact is Australia is one nation, thank heaven. It is something we should be proud of, and we should not denigrate that fact.

This is the only continent controlled by one people and one government. It is one nation. If we look at what has happened to other continents which have not had this privilege or have not been lucky enough to have this situation, we can see we have here a boon. I can see no reason to cause the confusion that has gone on in Western Australia for too long by having different requirements for people merely because on one occasion they are voting under Commonwealth law and on another occasion they are voting under State law.

We remember that before this Government came to power 100 000 Western Australians were not on the roll. That was by deliberate policy of the previous Government; it made it hard for people to get on the roll, especially country people. There was an absurd requirement which said that if one was not on the roll, one's signature had to be witnessed by a justice of the peace, a police sergeant, or other specified categories of witness. When Sir Charles Court defended that action in the House he made no attempt to say there was good reason for it. There was no report by the then Chief Electoral Officer that people were fraudulently filling out electoral claim cards, but he proceeded with it because of the attitude of the Government.

Our attitude is different. We do not want to turn away from the polling booths one single eligible voter. We are aiming to see that everyone is enrolled. Since we had the cooperative enrolment agreement with the Commonwealth,

100 000 Western Australians have come onto the roll. I do not believe any Government wants to sit here and think it has been elected because 100 000 Western Australians did not vote. What kind of government would that be? Would that government not wonder about its legitimacy? The Government wants to know it is here by the will of the people, and that means by the will of all the people who are qualified to vote as citizens of this State of ours. It may be only 100 people; but we have made sure there is no way this can be abused except that the right to enrol to vote can be abused at any time. Members may say, "Ah, but you can bring in 10 itinerant workers on to the roll," and so on. I suppose if people want to break the law that can be done. I could fill in 10 cards for fictitious people and I could get anyone to sign them. I could enrol 10 people now if I wished to break the law. The law can be broken, but it has no greater potential for being broken with the itinerant enrolment provision than it has in the present situation.

In our discussions with the Commonwealth Government, it indicated that it had no problems with itinerant voters. I believe very strongly that all people should have the right to vote and that, because a person is not, at a particular time in his or her life, able to give an address, that person should not be disqualified from voting.

Members should remember that this State has been developed by pioneers. Tens of thousands of Western Australians, over time, could not supply a permanent address; for example, the miners in the goldfields. Many of those miners have spent long periods of their lives fossicking in the bush for gold. The Act as it existed would not allow those people to be enrolled. We say that is wrong and that those people have a right to be enrolled. This amendment will not allow that.

Mr MENSAROS: I listened with interest to the arguments put forward by the Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform. Some of his arguments were novel and some were used in the original debate. I confess I was not impressed with some of the new arguments which he used. The Minister said that not a single Western Australian should not be enrolled or should not be entitled to vote because he is a Western Australian. How does the Minister come to the conclusion that all itinerant workers are Western Australians? It is almost a contradiction in terms. That worker might be

an Australian and might be moving around Australia. However, that does not make him a Western Australian.

The new examples of occupations of these people introduced by the Minister are not convincing because those occupations are held also by people who are domiciled in one place. There are hundreds of bank managers already listed on the rolls, and hundreds of other people with occupations mentioned by the Minister. I do not think that argument is convincing.

My definition is that an itinerant worker is one who lives in a car, caravan, or kombivan and who travels around Australia. However, I think that even 99 per cent of those people would have permanent residences and are only travelling on holidays. I know that there are genuine itinerants such as shearers, but even those people usually have permanent residences. Even if that person is an itinerant, there is no law against a person permanently living in a caravan or van as long as that person complies with the usual health and local government rules and other laws that might apply.

I think the Minister is talking about one person in 10 000 who might be a genuine itinerant. No stretch of the imagination would convince me that those genuine itinerants would affect the outcome of an election.

On the other hand, however, the provisions could be abused. I feel it would be easy to manipulate a few people enrolling in different areas of the State rather than to manipulate a larger number, to allow them to vote in a marginal electorate. We have seen, on many occasions, the outcome of an election depended on a handful of votes. Ken Dunn, a former member, won his seat on one occasion by one vote.

There is also no guarantee that a party organiser will not abuse the system or a guarantee that genuine nomads, such as Aboriginal people, might be enrolled in electorates in which it suits party organisers to manipulate the outcome of an election.

This amendment would affect 0.01 per cent of the eligible voting population and is not worth the effort. I know that my view differs from the Minister's view, as he says that no abuse is possible. I think it would be possible because I think the amendment would create a temptation for people to abuse the system. I believe that most itinerant people have permanent addresses; there is no need to enrol them

at addresses which may belong to a next of kin, some other relative, or even relate to their places of birth. I do not believe that people are itinerants for all their lives. It would be very difficult, even with normal spans between elections, to find people who have been genuine itinerants for that period. If the opposite were the case, there would be more justification for this amendment. But I do not think that it would be worthwhile to incorporate this provision in the legislation, thereby giving a temptation to anyone who wants to abuse it in an organised manner. Thus, I cannot accept the argument put forward and urge the Committee to accept the amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: Before I call the Leader of the House, I advise the Committee that in view of the complex nature of the Bill I have authorised a person to be able to come into the Chamber to sit next to the Minister and I intend to recognise the Minister from the place at which he is now sitting.

Mr TONKIN: I think that is a very sensible arrangement. I thank the Chairman and the Committee for their indulgence.

I am amazed at what the member for Floreat has said. He has put in a nutshell the great gulf that exists between the Government and the Opposition on this matter. I do not say that with any pleasure, because I wish this gulf did not exist. I have not written down the exact words spoken by the member, but he said that itinerant workers will not decide the outcome of the election. What has that to do with anything? Does the member for Floreat not understand about human rights? Some human rights belong to the people and we have no right to take those rights away from them. I could make out a case that the member for Floreat by himself would be very unlikely to determine the outcome of an election. Should we therefore move to take away his voting rights? It is very unlikely that his one vote will ever influence the outcome of an election. Of course, it is also unlikely that 107 itinerant voters, or however many there are, would decide the outcome of an election. However, they are citizens of Western Australia and should have the right to vote. It is as simple as that.

Mr MENSAROS: In response to the Minister, I point out that it is a matter of philosophy. It is very easy and nice to emphasise motherhood questions, but human rights with respect to voting are not absolute. Certain conditions must be met before any one of us can vote. First, we must be citizens. A non-citizen de-

serves human rights equal to those of citizens, but nobody thinks that he is disadvantaged because he cannot vote. Secondly, we have to fulfil certain domicile conditions. I have never heard it said by even the most ardent human rightist that anybody has been hurt because he is compelled to live one month, three months or six months, as the case might be, permanently in a place in order to vote.

Human rights are well acknowledged in certain countries. I point, for instance, to Switzerland. Nobody would say that Switzerland is an oppressive country, yet the conditions to be fulfilled there before attaining eligibility to vote are infinitely more stringent than in Australia or elsewhere. After a little research, one could nominate quite a number of countries where the conditions to be fulfilled are more stringent. I do not think it is valid to put forward an emotional argument that either the Opposition or I am against human rights. I suggest that if we bring that argument into it, the Leader of the House should review his position with respect to ID cards. Their introduction would harm human rights and dignity much more.

Mr TONKIN: I am pleased that the member for Floreat acknowledges the philosophical difference. It is a very big philosophical difference. I accept that human rights are conditional, but they should not be conditional upon someone's being a certain kind of worker. They should not be conditional upon whether one lives in a tent or in a house, in a caravan or in Floreat Park, for example.

Mr Mensaros interjected.

Mr TONKIN: I am talking about a moving caravan. Of course voting rights are conditional upon one's being a citizen. Is the member for Floreat therefore saying that a person who is an itinerant worker is less of a citizen? Our State has been built upon itinerant workers. As I said before, our pioneers would not have been able to put down on an electoral card an address. Should they therefore have lost the right to vote? That is nonsense.

There are safeguards. It is possible that this provision could be abused, but the present provisions can also be abused. A person today can also fill in a false enrolment card. Penalties are provided for in the Act. I suppose—although I do not know and have no reason to say there are—that at the moment it is possible that there are people incorrectly enrolled in Western Australia. They may be enrolled for a place in

which they have no right to be enrolled. Naturally, we try to cut out this practice and prosecute offenders.

We conduct habitation reviews, which were absent when the member for Floreat was in government. When the Opposition was in government, it did nothing to get people on the roll. It did not cooperate with the Commonwealth. It did not have officers conducting habitation reviews and it did not ask the Commonwealth to conduct such reviews on its behalf. As I stand here at this very moment dozens of people are going throughout the State of Western Australia enrolling people on behalf of the Commonwealth and the State.

That did not happen when the member for Floreat was in government. In his day, Commonwealth people undertook such reviews, but the State could not take advantage of them because of the absurd laws over which the Government presided. Let the Opposition be proud of its record. I thought the Opposition might have learnt from its years in opposition, but apparently it has not. It still has the attitude that if it can keep somebody off the roll, it will. It will do so not for a good reason, but for some irrelevant one such as the fact that a person does not have a permanent address. That is a record of which I would not be proud. It certainly helps the people of Western Australia to see the difference between the Government and the Opposition.

Question put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 25

Mr Bateman	Mr Hodge
Mr Bertram	Mr Hughes
Mr Bridge	Mr Jamieson
Mr Bryce	Mr Parker
Mrs Buchanan	Mr Pearce
Mr Brian Burke	Mr Read
Mr Terry Burke	Mr D. L. Smith
Mr Burkett	Mr P. J. Smith
Mr Carr	Mr Tonkin
Mr Davies	Mr Troy
Mr Evans	Mr Wilson
Mr Grill	Mr Gordon Hill
Mrs Henderson	

(Teller)

Noes 18

Mr Blaikie	Mr McNee
Mr Cash	Mr Mensaros
Mr Clarko	Mr Old
Mr Court	Mr Rushton
Mr Grayden	Mr Spriggs
Mr Hassell	Mr Stephens
Mr Peter Jones	Mr Trethowan
Mr Laurance	Mr Tubby
Mr MacKinnon	Mr Crane

(Teller)

Pairs

Ayes
Mr Tom Jones
Mrs Beggs
Mr Taylor
Mr McIver
Mrs Watkins

Noes
Mr Williams
Mr Coyne
Mr Watt
Mr Thompson
Mr Bradshaw

Question thus passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

Mr TONKIN: I move—

That amendments Nos. 2 and 3 made by the Council be agreed to.

Thank you, Mr Chairman. I thank the Opposition for its cooperation; it is sensible to proceed with amendments Nos. 2 and 3 together. Unfortunately I unwittingly misled the Committee earlier. This relates to absentee electors, not itinerant ones.

My advice is that the original Bill was sufficient, and that there was no need for this amendment. However, I can see no harm in accepting an amendment which makes sure that what one thinks one is doing is in fact done. Sometimes Acts of Parliament are not clear, resulting in litigation. We want to avoid that, so we are very happy to accept this amendment because it stresses what is already the Government's intention in any case; that is, that an absentee voter must not also be able to be enrolled in respect of some other State or Territory of the Commonwealth.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendments agreed to.

Mr TONKIN: I move—

That amendment No. 4 made by the Council be not agreed to.

The Legislative Council has asked that the occupation be included on the roll, in addition to the name, address and sex. In the Bill which we passed in this Chamber there was no requirement to include occupation on the roll.

It is not of great moment; it is a rather silly matter in a sense, because it does not matter whether the occupation is included, so the Government is not going to be upset about this.

The reason I say it is sensible to leave the occupation off is that it is so often inaccurate. As the member for Karrinyup said, how can a soldier be itinerant? After having left the Army some people will still class themselves as soldiers. Some people call themselves teachers when they have left the profession for some time. We know of nurses who no longer nurse but still regard themselves as nurses. If I were

retired I might like to call myself a teacher because I am still a teacher even though I am not still employed as one.

For that reason the occupation does not necessarily mean a great deal. It has no relevance to a person's right to vote. As Mr Berinson said so eloquently in the Legislative Council, one can have all kinds of descriptions on the roll but they do not help in identification.

As a newly-elected member of Parliament, I found when working with the rolls that I used the occupation detailed there quite a bit. I was interested in writing to nurses and to teachers and so on on matters of special interest to them. I was amazed how often I was wrong. These people would say the information was out of date, and that 10 years ago they had undertaken training courses, so it was quite inaccurate. The information was not at all useful because it was no longer up-to-date.

The silliest thing I have heard was the debate put forward in the Legislative Council, I think by Mr Pandal, who said that if he received a telephone call from someone in his electorate he wanted to be able to look up the occupation to know how to deal with the caller. I would have thought when one receives a telephone call one should listen. People who teach the art of listening warn that one must listen to what is being said; one should not assume what one thinks has been said or what one thinks will be said. I can think of nothing more destructive in the relationship between two people, albeit a member of Parliament and a constituent, than a man who says, "Oh, a truck driver, I will treat this person differently from one who has been a university professor or a teacher."

When one picks up the telephone one should listen and not be blinded by one's prejudices—and we all have them—as to the occupation a person may have. Even if one may want to use the information for that purpose, I do not believe it is legitimate, and one is likely to be wrong half the time. People do not re-enrol when they have changed their occupations.

Firstly, we think it is really irrelevant to the question of whether one has a vote. Secondly it is no good for identification. It is irrelevant from the point of view of the roll to enable one to vote, and it is useless from the point of view of identification. Thirdly, it is likely to be wrong. Unfortunately, it is sometimes improperly used. Some people will look at the occupation so that they will know what they

might be able to sell to that person—life insurance, and so on. The electoral roll is not devised for that purpose. I cannot see a really good argument for leaving occupation on the roll.

If it were usually accurate, that might perhaps be a good argument for retaining it. Given its inaccuracies and its irrelevance, and the fact that people may use it for the wrong reasons, even if it is only to make up their minds before they hear what someone has to say because his occupation is known and they will deal with him accordingly. The listing of one's occupation is just not needed. The Government insists upon its alteration of the law.

Mr MENSAROS: In the final analysis, the question of whether to retain occupation is a matter of deciding whether any harm is done by retaining it on the roll. I have not heard any concrete argument for its removal which would result in benefit to anyone which, after all, should be the main consideration.

When the Minister argued that the information was inaccurate, he should have spoken in the past tense because it is probably right to say that previously it was not very accurate. I doubt that many members have watched the electoral roll as I have. Since I first became a member of Parliament 18 years ago I have kept a card system of every domicile in my electorate registered on the electoral roll. In the early days we did not have a computer printout and so I organised a card system for people in every home unit and house, to record that not just Mr and Mrs Smith lived at a certain address but also that perhaps a mother-in-law or a married sister had joined them there who had a different name. I have recorded in the system where people have moved away from the area and other people have come in, and I have kept it up-to-date within two or three weeks of changes occurring. Of course my job is now easier because we have the computer printouts. The Minister's adviser might not remember the early days, but I went to the Electoral Office with a tape recorder and dictated the roll with all the changes from the master roll which existed at the time.

As Hon. Phil Pandal has said, I too found the listing of the occupation to be very useful despite a percentage of inaccuracies. I suppose it was particularly useful when I was a younger and perhaps more enthusiastic member in some ways because I could write to people of particular occupations to obtain their views on relevant matters. If a certain Bill or contentious matter was debated in the Parliament, or if I

was interested in any particular question, I could write to those people whose occupations indicated they might be interested in those matters so that I could ascertain whether the majority held views which were parallel to or against, for instance, the teachers' union's view, or parallel to or against the Education Department's view, and so on. I imagine that the incorrect recording of occupations did not amount to more than about 20 per cent. I suppose the most celebrated example of an incorrect listing of an occupation involved the then Under Secretary of the Premier's Department, Bill Lonnie, whose occupation was shown as driver because he had started in the service of the Government as a driver.

The Minister should have spoken in the past tense because since our electoral roll has been combined with the Commonwealth roll the occupations are much more up-to-date because electoral officers are constantly examining the rolls and visiting people to ascertain that they are enrolled at their present recorded address and that their occupation is as shown.

In this respect it is a good thing that the rolls have been combined. I say this drawing on my own experience, because I still scrutinise every computerised printout from the Electoral Office. A two or three-page printout comes every fortnight or so giving deletions and addendums. Originally I found a lot of mistakes and, in a question or perhaps in a speech, I asked the Minister to take some action. When we originally compared the deletions and the addendums we found often that perhaps 20 per cent of people deleted were then re-entered with the same name, address, and occupation. Happily this has improved now, and when I compare the deletions and addendums I find only one or two examples of this sort of error. When I do I mark them so that my secretary does not make an alteration on the cards only to find that she must then, in some instances, put back the same information. Sometimes I find that Mr and Mrs Smith have moved within the electorate from Glengariff Drive to The Boulevard, or their occupations have changed only.

Listing the occupation helps when at the one address a person who is a student becomes a salesman or an engineer. Sometimes a nurse changes her occupation to receptionist or something like that. I can show the Minister my cards where changes have involved people not moving into or out of the electorate but merely changing address within the electorate or changing their occupation. The Minister ought

to be proud of the fact, possibly for good reason, that the wrong listing of an occupation is much more infrequent now that we have these physical checks by the Commonwealth Electoral Department.

My view is that, on balance, much more good is achieved by having the occupation listed, thus enabling us to ask people with certain occupations their views on relevant matters.

It is also very informative with respect to who is who in a living unit. My cards may show that at one address there are two masculine Smiths and one feminine Smith. Often the only way to ascertain who is the father and who is the son is by looking at the occupation listed. If one Mr Smith is shown as a manager and the other as a student, obviously the latter is the son. More good than harm comes from having the occupation listed. I have seen no proof of harm being done to anyone by having the occupation listed.

Question put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 26

Mr Bateman	Mr Hodge
Mr Bertram	Mr Hughes
Mr Bridge	Mr Jamieson
Mr Bryce	Mr Parker
Mrs Buchanan	Mr Pearce
Mr Brian Burke	Mr Read
Mr Terry Burke	Mr D. L. Smith
Mr Burkett	Mr P. J. Smith
Mr Carr	Mr Taylor
Mr Davies	Mr Tonkin
Mr Evans	Mr Troy
Mr Grill	Mr Wilson
Mrs Henderson	Mr Gordon Hill

(Teller)

Noes 20

Mr Blaikie	Mr MacKinnon
Mr Bradshaw	Mr McNee
Mr Cash	Mr Mensaros
Mr Clarko	Mr Old
Mr Court	Mr Rushton
Mr Cowan	Mr Spriggs
Mr Grayden	Mr Stephens
Mr Hassell	Mr Trethowan
Mr Peter Jones	Mr Tubby
Mr Laurance	Mr Crane

(Teller)

Pairs

Ayes	Noes
Mr Tom Jones	Mr Williams
Mrs Beggs	Mr Coyne
Mrs Watkins	Mr Watt
Mr McIver	Mr Thompson

Question thus passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

Mr TONKIN: I move—

That amendment No. 5 made by the Council be agreed to.

This amendment refers to the length of notice to be given of an election. As the Act stands at the moment, Western Australia has the longest notice period in Australia.

Mr Hassell: That's how you made it—exactly how you made it.

Mr TONKIN: Yes, that is right. When I interjected on the Leader of the Opposition the other day and said he was like a school sneak, that was fairly accurate. There he is sniggering away. Is he getting pleasure out of this?

Mr Hassell: I am amused by you—not always, but by this one.

Mr TONKIN: I am glad.

Mr Clarko: Did you make a mistake? Why did you do it at the time?

Mr TONKIN: Yes, I did. I will tell the member privately.

Mr MacKinnon: He thought it was a good idea at the time.

Mr TONKIN: Those are famous words, but I will tell the member privately because I think there are good reasons for not making a public statement.

Mr Clarko: It will be interesting if the Press picks that up, because the other night when I said it was a separate question, they thought that was good news. Now you are saying you will tell me something privately.

Mr TONKIN: If anyone in the Chamber thinks it is something juicy, he will be disappointed.

I would like to tell the Committee the period allowed for notices of elections in other parts of Australia. In the Commonwealth it is 33 days; that is the minimum notice the Commonwealth Government must give before an election. As the Bill stands at the moment, the notice period in Western Australia is seven weeks; in actual fact, because of the provisions of the Interpretation Act, the Chief Electoral Officer tells me it is 51 days. The Commonwealth minimum is 33 days; in Victoria the minimum time is 33 days; in South Australia it is 24 days; and in New South Wales the minimum time is—wait for it—nil. There is no statutory requirement that prevents an election in New South Wales. I do not know how the NSW Government would manage that situation, but we are talking about the law, of course, and not practicalities. In Queensland there are no stated periods—that figures!

Mr MacKinnon: What was it in Western Australia before you made it 51 days?

Mr TONKIN: I think it was about six weeks. We added an extra week.

Mr MacKinnon: It was 42 days, was it?

Mr TONKIN: It does not count exactly like that because of the Interpretation Act which requires that the day on which notice is given must be counted. It was probably 43 days.

In Tasmania the minimum notice period for an election is 14 days, and in the Northern Territory it is also 14 days.

I was amused at the debate in the Legislative Council, when members talked about the democratic right of people to know that an election is coming up. How cynical can one get? No wonder people are cynical about politicians, if they hear conservatives talking like that, when we know that conservative Governments gave people one or two days to get on the roll. But I am a realist and I am aware of what politics is like.

Mr Gordon Hill: In one case the roll was closed retrospectively.

Mr TONKIN: That is right. I am aware that the Liberal Party in this place and in another place, as shown by the sniggers of the Leader of the Opposition, is enjoying this situation where we changed the Act and then said, "Well, it does not really need to be that long; we want to change it back." We can understand the Legislative Council using its numbers in that House, even though those numbers have been dishonestly brought about because of a contrived electoral system; and getting a certain amount of glee, not only to keep the Government to the previous commitment, but also to have a shot at yours truly. I understand that I am not the most popular member up in the Legislative Council.

An Opposition member: Or here either.

Mr TONKIN: Or here either. I am very proud of that, because the reason is that I have refused to compromise with corruption. I have refused to stop saying that an Act which gives one political party a permanent majority is a disgrace to a State claiming to be democratic.

I had been here a week and I had written a letter to the Press, no doubt in my usual brash style, and a member of the upper House came to me and said, "If you go on like that, no-one here will speak to you. I think you should stop saying things like that about the Legislative Council." I said to him, "Do you think I have been elected to be friends with you? I have

been elected to put into legislation the policy of the people who elected me; the policy of the Australian Labor Party, which went to the people and said, 'We believe in this'." But such conservative tactics had worked in the past; lots of people who said various true things learned not to say them when they came to this place.

I am not saying that I am incorruptible. To my knowledge, the last man who was described as incorruptible was Robespierre and he was guillotined. I hope that I have resisted corruption to some extent and that I have insisted on saying what I believe to be the truth. That does not mean to say that I do not accept that people see things differently and cannot disagree with me. Nevertheless, I have tried to speak the truth as I see it and I know the Legislative Councillors will never forgive me for that. However, I sleep very easily at night and I enjoy my weekends and there is no way that the attitude of the Legislative Councillors will concern me. If I have offended people who have been responsible in this Parliament for a disgraceful Statute, one which describes the metropolitan area in dishonest fashion and which provides that there should be more voters in the Kimberley—the most remote electorate in the State—than in Darling Range or Kalamunda, that is no scandal. I will continue to say that while I have breath in my body.

I understand that there is not just a question of policy here but there is something personal in the way that Legislative Councillors are very happy to refuse the Government the chance to reduce the length of the period. The Government is doing this, however, for one reason: We on this side believe that people do not want long election campaigns. I do not believe that they really want long election campaigns because I consider that by the time an election has run its course, people are sick of it.

Mr Thompson: That is a change of mind and something that you have suddenly come across once you became the Government. When you were on this side of the House you were not averse to a long time.

Mr TONKIN: That is untrue. I am averse to the fact that people were not given enough warning to get onto the electoral roll. I do not believe in snap polls, which would hardly exist if our Bill were passed. If we insist on our amendment and the Legislative Council agrees with us and we are able to reduce the time by a week, it will still be the longest period before an

election in Australia. There will still be eight days' warning before closure of the rolls and the Government is very proud of that. When Legislative Councillors are smarting because they have been caught out at being dishonest—and nobody likes to be caught out—and saying, "We believe in long elections; why has the Government suddenly changed its mind?", I would suggest that the central part of our policy still remains and has not been changed by this amending Bill. The people will still have eight days in which to get onto the electoral roll.

Compare that with what happened under the previous Government. I do not expect members opposite to be pleased with their record. If I were in their party and if I sat with them, I would be ashamed of that situation—a situation where members opposite deliberately stopped people voting because they thought the people might vote the wrong way. That is what members opposite did year after year. Many people did not vote because they had put off enrolling because they had either just turned 18 or had just arrived in this State—there are lots of reasons for failure to enrol. I suggest that if members such as the member for Greenough were not such busybodies and allowed other people to live their own lives, this matter would be somewhat clearer. The member for Greenough has suggested that people do not have a more pressing duty than enrolling. Of course it is a duty just as it is a duty to feed oneself and one's family, to get a job and to do a lot of other things.

Mr Tubby: I have a lot more experience of life than you do.

Mr TONKIN: I am not here to indulge in a childish contest as to who has seen more of life. I suggest that it is not our job, as politicians, to pontificate about why people do not get onto the electoral rolls. Our job is to see that getting onto the rolls is made as easy as possible. That is what this Government has done and we have seen to it that people have eight days' notice. That will continue under the Bill.

Having said that, I have been amused at the way the Legislative Council members have suddenly discovered the people—and it is amazing how the Opposition as a whole has discovered people since it has been the Opposition—and that there will be a notice of the intention to issue the writ, a warrant and so on. People will not be fooled by this. They will remember the Opposition's record in this matter when in government, which was abysmal. This is not a great electoral reform. The number of weeks

before one has an election is not of great significance to the Government. There is no doubt in my mind that this Government will win the next election. I am aware that a lot of things can happen in a short time in politics and that any Government can lose when there is an election, but I believe that the Government will win and I do not believe we will win because the election time was five, six, or seven weeks.

The Government is completely relaxed about this matter and is moving to agree with the Legislative Council amendment because it is not of great moment. We on this side think that a shorter election is better for the people, but if the Legislative Council is concerned to give the people lots of time, certainly the Government is not against that. The Government agrees with this particular amendment but we consider that as a whole there has been some very poor work done on this concept by the Legislative Council. I will be moving some changes to the Legislative Council's amendment sent to the Legislative Assembly but these changes will not attack the principle of the amendment. The changes will, however, make sure that things happen properly.

Mr MENSAROS: The Minister introduced a number of arguments which were not exactly relevant to the question now before the Chamber. I submit that it is irrelevant whether a particular member is rude or whether he is civil because that is not something for which politicians are elected—that is a matter of personality. I do not think that my character, considering the ripe age at which I was elected to Parliament, has changed during the time I have been here. Thus I cannot quite follow the Minister's argument. There are certain customs and traditions which have been observed almost without exception in Western Australia, which have served the populace generally quite well.

In Western Australia we do not have snap elections or early elections. Governments from each side of the House observe the three-year term and in a pragmatic sense, although not in a legal sense, the time of an election is usually between mid-February and the end of March.

No Government would bring on an election before Christmas, or before the start of the school year. We all know that most of the polling booths are situated at schools and the polling booth staff is drawn from the educational staff serving that particular school. No Government has held an election later than

March and all have observed the statutory requirement not to hold an election in given weeks before or after Easter.

I would be happy to be corrected if I am wrong, but according to my recollection we have always had regular elections every three years between mid-February and the end of March. The Constitution may allow for an election after Easter, but it has not happened.

It is not a matter of short or long election campaigns because political parties gear up for an election after people return from their holidays after Christmas. The announcement of an election is usually made at this time and it is never a surprise.

With regard to the closing of the rolls, if the amendment from the Legislative Council inadvertently results in the rolls being closed in an abrupt fashion—and that is the concern of the Minister—the Opposition would not mind if the eight-day maximum period stands, as long as this did not affect the overall period.

I think it was more the recommendation of the Electoral Department which made the Government decide to close the rolls—it was not a move against the electorate.

Again, I speak from memory, and it is open to the Minister to contradict me—if I am wrong, I would be happy if he did—but if we were to make a comparison regarding the closing of rolls after the issue of writs between the Tonkin Government and the Brand Government, we would find that there would not be a great deal of difference. The date of the closure of rolls would have been recommended by the Chief Electoral Officer and it would have been done purely for pragmatic reasons. In those days the Electoral Office worked with very few technical aids and it had much more organisation to undertake.

In any event, for the reasons we have discussed before, the closing of the rolls is less important than it used to be. The Minister prides himself on the fact that there are more people enrolled. Therefore, the number of people who would be affected by the closing of the roll would be small.

There should be no difficulty in the rolls being closed seven days after the writ is issued. If that cannot be done, I would be happy to remedy the situation in a legal way as is necessary.

Mr TONKIN: I reject totally the member for Floreat's hiding the actions of the previous Government behind the Chief Electoral Officer of the day and saying he was doing it because of

the needs of the Electoral Development. Of course it is easy for people to say that a particular system cannot and will not work.

The Minister is responsible, the Government is responsible, and the Government is the custodian of the rights of the people. The previous Government should have said, "That is your timetable and we will announce an election early to give the people a chance to get their names on the rolls." It is nonsense to say that Sir Charles Court had to keep the date of the election up his sleeve and not reveal it. There would have been nothing wrong to say a week earlier that there would be an election on such and such a day, and then people would have had nine days in which to have their names put on the roll. That would not have affected the Electoral Office in any way.

Mr Mensaros: I was referring to the argument you used before that there should be a shorter period.

Mr TONKIN: There should be a shorter period, if it does not disadvantage the people. There is a question of overriding principle. Of course it is convenient for Governments to have a three-day closure period before an election. Some Governments think it is more convenient not to have elections at all—to do without them. The fact is a Government that has any conscience, any feeling, or any philosophy that is worth having will say there are overriding considerations. The previous Government should have taken that into account and said that it was not right to close the rolls. It had an arrogant attitude just like that of the member for Greenough, about people who have a right to be on the roll—it was the Big Brother stuff. It said, "If you are not on the roll, you do not deserve to be." It should have taken the attitude that it was not its business if a person was not on the roll, but that person had a week in which to enrol. That would have been the most humane and decent thing to do.

The Bill which I brought to the Chamber did extend the period of time in which the Electoral Department could do its work. We did extend the critical period in which the Electoral Department has to do its work; that is, from the close of nominations until the elections. The Legislative Council amendment gives the Electoral Department less time to do that work and it will now have three weeks in which to do it.

I am not concerned about the Electoral Department because it is there to do the job and unless the Chief Electoral Officer advises that

he cannot do it in that time—and he assures me he can—I am not concerned. However, I am concerned that people would not have time to apply for and receive postal votes. It is a big State and they may have a problem.

Although we accept the Legislative Council's amendment, I do not think that it is right. It does make it difficult for country people to get postal votes in. However, it is the period of time we have traditionally had in this State, and I am sure people will have time to send in their postal votes on time.

If I felt that it was going to interfere with the Electoral Department's ability to run an efficient election, and if I felt that it would interfere unduly with people's chances to get postal votes back in time, I would not accept the Legislative Council's amendment.

I make the point that although the Bill had shortened the minimum period of time at which we could hold elections, nevertheless paradoxically, it did extend the time in which the Electoral Department had to actually conduct the election.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Mr TONKIN: I move—

That amendment No. 6 made by the Council be agreed to, subject to the following being added—

and to substitute the following:

19. After section 69 of the principal Act the following section is inserted—

69A. The time of the close of the rolls is 6 p.m. on the day of the issue of the writ for the election.

I was amazed that Mr Pandal in the Legislative Council said several times that this Bill had sloppy drafting.

Mr Blaikie: That is almost a comment against yourself.

Mr TONKIN: One could think so.

Mr Bertram interjected.

Mr TONKIN: I have had a lot to do with Parliamentary Counsel, not only as a Minister, but also as Leader of the House. I meet weekly with the Parliamentary Counsel, Mr Thornton, to discuss legislative priorities, bottlenecks and that sort of thing. I have been very impressed with the high degree of competence of Parliamentary Counsel. In fact, I am amazed that the human mind can find its way through a

labyrinth of various Acts and can see that a consequential amendment must occur in an Act, although it may seem unrelated at first glance. I am amazed at the way the minds of Parliamentary Counsel can go along tortuous paths in our Statutes. I am not saying that they do not make mistakes; I am saying that they are highly competent.

Their competence can be judged from the fact that when Bills have been contracted out for drafting by private law firms, they have had to be redrafted, some of them almost completely, by Parliamentary Counsel, despite the fact that the contracting lawyers may be good lawyers in their own fields. Parliamentary drafting is such a specialised area. I have told Ministers that engaging contractors for such purposes is a waste of money, as lawyers in the private field are not necessarily qualified for this specialised area. Mr Thornton has told me that after qualifying a lawyer needs five years' training in this very special area.

I pay tribute to Parliamentary Counsel. I have had a fair bit to do with them over the past 2½ years and have found them to be incredibly good. However, we find that someone like Mr Pandal has said that they are responsible for sloppy drafting when, in fact, the Legislative Council sent back this Bill to us without any provision for the closure of the rolls. Under the Council's provision it is not clear whether we could have closed them any time, like today, or whether we could close them at all. It could be possible for the Chief Electoral Officer to close the rolls in order to get them into some sort of order. A citizen could come along and ask to be enrolled. The Chief Electoral Officer could be asked where the authority to close the rolls was contained in the Statute. There could be litigation on the subject, throwing the whole question of our electoral system into doubt and chaos. That is the kind of Bill we got back from the Legislative Council. It is not good enough to say that members of the Council are not draftsmen; they have access to draftsmen.

As a private member on the opposite side of the House I brought quite a few Bills to Parliament as well as amended others before the House. I found that the assistance I got was very good. Mr Pandal also had access to such a draftsman. We now find that the Bill that has been returned to this Assembly refers to closure of the rolls, but nowhere does it say when they will close and nowhere does it give authority to close them. That is the kind of Bill returned to us. I would not harp on this so much, were it

not for the remarkable words uttered, not once, but several times, by Mr Pendal, "This is sloppy drafting". What authority does he have to attack Parliamentary Counsel in this way? That is why I have agreed to the deletion of the clause that is the subject of Council's amendment No. 6, but have moved that it needs to be replaced with the clause I have read out. It would give us authority to close the rolls and also provide when the rolls will be closed. Otherwise, the system would be in chaos. I hate to think what would have happened at the next State election if we had simply accepted the Bill as sent back to us by the Legislative Council.

Mr MENSAROS: I have no argument with the addition, because it logically flows from the amendment. I make a very brief comment regarding the Minister's argument generally, despite the fact that I believe we are not really able to criticise debate in the Legislative Council. I think the Minister knows as well as I do, first, that comments about sloppy drafting and the like have been made by Oppositions and defended by Governments since time immemorial, irrespective of their political complexions. One need only study *Hansard* to find that that has happened.

I was very glad that the Minister mentioned the expertise needed for Parliamentary Draftsmen, because the Minister has put himself in a deep hole. He said that five years' experience was needed to be a proper draftsman. I agree with him. Yet the Opposition has a Parliamentary Draftsman who had never drafted in her life. She is a very nice lady. The member for Balcatta interjected; I agree with him too.

The Opposition is allocated an acting draftsman, someone who had never drafted anything in her life before. I understand the concern of the Electoral Office. How will this Bill look after it comes back from the Legislative Council? My response to this sort of concern is that it can be remedied if the Government gives a proper draftsman to the Opposition.

I remember well when I opposed a Bill of a former Premier, John Tonkin, he sent a very senior draftsman down to my office to draft the amendments because he knew how a piece of legislation should be drafted when it is amended.

Otherwise I accept the amendment.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to subject to the Assembly's further amendment.

Mr TONKIN: With respect to amendment No. 7, I would like to agree to it in principle. The Legislative Council's amendment is to delete the clause which would leave the Act exactly as it is. I am prepared to do that in regard to the minimum times, but I suggest we reduce the maximum time, or we will have the absurd situation where the maximum time for the return of the writ is 90 days. One could have an election on the same day as one is required to return the writ.

Mr Mensaros: Is it not a minimum of 14 and a maximum of 45?

Mr TONKIN: Yes, but I am talking about the maximum only. If one adds the maximums together one could have a requirement for the writ to be returned on the day of the election.

Mr Mensaros: As the Bill came to this Chamber, the minimum time for returning the writ was nil and the maximum 90 days. We are talking about the same situation from the point of view of returning the writ.

Mr TONKIN: I am not sure about that. If it was a matter of great moment I could report progress and consider it. I reserve the right to disagree with that when I have had another look at it.

Let us retain what the Bill was providing. I want to save the part of the clause which is to delete "forty-five" and substitute "35". In other words, we agree to the Legislative Council's amendment which would delete subclause (a), but we wish to retain subclause (b) so that we get away from that anomalous situation.

Therefore, I move—

That amendment No. 7 made by the Council be agreed to, subject to the addition of the following—

and to substitute the following:

20. Section 70 of the principal Act is amended by deleting "forty-five" and substituting the following—

35

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to subject to the Assembly's further amendment.

Mr TONKIN: I move—

That amendment No. 8 made by the Council be agreed to, subject to the following being added—

and to substitute the following—

21. Section 71 of the principal Act is amended in subsection (1) by deleting the "forty-five" and substituting the following—

40

Mr MENSAROS: I understand that the effect of the Minister's further amendment will be to reduce by 15 days the aggregate maximum period of 125 days which is presently in the parent Act. I agree with the Minister's amendment.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to subject to the Assembly's further amendment.

Mr TONKIN: We are now dealing with amendment No. 9, which is to delete clause 27, which relates to party designations on the ballot papers.

I am at a loss to know why the Opposition wants to withhold information from electors. I know the Liberal Party has changed its name many times during the last 100 years. When they did things of which they were ashamed they called themselves nationalists; when they did other things of which they were ashamed they called themselves the United Australia Party; when they did other things of which they were ashamed they called themselves the Liberal Party. Never once have they had the honesty to call their party the conservative party. The conservatives have changed their name regularly. If we read through Australian history we find they have called themselves nationalists, free-traders, the United Australia Party and the Liberal Party. Apparently they are not particularly proud of their name, and I will not comment on whether they should be.

The Australian Labor Party has never changed its name. Even when it has been unpopular, as it has been at times for whatever reason, it has called itself the Australian Labor Party. We are proud of our party designation and we would be proud to have our party name on the ballot papers.

Most people vote for a political party. Members opposite hand out how-to-vote cards. What is the difference between handing out how-to-vote cards a few metres away from the polling booth and placing advertisements in the Press which people carry along to the polling booth and take into the polling booth, and having party designations on the ballot paper?

No wonder we sometimes charge conservatives with opposing change for the sake of opposing change. I agree that change for the sake of change is silly. The fact of life is that

political parties are here to stay and that how-to-vote cards are given out in the name of political parties and that how-to-vote information is printed in the Press. I would expect that every conservative member of the Chamber and of the Legislative Council has at some time advertised for people to "vote Liberal" and inserted his name with a beaming photograph to match. However, when it comes to ballot papers the conservatives say, "No, we won't have party designations on ballot papers." Why do members opposite not want people to know what is going on? Of course, most people will know, but some will not.

The people who are really disadvantaged are the country people and, after all, members opposite are always talking about how they look after country people. But they do not. For example, legislation for 008 dialling was introduced by this Government. Legislation to get rid of the requirements for justices of the peace and police officers to witness signatures for enrolment was introduced by this Government. It is we who assist country people.

In some places in the country we find no-one is available to hand out how-to-vote cards, especially in a spot where perhaps only 10 people are likely to cast a vote. What is wrong with having political party designations on the ballot paper? What are members opposite trying to hide? Are they trying to pretend they are independents? They are being childish.

Absentee voters are also disadvantaged. Time and time again a person holidaying at Albany or another centre will find that the relevant information is not available. I know political parties try to provide the information at every election booth. The Australian Labor Party does this and I presume it is the same with other parties. Kits are sent out and booth workers are given a list of all candidates throughout the State so if a person from Mukinbudin is holidaying by the seaside he can find out who his candidate is.

Mr Cowan: Will you be conducting the election before school holidays next year?

Mr TONKIN: Believe me, there are people who holiday in other than during the school holiday period. There are many absentee votes every year. This is a big disservice to country people and others who vote outside their areas. Above and beyond that, it is a disservice to many people.

Members know what happens, do they not? The poor old electoral officer—the person at the polling booth—is given a ballot paper. He

is told, "Hold that for a minute while I find out who the Liberal candidate is", because it is the policy of the Electoral Department not to give this information if asked. It is a bit funny. Imagine in Cottesloe the returning officer saying, "I do not know who the candidate is".

Mr Cowan: That is not the policy of the Electoral Office itself.

Mr TONKIN: I did not know that the Act itself prohibits—

Mr Cowan: It does not prohibit it.

Mr TONKIN: I know. It is a policy of the Electoral Department. If electoral officers are asked the name of the Liberal candidate for a certain seat, they will not give the answer. The member probably misheard me. Electoral officers are required not to tell people. The member might argue about that. I cannot see a great deal of harm if they were to inform the public in that way except for the need for electoral officers to be seen to be above any political leanings and to be impartial. I accept that, and I would not put any pressure for a change of policy in that regard.

The voter who does not know the name of the Liberal candidate is given a ballot paper; usually he is actually in the polling booth when he asks the name of the Liberal candidate. He then asks for a how-to-vote card outside the booth, goes back into the booth and fills it in. Why have all that fuss and commotion when it could state "Liberal" against the candidate's name on the ballot paper? It does not make sense. I cannot understand it.

The conservatives did say, however, that they thought some of our proscriptions in the Bill which prevented people from using the words "Independent Labor" or "Independent Liberal" were wrong. I remember the member for South Perth objected to those provisions in a previous debate. I said I had a lot of sympathy for that point of view. The Government is prepared for people to be referred to as Independent Labor or Independent Liberal if they wish.

Mr Cowan: Have you got the wording for that?

Mr TONKIN: Yes. The Commonwealth ballot papers provide this information. The New South Wales, South Australian, Tasmanian, and Victorian ballot papers carry the party names—that makes four States and the Commonwealth Parliament which do this. I know that is not an argument for us to do it. If it was a bad practice I would not be saying we should

do it because others have done it. I accept the member for Floreat's statement that we do not have to follow Big Brother or the other States. Of course we do not have to. I mention only that that is the practice in those States and it has been very successful. That is why we are following them. We are not following them only because they do it, but because they are doing something which we think is very sensible.

Look at our figures with respect to informal votes. In 1983, for the Legislative Assembly, the percentage of informal votes amongst ordinary votes was 2.75 per cent, and for absentee votes it was 4.04 per cent. In other words, there was a significant increase in informal voting among absentee voters. I suggest that one of the reasons was that people did not know who the candidates were and in frustration said, "I don't know", and wrote something rude on the ballot paper, or did not vote.

Why can we not give this service to the 640 people who vote informally? We do not know whether all those informal votes occurred because of people's confusion about the party to which a candidate belonged, and we are not in a position to know how many people were confused, but we certainly do know that some of the informal votes would be due to that factor.

Look at the informal votes for various seats. In Cottesloe, for example, 2.04 per cent of ordinary votes were informal and 3.33 per cent of absentee votes. Perhaps if those informal voters had known who the Liberal candidate was they would have voted against Mr Hassell! Maybe that is why he does not want party names to be put on ballot papers; I do not know.

In Albany 2.56 per cent of ordinary votes and 3.15 per cent of absentee votes were informal. In Bunbury the figures were ordinary votes 2.81 per cent and absentee votes 3.24 per cent; for Joondalup 2.21 per cent of ordinary votes were informal and 4.17 per cent of absentee votes. In Merredin the figures were 2.89 per cent of ordinary votes and 3.79 per cent of absentee votes; Murdoch 1.92 per cent of ordinary votes and 3.61 per cent of absentee votes; Victoria park, 2.82 per cent of ordinary votes and 3.86 per cent of absentee votes. That was a grab sample of a few seats; I have not gone into them all. I have given the State average already. There is no point, is there, in keeping party names off the ballot paper? The provision would not force anyone to include a party affiliation if he wanted to fly his own colours. If

someone does not want to be associated with a party, he does not have to include a designation.

It is about time we stopped the sham and hypocrisy of pretending there is no politics in it. Most people vote for a party. Of course some other people do not want to. Take that nice fellow John Read in Mandurah, for example; do members think that because people see he is a Labor candidate they will not vote for him?

The people of Mandurah know that Mr Read is a member of the Labor Party. He is proud of that and he will put that on the ballot paper and, to use a good old Australian colloquialism, there will be a picture of his smiling mug on the paper as well. The people will know that Mr Read is a member of the Labor Party and they will like him in spite of that, and will vote for him. This does not prevent people from voting for the person for whom they wish to vote; they will still vote for the individual. Keeping the party designation off the ballot paper will not fool people. Members should be aware that many people in my electorate with Liberal Party sympathies voted for me for reasons of their own. It is not something I can explain but the fact is that I could not have won the seat in the first place if such a large number of such people had not voted for me. People know to which party an individual belongs but they vote for reasons best known to themselves. This would just make the ballot paper honest in the same way as how-to-vote cards, and newspaper and television advertisements do.

If members opposite are suggesting that we should get away from placing party designations on ballot papers, perhaps we should ban how-to-vote cards and other types of electoral advertising. It is as though one was saying to the people, "Look, if you are going to vote for the party we are not going to tell you the candidate's name", but the people know very well who their candidate is and what his party is because they have seen the how-to-vote cards.

Therefore, I move—

That amendment No. 9 made by the Council be agreed to, subject to the addition of the following—

and to substitute the following:

Section 78A
and 78B
inserted.

27. After section 78 of the principal Act the following sections are inserted—

Notification
of candi-
dacy.

78A. (1) Where a person who has been endorsed as a candidate in an election by a political party wishes a name of that party or an abbreviation of that name to be printed adjacent to the name of that person on the ballot papers for use in that election, the person may, in the nomination paper, request the Chief Electoral Officer to include that name or abbreviation adjacent to his or her name on those ballot papers.

(2) Where a candidate in an election who has not been endorsed in that election by a political party wishes to have the word "Independent" printed adjacent to the name of that person on the ballot papers for use in that election the person may, in the nomination paper, request the Chief Electoral Officer to include that word adjacent to the name of that person on these ballot papers.

(3) For the purposes of this section, a candidate shall not be taken to be endorsed as a candidate in an election by a political party unless—

- (a) the request made by the candidate under subsection (1) is also signed by the secretary or chief executive officer of the party (however designated) or an authorized officer of that party;
- (b) the name of the candidate is included in a statement setting out the names of endorsed candidates in that election, or elections that include that election, signed, and lodged with the Chief Electoral Officer, by the secretary or chief executive officer (however designated) of that party before the close of nominations for that election; or
- (c) the Chief Electoral Officer is satisfied, after making such enquiries as he thinks appropriate of the secretary or chief executive officer (however designated) of that party or otherwise, that the candidate is so endorsed.

(4) A reference in this section to the authorized officer of a political party shall be read as a reference to any person who has been nominated by the secretary or chief executive officer

(however designated) of that party to be an authorized officer of that party for the purposes of this section by notice in writing, specifying the name and address of the person and signed by the secretary or chief executive officer, lodged with the Chief Electoral Officer, and where a nomination has not been cancelled by notice in writing, signed by the secretary or chief executive officer, lodged with the Chief Electoral Officer.

Certain names not to be included on ballot papers.

78B. The Chief Electoral Officer shall refuse a request to include on a ballot paper a name of a political party if, in the opinion of the Chief Electoral Officer, the name of the party or the abbreviation of its name that a candidate wishes to be able to use on a ballot paper—

- (a) comprises more than 6 words;
- (b) is obscene;
- (c) is the name, or is an abbreviation or acronym of the name, of another political party;
- (d) so nearly resembles the name, or an abbreviation or acronym of the name, of another political party that it is likely to be confused with or mistaken for that name or that abbreviation or acronym, as the case may be.

Mr MENSAROS: I do not think that it will serve any purpose to engage most of the arguments that the Minister has used because they contain contradictions in respect of what he said to the amendment previously. He mentioned the individuality of human beings and their rights, and now when it suits him, he wants to regiment them.

Fortunately we have a single constituency which demonstrates the fallacy of the Minister's argument. We on this side of the Chamber did not agree to proportional representation but when one has a single constituency the candidate is more important than the party. This is particularly so in country electorates. For example, in the electorate of Gascoyne the Labor candidate was elected back into office for 21 years. That was Danny Norton who became a Speaker of this House. After he retired a Liberal Party member was elected, again on a personal basis. The electorate of Gascoyne did not change its politics suddenly; the people

simply liked Mr Laurance, as they had liked Mr Norton. Thus it is proved that people, particularly in the country areas, vote for individuals.

One could take a further example, that of Mr Tom Jones, the member for Collie. The Labor Party was desperate to keep Mr Jones in his seat in order to keep the electorate a Labor one and it realised that the electorate would be put at risk if it did not retain the services of Mr Jones, who is a moderate member, well-liked in his electorate. We on this side cannot agree with the Minister and we will probably vote against his amendment.

Mr STEPHENS: I indicate that the National Party will support the proposition advanced by the Minister. I have the greatest respect for the member for Floreat who I think is a capable man but I question whether he really believes the argument that he has just advanced. I think he has just put forward an outright political argument and I cannot, for the life of me, imagine that he sincerely believes in it himself.

People have the option, even if this clause, as put forward now, is carried; there is no compulsion on a political party to ask the Electoral Department to place designations on the ballot paper. It is a voluntary thing. If the member for Floreat's argument was to be seriously received, I think it must also be true that at an election time a person following that argument would not put forward a how-to-vote card carrying his party's designation. I suggest that no member of the Liberal Party would go around with how-to-vote cards which did not carry the name of the Liberal Party organisation. It is only being consistent to put party designations on the ballot paper.

The public are fairly apathetic to politics and elections, therefore I think it behoves every politician to make this as simple and plain as possible so that members of the public vote according to their wishes. Nothing could make this easier than to have the party designation beside the candidate's name on the ballot paper.

I would like to be reassured by the Minister that the wording of new subsection (2) which deals with the designation of parties, is not misinterpreted. Officers of the Electoral Department could conceivably misinterpret the new subsection to mean that candidates are only allowed to put the word "Independent" and I think the Minister should make it quite clear that by deleting (e) and (f) there was not that intention. If the wording is left as it is, departmental officers could argue that one

would only be entitled to put the word "Independent" on the ballot paper. I support wholeheartedly that one must be allowed to put not only one's name, but also the name of the party one represents, irrespective of the party one represents.

The Government may need to tighten that section up to make it clear to the Electoral Department that the candidate, who is not directly affiliated or endorsed by a political organisation, can still use the title. By saying, "Independent Labor Party, Independent Democrats or whatever" I think the public recognises that he is not an official candidate. However, it does indicate the general line of that candidate's philosophical thinking. I urge the Government to give some thought to that point. With that qualification, the National Party supports the amendment before the Chair.

Mr TONKIN: I would like to reassure the member for Stirling and the member for Merredin—who have often been attacked by conservatives in this place for voting with the Government on certain occasions—that there is no doubt in my mind—and I am not saying this as a political animal—that although they do vote against us sometimes and we disagree with them, they vote for issues on their merits. I guess that is what sticks in the craw of the Liberal Party. For all its talking about independence and the point that the individual is greater than the party, it becomes very angry when someone votes against its party decision.

I think it is a clear case that the member for Stirling has listened to the argument and has made up his mind. If the Liberal Party had put up this amendment and the Government was voting against it, then the member for Stirling would still have spoken in favour of this amendment because he is voting on the issue itself. This is the way it should be.

There is no question that there is any problem with that. It does not prevent anything from happening. If members wish, I will discuss this aspect with Parliamentary Counsel to make absolutely sure we are getting what we think we are getting because this will now have to go back to Parliamentary Counsel to be looked at. My advice from the Chief Electoral Officer is that there is no problem with that point. I can see why the member for Stirling might have reservations. I am not sure that those reservations are justified, but my advice is that they are not. If it is necessary to make absolutely sure, then we can have an amend-

ment moved. It is certainly the Government's intention to enable the inclusion of party designations on ballot papers.

Mr MENSAROS: How shall I vote if my aim is that the amendment be agreed to as submitted by the Legislative Council? The question is that the amendment be agreed to "subject to" something else. I do not accept that. I accept that the amendment be agreed to, because I think that is the reason the Minister was right when he said that the amendment be not agreed to. It would have been easier. I ask your advice, Sir, on which way to vote to achieve that aim. The question may be put in two parts.

Question put.

Mr Mensaros: Divide!

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to subject to the Assembly's further amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: I apologise to the member for Floreat, but I have no right under Standing Orders to allow a division in respect of that one call. I am sorry I cannot allow a division. For the member for Floreat's advice, Standing Orders specifically state that if a division is to be allowed, more than one person will have had to vote in the negative for that division to be allowed. On both occasions the member for Floreat was the only person who voted in the negative.

Point of Order

Mr CRANE: I called "Divide" on the second division.

Mr Jamieson: You did not. I was watching your mouth.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is no point of order.

Committee Resumed

Mr TONKIN: I move—

That amendment No. 10 made by the Council be agreed to.

When we were talking about an oral application for a postal vote, the Government suggested that it was a rather absurd situation that a person could not orally make the application. The Government thought that an elector, instead of having to fill out forms, receive a ballot paper back, and then vote, should be able to say to an electoral officer, "Hey, I am Jim Smith and I live at such and such a place, and I want a ballot paper". This is similar to what happens on election day.

My advice is that the amendment in the Bill precludes that from being done over the telephone. However, the Legislative Council has included an amendment which says, "Shall be made in person before an issuing officer and" because the Legislative Council wants to make sure that a person cannot telephone to arrange a postal vote.

Obviously, that was never the Government's intention. My advice is that it is not possible under the Bill as it is, but I have no objection to making sure that it is not our intention for people to be able to apply for a postal vote over the telephone. One can imagine the abuse that could arise from that situation. I am quite happy to accept the amendment suggested by the Legislative Council. I think it is straightforward. If the Committee agrees with this, then it will mean that a person has to vote in person. In other words, he cannot seek to obtain a postal vote over the telephone. The Government's understanding is that the Bill provides for that, but to make absolutely sure we are happy to accept the amendment from the Council.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Mr TONKIN: Amendment No. 11 is purely consequential to previous amendments which the Committee has disagreed on. It provides for party names to be included on ballot papers and how they are to be printed. Therefore, I move—

That amendment No. 11 made by the Council be not agreed to.

Mr MENSAROS: For the very same reasons, I agree with the amendment because it is consequential to the stand the Opposition took before.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

Mr TONKIN: I move—

That amendment No. 12 made by the Council be not agreed to.

This clause enables the polls to close at 6.00 p.m. and I can envisage some serious problems arising from one election to another if the State polling booths close at 8.00 p.m. and the Commonwealth polling booths close at 6.00 p.m.

We have made it easier for postal and absentee voting so that people who have difficulties because of religious or occupational circumstances, people such as farmers, should have no problem. There is nothing to prevent them from getting postal votes on the ground that it

will not be convenient for them to vote on polling day. Ten hours is a long-enough period in which to vote. My main concern is the confusion which will arise if in a State election people are able to vote until 8.00 p.m. but in a Commonwealth election those same people may go to the polling booth at 6.30 p.m. or 7.30 p.m. and be unable to vote because the booth will be closed. That would be most unfortunate.

Also, by closing the polls at 6.00 p.m. election results will be available earlier and people are always keen to know the results.

Mr MENSAROS: This amendment might not appear to be very important from the point of view of many people. Speaking personally, as a metropolitan representative who lives in the metropolitan area, I cannot see much reason why the polls should not close at 6.00 p.m. or why they should remain open until 8.00 p.m. The argument that has been put very strongly to the Opposition, particularly to those members representing country areas, is that depending on the time of the year when an election is held, many people in the country work during the hours of daylight available and they do not want to stop work to go to a polling booth. If the polling booths remain open till 8.00 p.m. they can fulfil their responsibility at the polling booth without neglecting their occupation.

The other argument put forward is that many of the minority religious groups, whose religious beliefs do not allow them to go out on the sabbath before sunset—people such as Seventh Day Adventists—live in fringe metropolitan areas. Obviously the difference in closing time between 6.00 p.m. and 8.00 p.m. is of importance to them. The Minister can say that if those people have such religious beliefs they can register for permanent postal votes and discharge their responsibility in that way. That is acknowledged. However, using the same argument the Minister has used, voting might be an important exercise which those people wish to take part in rather than applying for a permanent postal vote.

For those reasons this side of politics considers that in the genuine interests of not 100 electors, but of several tens of thousands of electors, the polls should close at the time they did in the past.

Mr STEPHENS: This clause should be deleted. There is no doubt that it might make things easier for city people, but country people will certainly be disadvantaged by it. I have

had a great deal of representation on this matter which goes back to the time when the Federal Act was amended. Of course we had no say in that amendment, but we do have some influence in this situation. Rather than trying to fall into line with the Federal Act, we should be putting pressure on the Federal Government to fall into line with the State.

Question put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 24	
Mr Bateman	Mrs Henderson
Mr Bertram	Mr Hodge
Mr Bridge	Mr Hughes
Mr Bryce	Mr Jamieson
Mrs Buchanan	Mr Parker
Mr Brian Burke	Mr Pearce
Mr Terry Burke	Mr Read
Mr Burkett	Mr P. J. Smith
Mr Carr	Mr Tonkin
Mr Davies	Mr Troy
Mr Evans	Mr Wilson
Mr Grill	Mr Gordon Hill

(Teller)

Noes 19	
Mr Blaikie	Mr McNee
Mr Cash	Mr Mensaros
Mr Clarko	Mr Old
Mr Court	Mr Rushton
Mr Cowan	Mr Spriggs
Mr Grayden	Mr Stephens
Mr Hassell	Mr Trethowan
Mr Peter Jones	Mr Tubby
Mr Laurance	Mr Crane
Mr MacKinnon	

(Teller)

Pairs	
Ayes	Noes
Mr Tom Jones	Mr Williams
Mrs Beggs	Mr Coyne
Mrs Watkins	Mr Watt
Mr McIver	Mr Thompson
Mr Taylor	Mr Bradshaw
Mr D. L. Smith	Dr Dadour

Question thus passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

Mr TONKIN: I move—

That amendment No. 13 made by the Council be not agreed to.

This amendment refers to optional preferential voting. Before the last State election we went to the people and said that we believed in optional preferential voting. We were elected with the understanding that we were in favour of it. We are not stopping people from indicating a preference if they wish to do so. All we are saying is that people should have the choice, and this is overwhelmingly supported by the Australian people. Successive opinion polls have indicated that people are strongly in favour of optional preferential voting.

Even members of Parliament may not be aware that most preferences are never examined. In the 1983 State election, only 1.56 per cent of preferences were distributed for the Assembly. So, members can see that most people indicate preferences that are never used.

The Morgan Gallup poll published in *The Bulletin* of 12 February 1985 showed that optional preferential voting was preferred by 66 per cent of Australians and that 66 per cent of Liberal voters wanted optional preferential voting.

Why do members opposite not try to win back some of their own constituency by agreeing with the Government on this matter?

Mr MENSAROS: I will not repeat the arguments we put forward at great length during the second reading debate. Briefly and concisely, the real argument is that if we have an optional preferential voting system, for all pragmatic considerations it is a first-past-the-post voting system. I do not hold any brief for that system, but if the Government wants a first-past-the-post system, which is possible in a single constituency electorate, the Government should also be seeking a voluntary system of voting. The Government cannot have it both ways. If the Government wants an optional preferential voting system, it should call a spade a spade and call it a first-past-the-post system and then move to introduce voluntary voting.

As for the Minister's argument about opinion polls, I make two observations: The first is that he should consult with the Premier, who said yesterday that the Government would not act according to opinion polls; the second is that if an opinion poll were conducted on voter preferences, I venture to suggest that the people would favour voluntary voting rather than compulsory voting. If we impose upon the electorate a compulsory system, we should have a preferential system of voting, which is the most equitable system one can imagine for individual constituencies.

We support the Council's amendment.

Mr STEPHENS: I support the remarks made by the member for Floreat. We should have either first-past-the-post voting or preferential voting. We support the preferential system.

I believe the public ought to be better informed about the preferential system. The Government has been very keen to broaden the public's knowledge on electoral matters and I believe it should mount an educational campaign outlining the proper function of preferen-

tial voting. If that were to happen, I am sure we should soon see the public utilising that system to its full.

The benefit of preferential voting is that it enables us not only to vote for the candidate we want most, but also to vote against the candidate we want least. This is one aspect of the preferential system of which the public generally are not aware because they do not really understand it. If we educated them we would see them strongly supporting it. Until an education campaign of this sort is carried out by the Government, we will keep this system because we will be in front.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

Mr TONKIN: I move—

That amendments Nos. 14 to 17 made by the Council be not agreed to.

These amendments are consequential to other amendments the Committee has already agreed to. They relate to the admission of ballot papers to scrutiny and the inclusion of party names and errors therein.

Mr MENSAROS: I am of the opposite view to the Minister as he has reasoned.

Question put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 26

Mr Bateman	Mrs Henderson
Mr Bertram	Mr Hodge
Mr Bridge	Mr Hughes
Mr Bryce	Mr Jamieson
Mrs Buchanan	Mr Parker
Mr Brian Burke	Mr Pearce
Mr Terry Burke	Mr Read
Mr Burkett	Mr P. J. Smith
Mr Carr	Mr Stephens
Mr Cowan	Mr Tonkin
Mr Davies	Mr Troy
Mr Evans	Mr Wilson
Mr Grill	Mr Gordon Hill

(Teller)

Noes 17

Mr Blaikie	Mr McNee
Mr Cash	Mr Mensaros
Mr Clarko	Mr Old
Mr Court	Mr Rushton
Mr Grayden	Mr Spriggs
Mr Hassell	Mr Trethowan
Mr Peter Jones	Mr Tubby
Mr Laurance	Mr Crane
Mr MacKinnon	

(Teller)

Pairs

Ayes	Noes
Mr Tom Jones	Mr Williams
Mrs Beggs	Mr Coyne
Mrs Watkins	Mr Watt
Mr McIver	Mr Thompson
Mr Taylor	Mr Bradshaw
Mr D. L. Smith	Dr Dadour

Question thus passed; the Council's amendments not agreed to.

Mr TONKIN: I understand the member for Floreat is agreeable to amendments Nos. 18 and 19 being put together. They relate once again to optional preferential voting; they are consequential and there is no point in having a long debate on them.

I move—

That amendments Nos. 18 and 19 made by the Council be not agreed to.

Mr MENSAROS: Because of the Opposition's very strong stance against optional preferential voting and consequential amendments, we would like the amendments to stand despite the fact that the Committee will reject them.

Question put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 24

Mr Bateman	Mrs Henderson
Mr Bertram	Mr Hodge
Mr Bridge	Mr Hughes
Mr Bryce	Mr Jamieson
Mrs Buchanan	Mr Parker
Mr Brian Burke	Mr Pearce
Mr Terry Burke	Mr Read
Mr Burkett	Mr P. J. Smith
Mr Carr	Mr Tonkin
Mr Davies	Mr Troy
Mr Evans	Mr Wilson
Mr Grill	Mr Gordon Hill

(Teller)

Noes 19

Mr Blaikie	Mr McNee
Mr Cash	Mr Mensaros
Mr Clarko	Mr Old
Mr Court	Mr Rushton
Mr Cowan	Mr Spriggs
Mr Grayden	Mr Stephens
Mr Hassell	Mr Trethowan
Mr Peter Jones	Mr Tubby
Mr Laurance	Mr Crane
Mr MacKinnon	

(Teller)

Pairs

Ayes	Noes
Mr Tom Jones	Mr Williams
Mrs Beggs	Mr Coyne
Mrs Watkins	Mr Watt
Mr McIver	Mr Thompson
Mr Taylor	Mr Bradshaw
Mr D. L. Smith	Dr Dadour

Question thus passed; the Council's amendments not agreed to.

Mr TONKIN: I thank members of the Opposition—and particularly the member for Floreat—for their cooperation. We have covered a lot of work this afternoon, in quick time.

Progress

Progress reported and leave given to sit again, on motion by Mr Tonkin (Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform).

[Questions taken.]

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.15 p.m.

AUSTRALIA ACTS (REQUEST) BILL*Returned*

Bill returned from the Council without amendment.

LOAN BILL*Second Reading*

Debate resumed from 29 October.

MR CASH (Mt Lawley) [7.18 p.m.]: During the Budget debate the other night I pointed out to the House some of the statistics able to be gleaned from the Consolidated Revenue Fund in this 1985-86 Budget and also some of the figures in the attached documents relating to the General Loan Fund. For the benefit of members I will run through some of the statistics that were raised the other night because they clearly show that the Burke Government is the highest taxing and biggest spending Government in the history of WA.

Mr Bryce: That is a big fib.

Mr CASH: Perhaps the Deputy Premier would be good enough to listen while I relate to him some of the figures that clearly show the truth of my statement.

The Consolidated Revenue Fund is broken into a number of items. Under "Governmental" we have taxation, territorial, law courts, departmental, and public utilities; and we also have "Commonwealth".

I will consider taxation first. We can see very clearly that land tax, for instance, has increased from 1982-83—which was the last time a Liberal Government brought down a Budget in this House—from \$35 million to \$54 million in 1985-86, which is an increase of 54 per cent. The Deputy Premier may shake his head, but I regret to tell him that they are the figures his own Treasurer announced in this House only a week or two ago.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has raised a very interesting point in that the Treasurer recently sent out a letter to land-owners within the State indicating that while their land tax bills had increased by some 54 per cent during his term in office, he was going to be big hearted enough to make a slight re-

duction to their bills in 1985-86. I said earlier in the Budget debate that I was very pleased some reduction was to be made in land tax; but I also made the point that, quite obviously, that reduction was not enough. We can see very clearly that this year the Government will bring in \$54 million from that item. But it gets worse as we work through the figures.

Let us consider stamp duty: We have heard some talk about reductions in the rate of stamp duty and a Bill has been introduced into the House to give effect to some of those reductions the Treasurer announced earlier. But we can see here that in 1982-83, stamp duty accounted for \$123 million of the Consolidated Revenue Fund. For the 1985-86 year, it is expected to raise \$226 million, an increase of a phenomenal 99 per cent.

I do not argue that there has not been any increased activity. Tonight I am pointing out very clearly that if anyone thinks that taxation and charges have been reduced during the period of the Burke Labor Government they are quite wrong, and when they read and analyse the advertisements put out by the Government they will find many misleading and false statements. If the member for Mandurah would care for me to go through some of the Labor advertisements with him later on, I will show him where the misleading statements appear.

In 1982-83 the financial institutions duty did not exist. It was a new tax that was concocted by the Burke Labor Government, and from an initial \$16.5 million which was raised during 1983-84, its first year in Western Australia, FID collections are anticipated to increase this year to \$24.9 million, an increase of 50 per cent for a tax that we did not even have in 1982-83.

I turn to licence fees. Again there is some justification for slight increases in licence fees because in some areas there has been increased activity; but when one considers that in 1982-83 licences accounted for only \$37.8 million of the Consolidated Revenue Fund and today represent \$78 million, an increase of 106 per cent over a three-year period, there is no question that that increase cannot all be attributed to increased activity.

Mr Read: What percentage is due to increased economic activity?

Mr CASH: The member for Mandurah will have the opportunity to make his speech after I have finished, and it will allow him to tell the House just what percentage he attributes to increased activity over the three years of the Burke Labor Government. I am suggesting that

the figures of the Consolidated Revenue Fund show very clearly that from \$37.8 million in 1982-83, this year the Government will raise an estimated \$78 million from the area of licence fees. Again I repeat for members' benefit that that is an increase of 106 per cent.

Mr Bryce: Aren't we talking about the Loan Bill?

Mr CASH: We are talking about the Loan Bill but for the benefit of the Deputy Premier, having discussed with Mr Speaker last night the matters which may be raised, I understand that this debate allows me to raise any matter so long as it has a general association with the Loan Bill. I would have thought that the Consolidated Revenue Fund would be very relevant to the finances of this State, of which the Loan Bill is an integral part.

Mr Bryce: A man with your depth of capacity should really understand the difference between the Estimates and the Loan Bill.

Mr CASH: I think I understand the difference between the Estimates and the Loan Bill, if that is what the Deputy Premier was alluding to.

Mr Bryce: You have got the wrong number.

Mr CASH: I am repeating these statistics for the Deputy Premier's benefit because when I raised them a week or so ago he was not in the House. I want him to know that the Opposition in fact has analysed his figures and has come up with some statistics, so when the Deputy Premier is framing the Government's advertisements I want him to be able to quote accurately the statistics which relate to the Government's performance over the last three years.

Mr Bryce: Wrong subject.

Mr CASH: The Deputy Premier was right; it is the wrong subject. It is not a subject that the Deputy Premier would want to raise in the advertisements the Government is running at this stage of the game.

TAB betting tax collections have markedly increased from \$16.3 million in 1982-83 to \$22.5 million in 1985-86, an increase of 37 per cent over that period.

I turn now to total taxation revenue raised during the period of the Burke Labor Government. From an amount of \$474.6 million in 1982-83 we now have the situation where the taxation component of the Consolidated Revenue Fund has increased to the amazing amount of \$721 million, which represents an

increase over that period of 52 per cent. It is nothing to be really proud of, is it, Mr Deputy Premier?

Mr Bryce: Consolidated Revenue is a different item on the agenda.

Mr CASH: I am discussing Consolidated Revenue now, for the Deputy Premier's benefit.

Mr Bryce: We had better get somebody to explain to you the difference between Consolidated Revenue and the Estimates, on the one hand, and the Loan Bill and loan raisings, on the other. It is really not too sophisticated.

Mr CASH: The Deputy Premier is not happy that I should discuss in this debate the Consolidated Revenue Fund which shows clearly massive increases over the last three years. If the Deputy Premier thinks that by his interjections I will stop discussing the Consolidated Revenue Fund, he has another think coming; so he might as well accept now that during his period of Government Consolidated Revenue in respect of the item of taxation and the various subitems that appear under that heading on table 3 of the Budget papers, increased by a massive 52 per cent. I trust that the Deputy Premier is still listening to me.

Mr Bryce: With a bated breath.

Mr CASH: He should be aware of some important facts. It is possible that the Deputy Premier may not have been aware at the time of the framing of the Budget that these figures were coming through and he may want to go back to his Cabinet and make some sort of statement that the phenomenal increase that we have seen over the last three years needs urgent attention, and there is plenty of room for taxes to be reduced.

Mr Bryce: Order of the Day No. 16 is when you should make this speech.

Mr CASH: I have already made these comments before, but I say again to the Deputy Premier—

Mr Bryce: We are starting to grow weary.

Mr CASH: The only reason the Deputy Premier would be growing weary is that he does not like the figures that his own Treasurer introduced into this House some time ago.

I can assure the Deputy Premier that the people of Western Australia are not weary of hearing the facts. I am stating the facts tonight so they can be placed on record for all to see.

In the area of territorial law courts and departmental expenditure the CRF revenue statement reveals an increase over the three-year period of the Burke Government of more than 60 per cent in the revenue collected. In 1982-83 it was \$450 million, and this year it will be an anticipated \$721 million, a phenomenal 60 per cent increase; and the Deputy Premier is prepared to smile about it. I would have thought it was no laughing matter, but something which deserved investigation by the Government.

Some changes have been made to the method of accounting in the area of public utilities and the country areas water supply, sewerage, irrigation, and drainage figures have been moved. Those figures do not appear in the CRF statement; they are listed under business undertakings and statutory authorities in table 31 of the financial statements. That has meant a change in the order of \$65 million which now does not appear in this particular account. Even so, in the area of railways and State Batteries there have been significant increases over the past three years. There have been massive increases in respect of the various items which appear under the Commonwealth heading.

I raise that to give the message to the Deputy Premier who unfortunately could not be here when those statistics were stated before. I want to make it very clear to him that the massive increase in taxes and charges during the last three years is not acceptable to the taxpayers of WA. All the advertisements he cares to run to try to argue that his Government is not increasing taxes and charges at the phenomenal rates which can be seen in this statement are absolutely false and quite misleading.

Having discussed and put the case that there have been tremendous increases in that area I would like to deal with interest rates, which have changed for the worse under this Government.

Mr Bryce: Now you are getting close to the subject before the Chair.

Mr CASH: I am prepared now to talk about interest rates if that will help the Deputy Premier.

Mr Brian Burke: Why can't you be pleasant?

Mr CASH: The Treasurer is now here because I have just indicated to the House the massive increases over the last couple of years. He was probably shocked out of his slumber outside and decided to come and see whether the figures were accurate. I assure the House they are because—

Mr Brian Burke: That is a lovely suit you are wearing.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Burkett): Order! There are enough interjections for me to join in. I would prefer to hear only the member for Mt Lawley.

Mr CASH: If the Treasurer thinks that by flattering me I will not refer to the figures he introduced in this House he is totally wrong. They are his figures for everyone to see and they will be used to show that in this Government's three years in office it has shown itself to be the highest-taxing, biggest-spending Government in the history of this State. I ask the Treasurer if he wishes to deny that.

Mr Brian Burke: Yes, I deny that. I wish to deny it. I deny it twice and thrice before the cock crows.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I think that is enough of denials.

Mr CASH: I heard the Premier's denial, but regrettably all he does is cast some doubt on the figures he brought in himself two or three weeks ago.

Perhaps I could get back to interest rates in the hope that the Treasurer will take some notice of the way these rates have shifted during his term of office. I want to deal with real interest rates for farm overdrafts of less than \$100 000. In 1981-82 the interest rate on farm overdrafts below \$100 000 was 14.5 per cent.

Mr Brian Burke: Even the member for Moore says we have done more for farmers than any previous Government he has served under.

Mr CASH: Perhaps the Treasurer will allow me to finish what I was going to say. He chopped me off from paying him a compliment in relation to some areas in which he has managed the economy. In 1981-82, 1982-83, and 1983-84 the interest rate was generally 14.5 per cent. Because of the changing inflation rate the real level of interest in 1981-82 was 4.6 per cent; in 1982-83 it was 5.1 per cent; and in 1983-84 it was 6.8 per cent. That increased in 1984-85 in real terms to 9.4 per cent, and in September 1985 the real interest rate on farm overdrafts below \$100 000 was 8.5 per cent.

Mr Brian Burke: Says who? What is your reference?

Mr CASH: The Treasurer is entitled to question the source but he has only to go to the library and check the documentation. The source is the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, the Westpac Banking Corporation, and the

Australian Bureau of Statistics. Is the Treasurer saying they are not reputable bodies and their figures are not accurate? Of course not, because he knows the figures I quoted are absolutely correct and that they show one thing—real interest rates have increased dramatically during the term of the Burke Labor Government. The Treasurer would not deny that because the figures are here.

Let us talk about Bankcard interest rates. In February 1983 the rate of interest charged by Bankcard was 18 per cent. The inflation rate at the time was running at 9.4 per cent. If one deducts the inflation rate from the nominal interest rate of 18 per cent one gets a real interest rate of 8.6 per cent. That was at the time when this Labor Government was about to assume office in Western Australia. Three years later, based on the anticipated figures for December 1985, the Bankcard interest rate is 21 per cent against a suggested inflation rate of eight per cent. Again I am using the figures the Treasurer quoted in his Budget speech. Therefore, the real interest rate relating to Bankcard is 13 per cent. That is a massive increase in real interest rates of 51.2 per cent during the period of the Burke Labor Government.

I realise that those figures do not give comfort to the Treasurer, the Deputy Premier or any of the Ministers, but regrettably they are fact, and those facts should be drawn to the attention of the House and recorded for all to see.

Mr Brian Burke: We will face up to it.

Mr CASH: The Government will face up to it. The Treasurer should get out into the community and start asking people what they think about the interest rates during his term in office and if he does he will find it difficult to face up to. The Treasurer will say that he is doing his best, but that remains to be seen because the figures are against him. It is something of which the Government cannot be proud because it is not helping the economic recovery of our State or of the country as a whole.

I refer now to interest rates in respect of bank loans. In February 1983 the bank interest rate was 12.5 per cent.

Several members interjected.

Mr CASH: Mr Acting Speaker, as a former bank manager you will know that after discounting for inflation the real interest rate at that time was 3.1 per cent. In October 1985 we find that the interest rate in respect of bank

loans is now 13.5 per cent; after discounting for inflation the real rate of interest in respect of this particular item is now 5.5 per cent.

Mr Brian Burke: And the economy is booming.

Mr CASH: I am pleased that the Treasurer thinks that the economy is booming because if it is, it is good for the State. However, what is not good for the State is the massive increase in real interest rates during the Labor Government's period in office.

If this Government were able to hold the interest rate to an amount equivalent to that which prevailed before it came into office the community, in general, would applaud it. I can assure the House that I would applaud the Government if this were the case.

I do not stand in this House to knock the Government for what it has or has not done. However, I stand in this House to point out that some of the statements the Treasurer makes in this House are not always accurate. I refer to the Budget papers, the loan papers and the various interest rates which affect the financial markets. There have been dramatic increases in interest rates during the Burke Government's term in office. It is nothing for the Government to be proud of.

Mr Brian Burke: What should we do about it?

Mr CASH: I will come to that in a moment, if the Treasurer gives me the opportunity. With his interjections it is regrettable that I may not be given the opportunity to, in fact, propose some solutions which might assist the Government.

Mr Brian Burke: Tell us now.

Mr CASH: I will not cover that area until I am through discussing interest rates in general.

Mr Bryce: Are you knocking the banks?

Mr CASH: Is the Deputy Premier blaming the banks for the increases that have come about because of poor economic management?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Burkett): Order! These persistent interjections from the frontbench of the Burke Government and, in particular, from the Deputy Premier are most unreasonable and I wish they would cease for some 21 minutes.

Mr CASH: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker, I appreciate the fairness with which you are treating me.

Whether the Deputy Premier or the Treasurer likes it or not the bank loan interest rate has increased dramatically during the period of the Burke Labor Government.

I will repeat what I said earlier because I am not sure whether the *Hansard* reporters were able to hear the figures I quoted and it is important that members are aware of the figures.

I said earlier that in February 1983 the interest rate in respect of bank loans was 12.5 per cent and if we allowed a discount for inflation the real interest rate at that time was 3.1 per cent. By October 1985 we have an interest rate in the region of 13.5 per cent, and if we discount for inflation the real interest rate in respect of bank loans is 5.5 per cent.

Given that the real interest rate for bank loans in February 1983 was 3.1 per cent and in October 1985 it is 5.5 per cent it represents an increase over that period—that is, during the period of the Labor Government—of 77.4 per cent. Obviously, these massive increases in the real interest rate flow on to increase monthly payments for people who have mortgages and who are required to make repayments on their loans.

The building society interest rates increased dramatically from February 1983 to October 1985. In recent months the Treasurer obviously became alarmed at the increases in these particular interest rates. It was a panic situation because the Treasurer realised that there was a possibility that the northern corridor seats won by his party at the previous election largely over the question of interest rates, would be lost to the Labor Party if the building society interest rates were allowed to continue in an upward spiral. We saw the situation where the Treasurer ploughed \$72 million of taxpayers' money into the building societies to offset the situation in order that they could keep the interest rates between one or two per cent below what they would have been if the money had not been put on deposit in the building societies.

I am not knocking the fact that the Treasurer used taxpayers' money to help keep the building societies' interest rates down. However, I ask why the Treasurer was discriminatory in placing those funds. The building societies probably financed only between 35 and 40 per cent of housing loans, and, as a result, that benefit has been received by a limited number of people who have mortgages. Obviously there are other people involved in credit unions and

in the banking area who have mortgages and from their comments to members of the Opposition they are very upset with the action taken by the Treasurer. They can see the need to allow a reduction in interest rates by way of offsetting accounts placed with building societies but it should be allowed to flow through to other institutions.

From the number of phone calls the Opposition has received from the rural community it is aware of how those people feel about this Government's action. I move now to the problems concerning interest rates and the rural community and I refer to an article published in the current issue of *The Bulletin* dated 29 October. The cover story is titled, "Rural Crisis: the revolt against the money drought". The first paragraph of the article reads as follows—

Having bounced back from a record drought Australia's farmers are struggling with a money drought—brought on by crippling interest rates, rock-bottom prices and, they say, tax policies.

From reading the article it can be seen that some of the statements of the author, Nigel Austin, are worth considering. He states—

Australian agriculture is strained to breaking point. Prices for a number of commodities are at rock bottom, steadily rising costs are causing severe hardship, interest rates of up to 21 percent are the last straw for many rural families. Worse is to come. The immediate outlook for several commodities is dismal and the possibility of a world agricultural trade war has cast a dark shadow over many rural industries. Already sugar, dairy and a number of horticultural commodities are in dire straits

Further on it states—

Against this grim background the rural sector has become incensed by an unsympathetic federal government and its alliance with the trade union movement. Proposed taxation changes will also disadvantage farmers and graziers, while the government's support of the Australian dollar to prevent further devaluation has caused high interest rates.

The article in *The Bulletin* in fact argues that high interest rates are the greatest problem that the farming community faces today. That brings me to the Bill introduced by the member for Moore some weeks ago after he had

recognised that the massive cost-price squeeze in the farming community was such that something positive had to be done. The member for Moore sat down and worked out a way in which he believed a moratorium could be organised to protect some members of the farming community who were being forced into a position in which their land was being sold from beneath them.

There is no doubt that in a cost-price squeeze situation, with costs increasing all the time, the only thing that can give is the price of land. In the last 12 to 18 months we have seen a dramatic reduction in the value of rural land in this State.

I quote some figures from another article which refers to the problems of the rural community. The article appeared on page 6 of a publication called *Facts* issued in winter 1985 and it is based on statistics provided by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. It shows that there have been changes in both the prices received and in costs in respect of the rural community. With regard to changes in the prices received by farmers it shows that vegetables were down 73 per cent, dried vine fruits at minus 64 per cent, wheat at minus 25 per cent, livestock at minus 25 per cent, wool at minus 13 per cent, pigs at minus eight per cent, and dairy produce at minus three per cent. These are the changes in the prices received by a farmer for his commodities.

Looking at the cost factors we see massive increases. Interest rates have now increased the farmers' repayments burden by 45 per cent; rates and taxes are up 38 per cent; electricity up 29 per cent; machinery and equipment are estimated to have increased by 11 per cent; freight outwards, which is an ever-increasing problem, has increased by 11 per cent; hired labour, something the farmer tries to avoid if he can because of the cost increase and the problems associated with it, have increased by 9 per cent; repairs and maintenance are up six per cent; and fuel and oil add four per cent to the cost increases experienced in recent times.

If we use the Victorian experience we find that the average rise in farming costs since 1980 has been 40 per cent for all costs and more than 60 per cent for those prices and charges controlled by Government. In the same period the average price of farming output has risen by only 13 per cent.

There is no question that the farmer is caught in a cost-price squeeze which is causing dramatic reductions in the value of his land and forcing some farmers into a situation in which their land is sold from under them.

I return to the Bill introduced by the member for Moore which was strongly supported by a number of rural members of the Opposition and also by metropolitan members of the Opposition. I was certainly very impressed by the general theory behind the Bill. I understand that the member for Moore, when introducing the Bill, did not claim it was the be-all and end-all in respect of the solution to the farmers' current problems. He introduced a Bill to try to encourage this Government to start acting in the best interests of farmers. It can be said that in fact the Government has now recognised a real need to assist the rural community in respect of its financial plight, since the introduction of the Bill, and it has caused the Minister for Agriculture and the Treasurer to get together with representatives of various financial institutions to talk about the need for a moratorium in respect of the farmers' financial problems.

Mr Evans interjected.

Mr CASH: The Minister for Agriculture rises from his slumber and tries to defend his position. I have listened for the past three or four months to rural members on the Opposition side stating absolute facts in respect of the plight of the farmer in Western Australia. At no time have I heard the Minister for Agriculture get to his feet and make a realistic and defensible explanation for the way he has managed the Agriculture portfolio during his time in office. I think that that is an absolutely disgraceful circumstance.

Mr Evans: More has been done by this Government for the rural community than by any other previous Government.

Mr CASH: Is the Minister claiming that he has done more for the farming community than has anyone else?

Mr Evans: This Government has.

Mr CASH: That is absolute garbage and if the Minister believes it, it probably explains the manner in which he runs his portfolio. It shows very clearly that the Minister for Agriculture is not in touch with reality and that he does not understand what is going on in rural Western Australia. The farmers will be absolutely shattered to hear that the Minister for Agriculture believes that he has done more for farming in his time in office than have re-

cent Governments. That is an astounding claim for the Minister to make and it is not one that can be supported by facts. The facts clearly demonstrate that the Minister for Agriculture does not understand his portfolio and the farmers in Western Australia are suffering as a result of that.

I do not mind if the Minister for Agriculture wants to stand in this place and tell me, and the Opposition, and members of his own party—who are confused as to the way he is managing his portfolio—of the wonderful things he believes he has done for the farmers. I have spoken to a number of farmers and a number of those who came to Parliament House some months ago—members will recall 8 000 or 9 000 farmers gathered on the front steps of Parliament House to let the Government know of the dire straits they were in. On that occasion the Minister made no comment at all and, if I remember correctly, the Minister for Transport spoke on his behalf. That is not the action of someone who is in control of his portfolio.

My time is getting short but I wish to raise a couple of other points. Without question, it has been clearly demonstrated that this Government has failed in respect of curtailing taxes and charges. Massive increases have occurred in taxes and charges. The Government has failed in respect of interest rates because they have increased dramatically during the Government's term of office and that is nothing to be proud of. I do not stand here knocking the Government but I point out that if it believes the people in the community are happy with its performance, its members should get out there and start talking to some of the people who have financial commitments which they are now battling to meet. The first person who should get out in the community to find out who is in financial trouble is the Minister for Agriculture. At no time in the history of this State have rural land prices fallen as fast as they have in the past 18 months.

If the Minister for Agriculture wants to dispute that, I suggest he should go to the Valuer General and obtain some statistics from him, because the records show that to be the situation. I do not really believe that is something of which the Minister can be proud.

Time will beat me. At some other stage I shall have to raise some matters I wanted to raise in this debate in respect of the property market, the rental market, and the residential market in general.

Just before my time runs out, I think I heard one of the Government members ask me what my interest was in the rural community. I regard that as an offensive remark, because it would seem to me that as a member of this Parliament I am entitled to have an interest in anything which affects the people of Western Australia, or if necessary the whole nation. I understood when I was elected to this place that I would be able to stand here and make comment freely in respect of some of the issues which I see as being important.

Mr Hassell: You have stirred them up with your comments. If they were not stirred they would not have reacted so sharply.

Mr CASH: I accept what the Leader of the Opposition says, because the very actions of the Government during the period I have spent on my feet have indicated that neither the Treasurer nor the Deputy Premier has been prepared to accept what I have said because they know I am speaking the truth; they know they can check their advertisements and find that they contain many false and misleading statements in respect of taxes and charges. It was not unreasonable for them to abandon the Chamber when I started demonstrating very clearly that the Burke Labor Government has been the highest-taxing, biggest-spending Government that this State has ever seen. That is nothing to be proud of at all.

A matter which I did want to raise was that of the Police Force. I am not going to raise it at this stage, I shall wait until another part of the Budget debate. Also I intend to refer to the West Morley Primary School, where I am keen to have established a preprimary school centre to accommodate the children in that area.

It was my understanding some months ago that if the parents in that area could muster 20 potential students for 1986, the department would give very serious thought to establishing a preprimary school at that school. The situation, as I understand it now, is that the department may be trying to back off from its earlier position. That is something I want to raise in due course with the Minister for Education.

In conclusion I make the point that the figures I have presented tonight are an analysis of the Treasurer's Budget statements and show very clearly the fact that this is a big-spending, high-taxing Government.

MR CRANE (Moore) [8.04 p.m.]: In speaking on the Loan Bill tonight may I first congratulate the member for Mt Lawley for the obvious experience he has had and the way in

which he dealt with the subject on which he has just been speaking. He was asked by interjection, "What would you know about farming and the rural industry?" I must confess I do not know what experience he has had in the rural industry, but judging from the remarks he has just made, he has a full and accurate grasp of the serious situation out there in the bush. I thank him for the contribution he has made tonight.

He mentioned my private member's Bill a couple of times. I thank him for his support. It is very important that we keep reiterating in this House the problems faced by the rural industry. The member for Mt Lawley has done this in a very able manner. He did not allow himself to become ruffled; he spoke very accurately, and quoted very important figures from the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and other figures which clearly illustrated constructive arguments which many of us have been making for a long time concerning the plight of our rural colleagues.

May I just say, in answer to those who interjected to ask him what he would know about it, that he has, by his own example tonight, shown us that he has a tremendous amount of commonsense. That is a commodity which is often conspicuous by its absence in this place.

Tonight we have had a stirring example from a Liberal backbencher from the metropolitan area who has shown a great deal of understanding and compassion for the industry which is the backbone of the country. It has carried us for almost the last 200 years. At the present day it is in very grave danger of being completely eradicated. If that should happen, the wealth of this nation will fall with it. I cannot stress enough the importance of reminding this House and Government Ministers of this fact. It is unfortunate that during that very informed debate only six members of the Government plus the Acting Speaker remained in the Chamber. This is probably indicative of the interest these people show in the rural industry. I must remind the House that the industry is worth more than that.

It is only right I should mention that a backbencher of the Liberal Party, which is always being accused of not doing anything for the country people, has shown us just how informed and how concerned he is.

I have suffered criticisms from a number of people who say that because I am no longer a member of the Country Party, but am now a

member of the Liberal Party I am no longer fit to represent the rural people. Let me say here and now in no uncertain terms that I have not altered nor will I ever alter. My concern has always been for rural people and it will continue to be for rural people. As long as I am in this place I will fight their cause.

I have been in the bush all my life. Wheat grows out of my ears. I have forgotten more about farming than most members will ever learn. I have gained this knowledge in a practical way. When I was nine years of age I was driving eight horses abreast, so members cannot tell me anything about farming. I know it right from the beginning up to the present day.

I do not want to overemphasise those points. Never let it be said in this place I do not understand the plight of the rural industry, or that I have lost my interest in defending the rural industry or looking after it. Anyone who tries to use that argument against me will learn that I will most certainly keep the flies out of their eyes while they are putting forward those arguments.

Going on to other arguments which have been brought to my attention, may I just mention one matter which was raised with me the other day by a person from Wanneroo. Wanneroo is a part of my electorate. My boundaries come down to Burns Beach Road, Clarkson Avenue, and Franklin Road. Many people out there remember my concern for Wanneroo itself. As a matter of fact they still come to me when they have problems. Because of the last redistribution, 6 500 of them were lost to me, but for some reason or other they still come back to me and I am happy to accommodate them. I am very happy to accommodate them in fact.

A man who came to me the other day was very concerned about an account he had received and, particularly, about a letter attached to it from none other than the Department of Premier and Cabinet. The letter read—

Dear Taxpayer,

The Government has reduced your 1985-86 land tax bill by ten per cent. There is a similar cut in the metropolitan region improvement tax.

My constituent thought the 10 per cent cut was absolutely marvellous. We have seen full page advertisements in several newspapers where the Premier says, "We keep taxes down. This Government keeps prices down." We have also seen these advertisements on television time

and time again. Contained in the envelope was his land tax assessment notice for \$547.65. This man thought that the 10 per cent reduction meant perhaps he could take his mother to dinner, or go to the races, or perhaps to Yanchep to see the dolphins, with the money he saved. He went into his office and checked his previous year's return. He thought that something must have gone wrong last year because his assessment was for \$515.50. This year's assessment supposedly embodying a reduction of 10 per cent, was for \$547.65.

I said earlier that the Premier's calculator must have had flat batteries when discussing the \$93 000 it would cost to send a Select Committee around the world. I am quite convinced that he has not changed his batteries yet. If the Premier expects us to accept that this constituent's rates were reduced by 10 per cent from \$515.50 last year to \$547.65 this year, I must be an idiot. There it is, ladies and gentlemen in the gallery and members; that is the sort of letter we get from the person who keeps prices down.

Mr Tonkin: It is a 10 per cent cut in the rate, don't you understand?

Mr CRANE: We know that is an impeccable source because we have heard it. I wanted to make those points on behalf of my constituents in Wanneroo, Joondalup, and the other northern areas. If that is the sort of help we get from friends, let us hope to God that we do not have too many enemies. There it is!

Mr Tonkin: It is a 10 per cent cut.

Mr CRANE: If the Government would like me to table the papers—

Mr Tonkin: We would love you to table them. It is still a 10 per cent cut.

Mr CRANE: I move now to the state of the economy, a very serious matter, as was the matter I just raised. Our economy is in a bad way. It appears that Australia is in debt to the tune of about \$70 billion. This should cause us a great deal of concern because only a few years ago we were a few million dollars in debt and the debt has escalated tremendously. The alarming point is that we find now it takes the total overseas' earning capacity of the Australian export industries—that is our rural industries—to pay the interest bill alone on our \$70 billion debt. For how much longer can we expect that situation to continue? Members know that if they take out a simple loan which they have to repay over a certain time if they repay the interest only, the principal goes on and on *ad nauseam*.

What is the Government and our nation doing to reduce this tremendous debt? I do not believe we are doing anything. We are handing out money to people like a man with six arms, to people who are not prepared to work in some instances, others who unfortunately cannot get work—I feel sorry for them—but many people do not want to get work. Some people are enjoying an around Australia trip with their surfboards and having the time of their lives.

We in Australia must roll up our sleeves and get back to the grindstone if we are to get our nation back onto the rails. The first step that the Parliament must take is to make this country workable in such a way that we do not get discouraged because of lack of incentive. The Federal and State Governments have created a lack of incentive because if a person works hard he is taxed over and over again. Nobody can stand that for very long. We must put incentive back into private industry so people will be encouraged to work and, having worked, they will receive their just rewards for that work.

Recently we had the experience of the Mudginberri abattoir dispute. The unions stood over that abattoir proprietor when he was prepared to pay his workers in the abattoir more money for the killing of the buffalo than they received previously. Do not forget the employees were going to receive \$1 000 a week. If we spoke to most other people in the street and asked, "How would you like a job that pays \$1 000 a week?", how would they react? I think they would snap up the offer. That is probably an understatement. These abattoir employees were quite happy to work for that wage, but no, the union had to stand over them and try to prevent them from working.

I am not a union basher, but I am a militant union basher. There is a difference. I am not at all against the working man because, God knows, I have worked since I was eight years of age. I am still a working man even though I may be on the other side of the fence, as many people would like to think. But do not think for one minute that I have not worked and that I do not work still. Last week, for instance, I averaged 18 hours' work a day. Perhaps some other members of Parliament also worked that many hours. I can easily prove that for members, if they so desire. Some members, having a pocket handkerchief electorate, do not understand that sometimes when I leave this place I might have to drive to Carnamah or Coorow—3½ hours' drive away—and then turn around and drive back again. The next day

I have to line up for the first meeting with the Leader of the Opposition at 8.00 a.m. How many members with pocket handkerchief electorates appreciate this? It is all right. I am not crying; the member for Cockburn can keep his handkerchief. That handkerchief is about the size of the member's electorate. I am sure that he was holding it up to indicate the size of his electorate. That is an indication of what some members have to do. It makes us healthy and vigorous. While we are doing that, what are other people doing? They are accepting the dole and making very little contribution to this country, and that is of great concern to us.

I have always been a great believer in a man commanding and leading his troops, and I must pay tribute in this regard to the previous Premier (Sir Charles Court). We find we are now sitting longer hours than before—we have to start earlier than we did under the previous Government even though the present Government said we would finish at 11.00 p.m.—and where is the Premier usually? Is he home in bed?

Mr Tonkin: He is in his office.

Mr CRANE: We never see him sitting in his seat.

Mr Tonkin: Do you want to hear the answer or not? He is in his office, you great big bag of wind.

Mr Hassell: He was at the Trades and Labor Council last night, would you believe?

Mr CRANE: Sir Charles Court was always in his seat commanding his troops until 2.00 a.m., 3.00 a.m., or 4.00 a.m. He never left the House. He knew exactly what went on in this place. He would lead his troops. Where were the troops? They were here.

Where is the current Government's leader? Is he home in bed? What is he doing—making babies or something? This is where he ought to be. This is the place for the Premier. How often is he present in the House? I think it is disgraceful. Sure, he might be in his office tonight listening to the debate over the loudspeaker.

This is where the Treasurer ought to be. How many times do we have to keep the numbers in this place? It is the Government's job, but how often do we, the Opposition, have to keep the numbers? Sir Charles always told us, "It is your responsibility to keep the numbers, not the Opposition's." We kept them.

Mr Tonkin: What rubbish! We are all members of Parliament.

Mr CRANE: We are all members of Parliament, but the only difference is that some of us are always here and some of us are never here. I wanted to mention those things because it is a very poor state of affairs if we can decide, "Sure, we are going to go home at 11 o'clock at night." How often does that happen? We are sometimes here at one or two o'clock in the morning, yet we start earlier. We start earlier and end up here later at night. Fortunately some of us are pretty tough and it does not worry us, but it does worry some of the other fellows. Why should we have to do it? We all should run this place a bit better than we do.

I congratulate the Leader of the Opposition and the Opposition for an announcement they made on Monday on a matter which has been close to my heart for many years. I refer to their decision and their commitment to start the Agaton water scheme when they are returned to Government at the next election.

Mr Tonkin: That will never get off the ground.

Mr CRANE: It will get off the ground. Before the last election we heard the member for Fremantle, now the Minister for Minerals and Energy—or perhaps a lack of energy—make a commitment that this present Government would start the Agaton water scheme.

That was a wonderful promise, and it was reported in the Press.

Mr Tonkin: For nine years you had the chance.

Mr CRANE: Some of the people fell for that promise. One can promise some people anything and they will believe one. But the people up there will not forget that that was another broken promise. The Leader of the Opposition did make a commitment this week that we will start the Agaton project—and it will be of tremendous benefit to the people of the area. I have written to the Minister for Water Resources about the situation in Miling many times. That town has been on water restrictions for nine years, summer and winter. Miling is not a big place and there are not many people there, but they are people and they do make a tremendous contribution to this State. They are rural people, the salt of the earth, who make this contribution to bring out the riches that many of the people in the metropolitan area can enjoy—they can build their revolving casinos and all the other sorts of rubbish the people in the city seem to want. But for those

people in the bush earning the money, there would no enjoyment for the people in the metropolitan area.

Mr Tonkin: Do you want a bet about Agaton?

Mr CRANE: Yes. If the Government now said, "We are not going to build it for you", I would respect that, just as I respect a Communist. I do respect a Communist; at least he will be honest enough to say that he is a Communist. However, when people try to tell me they are one thing and they are obviously something else, they are wolves in sheep's clothing. That is the sort of Government we have today—it makes promise after promise, but what does it come up with? A 10 per cent reduction in land tax—but when we get the bill we find it has gone up by 20 or 30 per cent. That is pretty good!

The Labor Party likes to have the Australian flag as its symbol, but it should have the umbrella, the thimble and the pea, because it would be the greatest pea and thimble group of people God ever put breath into. The Government uses the flag and always seems to support it, even if it does not like to go out at present and say much about it; but who destroyed the flag, who wants to take it away and change it?

Mr Tonkin: Curtin looked after the flag when Menzies was sacked during the war.

Mr CRANE: Do I take it that the Government will support the flag? I do not believe it will. It does not seem as if the Government is prepared to give us a commitment on the flag, although I have given it an opportunity. Would the Government like to give me that commitment to defend the flag? The silence is deafening!

Several members interjected.

Mr Tonkin: Menzies destroyed the flag—he was Prime Minister and was sacked during the war.

Mr CRANE: I do not remember that, but the Minister will not find an argument with me when it comes to the late John Curtin because I had a great respect for that man. One of Curtin's greatest shames to himself was the fact that the dockers at Cockatoo dockyard would not repair HMAS *Sydney* because they were on strike during the war. When the *Sydney* was sunk, the guns were not properly operative because of the strike by the workers in the dockyard. Did members know that? It was one of the greatest concerns, and Curtin felt a great shame for it. Members may not know it but it is true, and it was not the only occasion on which

the Cockatoo dockyard workmen who repaired the naval vessels went on strike. At one stage one of our destroyers was damaged and the workers would not work on it. The sailors were going to turn the guns on the workers because they wanted the vessel repaired to go to the Pacific. Did members know that? They probably did not, but it actually happened.

Now where is all the noise coming from? Members should go back and look at history and they will find it is true.

Speaking of naval vessels, I was very pleased to hear the member for Nedlands speak last night in this place about the small shipbuilding yards in Fremantle which build trawlers and other vessels. That was very commendable. I would like to go one step further because this matter is of concern to me. I have mentioned our overseas indebtedness. Despite this indebtedness we still seem to go overseas to buy all our military equipment. I believe the defence of this country needs a very good contribution from this country. We cannot expect other nations to come to our assistance continually. In early 1942 the Americans came to our assistance at the invitation of John Curtin, and it was to his credit that he invited America to come over here and use Australia as its forward base in the Pacific—a place where they could assemble and prepare to drive the Japanese back to Japan. The Americans accepted this and came over here on that invitation, but can we expect them always to do that? We must make a contribution ourselves, and the greatest contribution we can make is by building up our armed services, and building our own ships is one way of doing it. It would create employment; we could use HMAS *Stirling* naval base, which is a good one and which could be made into a top-line naval base equal to anywhere in the world. It is strategically placed to home-port our submarines. Western Australia is the obvious place to home-port our submarines; indeed it was in 1942 when the Americans came here that they recognised the strategic advantage of Western Australia for submarine operations. In the first instance, early in 1942, the submarine mother ship USS *Holland* was stationed in Albany. The submarines which operated in the Pacific and Indian Oceans and in the islands north of Australia used Albany as their forward base. USS *Holland* was eventually replaced by USS *Pelius* and, as the Japs were moved further north, it operated from Fremantle; later, it operated from Darwin. As the Japs moved back, the base moved as well. But it was recognised then that Western

Australia was the strategic place to be because it cut down the number of sea miles vessels needed to travel to get to the area of operations.

The same thing applies today. We have the islands of strategic importance near to us, and we have the Indian Ocean on our western seaboard, and that is also of importance to us.

That is very important, particularly in view of the unsettled times in Africa where anything is likely to happen. We may find a Russian presence in Africa very soon, and we have in fact already seen this in Aden. I believe that not only should we welcome the American fleet here but also we should help it in our joint operations.

During the war we built many of our own vessels. In fact Australia built 67 major warships during the war. We built three destroyers, HMAS *Warramunga*, HMAS *Arunta*, and HMAS *Bataan*. They were Tribal-class destroyers which had a speed of 36 knots and were among the most advanced destroyers of World War II. They were built in the Cockatoo naval dockyards in Sydney. There is no reason, having built them then, that we cannot build them now.

We built six frigates one of which was the old HMAS *Dimantina* which was a River-class vessel. We built two sloops, HMAS *Warrego* and HMAS *Parramatta*. We built 56 Corvettes—a vessel with which you, Mr Speaker, will be familiar with because you served on the HMAS *Mildura*.

A Government member: He was a very good sailor.

Mr CRANE: I have no doubt that he was a good sailor. I have been told that I, too, was a good sailor because I could throw my stomach further than anyone else.

That was Australia's contribution in terms of vessels. If we could do that during wartime, why cannot we do it in peacetime? We could home base many of those ships here.

We were discussing building submarines in Western Australia and I asked a question of the Deputy Premier. I made the suggestion—which may well horrify many people—that those submarines should be nuclear-powered. I do not mean nuclear-armed, but I think that we have to use nuclear energy and all the advantages that go with the propulsion of vessels using this type of energy. People say that one cannot have nuclear-powered submarines because of all the dangers involved. However I will give the House an example: A Mr Faulkner who lives in

Wanneroo is a retired cook who served on HMS *Conqueror*, which is nuclear-powered and which is a hunter-killer type submarine—in fact it was the submarine which sank the cruiser *General Belgrano* during the Falklands crisis. The *General Belgrano* is a vessel which brings back happy memories to me because during the war she was known as the USS *Phoenix* and she was one of the few ships which escaped from Pearl Harbour when the Japanese bombed it on 7 December 1941. She was a six-inch cruiser and a formidable vessel. She operated in Australian waters during World War II before being sold to Argentina and being renamed the *General Belgrano*. I understand that the Phoenix Hotel in the South Fremantle area was named after her.

The important thing is that when HMS *Conqueror* was chasing the *General Belgrano* she needed to stalk that ship. That could not possibly have been done by a conventionally-powered submarine. Only a nuclear-powered submarine could have maintained its station with the *General Belgrano* and maintained a speed of 14 knots. It could not have been done by a conventionally-powered submarine because such a vessel would need to surface to recharge batteries, which it could not do underwater sufficiently quickly. It was only at the end of World War II when the snorkel was invented that a submarine could recharge batteries while under water, but even so, in this case the submarine could not have recharged its batteries fast enough.

Just as I would hate to think that the Ford Motor Company could build an LTD model Ford car and put a model T-engine in it, so I would hate to think that we could build a modern-day submarine and use a conventionally-powered diesel submarine engine, which is really obsolete by today's standards. I believe that we should be prepared to look at powering these submarines with nuclear reactors.

Mr Faulkner, to whom I referred a moment ago, was one of my constituents before the redistribution; and in a conversation I had with him three weeks ago at the Wanneroo art festival he said that he was wearing a Rolex wristwatch on board HMS *Conqueror* when he went down below. He said that the alarms for radiation which were not set off by radiation emissions from the reactor were set off from the luminous wristwatch that he was wearing. That is how safe the nuclear-powered submarines are, and if anyone would like to check that story out, I will give them Mr Faulkner's ad-

dress. Mr Faulkner said further that he considered that there was no doubt that nuclear-powered submarines are what we need in our submarine stations here in Western Australia.

I would hope that the powers-that-be get away from this fetish regarding nuclear reaction because I believe it is a "reaction" when we use the word "nuclear". Nuclear power should be used to our great advantage and there is no question about how we would be able to do so.

We would be able to do much of the work necessary for building these submarines and the other ships about which I was talking. I remember that one vessel on which I served had engines with the numbers 11 and 12 on them. There was a plaque on the side of those engines, which were three-cylinder triple-expansion steam engines—that is, high-pressure, intermediate, and low-pressure steam engines, for those members well-versed in steam engines—which had been built in the Midland workshop in Western Australia. Western Australians ought to be very proud of that, and members in this place can check that out because I have no doubt that they would find it a very interesting exercise.

Those engines were built here in Western Australia and that was 40 years-odd ago. They could still be built here today. The River-class frigates had triple-expansion engines also. We could build a lot of the escort vessels in this country. Even the turbines that were put into the Tribal-class vessels were built in Australia. Thus there is nothing that we could not do; all we need to have is the will to do it. We have the ability, the raw materials, the manpower, the know-how, and naval architects; and there is nothing we need to import from anyone because we could do it all ourselves. There is only one thing that we do not have; that is, Governments which have the courage to take that first step. I am pointing this out to the House in the hope that perhaps one day members will stop and think, "Why don't we do it? Why is it that we have to pay so much to other countries to have them make our destroyers and aircraft?"

I refer now to aircraft. An article which was published in an edition of the *Australasian Post* or *People* magazine some years ago stated that at the end of the war—and this will surprise many people—Australia had designed the fastest single-engined fighter plane in the world. It was faster than the American P-51 Mustang, and it was designed in Australia. I notice the interest on the face of the Minister

for Agriculture and I appreciate that because he was an airman. I cannot recall the name of this aircraft but it was featured in one of these magazines. Only the one was made, but it was made towards the end of the war and I think it was destroyed.

It was not the old Boomerang because that was not very good at all. The Mosquito was a twin-engine plane that was made in England. I cannot remember the name of the plane about which I am speaking, but it is a fact that it was Australian designed and it was the fastest propeller operated aircraft in the world. The Mustang was claimed to be fastest aircraft and it was fast, particularly when fitted with the British Rolls Royce engine. The American engines were not as good as the British Rolls Royce engines.

I am on strong ground when I am talking about these things. As I said I cannot remember the name, but I will check it out. What I am trying to illustrate is that we have the technology, ability, and the brains to design and construct these things in Australia. Why knock our nation? We should encourage people to use the technology that is available; they should be given the incentive to go back to the drawing board. We had these people in Australia before and there is no reason that it cannot be done here now. The Government needs to give these people the incentive to do these things. I am giving the Government the opportunity to take this matter further.

I suggest that the Government check out the remarks I have made tonight. I will give it \$1 000 for every point that is not true. It is a fair enough offer because I checked my facts before I spoke.

Why should we sit back and let our nation become redundant? We should not be prepared to just play football, go to the beach, or to Pinocchio's Nite Club at 3.00 a.m. We should get back to the sort of nation that we were and we should build up our defence forces. We not only have the resources, but also we have capable men to build up our defence forces.

I am sure the member for Canning will agree with me because he was one of the commandoes left on Timor. I have always felt a little guilty because we were meant to pick him and his mates up, but we were not fast enough and had to leave him on Timor. I understand that he was eventually picked up by the Dutch destroyer *Tjerk Hiddes*. He knows what I am talking about and appreciates the point I am

trying to make. We are proud of this country and we should get back not only to defending it, but also to making it strong again.

Mr Old: Make sure we keep a decent flag.

Mr CRANE: We have a decent flag and all we have to do is keep the flag.

Mr McIver: You and I will run the canteen.

Mr CRANE: For the benefit of the Minister for Lands and Surveys, it has just been suggested to me that I run the canteen and he run the two-up. Perhaps we could swap duties from time to time.

What has been shown in the last few minutes in this House is that the spirit of Australia has not died. Members on both sides of this Chamber have the ability to do those things I have been speaking about tonight. All we need to have is the determination to say, "We will do it." What is wrong with that? Never mind the rot about nuclear energy. We do not want nuclear wars. The only reason there has not been a World War III or a World War IV is that the super powers do have the nuclear bomb, but people are frightened of it. Thank God they are frightened of it because it is horrific.

Recently we witnessed the anniversary of the disaster at Hiroshima. Many letters were written to the editors of newspapers saying that the bomb should never have been dropped, that 80 000 people were killed, and it must have been horrific for the people. What about the firestorm in Hamburg where 70 000 people lost their lives? Was that more or less horrific than the atomic bomb that was dropped in Hiroshima?

I believe that if the bomb had not been dropped on Hiroshima my friends the member for Canning and the member for Katanning-Roe I and many others would not be here today because we would have had to take Japan by force. God knows, the Japanese would not have surrendered to us. We know about the Kamikazes and what they did. They would have died for the emperor. People should remember that if we had not dropped the bomb, many of us, including the Minister for Agriculture, would not be here today. We should not forget these things. We do not question how horrific that was, but the fact remains that it should be remembered that we did not start the war in Europe or in the Pacific Ocean. All we did was bring it to an end. Those sorts of things should not be forgotten.

When anyone starts talking about how horrific the dropping of the bomb on Hiroshima was we should say that we know how horrible it

was. Members will agree with me that being in this House, regardless of how difficult or boring the job may be, sure beats being dead.

Mr Evans: We did not win peace.

Mr CRANE: We did not win peace and that is a little sad. However, if all those people involved were to sit around a table and talk about the problems facing the world, we might have won that also.

I am sorry that I have had to bring this matter before the House tonight. It is not a laughing matter and many young people do not know what we went through. It was pretty horrible but the fact remains that it had to be done and we were the people who had to do it. Having done it, what is wrong with our rolling up our sleeves and getting the country back on its feet?

Let us build up the forces and the armed services. We need to join with our American allies because we have the opportunity to have the greatest navy at our disposal.

We do not have to pay for the modern US warships that are protecting our shores. As a matter of fact, not only do these warships which visit this State cost us nothing, but they also bring in revenue to this country. It gives us peace of mind and security which surely a country like Australia deserves.

I hope the Parliament will take on board those things I have said tonight and takes up the opportunity to bring this nation back to the strong nation that it used to be.

At the end of the second World War we had the second largest navy in the Pacific. All we have now are a couple of boats which cannot go out onto the stormy seas at night because they might meet with disaster.

I hope that members on both sides of the House will work towards making this nation one of which we can be proud. Apart from that we should make it a better, stronger and safer nation in which to live.

Government members: God save the Queen!

MR OLD (Katanning-Roe) [8.49 p.m.]: That is the sort of response one would expect from members of the Government.

I take this opportunity to take up a few points which I was unable to raise during the Budget debate. I will not take very long, but the matters I have to bring before the House are of great importance to some people.

The member for Moore referred to the Agaton water scheme which, I believe, is a very important project for the agricultural industry

of Western Australia. Despite the derision of the Government, I am quite sure that thinking members on the other side of the House would agree that it is a natural progression from the comprehensive water scheme as we know it today to providing a water supply to an area of agricultural country, which is most important to Western Australia but which happens to be rather lacking in *aqua pura*.

I do not intend to talk about the Agaton water scheme, but I want to talk briefly about a very small centre in the south-east part of the State—Lake King. Unfortunately I only had time to touch upon the problems of Lake King in the closing stages of the speech I made during the Budget debate. At that stage I was talking about the fact that the Licensing Court of Western Australia had seen fit to charge the people of Lake King a premium of \$20 000 for a tavern licence in a town which is the centre of a district settled in 1928. The year 1928 might not sound very impressive, but it is quite a few years ago. If a person went into the street and asked people if they knew where Lake King was, very few people would know. However, if those who knew it were asked when it was settled, they would probably say in the last 20 years. That is the impression a large number of people have. However, it is one of the earliest settled parts of Western Australia. It was settled at a time when it was proposed to extend a railway line to Lake Grace, Newdegate, Lake King, and perhaps eventually to Esperance. I do not know what the full programme was. However, the proposal never reached fruition and so Lake King battled on without the benefit of a railway line but with a great deal of grit and determination. Some of the descendants of the original settlers of Lake King and Lake Varley are still in the district; they are farming and producing a tremendous amount of export income for Western Australia.

Every now and again people remember them and I believe it is my duty as the member representing that area to bring before members some of the problems they are currently experiencing. I am sorry that the Minister for Water Resources is not present. He knows of some of the problems being experienced and I am quite sure that he will be appreciative of those problems. Hopefully, the Minister will look benignly upon assisting these people to solve their problems.

The only water supply in the townsite of Lake King is a dam which belongs to the shire, and a dam of doubtful ownership which supplies the school. It was originally a Government dam and the PWD still maintains it. I am not quite sure who actually owns the dam. That represents the complete water supply for the township—two dams which probably equate to two decent dams on a farm.

The people of Lake King got together and decided that it was time they provided some amenities for the town. They have created a very fine sporting area, including a football oval which is grassed during the winter as a result of winter rains; a very fine golf course; and a church; and they are now in the throes of providing a tavern-roadhouse-service station complex. It is not being done by private enterprise *per se*; it is being achieved by the efforts of the people in the community. A company called Lake King Developments has been formed as a result of the desire of the citizens of the district to provide their own facilities. I have no doubt that the members of this House in the main will applaud the initiative these people are showing. But that is not good enough; the Government and the Parliament should be making more effort to ensure that their initiative does not go unrewarded and that they are recognised by the Government's making some contribution.

Three applications were made to the Licensing Court before a licence was obtained for Lake King. I appeared as a witness when the last application was made, as the local member and a person knowing the situation existing in the Lake King area. I was very pleased that the Licensing Court issued a licence to Lake King Developments at a premium of \$20 000.

I was not impressed when the Government of the day decided to issue a licence to the casino project for no premium whatsoever. On a productivity basis, and on the basis that the people of Lake King live in isolated conditions, I believe that area should receive the same consideration as has been extended to the casino project. There are probably very good reasons—and the Minister concerned has advanced those good reasons to me—why the casino project should not have been charged a premium for its licence. Those reasons centred around the fact that the entrepreneurs of the casino project had to pay a very high price for the land on which the project is built, and they had to undertake to develop certain aspects of that part of the land which belongs to the public. They are very valid reasons why some con-

cession should be made to such an organisation. However, I put it to the House that the citizens of Lake King, and especially those who are members of Lake King Developments, should receive some consideration because their forebears were pioneers of a district which is producing export income for Western Australia.

I have written to the Minister for Water Resources and to the Water Authority on several occasions. Lake King Developments has written to the Treasurer and to the Minister for Water Resources. I know that it is not a very easily solved problem, but I hope the Minister will endeavour to visit Lake King and the lakes area generally—I refer not only to Lake King but also to Lake Varley, Ravensthorpe, and Munglinup—and all those areas in the south-eastern part of the State which are water deficient.

Those areas are water-deficient to the extent that during the depression years it was decided that, as a project, rock catchments would be harnessed in an endeavour to provide potable water in those areas. The rock catchments at Lake Varley and Lake King are now probably the most important part of the water supply, but unfortunately they are terribly inadequate. Recently I wrote to the Farm Water Supply Committee to find out if it would be prepared to provide another tank at the rock catchment adjacent to the Lake King settlement in order that the water being caught on that rock catchment could be adequately stored. In other words, the storage which is provided at the catchment is totally inadequate in a normal season, and there is a tremendous amount of water which runs to waste.

The water supply department disclaims any responsibility, and quite rightly so under the present situation, and the Farm Water Supply Committee also disclaimed any responsibility, although that tank is supposedly there for emergency stock water. Whose responsibility is it to provide water for the livestock in the area, and for the *Homo sapiens* in the area. That is the priority that we as a Parliament and successive Governments have put on the water supply. Members would be amazed that in times of water deficiency the top priority for those catchments is for stock water, and certainly not water for human beings.

It has been claimed by successive Ministers for Water Resources that there is enough roof catchment on the average farm to provide enough potable water to keep the average farm

family supplied with reasonable water. That is quite erroneous. It may have been adequate in days gone by, but in today's climate in which people are entitled to look for a different standard of living from that which existed in the 1920s and 1930s, people in areas such as those I have enumerated—the Lakes district, Munglinup, and to a degree Ravensthorpe—are severely disadvantaged. I do not know what the answer is, but I would hope that the Minister for Water Resources, who has been invited to visit the area, will accept that invitation because I am quite sure that when the Minister looks at the inadequacies of the water supply in those areas, he will at least make some move to see they are put on the five-year plan which the Water Authority had in the past and is continuing to put forward as the plan for the future.

I will give members some idea of the frustrations of this five-year plan by citing the town of Munglinup. Munglinup lies between Ravensthorpe and Esperance. It is a town in which the Minister for Transport has some interest because the boundary of his electorate abuts Munglinup townsite, as does my own. That town has quite a population nowadays when one looks at small country towns. I enumerated 12 months ago in this House that this town has a number of buildings, small industries and a number of households that have no water supply. It has a town dam which has been constructed by courtesy of the local authority, the Ravensthorpe Shire Council. It is one which is equipped with a mill, a pump, and a motor courtesy of the people of Munglinup. The town is reticulated in a rough sort of way by polythene piping above ground, which has a very limited capacity.

The people would like an extension of that dam and perhaps some reticulation on a fairly moderate basis, certainly not to the specifications of the Water Authority but one which is adequate for the requirements in the foreseeable future for a town of that size. Quite frankly, it has been floated that perhaps the optimum in the next 20 years will be 40 connection points, which is not very much to provide. The schemes for provision of a water supply to Munglinup have been on that five-year plan, and twice they have fallen off. Unfortunately, under the new Water Authority of Western Australia's five-year plan there is no mention whatsoever of Munglinup, despite the fact that this matter was brought before this House on two occasions and despite the fact that the Minister for Water Resources gave me

an undertaking that consideration would be given to supplying water to Munglinup in the next five-year plan. A five-year plan which has recently been brought out has no mention of that town.

I believe that these are things that city people do not appreciate. I believe that we as a Parliament, as a Government, and as an Opposition should be aiming to ensure that while we keep apace of the demand for water in the metropolitan area we should also be giving consideration each year to the provision of several of these small schemes. One or two barriers have existed to supplying small towns in the past because of the astronomical costs of a service to those settlements. I am sure that the Minister will recall that Pingrup was noted as having the most expensive water service provided in Western Australia. That town has a water service, and while per connection it might have been terribly expensive, the upkeep of that water scheme is not expensive at all. If we could provide two or three towns of that size with water each year we would be providing a great service to people who are living in isolated areas and who are making a great contribution to the economy of this State.

Mr Gordon Hill: The Labor Government?

Mr OLD: That is the sort of inane remark that one expects from the member for Helena. The member has no concept of it at all.

Mr Gordon Hill: Come on, that is not fair.

Mr OLD: I do not even know where he is from—somewhere around Midland. He has no concept of anything over the ranges. That fellow would not have any idea of what I am talking about and he comes forth with an inane remark which is indicative of his intelligence and intellect.

Mr Gordon Hill: That is a bit rough.

Mr OLD: No, it is not a bit rough at all.

Mr Gordon Hill: Come on, grumbly. You are in a bad mood tonight.

Mr OLD: It is quite a legitimate observation. When all else fails—and the member tried to be smart for a while—he now tries to be degrading.

Mr Gordon Hill: I am just coming down to your level.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr OLD: Both the member's remarks were made very smugly because he is nothing but a knocker. He has no concept—

Mr Gordon Hill: Listen to the pot calling the kettle black.

Mr OLD: —of what this State requires to make it go. The member thinks nothing of people who live in isolated areas.

Mr Gordon Hill: That is why you are in Opposition.

Mr OLD: Has the member for Helena ever been outside the metropolitan area?

Mr Gordon Hill: That is a stupid question, and it is indicative of the level of your intelligence.

Mr Blaikie: He went to America.

Mr OLD: To America, did he? Having heard the intelligent remarks made by the member for Helena, I am not terribly interested in what electorate he represents; I am interested in the fact that he has no concept whatsoever of the needs of Western Australia. He was elected to this Parliament, not to promote the interests of one small section of Western Australia, but to endeavour to ensure that the State continues to prosper.

The State is becoming frustrated under the Federal Labor Government, aided and abetted by this Premier, and the people who sit behind him and say nothing except "Hear, hear!" when the Premier stands up and dances around and makes an ass of himself. One thing that can be said about the Premier is that he is starting to look a bit pale. I do not know why. I cannot figure it out.

Mr Hassell: I have a fair idea.

Mr OLD: Does the Leader of the Opposition have an idea of the reason? I have not figured it out yet. As the member for Helena said, I am a slow learner. I do not know why.

Today I presented a petition to this House on the necessity for flashing lights at a rail crossing in a small centre called Badgebup. I am sure the member for Helena knows where that place is because it is a pretty important centre. It has a railway crossing which is a potential danger to the motoring public. I have been trying for a few years to get flashing lights at this crossing, but unfortunately my pleas have fallen on deaf ears. The reason I brought the problem forward a few years ago was that the Katanning-Kojonup or the Katanning-Boyup Brook line was to be closed. There were several sets of flashing lights on rail crossings on that line. I asked the Minister of the day—he is still the Minister, incidentally—whether or not he would consider removing one of the sets of flashing lights which was standing on a road-

way just out of Katanning where there was no local line and re-erecting them at the Badgebup crossing where there is a potential danger, although it is a seasonal line running for about six months of the year.

The Minister acknowledged that he was interested in looking into the matter and, to his credit, he took it up with the commissioner and the chief traffic manager of Westrail. Since then we have continued a running battle. The reason that we cannot have warning lights on this crossing, according to Westrail, is that it is a seasonal line and it is only used during the grain and superphosphate seasons. The tracks get rusty, and while the tracks are rusty, the trains will not activate the lights. I suggested that perhaps prior to the grain or superphosphate season, whichever comes first, Westrail could do something about taking the rust off the lines. That was thought to be a very good idea, except that there are times when the trains do not run for two or three weeks and the rust might build up again. I know rust builds up pretty quickly, but I do not believe that the excuses being put up by Westrail are valid.

People from Nyabing, Pingrup, or Katanning use that road and take their lives into their own hands when using that railway crossing because it hits the road at such an angle that it is very hard to see an oncoming train.

The latest information from Westrail is contained in a letter addressed to the Katanning Shire Clerk and dated 21 August 1985. It reads as follows—

Westrail's experience has shown that as a result of the spasmodic use of the Katanning-Nyabing line the tracks are expected to develop a coating of rust, particularly during periods of non use. This coating can prevent the correct operation of the actuating equipment for the flash lights and therefore it would not be possible to guarantee the safety of the crossing on all occasions.

That is valid, because if a set of warning lights was installed on a crossing and sometimes did not work, obviously there would be more danger than if lights had not been installed. The letter continues—

A suggestion that the rust be cleaned off the line prior to commencement of the grain haulage season has been examined.

The letter discusses intermittent services, etc., and then says—

During the first six months of the season the pattern has been one train daily in each direction but over the ensuing three months trains run on a demand basis only as traffic dictates. Therefore during this period an average of only two to three services operate each week and weeks could go by without any trains running.

That point is also valid. I am no engineer, but I doubt very much whether there would be enough rust build-up in that period to stop the activation of those lights unless there was really unusual weather. Surely enough trains are running to polish the line. It does not take very long for a train to clean up a railway line, as you would know, Mr Speaker. Probably as a youngster you put pennies on the line to see how big they got.

Westrail claims to have examined the situation in detail. It is unable to find a way in which a crossing such as this one could incorporate safety signals such as we have become used to on most lines, and certainly those in the metropolitan area. The letter continues—

At the present time we are obtaining urgently for evaluation electromechanical detector switches which have been used for similar applications by overseas railways.

If overseas railways can use an electromechanical switch which is suitable under such conditions as exist on the line I am talking about, why cannot we have them in Western Australia?

The situation is that Westrail is trying them out, and it is envisaged that a six month period would be required for assessment. Westrail is concerned that the switches may be subjected to vandalism. I find it hard to believe that if the switches can be used in other parts of the world with comparative safety they cannot be used on the Badgebup line. It seems to me there is a distinct disinclination on the part of Westrail to do anything about that particular crossing despite the representations of the people using the road who are apprehensive about crossing the line, when some of the lights have been relocated from the Katanning-Boyup Brook line to other seasonal lines.

Once again I ask the Minister for Transport to investigate this matter. In the penultimate paragraph of its letter, Westrail says that in the event of the switches being finally accepted for use on light traffic lines, the localities would be determined by the railway crossing protection committee, and consequently no guarantee can be given by Westrail that the crossing at

Badgebup would receive priority above other similar situations. That is not a bad thing to hide behind, but as far as I am concerned it is not good enough because those people are just as entitled to some protection from possible harm on a railway crossing as anybody else in Western Australia. I ask the Minister to look at the matter and instruct Westrail to do something about it.

One other matter I would like to discuss briefly is the closure of the Wyndham Meat Works Pty Ltd. This closure was not unexpected, and I am quite sure that the member for Vasse, who knows a bit about these works, would agree. Not very long ago meatworks were operating at Katherine, Wyndham, Derby, and Broome. This year they operated at Wyndham and Broome. Next year it will need a bit of luck for one to be operating at Broome. This has all happened in a period of five or six years.

Mr Bridge: Derby closure goes back a while.

Mr OLD: About five years. Several facets have contributed to the closure of the northern abattoirs. One is the increased efficiency of road transport and the fact that southern buyers have been able to go into the Kimberley, purchase live stock, bring them down in a reasonable time to the southern meatworks, and slaughter them in the southern part of the State. That seemed to be a reasonably good idea at one stage when the station owners were getting more for their cattle than they could make by sending them to one of the northern meatworks because of the astronomical cost incurred in killing charges.

I notice the Minister for Regional Development and the North West is having a good look at the situation of the meatworks at Wyndham, and I hope for the sake of the industry and Wyndham that something can be done. I personally do not hold any hope that anything will be done because the meatworks are owned by the Hooker Corporation Ltd which also owns the Katherine meatworks. The Hooker Corporation used to own extensive pastoral leases, including Victoria River Downs Station which it no longer owns. I think it has sold all its pastoral land. Victoria River Downs contributed greatly to the Wyndham meatworks, and it was fairly natural that the Hooker Corporation would have cattle from its own stations processed at its own works.

Katherine closed down, Victoria River Downs cattle came to Wyndham and got the numbers going there. It was thought that the

Wyndham closure would perhaps guarantee the survival of the Broome meatworks because the natural thing would have been for the cattle killed at Wyndham, or a proportion of them, to go to Broome. Some people who have an idea of the situation in the Kimberley feel that many of the cattle which would normally flow into Wyndham will not go to Broome which is a pretty fair haul, but into the Northern Territory. In the case of Victoria River Downs, I understand some of the cattle have been killed in Queensland in this last season. If one looks at the situation which exists in the Northern Territory, I am quite sure that if Mr Jay Pendavis, the proprietor of the Mudginberri meatworks, could apply the same concept to Katherine, he would be able to keep that meatworks going very well, because one of the problems with the northern meatworks is the cost of killing.

I understand the cost of killing in Wyndham is about \$120 a head, give or take \$10, whereas in the southern meatworks, it is about \$30 to \$31. It becomes a very attractive proposition to load the cattle in the Kimberley and truck them to the southern meatworks where they can be slaughtered and the prime cuts taken out for local consumption, and the other cuts sent to export. E. G. Green and Sons who are lessees of pastoral leases in the Kimberley, have been doing it for some time, and I understand quite successfully.

It seems a pity that not only the Wyndham Meatworks has closed, but also there seems little prospect of a buyer for the works because of its physical location and the diminution of the number of cattle as a result of drought in the Kimberley and in the turn-off from those meatworks because of improved transport. It seems that Wyndham will not reopen for those reasons. What will happen to Broome?

Mr Bridge: When you speak of those decreasing numbers, would you agree it may be only a short-term situation?

Mr OLD: It may be a temporary aberration for sure, but as I understand it, the turn-off in the Kimberley has been reasonably consistent over the past 10 years.

Mr Bridge: This year was particularly difficult.

Mr OLD: This year was a bad one, for sure. Let us assume the Katherine meatworks was able to get going again. Katherine and Broome could undoubtedly handle the turn-off from the Kimberley and part of the Northern Territory.

If the concept of contractual killing between the meat industry employees and employers can become the norm there is a great hope that the northern meatworks will continue with some hope of survival. The member for Kimberley knows very well that to pay the level of killing fees that are demanded in the Kimberley, put the carcasses or cuts into cool stores for any length of time, and then ship them out is a very expensive operation. The cost of storing meat today is increasing at a rate which will make it very difficult for export companies to maintain their throughput at any reasonable level. Unless we can overcome that problem, not only in the Kimberley, but also in the southern part of the State, we will find that our meat industry will be in a very parlous state.

I will certainly have more to say about this matter when we discuss the new meat Bill. I hope that we will be able to overcome these problems and that we will be able to export our meat at a reasonable price. Certainly meat which is produced under conditions which apply today and which are slaughtered for export have a very low value. It is an unfortunate fact that, unless we can overcome problems of storage, transport, and the competition with the European community, our meat marketing situation will get worse.

I am grateful for the opportunity to bring these few matters before the House. I hope to have the opportunity during the discussions on the meat Bill to bring these matters forward for debate by the Parliament.

MR TUBBY (Greenough) [9.32 p.m.]: Some very interesting comments have been made in this debate tonight. We have gone back a long way, even as far as the Second World War. I thought some of the points raised were interesting. There are many members in this House, who, no doubt, could have done with the experience of not actually fighting in the Second World War but experiencing the comradeship with those who took part. That comradeship extends now to friendship between servicemen in this House after 40 years. It is a lasting tribute to the comradeship that we experienced during those war years.

I was pleased to hear the comments of the member for Mt Lawley regarding the plight of the rural sector. It is pleasing to see that at least some city members have taken note of what is being said in this House. It was certainly pleasing to hear the well-considered comments by the member for Mt Lawley. It is a great pity that members on the other side of the House do

not take more notice of what is being said by members on this side. For example, I know that I am not the greatest converser in the place. However, at least I have had the experience of being on the land and know what it is all about. Although I am not as polished as some speakers in the House, I am genuine in what I say because I have been through it.

Mr Bridge: You expressed the view that comradeship was important. If that is so, don't get stuck into us on this side of the House.

Mr TUBBY: I will get stuck into members opposite because they have not been listening to what has been said. I am not condemning the member for Kimberley because I know that he has had a background quite similar to many of us on this side of the House. I admire him for that. With his background, experience, and feelings, he is on the wrong side of the House.

Mr Brian Burke: So that means you are going to get stuck into me.

Mr TUBBY: I will get stuck into the Treasurer a little later on.

Mr Brian Burke: Members opposite never fail to get stuck into me.

Mr TUBBY: The member for Balga is Premier of this State. He is responsible for the running of this Government. I do not think we enjoy getting stuck into him personally but, as Premier, he has to take it.

Mr Brian Burke: Sir Charles Court was a Premier of this State and you did not get stuck into him.

Mr TUBBY: No, but the present Premier gave him hell. We are amateurs compared to the Premier and the way he used to get stuck into Sir Charles.

Mr Brian Burke: Oh, come on!

Mr TUBBY: Come on nothing.

Mr Brian Burke: The truth is that you play politics because when he was Premier you did not get stuck into him but now I am Premier you get stuck into me. That is playing politics.

Mr TUBBY: I have not heard anyone from the Premier's side of the House getting stuck into him.

Mr Brian Burke: You have not been in Caucus.

Mr TUBBY: I would like to see them be men enough to do it in the Parliament. That would be very interesting. I am sure that, if any of the members on this side genuinely felt like getting stuck into Sir Charles, they could have. A member who saw fit to leave our party continu-

ally got stuck into Sir Charles Court. The member for Subiaco got stuck into the Premier on many occasions. We are not afraid to criticise our leader in this place. We would remain in this Parliament and not suffer any penalty. That is not so with the Labor Party. If anybody dared to criticise the Premier or the Labor Party they would be thrown out at the next election, with no beg-your-pardons.

Mr Brian Burke: Everyone knows I am five times softer than your leader was. That is well known.

Mr TUBBY: Whereabouts?

Mr Cash: Around the girth, maybe.

Mr TUBBY: Yes, around the girth. I am not being personal. The Premier has caused me to deviate from my speech. I wanted to concentrate on the sterling effort by the member for Mt Lawley.

I know it hurts people on the opposite side of the House to hear the truth. However, the facts stated by the member for Mt Lawley in relation to taxes and the general handling of the economy by this Government have been well researched and cannot be disputed.

Mr Brian Burke: What do you say about the decrease in unemployment from 10.4 per cent to 7.4 per cent?

Mr TUBBY: It would be excellent if all those jobs were productive jobs and did something for the economy of the State. However, many of the jobs that have been created are not productive.

Mr Brian Burke: There have not been the sorts of increases in Government services that occurred under the previous Government.

Mr TUBBY: I doubt that very much.

As I said before, the member for Mt Lawley's presentation on the rural situation was excellent. He commented on the Rural Mortgage Protection and Relief Bill which has been adjourned twice, and the lack of commitment by the Government to indicate its intentions by voting on the fate of that Bill.

When that Bill was introduced, I sent a copy of the Bill and the second reading speech to all the shire councils in my electorate. I also put a notice in the paper indicating that if farmers wished to view the Bill, copies could be obtained through the various councils. The Shire of Morawa has already replied and no doubt several others will reply in the next few days. Morawa is an area that has been very seriously affected, probably more than any

other area in the State. But fortunately, so far we have not had the experience of a mortgagee sale within the Shire of Morawa. I think that is mainly because the farmers in that shire farm on a fairly small scale. They have lived within their means and have not invested in big land purchases. They are all resident operators of their farms, not like farmers in many districts who are absentee owners. Such absentee owners are generally not a credit to the district because they take everything out and put nothing in.

The letter from Morawa Shire states—

Your letter containing a copy of a 'Private Member's Bill' which makes provision for restriction in certain cases of the rights of mortgagees, vendors and others with regards to rural land has now been considered.

My Council agrees with the policy of protection against low price sales of rural land and believe that the Bill as drafted is to protect the family farm.

All efforts should now be taken by the State Government to stabilize land prices which have fallen considerably over the last few years. The drop in values has in many instances eroded the farmers equity in his property and this has been brought to bear during recent Mortgagee land sales.

The Shire of Morawa fully supports the Bill as presented in Parliament.

I know that the Government has taken action by having a moratorium on mortgagee sales for six weeks, but I am concerned about what good this will do. Already in my area the moratorium has had a detrimental effect on one land sale, an auction that was held last week. It was not a mortgagee sale; it was an ordinary land sale. It attracted 16 interested people, but when the farm was put up for auction there were no bidders. This was largely brought about by the moratorium which affected a proposed mortgagee sale at Eradu. Those people who were interested in purchasing the property were not prepared to bid until they found out what the price level was going to be for the Eradu property which was a mortgagee sale. The owner of the Chapman Valley property is rather annoyed to think that the moratorium has had an effect on him. He wants to know who will pay the \$2 000 bill he has for advertising the property for auction. I believe his complaint is justified, because his problem is a direct result of the moratorium on mortgagee sales.

Mr MacKinnon: How much is he out of pocket?

Mr TUBBY: It has cost him \$2 000 to advertise the property for sale. It was not a forced sale, but a normal sale, which quite often takes place. That is the penalty that he has paid so far.

Mr Evans: There would be a \$500 booking fee as well with the company that he approached to do the selling.

Mr TUBBY: On top of the \$2 000?

Mr Evans: Yes.

Mr TUBBY: The farmer only told me the direct cost to him in advertising.

I hope that the Government at the end of the six-week period will come up with something that will alleviate this problem and retain land values at a reasonable level. I am not in a position to be able to suggest what that solution might be.

It is rather interesting to read the comments in *The Bulletin* of 29 October. The article states—

Prominent rural economist Dr Gary Bond believes the factor which will send the largest number of farmers to the bankruptcy courts is the high interest rate: "The government through so-called market operations by the Reserve Bank is preventing the Australian dollar from reaching its true value." Bond, a senior officer of the Livestock and Grain Producers' Association, said the feeling in financial markets was that the true value of the dollar was 60c compared with the US dollar. But the government's determination to maintain the Accord is behind its artificial support of the \$A, according to Bond. He says if there was another large devaluation the Accord would fail.

The rural sector's expected decline in 1985-86 has been well-documented by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. It is tipping a 22 per cent fall in the real value of rural production. Given the likelihood that interest rates will remain high, there is a growing belief that agriculture is falling into its worst position since the 1930s Depression.

McDougall says existing government regulations and the direction of legislation is clearly discriminating against the rural sector: "The net effect is that the investment needed by agriculture is being discouraged. Unfortunately the industry is

not attracting the right sort of money to suit the needs of a rapidly changing sector." He argues that to compete on world markets the over-riding need is for excellent products, yet the direction of legislation is a disincentive to business interests which can provide the necessary innovations and skills.

The federal government and urban community, says McDougall, is discriminating against agriculture because they cannot yet comprehend that the wealth and prestige of virtually all the large squatting families has been eroded. Families such as the Chirnsides who once ran one million sheep in the Western Districts of Victoria have all but disappeared . . .

The maintenance of high interest rates in the next 12 months is expected to push even structurally sound farmers into severe financial difficulty. Bond says nothing will help except a decrease in interest rates: "The burden of the government's credibility is being borne by the export sector. The government is glossing over Australia's economic problems. With interest rates of 20 percent no rural business is structurally sound. The problem the government is facing is that overseas borrowings can only be paid by export income, yet the export sector is being slowly killed by government policies."

Bond considers it vital for banks to reschedule rural debts. Repayment "holidays," extended loans and other concessions are necessary if the sector is to escape the deepening recession.

The Minister for Agriculture may have to look at some of the matters raised in the last paragraph of that article if the problems are to be eased in some way.

There are a number of other areas of concern in my electorate. One is in the fast developing town of Kalbarri, which is going ahead in leaps and bounds. It is certainly very refreshing to go to Kalbarri and see the development that is taking place. As far as the atmosphere is concerned, it is a great place to get away from it all and, as I have said to members in this place before, it is a great place to go for a holiday. I am very pleased indeed to have seen members from both sides of this House in Kalbarri on several occasions enjoying a very relaxed holiday. It is certainly a great place and most of the people there are Liberals!

One area of concern is the mouth of the Murchison River which silts up very badly. Within the river mouth there are excellent boat servicing facilities provided by the Government. Usually in excess of 20 lobster boats are based in Kalbarri.

At the moment these are trapped. I believe the Building Management Authority has provided a dredge which is now either there or on its way and hopes to have the channel cleared so that the boats can get out by 15 November for the start of the lobster season.

Comments locally indicate that it is doubtful if this will be achieved. It will be frustrating for the lobster fishermen, who have their boats serviced, and crews and everything ready to go, if they are unable to get out of the river mouth. The problem is that when they get out they then have the difficulty of negotiating a treacherous inlet back to the river to unload their catch.

Many wet line fishermen, and also a number of pleasure craft, are based in Kalbarri. The catch of the fishing industry in Kalbarri is estimated to be around \$7 million. This is a mighty contribution to the area and to the State, and it represents export earnings.

This is the third occasion on which the river mouth has been dredged. It is only temporary, and it must be very costly to keep doing it. The silt is caused mainly by the fact we do not have a river, and have not had for a number of years, to flush out the sand and silt.

I would like to see an extensive survey made of the tidal flow pattern, because there must be some way of overcoming this problem. Right across the mouth of the river is a reef which is buffeted by heavy seas. Sand is deposited over the reef and dumped in the mouth of the river. Perhaps a channel can be made through the reef which would allow the free movement of the high seas to flush the channel.

Recently I was approached by several people in Kalbarri. I referred their problem to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, to whom I wrote concerning the need for at least one additional police officer.

At present only one officer is stationed permanently in Kalbarri. When one considers the considerable increase in population during the holiday period, when the permanent population of Kalbarri, which is just under 1 000, increases to 12 000 or 14 000, great problems are created with only one police officer permanently in the town.

There are times when the officer is not on duty. When a relieving officer is sent to the town, if the permanent officer happens to be away, the relieving officer accepts accommodation wherever it may be offered in the town. This makes it very difficult to locate the police officer in the event of an emergency.

I quoted in my letter to the Minister one glaring instance which occurred about two months ago. There was a nasty accident in which four people were killed. The police officer could not be located. Fortunately the shire president was on the scene of the accident very shortly afterwards, and he knew that in his caravan park were two police officers on holiday. He approached them and they readily agreed to assist in this case.

The supervision of traffic during these heavy holiday periods leaves much to be desired. I asked the Minister to look into stationing another officer in Kalbarri, if possible to be resident somewhere near the police station, so that in the event of an emergency he could be located very readily.

Mr Carr: The commissioner has received that request through me and he is having his appropriate officers examine it. I presume you will have a reply in the not too distant future.

Mr TUBBY: It is rather more serious than it sounds, because the nearest police station is in Northampton, 100 kilometres away. If the resident police officer wants assistance he is in a very difficult position. He must wait a considerable time for help.

While speaking about Kalbarri, I mention another problem. A company by the name of Cellidge Pty Ltd is endeavouring to establish a service station at the junction where the road from Kalbarri meets the North West Coastal Highway. I have looked at this situation over many years and thought what a prime position it is for a service station. I am pleased to see somebody else has seen the opportunity and is now endeavouring to clear a number of problems and get on with this development.

The area he has bought for this service station is set back from the road. There is a block in between where the new information bay will be provided. The information bay will be shifted from its present site, which is probably a kilometre away from the intersection.

However, the company is experiencing considerable difficulty in convincing the Main Roads Department that it should have direct access to the main highway. I know that on the

main highway the speed limit at present is 110 kph. The Main Roads Department says this service station could be considered to be a traffic hazard.

I have written to the company to support its efforts for a speed restriction approaching the Kalbarri turn-off. A number of accidents and also a number of close shaves have occurred there. Coming south on the North West Coastal Highway one comes down a sharp hill to the turnoff. Travelling from south and north, and from Kalbarri to meet the North West Coastal Highway, as well as with an unsealed road which follows the old vermin-proof fence, one encounters a similar situation. One is looking virtually at all entrances coming into a downhill situation.

Regardless of this development and the amount and nature of the traffic going in and out of Kalbarri and entering the North West Coastal Highway, there is justification for a reduction in the speed limit.

Very close by, about four miles from the junction of the Kalbarri road and the North West Coastal Highway is the Barrel Well Reserve. This has been of great concern to many people in the Ajana area because currently there are illegal squatters on this 600-acre reserve. The problem is not so much the squatters themselves, but they are running stock in this undeveloped area the water supply for which is the Barrel Well. They have sheep, goats, cattle and horses and they are creating problems for surrounding land-holders because the majority of fences, particularly in this newly-developed area, are not capable of catering for horses and cattle and consequently the boundaries of this reserve are the boundaries of surrounding land-holders. These people are not thrilled when they find that sheep, goats, cattle and horses are getting into their crops. The Government is fully aware of this situation and condones what is going on. In doing so it is only provoking a situation and there will be a great deal of trouble before very long. This is rather unfortunate because the problem has been brought to the Government's notice on a number of occasions recently and no action has been taken.

One of the surrounding land-holders, Mr Colin Reynolds, informed me that he has lost a considerable number of sheep and although he is not indicating that the people visiting the reserve have taken the sheep, he said it was rather coincidental that this was going on and that he has lost these sheep.

Another problem is they have no firebreaks around the reserve which they are occupying and a severe fire hazard situation exists. Fires are apparently lit in the open and should a fire get going on a very hot day such as they often have in that area, the situation could be absolutely devastating to the surrounding land-holders.

The reserves have been occupied by Aboriginal people and for running stock and soon the available feed will be eaten out completely and they will be unable to control the stock. I am sure they will not be able to buy the feed for the stock. This situation should not be allowed to continue. I would like to see some action taken in this regard. The families who live near by are quite concerned because a lot of drinking goes on in this reserve and many people gather there. Should any assistance be needed with these drinking episodes, the closest police are stationed at Northampton which is 50 kilometres away. The people are quite concerned about what is going on.

I notice the Minister for Land and Surveys is listening. I hope he takes note of what I have said because we do not want a nasty situation to develop, and I am sure the Minister agrees.

Another problem within my area relates to the railways. I seem to be receiving bundles of letters periodically from Westrail indicating that it is removing various facilities from sidings which are now not being used as much as they were previously. Farmers, shire councils and people generally are very concerned that when the rural community is in such a depressed situation, and is endeavouring to retain the services and the few facilities it has, Westrail is removing cranes, stockyards and ramps. Perhaps it is fair enough to remove stockyards because the maintenance component on them is very high indeed and they could be dangerous. However, the cranes and the ramps could be left there as a very valuable community service. The ramps have only recently been upgraded and renovated and they would be serviceable for probably 20 years without needing money spent on them. They provide a great service to the community, but to remove these facilities places a cost burden on Westrail. If they were left no costs would be incurred whatsoever. It would be a very valuable public relations exercise, and I am sure the community would appreciate the use of these facilities. I would like to see consideration being given to these facilities being left

there and being able to be used from time to time by the community. They are not an eyesore and they are a very valuable asset indeed.

I received a letter recently from the Morawa Shire Council which complained bitterly about the situation regarding the town sewerage scheme which is run by the shire council, and the lack of payment of sewerage rates by Government departments which hold blocks of land for future residential development within the town. The blocks are serviced and because the Government departments are not paying sewerage rates it places a further burden on the community. The shire council believes that the Government departments concerned should meet their obligations to support the facilities that have been provided by the council, no doubt with the support of the Government. I have been asked to make representations to see whether the Government could consider supporting these schemes.

Last Friday week the Treasurer opened the very impressive State Government Insurance Office building in Geraldton. It is on a very select site in the centre of Geraldton, but I, along with many other people in Geraldton who are in private enterprise see it as a monument of this State Government's competition with private enterprise. Until now private enterprise has provided the office accommodation in Geraldton. Although it is a very impressive building and it certainly does a lot for Geraldton, private enterprise will suffer greatly with the vacuum that will occur as all these departments move out of their privately-owned offices. I assure members that great concern is being expressed throughout the community of Geraldton.

I was a little amused at an incident at the opening ceremony. It is a pity the Treasurer is not here now. I know the Treasurer has a lot of pressures, but I would like to read part of this letter which was written to the *Geraldton Guardian* by a Mr Milton Hayes. Under the heading "Fast talk called for" it reads as follows—

Mr Burke, in his address to the large gathering at the opening of the new SGIO building, acknowledged the presence of dignitaries including, as the Premier put it, "the Mayor of Geraldton, Phil Collins and Mrs Collins."

Despite the slip, Mr Burke ploughed ahead with his address. He returned to his table for only a moment before hastening back to the rostrum to offer an apology to Mr and Mrs Cooper.

No doubt it was the member for Geraldton who reminded the Premier that he had made a boo-boo. The article continues—

Mr Burke, with a neat side-step, claimed he'd recognised his mistake immediately.

I had always thought the Premier to be very proud of his family, and his remark astounded me. The article continues—

He blamed his "rotten kids" for the error, claiming the rock music which blares around his house constantly caused him to confuse Mr Cooper's name with that of a millionaire singer.

In jocular mood and with a mind to the controversy raging over his recent free private trip to Fiji, the Premier laid his cards on the table.

I think it was rather amusing that the Premier should make a remark such as that, and I can see—and I do not blame him either—that the trips he has had to Fiji are certainly on his mind, even on the occasion of a trip to Geraldton.

A Government member interjected.

Mr TUBBY: I would not refer to my worst enemy's kids as rotten kids.

Mr Terry Burke: That is unfair, and you know it is.

Several Government members interjected.

Mr TUBBY: It was unlike the Premier to speak of his children like that.

Mr Carr: It was a joke—can't you take a joke? You were there and so was I.

Mr TUBBY: I was not there. I saw the article in the paper and I read what was in the paper.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Members, I think the point has been made.

Mr TUBBY: Time is running out, but on the occasion of the Premier's visit to Geraldton he took the opportunity, which I do appreciate, of meeting with Mr and Mrs Hemsley who have had an ongoing problem for a number of years. I was very thankful that he spent 10 minutes of his valuable time with the Hemsleys. However, because I was unable to be there—and I do not know whether the Minister and member for

Geraldton were there—Mrs Hemsley gave me a report on the meeting. It was rather disappointing. Her report read as follows—

Meeting with Premier Burke at Geraldton on Friday 18th October 1985 commenced 11.40 a.m.

I had itemised relevant points which would have taken 3 minutes to read had I been given the chance.

I began the meeting by reminding the Premier that 2½ years ago, he promised us at another hurried meeting, that Mr Terry Burke would contact us and settle this, quote, "appalling situation" within 3 months. We never heard a word from either of the Mr Burkes on this promise.

I notice the member for Perth is smiling.

Mr Terry Burke: It is the first I have heard of it.

Mr TUBBY: His brother must have let him down.

Mr Terry Burke: He has never let me down.

Mr TUBBY: Mrs Hemsley's report continues—

I tried to start reading my itemised points by pointing out that we have had to give to W.A., protection for the State's rare flora heritage at great disadvantage to ourselves. Yet for this gift we are being penalised. At this point, the Premier interrupted, saying that we only have 10 minutes with him.

However, he used our time to make light conversation of his controversial "free trip".

I think that was just another indication of the Premier's concern regarding the problem. The report continued—

I once more tried to return to my itemised points. The Premier again interrupted, saying he didn't have time to listen. Told me to get to the point.

Very swiftly I did. The aim of this meeting was to ask the Premier if he was prepared to request the Treasury to pay for the errors made by the then Ministers of Fisheries & Wildlife. (Department now called Conservation and Land Management). It was these errors which have caused the 4½ years confusion and delay.

Without hesitation he answered NO. Told us to sue the government. The Premier is aware that we have no idea of how to go about this, he is also aware that we have no money.

I handed to the Premier, a petition of 175 supporters, requesting him to do all within his power to right the wrongful situation caused to us.

I also handed to the Premier, a copy of my itemised points.

The Premier made a phone call and put the matter into the hands of yet another public servant.

The 10 minute meeting was over.

Mr Read: Do you believe everything in that letter?

Mr TUBBY: Yes, I believe everything in that letter, very definitely. It is true.

Mr Read: How do you know? You were not there.

Mr Blaikie: Neither were you.

Mr Read: No, but the member for Greenough was not, and he is making the statement.

Mr TUBBY: I know the people who made this statement. The resume of the situation, as given by Mrs Hemsley to the *Guardian Newspaper* is as follows—

Species of rare flora found by Department of Fisheries & Wildlife in several locations throughout our property in June 1981.

Wildlife Conservation Act Section 23F, provides for compensation if owner applies to Minister in writing "to take" rare flora. If Minister refuses application, he then notifies the Treasurer in writing. Treasurer then negotiates compensation with owner.

In our case one application "to take" was made to the then Minister Gordon Masters. A second application was made to Dick Old when the portfolio became his. Both these applications were refused. Neither of these Ministers notified the Treasurer as per the Act's instructions.

The Director of the Department of Fisheries & Wildlife, Mr Bowen, advised us that no cash compensation was available at that time. He said cash compensation would take years to settle. He suggested we accept a land exchange to expedite matters.

The first offer made to us was that the areas to become Crown land—

Mr Davies: Also to waive some arrears they owed on licence fees.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member is trying to finish up.

Mr TUBBY: The resume continues—

We had negotiated to mine this gravel, proceeds to be farm repayments.

The Department eventually offered a more equal land exchange which we accepted to expedite finalisation.

Four and a half years have passed, and the terms of the land exchange have not been finalised. We were informed last week—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! When I indicated to the member to proceed, I did not mean him to read the whole thing word for word. If the member wants a few seconds I will allow them, but he must paraphrase it and then sit down.

Mr TUBBY: Thank you for your tolerance, Mr Deputy Speaker. I will have another opportunity to speak later and will do so then.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Mt Marshall.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Mt Marshall has not, at least as far as I have heard, uttered a word.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I have not quite finished. I cannot understand how the member can draw so many interjections simply by standing up.

MR McNEE (Mt Marshall) [10.17 p.m.]: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. The members remind me of my neighbour's sheepdog pups, which start yelping before they get a belting.

I would be very worried if I were living in suburbia.

Mr Brian Burke: So would suburbia.

Mr McNEE: I would be even more worried if I were living in Balga alongside the Treasurer. However, if I had a wish it would be to be an elector in the Treasurer's electorate because I would ask him a few pretty basic and fundamental questions. The Treasurer proudly announced a surplus in the Budget. What he did not say is that he was introducing a surplus Budget after fiddling the books. He did not have to say that but we know he has fiddled the books. That is the first thing I would be worried about because we all know the results of that. We all know the results of someone not recognising reality and doing something about it. That sort of froth and bubble attitude to the economy will dry it up.

The thing that causes great concern to people in my electorate is interest rates. I think I should remind people in the suburbs, and particularly those people in Balga and Joondalup, that they should rethink their situation. They should understand what the Treasurer has said. A pre-election advertisement which I remember reading stated, "We need a fresh approach to housing interest rates. Our way will work."

Mr MacKinnon: Who said that?

Mr McNEE: It is a Labor pre-election advertisement.

Mr MacKinnon: Before the last election?

Mr McNEE: Yes. I leave the people to judge for themselves. Another pre-election advertisement of 12 February 1983 stated, "Bandaidd measures cannot fix up an incorrect strategy." Darcy Farrell at his best! I believe it is important for the people in the suburbs to gain a greater understanding of my electorate's problems. I assure them that the Treasurer's bandaidd strategies will come to an end. I warn them that they should understand this before the next election and should not be caught up by that sort of slick advertising. We want them to understand the truth. In *The West Australian* of 15 January 1983, the then Leader of the Opposition strongly criticised what he termed record home interest rates. What he did not say was that he intended to break the record, and he has done so.

I want people to understand what interest rates are doing to the economy. I want people in the suburbs to understand that their homes and their jobs are just as much in jeopardy as the young fellow's farm in the Shire of Mt Marshall. His property will be sold by mortgagee auction on 11 December. The rise in interest rates will bring just as much misery to them as that sale is bringing to that young chap, his wife, and their five children.

A moment ago, the member for Mt Lawley showed me a statement made by the Minister for Agriculture who said that more has been done by this Government for the rural community than by any previous Government. If the Minister goes to Mt Barker and tells that joke, he will have them lying in the aisles because the Minister cannot back that statement up.

Mr Burkett: Why did the member for Moore say at the rural hardship inquiry at Geraldton that there had been nine years of complete neglect by the Liberal-National Country Party Government, State and Federal, during their time in office and that all of the ills of the rural

sector could not be blamed on the Burke Labor Government? Be a bit honest. You are supposed to be a Christian.

Mr McNEE: If the member is finished I will answer that. The member for Scarborough should realise that his party has been in office for almost three years. It is simply not good enough for him to blame previous Governments. That was the Treasurer's trick at Dowerin. It did not do him any good. He blamed fuel prices and he blamed everything. However, he did not blame his own incompetent management of the economy. If I were the member for Scarborough I would be more concerned about the high-rise development in my electorate rather than making contributions to something he knows nothing about. He should realise that the Government should take responsibility for its actions. It is not good enough for this Government to stand back and say someone else is responsible.

Mr McIver: Do I understand that the people of Mt Marshall are not happy with the current Government?

Mr McNEE: That is a fact.

The people in my electorate view the surplus with some concern, because not only have their rural activities been affected, but also we have the issue of the school bus contractors. They are back in the firing line.

Mr Hassell: They are not trying to make a living, are they?

Mr McNEE: They are trying, but anybody who tries to make a living under this Government is considered corrupt.

Mr Tubby: They are private enterprise people.

Mr McNEE: Of course they are.

On taking office, this Government attempted to reduce the price paid to bus contractors by 10 per cent. Fortunately, that was not successful because there was a groundswell of protest by the people involved. The Government reconsidered its position and gave in. After some negotiations, the contractors decided to accept a five per cent reduction in the daily rate with some reluctance. A school bus contractor has to pay for tyres, fuel and oil, and so on, plus the wages for drivers if he has any. He is in no position to accept a five per cent reduction.

Having achieved that decrease the Government has now turned around and cut out all circular routes and that has increased the amount of dead running in these services for the contractors. It was not honest of the

Government to do this and it has shown how deceitful it is. Not one contractor in Western Australia would have agreed to the five per cent cut if the Government's intention to have another go at their contracts had been known. The Government should reconsider its decision.

It is interesting to note that the land values in some parts of my electorate have increased dramatically. I have received reports that the increases have been up to 300 per cent in this recent revaluation.

Mr McIver: When was the last one?

Mr McNEE: Never mind when the last revaluation was. If the Minister for Lands and Surveys knew when the last revaluation took place he might be surprised.

The point is that those valuations have increased by up to 300 per cent. I do not believe that that reflects the true position regardless of what the Minister for Lands and Surveys might try to tell me.

Another interesting point is the number of times a revaluation is carried out in a shire area. Revaluations are carried out regularly and they are very expensive. It makes one wonder why it is necessary and why they are undertaken so frequently. The cost of a revaluation is between \$8 000 and \$10 000.

Mr Brian Burke: You passed the law requiring it.

Mr McNEE: It is easy for the Treasurer to make a joke about it, but he does not have to find the amount to pay for the revaluation. He has done precious little to help the situation. It is like his land tax trick which has already been dealt with by members of the Opposition.

The Government needs to reconsider the position which prevails regarding revaluations and it should consider the people which it affects.

Mr Brian Burke: Why don't you be a bit pleasant?

Mr McNEE: I am always pleasant to the Treasurer.

Mr Read: I am disappointed. First we heard the member for Greenough and now we are listening to you.

Mr McNEE: The member for Mandurah will have his turn.

Mr Burkett: It is not one of your better nights. You are spoiling yourself by continually taking off and putting on your glasses.

Mr McNEE: I think the member for Scarborough is worried. If I were him I would be out knocking on a few doors, chasing votes, and not advising me about what I should do.

I go back to the situation of the froth and bubble economy that this State is currently enjoying—although I do not think that is the right phrase to use.

Mr Read: Champagne!

Mr McNEE: The member for Mandurah should not kid himself because it is not a champagne economy.

Looking at the year in retrospect we see that it commenced with approximately 110 000 farmers marching on the Federal and State Governments followed by 8 000 farmers marching on this Government. After that, the farmers paused for a while to see what would happen. Of course, nothing happened except that the interest rates kept rising and the concerns of the farmers kept growing.

I guess that neither this Government nor the Federal Government is really worried about our rural position, but both should be.

The reason I said that we have a froth and bubble economy is simply that our trade position is severely in deficit. The deficit figure in July was a record \$450 million. Our terms of trade are shrinking and our interest charges are self-explanatory. Members opposite should be interested in inflation as should be their electors.

Mrs Henderson: They are.

Mr McNEE: The member for Gosnells may be good at handling her household affairs, but I guarantee that a lot of electors are not living as well as she is.

We must take into consideration that our national debt is skyrocketing and the incentive to investors is declining. Those are the conditions which face the rural industry. Regardless of how the Treasurer might like to cook his books, fiddle with the facts, or create a surplus eventually, when there is no surplus, he and his Government will have to face the music. Fortunately, they will face the electors and it will not be very far down the track. If the electors have any sense they will do something about it.

It is important that the people in suburbia realise what is happening to the economy and what is happening to their jobs. Until the Governments of this country take their heads

out of the sand and realise what is happening, I cannot see how the present situation can be maintained.

We certainly have far too many costly and unproductive programmes. As a result of these costly and unproductive Government programmes a sense of false security which is already a part of suburbia is conjured up.

I will give an example to the House of what I am talking about. If members take the time to travel between Midland and Guildford they will notice that a cycleway has been built on the left-hand side of the road. Recently another cycleway has been commenced on the opposite side of the road. That is a misappropriation of funds especially when one considers that the rural economy is at its lowest level.

Mr Gordon Hill: You are a fool. That cycleway has nothing to do with the Government.

Mr Read: Now you are condemning local government. You are getting confused.

Mr McNEE: If I was given extra time I would be able to tell a story about what this Government should learn. However, I do not think it would understand.

I am interested to find out how much the landscaping outside McIver House cost. It is very nice—

Mr McIver: What did you sell mutton for?

Mr McNEE: If the Minister for Lands and Surveys settles himself down for a moment I will deal with the subject of the selling of mutton. In actual fact, one of the subjects on which I will speak tonight concerns the export of mutton. I advise him that the more he interjects, the more time will be wasted.

If the Minister answers the question about McIver House and tells me how much the landscaping costs were, I will be satisfied. He does not want to do that.

Several members interjected.

Mr McNEE: As long as we do not seem to understand that the wealth of this nation comes from the goods it produces at a price the world can afford to pay, and while we do not create for this country its export dollars to bring that wealth, we shall not sustain our position by expensive, extravagant, and non-productive Government programmes. That is what these programmes are.

Mr Bertram: Like the new pipeline up there?

Mr McNEE: The Government members seem to want to talk about the pipeline. I did not intend to talk about it, but as the member for Balcatta wants to, I am delighted to accommodate him and talk about the Agaton scheme. Do I have to remind the Government of its promises? Perhaps I should remind the Government of the promises made by the Minister for Minerals and Energy at Mukinbudin. He said that on attaining Government, his party would initiate the first stage.

Several members interjected.

Mr McNEE: The Government has walked away from that and even called in Senator Walsh, the farmers' friend, to say that there was no commitment on Agaton.

Mr Burkett: It's a pity that the member for Mt Marshall does not speak more often. The Leader of the Opposition is very relaxed because he can see that there is one bloke on his side who is no threat to him on the leadership issue. It is the happiest the Leader of the Opposition has ever looked.

Mr Tubby: You talk nonsense.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr McNEE: It is a pity that the Treasurer does not allow the member for Scarborough to speak more frequently. He should give him more dorothy dix questions to read at question time. He is chafing at the bit and he needs the attention of the Treasurer who should give him more help.

Mr Brian Burke: It is very hard on him when you are in such good form.

Mr McNEE: The member for Scarborough keeps fiddling around. The Treasurer should allow him to read a few dorothy dix questions and I am sure it would set him on his way.

Much ado was made about the Agaton project and the people were pleased and thought that at long last the scheme would become a reality. However, that was not to be. It will be the case because the Leader of the Opposition has committed the Liberal Government to commencing that scheme. He will not do what this Government has done with its promises, and I remind members of one or two of those promises.

We need a fresh approach to the question of housing interest rates. I remind members of Mr Burke's statement that, "Bandaïd measures cannot fix up an incorrect strategy." I remind members of the string of broken promises, and as yet I have looked only at the interest rate

areas. The member for Balcatta encouraged me to talk about Agaton and as a result I was encouraged to look at the Government's record. Government members are angry now because its record does not stand up to examination. A cursory glance is enough to put the Government in trouble. The Government has a record but it is a very bad one.

Returning to the situation we were talking about—unproductive, expensive, and extravagant Government jobs—as long as we spend our money on that sort of thing and ignore those industries that create wealth, we can expect our living standards to sink and our debts to increase. Members should make no mistake about it. It is even more important than a few farmers facing bankruptcy. The number of mortgage sales is at a record height. It is approaching the same level as that in the early stages of the 1930s when Australia's serious depression occurred. That will be the situation again.

Mr Burkett: It is interesting to note the comparison between the climatic conditions also. Be honest and talk about seven droughts in 10 seasons. Neither Liberal, Labor, nor country parties could overcome that. The seven droughts in 10 years are not the fault of any Government.

Mr McNEE: I point out to the member for Scarborough that I am talking about the last three years; the record harvest we had last year; and the record high interest rates we have which are a result of the incompetent management of the Federal and State Labor Governments. There is another line of thought which says that if the Australian dollar were devalued to what some people think is its true value, approximately 50c—I do not know whether that is true or not—at least it might help our export industries.

I am reminded of the old lady who wrote to the paper and said that Mr Hawke should have had a lot more sense than to float the dollar, because anyone would have known it would sink. Yet that happened.

Let me now consider my electorate and rural areas generally. The cost of tariffs, wharfage, and other charges is costing each farmer about \$24 000 a year. If they could save that money, they would solve their problems or at least go a long way towards it.

Unfortunately in this country we seem to be protecting a lot of industries which I wonder whether are worth protecting. We are told we do this in the name of maintaining employ-

ment. Very soon we will have to question our direction with respect to this sort of protection. About \$4 billion a year is being sucked out of the wealth-producing industry—the rural industry—and being injected into other sectors of the Australian community which do not generate any real wealth and which are certainly less efficient wealth producers than the farming industry. This is something we must consider. All people living in suburban households need to take stock of this fact and to understand the situation because they are in as much peril as rural communities. If this situation continues we will see no division between city and country people when it comes to a financial crisis.

Mortgagee sales are of particular concern to farming communities. I do not know how the Treasurer and the Minister for Agriculture are progressing with their meetings with interested parties in order to solve this problem. The Government wants to hammer out conditions under which mortgagee sales are held, but that is not the real problem facing country people.

The Bill introduced by the member for Moore attempted to apply a floor price in mortgagee sales. Unfortunately the Government once again avoided its responsibilities. It does not want to vote on the Bill because it does not have the courage to do so. It does not want rural people to see that it is not prepared to help them. It is not to the Government's credit that it is avoiding the issue.

I have heard a strong rumour that at least one of the properties recently sold by mortgagee auction has been resold at a price higher than that received at the mortgagee sale. Surely if this is true it means that the real value of the property was not achieved at that original sale. This is the sort of thing the member for Moore was wanting to prevent.

All the Minister could do that evening was to read out letter after letter from financial institutions saying how they thought the suggested remedy would not work. The member for Moore made it clear that he would accept amendments or suggestions that would improve the Bill, but all the Minister did was to criticise it in terms of the letters he had received from financial houses around the town.

It is an absolute necessity that the Government grapple with this issue. The Government had the opportunity, through the member for Moore's Bill, to do something positive, but it ignored it. At the same time, the Government

is prepared to grant building societies \$14 million to help people with home mortgages, but rural people are in debt at least as deeply. However, the Government is prepared to offer rural people only the sort of help a man down a well might receive if a person were to pull up the ladder and then ask if he was okay. It is absolutely ridiculous for the Minister for Agriculture to have spoken in the way he did on this important subject.

Many people in Australia seem to be anti-export, and I am talking now about opposition to our live sheep exports. I do not want to talk about Mudginberri, because the Treasurer seems to think it is too far away from us and does not matter. The point about Mudginberri which the Treasurer overlooked was that a principle was at stake. In the Government's enthusiasm to help its union friends, we saw it throw good sense out the door.

New Zealand has recently announced that it intends to export live sheep. This is of concern to Western Australian and Australian farmers generally. People need to understand that this live sheep export trade is worth about \$100 million a year to us. However, many people in Australia look on people who want to export live sheep as bad, profiteering-type people and they seem to see all private enterprise people in this way. When we are trying to maintain and indeed expand our sheep export programme we find we have a most horrendous number of people opposed to it. As an example I mention the animal liberationists, who are aided and abetted by Senator Georges' animal welfare committee whose members believe we should phase out the trade in live sheep.

On top of all this we have New Zealand intending to join this trade. This move is a great threat to Australia's 7 000 000 head a year sheep trade. New Zealand's programme will most certainly be in direct competition with our export programme of sheep to the Middle East. Bahrain has recently completed a new and sophisticated abattoir whose future may lie with New Zealand sheep exported there for slaughter. Those sheep could be chilled and transported to such major Australian chilled lamb markets as the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. If that is not a serious situation, I do not know what is. As I was saying earlier, instead of the Government pursuing a policy of non-productive and extravagant Government programmes to maintain a false sense of security, it should maintain the type of programme that will bring in dollars.

Never mind about all the other problems those industries have to handle such as record interest rates, and so on. They have to handle all that and still remain profitable. They must do so under incompetent Government management and in the face of a spiralling overseas deficit. We need to think seriously about what we are going to do about that trade.

I welcome the new deal that has been made in regard to wheat sales, but the fact remains that 130 million tonnes of wheat are lying in Australian installations when it should be overseas. It is there because of union disruption, and the people should realise that. It is criminal, but the Government will not recognise it as such.

In the last few minutes remaining to me I want to dwell on the low price of land. That is another unsatisfactory aspect of this Government's record. Land values in rural areas have sunk to their lowest ebb in living memory. Nobody knows what is the real value of the land because it is simply not selling.

I make the point that this Government supports the Commonwealth Government's tax package. Our good Senator Walsh revealed recently that when 116 000 tax returns from 1982-83 were checked they showed that 47 taxpayers had reduced their tax assessments by \$117 000. He went on to say—and it surprises me that a man with a rural background should say it—that he would be surprised if the overwhelming majority were not St Georges Terrace, Pitt Street, or Collins Street farmers, and the denial of that shelter to urban taxpayers was not an increased tax on farmers. That might be so, but Senator Walsh seems to have a hatred of St Georges Terrace or Pitt Street farmers as he likes to call them.

I fail to see that those people have ever done the industry any real harm. They are not the people who pushed land prices up. In fact, in many cases they made a contribution because not only did they have money to develop their property, but also perhaps they diverted income there from the profits of some other industry or enterprise in which they were involved. I see nothing wrong with that. They were creating real jobs. Every time they bought a mile of ringlock and 1 000 posts they created a real job. But this Government has a complex about everybody being dependent on it and it would rather build footpaths by the mile than create real jobs. It restricts the opportunities to create jobs because it is private enterprise and individuals who want to do it.

MR RUSHTON (Dale) [11.05 p.m.]: I want to touch on two points; the first is of no great depth but nevertheless is a serious matter, and I refer to the pledge made by the Government last night to cover up some of its misdemeanors. The statement made in the Press was that the State Government refused to be stood over by anyone regardless of his financial or other influence. That was said by the Premier, Mr Burke. Methinks the Premier protests too much. It is no wonder the Premier and the Government attract conjecture from the public as to their honesty and integrity. Throughout its term of office this Government has refused to answer sensitive questions. I certainly have not been able to get factual answers about the numbers of its advisers and the different people involved in various departments.

Mr MacKinnon: Whom is the Premier talking about when he refers to their trying to stand over the Government?

Mr RUSHTON: That is a good point. I am not worried about anybody standing over the Government; I am worried about the Government's standing over somebody else. With a \$3 billion Budget the Government is standing over the people and intimidating them for its own ends. That is what I am fearful of. I am concerned about the lack of integrity in the statement that was made yesterday.

I have asked a few questions relating to the integrity of the Curtin Foundation and how pressures have been brought to bear on certain people to make contributions to the foundation. The Premier will never answer questions about the link between the Government and people's contributions to this fund. He will not answer questions about the link between the Government and guarantees, contracts, and licences it has given. That is a most sensitive area, and I get many questions from the public asking me about that link. It is a simple question which should be answered straightforwardly. What is the link between the Government and those people? I am not reflecting on the people concerned but rather on the Government.

I will keep pursuing the Premier until he provides answers to my questions because this put-off is not good enough. It is easy to understand why the Premier is attacking Mr Holmes a Court. Apparently he has refused to contribute to the Curtin Foundation. The Premier's attitude is deplorable to me. We must be fearful of the pressure this Government puts on people, not the pressure that other people put on the Government.

I want to address myself briefly to the announcement made by the Government some time ago of its intention to electrify the suburban rail system. It was an incredible announcement.

Mr Burkett: That was one of your ideas, wasn't it?

Mr RUSHTON: I am not against electrification, but it should be done properly and not for the wrong reason. Members opposite will be sorry to know that I can demonstrate that this proposal precludes the extension of a rapid transit system to northern and southern parts because the Government has chosen the wrong vehicle.

Mr Jamieson interjected.

Mr RUSHTON: I have heard enough from the member for Welshpool. He is one of the architects of the disaster.

It is the timing that counts, and if the Government wants good reason for my saying that the timing is wrong it should look at the decision relating to the electrification of the freight line.

Mr Jamieson: There is no time like the present.

Mr RUSHTON: The member for Welshpool does not worry about the economics and the debts people have to carry. He is a good person, but he is up the pole as far as economics are concerned.

Mr Jamieson: You are a typical banker: You want the money back before you lend it.

Mr RUSHTON: One should not spend money on things one does not use adequately. All the reports favour my point of view.

Mr Jamieson: They do not.

Mr RUSHTON: I am not going to get involved with the member for Welshpool because he was the architect of the last report. He was determined he would not be beaten again. He wanted an electrification system for the trains but the report in the 1970s said we should not opt for that system, but for a bus system.

Mr Jamieson: Which report was that?

Mr RUSHTON: I think it was Wilbur Smith's.

Mr Jamieson: That is one where you altered the terms of reference.

Mr RUSHTON: This Government did not fix it up well enough. It has always been the member's disappointment.

When one reads the terms of reference one will find that the consultant was not allowed to consider anything else but the electrification of the railway system. He was not permitted to consider any alternatives. That is a bad business. The Government had its blinkers on. The interesting thing is that, when one finds sound people concerned about running the railway system in the most efficient way—Westrail, to give it credit, does that—they did not look to electrifying the system ahead of time; they considered the right time for electrifying it. For instance, in the early research that we carried out we thought that the first line to be electrified would be the line from Kwinana to Koolyanobbing. After the study was completed it was decided that the Kwinana-Bunbury line should be the first to be electrified.

Mr Jamieson: That would have been a nice old disaster if you had gone ahead with that.

Mr RUSHTON: It was all assessed. It would be like the disaster of the electrification of the suburban system.

We committed ourselves to an electrification of the system by 1988. The Labor Party is now attempting to do something within the same time span. However, with the present price of fuel and costs being held to a minimum, the introduction of this electrification is being deferred and the diesel-electric system should be allowed to continue.

Mr Jamieson: Aren't you concerned about the environment?

Mr RUSHTON: The environment is considered at the same time; it is all part of the same deal.

One of the bad decisions of the Government was the reopening of the Perth-Fremantle line at the time it did and for the reasons it did.

Mr Jamieson: The people didn't complain about it.

Mr RUSHTON: The people do not know what they are paying for it either. In its first week in office upon being elected in 1983, the Government decided to approve 10 new railcars. I had delayed that decision because we were considering a suggestion by Comeng for a lighter vehicle. Spare parts could have been interchanged between those and the present vehicles, and the employment of those lighter vehicles would have been a move in the right direction. However, the Labor Party was committed to the Perth-Fremantle line and used the 10 more railcars for that. That was part of its commitment. It brought back some decrepit old vehicles to run in the interim and they have

cost vast amounts of money in maintenance and repairs. Sadly, now, it has deferred the use of that lighter vehicle.

The tragedy is that, because of the Government's decision to electrify the rail system and to use these heavy vehicles, it will lock us into 25 years of life of the vehicles for that electrification. It was my objective to introduce the light vehicle system to provide about a 12-year life for the vehicles.

Mr Jamieson: Everywhere they have introduced this light vehicle they have had failures.

Mr RUSHTON: No, they have not. They certainly have not where a low capacity system was needed. The member for Welshpool is arguing about a vehicle which would carry 20 times the number of people that the system demands. The Perth-Fremantle system carries about 1 000 people in peak hour, but the Government has put in a system that will carry 20 000 people in peak hour. The Government is intent on introducing a system that will not be flexible. We should all be working towards introducing a system for moving people to regional centres. However, the Government is turning its back on that plan and is considering centralising people in central Perth. I believe that the best plan is to proceed with the corridor plan for subregional centres and extend the plan to Rockingham, Mundijong, and Wanneroo. Now with the use of the heavy vehicles, the costs will be prohibitive. I feel, therefore, that the link bus will be the vehicle to transport people for many years to come. The heavy rail vehicles will become redundant to a degree.

In considering the electrification of the Perth system, the consultants were given restrictive terms of reference. They were to consider only the electrification of the system. That was the first stumbling block. Sixteen people were involved in the review of the electrification of the system, 12 of whom were either linked with the trade union movement or Mr McCaskill, and a number of whom were from the Government. Only four people were from outside Government influence. Of course, unionists were invited because they are committed to the rail system. Mr McCaskill has been fanatical about the electrification of the system for many years. The other people included a Commonwealth rail person, an Ansett representative, and two engineers. Those engineers put in a minority report differing from the other recommendations.

The committee was Government-based. It drew up recommendations agreeing with the beliefs of the Labor Party. If those recommendations are implemented, it will be a disaster from the taxpayers' point of view. The system will not do the job that it is required to do. I hope that the Government accepts the suggestion that it should not accept contracts for the development of the system until after the next election so that we will have the opportunity to review the matter fully if we are returned to Government. I did not make a commitment for the acceptance of those 10 earlier-mentioned rail vehicles as I was entitled to do. I deferred that decision because I wanted the lighter vehicle assessed properly. However, I played into the Government's hands because it was able to accept the tender as if it was its tender.

Mr Parker: Was that the week that the Liberal Party refused to let you stand for the deputy leadership?

Mr RUSHTON: It has nothing to do with that. The Minister cannot sidetrack me.

I come back to the report that was made recently on a very limited basis and with the wrong objectives. As I said, it precludes the opportunity for rapid transit vehicles to go through to Wanneroo, Mundijong, or Rockingham. With the new technology there should be that opportunity. The vehicle does not need to travel on rails. It could be a vehicle that could run on rails and also on rubbers. It could then do alternative runs. So many new things are being developed that it is ridiculous to commit ourselves for 25 years to a heavy vehicle that has no alternatives. The report prepared recently by the Connell Mott Hay and Anderson group concerned the electrification of only the suburban railway system. I will not deal with the technical points in the report, because they are directed to the electrification of the system and, of course, that is not the answer we should be looking for. We should look at alternative forms of transport and the integration of transport. That has not been done.

The Travers Morgan report of 1982 gives us a very sound basis for discussing the overall situation. The broad range of comments in that report are appropriate today. Anybody who is interested enough can obtain that report from the library and read the recommendations of that time. They still stand. All earlier reports conclude that a bus system, not a railway

system, is the most preferred commuter system, particularly for the Perth-Fremantle corridor.

Mr Jamieson: You would have to consider a track system within 20 years. Even the Nielsen report said that.

Mr RUSHTON: Even that report said there would not need to be electrification of the rail system until after the year 2000. I am not suggesting that we should not move towards electrification, but I am suggesting that we need to have the right vehicle and introduce it at the right time. We do not want to change our city.

Mr Jamieson: You don't know enough about engineering to be an expert on that.

Mr RUSHTON: I have had enough people advise me on this matter and that has been their constant recommendation.

Mr Jamieson: They have confused you.

Mr RUSHTON: The member has had a dogmatic approach. I appreciate that it has been fed to him by the union movement which believes we must have an electric train and that it must be a fixed, heavy train because that is the safest thing to have, but it does preclude some of the other alternatives.

The Connell Mott Hay Anderson report was commissioned to investigate whether to electrify the commuter railway system, and not whether a railway system was the preferred transport mode. The consultant was careful to acknowledge the content of the brief. The minority of views suggested that the railway system was an uneconomic approach to solving the problems and indicated that the brief was not appropriate for transport, but was directed only to railway electrification. If we are honest with ourselves, we will admit that that is what it was. If the member for Welshpool were honest—and he is always honest as far as I am concerned—he would say to me that they were not going to be caught again by having someone come down with a recommendation that did not follow the preferred line; that is, electrification of the rail system.

Mr Jamieson: Well Wilbur Smith was commissioned for a report on a railway system and finished up reporting on a busway after you people altered the terms of reference when the Government changed.

Mr RUSHTON: Wilbur Smith did not find in favour of an electrification system.

Mr Jamieson: But they weren't asked to do the other.

Mr RUSHTON: The Government's champion of the electrification system, Mr Darrald McCaskill, put in an electrification proposal.

Mr Jamieson: This was long before Darrald McCaskill was fooling around with it.

Mr RUSHTON: That is the right term, fooling around with it. When he was chief of the Midland workshops he put in a proposition which was rejected out of hand. It was totally unacceptable. He has been the champion of this cause ever since he retired. He is one of the members of this referral or examining group. He was leader of the Friends of the Railways. One could never find out whether that body was properly constituted or not, but he was the mouthpiece for it.

He had another close ally in Dr Peter Newman, who is now the Minister's adviser. What a combination to have when one is trying to get a logical and responsible approach to a new technology in transport for the years ahead. These are two committed people. One is a very strong environmentalist who will make decisions from that point of view and not from the transport view. The other could see nothing but electrification of a railway system. In fact, our estimate of cost at about \$120 million was decried by him. Westrail worked it out at about \$108 million. The same Mr Darrald McCaskill said it could be implemented for \$50 million. Now we see an estimate of \$146 million. It is totally crazy to proceed with electrification now.

The same gentleman, Mr Caskill, has cost this State a huge amount of money. When he was at Midland Workshop he played around with the "N"-class locomotive which we are still paying for. The trouble was he changed the plans. Everybody in the railway system knows that the "N"-class locomotive was a disaster. If the Minister for Works were here he would be nodding his head. He knows only too well what a disaster that locomotive was from this State's point of view. To my knowledge, nobody has calculated what the loss has been. The locomotive is now run on a fixed line to Jarrahdale with a sort of workshop available to keep it running, but at a huge cost. Comeng deplored the fact that it succumbed to Mr McCaskill's amendment of design while it was constructing the locomotive. Comeng got the blame. In fact, I think that construction of the *Australind* railcars is the first time Comeng has become acceptable since it built the "N"-class locomotive. That company, when those railcars

were recommended, put forward the alternative of a lighter vehicle which would have been well worth thinking about.

I continue with an assessment of the report: If light rolling stock was used it would be possible to adopt a European practice extending the railway system into tramways. We do not need to go to that extent, but if we had the rapid transit vehicle we would have that opportunity. It would allow us to accommodate a low density community. We are now putting in a heavy electric train to look after a light density community. What do we want our city to be? Obviously, this Government is toying with the possibility of exchanging what we have been used to for a long time, a low density city. It should tell the people before it makes a definite decision, but the answer I have had in the last few days indicates that the Government is now starting to move towards a reassessment of the future planning for the city.

The corridor plan, of course, can have variations, but if we fill in the rural wedges we then would have a high density conglomeration. This would bring down the standard of our city to that of others which are not held in very high regard. We have a way of life here, a planning concept, which is attractive to all. We have started to deteriorate. We have caused this situation by plonking the casino on Burswood Island. That was done without planning consideration, without environmental consideration, and it is a move destructive to our planning process.

Mr Davies: There was a proper inquiry.

Mr RUSHTON: No, there was not a proper inquiry.

Mr Davies: Of course there was a proper inquiry. Your question has shown that you are completely ignorant.

Mr RUSHTON: The Minister is the fool who did not open his mouth and stop it. He did not carry out his responsibility and he will be known for that.

Mr Davies: Your questioning has shown that you are completely incompetent and do not know how to handle environmental matters. I have told you twice that I have no power and you are as thick as two short planks because you cannot understand that.

Mr RUSHTON: The Minister could have influenced the decision. He seems to have abdicated his responsibilities. He has already been found out as a man who will not make a decision. He has abdicated his responsibilities with respect to the casino site by getting a re-

port after the event. Although the casino is to be opened in December, he is now coming forward with a public environment review which has not even been considered by the people.

I was referring to the fact that the introduction of the electrification of railways has been done in such a way as to preclude—

Mr Davies interjected.

Mr RUSHTON: Will the Minister for Conservation and Land Management keep quiet for a moment. He should give himself a PER.

The real tragedy of this recommendation is that the intent of the Government is to preclude the use of a rapid transit system by locking us into a 25-year heavy rail system. That is the thinking of this Labor Government and its advisers. It thinks it is a triumph. It has been aiming to get an electrified suburban system for years and it now expects to succeed. I am hoping that if the Government has any conscience, it will not make firm commitments before an election. It should let the people decide if there is to be an alternative. I truly hope there is an opportunity after the next election for the position to be reviewed and for an alternative decision to be considered.

The report refers to a decision to continue with developing the railway system, and that it should have been contingent on revising the approach to the road system. The community cannot afford to support maximum levels which are in conflict. The Government has not given any thought to the road system, the bus system, the taxi system, or any other alternatives. The part played by the motor vehicle is all-important. The Government has thought about the electrification of railways which serve two per cent of the commuters. There is no advised reduction in costs. In fact, \$20 million a year in interest will be loaded onto the cost. That is the first thing that will be experienced. An indication that a decision on the transport mode for Perth has not been made shows that the Government is supporting a clearly uneconomic transport path and then aggravating it by not taking compensating cost-reducing measures. It has not given proper consideration to that fact.

The point I would like to make is that the Minister for Transport has committed this Government to presenting, before Christmas, a comprehensive five-year plan for urban

transport. The Opposition has not seen it and nothing has been said about it, but it is expected. The Government has made a decision to lock itself into a 25-year programme with heavy rail electrification before it comes down with the review. That is a back-to-front crazy decision to make. It is similar to the Sorrento Marina. The Premier says that the State will have a thousand-boat marina, and when the pressure goes on he says it will have an ERMP, and the EPA will examine it. All the people involved in that, who are basically from the Public Service, are committed to backing the Government with questions of how one can do it, not should it be done.

Mr Read: Do you oppose the marina?

Mr RUSHTON: I strongly support a marina and the facilities in that northern suburb. The Opposition does not think it should be at the cost to the beaches and the people in those areas losing something which they value. There are plenty of opportunities for it to be done the right way. This Government has gone about it in the wrong way.

A Government member: Where would you put it?

Mr RUSHTON: Ocean Reef is a jolly good spot.

There are matters in this report that relate to the brief on the report's findings. A conclusion is reached, without comprehensively looking after the community's interests and examining some of the key aspects that are important in deciding on the priorities for Government expenditure. More importantly, the relationship between rail and road systems has still not been examined. This is probably the most serious omission when considering employing taxpayers' funds for transport.

It is not too late for the Government to make the commitment that it will not take the next step until after the election, whatever the outcome may be. We have a 25-year cycle where we have a vehicle that we are locked into and cannot do anything about, and that is something I believe the public should be able to consider. I say again that the most serious matter is that we are locking ourselves into electrification of the railway system with a heavy vehicle. As far as I am concerned, we could quite likely have had a light rail vehicle in place at this time as a prototype, or as an experiment or test. This Government has been so fixed with its thoughts on electrification and has put off all the natural progressions by putting those things aside—things which were well ad-

vanced. That is the Government's responsibility and its failure. It has failed dismally in coming forward with a rational and responsible approach to the future of our metropolitan transport system.

One only needs to ask oneself what sort of a city and metropolis do we wish to have? I would suggest most people would opt for a city which has a fairly low density and keeps the maximum environmental delights we have all enjoyed. We have started to move away from that with the building of the casino, and have transformed the city into something that most people would not want in the long term. We could have had, without the casino, a city of which we could have continued to be proud. It would have been a city attractive to people visiting this State for the very reason that it had that lack of density and the environment that will come with the casino. That would have been a plus for Perth and would have attracted tourists more prolifically than we will by the other approach.

I hope I have left the thought in members' minds that we are placing at risk the future of a rapid transport system to the northern suburbs, to Rockingham in the south, and Mundijong, purely by the wrong choice of a vehicle.

The Opposition is not opposing electrification, but the Government has to go about it in a natural and responsible way so we link it to the demands of the people and get the benefits of cost evaluation to the benefit of the taxpayer. I have touched on this subject because I think it needs much more thought. I sincerely hope that the Government will not proceed with contracts that will preclude the alternative Government from reviewing what I think is a disastrous decision made for the wrong reasons.

MR BLAIKIE (Vasse) [11.39 p.m.]: Let me say from the outset that the Treasurer has shown that he is not prepared to sit in the House and listen to the full debate on the Loan Bill.

Mr Tonkin: It had nothing to do with loans. The way speakers have been raving on tonight is a disgrace. For a State Parliament, the kind of stuff spoken here tonight has been disgraceful.

Mr BLAIKIE: For the Treasurer not to be here on this Loan Bill is a disgrace.

That is a further indication of the attitude shown by the Treasurer when he was not present during the debate on the Budget. This

is the first time I have known of a Treasurer involved in a Loan Fund debate who has not taken the trouble to listen to the speeches made by other members, irrespective of which side of politics he has been on. Treasurer O'Connor had the decency to sit through the debates and listen to the comments made. Whether or not he answered all the comments, at least he sat and listened to the matters raised by the members. Sir Charles Court, Sir David Brand, and Treasurer Tonkin also listened to the debates. Treasurer Tonkin was one of the best members for sitting in the House and when he was Treasurer he gave members opposite the courtesy they would expect from a Treasurer.

Mr Parker: Is there something intrinsically good about sitting in the House?

Mr BLAIKIE: There is one thing intrinsically good about listening to the debates. We are discussing the financial affairs of the State; and the Treasurer on two occasions, in this debate and in the general Budget debate, has shown his contempt for the Parliament and indicated his lack of regard for Parliament and the members opposite by not being present to listen to the issues raised.

Mr Parker: He does not want to sit in here and listen to you and the member for Mt Marshall rave on. Do you not think he has better things to do?

Mr BLAIKIE: He may well have other things to do but his responsibility as Treasurer is to listen to the matters raised by members opposite.

Mr Parker: No one is talking about the Treasurer's responsibility.

Mr BLAIKIE: I am talking about the Treasurer's responsibility; he has an obligation to be in the House and he shows contempt by not being present for the debate, not only on this occasion but also during the general Budget debate. An amount approximating \$3 billion is proposed to be spent, yet the Treasurer, whose Government sets the policy for how this money will be raised and spent, fails to be in Parliament.

I remind the House—the Leader of the House knows I am on positive ground—that the Treasurer brings forward the Budget to the Parliament and seeks approval for that Budget.

Mr Tonkin: Say anything about the Budget that you want and I will pass it to the Treasurer. I will also tell him about the comments made by the member for Moore and the ship's cook and how he understood why we needed a nuclear navy. It is drivel and I would

be ashamed if students were present to listen to this debate. They would go back and ask if these men got paid for that drivel.

Mr BLAIKIE: The Leader of the House would clearly understand that the Treasurer seeks the approval of Parliament for the expenditure of taxes and the raising of the revenue by way of taxes and charges. The Treasurer at least has an obligation to hear what members on this side of the House have to say.

Mr Tonkin: I will pass it on if you talk about the Budget; that is my job as Leader of the House.

Mr BLAIKIE: In the last fortnight matters have been raised in respect of Crown grants and sums of \$23 million. This does not relate to the Loan Estimates speech but to the increased money to be raised by Crown grants. The Treasurer was asked where the money was coming from and why the increase was so high at \$23 million this year.

The Treasurer did not answer; he talked about the attributes of all his Ministers, rejected the comments that had been made, and sat down. The Treasurer was also asked about matters relating to land tax and why the collections were as high as they were. The Government was asked to respond to questions on its advertising campaign, and why it advertised in the way it does and it was also told that the advertising was false. The Government, through the Treasurer, made no comment. The Loan Estimates debate is on tonight—

Point of Order

Mr TONKIN: Clearly the member for Vasse is speaking on the wrong Bill.

Mr Blaikie: I meant the Loan Bill.

Mr TONKIN: The member for Vasse has it right for the first time. It is time he knew what we are debating and he should confine himself to speaking on that Bill.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs Henderson): Certainly members are permitted to range widely in the debate on Budget Bills. The member has been on the point he is making for some time and I ask him to move to the next point.

Debate Resumed

Mr BLAIKIE: I am concerned about the funding programme for the Department of Conservation and Land Management. In this area, \$6.2 million will be provided for the tending of 60 000 hectares of land under softwood in the south-west. These form a very im-

portant part of this State's resources. In addition, a further amount will be provided for the purchase of 2 000 hectares of land for pine planting. I want to take issue on the purchase of this land because it follows the Government's policy of not allowing any further clearing to be done in the Donnybrook sunklands. This area of State forest is completely degraded and degenerated. It has no function as far as providing commercial quantities of hardwood timber for the State is concerned. In previous years the State through the then Forests Department has cleared areas and planted pine trees. For some reason this Government has decided that no further clearing will take place and this is causing a great deal of concern.

On the one hand we have a substantial area that should and could be planted with pine trees and on the other hand the Government is determined that no further clearing will take place. It has decided to move to other areas of the State and purchase farmlands in lieu of planting pines in the Donnybrook sunklands area. This new policy is a complete waste of money. When the Liberal Party is returned to Government, I can assure the present Government that we will reverse that decision and ensure that the Donnybrook sunklands will continue to be planted with pine trees and other commercial species. We will also encourage private industry to take part in the commercial plantings.

We will certainly be chopping down those degraded trees and declaring degraded areas. We will ensure roads are made in the area and that that forest area again becomes productive. If any members have taken the trouble to look at the Donnybrook sunkland area they will realise it is degraded forest of no commercial value. In addition to that, the Donnybrook sunkland area provided salvage logs for the mills, so it has at least provided some timber for which there was some return.

With the Government's decision not to carry out clearing or planting, the remaining trees are riddled with jarrah dieback. Those trees will die and the remaining resources, inconsequential as they may be, are lost to the State completely.

I invite the member for Mandurah to go to the Donnybrook sunklands at any time to see the area and he will understand that the decision of the Government was a wrong one. Let me say quite categorically that when we become the Government we will change that position in relation to the Donnybrook

sunklands and we will ensure that commercial plantings are re-established. We will work for and look for the cooperation of private capital to become part of that programme as well.

I also want to comment in relation to the aircraft wing of the Department of Conservation and Land Management. That aircraft wing consists of nine aircraft, with some three permanent pilots and 17 part-time pilots employed. The costing to the department, when it has been used for air surveillance and aerial photography for the 1984-85 financial year, was \$650 000. When we are in Government we will undertake an evaluation of that aircraft wing to see why the department should own its fleet of aircraft and whether the State would be better served by leasing aircraft from the private sector or having the work done by contract.

We will be investigating the wisdom of the State owning aircraft and seeing whether a satisfactory service can be carried out ensuring forest protection is maintained and also whether it can be obtained at a lower price. I shall be making further comments at a later stage in another debate.

I want to comment on the South West Development Authority, and in particular "Bunbury 2000." Part of the Loan Estimates was a programme for a modern rail passenger service between Perth and Bunbury to replace the *Australind* passenger train. This financial year some \$500 000 has been provided for progress payments.

I received a Press report some while ago attributed to a Mr McCaskill complaining that the high speed express passenger train service into Bunbury would be an antiquated service. I do not want to give him credit, but I believe Mr McCaskill could be quite correct on this occasion.

Mr Parker: The member for Dale was saying everything Mr McCaskill did was wrong; now he is telling us what a marvellous fellow he is.

Mr BLAIKIE: I did not say he was a marvellous fellow. I said on one occasion he might have been right. The Government proposes to introduce what is called a high-speed rail passenger service between Bunbury and Perth with two hours' travelling time.

Mr Rushton: That was not Mr McCaskill's proposition.

Mr BLAIKIE: No, it was not, but Mr McCaskill is castigating this Government for its proposition. He is saying the service is

antiquated. If the Government is to introduce a rail service between Perth and Bunbury it should be faster than two hours.

I believe Mr McCaskill could well be right, because a motor coach travelling on the road between Bunbury and Perth and observing all speed limits travels the same distance in two hours 15 minutes. The motor coach probably costs \$150 000 or \$200 000. The Government will spend in excess of \$7 million on a high speed rail service which will take two hours. I do not often agree with Mr McCaskill, but on this occasion I think he may well be right. The people in Bunbury may well be duped on what is being provided.

I want to make some comments relating to the South West Development Authority. The Treasurer has time and time again referred to the lack of Opposition's policy on the south-west. The Treasurer can wait; the Opposition's policy will come out in due course. I can assure the Treasurer and members of the Government that there will be one major change in the SWDA, and that is its media officer costing \$41 000, but members will have to wait for the balance of our policy in due course.

Here in Bunbury the Government has appointed its own media officer, Mr Baden Pratt, to the SWDA at a cost of \$41 000 simply to promote the Government's achievements. Surely the Government must see that as a farce and an abuse of taxpayers' funds. I certainly do and I want to indicate that the Government has been guilty of pork-barrelling Labor electorates in the area. It has been guilty of attempting to buy electorates.

Mr Jamieson: They are pork-barrelling you.

Mr BLAIKIE: I shall come to that in a few moments and members can make their own judgments. As far as Preston drainage is concerned, the Government has abolished the drainage district. In addition to the private ratepayers who no longer pay rates in that area, the Bunbury Forum, which incorporates Big W and organisations such as Hungry Jacks, Red Rooster, and the Port Authority, no longer pays drainage rates, because that was the Government's decision; yet other drainage areas in the south-west still pay drainage rates. The Government has favoured a very select group of people in a select area which happens to be within the electorate of the member for Mitchell and the electorate of the member for Bunbury. These people do not pay drainage rates. That is pork-barrelling at its worst.

Whilst the Government is doing that it also ensures the big national corporations do not pay either.

I turn now to a matter of concern in my electorate; namely, a decision made by the Environmental Protection Authority in relation to a proposed boat harbour at Point Picquet in Geographe Bay. The South West Development Authority was very strongly in support of that boat harbour project, and I understand the reason for its support. It was a Government project likely to cost some \$5 million or \$6 million. Had it been proceeded with it would have been an important facility in the area. If I had the choice I would not pick Point Picquet. Notwithstanding that, the point is that on the one hand we have a Government-sponsored project at Point Picquet costing some \$5 million while on the other hand we have a private development project for Point Geographe a little north of Busselton jetty and expected to cost around \$50 million on completion. One of the partners is John Holland Constructions Pty Ltd. I am very disappointed that the Government and the South West Development Authority have not seen fit to offer wide support the private development as well.

Mr P. J. Smith: Is that guaranteed money?

Mr BLAIKIE: Yes.

Mr P. J. Smith: Over what period?

Mr BLAIKIE: About 18 months. That private project deserves some acknowledgment consideration, and support from the Government and the South West Development Authority. If that support is not forthcoming it will be a little more difficult for the project to get off the ground.

Mr Parker: It would require a very great amount of Government monetary support.

Mr BLAIKIE: I am not aware of the full extent of the monetary support the project requires. It has to undergo planning requirements and run the gauntlet of Environmental Protection Authority requirements in the same way that every other project does. Unfortunately the Government has been very short on wide acknowledgment of or support for the project at Point Geographe, as has been the South West Development Authority. Here we have a project with an up-front cost of some \$50 million which has received little or no Government support for its concept. By comparison, we have seen a lot of publicity given by the

Government for the \$5 million Point Picquet project. Both are in a similar area but one is public and the other is private.

Mr P. J. Smith: The \$50 million project is not a new one.

Mr BLAIKIE: It is a new project which came to light about 18 months ago.

Mr P. J. Smith: Is it a canal project?

Mr BLAIKIE: It will have some canals. The project came to light when the local consortium was able to get on side the John Holland construction group. I believe the project has a great deal of merit. Certainly it will have merit if it meets the planning requirements of local government and the environmental requirements of the Environmental Protection Authority. If it can meet both those sets of requirements, I am fully prepared to give it my blessing and support. Until it meets those requirements I am, in the meantime, prepared to give it my preliminary approval. The Government should do the same, but its approval has not been forthcoming.

My next point is that the membership of the South West Development Authority's advisory committee has only recently changed, and I was disappointed to find that a certain industry for which I have responsibility did not gain representation. I refer now to the forest industry, which is not represented in the new membership of the South West Development Authority's advisory committee of 14 people. Although the advisory committee has representatives of towns and communities in the area, the timber industry missed out. The timber industry is probably one of the most important industries in the south-west and it certainly has an important and long-standing traditional tie with the region. In recent years it has been eclipsed in importance by the mineral sands and alumina industries, and both those industries were represented on the advisory committee.

The two nominees of the timber industry were Mr John Oldham and Mr G. M. McArthur. Mr Oldham is chairman of the Forest Products Association of WA, which body looks after all mill operators and other people operating within State forests and associated areas. Mr Kelly, the manager of the Forest Products Association, received the following letter from the South West Development Authority—

Re: Nomination of Mr J. A. Oldham as member of the South West Development Authority Advisory Committee

On behalf of Dr E. C. Manea, Director to this Authority, I wish to thank you for the application which you presented for consideration of the abovenamed to membership of Advisory Committee.

In the ultimate, some 56 requests for consideration were received from all sections of the South West Region.

The Hon. Minister for Regional Development, Mr Julian Grill has now selected the composition of committee for the coming year and I regret to advise that, at this time, you have been unsuccessful.

Mr Read: Who should be taken off to put him on?

Mr BLAIKIE: I will come back to that interjection later. The timber industry's second nominee, Mr McArthur, is chairman of the Australian Forest Development Institute, Western Australian Chapter, and Mr Kelly received a similar letter on his nomination.

To take up the interjection by the member for Mandurah, I indicate that I would have ensured that a member representing the forest industries was included in the first draft.

Mr P. J. Smith: Were those names forwarded to the Minister by Mr Guthrie for him to make a selection?

Mr BLAIKIE: Mr Guthrie represents local government, so I cannot imagine his being the Minister's minder.

I will indicate the new advisory committee membership. John Mummie, who is the chairman, is the president of the Shire of Collie. John Guilfoyle is the president of the Manjimup Shire and a pharmacist. James Bovell is a businessman with various transport, construction, and building businesses in the Donnybrook area. Dudley Tuckey is a member of the Shire of Mandurah. John Towie is President of the Shire of Manjimup. William Ullinger is owner of the Redgate Winery at Margaret River. Malcolm Wills is works manager at Alcoa of Australia Ltd's Wagerup refinery. Iver Robertson is a Bunbury city councillor. Mark Turner is a partner of Coopers and Lybrand in Bunbury. Sir Donald Eckersly is from Harvey and is associated with various organisations and committees. Dominique Van Gent is a senior employment officer at the Bunbury CES. Peter Fennessy is involved with business activities both locally and abroad and is from Busselton. David Reid has been a member of the South West Development Authority advisory committee since 1984-85 and has been associated with economic and com-

munity-based organisations in the region. He is a former senator and a former member of the State Parliament. Jack Guthrie of Busselton is the local government nominee. They are the people who comprise the advisory committee. Again I stress that the timber industry has no representative.

That was an oversight by the Minister. It is the Minister's decision in regard to who has to make way for the timber industry to be represented. It will certainly be my responsibility to draw that matter to the notice of the Minister and he has erred on this occasion.

It is important to understand that the timber industry is a major industry in the south-west. It is looking to a new working plan for the next five years—working plan No. 88—and the timber industry expects working plan No. 88 will be an extremely difficult one, particularly in the light of what has happened in the last three years when there have been some dramatic changes in forest management, forest programmes, and the reduction of area of State forest that is available to the timber industry. Dramatic changes will take place and there will be further dramatic changes ahead.

In the next two to three years a new wood chip agreement is to be formulated and agreed to, and if the South West Development Authority is to have the dimensions that the Government wishes it to have in the south-west, and to have some influence and impact in the south-west, the timber industry should have been represented on the South West Development Authority advisory committee.

The member for Warren (the Minister for Agriculture) will understand the acute sensitivity in the south-west over the reaction we have already seen from environmental groups—comprising radical people who have extreme views—who want to prevent the wood chip agreement being signed. That agreement is important to the Manjimup region and the south-west generally. Wood chips are important to the Port of Bunbury and to the whole State as a very valuable resource and export earner. New pressures will be placed on the timber industry and the prediction is that when working plan No. 88 is brought in next year, fewer hardwood reserves will be available. Naturally greater demands for resources will be made to the Minister.

Timber mills have already received notice that their mills are to close. In my electorate of Margaret River, one mill employing 14 people received notice that it will not have grown tim-

ber for next year. The Adelaide Timber Company, which employed some 30 people, has given notice to some 12 or 13 people in the Margaret River region. Picton Sawmills and South West Sawmills have been told no timber will be available for them. That is the pressure that is being placed on the timber industry now and if the member for Bunbury is charitable he will agree with me that the timber industry is an important industry. It is experiencing difficult times now, and it will undergo even more difficult times in the years ahead, so it is very important that the industry should be given the consideration of a committee that the Government regards as being important and representative of the south-west region—a committee which the Government has already said has a definite ear to the Government. I take issue with the Minister and repeat that he has erred in rejecting the timber industry's request for membership of the South West Development Authority.

I have said that the Government has pork-barrelled its own elector in the South West Development Authority area, and I want to take some time to detail some of the funding that has been made in that area. Although the Government should keep its election promises, it should not use a very decided political direction to put money where it will serve a political purpose rather than a welfare purpose when the welfare need has been demonstrated.

I very keenly supported a new Margaret River Hospital. Members of the authority also supported the inclusion of the Margaret River Hospital in the State's Budget.

Mr Read: Members of the authority?

Mr BLAIKIE: Yes, so they tell me.

Mr P. J. Smith: I would think some members of the authority would support a lot of things because the committee's aim is to look after the south-west.

Mr BLAIKIE: That is correct. By and large, the committee members certainly have the interests of the south-west at heart and do the best they can. On the other hand, the committee has to put up with the frustrations of having to accept the decisions of Government. That is the responsibility of Government. The South West Development Authority was set up for a purpose. Committee members have devoted a considerable amount of time to this area, and I credit them with being very dedicated people in their work for the south-west.

Mr Read: The member for Murray-

Wellington wants to get rid of them.

Mr BLAIKIE: I want to return to some of the items in the Budget that were included in the South West Development Authority newsletter. The amount of \$1.03 million was provided for the new Bunbury high speed train; \$1.207 million went towards the associated upgrading of the Mundijong to Picton rail service in the electorate of Bunbury; \$1.188 million towards special railway development works. The money is provided for the completion of a new railway installation at Bunbury, a new passenger terminal, upgrading of rail access to Bunbury via the north shore, and redevelopment of the vacant Westrail land in the central business district of Bunbury. An amount of \$50 000 was provided for preliminary work on a \$2.2 million 30-bed regional rehabilitation centre for Bunbury, and \$350 000 to begin construction on stage 1 of the \$3 million Mandurah Hospital. Again, they are the Government's own electorates.

An amount of \$5.6 million was provided for the Bunbury Institute of Advanced Education. It will be a \$7.5 million project when completed. An amount of \$1.53 million was provided for Department of Agriculture offices at Bunbury. An amount of \$100 000 is provided to cover preliminary planning for redevelopment of the Warren District Hospital at Manjimup. This is where we change, thank goodness. I am very pleased to see that \$820 000 has been allocated to the Augusta Hospital.

Then again follows the pork-barrelling. An amount of \$200 000 has been provided for redevelopment work at the Collie Hospital and \$100 000 has been provided for the siting of a new \$2 million high school at Australind. An amount of \$50 000 is provided for improvements to the Pemberton High School. An amount of \$20 000 is provided for work on the Capel Primary School, and \$50 000 is provided for Carey Park pre-primary centre. An amount of \$778 000 is provided for a hall-gymnasium and prevocational area at the Bunbury Senior High School. An amount of \$328 000 is provided for additions and improvements to the Manjimup Senior High School. An amount of \$46 269 000 is provided for the Muja Power Station. An amount of \$9 227 000 is provided for work on the Muja coal receival facility. That is part of a special urban system, but all the other items with the exception of the Augusta Hospital are pork-barrelling.

Mr Hodge: Do you think all those items are pork-barrelling?

Mr BLAIKIE: No. The Government has pork-barrelled its electorates by ensuring that the bulk of expenditure goes to the electorates which suit the Government. I think I have mentioned the existing hospital—

Mr Read: Do you think that is pork-barrelling?

Mr BLAIKIE: An amount of \$91 800 has been provided for the Mandurah Research Station; \$1.25 million has been provided for the Department of Conservation and Land Management regional office at Manjimup; \$1.4 million is provided for ocean dredging at Mandurah; \$509 000 is provided for a channel at Dawesville; \$460 000 is provided for dredging works at the Mandurah traffic bridge; and \$250 000 is provided for land acquisition at Mandurah for a new police complex.

I want to make the point again that all those areas, with the exception of the one I have already mentioned, happen to be in the electorates of Labor Government members. Yet if one looks at other areas such as Murray-Wellington, one sees no money has been allocated there.

Mr Hodge: That is not true. It is getting hundreds of thousands of dollars spent on Bunbury Hospital.

Mr BLAIKIE: I will go on further. I want to make certain this is accurate. These details are in the South West Development Authority newsletter which goes to areas serviced by the authority. The Minister can check that if he wishes.

I want to deal with other matters of an electorate nature in the time remaining to me. One matter to which the Government needs to pay attention is the Busselton jetty. It was closed in 1972 and since then has been in a continuing state of disrepair. It is a very important facility as far as the community is concerned. A proposition has been put forward that a T-head be built approximately 600 metres from shore. It is proposed that that section of the jetty including the T-head would be fully maintained. The jetty is an important part of the community and the Government should ensure that funds are made available for this project. I would hope the South West Development Authority might get its shoulder to the wheel and support this proposal. The community regards the jetty as being of great importance and value, and I support that view. For the many visitors to the community at whatever time they come the jetty is a prime point of interest.

Mr Parker: Do you think we should rebuild it?

Mr BLAIKIE: I did not say that at all. I said a section has already been mapped out; it is about 600 metres in length and it goes just past an area known as the first head. It is proposed that a T-head section should be built at that point to stabilise the jetty and provide a fishing platform for the many thousands of visitors to the jetty as well as a mooring area for boats loading and offloading passengers.

I refer now to education. There is a positive need for a building improvement scheme at the Busselton High School. The number of pupils at the school is approaching 800. The school draws its students from a wide area ranging from Augusta to Nannup. The school is overcrowded and students are housed in transportable classrooms and in the auditorium area. It is important that a building upgrading programme be carried out.

The Margaret River High School also requires a renovation programme. The time is not too distant—either next year or the year after—when the Government will have to consider making that school a five-year high school. With those comments I support the Bill.

MR COWAN (Merredin) [12.25 a.m.]: I have no wish to speak for any great length of time on this matter. I wish to raise two points, and this is the right time to do it although perhaps not the right time in terms of the time on the clock.

The whole purpose of this Bill is to seek approval for the raising of \$90 million, all of which will go to housing. It is being allocated at four per cent repayable over a period of 53 years. I have no argument with the Government making that money available for housing alone, but I remind the Government there are other areas where financing from this source of funds would be quite appropriate.

One of them has already been mentioned tonight by previous speakers, and I refer to the Agaton water scheme. This scheme has had a fairly chequered career. In 1982, or perhaps the early part of 1983, the Minister for Minerals and Energy (Mr Parker) made a statement in Mukinbudin that if the ALP was elected to power it would set aside funds for the purpose of initiating the Agaton water scheme.

Mr Parker: That is not what I said.

Mr COWAN: The Minister was reported as having said that and I never saw any correction of any report.

Mr Parker: Several letters have been written to papers expressing what I said. The member can go back and look at them if he wants to.

Mr COWAN: I do not have to. I have seen reports of what the Minister said and subsequent letters, and in those reports it was made clear to the people in the Agaton area that the Minister on behalf of the Labor Party made a commitment that the Agaton water scheme would go ahead. It has not gone ahead, and as a result we made it very clear in 1984 as a political party that we would implement the Agaton water scheme as a condition of coalition.

Apparently that has excited the Liberal Party to the extent that it has given a commitment that the first stage of the scheme will go ahead. I am very pleased to hear that the Leader of the Opposition has committed his party to a \$30-million programme to initiate the first stage of the Agaton water scheme. Certainly it is not anywhere near enough. If we as a Parliament, and on the basis of Government decisions, can appropriate a great deal of public money for various schemes such as the Dampier gas pipeline and matters of that nature it would be quite appropriate for us to look not just at the first stage of the Agaton scheme and the \$30 million necessary to construct it, but to give a commitment for the total completion of the scheme over a period.

The National Party certainly gave no proviso that the Agaton scheme would be constructed only to the first stage and after that any further progress would be subject to Commonwealth moneys. It would be a most appropriate scheme for funding from moneys coming from the source involved in this measure. The money is relatively cheap; repayment is over a very long period, and I can see something like the Agaton scheme creating much-needed employment as it would be fairly labour intensive. It would be a very good project indeed for the purpose of expending some of the funds made available from this source.

Mr Jamieson: The Agaton scheme was ready to go at the beginning of 1974 but the Court Government decided against it.

Mr COWAN: The member for Welshpool is quite correct, because at that particular time, when the Liberal Party was in power and held the purse strings, it went to the people in the Agaton area and offered them the scheme provided they met 25 per cent of the capital costs. I hope that people in the Mt Marshall

region bear that in mind, when they hear the promises that have been floating around that electorate during the last week.

The other area in which I think this money could be quite usefully put to work is in the matter of rural finance. In Western Australia, particularly in the eastern wheatbelt, there will be a sore need for a large amount of funds and I suggest that the Government could have examined the prospect of making money available to the Rural Adjustment and Finance Corporation from this source for on-lending to the farming community. There will be 1 000 to 1 200 farmers who will be seeking funds from RAFCOR as lenders of last resort. I know that up to \$70 000 has been offered for drought assistance and carry-on finance, and I suggest to the Minister for Agriculture that the maximum amount of money which is available would approximate half—and only half—of the money necessary to run a Budget for 1986-87. For that reason there is a need for even further funds for the agricultural community. I hope that some action is taken as I realise that it cannot now be taken through this measure, but I hope that the Minister for Agriculture recognises that there will be need for a substantial sum of money to be set aside for RAFCOR on-lending to the farming community.

It is extremely important that that money be made available to tide the farming community over the next two or three years. Some farmers will possibly have to sell out and I hope that this will not be in the form of mortgagee sales, but others will be able to restructure their debts and move toward new farming regimes and avoid some of today's cost imposts. I am sure that the great majority of the farmers will be able to survive and continue farming in the future. I would like to point out that all the funds that are available from this source should not necessarily be made available for housing loans. There are other areas where these funds should be made available. The Agaton water scheme is one and on-lending for the Rural Adjustment and Finance Corporation is another.

I support the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (Mr Burkett) in the Chair; Mr Tonkin (Leader of the House) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 6 put and passed.

Schedule 1 put and passed.

Schedule 2—

Mr COWAN: I wonder whether the Minister can answer one query. I see that in the reappropriation fund under the scheme, \$800 000 was the original figure available for the Rural Adjustment Authority. Only \$440 000 is being reappropriated. Could the Leader of the House comment on that or give an undertaking that he will do so and provide me with an indication of the reasons?

Mr Tonkin: I undertake to provide that information to the member.

Schedule put and passed.

Schedule 3 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

MR TONKIN (Morley-Swan—Leader of the House) [12.38 a.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR BLAIKIE (Vasse) [12.39 a.m.]: This is the first time that I have ever seen a Loan Bill go through the House without the Premier or Treasurer being in charge of it. I find the matter deplorable and I indicate my objection to it.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

ACTS AMENDMENT (EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS SUPERANNUATION) BILL

Second Reading

MR PEARCE (Armadale—Minister for Education) [12.40 a.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This legislation confers on the Western Australian Institute of Technology and the Western Australian College of Advanced Education powers commensurate with those of the universities with respect to superannuation. This will enable the Western Australian Institute of Technology and the Western Australian College of Advanced Education to join the superannuation scheme for Australian universities, a national scheme which provides access for academic and general staff of

universities and colleges of advanced education. Most universities in Australia, including the University of Western Australia and Murdoch University, are already members of the superannuation scheme for Australian Universities and, following the recent decision of the Commonwealth Government to fund the employers' contributions for colleges of advanced education through the normal funding arrangements, many colleges of advanced education are expected to join the scheme.

The superannuation scheme for Australian universities is a fully-funded and vested managed-fund type of scheme which provides pension or lump sum benefits on retirement, resignation, disablement or death. Employees contribute to the scheme at the rate of seven per cent of salary, while the employers' contributions are 14 per cent of salary.

The councils of the Western Australian Institute of Technology and the Western Australian College of Advanced Education have decided to join the superannuation scheme for Australian universities following consultation with academic and general staff associations. A major advantage for staff is that the superannuation scheme for Australian universities provides portability of superannuation entitlements for staff transferring between member institutions throughout Australia. In addition, the contribution rates to the superannuation scheme for Australian universities compare favourably with those for existing managed funds which are set at five per cent and 10 per cent respectively.

Currently, academic staff at the Western Australian Institute of Technology and the Western Australian College of Advanced Education have the option of joining the State superannuation scheme, which is an emerging cost scheme, or the appropriate managed-fund scheme—the Western Australian Institute of Technology superannuation scheme for the Western Australian Institute of Technology staff and the Western Australian Post Secondary Education superannuation scheme established under the colleges act for Western Australian college staff. General staff have access to the State superannuation scheme. Access to these schemes for new appointees, other than those already contributing to the State superannuation scheme, will be closed when the institutions join the superannuation scheme for Australian universities. Appropri-

ate provisions are included in the Bill to protect accrued rights and benefits under existing schemes.

The amendments concerning the Western Australian Institute of Technology and the Western Australian College of Advanced Education are contained in separate parts of the Bill, and will take effect on a date or dates to be fixed. This will enable the timing of the amendments to be synchronised with the formal entry of the Western Australian Institute of Technology and the Western Australian College of Advanced Education into the superannuation scheme for Australian universities.

Special benefits are available upon transfer to the superannuation scheme for Australian universities for eligible staff of institutions which join the scheme prior to 1 January 1986. This date has been set by the trustees of the superannuation scheme for Australian universities and there is no possibility of its extension. The passing of the amendments during the current parliamentary session will enable the Western Australian Institute of Technology and the Western Australian College of Advanced Education to meet this deadline.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr MacKinnon (Deputy Leader of the Opposition).

WESTERN MINING CORPORATION LIMITED (THROSSELL RANGE) AGREEMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR PARKER (Fremantle—Minister for Minerals and Energy) [12.44 a.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of the Bill is to ratify the agreement entered into between the State and Western Mining Corporation Limited on 29 October 1985. The agreement establishes the respective rights and obligations of the State and Western Mining Corporation Limited in respect of, firstly, the company's mineral exploration activity in the Throssell Range area of the Pilbara region; and, secondly, the future development of a mining project arising out of that exploration.

With regard to the Bill itself, members of the House will note that clause 5 provides the Governor with the power to make by-laws for the purposes of, and in accordance with, the agreement. This provision of the Bill is necessary as under clause 23 of the agreement, the

company has the right to recommend the making of by-laws for certain purposes associated with its activities under the agreement.

However, before dealing in detail with that and the other provisions of the agreement, I will briefly outline the events leading to its negotiation.

Throssell Range is currently Western Mining's largest mineral exploration project in Australia. It involves 34 Mining Act exploration licences—ELs—covering an area of 5 685 square kilometres or 568 500 hectares, located approximately 200 kilometres south-east of Marble Bar. The terrain is sandy desert with any prospective base metal targets generally lying below 70 to 100 metres of transported overburden.

The notable exception to the norm is the rock outcrop which contains the Nifty copper deposit. This deposit was first discovered by our colleague, Hon. Mark Nevill, MLC when he was a geologist employed by the Western Mining Corporation. In fact, the deposit is named after him.

The company has defined 5 million tonnes of oxidised copper at Nifty, but the combination of the remote location of the discovery and the weakness in world copper markets renders the prospect currently unviable for economic development.

Despite this, the company has been encouraged by the results of its regional exploration programme. The results indicate a potential for associated silver, lead, and zinc mineralisation within characteristic shale host rocks, similar in many respects to Mt Isa.

At the conclusion of my speech, I will table plans A and B, which are respectively referred to in clause 1—definition of "exploration areas"—and clause 5, subclauses (4)(a) and (4)(b)(i) of the agreement.

Plan A outlines the 34 ELs which comprise the exploration areas, whilst plan B shows the Nifty copper project within that area.

Over \$8 million has been spent by the company since 1979 on Nifty itself and regional exploration in the Throssell Range, but even at that rate and level of expenditure the company has been unable to comply strictly with the provisions of the Mining Act by spreading the expenditure over all of the ELs. On the other hand, the company's annual expenditure has been in excess of the annual sum required for the total area under that Act.

The company's inability to spread its exploration expenditure as required by the Mining Act arises from the enormous logistical problems associated with exploration in the area.

A further difficulty is faced by Western Mining with regard to the requirements of the Mining Act. The mandatory area "drop-off" provisions applicable to exploration licences under that Act require the company to relinquish a substantial proportion of the prospective area it holds under its Throssell Range ELs, prior to the completion of the company's regional exploration programme.

For the reasons just stated, Western Mining approached me early this year expressing concern about its ability to fully evaluate the area prior to the commencement of the mandatory drop-off provisions of the Mining Act 1978.

In view of the high prospectivity of the area, and bearing in mind the circumstances of Western Mining's exploration programme to date, I was satisfied that there were sound reasons for the Government to provide the company with extended tenure over the areas in question. Negotiations then proceeded towards a State agreement incorporating a special exploration licence with the following terms and conditions—

The period of the special exploration licence to be five years with a once only opportunity, subject to the Minister's approval, for a one-year extension. Should the company wish to proceed to development then a formal development proposal must be submitted within the term of the special exploration licence;

no mandatory drop-off provisions;

expenditure covenants as per the following table—

Years	\$Sq/k	\$Mill/ Annum	Prog. Expenditure Total (No drop-off)
1	600	3.4	3.4
2	900	5.2	8.6
3	1200	6.8	15.4
4	1200	6.8	22.2
5	1200	6.8	29.0
6*	1200	6.8	35.8

(* Extension for year 6 only at Minister's discretion.);

a requirement that the company spend its expenditure commitment on exploration spread over the entire licence area;

a provision that certain information available as a result of the company's exploration activities in the special exploration licence area may be made public by the Minister for Minerals and Energy;

a requirement for the company to submit proposals for the development of the project based on copper and associated minerals, in conjunction with the provision of infrastructure;

subject to the consent of the Minister—currently the Minister for Minerals and Energy—the proposals may relate to minerals other than copper and associated minerals;

on approval of the proposals the company can apply for a mining lease over a small proportion of the area;

other than in the above conditions and the standard State resource development agreement exemption from normal expenditure conditions, the conditions of the Mining Act apply.

In more detail, the agreement departs from the provisions of the Mining Act in the following areas—

the ministerial discretion to allow extension of the term of the special exploration licence by a maximum of one year over the standard five-year term, with no mandatory relinquishment requirements at the end of years three and four;

expenditure covenants exceed the Mining Act requirements by twice in year one, three times in year two, and four times in years three, four, five and six;

there is tight definition within the agreement as to what would comprise exploration expenditure, with a mechanism to ensure that the exploration programme is spread over the entire lease area.

In addition to these special provisions, the agreement embraces the normal provisions of a development agreement. For example, the requirement for the company to provide and submit proposals covering the following matters for approval by the State are—

- (a) the establishment of mining and treatment operations in respect of copper and associated minerals, or if the Minister approves for other minerals—other than iron ore;
- (b) roads;
- (c) accommodation including housing, provision of utilities and services and associated facilities for the company's work force associated with its mining operations carried on pursuant to the agreement, and for any other of the company's work force engaged in the

shipment of minerals from ports in the Pilbara and for the processing of minerals pursuant to this agreement;

- (d) water supply;
- (e) power supply;
- (f) port facilities;
- (g) airstrip in or adjacent to the exploration areas and other airport facilities and services;
- (h) any other works, services or facilities desired by the company;
- (i) use of local labour, professional services, manufacturers, suppliers, contractors, and materials and measures to be taken with respect to the engagement and training of employees by the company, its agents, and contractors;
- (j) any leases—other than mining leases—licences or other tenures of land required from the State; and
- (k) an environmental management programme as to measures to be taken in respect of the company's activities under this agreement for the protection and management of the environment.

This Government believes this arrangement has the potential to yield substantial benefits to the State, through both the high level of expenditure on exploration to which the company is committed, and the likelihood that any major deposits will be discovered and proceed to development considerably earlier than would be the case if the company is required to comply with all of the provisions of the Mining Act.

I will now proceed with an outline of the actual clauses of the agreement, with specific comment on the more important clauses. Clauses 1, 2, 3 and 4 are in the current form of State resource development agreement opening clauses dealing with the following—

the definition of terms used in the agreement;

certain interpretations of references and powers contained therein;

the initial obligations of the State with regard to the ratification of the Bill and to allow entry upon Crown lands for the purposes of the agreement; and

the coming into operation of the agreement.

Clause 5 establishes the specific terms and conditions relating to the special exploration licence to be granted to the company, including the specific expenditure requirements which were mentioned earlier.

It is important to note that under clause 5 subclause (4) (b) (i), the company is barred from applying any portion of the expenditure to which it is committed under subclause (4) (a), to further exploration of the Nifty copper deposit. That is the area outlined on plan "B" referred to in subclause (4) (a) of clause 5.

A breach by the company of its expenditure obligations will constitute a breach of the agreement.

It should be noted also that although there is no provision for the automatic drop off of portions of the area of the licence at the end of year three and year four—as would apply to an exploration licence under the Mining Act—the Minister has the right to seek an amendment to the proposed exploration programme for any year after year three if he is not satisfied with the spread of exploration activity. The Minister has the right also to require the surrender of areas which are not proposed to be explored by the company during any of those latter years.

The ministerial right just mentioned is contained in subclause (4) (b) (ii) of clause 5.

Subclause (8) is a special inclusion which provides for the automatic termination of the agreement in the event that the company should fail to submit all of the proposals required pursuant to clause 7 during the term of the special exploration licence.

The proposals necessary have been touched upon already in this address, but there is an important feature of the agreement, included as subclause (2) of clause 32, which has great relevance here also. That subclause ensures that the *force majeure* provisions of subclause (1) of clause 32 cannot be applied by either party to extend the term of the special exploration licence beyond that provided for in clause 5.

Clause 6 of the agreement requires the company to carry out various studies and to report the results of its investigations as a preliminary to the submission of the proposals required under clause 7.

Clause 7 has been identified already as the proposals clause. Its content was listed earlier, following the outline of those aspects of the agreement which depart from the provisions of the Mining Act. I would, however, make special reference to subclauses (2) and (6) of

clause 7. Under subclause (2) the company may seek approval for the proposal required under subclause (1) (c) to address alternative arrangements to the establishment of a mine town for the accommodation of its work force and support facilities. Subclause (6) requires both the submission of supporting financial information and a commitment to proceed by the company.

Clauses 8 and 9 are standard State resource development agreement clauses, respectively providing the proposals approval mechanism and the procedure to be followed should the company wish to significantly modify, expand, or otherwise vary its activities under the agreement beyond those in the approved proposals.

Clause 10—protection and management of the environment—clause 11—use of local labour and materials—and clause 12—roads—are also in keeping with the relevant provisions of recent State resource development agreements. Clause 13 sets out in full detail the maximum area, term, and other conditions applicable to the mining lease to be applied for by and granted to the company, subject to the prior approval or determination, by arbitration, of all of the proposals, and the company's submission of the financial and other information required under subclause (6) of clause 7.

The surrender of the special exploration licence is a prerequisite—under subclause (1) of clause 13—to the grant of the mining lease.

Clause 14—electricity—clauses 15 and 16—water—clause 18—sewerage facilities—and clause 19—lands—are also in the normal form of comparable provisions in recent State resource development agreements.

Clause 17—townsite—departs from the standard form in that whilst it commits the company, subject to subclause (2) of clause 7, to the provision of townsite facilities, including housing, in keeping with current Government policy, there is ministerial discretion—in subclauses (1) (a), (3), and (4)—to agree to alternative arrangements.

The provision of such ministerial discretion is designed to allow a degree of flexibility to future requirements, bearing in mind the five to six year exploration period which will elapse before the exact nature, location, and extent of a likely mining development project can be determined.

Clause 20 provides that royalties on all minerals produced from the special exploration licence area or the mining lease are to be at the rates prescribed from time to time under the

Mining Act. There is, however, a provision for the State to agree to alternative rates of royalty should this prove to be justified.

Clauses 21 and 22 define the State-company arrangements to apply in the event that any wharf, port facilities, and services are required to be established for the purposes of the agreement.

Clause 23 contains by-law making provisions which could become necessary to enable the company to fulfil its obligations in respect to clause 17—townsite—and clause 22—company wharf.

Clause 24 establishes the obligations on the company with regard to the secondary processing within the State of minerals mined from the mining lease.

Clauses 25 to 29, with clauses 31, 33 to 40, and 42 to 45, all inclusive, are all standard clauses as incorporated in State resource development agreements of recent years.

Clause 30 is an updated form of the provisions relating to the company's rights to assign its interests, or part thereof, in the agreement. The new format requires the consent of the Minister in all instances, whereas in previous agreements of this nature there was an ability to assign such interests to certain nominated parties as of right, without ministerial consent.

Clause 32 incorporates in subclause (1) the usual *force majeure* provisions, but, as mentioned earlier, subclause (2) excludes the application of those provisions from the special exploration licence to be granted under the provisions of clause 5.

Clause 41 grants the company an exemption from any stamp duty otherwise chargeable on the agreement or specified relevant documents,

for seven years from the date of execution of the agreement—29 October 1985. If it is borne in mind that the exploration phase will have a life of five to six years maximum, it will be patent that the exemption is not as generous as it would first appear.

The first and second schedules to the Bill set out the respective forms of the special exploration licence and the mining lease to issue therefrom. As I mentioned earlier, the mining lease cannot be issued prior to the termination of the special exploration licence.

This concludes the outline of the agreement clauses.

This agreement represents a breakthrough in the achievement of a substantial, long-term, strategic exploration programme in a highly prospective, yet relatively unexplored area of the State.

The commitment by Western Mining Corporation Limited—which many in the industry regard as not only Australia's, but the world's best exploration company—to a huge level of expenditure far exceeding anything else that it is doing, is a major vote of confidence in the future of the State and a considerable achievement for this Government.

The Government is confident that the project the subject, of the agreement to be ratified by this Bill, will yield substantial benefits to the State in both the short and the longer term.

I seek leave of the House to table some documents, and I commend the Bill to the House.

(See paper No. 262.)

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Hassell (Leader of the Opposition).

House adjourned at 12.56 a.m. (Thursday).

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

WASTE DISPOSAL: LIQUID

Sites: Alternative

1232. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) What current action is the Public Health Department taking to seek alternative sites to Canning Vale for liquid waste disposal?
- (2) What consideration has the Government given to the joint Westrail-City of Canning proposal relating to waste disposal?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) and (2) It is a priority consideration of the Cabinet subcommittee on metropolitan waste and its advisory committee.

Proposals to upgrade other sites to cope with increased volumes have been discussed with local authorities. One council has agreed to accept increased volumes.

Other proposals include—

Experimental trials on new methods of disposal;

negotiations with Government and other agencies regarding land for a permanent facility;

consideration of whether such facility should be operated by Government or private enterprise;

consideration of the Westrail-City of Canning proposal, including identifying a suitable site;

continued development of the department's industrial waste exchange to maximise recycling.

Amended septic tank regulations are ready for drafting, which in the long term will reduce the volume of septage.

1270. *Postponed.*

MINERAL: GOLD

Armway Mining Pty Ltd: Arrangements

1340. Mr RUSHTON, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

Will he assure the House that none of the following—

- (a) a contract;
 - (b) an agreement;
 - (c) an undertaking;
 - (d) an offer,
- exists between—

- (i) Armway Mining Pty Ltd;
 - (ii) Futuris Corporation Ltd;
 - (iii) Langton Holdings Pty Ltd,
- and—

- (A) any Government member;
- (B) any Government department;
- (C) any Government authority?

Mr PARKER replied:

The member is referred to my reply to question 1341.

1349. *Postponed.*

TRANSPORT: RAILWAY

Bunbury-Kwinana: Electrification

1355. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Transport:

Further to question 274 of 27 August 1985, will he advise whether the report on the electrifying of the Kwinana to Bunbury railway line has been completed and submitted to the Government?

Mr GRILL replied:

The study report has been received from Westrail and I am considering it at present.

I will provide the member with a copy in due course.

LAND: NATIONAL PARK

Hamersley Range: Boundaries

1356. Mr RUSHTON, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

- (1) Further to question 1146 of 1985 concerning Hamersley Range National Park, was it within his responsibility

to indicate that the boundaries of national parks "may need to be looked into"?

- (2) Further to question 486 (8) of 1985, and his statement that "the Government would not allow extractive mining in a national park if such mining would damage features of importance to the purposes of the park", did—

(a) the Minister for Conservation and Land Management;

(b) the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority,

initiate this policy?

- (3) Do—

(a) the Minister for Conservation and Land Management; and

(b) the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority,

support the policy as in (2)?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) Any instance which arises which may have an impact on the development of the Crown's minerals is part of my responsibility.

- (2) and (3) The statement I made that the Government would not allow extractive mining in a national park if such mining would damage features of importance to the purpose of the park is a self-evident policy which, as Minister for Minerals and Energy, I intend to follow.

LAND: NATIONAL PARK

Hamersley Range: Mining

1357. Mr RUSHTON, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

- (1) Further to question 1145 (1) of 1985, which of the parties involved in negotiating the proposal to mine for gold in Hamersley Range National Park is currently considering conditions for possible future exploration and mining operations?

- (2) What are the conditions being considered by the party or parties?

- (3) Have any new conditions been recently proposed by the party or parties?

- (4) When will the party or parties convey the result of the considerations to him?

- (5) Will he inform the House of the results of the considerations as soon as they are received?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) Conditions in respect to exploration and/or mining operations on mining leases are determined by the Minister for Minerals and Energy. In the case of national parks, the Minister for Conservation and Land Management, and the Environment, as the responsible Minister, is consulted and his recommendations obtained.

- (2) to (4) Currently, conditions are being considered for exploration only. Discussions between the lessee and the Department of Mines, and the Department of Conservation and Land Management are to be held this week following which officers of these departments will make recommendations to their respective Ministers.

- (5) Any decisions made will be publicised.

1358. *Postponed.*

TOURISM

Directional Signs: Wine-producing Regions

1359. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Regional Development and the North West:

Will he indicate what is the Government's policy of funding, including contribution from—

- (a) Government;
- (b) local government;
- (c) tourist;
- (d) private property,

sources for a system of new directional signs planned for the—

- (i) Swan Valley; and
 - (ii) Margaret River,
- wine producing regions?

Mr GRILL replied:

In the Margaret River area, the Main Roads Department has designed a comprehensive direction and tourism signing proposal. This comprehensive scheme has been accepted by the local

governments of the area. Excluding individual winery signs, the funding for this proposal has been agreed on the following basis—

All signs on main roads and highways—funded by Main Roads Department;

All other signs—50 per cent Main Roads Department;

All other signs—50 per cent Local Government;

Signs to individual wineries will not be financed by the Main Roads Department or local government but details are being negotiated through the local authority with the Margaret River Grapegrowers' Association.

In the Swan Valley area, discussions have only just commenced to develop a comprehensive signing proposal as part of the Government's Swan Valley policy. The details of funding arrangements have not yet been discussed.

1360. *Postponed.*

PORRIDGE OATS

Government Purchases

1361. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Premier:

(1) Apart from the Education Department, has the Government or its agencies made any other purchases from the firm, Porridge Oats, since 30 June 1984?

(2) If so, would he provide details?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

(1) and (2) I am not prepared to commit the resources of Government departments or agencies to such an exercise. However, if the member has any specific concerns regarding Porridge Oats and its dealings with Government, I will consider further inquiries.

REAL ESTATE AGENTS

Registration Fees: Education Projects

1362. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Consumer Affairs

(1) Would the Minister give full details of the amount, location, and number of education projects funded from fees

paid by registration fees of real estate agents to the year ended 30 June 1985?

(2) Would the Minister provide details of similar funding for the 1983-84 year?

Mr TONKIN replied:

(1) Information on the amounts and locations are contained in the financial statement of the Real Estate and Business Agents Supervisory Board 1984-85 tabled in Parliament.

(2) Information on the amounts and locations are contained in the annual report of the Real Estate and Business Agents Supervisory Board 1983-84 tabled in Parliament.

Information on the number of projects funded should be obtainable from the educational bodies named in the documents referred to.

ENERGY

Solar Hot Water Systems: Explosions

1363. Mr CASH, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

(1) Is he aware of explosions which have been attributed to the build up of hydrogen gas in solar hot water systems which utilise sacrificial anodes?

(2) Is he aware of a report written by Mr J. Sheahan, an employee of Hamersley Iron Pty Ltd, relating to the hydrogen generation in some solar hot water systems?

(3) If "Yes" to (2), does the report identify a potential hazard to users of solar hot water systems?

(4) If "No" to (2), will he obtain a copy of the report and have his officers evaluate the report's findings?

Mr PARKER replied:

(1) The Solar Energy Research Institute of Western Australia is aware of reports that hydrogen gas build up in solar hot water units is claimed to have caused explosions.

(2) The Solar Energy Research Institute of Western Australia is not aware of the report written by Mr J. Sheahan.

(3) Not applicable.

- (4) The Solar Energy Research Institute of Western Australia will endeavour to obtain a copy of the report by Mr J. Sheahan and evaluate its contents.

HOUSING

Solar Hot Water Systems: Modification

1364. Mr CASH, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Has Homeswest made a specification change to suppliers of solar hot water systems to require all solar hot water systems with sacrificial anodes to be fitted with hydrogen release valves before being accepted by Homeswest?
- (2) If "Yes", for what reasons was this specification change necessary?
- (3) Is it intended to fit hydrogen release valves to existing solar hot water systems which utilise sacrificial anodes?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Homeswest became aware of a build up of hydrogen in situations where the appliance was not being used for a period of time.
- (3) Yes. A programme is currently under consideration and in the interim all field staff have been advised of safety measures to be taken on vacant properties prior to reletting.

EDUCATION

Hostels: Fees

1365. Mr OLD, to the Minister for Education:

What fees have been charged for student accommodation at—

- (a) Narrogin High School Hostel;
 - (b) Merredin High School Hostel;
 - (c) St Andrews High School Hostel,
- for the years—

- (i) 1982;
- (ii) 1983;
- (iii) 1984;
- (iv) 1985?

Mr PEARCE replied:

	Fees per Term			
	1982	1983	1984	1985
(a) Narrogin	\$750	\$825	\$825	\$900
(b) Merredin	\$700	\$825	\$950	\$1 050
(c) St Andrews (Katanning)	\$800	\$800	\$950	*\$950

(*increased to \$1 050 for last term)

ABATTOIRS

Lambs: Prices

1366. Mr OLD, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) What is the current producer price and distributor price for lambs described as medium class fat score 2 and 3?
- (2) What prices for similar quality lambs are being paid to producers in South Australia and Victoria?

Mr EVANS replied:

- (1) Current producer price for medium class fat score 2 is 83c per kilo; fat score 3 is 88c per kilo.
Current distributor price for medium class fat score 2 and 3 is 174c per kilo.

- (2) South Australia.

Current producer price for medium class fat score 2 is 69c per kilo; fat score 3 is 72c per kilo.

Current distributor price for medium class fat score 2 and 3 is 138c per kilo.

Victoria.

Current producer price for medium class fat score 2 is 67c per kilo; fat score 3 is 63c per kilo.

Current distributor price for medium class fat score 2 and 3 is 148c per kilo.

COMMUNITY SERVICES: CHILDREN

Charges: Hearings

1367. Mr CASH, to the Minister for Community Services:

- (1) Is it proposed to change the current system of hearing charges against children who are eligible to appear before the Childrens (Suspended Proceedings) Panel?
- (2) If "Yes", what changes are proposed and why are they necessary?

- (3) Who recommended that changes be made to the existing procedures?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) No.
(2) and (3) Not applicable.

EDUCATION: PRE-PRIMARY

Serpentine: Enrolments

1368. Mr RUSHTON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is he aware—
- (a) that 27 children have enrolled for Serpentine pre-primary school for next year;
 - (b) that the school is only allowed to take 20 students;
 - (c) the parents have asked for the pre-primary school at Serpentine school to be updated to full-time to accommodate the children;
 - (d) the superintendent has advised there are not sufficient funds to finance the full-time pre-primary at this school?
- (2) Does this not contradict his promise that all pre-school students will be accommodated?
- (3) What arrangements is he making to accommodate the 27 children enrolled for pre-school for Serpentine next year?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) (a) On 25 October there were 27 children registered for enrolment;
- (b) this demountable building is listed to accommodate a maximum of 25 children;
 - (c) this is a half-time centre at present; the decision to increase to full-time has not been determined and will be listed for consideration;
 - (d) the superintendent has not advised the principal that there are no funds for additional staffing; she is aware that priorities have yet to be determined for 1986 after all situations are considered.
- (2) Every effort is made to accommodate five-year-old children, which requires children to be enrolled at centres which may not be the most convenient for the family. The position for 1986

cannot be determined until all registrations are processed early in November.

- (3) These arrangements will be advised following the November review of needs.

SEWERAGE: WESTFIELD

Scheme 6A: Construction

1369. Mr RUSHTON, to the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) Has he decided whether Westfield sewerage scheme 6A is to be constructed?
- (2) What other steps in planning and public referral have yet to be completed before construction begins?
- (3) When is construction estimated to commence?

Mr TONKIN replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) It is anticipated that field investigations will be completed by the end of this year and the design of the works in March 1986. The Water Authority will then serve notice of its intention to proceed with the works and any affected person may comment or object.
- (3) Subject to the satisfactory resolution of any objections, it is proposed to commence construction in September 1986.

EDUCATION: PRIMARY SCHOOL

Armadale: Relocation

1370. Mr RUSHTON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is he aware the parents of the children attending Armadale Primary School are anxious for a decision to relocate the school?
- (2) Is he also aware this anxiety is due to the uncertainty over the delay in the works and maintenance that should be carried out at the present school pending the transfer?
- (3) Will the new school on Carradine Road be ready for the students at the beginning of the years—
 - (a) 1987; or
 - (b) 1988; or

(c) 1989; or

(d) 1990?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The school is on a maintenance programme to ensure the safety and health aspects of the staff and students.
- (3) Negotiations are in progress. If these are successful, a new school will be provided as soon as possible. It is not possible to give a precise estimate.

FIRE BRIGADE

Armadale: Location

1371. Mr RUSHTON, to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

- (1) Is the Armadale volunteer fire brigade to continue to retain its present station on Forrest Road?
- (2) What are the considerations and decisions being taken to locate a permanent fire station service in Armadale?
- (3) When is it anticipated that a final decision will be made?
- (4) What is the estimated cost of locating a permanent fire brigade service in Armadale?
- (5) What arrangements are being made to provide for the future fire safety for residents living in the Town of Armadale?

Mr CARR replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The Government has approved the Western Australian Fire Brigades Board budget which provides for the introduction of permanent full-time manpower to reinforce the Armadale Volunteer Fire Brigade initially on a weekday-day time basis.
- (3) Early in the new year, following finalisation of recruitment and training programmes for 1985-86.
- (4) Alteration to existing fire station \$5 000. Operating costs associated with the proposal outlined in (2) \$62 000.
- (5) The WAFBB monitors development in all areas under its control, taking into account new property development and other relevant issues.

The board advises me that the present volunteer fire brigade is providing an excellent service; and with reinforcement from full-time personnel during the working week the service will be most adequate for the near future.

The board will, in accordance with the standard practice I referred to, continue to monitor the situation and provide an appropriate level of service to residents living in the Town of Armadale.

TRAFFIC LIGHTS

Albany-Brookton Highways: Installation

1372. Mr RUSHTON, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Will the traffic lights at the junction of Brookton and Albany Highways be installed at the same time as the present road works are being constructed?
- (2) What is the cost of these present works?
- (3) If "No" to (1), why is this opportunity not being taken to minimise the traffic hazard at this seemingly dangerous junction?
- (4) Will the new construction increase the speed and flow of the traffic into and through this junction?
- (5) Is consideration being given, when evaluating the priority for these traffic lights, of the speed of traffic down the hill on Albany Highway?
- (6) Will the installation of the traffic lights have to wait for a fatality to occur at this junction?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (1) No. The present roadworks do not affect the layout of the intersection itself.
- (2) As advised in my reply to question 1002 asked by the member on Thursday, 10 October 1985, the estimated cost of this work is \$200 000.
- (3) As advised in my replies to questions 2917 and 3041 asked by the member on Wednesday, 27 March 1985 and Thursday, 4 April 1985 respectively, the provision of traffic signals at this intersection is not likely in the near future as there are over 200 other in-

tersections in the metropolitan area with a higher priority on the basis of hazard assessment alone.

- (4) It is not anticipated that the speed and flow of traffic into and through this junction will be affected to any significant degree by the new construction.
- (5) There are many factors taken into account when determining priorities for the installation of traffic lights, existing traffic speeds being one of them.
- (6) No.

EDUCATION: PRIMARY SCHOOL

Serpentine: Works

1373. Mr RUSHTON, to the Minister for Education:

What works are to be provided for Serpentine Primary School this financial year?

Mr PEARCE replied:

No project is scheduled from capital works funds, but minor works requests may be financed according to the demand on funds and the priority given by the regional committee.

TRAFFIC ACCIDENT

Ranford Road

1374. Mr RUSHTON, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is he aware, or is the Main Roads Department aware, of a serious accident on Ranford Road last Sunday?
- (2) Have negotiations between the involved municipalities taken place with the Main Roads Department for the extension of the upgrading of Ranford Road from Nicholson Road to Armadale Road?
- (3) When will the upgrading mentioned in (2) be announced?
- (4) Will the Main Roads Department negotiate now with the municipalities involved for the necessary safety measures of road widening to reduce the present real risk of serious traffic accidents?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (1) The Main Roads Department is aware of a roll-over accident last Sunday night which police traffic officers attended. It is understood that the driver, the only occupant of the vehicle, did not require medical attention.
- (2) to (4) Ranford Road south of Nicholson Road is under the care, control, and management of the Gosnells City and Armadale Town Councils, and therefore any upgrading would be the responsibility of these councils which have the prerogative to make requisite submissions for funding from the annual metropolitan councils' road programme should they so desire. Neither council has included Ranford Road on its list of priorities for funding consideration in 1985-86. It is not known if these councils are planning to spend municipal funds on Ranford Road.

PLANNING

Corridor Plan: Changes

1375. Mr RUSHTON, to the Minister for Planning:

- (1) Has any action been taken to change the corridor plan for development of the metropolitan region?
- (2) Have the Urban Lands Council and the State Housing Commission—now Homeswest—purchased any land in the rural wedges in the last three years?
- (3) If "Yes" to (2), will he describe the location of the land?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) No. However, a review of the corridor plan and the metropolitan region scheme by the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority is about to commence.
- (2) The activities of the Urban Lands Council and Homeswest are the responsibility of my colleague, the Minister for Housing.
- (3) Answered by (2).

MINISTERS OF THE CROWN

Chartered Aircraft: Policy

1376. Mr MacKINNON, to the Premier:

In reference to question 1236 of 23 October 1985, will he advise as to what restrictions, if any, apply to Ministers as to the type of aircraft they can charter?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

In consultation with the Department of Aviation and the Coordinator General of Transport, advisory safety guidelines have been developed regarding the types of aircraft suitable for charter by Ministers. They are not obligatory.

TRANSPORT: RAILWAYS

Robb Jetty: Removal

1377. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Referring to question 47 of 20 August 1985, has a decision yet been made on the proposal by the City of Cockburn with respect to the railway line south of Robb Jetty?
- (2) If not, when is it anticipated a final decision in this matter will be made?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (1) and (2) Since I answered question 47 on 20 August 1985, the circumstances have changed in that the Government is now examining proposals for a recreation area at Woodman Point and the outcome will have a bearing on the future of this line.

The proposals for Woodman Point are the responsibility of the Minister for Planning and, until his recommendations are received, I am unable to make a decision.

EDUCATION: PRIMARY SCHOOL

Rostrata: Enrolment

1378. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) What is the current enrolment at Rostrata Primary School?
- (2) What is the anticipated enrolment at Rostrata Primary School for the commencement of the 1986 school year?

- (3) How many transportable classrooms are currently on site at the school?

- (4) How many transportable classrooms will be on site at the school at the commencement of the 1986 school year?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) 419 primary pupils.
- (2) 517 primary pupils.
- (3) Six temporaries.
- (4) Nine temporaries.

1379. *Postponed.*

EDUCATION: HIGH SCHOOL

Kununurra District: Improvements

1380. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) What contribution to improvements at the Kununurra District High School has been made by Argyle diamond mine joint venturers?
- (2) What facilities were constructed as a consequence of this contribution?
- (3) How many transportable classrooms are currently on site at the school?
- (4) Will any of these classrooms be removed in the near future?
- (5) If so, why?
- (6) Where will these classrooms be relocated?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) \$550 000.
- (2) A classroom block comprising three classrooms, a practical area, a withdrawal area, and pupil toilets. In addition, a double multipurpose hard court play area has been provided.
- (3) Ten.
- (4) Yes.
- (5) With the recent completion of the above classroom block, it is now possible to relocate two temporary classrooms to other schools in the Kimberley region which are experiencing an increase in pupil enrolments.
- (6) Kalumburu and Halls Creek.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

"People Who Care": Funding

1381. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Does he recall in answer to question 936 of 9 October 1985 he advised me that "Decisions on funding of eligible organisations will be made jointly by myself and the Federal Minister for Community Services, Senator Grimes"?
- (2) Are "People Who Care" considered to be an eligible organisation?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes.

EDUCATION: PRIMARY SCHOOL

Lancelin: Assembly Area

1382. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Has the Lancelin primary school a covered assembly area?
- (2) If not, when is it likely that this facility will be built at the school?
- (3) Are there any plans to upgrade the administration area of this school?
- (4) Have these plans been documented?
- (5) If so, when will work commence on this project?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Lancelin is a small school. As a consequence, its priority for provision of a covered area is low.
- (3) Not at present.
- (4) and (5) Not applicable.

POLICE OFFICERS

Mandurah

1383. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

- (1) How many police officers are currently located at the Mandurah police station?
- (2) How many police officers were located at the station as at—
 - (a) 1 July 1981;
 - (b) 1 July 1982;
 - (c) 1 July 1983;

(d) 1 July 1984;

(e) 1 July 1985?

(3) What area is covered by the Mandurah police station?

Mr CARR replied:

- (1) 13.
- (2) (a) 8;
(b) 8;
(c) 11;
(d) 13;
(e) 13.

In addition, there have been seven traffic police attached to Mandurah traffic office during the above period of time and two PCYC officers operating from the youth club.

(3) The Mandurah police subdivision consists of an area of 317 square kilometres and takes in the entire Shire of Mandurah and small portions of the Murray and Rockingham Shires.

HEALTH: HOSPITAL

Wanneroo: Land

1384. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) When was the land upon which the Wanneroo Hospital is now built first acquired by the Government?
- (2) How much land was involved?
- (3) What was the cost of that land?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) The Wanneroo Hospital site was acquired by the Health Department from the Metropolitan Regional Planning Authority on 13 July 1980.
- (2) 17.04 hectares.
- (3) Cost to the Health Department was \$298 200.

HEALTH: HOSPITALS

Sites: Purchases

1385. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Health:

What was the most recent hospital site purchased by the Government?

Mr HODGE replied:

Lot 202 Lakes Road, Mandurah.

1386. *Postponed.*

HEALTH: HOSPITAL

Mandurah and Districts: Land Purchase

1387. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) When did the Government purchase Lot 202 Lakes Road, Mandurah, as the site for the proposed Mandurah and Districts Hospital?
- (2) What was the purchase price for the property?
- (3) Was the purchase a conditional one?
- (4) If so, what conditions applied to the purchase?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) 27 September 1985.
- (2) \$100 000.
- (3) Unconditional.
- (4) None.

1388. *Postponed.*

TOURISM: CARAVAN PARKS

Regulations: Review

1389. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has the review of the regulations and by-laws pertinent to caravan parks, camping areas, and chalets mentioned in question 1788 of 14 November 1984, yet been completed?
- (2) If so, are these regulations now to be changed?
- (3) If so, when?

Mr HODGE replied:

- (1) Assuming the member is referring to question 1778, yes, the review of the regulations under the Health Act has been completed. By-laws are made under the Local Government Act.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) I expect the regulations to be ready for gazettal early in the new year.

HOUSING: SELECT AND CONSTRUCT

Builders: Selection

1390. Mr LAURANCE, to the Minister for Housing:

Under the terms and conditions of Homeswest's "Select and Construct Metropolitan Scheme 1985-86" it was stated that the number of builders would be as follows—

Scheme 1—10 Builders and two reserves

Scheme 2—10 Builders and two reserves

Scheme 3—Eight Builders and two reserves

Scheme 4—Four Builders and one reserve:

Were these numbers of builders actually selected and if not, why not?

Mr WILSON replied:

The number of builders initially proposed to participate in each of the four schemes was as stated. This information was included in the conditions pertaining to the scheme.

However, also contained in those conditions was a statement of builders' eligibility which was that participating builders should be "reputable builders having proven ability and experience in the cottage construction and marketing industry".

The committee appointed to select participants included representatives of the Housing Industry Association of Western Australia, the Master Builders Association of Western Australia, and the Government's consultant on housing matters. That committee selected only those applicants which it considered satisfied all the requirements. This resulted in some variance of numbers to that originally envisaged.

HOUSING: SELECT AND CONSTRUCT

Homes Built

1391. Mr LAURANCE, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) How many houses will be built in the metropolitan area in the 1985-86 financial year under Homeswest programmes using "select and construct" schemes?

- (2) How many houses will be built in the metropolitan area in the 1985-86 financial year under Homeswest programmes using the tender system?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) and (2) Current proposals, which may be subject to change for cash flow, market, and other reasons, are that 593 accommodation units will be constructed in the metropolitan area by "select and construct" schemes and 590 accommodation units using the tender system.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Apprentices: Homeswest Contracts

1392. Mr LAURANCE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Employment and Training:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that the requirement to employ apprentices in order to obtain building contracts in the building programme of Homeswest for 1985-86 has been seriously diminished—to the point of requiring only one third of the number of apprentices that have been required in the past?
- (2) Is it Government policy to relax the requirement to employ apprentices on Government contracts in this way?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) I am advised there has been no change to apprentice employment requirements administered by Homeswest.

The ratio of apprentices to contract units set for previous years has remained the same in 1985.

- (2) No. In fact I have recently had an independent review of the existing preference for apprentices schemes carried out. The report recommends changes to strengthen preference arrangements, and these recommendations have been referred to Cabinet for consideration.

SUPERANNUATION BOARD

Princes Hotel: Investment

1393. Mr LAURANCE, to the Premier:

- (1) What income has been received by the Superannuation Fund for the period of its involvement in the Princes Hotel?
- (2) Does the Superannuation Fund receive a set rental figure or a percentage of turnover under the management contract for the Princes Hotel?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) \$1 398 424 as at the period ending 23 September 1985.
- (2) Neither.

SUPERANNUATION BOARD

Hotels: Investment

1394. Mr LAURANCE, to the Premier:

- (1) Have any agents or consultants been involved in evaluating the price to be paid by the Superannuation Fund for its involvement in the hotel investments the fund has acquired?
- (2) If so, who are the agents or consultants?
- (3) What consideration has been paid to any such agent or consultant in respect of each of the fund's hotel investments?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) K. J. Milne & Associates;
(b) Colliers;
(c) Richard Ellis;
(d) McLachlan Consultants.
- (3) The scale fee as recommended by the Real Estate Institute of Western Australia or a negotiated fee below the recommended fee depending on the scope of the project.

SUPERANNUATION BOARD

Esperance Hotel: Investment

1395. Mr LAURANCE, to the Premier:

- (1) Is the Superannuation Fund considering a hotel investment in the Esperance area?
- (2) If so, what is the intended amount of the investment being planned on behalf of the fund?
- (3) Will the hotel project be managed under a management contract?
- (4) Will the board call tenders for the management contract?
- (5) If "No" to (4), why not?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) Yes. A board decision to proceed has not yet been made.
- (2) to (5) Dependent on the outcome of the board's decision in relation to (1).

LAND INFORMATION SYSTEMS SUPPORT CENTRE

Departmental Control

1396. Mr COURT, to the Minister for Technology:

- (1) Will the Land Information Systems Support Centre be remaining under the umbrella of the Department of Computing Information Technology?
- (2) What progress has been made in selling this system overseas?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) No. It is planned to integrate the Land Information System Support Centre into the Lands and Surveys Department in the near future.
- (2) The land information system is not marketable itself, but rather the skills and expertise in developing such systems, together with the possibility of adapting the software of various subsystems developed in WA.
To date LISSC has cooperated with local private organisations in tender responses for land information systems in Malaysia. One of the tenders was won by a European firm and the other has not yet been awarded.

TECHNOLOGY: COMPUTERS

Purchases: Offsets

1397. Mr COURT, to the Minister for Technology:

- (1) What offsets are involved with the large computer purchases the Government has recently negotiated?
- (2) Who will be managing this offset programme?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) The associated benefits programme has been initiated with IBM and Amdahl and as yet has not been executed. Details of the associated benefits will be announced as soon as documents have been duly signed and executed.
- (2) The programme will be managed by the Technology Development Authority.

TAXES AND CHARGES

Payroll Tax: Collections

1398. Mr COURT, to the Treasurer:

How much of the \$300 800 000 the Government estimates it will collect in payroll tax will be paid by Government operations?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

Collections from State Government departments and instrumentalities is expected to be approximately \$90 million.

STATE FINANCE

Borrowings: Details

1399. Mr COURT, to the Treasurer:

What is the extent of the State's total borrowings for the years—

- (a) 1981-82;
- (b) 1982-83;
- (c) 1983-84;
- (d) 1984-85;
- (e) 1985-86—estimate?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

(a) to (e)

**New Money Financings by the State Government
and Semi-Government Authorities 1981-82 - 1985-86**

	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86 Estimated
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
State Government (1)	80 639	77 495	83 618	96 509	93 132
Semi-Government authorities					
—Conventional (a)	235 566	420 997	610 701	726 750	666 445
—Non-conventional (b)	N.A.	198 900	148 500	47 616	NIL
Total—Semi-Government (2)	N.A.	619 897	759 201	774 366	666 445
Total—Financing (1) and (2)	N.A.	697 392	842 819	870 875	759 577

N.A. Not Available.

(a) Includes borrowings for infrastructure purposes.

(b) Covers domestic deferred payments, trade credits, financial leases, sale and leaseback arrangements, security deposits, and other repayable front-end capital contributions, net change in temporary purpose borrowings over the financial year, and any other means of financing capital programmes.

PUBLIC MONEYS INVESTMENT ACT

Bank Bills: Purchases

1400. Mr COURT, to the Treasurer:

Under what section of the Public Monies Investment Act does the purchase of bank bills conform with the guidelines of the Act?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

The guidelines of the Public Monies Investment Act are the security standards set by that Act. Therefore, to take a bank bill as security or to buy a bank bill delivers to an investor a similar security standard.

Section 3 (3) (c) (ii) of the Public Monies Investment Act provides for investments to be made against the security of bank bills.

HOUSING

Solar Hot Water Systems: Problems

1401. Mr COURT, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Has his department experienced any problems with hot water systems in the north of the State which have caused washing machines to explode?
- (2) If "Yes", has a report been prepared by the Government on this problem?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) No. However Homeswest is aware that such problems did occur in two private houses in the north-west of the State. In view of this, Homeswest has and is continuing to investigate the problem with hot water system manufacturers.

(2) Answered by (1).

STATE FINANCE: BORROWINGS

Overseas: Profits or Losses

1402. Mr COURT, to the Treasurer:

- (1) What profit/losses have been made by State Government bodies on overseas borrowings with the movement of the Australian dollar against other countries' currencies in the years—
 - (a) 1982-83;
 - (b) 1983-84;
 - (c) 1984-85?
- (2) How have these profit/losses been accounted for in the Government's Budget papers?
- (3) Does the Government follow the practice of "hedging" its positions?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) Since the inception of the Australian States being granted approval to access offshore markets, the State Energy Commission has been the sole State Government body to have received the Australian Loan Council's allocation for this State.

The profits or losses made by the State Energy Commission due to the movement of the Australian dollar against other countries' currencies is as follows—

- (a) \$A53 360 (profit-gain)
- (b) \$A335 573 (profit-gain)
- (c) \$A673 429 (loss)

As the member would be aware, actual profits or losses can only be incurred when repayments are made.

- (2) These profits-gains and losses have been taken into account in the commission's profit and loss statements.
- (3) Yes, provided the cost of a hedging contract is not prohibitive.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

TRADE

South Africa: Sanctions

366. Mr MacKINNON, to the Premier:

- (1) Has the Premier received correspondence from the Prime Minister urging him to take action to impose sanctions against South African companies?
- (2) When was he first made aware of the correspondence?
- (3) Will the Premier be taking any action in response to the request, as has Premier Cain in Victoria?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) and (3) I am not certain of the details that would answer the question correctly, and I suggest the Deputy Leader of the Opposition put those parts of the questions that remain unanswered on the Notice Paper.

ROADS

Northern: Expenditure

367. Mr BRIDGE, to the Minister for Regional Development and the North West:

What is the anticipated amount that will be spent on tourist, national park, and fishing industry roads in the Kimberley and Pilbara regions during the next 12 months?

Mr GRILL replied:

A total of \$117 000 will be spent on these roads in the Kimberley and Pilbara regions during the next 12 months. This regional allocation is part of a total of \$850 000 to be spent on the roads throughout the State.

The State-wide programme has allocated \$312 500 for tourist and fishing industry roads and \$537 000 for roads in national parks. The programme is funded by the Main Roads Department, and the allocation for roads in national parks is based on requests from the Department of Conservation and Land Management.

In the Pilbara, the programme includes \$42 000 for improvements to creek crossings, and formation and gravel sheeting in Dales Gorge in the

Hamersley Range. It also includes \$26 000 to improve formation, drainage, and gravel on the Coppins Gap access road in the East Pilbara, where a car park will also be constructed.

A total of \$11 000 has been earmarked to form, gravel, and construct Deep Reach Road in the Millstream-Chichester National Park, including construction of a car park.

In the Kimberley region, \$18 000 will be spent for improvements to the formation, drainage, and gravel sheeting of Manari Road, Broome. In addition, \$14 000 has been allocated to gravel sheet and improve creek crossings on the Geike Gorge Road.

A \$6 000 programme to construct and gravel sheet Tunnel Creek Road on a new alignment at Lillimallura in the Windjana Gorge National Park is also part of the regional allocation.

ABATTOIRS

WA Meat Commission: Trading

368. Mr OLD, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) What is the volume of the Meat Commission's trading in meat products between 1 January 1985 and 25 October 1985?
- (2) How many lamb carcasses have been purchased by the commission's trading division during this period?
- (3) Has the commission imported any lambs ex-Eastern States or purchased any lambs imported ex-Eastern States during this period?
- (4) If "Yes" to (3)—
 - (a) For what reason have such lambs been purchased;
 - (b) what volume of such lambs have been purchased and over what period have the purchases been made?

Mr EVANS replied:

The answer relates to the accounting period from 1 January 1985 to 2 October, slightly shorter than the period requested.

The answer is as follows—

(1)		\$
Beef	4 150 442	
Mutton	922 197	
Goats	1 210 805	
Lamb	544 649	
Pork	320 915	
Offal and Miscellaneous	627 789	
Total	\$7 776 797	

(2) 11 187 lamb carcasses.

(3) Yes.

(4) (a) The wholesale price of lamb in the Eastern States has been lower than that available from the Lamb Marketing Board, and lambs of specific quality have not always been available locally;

(b) 3 073 lambs since 22 August 1985.

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS: INTEREST RATES

Fall: Prediction

369. Mr BURKETT, to the Premier:

Is he aware of expert predictions that interest rates will fall in 1986? What are the implications of this report for Western Australian home owners?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

Yes. A survey of 21 economists concludes that financial market analysts and economists are almost unanimous that interest rates will fall. They also predict inflation will decline in 1986.

The anticipated easing of pressure on home loan interest rates, and a lower cost of living which is already substantially below the national average, will be of enormous benefit to Western Australian families.

Some disagree when the turning point will occur but most of the 21 economists, spanning banks, merchant banks, stockbroking firms, and both public and private sector corporations, see a steady fall in interest rates in 1986 and inflation peaking around the end of this year or early next year.

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

Carnarvon Primary School: Canteen Opening

370. Mr CLARKO, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is it correct that he failed to attend the Carnarvon Primary School to open its new canteen on Saturday, 26 October 1985, as arranged?
- (2) If "Yes" to (1), why did he not attend the function?
- (3) Is he aware that the pilot of the aircraft which he had chartered lodged the flight plan for the trip with the Department of Transport at Perth Airport at 6.43 a.m. that morning?
- (4) Is he aware that a traffic officer of the charter firm awaited him at the No. 1 lounge of Perth Airport from 7.05 a.m. to 8.30 a.m. on that day, but did not sight him?
- (5) What evidence can he produce to confirm that he actually attended the appropriate part of the airport at the correct time for departure as arranged?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) to (5) I am a bit amazed at the question. I was invited to attend the Carnarvon Primary School to open the canteen, and I accepted that invitation. I took a number of steps in addition to that in that I arranged to pick up the Regional Superintendent of Education (Mr Malcolm McGowan) from Geraldton, and agreed to a request from the member for Gascoyne (Mr Laurance) that I would give him a lift back from Carnarvon in the plane because he did not want to spend the weekend in his electorate.

I understand one of the net results of the failure of the charter firm to provide a plane for that flight was that the member for Gascoyne spent a weekend in his electorate, and I guess the electorate will show some gratitude to me for that unexpected and relatively rare event.

With regard to the charter plane, I turned up at the appointed place to be picked up by Austair, the charter company, which was outside the entrance to gate 1 opposite the Avis rent-a-car desk, and I was there at 7.30 a.m. I waited there with frequent

moves away to make phone calls until 9.00 a.m. That is, I was 1½ hours at the airport. At one point I walked to the control gate outside the lounge to ask the DCA official there if he had seen the official from this particular company and where on earth was the aeroplane.

Mr Tonkin: We will not use them again.

Mr PEARCE: No, we will not.

Mr Clarko: They dispute that.

Mr PEARCE: They are stupid to dispute it because the net result is to have the company's record brought out in the open in a place like this.

Mr Clarko: I gave you the time.

Mr PEARCE: I know the member gave me the time—

Mr Hassell: Threats and retaliation!

Mr PEARCE: It is not a question of threats and retaliation. I want to make the situation with Austair clear to the House.

When I was not picked up by the company's pilot at the rendezvous point—to use an aeronautical phrase which I learned from a Biggles book—I went to the public phones in the airport and sought to ring this Austair mob. No-one was answering and there were two contact numbers on an answering machine. I was not carrying around a whole pile of 20 cent pieces because obviously I was not expecting to have to make a lot of calls of this kind. I had my private secretary ring those numbers, and no-one was able to contact Austair at any of those points.

I had never used this charter company before; in fact I had not heard of it previously. I normally travel with Jan Beers Aviation which provides an excellent service and is always there when requested. My private secretary booked with Austair because she tells me the company rang constantly and offered a service with a faster aircraft than we normally use for the long trip to Carnarvon. She made the decision, I might say without consulting me, that we would use this firm on this occasion.

I turned up at the point designated by the company and I stayed there for an hour and a half. The pilot did not turn up. I was unable to contact the company to find out where the pilot was that morning because the company was not answering at any of its numbers. When my private secretary rang the company on the Monday morning it put in the excuse that the pilot was there.

I was there, and I can tell the House that no pilot was present. In fact, the airport on Saturday morning is a very deserted place, and it amazes me that the company can pretend it had its person there. If the company wants an investigation I am well placed to point to whether I was there. I am getting to be a moderately well-known face around Western Australia these days, and a whole range of people coming in and out the airport spoke to me. I rang my wife to indicate the difficulties that I was having.

My private secretary, unable to contact the charter company, firstly rang the Carnarvon School and asked it to make alternative arrangements. She also rang Malcolm McGowan to tell him that he was not going to be picked up in the way advised.

My experience with the charter firm has not been a satisfactory one. I assure the company that I will not be using its services again.

Mr Parker: That is what private enterprise is about.

Mr PEARCE: That is right; if it provides the service, it gets the business.

Mr Clarko: Did you go to the right spot?

Mr PEARCE: Of course. If the member wants me to table my running sheet for the day then I will do it.

Furthermore, my private secretary read back over the phone to Austair the arrangements it had made with her in the first place. Austair confirmed that the advice was precise, that I should be outside the No. 1 departure gate opposite the Avis desk. It is a bad place to meet someone because there is nowhere to sit down. I spent an hour and a half standing up. I think it is unfortunate that this company has

involved itself in this whole business. Not many people in Government will use Austair in future.

Mr Davies: He warned us about it on Monday.

Mr PEARCE: I did. I raised the matter in Cabinet.

Mr Clarko: Did you bring a note?

Mr PEARCE: Members may see this as a joking matter but I was particularly embarrassed that I had accepted an invitation and I was not able to attend. I was grateful to the member for Gascoyne, who undertook the opening in my absence. If I were suspicious I might think that he had worked it out with Austair.

I have apologised to the school and explained the circumstances. I have told the people at Carnarvon over the local radio station precisely what occurred. It had never been my intention to make public the name of the firm involved in the incident because I did not know whether it was an individual pilot's fault or whether there had been some sort of administrative error. I did not believe the company should be held up to ridicule. However, given the fact that Opposition members have sought to raise this matter in both Houses, I have no option but to say that the fault lies completely with Austair and I certainly will not be using its service again. I will not advise anybody else to use it either.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Zirconia Plant

371. Mr HUGHES, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

Can the Minister outline the background and implications for Western Australia of the proposed zirconia plant mentioned in this morning's *The West Australian*?

Mr BRYCE replied:

Western Australia has secured an important new growth industry which will be the catalyst for the State's entry into the world of advanced ceramics. An agreement in principle has been reached with ICI Australia to locate its first zirconia production plant in WA.

Initially, ICI is planning an investment of \$13.5 million in a plant with capacity to produce 2 500 to 3 000 tonnes of zirconia a year. Zirconia is the starting point for a ceramic which can do many of the things now done by metals.

Seventy per cent of the world's supply of zircon comes from Australia, but none is processed here.

I am very happy to say that ICI Australia, in conjunction with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, has decided that a new process of producing zirconia should be based here in Western Australia, relatively close to the raw material supply of mineral sands.

The decision ties in with the Government's policy of encouraging the secondary processing of minerals which are now mined here and then exported. Zircon now sells for \$120 a tonne, while zirconia grosses \$3 000 a tonne. Highly specialised grades of zirconia bring even greater prices.

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology has estimated the total world market value for advanced ceramics, of which zirconia would be a strategic component, will grow from about \$500 million a year now to more than \$19 000 million within the next decade. Such potential earnings are an important indicator of why Western Australia should be at the forefront of this exciting new industry.

The plant is planned to be established at Kwinana with a construction work force of 100 beginning before the end of the year. Detailed negotiations on commercial agreements between ICI and the Government will begin shortly.

ICI will construct a high temperature reactor and a hydrometallurgical plant. The project would need to meet stringent environmental standards.

ICI expects the initial permanent work force to be 45 within the plant, and the value added to Western Australia's exports to be about \$7 million a year.

Apart from the immediate employment benefits and the medium-term gains from export income, the project will be a catalyst for the establishment

of a new advanced technology growth industry, and that is what the State Government has been aiming to achieve.

The use of ceramics for industrial purposes is fast becoming one of the most exciting technological developments around the world. We believe ICI's decision will allow Western Australia to develop as a centre for advanced ceramic materials production in Australia.

BUSINESSES: SMALL BUSINESS

Drought-affected: Carry-on Loans

372. Mr COWAN, to the Minister for Small Business:

Has the Government given consideration to the extension of drought relief and carry-on finance to those off-farm rural businesses which operate principally in drought declared areas?

Mr BRYCE replied:

The matter is currently under consideration by Cabinet.

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

Disabled Children: Conference

373. Mr CLARKO, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is it a fact that he failed to open a conference on education relating to disabled children on 10 August, as he had arranged?
- (2) Is it correct that the Minister is reported to have explained his absence by stating to the media that "I didn't get up in time"?
- (3) Will the Minister therefore consider buying an alarm clock and a guide dog to offset his dilatory habits when attending official functions?

The SPEAKER: The last part of the question is out of order.

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) and (2) I suppose this is better than suggesting that I am taking free trips or being paid by Holmes a Court. The Opposition is the absolute pits in trying to raise matters of this kind which are very old.

The member raises a question relating to an Association for Special Education conference which I was asked to open many months ago. The fact was that I came home late the evening before from the Eastern States. I did not sleep in and I did not tell the Press that I did. Mr Allan Hale, who is not a particularly reliable reporter, reported something that he thought would embarrass me. Remarks were made by the lead speaker at the conference along the lines that obviously no one pays any attention to special education requirements because the Minister did not turn up to open the conference.

In fact, I got a letter from Mr Hale a week later apologising for those remarks. He said that immediately he finished speaking local officials of the Association for Special Education advised him of the steps that I had taken in the special education area. The lead speaker at that conference conceded that Western Australia was far in advance of the rest of Australia in regard to special education. Mr Hale wrote to me personally to let me know that he regretted the remarks that he had made on that occasion because we were doing such a good job in the special education area.

Subsequently, the Australian Association for Special Education wrote to me again praising the work of the Western Australian Government and me specifically in that area because of the very significant steps that we had taken in the special education area. That is the kind of serious issue to which the Opposition ought to address itself because one of the reasons that we look so good in special education across Australia is because we are picking up after a Government which had the worst record in Australia in special education. Something like 300 handicapped kids in Western Australia could not even get a place in Western Australian schools under the previous Government. We have redressed that situation. We have now integrated moderately handicapped children into normal schooling with a

programme that is supported around Australia and internationally. It is acknowledged as one of the best.

It is the case that through a misunderstanding—not because I slept in; I have a perfectly good alarm clock which works at an early hour every morning as it does for every Minister in this Government—I did not turn up to open that particular conference.

Mr Brian Burke: I do not have an alarm clock.

Mr PEARCE: The Premier does not have an alarm clock but he gets up every day at 5.00 a.m. anyway.

I told the reporter from the paper that I missed the conference because of a misunderstanding. I admit that I did not turn up to open that conference.

Mr Clarko: What was the misunderstanding?

Mr PEARCE: It may be that when the member for Karrinyup was Minister he may have missed a meeting. I missed this meeting and I admitted that openly to a reporter. But the fact of the matter is that in the special education area people in this State would rather have a Minister who does something for handicapped kids, even if he misses the occasional conference.

ROADS

Bunbury Region: Expenditure

374. Mr P. J. SMITH, to the Minister for Transport:

What is the anticipated amount that will be spent on roads in the Bunbury region for the tourist industry, national parks, and the fishing industry during the next 12 months?

Mr GRILL replied:

A total of \$119 000 will be spent on these roads in the Bunbury region during the next 12 months. The programme includes \$39 000 to widen and reconstruct 1.2 km of the Eagle Bay-Meelup Road in the Shire of Busselton, and \$30 000 to widen and primer-seal 2.6 km of the Leeuwin Road in the Shire of Augusta-Margaret River.

Other highlights of the programme include \$20 000 for improvements and maintenance to various roads in the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park; \$20 000 to construct and gravel sheet the D'Entrecasteaux Lighthouse Road; and \$10 000 to compact and primer-seal 1.93 km of Grist Road in the Shire of Donnybrook.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS: DISPUTE

Muja Power Station: Premier's Attendance

375. Mr HASSELL, to the Premier:

Did he attend a meeting at Muja power station approximately six weeks ago when a strike was imminent?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

No.

HORTICULTURE: VEGETABLES

Exports: Loss

376. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Agriculture:

With the *Warren-Blackwood Times* of 23 October reporting that Manjimup-Pemberton vegetable growers shuddered last week as the State lost another vegetable export order to Taiwan as a result of wharf disruptions at Fremantle, what action does the Government propose to rectify this situation?

Mr EVANS replied:

I am pleased that the member has seen fit to ask this question. I am aware of the report and the circumstances, as is the Minister for Transport who several months ago at a conference with shippers and vegetable exporters undertook to ensure that there would be consultation with all those segments of the industry involved in the transportation of perishable goods for export through the Fremantle wharf.

The Minister for Transport has undertaken to set up a committee which will enable discussions with the wharf authorities, the unions concerned, and the Office of Industrial Relations, to endeavour to come to a formula which will ensure that in times of industrial disputation there will be a fast tracking arrangement for perishables. I have not received the

most up to date information of the results that he has achieved in this matter; I look forward to obtaining them in due course.

I also mention the fact that the vegetable exporters have shown considerable foresight and wisdom in bringing this matter to the fore at a time when contracts will not be made for another four or five months. During that period, I hope that something may be achieved in an ongoing sense which will obviate this difficulty, at least in part, in the future.

HEALTH: NURSES

Strike: Proposal

377. Mr BRADSHAW, to the Minister for Health:

Was the Minister successful in averting the proposed strike by the Royal Australian Nursing Federation when he and the Premier addressed the nurses at their recent annual general meeting?

Mr HODGE replied:

The member for Murray-Wellington has misunderstood the purpose of the visit to the nurses' annual general meeting. As far as I am aware, there is no proposed strike. The Premier and I asked whether we could address the annual general meeting to put a number of points of view to the nurses about matters that were of interest to them and of concern to the Government, and we did that. As far as I know, there is no strike proposed by the nurses in this State.

AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY: JOHN CURTIN FOUNDATION

Contributions: Government Action

378. Mr RUSHTON, to the Premier:

I refer to my previous questions regarding major contributors to the John Curtin Foundation and the licences, contracts, and guarantees granted by the Government to them.

- (1) Will the Premier now list the Government licences, contracts, and guarantees held by the John Curtin Foundation contributors

grouped in the photograph shared with the Premier and the Prime Minister?

- (2) If he still refuses to answer the question, how does he suggest people obtain information about this matter of public interest?

The SPEAKER: Order! I am not sure whether the member is asking whether the Government has some involvement.

Mr Rushton: Yes, certainly—the guarantees, contracts, and licences.

The SPEAKER: That was not very clear.

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) and (2) To answer the last part of the question as to how I would suggest that a member of Parliament bursting for knowledge about a matter of public interest should discover the information, I suppose he could go and ask the people concerned. Perhaps they could tell him. I do not know how long it would take to compile that mass of information, but if the member has any particular matter about which he has a concern, if he provides even a hint of it, I will attempt to find the contract, licence, concession, accommodation, or whatever he is talking about, and give him the details.

As I have tried to explain to the member previously—and as a former Premier explained to me—I am not here to help the member go on fishing expeditions. I am here to tell him what the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said a week ago. If he indicates the level of his concern, I will do my best to satisfy it. I understand that this matter of pressing public interest weighs heavily upon the member and I invariably try to relieve the pressures and the strains that he feels from time to time. I know that the member has a marginal seat that he is trying hard to retain, but I cannot do more than offer him my good offices, provided he gives me some indication of where I should look for the information that he wants.

EDUCATION: TERTIARY

WAIT: Course

379. Mr COURT, to the Minister for Technology:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of the closure of the WAIT School of Electronic Engineering's two-year associate diploma course on digital systems and computers due to lack of funding?
- (2) Is he aware this is only the first of the hi-tech programmes being affected?
- (3) Will the Government be taking any action to prevent the further decline of these courses at WAIT?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) No.
- (3) No.

In fact if the details are brought to my attention I would be very happy to investigate why the course is being closed and see what can be done about it.

**INSURANCE: MOTOR VEHICLE
INSURANCE TRUST**

Actuary's Report: Tabling

380. Mr RUSHTON, to the Premier:

Will he table the details of the actuary's report on the Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust which he claims indicates that the trust is solvent and can meet its present claims?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

I am not quite sure of the detail of the question. I am afraid I have been here for too long and I have seen too much.

Mr Laurance: What are you not sure about? The Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust or what?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Does the member want to ask a question?

Mr Laurance: I am not sure which part you are not sure about.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: If the member wants to ask a question he can stand up in due course. I am trying to answer the question from the member for Dale. I am not sure about how the actuary's report fits into the annual report of the MVIT.

Mr Rushton: You announced in fact it did not need extra rates because the trust was solvent and could meet expected claims. I am asking you to table that report.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I am not sure where the actuary's report fits into the total MVIT report. I can say, for example, that the deficit in the MVIT report has fallen quite substantially without any increase in fees or charges. I can say there has been a 16 per cent reduction in claims, partly as a result of the work of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services in working towards the elimination of motor accidents.

But I have been here far too long to be taken in by the member's wiles. If he thinks I am going to fall for his questions as readily as that, then he has another think coming. He can put his question on the notice paper because he has a reputation.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT: BUNBURY CITY
COUNCIL**

Leakage: Minister's Report

381. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Regional Development and the North West with special responsibility for "Bunbury 2000":

Following the report of the Minister accusing the Bunbury City Council of leaking confidential information on major development proposals, including DTX, the Bunbury marina, and the Westrail marshalling yards, is the report correct, and what action does he propose in future dealings?

Mr GRILL replied:

I have not seen the report; therefore I cannot say if it is correct in detail, but I have expressed concern about the irony of matters which have remained confidential for a considerable period of time suddenly becoming public after reaching the Bunbury City Council and suggesting that our means of communication might be improved.

I am not doing anything about it, apart from mentioning that fact to the media and to the council. However, I understand that the Mayor of Bunbury has instigated an investigation into the possible source of the leaks.

HOUSING: SELECT AND CONSTRUCT

Builders: Selection

382. Mr LAURANCE, to the Minister for Housing:

In relation to my question 1390 which was answered today, I have a further question for the Minister.

Is the stated number of builders in each of the scheme areas for the Homeswest programme this year less than the number which had been indicated in the tender documents? The Minister indicated that in scheme 1, where there were to be 10 builders, something like five had been appointed to build several hundred homes. I ask him if he was not concerned that only five builders were responsible for this large number of homes, and as a result he was excluding a number of traditional builders for Homeswest, many of whom have a considerable number of apprentices employed.

Mr WILSON replied:

I do not know that I can add any more than has already been conveyed to the member in the answer given to him in his question on notice. The answer quite clearly indicates the reason for the departure, although it is not in fact a departure from the advertised conditions. As indicated in the answer, contained in those conditions was a statement of builders' eligibility, which was that participating builders should be reputable builders with proven ability in the cottage construction and marketing industry.

The member obviously does not understand the point of the programme. It did not operate under his Government when he was Minister, so I do not blame him for not understanding it; it is an innovation of this Government and it is working excellently. It has proved to be an innovation which has the full approbation of the Master Builders Association and the Housing Industry Association of Western Australia, which were involved in the selection process, as the answer on notice has already indicated.

The whole sum of the success of that programme is that the builders who are involved are selected on the basis of their marketing capacity. If builders cannot measure up to the marketing capacity required under that very excellent scheme, that is a judgment which must be made in order that the scheme will continue to operate at its present rate of success.

HOUSING: SELECT AND CONSTRUCT

Builders: Reputations

383. Mr LAURANCE, to the Minister for Housing:

If the conditions are that these builders must be reputable builders with proven ability and experience in the construction and marketing fields, as the Minister knows, several builders have done a lot of building for the State Housing Commission but they have been excluded under this programme. His own document said that 10 builders would be chosen. In fact only five have been chosen, so many apprentices have been sacked as a result of this programme which the Minister now says is a wonderful programme. Perhaps he might tell that to the apprentices.

Is the Minister saying that these builders are not reputable, or they do not have proven ability in the actual construction industry, or is he purely saying they are deficient in the marketing area?

Mr WILSON replied:

This is not really a different question. However, in answer to the member who persists in his ignorance, great stress is placed on the marketing capacity of these builders. That is the secret of the success of this innovative scheme which we have brought into being. The selection itself involves people with good judgment in the construction and marketing areas of the housing industry, representing the Master Builders Association and the Housing Industry Association. If the member for Gascoyne sets himself in judgment above such people, he should say so.