

# Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 12 November 1981

The SPEAKER (Mr Thompson) took the Chair at 10.45 a.m., and read prayers.

## EDUCATION: FOUR-YEAR-OLDS

### *Petition*

**MR BERTRAM** (Mt. Hawthorn) [10.46 a.m.]: I have a petition addressed to the Honourable Speaker and honourable members of the Legislative Assembly which indicates that the petitioners have grave concern that the funding for education of four-year-old children in community-based pre-school centres could be cut. The petition bears 184 signatures and I have certified that it conforms with the Standing Orders of the House.

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

(See petition No. 116.)

## EDUCATION: FOUR-YEAR-OLDS

### *Petition*

**MR WATT** (Albany) [10.47 a.m.]: I have a petition which is exactly the same as the previous one and bears 174 signatures. I have certified that it conforms with the Standing Orders of the House.

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

(See petition No. 117.)

## EDUCATION: FUNDING

### *Cutbacks: Petition*

**MR PARKER** (Fremantle) [10.48 a.m.]: I have a petition from 42 citizens of the State of Western Australia praying that the Government should provide sufficient funds for Government schools. The petition is in similar terms to those which have already been received and I have certified that it conforms with the Standing Orders of the House.

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

(See petition No. 118.)

## WORKERS' COMPENSATION AND ASSISTANCE BILL

### *Council's Amendments*

Amendments made by the Council now considered.

### *In Committee*

The Chairman of Committees (Mr Clarko) in the Chair; Mr O'Connor (Minister for Labour and Industry) in charge of the Bill.

The amendments made by the Council were as follows—

#### No. 1.

Clause 5, page 4, line 39—Insert the word “between” after the word “occurs”.

#### No. 2.

Clause 5, page 5, line 29—Delete the words “the death resulting from”.

#### No. 3.

Clause 5, page 8, line 36—Delete the word “and” and substitute the word “or”.

#### No. 4.

Clause 5, page 13, after line 3—Insert the following passage—

“tributer” means a person who works a mine under an agreement with the lessee or owner of the mine to pay or receive from the lessee or owner a portion of the percentage product taken from the mine; .

#### No. 5.

Clause 5, page 13, line 10—Delete the passage “or 3”.

#### No. 6.

Clause 7, page 14, lines 35 and 36—Delete “within the meaning of the word in the Mining Act 1904, and the regulations thereunder”.

#### No. 7.

Clause 16, page 19, lines 18 to 21—Delete subclause (2).

#### No. 8.

Clause 16, page 19, lines 34 to 37—Delete paragraph (b).

#### No. 9.

Clause 24, page 25, line 19—Insert “percentage ratio of the prescribed” after “the”.

No. 10.

Clause 31, page 28, lines 8 to 14—Delete the clause.

No. 11.

Clause 33, page 29, lines 5 and 6—Delete the words “pneumoconiosis or mesothelioma” and substitute the following—

“pneumoconiosis, mesothelioma, or lung cancer”.

No. 12.

Clause 34, page 29, lines 16 and 17—Delete the passage “pneumoconiosis or, on and after 8 May 1970, mesothelioma” and substitute the following passage—

- (a) pneumoconiosis;
- (b) on and after 8 May 1970, mesothelioma; or
- (c) on and after the date on which this section comes into operation, lung cancer,

No. 13.

Clause 34, page 29, line 32—Delete the passage “pneumoconiosis or mesothelioma” and substitute the following passage—

“pneumoconiosis, mesothelioma, or lung cancer”.

No. 14.

Clause 35, page 29, lines 36 to 40—Delete the clause.

No. 15.

Clause 36, page 30, line 1—Delete the passage “, on or after 14 December 1964,”.

No. 16.

Clause 42, page 32, line 37; page 33, line 6; and page 33, line 19—Delete the passage “pneumoconiosis or mesothelioma” and substitute the following passage—

“pneumoconiosis, mesothelioma, or lung cancer”

in each case.

No. 17.

Clause 47, page 35, lines 17 to 34—Delete the whole of those lines and substitute the following—

in respect of pneumoconiosis or that disease in combination with any other disease, and who is subsequently employed in any

process entailing exposure to mineral dusts harmful to the lungs, shall not in any circumstances be entitled to further compensation or benefit for any period of incapacity due to pneumoconiosis, or to that disease in combination with any other disease.

No. 18.

Clause 47, page 35, after line 34—Insert the following subclause to stand as subclause (3)—

(3) A supplementary amount paid under Schedule 5, Clause 3 is not compensation for the purpose of this section.

No. 19.

Clause 48, page 36, line 23—Delete the words “or practitioner”.

No. 20.

Clause 54, page 39, line 17—Insert the subclause designation “(1)” after the figure “52”.

No. 21.

Clause 59, page 42, lines 10 to 18—Delete the whole of those lines and substitute the following paragraph—

(a) if it considers that the evidence is satisfactory for the purposes of subsection (1), may—

(i) order that weekly payments including arrears to the date of the hearing shall be paid out of the General Fund and shall order that the employer forthwith pay to the Commission for the General Fund the amount of such payments together with an additional 10% of such amount; or

(ii) make an order as to weekly payments by the employer to the worker on such terms as it thinks fit;

No. 22.

Clause 59, page 42, line 22—Delete the passage “fit.” and substitute the following passage—

fit; or

- (c) if it considers a genuine dispute exists concerning the liability of the employer to pay compensation under this Act, may order that the worker proceed by way of a substantive application.

No. 23.

Clause 62, page 43, line 33—Insert the passage “and section 85” after the subclause designation “(7)”.

No. 24.

Clause 62, page 45, lines 10 and 11—Delete the whole of those lines and substitute the following paragraph—

- (c) make an order as to weekly payments by the employer to the worker on such terms as it thinks fit.

No. 25.

Clause 68, page 46, line 35—Delete the words “weekly payment by a lump sum” and insert “liability for incapacity”.

No. 26.

Clause 72, page 50, lines 28 to 31—Delete the passage “sue and recover from that person the amount or part of the amount, as the case requires, of compensation or expenses so paid” and substitute the following passage—

apply to the Board for an order that compensation or expenses so paid be refunded, and the Board has jurisdiction to hear and determine such an application and to make any order in relation thereto or any part thereof as it considers appropriate in the circumstances.

No. 27.

Clause 84, page 57, line 35 to page 58, line 4—Delete subclause (1) and substitute the following subclause—

(1) Notwithstanding any industrial award or industrial agreement, other than any award or certified agreement made under the Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1904 of the Commonwealth, where a worker is disabled from earning full wages by reason of a disability for which compensation is or has been payable under this Act, he

may be employed at such wage, being such proportion of the full wage for work in the same employment, as he and the employer may agree as being appropriate to his earning capacity having regard to the nature and extent of his disability.

No. 28.

Clause 96, page 66, line 2—Insert the word “Advisory” after the word “Regional”.

No. 29.

Clause 96, page 66, line 3—Insert the word “Limited” after the word “Australia”.

No. 30.

Clause 123, page 90, line 10—Delete the words “Weekly payments” and substitute the following—  
the liability for the incapacity.

No. 31.

Clause 123, page 90, lines 11 and 12—Delete the words “in respect of the disability”.

No. 32.

Clause 123, page 90, line 13—Delete the words “weekly payments” and substitute the words “the incapacity”.

No. 33.

Clause 130, page 95, lines 31 and 32—Delete the words “unless he has been given” and substitute the words “without giving him”.

No. 34.

Clause 145, page 104, line 22—Insert the words “Advisory Board of the” after the word “Regional”.

No. 35.

Clause 145, page 104, line 23—Insert the word “Limited” after the word “Australia”.

No. 36.

Clause 155, page 111, line 17—Insert after the clause designation “155” the subclause designation “(1)”

No. 37.

Clause 155, page 111, line 23—Insert after subclause (1) the following subclause to stand as subclause (2)

(2) The Commission may at any time require the worker to

undertake treatment by way of rehabilitation or a programme of occupational or vocational training."

No. 38.

Clause 171, page 119, line 40—Delete the word "or" where first occurring and substitute the punctuation mark ",".

No. 39.

Clause 172, page 120, line 25—Insert after the word "Act" the following "or the case is one to which section 171 (2) applies".

No. 40.

Clause 196, page 133, line 13—Delete the figures "65" and insert the figures "64".

No. 41.

Schedule 1, Clause 7, page 141, 1st line—Delete the words "of this clause".

No. 42.

Schedule 1, Clause 7, page 141, after subclause (4)—Add the following to stand as subclauses (5) and (6)—

(5) Unless otherwise authorised by the Commission, compensation shall be paid by the employer to the worker at the employer's usual place of payment of wages on the employer's usual pay days or, at the request of the worker, shall be sent by prepaid post to the worker's address.

(6) A worker when fulfilling any requirement of the Commission made under section 155, is deemed for the purposes of this clause to be totally incapacitated.

No. 43.

Schedule 1, Clause 11, page 142—Insert after the word "agreement" in the last line of subclause (1) the following passage—

plus an over award or service payment payable on a regular basis as part of the worker's wages, salary or other remuneration.

No. 44.

Schedule 1, Clause 11, page 143, line 16 of subclause (2)—Delete the words "a relevant" and substitute the word "an".

No. 45.

Schedule 1, Clause 11, page 143, line 18 of subclause (2)—Add after the word "applied" the following passage—

plus any over award or service payment payable on a regular basis as part of the worker's wages, salary or other remuneration.

No. 46.

Schedule 1, Clause 11, page 143, line 20—Delete the passage "(except over award payment and service pay)".

No. 47.

Schedule 1, Clause 17, page 144, line 8 of subclause (1)—Insert before the word "charges" the passage "other attendance and treatment by way of rehabilitation;"

No. 48.

Schedule 1, Clause 17, page 144, last two lines to page 145, line 4—Delete the passage ", and if and when those expenses reach a sum equal to 10% of the prescribed amount, there shall be no revival of, or increase in the entitlement to such expenses upon any subsequent increase in the prescribed amount".

No. 49.

Schedule 1, Clause 17, page 145, line 6—Insert after the word "inadequate" the following passage—

, and there shall be no revival of, or increase in, the entitlement to such expenses upon any subsequent increase in the prescribed amount.

No. 50.

New Clause, page 30—Insert after clause 36 the following new clause to stand as clause 37 as follows—

37. Whenever after the proclaimed date a worker becomes disabled from earning full wages by reason of suffering from lung cancer in association with that form of pneumoconiosis known as asbestosis he is deemed to be so disabled by pneumoconiosis and this Act applies subject, however, to this Division: but a worker who, after receiving compensation pursuant to this section, is subsequently employed in any process entailing substantial exposure to asbestos dust whether by the same or any other employer,

is not entitled to any further compensation or benefit, in respect of any period of incapacity due to asbestosis or to the aggravation or acceleration of such disease, arising from his subsequent employment in that process.

No. 51.

New Clauses, page 97—Insert after clause 131 the following new clauses to stand as clauses 132, 133 and 134—

132. Where a worker, after a disability has occurred, makes a statement in writing, in relation to the disability to his employer or to an insurer or to any person acting on behalf of the employer or insurer, the statement shall not be admitted in evidence if tendered by the employer or insurer or used by the employer or insurer in substantive proceedings before the Board unless the employer or insurer has at least 28 days before the hearing of those proceedings supplied to the worker or to a solicitor or agent acting on behalf of the worker in the proceedings a copy in writing of the statement.

133. Where an employer or insurer has in his possession a copy of a report relating to a worker who has suffered a disability, being a report by—

- (a) a medical practitioner, by whom the worker has been referred to another medical practitioner for treatment or tests related to the disability;
- (b) a medical practitioner who has treated the worker for the disability; or
- (c) a medical practitioner who has been consulted by a medical practitioner referred to in paragraph (a) or (b) in connection with treatment of, or tests related to, the disability,

and the worker's claim is disputed, the employer or insurer shall at the request of the worker or a solicitor or agent acting for him in the proceedings and within 7 days of such request supply to the worker,

solicitor or agent, as the case may be, a copy of the report.

134. Evidence of any communication between a worker and a person employed by the Commission and acting in the capacity of a social worker or rehabilitation counsellor is not admissible in proceedings before the Board unless, during the course of the proceedings, the worker consents to the evidence being so admitted.

Mr O'CONNOR: The Opposition and the Government have had discussions on the amendments, many of which are drafting alterations which will make the Bill more easily understood. The first amendment is designed to insert the word "between" after the word "occurs". That inclusion is necessary to identify clearly the indexation of a child allowance to be based on the percentage increase with the weighted average minimum award rate for the period of 1 April and 31 March.

Mr PARKER: The Opposition agrees with these amendments from the Legislative Council. By and large they were drafted by the Hon. Howard Olney, one of my colleagues in another place. Mr Olney has put in a tremendous amount of work on the workers' compensation legislation and I think it is fair to say that most people, irrespective of their political stance, would concede that Mr Olney is, if not the leading barrister, certainly one of the leading barristers in the workers' compensation field in this State. His expertise is acknowledged widely and he has written papers and chapters for books on workers' compensation practice in Western Australia.

This Parliament and the people we represent can be very pleased that we have someone of the calibre of Mr Olney who is able and willing to devote his attention to the minute detail in the Bill to the extent that he has. This Bill would have been a much poorer document if it had not been for the work he has done, not only in discussions with the Government and the advisers to the Government, but also with the Parliamentary Draftsman.

Quite often when we are dealing with such matters we think we know a great deal about the areas involved but we do not have the specific abilities and skills which Mr Olney has. Credit is due to him for the work he has done on this legislation which has been improved as a result.

Some of the 51 amendments proposed were moved by Mr Olney and some by the

Government. However, there were two areas where we did indicate to the Government that we were dissatisfied with the Bill and Mr Olney did attempt to have amendments passed. Despite those attempts and the best drafting from Mr Olney, he was not successful. I refer to section 80 in the Bill which relates to the disclosure of a previous disability; and to the extended definition of a "worker".

I had discussions in this Chamber with the Minister and questioned the extended definition of "worker". We are dissatisfied with the extended definition. Mr Masters indicated that the Government conceded that the definition was not perfect, but he was not prepared to accept the draft amendment put forward by Mr Olney. The Bill which will come out of this Parliament will not contain a proper extended definition of "worker" and that is not my understanding of the agreement which had been reached with the Government and various parties with which it had discussed this matter. Those parties will be somewhat disappointed that a proper extended definition of "worker" is not contained in the Bill.

Mr O'Connor: We did have a look at this and had extreme difficulty in getting the right wording.

Mr PARKER: I know it is difficult to obtain the precise wording, but I believe that more appropriate wording could have been used. It is of particular concern to me, because as I have had experience in the building industry I know it is one of the areas most affected by these restrictions.

I would like to indicate at this stage that the Opposition supports the various amendments that have been made by the Legislative Council.

Mr O'CONNOR: I would like to thank the Opposition for its co-operation in this matter and for the time saving measures that have been introduced. I move—

That the amendments made by the Council be agreed to.

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

#### *Report*

Resolution reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

### **APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND) BILL**

#### *In Committee*

Debate resumed from 11 November. The Deputy Chairman of Committees (Mr Nanovich) in the Chair; Mr O'Connor (Deputy Premier) in charge of the Bill.

Progress was reported after Division 49 had been agreed to.

#### **Division 50: Harbour and Light, \$7 214 000—**

Mr PARKER: Earlier this year the Minister for Transport and I discussed the facilities for professional fishermen and also the Minister received a deputation—as did the Acting Minister during the Minister's absence from the State—from professional fishermen on the question of upgrading the facilities. No doubt the Minister will recall that deputation and the fact that the fishermen's concern originated from the substantial increase in charges—between 300 and 400 per cent. Fishermen have been forced to pay the increases announced by the Government last year.

Although the fishermen were concerned about the charges they would have to pay they were particularly concerned about what they saw as an inequity of the principle behind those charges, as there had not been any upgrading work to the harbour for a number of years.

A number of issues were of concern to the fishermen and one was the question of lighting. Perhaps one could say that in regard to this harbour it is controlled by the "department of harbours" rather than the Department of Harbour and Light. Because of the lack of adequate lighting problems, vandalism and theft occur. Members of the Committee and the Minister would appreciate that the boats which are moored in that harbour contain valuable equipment including radar, radio, and refrigeration equipment and are targets for vandalism and theft. This is of concern to the industry.

Among the fishing community there is a general feeling that they contribute to the earnings and the strength of this State by virtue of their participation in the crayfishing industry. Something like \$75 to \$80 million worth of exports leave from the Port of Fremantle alone. The industry has not received any form of Government assistance towards the setting up of the industry; indeed the industry has not asked for such assistance. However, it is asking for the facilities that are made available to it to be upgraded.

Another problem that the industry faces is the huge increase in the cost of fuel. Some sections of the industry which have been more viable, and even lucrative in the past, have become marginally viable as a result of the increase in the cost of fuel. When the Government replaced the road maintenance tax with a levy on fuel costs, the effect on the fishing industry was quite extraordinary. By no stretch of the imagination

could the fishing industry contribute to the need for road maintenance and it seems extraordinary that these people are paying that levy. The people in this industry are paying more for their fuel than are the members of the yacht clubs who obtain some concession in regard to that levy.

I ask if the Government has given any further consideration to this matter since the time of our discussions. Also, do the Estimates contain any provision for upgrading work on these facilities as they are a profitable and integral part of the industry in this State.

**Division 50 put and passed.**

**Division 51: Metropolitan (Perth) Passenger Transport Trust, \$42 469 000—**

Mr PARKER: I do not want to speak on the MTT. I am absolutely astonished that the Minister chose not to reply to my comments on Division 50.

Mr Rushton: I did not pick up your point very clearly.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Nanovich): I paused to allow further general debate and as none was forthcoming, I called on the Items and then put the Division.

Mr PARKER: I am not blaming you, Mr Deputy Chairman; I simply expected the Minister to reply.

**Division 51 put and passed.**

**Divisions 52 and 53—Western Australian Coastal Shipping Commission, \$10 128 000; Western Australian Government Railways Commission, \$201 824 000—put and passed.**

**Division 54—Public Health, \$51 590 000—put and passed.**

**Division 55: Hospital and Allied Services, \$344 601 000—**

Mr HODGE: I believe Government-run hospitals in this State are going to suffer very severely from the Budget. It is perfectly obvious to anyone who makes even the most cursory examination of the Budget that the allocation of \$344.6 million is nowhere near adequate to efficiently run the State's Government hospitals. I realise that the figure mentioned is not the total amount of money which will be spent on hospitals, and that a further large sum will be raised by Government charges and fees in hospitals. However, even taking that into account there will be nowhere near sufficient money to maintain the standards of care and attention available in Government hospitals.

Whether this is a deliberate action on the part of the Government to try to reduce the standards

in public hospitals, thus making them less attractive, I do not know; however, that will obviously be the result of this Budget.

Another problem area is the inadequacy of the provision made for wage increases for hospital staff. By way of questions to the Minister for Health, I learnt that a little over \$11 million had been set aside for the forthcoming financial year to cater for possible wage rises. This obviously is nowhere near enough. The Minister for Health should be well aware that recently nurses in New South Wales were granted substantial pay increases by the NSW Industrial Commission to the extent that it is estimated it will cost the NSW Government an additional \$100 million in a full financial year. Obviously, that pay increase will flow on to nurses in other States.

I understand the Royal Australian Nursing Federation already has submitted an application in this State for increases ranging from between 10 per cent and 12 per cent. I further understand that the Hospital Employees' Union, acting on behalf of enrolled nurses and hospital domestic staff already has had its case heard for a 10 per cent pay increase.

So, it seems to me that early in the New Year, the Industrial Commission will make decisions on these pay applications. If some semblance of uniformity between nurses and hospital employees is to be maintained throughout Australia, a substantial pay rise will need to be granted.

The Government has failed to make adequate provision for those pay increases. The \$11 million which has been set aside is nowhere near adequate when one considers the massive size of the staff of the State hospital system. I do not know precisely how many people are employed in the system, but there must be at least 25 000. When one considers that pay increases of the magnitude of 10 per cent probably will be granted, and applies this increase to approximately 25 000 employees, it becomes painfully obvious that the \$11 million which has been set aside is nowhere near enough.

I predict that early next year we will be in for another round of anguish, turmoil, and chaos in the public hospital sector, much the same as we had about 12 months ago, only on a far greater scale. One wonders what the Government is really up to. Surely the Government is not so out of touch with reality as to be unaware of what is happening on the industrial scene in respect of pay increases.

One can conclude only that the Government has deliberately under-budgeted in this area, knowing that applications for wage increases are in the pipeline, and knowing how many staff are on

the pay-roll. So, the Government has built into the Budget a great potential for industrial conflict and confrontation. The Opposition has often accused the Government of relishing industrial confrontation, and it seems inevitable that we are in for yet another round of confrontation early in the New Year. This will be much more serious than the normal type of industrial confrontation because it will be in the vital field of health care, and will seriously affect the health and welfare of many Western Australian citizens.

What will happen when the crunch comes? Are more nurses to be sacked, or made redundant and not replaced? Are we to see another round of hospital wards being closed, and more nurses' accommodation being closed? Are we again to see patients queuing up on beds and trolleys in hospital corridors, waiting to get into a ward? Are we to see more hospital annexes closed or leased to private investors? Perhaps we will see some of the peripheral public hospitals sold or leased to private investors. There is no doubt the Government has given consideration to those matters in the past few months. How will the amount of money which has been allocated stretch to accommodate all the needs? It is obvious that the money will not stretch, so something will have to go.

I am advised that 700 fewer nurses are in the employ of the State Government than 12 months ago. Obviously the system cannot go on being pruned in that fashion. Nurses are working under tremendous strains. I heard recently of a nurse who worked for 22 hours. I do not know whether that is true. It was second-hand information, and I cannot verify it. However, I am receiving reports constantly of nurses working extremely long shifts, and not having proper breaks between shifts. They are working under great stress and strain.

I have been told that sick leave amongst nurses in the large Government hospitals has doubled in the past 12 months because of the stress and strain under which the staff are working. That is not a desirable situation. It is not only the patients who will be endangered if the staff are tired and working under great stress. It will affect also the health and performance of the nursing staff and the hospital staff in general.

I would be interested to hear the Minister's explanation of how the Government proposes to cope with the inevitable wage rises in this financial year. How will it stretch the relatively small sum of \$11 million for pay increases to cover the potential rises in the pipeline?

The Government must have known of these pay rises when it framed the Budget. The cases have been under way in the Eastern States for some months. The Hospital Employees' Union case has already been heard by the Industrial Commission and the decision has been reserved. The application by the Royal Australian Nursing Federation is before the Government, and it will be heard in the New Year.

None of us relishes another period of turmoil like the one we had 12 months ago when the nurses were granted the 5 per cent pay rise. Are we to have another round like that? I hope not. Obviously it will be much more severe if increases of 10 to 12 per cent are granted. The Government cannot keep cutting back on hospital staff. It must realise that hospital staff have been pared down to the lowest possible level at the moment.

Standards of care and attention will be affected seriously if the hospital staff are reduced any further. I hope the Government can give a satisfactory explanation as to how the Budget will cope satisfactorily with the hospital scene in the coming 12 months. Personally, I am quite worried about it.

If we see any further reductions in staff, we may see Government hospitals leased out or closed down. The leasing out to private investors is a move to which the Opposition would be strongly opposed. We do not go along with that.

I hope the Government can explain to the Parliament how it sees this Budget being adequate to cater for the health and welfare of the citizens of this State.

Mr YOUNG: Very few members of this Chamber would not have heard the same hopeful speech of the member for Melville on at least a dozen occasions. When I say "hopeful" I mean that the member is not really suggesting to this Chamber that he does not want the dilemma that he predicted on at least six or seven occasions during the course of his speech. He predicted some form of chaos in the hospital system. It is sufficient to say that he would like it to come about. In fact, he "dines out" on that sort of trouble.

Mr Hodge: It is nasty of you to say that.

Mr YOUNG: It happens to be true.

I give the member for Melville an assurance that all of the information I have indicates that the Budget is sufficient in every respect to maintain a high standard of service in the public hospital system in Western Australia. I regret, for the sake of the member for Melville, that he will not be able to "dine out" on another fiasco this year.



**Division 55 put and passed.****Division 56: Mental Health Services, \$62 646 000—**

Mr HODGE: I wish to raise a matter with the Minister. He may be prepared to investigate it. It involves a Fremantle clinic run by Mental Health Services, which is referred to as the Ord Street Clinic. It has been drawn to my attention that recently the clinic changed its method of operation.

A constituent of mine goes to that clinic, and has done so for some time. Formerly she went every two months, and at each visit she received a two months supply of medication. Recently the system was changed, and she was advised to go once every three months only. She was told that at that visit she would be given one months supply of medication, and the supply for the next two months would be posted to her home, free of charge, a month apart. On each occasion, the postage on the drugs is over \$1.

My constituent asked me, in view of the Government's attempts to economise, whether that was not an unnecessary extravagance. Naturally I could not explain it, and perhaps the Minister will not be able to explain it on the spot.

It seems that where previously there was no need to post out the drugs, now the clinic is paying over \$2 to post a supply of drugs to my constituent. That does not seem to be economical. If that is being done on a large scale with many patients, it seems to be a false economy.

I hope the Minister will investigate why it is necessary to spend that amount of money to post drugs when the patients are quite happy to attend the clinic under the former arrangement and collect the drugs personally.

Mr YOUNG: I will investigate the matter raised by the member for Melville and give him a reply in writing.

**Division 56 put and passed.**

**Divisions 57 and 58—Western Australian Alcohol and Drug Authority, \$2 803 000; Nurses Board of Western Australia, \$162 000—put and passed.**

**Division 59: Education, \$480 662 000—**

Mr PEARCE: A number of points need to be made about this section of the Budget because it has probably been the most looked forward to section of the Budget by the majority of the general public. It has had the rare distinction of having been the subject of considerable public debate leading up to the presentation of this document and an unprecedented commitment by

the Treasurer that the level of the allocation would exceed \$479 million.

Mr O'Connor: The Minister is not present, but I have arranged for him to be here shortly.

Mr PEARCE: In that case I will try not to say anything significant until he arrives. I hope when I say significant things he will understand them. By way of preamble—slowly—while ministerial footsteps drag their way to the Chamber—

Mr Young: Tell a few jokes.

Mr PEARCE: The only one I have heard lately is an Irish joke, and I could not repeat that considering the anti-discrimination Bill I am hoping to get through this House. I can now welcome the Minister to the Chamber to take part in the debate.

*Point of Order*

Mr GRAYDEN: I take exception to that remark. The member for Gosnells is trying to imply I have not been present. I have been in the House this morning since the proceedings began. It is typical of the sort of remarks the member makes from time to time, and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr PEARCE: I certainly withdraw any imputation the Minister saw in my remarks. I point out to him that before he came into the Chamber there was a fair degree of jocularity in remarks between the Minister's colleagues and myself, which he will see if he reads *Hansard*. Some of his colleagues took part in the debate because I did not notice he was not present until the Deputy Premier pointed out that he had arranged to have the Minister called to the Chamber. If the Minister had been here he would have realised there was no slur intended.

*Committee Resumed*

Mr Shalders: I thought you were referring to the fact that you had only three of your colleagues with you.

Mr PEARCE: It is not up to us to keep the Chamber in working order. In any case, my colleagues know I will handle this matter completely and adequately. They require only that I be here, and I require that the Minister be here.

Mr Clarko: As soon as you got up, 80 children left the Gallery.

Mr PEARCE: They have perfect confidence in me.

Mr Grayden: That speaks volumes for their intelligence.

Mr PEARCE: The Treasurer spent a good part of his Budget speech trying to explain away the education chaos that developed in our schools from July onwards. During that time the Minister managed to "up the ante" until the education vote had reached its present level. The Treasurer tried to say that it was always intended that the Education Vote would be as generous as it is. He spent some time elaborating on the generous treatment of the education area. I do not deny that the Treasurer has stuck to his agreement and produced a vote of more than \$479 million for education.

Nevertheless, I adhere to the prediction I made in this place during my main Budget speech that the sum of \$479 million will be under expended by at least \$10 million when we return to the Parliament this time next year. I pointed out in quite specific terms that that would be so despite the efforts of the Treasurer to suggest in his Budget presentation that there were going to be more teachers in our schools—that more teachers would be employed. A very rapid reference to the figures indicates that is not so.

One has just to compare the Budget for the 1980-81 year with the Budget of the 1981-82 year to discover, for example, that in pre-school centres there is listed to be 204 teachers as opposed to the previous year when there were 211 teachers. I have explained to the Chamber previously that the slight diminution is in fact due to the change of status of some pre-schools to pre-primary schools. However, it has since become clear from my probing questioning of the Treasurer and the Minister that there is an intention to further diminish those 204 pre-school teachers by 55, which effectively will reduce their number to 149. A little later I shall spend more time on the subject of pre-schools.

The second point deals with pre-primary and primary education where we see that for the current financial year we will be looking at a figure of 7 262 staff members. We find a slight increase—61 teachers—over the listed budgetary number for 1980-82 of 7 201 teachers.

We see something similar is experienced in the provision of staff for secondary education, where the 1980-81 figure has gone from 5 186 to 5 246, an increase of 60 staff members. So while it is true that overall in the primary and secondary area we see the Government has budgeted for a slight increase of staff, in the pre-school area the Government has budgeted for a slight diminution of staff. I predict we will find that in the primary and high school sections of teaching staff the same thing is being done as happened with the pre-school staff.

These figures do not truly project the Government's planning in this area, and here we consider the crucial figure. This is a fairly technical matter and for my information in these budgetary proceedings I am relying on answers given to me by the Treasurer.

Last week and the week before when we discussed the proposed cuts in the number of pre-school teachers, the Treasurer announced that instead of writing into the Budget the exact number of teachers who would be employed for the whole year he had written into the Budget the number of teachers there were on staff at 1 July and then allowed for cut-backs of staff in areas that were not easily identifiable.

The education section of the Budget contains an entry of, "Less savings on staff turnover and delays in filling vacancies, and accrued salaries brought forward". That item also covers savings which are estimated by cutting back on the number of teachers. The Treasurer told me his estimate was that \$625 000 would be saved by not employing some 55 pre-school teachers for the second half of the financial year.

Mr Grayden: You misunderstand the situation.

Mr PEARCE: The Minister should be very careful with his choice of words, because I have had the Treasurer put his answers in writing and I will be very rapid to quote these back to the Minister.

Mr Grayden: I will explain later; you are back to front.

Mr PEARCE: The Treasurer must be back to front, because I am citing his figures. The Minister might know more than the Treasurer, although I would not be inclined to bet on that. I would imagine his colleagues would not want to bet on that either.

So the item I quoted is also a saving on teachers who are effectively laid off and we see that for 1980-81 there was an amount involved of \$4 918 400—roughly \$5 million.

This year we see that same item has a component of \$11 877 700, shall we say, in round figures, \$12 million. So the amount of savings on unfilled vacancies and the like has increased from approximately \$5 million to approximately \$12 million in the course of the year. Just over \$500 000 is projected to be saved on the cutbacks in pre-school teachers, so that is obviously an extra amount.

What we find then in the change from \$5 million to \$12 million is that approximately \$6.5 million has been unaccounted for in that item.

Part of that can be accounted for in accrued salaries which are brought forward from the previous financial year. This is a sort of accounting juggling which is entered into to bring salary payment rates into line with the cutoff in the financial year. The Treasurer indicated \$4.3 million in accrued salaries would be carried over in that way from the previous financial year. Of that \$6.5 million we are looking at, at the most \$4.3 million can be accounted for by accrued salaries carried forward and that is working on the assumption that no accrued salaries were brought forward from the previous financial year.

Therefore, the best possible position is there is an additional \$2.2 million in there for the non-payment of salaries for teaching vacancies which are not filled. That is a minimum figure and the figure could well be as high as \$6 million if in fact the accrued salaries brought forward in the previous financial year were the same as this financial year, or even more if the accrued figure was greater.

I know that is all rather technical, but the important point in all this is a figure is included in the Budget of at least \$2 million for cutbacks in staff numbers for our high schools, primary schools, pre-primary schools, and pre-schools in the next school year and of that approximately \$2.2 million, a little over \$500 000 can be ascribed to cutbacks in the pre-school area. That leaves something between \$1.5 million and \$2 million as the bare minimum for cutbacks in staffing salaries for teachers in high schools, primary schools, and pre-primary schools. That may well represent a reduction of 200 teachers or more in our school system.

As it is the case that the numbers of students in our schools are not decreasing at the present time, although, as I understand it, the rate of increase has levelled off slightly—it is still, nevertheless, my belief we are seeing a slight increase in student numbers and, at the very most, there might be a levelling off—a diminution in numbers of 200 or more teachers in the system will cause chaos greater than that caused by the attempted reduction of 107 teaching positions during the fuss in July and August that we all went through and which caused a monumental Government backdown.

That reduction in teaching numbers is a very important matter. It has been hidden very cleverly in the Budget and I may even have underestimated the severity of it by 100 teachers or more; but 200 teachers is the minimum figure we are looking at with regard to this particular matter.

We shall see the effect of that reduction in teaching numbers at the beginning of the 1982 school year; because the Government will lay off teachers who are on the temporary staff—people who do not have permanency and who now constitute approximately 20 per cent of the teaching force. These teachers will be given redundancy notices. Indeed, they are probably being prepared now.

Mr Grayden: There will not be any redundancy notices.

Mr PEARCE: I shall get the terminology clear. There are people on the temporary staff of our high schools and primary schools who will get a letter in the next few weeks telling them their services will not be required for 1982. That is what I mean by a "redundancy notice".

Mr Clarko: Has not that been a system used in the past, but not really applied?

Mr PEARCE: No, in fact 283 teachers were laid off at the end of the 1980 school year in exactly that way and my authority for that is the Minister himself, because I have asked questions in that regard.

Mr Carr: I do not like the authority you are quoting.

Mr PEARCE: It is a rather tenuous authority, but one assumes those figures were prepared by the department. Those 283 teachers were not taken on again and I make that point to the member for Karrinyup who has ambitions, as I have, to be Minister for Education, though doubtless I shall get there before him.

Two kinds of letters are sent out to people on the temporary staff towards the end of the year. One contains words to the effect, "Thank you for your services", and then goes on to say that the person will either return to his particular school on the first day of term in the following year or otherwise he will be notified accordingly and it is hinted that an alternative position will be offered. The second type of letter which is sent out contains words to the effect, "Thank you for your services. They will not be required next year".

The people in the first category are re-employed in the following year, but the people in the second category are not.

In the last three years we have seen an increase in the letters which fall into the second category and a decrease in the first category of letters. The member for Karrinyup is quite right in his statement, but he is three years out of date, because three years ago almost all people on the temporary staff would have been carried over in that way, although they would not necessarily all

have been employed straight away, because the Education Department used to use married women particularly who are on the temporary staff as a kind of unemployment pool. They would be put off at the end of the year, graduates from teachers' colleges would be employed, and as vacancies occurred during the year, married women on the temporary staff would be brought in.

Mr Clarko: I am not out of date. You are making the very point I wish to make and I think it is important to make it in the way you have so that the position is clear to everybody.

Mr PEARCE: Except that the unemployment pool does not work now in the way it used to, because that pool of people on the temporary staff has now been replaced by graduates from the teachers' colleges who do not obtain jobs.

The member for Karrinyup would know that less than 50 per cent of the graduates from teacher training colleges were given jobs last year. That leaves a large pool of unemployed, trained teachers as well as the pool of people who may have graduated up to four years ago and who have not been employed.

Mr Clarko: What are your feelings about the advertisements which are appearing in the newspapers from various teacher training colleges which are designed to encourage people to take up teacher training?

Mr PEARCE: I am very opposed to them. I have made my attitude very clear to the colleges of advanced education. It is not the Minister or even the member for Karrinyup who makes the statements about levels of teacher unemployment. Largely it is me and every time I do that I receive phone calls from at least some of the colleges of advanced education or other teacher training institutions asking me not to make statements of that type, because they reduce their ability to enrol potential teachers in the colleges. They are fearful for their funding, because they require certain enrolment levels to keep up the level of funding they receive.

I appreciate the difficulties of the colleges, but it is not right for tertiary institutions to attempt to attract potential teacher trainees when they know perfectly well there are not enough jobs available and when they ought to be aware the chances of job opportunities for teachers are diminishing and will continue to decrease throughout the decade.

Mr Grayden: How did you get that impression?

Mr PEARCE: The next point I want to make is that it is not just the teacher training colleges which are responsible for that, because the planning of the Education Department is at odds

with every other educational projection in Australia, including that of the Australian College of Education of which the Minister is a member. All the projections indicate decreasing numbers of teachers and fewer jobs for teacher graduates. The Education Department's projection is for a reversal of that trend in 1984 or 1985.

Mr Clarko: The reversal is projected to be in 1986.

Mr PEARCE: I was not sure of the date and I was going to say 1986, so I accept that date. I certainly have not seen the latest projection.

The irony of the situation is that originally the reversal was predicted to occur in 1981 and there was to be a deficiency in the number of teachers next year. Back in 1975-76 when these projections were first made, it was predicted there would be a tremendous shortage of teachers next year; that is, 1982.

I will predict now that less than 35 per cent of the teachers who graduate from the teacher training colleges at the end of this year will obtain jobs in the first six months of the school year next year, but it was predicted in 1975-76 that that would be the year when the reverse trend would come into effect.

However, the planning branch has extended the date on which the reverse trend is predicted to occur and I am prepared to accept what the member for Karrinyup has said to the effect that it is now predicted it will occur in 1986. That is a four-year delay and in 1986 they will be predicting the reverse trend will occur in 1991 or 1992 unless some significant action is taken drastically to reduce the intake of students by teacher training institutions.

I was prepared to deviate from my remarks to deal with that point, because it is a very important one and I am sure all members of the Chamber will be concerned about it. It is also a point on which perhaps the member for Karrinyup and I may be in agreement. It seems everyone is happy about that except the Minister who continues to believe there will be some reversal in the shortage of teachers—in what year did the Minister indicate?

Mr Grayden: I will tell you all about it shortly.

Mr PEARCE: Let him say it will be by 1986. Actually, we should let him say by 1982 because that was the department's original prognosis on this point. In any event, the situation in regard to the oversupply of teachers will be made worse by the proposed departmental and governmental policy which I have outlined, which is to reduce by more than 200 in real terms the number of

teaching staff in our schools next year. This will commence at the beginning of the 1982 school year when it is easier to do such things unnoticed because all classes are revised and rearranged, and new teachers come into schools.

Mr Grayden: Actually there will be a substantial increase.

Mr PEARCE: The Minister can tell me about it in a moment, and I hope he tells me how he will save \$12 million by not filling vacancies. Other members on this side of the Chamber and I look forward with great interest to hearing the Minister's answer.

Mr Grayden: I will detail it.

Mr PEARCE: I ask the Minister to detail how he will save \$12 million by not filling vacancies. If he can explain that to us, we will be very interested to hear the explanation. I could make similar remarks in regard to the technical education division of the department, but my time is about to expire. I shall make one or two points about the position into which the Government has got itself in regard to the pre-school education issue.

There is no slackening within the community of the demand which has built up over some period for adequate pre-school education facilities for four-year-olds. I will be attending this evening a meeting at the community hall at Coolbellup. Representatives of the Pine View Pre-school will attend, as well as representatives from other pre-schools in the metropolitan area and even around the State. Will the Minister attend? I believe an invitation was extended to him.

Mr Grayden: I haven't received one.

Mr PEARCE: I do not want to admit to too much knowledge about the Minister's correspondence, otherwise the police will be around to see me.

Mr Grayden: Tonight I will be at a sporting function—the Dennis Lillee testimonial dinner. However, we would have sent a departmental representative to that meeting if you hadn't been going to it. We won't permit any representative to go to a meeting if it is to be a political one.

Mr PEARCE: That is a fascinating point because the Press report I read indicated that a departmental representative will attend but the Minister will not.

Mr Grayden: We can't allow a departmental officer to go under the circumstances you outline.

Mr PEARCE: I have had problems with bureaucratic representatives.

Mr Grayden: You have said what you wanted to know.

Mr PEARCE: That is right. Departmental representatives try to maintain some kind of neutral role at such meetings by purporting to put a neutral point of view instead of the Government's. At every meeting of an educational nature which I have attended and at which a departmental officer has been present, I have pointed out that he is speaking for the Government, and that he is not in a position to criticise the Government. I point out that after a change in government in a couple of years, these same officers will be telling my side of the story, or they would not be speaking at all. Now when these officers attend these meetings they must put the Minister's point of view, which puts them in an embarrassing situation—I feel sorry for them.

The Minister ought not to duck his responsibilities by sending along departmental officers in his stead. It is unfair to the officers and the people attending the meetings. The officers are asked political questions, putting the officers in an invidious position. When they answer such questions they are putting the Government's point of view, and therefore must argue with me. However, in a couple of years officially those officers may have to deal with me in a different capacity.

Often departmental officers will take the easy way out, which is quite reasonable, by saying, "You will have to ask a politician about that. I am not here to answer political questions".

Mr Bryce: Do those departmental officers usually say that they must have the Minister's permission to speak to everybody about such things?

Mr PEARCE: The Minister usually demands that his representatives follow that condition, but when the officers attend that condition is broken down because I have told the meeting of the condition. After a few meetings the condition has disappeared. At public meetings it is good to obtain a reaction to speeches, because the views put find their way through the bureaucracy to the Minister. In fact, it seems I have more effect on departmental policy by speaking at public meetings than I have by speaking here.

Mr Clarko: In this question about pre-school education which you are dealing with now, what about the use of the term "three-plus" instead of "four-year-olds"? The use of the term "four-year-olds" can be confusing because it can be taken to mean children who turn five in the year. It would be better to talk about "three-plus" and "four-plus" children. It is not possible to talk about four-year-olds and know the people understand what you are talking about.

Mr PEARCE: It is possible. Until the Minister raised this matter it did not occur to me that a degree of confusion could exist. As far as I understand, everybody who talks about this area refers to three-year-olds and four-year-olds, knowing that a four-year-old is a child who turns four in the year in question. The Minister tried to confuse that point by contending that children who are, in fact, normally referred to as four-year-olds are three-plus-year-old children.

Mr Clarko: Unless you use the term "three-plus" there is an element of confusion.

Mr O'Connor: I think there is an element of confusion in the community.

Mr PEARCE: I have not perceived any such confusion. Everybody knows what is a four-year-old and a five-year-old, because that is the common terminology.

Mr Clarko: I don't think that is so.

Mr PEARCE: I have not tried to confuse the issue.

Mr Clarko: I don't say you have, but the term can be used in a double way. Some people have said to me, "Will the Government stop children going to pre-primary centres?"

Mr Shalders: I have had that, too.

Mr PEARCE: This confusion has been engendered by the Minister. The system worked well for a long time until the Minister referred to three-plus-year-old children going to pre-schools. A child goes to primary school when he is six years of age, but that does not mean he must wait until his sixth birthday before going to primary school. In the Minister's terminology, five-plus-year-old children go to primary school. I do not say that terminology is not exact, but it should not be used until it is widely accepted.

The Opposition is considering the proposition that generally children should be taken into pre-schools at the age of four, which in exact terms is that they would be eligible to enter a pre-school on their fourth birthday rather than when they are three years and one day old on 1 January in any year. We are considering a more flexible arrangement, but a definite decision has not been made. Perhaps I am premature in raising that matter.

Mr Clarko: This is a very important question.

Mr PEARCE: The confusion is not alleviated by the Minister's saying that children who go to pre-school are three years and one day old, wet their pants, and do all sorts of other things. Such remarks have introduced confusion into the issue.

There still exists much to debate in relation to the pre-school situation, and many remarks could

be made about other factors of the education allocation, but my time is on the point of expiring. Instead of launching into those matters I will refer to them when the appropriate Items are open to discussion.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Nanovich): I call the member for Ascot.

Mr BRYCE: I get the impression that there is a distinct conspiracy on the part of Government members to deny me of my worthy title.

Mr O'Connor: We always like to listen to you.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Very well, the Leader of the Opposition—I am sorry, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr BRYCE: You will get us all into trouble.

### *Points of Order*

Mr PEARCE: My speech was limited to 30 minutes, but the member for Stirling has just pointed out to me that because I spoke as the lead Opposition speaker on this matter I should have had unlimited time.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Nanovich): The Chairman of Committees has given the ruling that unless a member is deputed by his leader to be the lead speaker, the member may not have unlimited time. If you have not been deputed by your leader you do not have unlimited time, and that is in line with the ruling of the Chairman of Committees from which I am not prepared to deviate.

Mr BRYCE: On a point of order, given the—

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Nanovich): The member will resume his seat. That is the leading speaker, the first speaker on the Opposition side.

Mr BRYCE: I want to clarify this—

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He is not getting more than 30 minutes.

Mr BRYCE: That is the point I wish to clarify. Under the way we are operating, surely the deputed spokesman is a shadow Minister, and the spokesman for the Opposition—

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Unless the Chairman—

Mr BRYCE: Hang on! We are talking about convention and practice. Do you require something in writing from here on?

Mr Tonkin: It is done on every Bill, heaven's above!

Mr BRYCE: Do you require something in writing from the Leader of the Opposition during the course of this Budget debate to say, "I hereby

depute somebody to be my leading spokesman on this section of the Budget?"

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Exactly.

Mr PEARCE: I am quite happy to spend a lot of time on the Items. I probably would have spoken for another 10 minutes, in any event, but that is not the point. The Government as well as the Chairman of Committees ought to understand what will follow from this, because of what will happen; for example, none of us was expecting these items to come on as early as they did, and it will be the case when we are dealing with these things that the Opposition will not agree to proceed on these things unless the Leader of the Opposition is present to depute people to deal with them. Surely it will be possible for the Chairman of Committees in the future to understand that the Opposition is in a situation whereby there is a permanently deputed spokesman in each of the ministerial areas; they are the shadow Ministers.

The shadow Ministry is well known. They sit, for the most part, on the front bench. Their areas of responsibilities are known and it ought to be the case that where a shadow Minister rises as the lead speaker it will be automatically understood that he has been deputed by the Leader of the Opposition to take his place in the course of the particular debate.

Mr TONKIN: On the same point of order—

Mr PEARCE: Can I just finish, please?

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Nanovich): Wait for a moment.

Mr PEARCE: I am not going to seek to have my time extended, but make this point: This matter should be clarified for the efficient operation of this Chamber and if the presiding officers stick to the ruling you give, you will lose a lot of co-operation from the Opposition which will result in greater disruption than if you agree to the slight change I am suggesting.

Mr TONKIN: On the same point of order—

Mr O'CONNOR: Just on a point of clarification in connection with the deputation by the Leader of the Opposition, I take it that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition would do so when the leader is away and that would suffice; is that your understanding?

Mr TONKIN: That is not necessary at all. On every Bill the lead speaker for the Opposition has unlimited time. We never have this nonsense with every Bill of someone saying, "Look, I have been deputed." Every time the lead speaker for the Opposition gets up he is given unlimited time. I was the lead speaker, and I am recognised as the

spokesman on consumer affairs and was given unlimited time yesterday. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition was given unlimited time on resources last night, so, Mr Deputy Chairman, you are not following the practice even on this Budget, even this week, but are actually breaking the practice. I see no reason that it cannot automatically be that the lead speaker for the Opposition gets unlimited time as does the lead speaker for the Government. That is what has happened on every other Bill and I see no reason for it to be changed.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Nanovich): I acknowledge the member for Morley's point.

Mr CLARKO: I believe that the new arrangement that we have in regard to the discussion on the Appropriation Bill in Committee has given a vast extension of the amount of time for which one can speak; for example, in the section dealing with the Premier's Department there are now approximately 20 sections and therefore there is a greater period of time that one can debate those 20 separate Divisions than if we speak on just one Part, as occurred before. There has been a gargantuan increase in the amount of time that can be taken. Where we have a situation where we have a strict statement in the Standing Orders which says, "The Leader of the Opposition or a person deputed by him", it is necessary that you be advised, because otherwise—

Mr Carr: That was done when he prepared the list for the shadow Cabinet.

Mr CLARKO: There is no limitation. There is more opportunity to speak on this in Committee.

Mr Bryce: That is irrelevant.

Mr CLARKO: It is simply a matter that, if I were in the Chair, I would want the person to indicate to me that he was deputed by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Bryce: Rubbish! Since when? You have been in the Chair, you goose.

Mr Tonkin: You were in the Chair yesterday.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr CLARKO: The member should not scream unless he wants to go to pieces. He should stand up and say his point in a reasonable and adequate way without screaming his head off.

Mr Bryce: You did not do it yesterday.

Mr CLARKO: I did so.

Mr Tonkin: I had unlimited time.

Mr CLARKO: There is no need for the Opposition to get angry in this matter. All one needs do is say, "I am deputed by the Leader of

the Opposition to be the lead spokesman", otherwise the Chairman of Committees is not in the position to know whether that person is deputed or not. One does not know. For example, supposing the member for Fremantle got up today and spoke on transport when the member for Avon is the person who is normally recognised as the spokesman on transport; and the member for Avon had arrived to speak subsequent to the member for Fremantle speaking. Does one think the presiding officer could have denied him the opportunity if he said, "I am deputed"?

Mr Carr: Is this a speech or a point of order?

Mr CLARKO: If the member for Avon said "I am deputed by the Leader of the Opposition", one could not possibly deny him the right to speak for an unlimited time, and if one had already given it to the first person up, the member for Fremantle, the presiding officer would be in an extremely difficult position.

Mr Tonkin: With every Bill before the Chamber?

Mr CLARKO: There is no denial of the rights of the person to speak. The member for Gosnells has already indicated that he is able to speak in that way.

Mr Pearce: I was not happy to.

Mr CLARKO: All he has to do is indicate that that is what it is. That is what the Standing Orders say and the new Standing Orders give greater opportunity to members to speak than ever before by a multiplicity of something like 20 times.

Mr Tonkin: The Standing Orders are the same for every Bill.

Mr CLARKO: If any lead spokesman wants to have unlimited time all he has to do is indicate so. The Opposition is making a mountain out of a molehill.

Mr BRYCE: On the same point of order, can I suggest that this difficulty has arisen because we do have, and quite rightly, more than one Chairman of Committees during the course of the debate which extends over a couple of weeks and we have been implementing new, slightly different, Standing Orders and procedures?

Mr Clarko: That is true. I do not disagree with that.

Mr BRYCE: It appears that at no stage as far as this debate is concerned, prior to this point has it been the requirement of the Chair to have the Opposition spokesman declare to the Chamber or the Committee that he happened to be the deputed spokesman for the Leader of the Opposition and is therefore entitled to unlimited

time. What has happened is that both myself and a number of my colleagues have had unlimited time and it would be a pity for a Deputy Chairman of Committees, who is only one of three, to make a ruling that becomes binding on the procedures of the actual Budget Estimates in this way. Could I suggest, Sir, that you might be prepared to reconsider that ruling, if it is necessary to report progress or even leave the Chair, for the sake of the smoothness with which the actual Estimate procedures are continued?

Mr O'Connor: One would agree with that.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Nanovich): We are now at Division 59 and this is the first time this has been questioned.

Mr Carr: This is the first time it has happened.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: This has been the procedure all the way through. The Chairman of Committees gave this ruling and this is the way he performed while he was in the Chair.

Mr Tonkin: No, he did not. He had unlimited time.

Mr Carr: He had unlimited time.

Mr Clarko: I gave 30 minutes where it was not indicated.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Nanovich): Order! The member will resume his seat. That is the line the Chairman was taking and I have not departed from it because I do think it was the procedure to follow, so I am sticking with what the Chairman ruled previously.

Mr JAMIESON: This is where we are running into trouble. This is the first time a speaker has wanted to go longer. The lead speaker on other occasions has not used up his time and has said only what he wanted to say. This is the first time we have experienced this situation and I think we must look at it fairly and clearly and let members of the Chamber know where they stand, perhaps by way of a note from the Chairman setting out what he expects would be desirable. I recall only a couple of years ago I was lead speaker in respect of Item 1. Members will recall I spoke for nearly two hours, but I did not receive any special permission. It just happened that I was the first speaker on my feet.

If that Standing Order has not changed, we should have a clear indication that if the lead speaker takes over, it is assumed he has the authority of the Leader of the Opposition. That has always been the case when a lead speaker speaks on a Bill, or anything else, when an adjournment has taken place. The one who speaks after the adjournment is the person who is



accepted as the lead speaker and is accorded the extra privilege of extended time.

My point is that the matter should be considered and a clear instruction be sent out, over the signature of the Chairman of Committees, indicating that the authority is given to the Leader of the Opposition or his deputy. However, that may be difficult to put into operation.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Nanovich): Order! I will leave the Chair to have the matter reconsidered.

*Sitting suspended from 12.07 to 12.18 p.m.*

#### *Deputy Chairman's Ruling*

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Nanovich): The matter of the amount of time allocated to the first Opposition speaker on each Division when in Committee on the Estimates has been considered. I have decided that that person will be given unlimited time. In the light of this decision I invite the member for Gosnells to continue his remarks if he wishes to do so.

#### *Committee Resumed*

Mr PEARCE: A very wise decision and the Opposition is grateful for the reconsideration of this matter. However, since I tailored my speech to the amount of time that was available I will raise the items that I wish to discuss during the debate on those particular items.

Mr BRYCE: I would like to join with my colleague, the Opposition spokesman for education, and express my concern about the Government's attack on pre-school education. The Minister's decision is unworthy and ill-advised and I would like him, at this stage of the Committee's consideration of the education budget, to review the stand the Government has taken on the question of pre-school education.

Currently there are some thousands of four-year-olds in Western Australia who are enjoying the benefits of pre-school education. I would like to take the member for Karrinyup to task, ever so lightly, by saying that so far as the people who administer pre-schools are concerned there is no confusion as to what constitutes a four-year-old. There may be some confusion in the minds of some uninitiated parents in the community but as far as the people associated with the administration of pre-school education groups are concerned, there is no doubt.

A five-year-old is a child in the year immediately preceding the primary school level—

Mr Clarko: That is not true.

Mr BRYCE: —and a four-year-old is a child one year before that. When one looks at the enrolments and applications for admission into pre-school centres one can see there is no confusion in the minds of the people who administer them. The talk of a three-year-old-plus group was developed in recent times by the Minister himself and by some of his colleagues.

Mr Clarko: No, that is not true. It is a long-standing issue amongst educators. If you are talking about different States you have to talk in this way because of different circumstances in each State.

Mr BRYCE: I gained the distinct impression that the term "three-year-old-plus" had crept into the debate in this State in recent times in order to give some credence to the Minister's position that those children two years before primary school are too young for formal education.

Mr Clarko: I can tell you very frankly that the term came up first after the Nott inquiry of 1972. You should recall that—it was when you people were in Government. It was necessary to use the "three-plus", "four-plus" and "five-plus" description because the other one was too confusing. I think you would agree that a four-year-old child could be in either of two years.

Mr BRYCE: There is no question as to what it could mean. What I was attempting to explain to the Committee is that as far as the people who administer these places are concerned—the parents and the committees—there is no doubt but that a four-year-old is a child who has two years to go before entering school and a five-year-old is a child who has one year at pre-school before entering school.

Mr Clarko: That is true but various groups outside are listening to the descriptions and are confused.

Mr BRYCE: I am not sure that any one of us will succeed in convincing the rest of us of the degree of that confusion. I would like to express, in fairly straightforward terms, my belief that it is a retrograde step for the Government to downgrade the current form of pre-school educational opportunity for four-year-olds. The Government has indicated that it is keen to downgrade the quality of pre-school education by requiring some centres to be converted into play school groups.

Recently I wrote to the Director of Education and asked him whether there was any particular source of extra funding available for a pre-school group in my electorate that was encountering financial problems because of the socio-economic pressures of the area in which the centre is

located. In his reply the Director of Education said that the Education Department suggested that the pre-school centre should be converted into a playgroup. That is a specific example of what the Education Department and the Minister for Education have in mind with regard to the pre-school education of four-year-olds.

Mr Grayden: That is not so. If they have the four-plus-year-olds, we will continue to fund them. It has never been Government policy to fund the three-plus-year-old group. If they have been enrolling them, they have been doing so unofficially.

Mr Wilson: Earlier, the Minister said, "if they had a preponderance of four-year-olds".

Mr BRYCE: The Minister has used that cute word "preponderance", but has not defined it. He must decide what it means before the beginning of the next school year.

Mr Grayden: We intend to circulate all the pre-schools.

Mr BRYCE: This is where the Minister and his parliamentary colleagues are misreading the minds of the public. I say unequivocally to the Minister that there is an ever-increasing number of parents of children—whether we call them three-plus-year-olds, or young four-year-olds, or children simply defined as occupying their second year before the officially go to primary school—who want their children to have an educationally guided experience in that year. They do not want to see the very proud system of community-built and owned pre-schools—of which there are about 200—downgraded to the point where they are run as child-minding centres. That is precisely the point at issue and I believe that if the Minister continues on his present course, he is about to seriously misread the desires of the community.

Mr Grayden: We will continue to assist certain children in the three-plus-year-old group. I will deal with that later.

Mr BRYCE: The moment the Minister makes fish of one and fowl of the other, and makes exceptions, he will finish up with a can of worms, administratively.

Mr Grayden: We have been doing it since 1977.

Mr Coyne: We must do it in remote areas.

Mr BRYCE: What right has a four-year-old child in Murchison-Eyre to an educationally guided experience when a child in Redcliffe or Bayswater is not entitled to such an experience? This policy involves not only an administrative problem, but also a problem of principle.

Mr Grayden: If they are within the area, and are disadvantaged for social or ethnic reasons, we will continue to assist them.

Mr BRYCE: So, if a child lives in Redcliffe or Bayswater, or any part of the metropolitan area, and is disadvantaged for social or ethnic reasons, the Government will continue to assist him.

Mr Grayden: I said that if the child is disadvantaged, he will continue to be assisted.

Mr BRYCE: This is the Minister who used the word "preponderance" and failed to define it. Can members imagine the encyclopaedia of politics the Minister will need to define the term "socially or politically disadvantaged"?

Mr Grayden: I will explain it shortly. We have been doing it since 1977. It has worked famously.

Mr BRYCE: What has happened is this: The Government has extended its pre-primary centres throughout the State and has absorbed about 85 per cent of all five-year-olds. This has meant that in many communities throughout the State the number of five-year-olds available for enrolment at community-owned pre-school centres has fallen. Therefore, an increasing proportion of the youngsters at those community kindergartens are four-year-olds; enrolment is not confined only to those children who are one year prior to their starting primary school. Yet it would seem that next year the Government is going to turn its back on this situation.

Let me refer the Minister to a particular centre—the Belmay East Pre-school Centre, which is situated 300 yards from a pre-primary centre. The community-owned centre was constructed at a cost of about \$25 000 or \$30 000, and at least 80 per cent of the children at the centre are three-plus-year-olds or four-year-olds; they are the youngsters. The Minister is about to say that this centre must be converted into a playgroup, or a child-minding centre.

Mr Grayden: It has ever been thus; there is to be no change in policy. If they are enrolling the younger children, they are doing it unofficially.

Mr Wilson: Your department has been paying subsidies for those children.

Mr BRYCE: The Education Department has accepted and acknowledged these children for years.

Mr Grayden: No.

Mr BRYCE: The Minister is now pretending it has been done unofficially.

Mr Grayden: It has been.

Mr BRYCE: These four-year-olds have been accepted at the centres for years, and the Minister

for Education, through his department, has paid the salaries of teachers to teach those children for years. Now he says it is unofficial.

Mr Grayden: We have had a clear policy that we will accept responsibility for children who are one year below school age, not two years below school age.

Mr BRYCE: In the last five or six years, this Minister's department has acknowledged the existence of children at these pre-school centres who are not just one year below school age, but who are two years below school age.

I make this point not only as a member of Parliament, but also as a parent of four young children: I have been involved with the administration of community pre-school centres for seven or eight years and it is a simple fact that some of my own children have had two years' pre-school experience. Never has there been a suggestion to the administrative committees of these pre-schools that the four-year-olds were there under sufferance, or unofficially.

Mr Grayden: You should have been aware of it, because it has been a clearcut policy since 1977.

Mr BRYCE: The Minister cannot produce one scintilla of evidence to show that the acceptance by the Education Department of four-year-olds was only on an unofficial basis.

Mr Grayden: We write to these pre-schools in about September each year and inform them they must enrol only those children who are one year prior to school age. We say that if they do not have sufficient enrolments in that group, they can make up their numbers with three-plus-year-olds. However, it must not be done to the extent that they become a centre catering principally for three-plus-year-olds.

Mr BRYCE: Here is where the Minister and his Government are going to find themselves in hot water, if they do not accept the urging from members on this side that there is a growing demand from parents from one end of the State to the other for this type of educational experience for their children.

I urge the Minister not to get himself into a state of panic about the potential costs involved. It is not true to say that every one of the three-plus-year-olds or four-year-olds throughout the State would be enrolled in these centres. If that were the case, I could imagine the Education Department rushing a memo to the Minister which said, "Mr Minister, do you appreciate the cost involved in additional teachers and buildings which must be found to educate all the four-year-olds throughout the State?" Of course, that will not happen.

Members would know there is a vast number of parents who would consider that some children were too immature at that particular stage to attend pre-school.

Mr Grayden: Do you realise there is a huge number of parents in Western Australia who want their three-plus-year-olds to have pre-school experience and are paying for that education and receive no Government assistance at all?

Mr BRYCE: This is the political crunch in regard to the Minister's difference of opinion with those on this side of the Chamber. The Minister represents the silvertails of South Perth. Some of his colleagues represent the silvertails of Floreat, Nedlands, Dalkeith, and Lesmurdie. They represent people who can produce a cheque book and write out a cheque for \$500 per child per year to pay the salaries of the teachers who provide the educational guidance in these centres. "Silvertail" is a quaintly accurate way of describing the more affluent sections of the community.

Mr Clarko: You live in Fauntleroy Avenue. You are Little Lord Fauntleroy yourself!

Mr BRYCE: I was not speaking about my constituency. The people who live in Fauntleroy Avenue probably would be able to pay \$500 a year.

Mr Clarko: "Little Lord Fauntleroy" fits very well.

Mr BRYCE: The title rests not too comfortably on the local Labor member.

If we can return to the political difference between the Government and the Opposition on this question, we do not accept that a child in an isolated community in Western Australia is any more entitled to pre-school education than is one who lives in the metropolitan area. Children should be treated equally when it comes to the question of who should pay the salaries for the teachers at these centres.

Mr Blaikie interjected.

Mr BRYCE: Will the member for Vasse give over for a moment? I can promise him that if he carries on like this, I will take every opportunity to finish this point during every Item of the Education Division.

Mr O'Connor: Why punish us all?

Mr BRYCE: Exactly. Will the Deputy Premier throw a noose around the neck of the member for Vasse?

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Crane): I suggest that the member addresses the Chair and disregards the interjections.

Mr BRYCE: We have about 200 pre-school centres in Western Australia. As the years go by, that number will increase because the Education Department will hand these facilities back to the community groups. We can assume reasonably that within three or four years we could have 250 or 300 community-based pre-school centres with four-year-olds. Yet what the Minister is now saying is that his Government will not provide the teachers' salaries; so where the 300-odd centres are scattered throughout the State, some of the parents will meet and write out a cheque to provide a teacher because they have the capacity to pay!

However, the Minister's director wrote to me in relation to the Belmay East Pre-School Centre and said, "If you cannot afford a teacher, then turn it into a playgroup". That would be an act of positive discrimination against four-year-olds, based upon the financial capacity of their parents. This is an unwarranted attack; and it would be a cowardly thing for the Government to do if it said to the four-year-old children in this community, "If your parents can afford about \$500 to pay for the salary of a teacher, then you can have some form of educationally guided experience."

Mr Grayden: What about the parents who want their two-year-olds to go to school? A lot of them are being enrolled at the moment.

Mr BRYCE: In fact, a lot of them are not being enrolled.

Mr Pearce: Ask him the numbers. He cannot answer that.

Mr BRYCE: This is the Minister who said that three-plus-year-old children in this community should not have facilities provided for them, and now he is saying that a tremendous number of two-year-olds are being enrolled in schools.

Mr Grayden: I did not say that.

Mr BRYCE: How many two-year-olds are there!

Mr Grayden: How would I know how many?

Mr BRYCE: He is the Minister. He has just advanced a substantive point by way of interjection—

Mr Grayden: You are denying that the parents are involved with the children in the pre-school centres. You want the Government to accept responsibility for them, and then you will ask for facilities for the one-plus-year-old group.

Mr BRYCE: This is called "the domino theory". I heard the Minister and his colleagues using this argument when the Vietnamese were involved in a civil war. I know that is a long way removed from this subject, but I am sure

members will appreciate that the argument is similar. They would recognise also the irrationality of that argument.

A serious body of opinion has never been advanced in our community to suggest that the Education Department should accept the educational responsibility for one-year-olds, two-year-olds, or three-year-olds. I am talking about what the community perceives as four-year-olds and five-year-olds.

Mr Grayden: You are talking about the three-plus-year-old group.

Mr BRYCE: Ever since this debate began a decade ago, generally people have agreed that five-year-olds may or may not be taken into a primary school situation, and that four-year-olds should be cared for in the pre-primary area. That should not apply to any children below that age. The three-year-olds, two-year-olds, and one-year-olds should be cared for by the child care facilities arranged locally by the community, and funded by the national or State Government.

Mr Clarko: In 1972 the Tonkin Government refused to accept the four-plus-year-old group. Now you are saying we should accept the three-plus-year-old group.

Mr BRYCE: Then the Tonkin Government changed its mind.

Mr Clarko: I can accept that that is what you did.

Mr BRYCE: Can the member for Karrinyup remember also that 1981 has a very different educational climate?

Mr Clarko: I accept that.

Mr BRYCE: The demands of the community in respect of education have not remained static. They are related to the rising standards of living.

Mr Clarko: Are you saying that the Labor Party, if in Government, would finance totally the three-plus-year-old group in kindergartens or pre-school centres?

Mr Pearce: Yes—and the four-year-olds.

Mr BRYCE: The member for Karrinyup would know that the five-year-olds are catered for in pre-primary or pre-school centres.

Mr Shalders: That is not right.

Mr BRYCE: It is right that 95 per cent of them are. The children two years below the age at which they are required to go to primary school are what we call the three-plus-year-old group, or the four-year-olds. Our party has indicated already that we believe State Government funding should be extended to provide educationally guided experience for these children in the

community kindergartens and the pre-schools throughout the State when the parents decide, as is their right, that they want the children enrolled for that purpose in those centres.

Mr Grayden: If the independent schools have pre-schools, are you going to fund them, too?

Mr BRYCE: The principle of funding independent primary schools is a totally different question.

Mr Grayden: Are you going to extend it to them?

Mr BRYCE: That involves State funding of independent schools. It is a different question.

Mr Grayden: They receive Cabinet grants for the four-plus-year-old group. Are you going to extend it to the three-plus-year-old group?

Mr BRYCE: When we come to the Item dealing with independent schools, I will debate the question with the Minister then. It is a separate question altogether.

Mr Grayden: Very well.

Mr BRYCE: I do not intend to be hassled on that question in the last few minutes of my contribution.

I draw the attention of the Minister to the fact that in other States of Australia children of the age we are talking about are provided with—

Mr Grayden: Not through the Education Department.

Mr BRYCE: —first-class community pre-schools.

Mr Grayden: That is not so. In New South Wales, who contributes the 40 per cent? The parents or the Government?

Mr BRYCE: The Federal Government provides funding for one year's pre-school experience below the year in which the children are admitted legally or are required to attend primary schools. In other States, the school entry age is lower than ours. The Commonwealth funding is directed to what we call the four-year-olds or the three-plus group—call them what one likes. However, that is the area to which the Commonwealth funding is given.

One of the reasons that the Commonwealth funding is not available in our community for the three-plus group or the four-year-olds is that, although the Minister and the Treasurer promised to reduce the age at which children enter primary school to the year in which they turn five, it has not been reduced. I can demonstrate that that has not been done, because the Government is using the Commonwealth funding for pre-primaries.

Mr Clarko: It is irrelevant.

Mr BRYCE: It is not irrelevant because by definition, and in an answer from the Treasurer, that money is available only for pre-primary centres for the one year before the children go into the formal primary education system.

Mr Clarko: They go to the pre-primary school one year earlier than they would have.

*Sitting suspended from 12.45 to 2.15 p.m.*

Mr WILSON: During the remarks made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition there was quite a deal of talk from the other side of the Chamber about the Government's policy on pre-school education for four-year-olds. I shall quote a passage from the policy document of the Liberal Party on pre-school education during the lead up to the 1977 elections, which statement cannot be denied. It reads as follows—

We believe every child has the right to attend a pre-primary school or kindergarten.

We will continue to encourage pre-primary or kindergarten attendance on a non-compulsory basis for all children.

The provision of the voluntary, free pre-primary year for all 5 year-olds in the State will be achieved over a period of 4 or 5 years. This provision will include children in country, city and isolated communities.

As pre-primary centres are increasingly provided, existing kindergartens which now care for children in their fifth year will be able to provide for children in their fourth year as the older children transfer to the pre-primary centres.

Access to 2 years of pre-school education will become available to a degree hitherto unknown in Western Australia.

Mr Bryce: There is the crunch.

Mr WILSON: There would be two years of pre-school education in pre-school centres made available for four-year-olds.

Mr Grayden: What year are you referring to?

Mr WILSON: I am referring to the Liberal Party policy statement for the lead up to the 1977 elections.

Mr Grayden: 1977?

Mr Bryce: Have you changed your mind since then?

Mr WILSON: I suppose the Minister has had a quick change of mind. That is not unknown for the Liberal Party. But this policy is here in black and white, although we know Liberal Governments do not always keep the promises made prior to elections. This is a statement made

publicly by the Liberal Party and one it is now publicly reneging on.

Mr Grayden: Rubbish!

Mr WILSON: The people are not being fooled by that; they are well aware of what is happening. As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has indicated already, there is an increasing ground swell among parents who are determined to see that the needs of four-year-olds for pre-school education are met. The ground swell is found not only among the parents, but also among psychologists and educationalists. Let me quote the remarks by Mrs Alex Radloff, a child psychologist lecturer on the Murdoch University education faculty. She has said, "Research shows that the modern four-year-old is more than ready for short, well-organised, education sessions". This is in absolute contrast to those fatuous remarks from the Minister for Education during a previous debate when he went on record—I am sure he has since been ashamed of himself—as describing four-year-olds as being too incontinent to be able to attend schools.

Mr Grayden: You are generalising.

Mr WILSON: He said that they would create a situation where the Government would be in danger of being accused of child abuse.

Mr Grayden: You are distorting my statement.

Mr WILSON: We now have educational psychologists making statements such as this—

Four-year-olds seek out and need co-operative social skills.

They are finely geared at this age to learning. They just don't get what they need in unstructured playgroups.

They lose their enthusiasm and spontaneity if we don't provide the educational support they need.

It's crazy not to spend on early education because it will prevent so many learning problems later; problems that get more difficult—and more expensive—to right as the child gets older.

Trained staff can spot problems in development—social, intellectual and so on—in a three and four-year-old and take steps to help that child.

The Education Department is obsessed with age. Children can start learning only when they reach a certain chronological age, they say.

This is the case according to the department, the Minister, and the member for Murdoch, who is no doubt a latter day expert in these matters.

Mr MacKinnon: Are you going to tell us what you would do with your children? Would you send your three-year-old to school for four days a week?

Mr WILSON: For four half days a week. No pre-school child attends on four full days a week. Most of the four-year-olds who presently attend pre-schools do not go for four days a week. I wish Government members would get their facts right.

Mr Clarko: Did you pay anything towards the education of that child?

Mr WILSON: I paid towards the education of that child—as did all other parents for their children—because it was a community-based school.

Mr Clarko: Do you support that?

Mr WILSON: I support it to the degree that parents are capable of doing it. In that situation the fees were geared to the means of the parents. That was the system that prevailed at the time. What we are saying now is that that system was the one the Liberal Party policy document indicated the Government would continue to support.

Mr Clarko: Which you people opposed—and particularly you.

Mr WILSON: The member should not tell me what I opposed when I can tell him now that the Government committed itself to a course of action which it is now reneging on.

Several members interjected.

Mr WILSON: They are the facts. I do not care whether the member for Karrinyup or the Minister tries to crawl away from that situation. They cannot do it with any honour or integrity, because it is not possible to do that and continue with the policy they are now promulgating about the community. Certainly they are getting their just deserts, because they are reneging on promises they made.

Mr Grayden: That is completely untrue.

Mr WILSON: I should like to quote the comments which have been made by other experts in this area. Firstly, I shall refer to a statement made by the senior lecturer in psychology at the University of WA (Dr Bob Grieve) as follows—

Years ago it was thought that four-year-olds did not have many skills, but research has shown they are developing their intellect, thinking and reasoning powers, linguistic ability and perception.

There needs to be some sort of provision at pre-school age with trained personnel who

can provide the appropriate contact to exercise and develop these skills further.

Children need to learn interaction and social developments where the mother isn't always present, so there is a contrast with the family circle.

I should like now to quote the remarks of another well-known expert in the field of pre-school education. Her expertise is widely acknowledged not only in this State, but also throughout Australia and the world. I am referring to Dr Audrey Little who said—

... it was essential for the children to have access to pre-schools.

Most play groups run by mothers did not provide the kind of help that was needed.

Unless a trained teacher or pre-school teacher was in charge, the parents were likely to provide the wrong kind of activities...

Mr Clarko: She made a disgraceful comment in the newspaper when she said they were just coffee clubs for mothers.

Mr WILSON: A number of mothers agreed with her.

Mr Clarko: A lot of the mothers are formally trained teachers and ex-kindergarten teachers.

Mr WILSON: I do not mind if the member for Karrinyup who is prone to setting himself up as an expert—

Mr Clarko: I don't do that. That is what you are doing now.

Mr WILSON: I am not doing that. I am quoting the comments which have been made by experts and the member for Karrinyup is setting himself up against this expert who is acknowledged throughout Australia as being extremely knowledgeable in the area of pre-school education. If the member wishes to contradict her, that is his right.

Mr Clarko: She is a very highly qualified psychologist working with young people.

Mr WILSON: She is an educational psychologist.

Mr Clarko: But when she made the comment that these play groups were run for mothers who wanted only to have cups of tea, it was a dreadful thing to say. She denigrated them.

Mr WILSON: Dr Little made other comments apart from the one to which the member for Karrinyup has referred. He is very adept at seizing on little statements and taking them out of context, because they suit his argument.

Mr Clarko: Your whole speech is built on that.

Mr WILSON: I am not quoting one little comment out of context; I am quoting a whole range of comments from people who are expert in educational psychology.

Mr Clarko: Whose arguments suit yours. Is it not true some people say there is no pre-school education at all?

Mr WILSON: I should like to continue with my speech, Sir. If the member for Karrinyup wishes to get to his feet and make his own speech later, he may do so.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Watt): Order! As long as the member for Dianella continues to reply to the interjections, I shall allow them; but if he ignores the interjections, I shall give him the protection of the Chair.

Mr WILSON: I did not realise that was the practice; therefore, I shall ignore the interjections from the member for Karrinyup.

There is no doubt there is a wide cross-section in those areas where people are expert in pre-school education and educational psychology which favours the entry of four-year-old children into structured pre-school situations and which certainly does not favour, as a cheap alternative, the promotion of playgroups.

One of the interesting features of the Government's attempts earlier this year to promote playgroups, which are a cheap alternative to proper pre-school education, was the advertisement of the availability of approximately 29 pre-primary centres which were not being utilised fully by five-year-olds. They were to be made available at the request of parents for use by playgroups.

Recently the Minister was able to tell me in answer to a question that approximately 12 or 13 of those pre-primary centres which were offered had been taken up and used as playgroups by parents.

Obviously the Government does not understand it is of no use offering facilities to people so that they may use them for playgroups if the facilities are not based in the areas in which people want to make use of them. It seems to me that was one of the weaknesses in this grand scheme to offer vacant pre-primary time slots to playgroups in these areas. Such an offer is not a panacea to parents who have a clear understanding of the needs of their four-year-old children. Of course, we have heard the Minister and other members opposite say that parents do not have a clear understanding of the needs of their children and that other people do not have a clear understanding of the needs of four-year-olds. It is no panacea to offer these people a whole range of

playgroups. The Government is treating these people as fools and idiots who have no understandings of their own. It is fobbing them off with something cheap and it is trying to fool them into thinking it is offering them some kind of grand programme. However, these people will not be fooled.

The experts in the field of educational psychology are not being fooled and it is time the Government came to realise the community as a whole is not going to be fooled by these sorts of grand-sounding schemes which are, strictly speaking, without any real substance.

Am I correct in my understanding, Sir, that we are not restricted in this Division to talking about pre-primary education? I understand we can talk about education issues generally.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Watt): You may talk about education in its total sphere.

Mr WILSON: There is another issue I wish to raise which sadly also refers to what appears to be a dismantling in the sphere of education of a highly valued service which has been operating for some time. I refer, in particular, to the service which has been offered in a number of schools throughout the State whereby social workers have been provided particularly in areas where there has seemed to be a concentration of social problems amongst children and families of those children.

I understand that earlier this year the supervisor of social workers in schools retired and she was replaced by one of the other people who had been working as a school social worker for a number of years in the Girrawheen Senior High School region; that is, with the high school and the primary schools which contribute to it.

Unfortunately, in replacing that person who retired, the department saw fit not to replace her on the same basis as the service that had been offered previously. The new social worker supervisor was in fact required to retain responsibility for some of the schools in the area where he had been working previously and he was required also to have responsibility for other schools in an area far removed from that region—in the Midland district.

Another social worker was appointed to the priority schools programme to take over some of the remaining schools in the Girrawheen-Koondoola area and to retain responsibility for other schools in the Midland district. In fact, it was a very messy arrangement. It was not a wholly satisfactory replacement situation.

Dr Dadour: There is so much overlapping that you don't know where you are.

Mr WILSON: That may be the member's opinion, but it is not my opinion in this situation.

Dr Dadour: I am talking about in general.

Mr WILSON: In this situation the social worker who has operated in the schools in the Girrawheen-Koondoola area for many years has been able to play a very active role in dealing with many of the long-term social problems of students and their families.

The whole matter has come to a head because the replacement social worker who was appointed for only a number of months recently went on long service leave, which has meant that for the last six weeks of the school year no replacement of that person will be made.

From answers I have received from the Minister, and copies of correspondence I have relating to this matter, it is a fact that the Government does not intend to replace the school social worker who has gone on long service leave. As a result, these schools will be without a social worker for the remainder of the year.

I was told that the department has rejected approaches by principals concerned by the gap left by the lack of a replacement. The principals suggested there might be a short-term contract replacement, but the department has in effect said, "No, that can't be done; instead, a crisis referral service will operate". The department has said that as only six weeks of the school year remained, a temporary appointment would not be warranted.

I was a bit intrigued by the reference to a crisis referral centre, so I asked another question. I was advised that the nature of the crisis referral centre is—

In situations beyond the capacity of the school to handle, the social work supervisor, who is familiar with the children and schools of the district, will provide whatever help is possible. This will not be a full replacement for the service these schools have been receiving but will provide a satisfactory service until the end of this school year.

The schools had been receiving the service for several years. In whose opinion it will be satisfactory, I do not know; certainly it is not satisfactory in the opinions of the principals of the schools concerned. For instance, I refer to an occasion which occurred only last year at the Girrawheen Senior High School. A crisis arose; a year nine child in a very disturbed state could not be handled by the teachers or his parents. There was just nowhere to which they could refer for help. In fact, they ended up by trying to seek help from the child guidance unit at Warwick, but



were told that to get help from the psychiatrist there they would be required to wait for three months, which was not much use in the particular case. The social work supervisor referred to by the Minister was not available because he could not be contacted.

It seems to me we are being fobbed off by the Minister's answers. Members of Parliament have not made representations to him to score political points. Principals of schools genuinely are concerned for the welfare of students and their families. It cannot be questioned that the people on the spot, the principals at the schools, are in a very good position to identify these problems and state that they are real and require specialist attention. When attention is provided on a continuing basis over a number of years, when case histories have been built up, when the social workers concerned have been able to develop a rapport with the families concerned, to take away that service even for a six-week period seems to me to be showing a complete lack of concern for the problems being encountered.

I am even more concerned. In the context of a submission made by one of the principals, this matter was referred to. The principal received a response from the Director of Guidance and Special Education which seemed to indicate that at that level of the department there is very little awareness of the true role of a social worker in these schools. There even seems to be an indication in the letter from this director of an intention on the part of the department to cut down on the services. In response to the request that some effective replacement be made for the remaining weeks of the school year the director said—

I would be very interested to have from you some evaluation of the contribution made to a secondary school by a social worker. As I understand the role at your school, the prime concern is to help Year 8 students make the transition from primary school.

Anyone who has any information at all about the work of the social worker at that school over the number of years he has been there and has worked in association with the contributory primary schools, would not in his vaguest dreams come to that sort of conclusion. Of course, detailed records and case histories show that in every way the situation is to the contrary of that stated.

I am glad the principal took it upon himself to respond to the letter and indicate his view and the view of the school about the real situation and the

real need that exists for this kind of extra support so that the role of the school may be maintained effectively. He said this—

The majority of referrals would be Year 9's, followed by Year 8, then Year 10 and with Year 11 or 12 the least. Our Guidance Officer has tended to concentrate his efforts on Years 10, 11 and 12 because of the need for him to be involved with these students in the areas of careers and further education guidance.

I do not think anybody can deny that the role of the guidance officer is extremely onerous. He deals with students in their final three years of school, which is an important aspect especially in light of the current employment situation for school leavers. The principal put across the point that there is some overlap between the roles of the officer, the social worker, the school nurse, the house centre staff, the deputy principals, and himself. He continues—

At times all of us have varying degrees of involvement in attempting to solve the social problems of students and/or their families. The greatest limiting factor in our attempts is the amount of time that we have available for this task. The social worker provides additional time that wouldn't otherwise be available and of course he has training and expertise which the others don't have. He also makes home visits to meet the families; this is invaluable as some parents find difficulty in coming to the school.

The broad behavioural characteristics dealt with by the social worker would include refusal to attend school, disruptive or withdrawn behaviour in class, assaults on other students, parental assaults on children, absconding from home, parental separation, death of a parent and attempted suicide.

In recent weeks the pressure on all staff involved with students' social problems has been increased because the school nurse (Sister Iles) has been seriously ill and absent from duty. This has exacerbated the problem caused by the non-replacement of the social worker.

I do not think it can be denied that this is a special situation. There are large concentrations of families in this essentially low income area, and many of them are single-parent families who share many and deep social problems. The role of the social worker in this area has been crucial in coming to terms with these social problems and in assisting the children concerned to adapt in a more effective way to their education.

It is not good enough to take away a social worker from that situation, albeit for the last six weeks of the school year, when those who are teachers or who have any knowledge of school situations will know that that is a time of the year when, if anything, pressures increase and problems become worse.

I make a special plea to the Minister to have another look at that situation and examine the possibility of providing a third term contract person in that situation to relieve the tremendous problems being encountered by members and staff of schools together with parents and children as a result of that untimely withdrawal of the service.

Mr SHALDERS: At the outset, I want to say that I do not doubt the sincerity of the opening comments of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, but believe that he was in error because, in my opinion, apart from those people who are actually involved in pre-school education, there is certainly some confusion in the public sector about what is meant by the term "four-year-old".

Mr Blaikie: Hear, hear!

Mr SHALDERS: Following publicity and the accusations that the Government was withdrawing funds for four-year-old pre-school education, many parents in my electorate who have children enrolled and due to commence at a pre-primary centre next year, rang me and were most concerned because they thought it was the funding for that year of pre-school education that the Government was going to cut. When I explained to them that that was not the case, they expressed the view that they had certainly been misled by what they had read in the newspapers.

The member for Karrinyup described the situation accurately in saying that children who attend a pre-primary centre are generally referred to as four-pluses, because they have to be four at the beginning of the year and the majority of them are in fact only four years of age when their attendance at a pre-primary centre commences. We start a little earlier than the beginning of February, six weeks after the beginning of the year, which is about an eighth of the year. Approximately an eighth of the children have turned five by the time they actually attend a pre-primary centre for the first time and seven-eighths of those children are still only four years old; so at the beginning of the year we have a mixture of seven-eighths of the children being four years old and approximately an eighth being five years old. The issue we are talking about concerns children who are three-plus.

Mr Pearce: That is misleading.

Mr Carr: It is. It is equally misleading.

Mr Pearce: You are trying to explain to me how 50 per cent of the three-pluses are actually over four, which is exactly the misleading thing about it.

Mr SHALDERS: If we are talking about the time they actually commence—

Mr Pearce: Yes, but you are talking about the time that they are there. People think in terms of years for students because they are at school or pre-school for a year at a time.

Mr SHALDERS: If the member for Gosnells wants to try to confuse this Chamber and the parents, he can.

Mr Pearce: It is the Minister who is doing that.

Mr Carr: The Minister is not trying to clarify the situation.

Mr SHALDERS: It is clear that pre-primary education is for the four-plus-year-old children.

Mr Blaikie: Correct.

Mr SHALDERS: The issue we are talking about is that of three-plus-year-old children.

Mr Pearce: Why don't you say pre-primary is for five-year-olds—

Mr Blaikie: No, it is not.

Mr Pearce: —and pre-school is for four-year-olds?

Mr Blaikie: That is confusing.

Mr Pearce: That is what your own party policy talks about.

Mr SHALDERS: These children are only three years old at the commencement of the year.

Mr Pearce: Have you looked at your own party policy lately?

Mr SHALDERS: I am stating the facts as they exist.

Mr Pearce: I am telling you the fact that your party policy book refers to four-year-olds and five-year-olds in exactly the same way I do and the Education Department does.

Mr SHALDERS: I am quite happy to acknowledge to the member for Gosnells that that is a fact, but it is confusing.

Mr Blaikie: That is right.

Mr Pearce: That is not the only area where your policy is confusing.

Mr SHALDERS: It is confusing. We ought to talk about pre-school education if we are talking about two years of pre-school education for four-pluses and pre-school for three-pluses.

Mr Blaikie: That is the only clear way.

Mr SHALDERS: A rose by any other name! The purpose of the debate in this Chamber today is to discuss four-pluses and three-pluses. Let us look at the reason we have pre-primary centres to cater for the children who are four-plus-years of age: It is precisely because the Liberal Party and this Government recognised the unequal opportunities that existed for four-plus-year-old children under the kindergarten system.

We heard the member for Ascot talking about "silvertails", but it was a cry from the Opposition that kindergartens were located mainly in areas where people could afford to establish them, and that in many areas of lower socioeconomic groups there were no kindergartens, so children in those places were not getting the benefit of a year of pre-school education under the old kindergarten system. That is a valid point. The Government bit the bullet and said, "That is correct", and we are going to provide Government facilities so that all children throughout the State, irrespective of the area in which they reside, will have the opportunity to voluntarily attend a pre-primary centre so that they can all have at least one year of free pre-school education.

It is true to say that until recently community-operated pre-schools have catered for a large number of children also who were four-plus years of age. Probably one of the reasons for their doing so was that it was impossible for the Government to provide sufficient pre-primary centres immediately to cater for those children. The Government quickly embarked on an excellent programme and it is worthy of commendation for doing so; but it could not be done in five minutes. Community pre-schools took up the slack and they did so very well and are deserving also of commendation for that. They were there and continued to operate and for a long time the majority of their children attending were four-plus years of age.

The stage has now been reached in most areas where Government-provided facilities in the form of pre-primary centres are available for almost all the children parents want to have attend. In my own rapidly expanding electorate it may be that we will start 1982 with some places being unavailable for children because the pre-primary centres existing now may not be sufficient as it is a growing area. When that happened last year the Government took steps to commence an additional pre-primary class for children who did not have a place available to them at the beginning of the year.

In most areas the Government provided pre-primary centres catering for almost all the children whose parents wanted them to attend,

and so the places that were normally taken up by four-plus-year-old children in community-operated pre-schools are now available for what I have termed the three-pluses. I do not care what other members want to call them, but I believe three-plus-year-old is a more accurate description.

Mr Blaikie: Of course it is.

Mr SHALDERS: It is also conceivable that the time will come when all the places in these community pre-schools will be sought for three-plus-year-old children because the four-pluses will be catered for and will be attending Government-provided pre-primary centres. If that happens, the wheel will have turned a full circle because the only children who are three-pluses who will have places available for them, are where there happens to be pre-school centres and, as the Opposition has said, under the old kindergarten system they are in the areas of the silvertails.

Mr Bryce: That is not true.

Mr SHALDERS: Certainly it was an argument of the Opposition.

Mr Bryce: The Whitlam Government made sure they were sprinkled through other areas as well.

Mr SHALDERS: There is no doubt about what the Whitlam Government did.

Mr Bryce: They funded a scheme you ripped off.

Several members interjected.

Mr SHALDERS: The Whitlam Government made certain that the small community of Dwellingup missed out on an allocation of money which was to be provided for a kindergarten. This allocation was used in other areas to build double centres. Therefore, some areas have a double kindergarten centre at the expense of the Dwellingup community and that community is aware of that fact.

Mr Bryce: The Whitlam Government built dozens of single kindergartens everywhere.

Mr SHALDERS: I am telling the member that the funds were allocated for a centre at Dwellingup and that allocation was subsequently withdrawn because of inflation during the Whitlam years, and it was reallocated for the provision of double kindergarten centres in other areas.

Mr Bryce: That was probably in 1976.

Mr SHALDERS: For the first time the Dwellingup people returned a majority vote in favour of the Liberal Party candidate and that had not happened even under Sir Ross McLarty

when the majority went to the Labor Party candidate.

Mr Bryce: It sounds like a bit of an ego trip to me. It sounds like you managed to convince the people of Dwellingup of something that suited you very much.

Mr Old: It must have suited them too.

Mr SHALDERS: We are going to reach a stage where community-based pre-school centres—

Mr Bryce: That is right, and there could be hundreds of them, if the Government hands some of them over.

Mr SHALDERS: Like a seagull picking at potato chips!

Mr Bryce: Go for your life.

Mr SHALDERS: I listened to the member intently throughout his speech. I think it was good in some instances and not in others, and no doubt he will think the same of mine.

Mr Bryce: I wouldn't go that far.

Several members interjected.

Mr SHALDERS: We will reach the stage where community-based pre-schools will cater for a very small number of children in the four-plus-year-old group whose parents choose those centres in preference to Government-operated pre-school centres. I wonder whether that situation is very different from the one where parents of four-plus-year-old children choose to send them to a pre-primary centre attached to an independent school. Some parents will elect to send their children to either one of those two centres in preference to a Government-operated pre-primary centre.

What is the situation in regard to the four-plus-year-olds who attend independent pre-primary school centres? The situation is that those centres receive a subsidy from both the Commonwealth and the State Governments on a *per capita* basis. I believe the Government will need to reach a decision whereby a similar subsidy is made on a *per capita* basis to the four-plus-year-olds who attend community-based pre-school centres. I do not see why those parents who elect to send their children to independent pre-school centres should receive favoured treatment.

We believe the three-plus-year-olds group who attend independent pre-primary school-based centres should not receive any Government assistance whatsoever—nothing.

The Opposition is saying that the Government should fund pre-school education for the three-plus-year-old children who attend community-based pre-school centres. Presumably it supports

the proposition that Government funds should not be provided for the three-plus-year-old group who attend pre-primary centres attached to independent schools. If that is the thesis they support, they are advocating a situation of favouritism. The Minister has said that the Government believes that the three-plus-year-old group could be adequately catered for in playgroup situations and I understand that where they are catered for in situations of this kind, a small sum of money is provided for consumable items of equipment. I would be happy for the Minister to advise this Chamber whether, in fact, this is correct.

Mr Grayden: Yes, they do receive a small sum.

Mr SHALDERS: Yes, I did say a small subsidy which is provided mainly for consumable items of equipment.

If parents prefer to have their children attending a more formalised type of pre-school when they are in their three-plus year, I wonder whether we should not be saying to these parents, "You have every right to make that decision, however, if you send your children to playgroups they will benefit from the subsidy payable to these centres. We will provide pre-primary education in that centre free of charge to the four-plus-year-old children, but people who want their children to have two years' pre-school education from the time their children are three years old, will have to pay for it. The same applies to those parents who elect to send their children to pre-school centres established in independent schools; they have to pay for that education.

Mr Pearce: That is rubbish, because you could extend that right through and say to people, "If you want to send your children to high school you should pay for it". We are not talking about principles like that; we are talking about cut-off points for education and the appropriate place for education to start.

Mr SHALDERS: In my opinion the cut-off point at which the Government should be meeting the total cost of pre-school education is the four-plus-year-olds; that is, for those children who are four years old at the beginning of the school year.

Mr Pearce: The Opposition disagrees with you by 12 months, and I think that the people do too.

Mr SHALDERS: That is a reasonable assumption. I said we disagreed with the terms used, but within this Chamber we understand each other irrespective of the terms that are used. I believe we should be talking about three-plus-year-olds and four-plus-year-olds, and the Opposition prefers to talk about the four-plus-year-olds and the five-plus-year-olds. That has confused the public. We have reached the stage

where our points of view differ. I have given my reasons for my belief that the Government should adopt a particular stand; however, the Opposition appears to have adopted another one. With those remarks I support the Division.

Mr CARR: It is very tempting to dive into the waters that the member for Murray has just muddied in respect of what to call children—

Mr Shalders: Not muddied—full of algae at the moment!

Mr CARR: —in the year in which they turn either four or five. It is not my intention to deal with that matter during the general debate on the education Division. I intend to touch on two matters which are of concern to me. One is essentially an electorate matter in Geraldton and the other is of importance on a State-wide basis.

The first point refers to the driver education programme which is in the process of being axed by the Government. I am concerned that a replacement programme has not been organised and made ready to put into operation. The previous scheme cost only in the vicinity of \$150 000 per year to operate. I know comments have been made about that scheme, but I am able to say that it operated effectively and successfully in Geraldton.

The scheme had operated for 15 years at the Geraldton Senior High School and it enjoyed the co-operation from Young Motors, the local GMH dealer. It was well received and appreciated by the staff, parents, and those students who participated in it.

I know some problems have been raised with the driver education scheme, and I am well aware the Public Accounts Committee has considered the scheme and has raised a couple of queries. For example, it was concerned the scheme covered only 7 per cent of the students in the age groups concerned. I know the Public Accounts Committee had regard for the need to examine very closely the cost effectiveness of the scheme. Further, the committee actually recommended changes to the scheme, which are detailed on page 8 of the Public Accounts Committee report No. 16. These suggestions include that a charge should be made on students participating in the scheme; that professional driving instructors be used for the practical portion of the scheme; that vehicles should be used during school hours as well as outside school hours; and, that the entire programme should be subject to close monitoring for its general effectiveness.

However, the same committee which raised those queries and put forward those suggestions

strongly recommended that the school driver training scheme should be allowed to continue and, in fact, expanded.

My view is that while it may be desirable to make some changes to the scheme, the scheme should be allowed to continue in its present form until such time as alternative arrangements are made and the details are worked out as to how a subsequent scheme should operate. Then, it would be a reasonable matter to change from one scheme to the other.

However, in fact, that is not what is going to happen. A gap will be created. I know the Minister for Police and Traffic indicated to this Chamber that the Road Traffic Authority was given consideration to a replacement scheme, and has expressed the hope that arrangements could be made in readiness for next year. He also expressed the hope—which I applaud—that such a scheme should involve not just those students at school, but all students.

However, it seems to me the hope of the Minister for Police and Traffic that this scheme will be in operation next year is a pious dream. No funds have been allocated for the purpose, and, given the tight budgetary situation we hear so much about, it seems most unlikely funds could be made available from some unknown source to enable the scheme to operate in 1982. Therefore, we will have a gap, with one scheme ceasing to operate at the end of this year and a new scheme which will not be ready until at least the 1983 school year. That is an unfortunate situation.

The greatest criticism I have of this proposed change is that, although it involves only 7 per cent of children in the age group, it will be seen by people as a symbolic move which reflects the Government's lack of concern about road safety generally. The public are concerned at the serious road traffic toll and believe there should be greater driver education generally within the community. The public also are well aware that young drivers are at a higher risk in terms either of causing accidents or of being involved in accidents. This Government's decision has been received by the public with dismay because many people portray it—either justly or unjustly—as a lessening of the Government's concern for the problem of road safety. That may be an unfair assessment in reality because, as the Public Accounts Committee rightly pointed out, the scheme affects only a very small percentage of people in this age group.

However, I put it to the Minister for Education and the Minister for Police and Traffic that this move has been seen as a symbolic gesture

reflecting a lessening of the Government's commitment to driver education. The scheme costs only \$150 000 a year. Each year, about 300 people are killed on our roads. How can the Government equate \$150 000 to 300 people—or, for that matter, one person—killed on our roads when the expenditure of that money might save lives?

Mr Watt: Would you care to comment on the other part of the recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee that the education authorities should include in the syllabus from K to 10 a range of driver instruction material which would assist those students who at present are receiving no input on road safety matters?

Mr CARR: I accept the point made by the member for Albany and concede the comments I have been making relate only to stopping what was already in existence. I agree there is considerable scope to greatly increase driver education throughout schools generally.

Mr Watt: And that could be done at virtually no cost, but with substantial gain to the public.

Mr CARR: I agree with the comments of the member for Albany. Given the public's perception of the seriousness of the road toll problem, such moves are desperately needed.

The second topic with which I wish to deal relates specifically to the Geraldton area. I refer to the situation at the John Willcock High School, and to the refusal of this Government to upgrade that school to five-year status. John Willcock High School has been in operation for seven years. It came into being as a result of serious overcrowding at the Geraldton Senior High School. Throughout its seven-year life it has been the poor relation amongst the secondary schools in the Geraldton area. It constantly has lived in the shadow of Geraldton Senior High School.

For a start, its location was not particularly appropriate. It was situated adjacent to the urban area, in a broad acre situation, and located between two housing estates which were to be its main catchment areas. One was a State Housing Commission area and the other was of a very high socioeconomic standing. The school therefore had the disadvantage from the beginning of having to come to grips with two different communities.

Mr Watt: Were better sites available?

Mr CARR: A debate took place at the time as to where the school should be located, and the planning people from the Education Department came up with the site. I do not want to go into that aspect of the matter, because it is not my major criticism; I simply made the point to illustrate how the school had been at a

disadvantage throughout its life. Perhaps it stepped off on the wrong foot. I intend to mention a number of other disadvantages the school has encountered along the way which have assisted to place it in its present position of disadvantage.

The school experienced problems in its early days with its grounds. Problems were experienced with prevailing winds. Actually, the school is located in the electorate of Greenough—although it draws from both the Greenough and Geraldton electorates—and accordingly, members will appreciate the extent of the wind problem.

Mr Watt: Don't you all have trouble with wind in Geraldton?

Mr CARR: Yes, but only in the summer; it is very nice in the winter.

The school also experienced a problem with the lack of water which made it difficult to get its grounds in shape. However, those problems have been overcome to the point where the school now has excellent grounds.

The school also has been at a disadvantage in losing the Dongara students. For some years, students from Dongara travelled by bus to attend the John Willcock High School. However, when the Dongara High School quite rightly was made a year 12 high school, the students were transferred back to Dongara which, naturally, had a detrimental effect on the number of students at the John Willcock High School.

My view is that, having been established in 1975, John Willcock High School should have proceeded to year 11 in 1978 and year 12 in 1979. Unfortunately, this Government has refused to take that step. I attribute a substantial part of the blame for this to the Director General of Education (Dr Mossenson). I well remember his attending a meeting at Geraldton at which this matter was discussed, and going to great pains to defend some proposal that there should be three-year high schools generally in the metropolitan area, with students then being channelled to five-year high schools. He felt this policy should also apply in country areas such as Geraldton and other regions.

I totally reject such a concept. It may be appropriate for the metropolitan area—although I very much doubt it—but it is totally unreasonable and unacceptable in the country areas where in each region there is a small number of schools which constantly are being compared with each other, which relate to each other, and which compete with each other on the sporting field and the like.

The growth of John Willcock High School has been retarded by that decision. It is well known

throughout the town that a considerable number of parents of children in the catchment area of John Willcock High School have chosen to send their children to one of the other five-year schools from year eight. Some children have been sent to private schools—to Stella Maris College and St. Patrick's College; other parents have managed, in one way or another, to enrol the children into the Geraldton Senior High School; so clearly the growth of John Willcock High School has been retarded by the Government's deliberate policy not to allow the school to go to year 11.

As an example of the disadvantages the school faces, when the inter-school sports carnival is held, John Willcock, as a year 10 high school, has to compete against year 12 high schools; and in that competition it appears to be a second-class school.

Unfortunately the school has attained the reputation of having a lesser standard in the community. That is totally unfair because it is an excellent school and it has a lot to recommend it. The morale in the school is very good; but the community holds it in low regard because it goes to year 10 only. The school deserves a boost. It should be allowed to proceed to year 11 at the earliest opportunity.

In a town with two Government high schools, it is reasonable that they should complement each other. They should have roughly the same status. It is perfectly reasonable for one school to specialise in one range of subjects, and for the other to specialise in a different range of subjects. As an example, Geraldton Senior High School could specialise in music and related subjects, and John Willcock High School could specialise in art and related subjects.

To add insult to the injury in the last seven years, the information which has now become available indicates that next year Geraldton Senior High School will be faced again with an overcrowding problem. John Willcock was established in 1975 to overcome the crowding problem at the Geraldton Senior High School. Next year Geraldton Senior High School will have a transportable home economics room, and two transportable classrooms, to alleviate the overcrowding problem.

Why has the Geraldton Senior High School an overcrowding problem? The latest issue of *The Geraldton Guardian* carried the news that one of the main reasons for the overcrowding problem is a record enrolment in year 11. That is at a time when John Willcock has vacant capacity.

John Willcock High School is large enough to have 500 or 600 children, but it has 390 at

present. Geraldton Senior High School is overcrowded, and transportable classrooms will be placed at that school next year because of the record enrolment in year 11. However, John Willcock is not allowed to proceed to year 11.

It is interesting that the Priest committee, in its recent report on lower secondary education, recommended that, in the long term, all high schools should proceed to year 12. I would have thought, given the background of that report, it would be perfectly reasonable to expect that John Willcock would proceed to year 11 next year.

A new situation has developed recently, and it adds further to the problem. I refer to the gifted children's programme which is about to be introduced at the secondary school level in Geraldton. We know that it will be introduced at secondary school level at Geraldton Senior High School; but I would have thought that when the town has two high schools, one of which commands great respect and a very high status in the community, and the other is at a disadvantage by being faced with a lower status, it would be an excellent opportunity to help balance the standing of those two schools by placing the gifted children's programme at John Willcock High School.

I know that the department requires a senior high school for a gifted children's programme to be provided; and in line with what I have been saying, if John Willcock High School were to proceed to year 11 next year and to year 12 in 1983, it would be able to have a gifted children's programme. The fact is that if John Willcock does not have a gifted children's programme, it will lose five or six of its potential students each year to Geraldton Senior High School. Of course, they are the students whom one would expect to play a significant role at John Willcock.

If the Minister thinks this is an unreasonable request, I refer him to a similar situation which has taken place at the primary school level in Geraldton. The Geraldton gifted children's programme at the primary school level has been located at the Beachlands Primary School. Probably it was located fortuitously at that school because it had a vacant classroom or two. Beachlands Primary School has obtained a great advantage from having that programme located there. The Beachlands school is in a State Housing Commission area, and generally it has been a socioeconomically deprived area. The school was not highly regarded in the community of Geraldton at large; but with the introduction of the gifted children's programme, Beachlands Primary School has had a rise in status in the eyes of the Geraldton community. The people take

much more notice of that school now because of the placing of the gifted children's programme there.

The gifted children's programme has been of considerable advantage to Beachlands. It would be of equally great advantage to John Willcock, if one were located there.

I do not know the Government's objection to John Willcock High School. Perhaps it does not like the school because it was named after a former Labor Premier. I hope that is not the explanation.

Mr Watt: That is a stupid suggestion.

Mr CARR: If the Government has an interest in John Willcock High School, it should help it.

Mr Grayden: You know perfectly well we have an interest in it.

Mr Pearce: Take it to year 12, then. That is the obvious move.

Mr CARR: I would be delighted if the Minister could prove me wrong this afternoon. I would apologise most profusely to the Minister if he should prove me wrong by agreeing that the school can go to year 11 next year and to year 12 in the following year.

Whatever reason the Government may have for its objection to John Willcock High School, it is time that the mistreatment of the school was reversed.

Mr Old: You cannot wipe out a statement like that.

Mr CARR: If the Minister for Agriculture wants to make a great issue about it—

Mr Old: It is not what you said; it is what you did not say. It is the inference.

Mr CARR: Whatever the reason, it is time that the treatment was reversed.

Mr Grayden: You know perfectly well why it is not a senior high school.

Mr CARR: I do not know why it has not been made a senior high school. I do know that the Opposition made clear at the elections in 1977 and 1980 that if it had been elected to Government the school would have proceeded to years 11 and 12.

Mr Grayden: That would have been another instance of the Opposition's squandering of public funds.

Mr CARR: The Minister talks about the squandering of public funds, but we have the situation in which John Willcock High School has vacant capacity, but the department is locating demountables at Geraldton Senior High School to cater for the overcrowding problem. That is more

of a waste of money than the situation I am suggesting to the Minister this afternoon.

Mr Watt: Do you know approximately the number of enrolments for years 11 and 12 at the senior high school?

Mr CARR: The full enrolment at Geraldton Senior High School is in the vicinity of 1 100. I know that does not answer the question; but I understand that at the start of this year over 100 students were enrolled in year 11. The departmental representative in Geraldton has referred to the record enrolment for year 11 next year; so I would say we are looking at more than 100 students in each of years 11 and 12.

Mr WATT: Even if it were in the order of 100 or more, to make Willcock High School a senior high school would put about 100 kids in the upper school of each of those two schools. That is questionable in terms of the deployment of the staff.

Mr Pearce: You could deploy staff between the schools. You people need a much more flexible attitude to education.

Mr CARR: The argument the member puts forward is acceptable only if we agree that the bigness of a school is an asset. I went to a school which had about 600 students and I suggest most members went to schools of a similar size. A high school with about 500 or 600 students is far better educationally and socially than a school of perhaps 1 100.

Mr Watt: In Albany we have only one high school with another about to be built. St. Joseph's College loses students from the upper school because the limited numbers mean the college is not able to provide an adequate range of subject options. Many of the students go to the high school.

Mr CARR: In a few years' time, the member may be faced with the problem with which I am faced. It is very interesting to note that increasing numbers of people in the John Willcock catchment area are sending their children to St. Patrick's and Stella Maris despite there being fewer subject options there than at the high school.

The last point I wish to make is that the morale and spirit at John Willcock High School is remaining at a very high level in spite of the difficulties confronting the school. Great credit must go to the staff and parents involved. The school is deserving of a boost, which it would receive if it learnt that it will have a year 11 next year. While I do not have too much hope at this stage, I appeal to the Minister to take this step which is very much in the interests of all concerned.



Mr WATT: I rise briefly to correct something said last night by the member for Gosnells relating to comments I made during the Budget debate about programmes for intellectually gifted children. I referred to the fact that advertisements have been placed in *The West Australian* advertising special programmes for intellectually gifted children in a number of metropolitan schools. I said that these programmes were not available in any country high school. I was critical of what I considered to be a discriminatory practice.

That comment was made after the Principal of the Albany Senior High School had taken the matter up with the department and had been told there was no possibility of any similar courses being introduced in country high schools. It is true we have had some programmes running in Albany and in certain other country high schools, but they have been limited.

Mr Pearce: You implied, not only in the Chamber but also in comments reported in the *Great South News*, that they were not present.

Mr WATT: I am glad the member referred to the article in the *Great South News*, which I think was a fairly faithful presentation of the comments I made here. Obviously because of constraints of space it did not cover everything I said. That article has been referred to the Deputy Director of Education (Mr Loudon) who, after reading it because of some concern the principal had about how accurate my comments were, said he regarded the article as a fair assessment of the current situation and that there continued to be discrimination against country students and schools in the provision of these programmes.

Mr Pearce: But the article makes mention of the programme which already exists at the Albany Senior High School.

Mr WATT: No, it did not.

Mr Pearce: Nor did your comments in Parliament.

Mr WATT: It was not necessary to do so. The point I was making was that these special programmes, which are a complete course in themselves, are being introduced as a new project into metropolitan high schools. There was certainly no intention on my part in any way to conceal anything—I was trying to do the reverse. I was trying to point out that something we have had in a limited degree was about to be lost. That certainly added to my criticism.

The member for Gosnells is very quick to try to put down people if he feels they have made a comment without being adequately informed. It may well be that on that occasion I was not adequately informed. But the principal of the

school brought this matter to my attention and asked me to raise it in Parliament, which I did. Subsequently he received a letter from the Director General of Education who said that while the department was not going to change the situation with respect to this special programme we could continue with the programme we had. We did win that concession. Unfortunately the principal never thought to acquaint me of the contents of that letter. In the circumstances I feel I can hardly be blamed for speaking as I did.

We in the country are still being treated in a less than favourable way compared with treatment given to city high schools which will have these programmes. Again I make the point I made in the Budget debate that it is generally conceded there are many advantages in the quality of life and other things available to young people who are brought up in country areas. Nevertheless, it would have been very desirable if just one country senior high school had been selected for one of these special courses. Perhaps students from the metropolitan area would be prepared to attend that country high school. Certainly there are country students who would be just as happy to go to another country town instead of to the city. The department has treated schools in country towns less favourably than it has treated city schools.

Mr CLARKO: I would like to say a few words on this issue which has been confused by the misuse of terminology. The use of the term "four-year-old" has caused a great deal of confusion which has been compounded by those people who are asserting that the State Government plans to withdraw pre-school education for four-year-olds.

I do not have to look very far to find an example which I think will bring home to members very clearly how confusing is the use of the term "four-year-olds". My eldest daughter was born on 26 December. If she were in the relevant age group today she could attend pre-primary school in the year in which she turned five, on 26 December. For the whole of the school year she would have been four and everyone would have called her a four-year-old.

My second daughter was born on 24 January, so she would be five years of age when she went to pre-primary school. She would be called a five-year-old for the whole of that pre-primary year. If she had attended some form of educational care two years before school, she would have been four years old two years before formal schooling started.

If members consider those two daughters of mine they will see we have a four-year-old one

year before formal schooling and a four-year-old two years before formal schooling. That is why it is essential we say that formal schooling begins in this State in the year in which a child turns six; that is, when he is five-plus years of age.

We have pre-primary schools which will continue to cater for those students who are four-plus years, and the debate at the present moment is to make it clear what we are going to do about the three-plus-year-old children. That is the essence of the problem.

I would not suggest that members opposite or people involved in the pre-school movement are trying to do this deliberately, but unless we get back to a description which is completely clear we will have confusion.

Mr Pearce: Your proposal is no clearer than the existing terminology. Why not concede that the point about your two daughters emphasises the point made by the member for Dianella, that this chronological year starting from 1 January with every kid starting at the same time is the problem.

Mr CLARKO: Nevertheless the member must appreciate that the younger a child is the more critical that factor is to his schooling. That is why it is so important, when we get to the three-plus-year-olds, to look very carefully at this matter. Before we embark on any sort of scheme whereby we see all three-plus-year-olds being entitled—out of the public purse—to two years of pre-formal education, we must very carefully examine that side of the question.

Mr Wilson: But you are not doing that.

Mr CLARKO: Firstly, I want to establish the terms. Unless one uses the terminology I am using, one will become highly confused.

Mr Pearce: Some of your three-pluses will be four.

Mr CLARKO: If I use the term "three-plus" it is clear to everybody what is meant.

Mr Pearce: It is not clear. If you say, "three-plus" everyone will think once a child turns four, it will stop being three-plus.

Mr CLARKO: The term "three-plus" relates to 1 January. In Western Australia we use the lock step system and the position is arranged according to the terminology I have used. There are many other sorts of systems. Previously in this State children started school on their birthdays and, in other States, children attend school in the term in which they reach the relevant age. In some States children may start school in the first and second terms, but they are debarred from doing so in the third term.

The principals put up the strongest fight against children starting school during the course of the year. A whole range of systems are used throughout Australia, but we operate under the lock step system here and that is the one to which we should have regard, particularly when we are discussing this issue.

One would be foolhardy in the extreme if one said one could treat all the three-pluses in the same way as other groups are treated, because that is a delicate age and one must be very perceptive and aware of that.

Earlier I asked the Opposition whether it proposed free Government education for all children in the three-plus age group. If that is the case, I understand from statements made recently by the Minister for Education that would result in capital cost of \$16 or \$17 million with a recurrent cost of approximately \$16 million a year. If we intend to move into that area of additional expenditure, we should be certain it is totally justified on educational grounds. One would also need to weigh up that expenditure against the overall burden of the education budget as part of the State's finances. I am sure every reasonable person would accept that. Perhaps some people would say the ideal situation would be to include three-pluses in the education system, but while we are short of money it might be better if the \$16 million were spent on such matters as smaller class sizes or other things of that nature.

Mr Bryce: You are not suggesting every four-year-old would want that, are you?

Mr CLARKO: I asked whether the Opposition proposed free Government education for all three-pluses.

Mr Pearce: You should say, "Access to free education for all those who want it".

Mr CLARKO: The figures provided by the so-called experts indicated a capital cost of \$16 million and a recurrent cost of \$16 million a year.

Mr Pearce: I hope the Minister for Education did not provide those figures.

Mr CLARKO: I would not imagine the Minister worked out the figures himself. That is what we must face up to when we decide where we shall use our scarce education dollars. We must decide also where we would put these new three-plus centres. It is a very important question. Would we put them in the school grounds? If we did that, we would once again hear all the horrible allegations which were made when it was proposed that pre-primary centres be located in the school grounds.

At that time a number of people in the old kindergarten movement flayed us for that proposition and told us how dangerous it would be to have younger children in a conventional school situation. Of course they grossly exaggerated the position. For example, in my area a junior primary school is situated alongside another school which takes years four to seven. It is on the border of the electorate of the member for Scarborough and my electorate. The one to threes and the four to sevens were separated deliberately and it was argued there would be all sorts of dangers if they mixed. However, throughout the rest of the district there is not another situation where the one to threes and the four to sevens are separated. It amazed me that it was laid down at that particular school that the two groups of children had to play separately, because of the alleged dangers created by the physical size of the bigger children. However, such separation was not required elsewhere.

Mr Wilson: Pre-primary centres are fenced off.

Mr CLARKO: I agree with the member for Dianella, but it was suggested we were not going to take these sorts of steps. The people who were opposing the pre-primary set-up said that and the member for Dianella was one of the leaders of the people who attacked us over this issue. All sorts of gross exaggerations were used by people like the member for Dianella.

Mr Wilson: Rubbish! Stop pushing yourself!

Mr CLARKO: The member for Dianella chaired a couple of meetings in this regard and thought he was an expert. He became one of the leaders of the people who criticised the Government for establishing pre-primary centres in that way.

As you, Sir, would know, when the Nott inquiry presented its report in 1972, the Labor Party was in power in this State—one of the brief aberrations that occurs from time to time in this State—and it rejected it. When we said we intended to set up pre-primary centres in this way, the Labor Party and certain kindergarten teachers told us how dangerous it would be and in fact the reverse situation applied.

When the Labor Party was in power and had the opportunity to provide pre-school education for four-plus children, it refused to do so. Now it is in Opposition, it has attacked us for failing to provide education for three-plus children, which is one year lower than the age at which the Labor Party rejected the proposition. That is hypocrisy in the extreme.

Mr Shalders: If we put the facilities for the three-pluses in the schools, we could then use them for the two-pluses!

Mr Bryce: We dealt with that absurdity this morning.

Mr Young: Do you guarantee you would not do that?

Mr Wilson: Why don't you catch up with the rest of the world?

Mr CLARKO: The question is: Where are we going to locate these three-plus centres? Are we going to put them in the school grounds, or will we locate them in a position contiguous to the school grounds and fence them off? Alternatively, are we going to put them somewhere else altogether?

Another question which must be asked is whether parents should contribute directly, either in part or in whole, to the cost of providing any form of universal education for three-pluses? I am sure, bearing in mind your perspicacity, Sir, you will understand that, when the Labor Government rejected the findings of the Nott inquiry in 1972, it refused to pick up the tab for four-plus children and, in effect, said, "The parents of four-plus-year-olds children should pay for this". Now the Opposition is trying to say we are niggardly, because we are not prepared to pick up the tab for the education of all three-plus children.

Mr Bryce: We phased out the levy.

Mr CLARKO: That may be so, but the Labor Government did not pick up the tab for it. Is the Deputy Leader of the Opposition saying that in 1972 the Tonkin Government funded kindergarten teachers' salaries?

Mr Bryce: The levy was phased out by the end of our term.

Mr CLARKO: Is the Deputy Leader of the Opposition saying the Tonkin Government funded the total cost of kindergarten teachers' salaries?

Mr Bryce: No, not quite.

Mr CLARKO: That is the biggest cost. Indeed, three costs are involved: The major cost is the teachers' salaries which the Tonkin Government refused to pay.

Mr Bryce: We paid part of the cost.

Mr CLARKO: The Tonkin Government refused to pick up the tab for teachers' salaries. However, we paid for them in 1977. The second area relates to construction costs and I should like to point out that principally the building costs were met by local government.

Mr Bryce: Were any Commonwealth funds available in 1972?

Mr CLARKO: None were available in 1972.

Mr Bryce: Commonwealth funds were used for that purpose.

Mr CLARKO: The Tonkin Government did not pay the teachers' salaries and it did not construct the buildings. The buildings were provided by local government and all the Labor Government provided was a bit of chalk and paper.

Several members interjected.

Mr CLARKO: Having done virtually nothing for four-plus children, the Opposition is now saying we should provide free education for three-plus children as well as for four-plus children.

Mr Wilson: You promised to do it!

Mr CLARKO: Twisting of the tongue by the member for Dianella is not effective here. He twisted the situation when he said how dreadful it is for four-plus children not to be given an opportunity by our Government to go into pre-primary centres.

Mr Wilson: You are an expert at misinterpreting what people in this place say.

Mr CLARKO: All of his remarks have been filled with hatred; he spits venom when he talks on this subject. The Labor Party when in Government never did anything positive for four-plus children. In fact, the Labor Party did exactly the opposite, but it is now trying to castigate this Government for not giving total support to three-plus children. We have never said that we will fund totally the education of three-plus children.

Mr Wilson: Now you are wriggling.

Mr CLARKO: The member for Dianella in his ignorance and gross dyspeptic state tried to say that a Labor Government would encourage the education of three-plus children.

Mr Wilson: I said more than that.

Mr CLARKO: He said a Labor Government would give those children an extra year at pre-school. At present in a class of 25 pre-school children, 15 of those are four-pluses, and the other 10 are three-pluses and are funded in exactly the same way as the four-pluses. That is what we are doing now, and we intend to continue that course. The Minister has made statements to that effect.

The remarks of the Opposition are typical of its normal veering and twisting, and, in particular, typical of the member for Dianella who with supposed annoyance and anger said that we should fund centres with three-plus children in the mornings and afternoons. Presumably the centre to which the member for Gosnells will go this

evening has three-plus children only or monthly. The Opposition has said that the people support it in its endeavour to have funded the education of not only four-plus children, but also three-plus children. The Opposition has said the Government should immediately pick up the tab for that education.

It is interesting that in the past the Opposition has not said it would do the same thing. Before the 1980 election the Opposition did not say it would provide pre-school education for three-plus children. The remarks of the Opposition are typical of those which one would expect from an Opposition that is so low. All it has tried to do is score points off the Government. The Labor Party rejected pre-school education for all four-plus children, but it is now trying to get cheap mileage out of the situation and has made totally misleading remarks. The Opposition has put into the minds of the public that the Government offered and then gave a system of universal education for three-plus children, but then retracted that offer.

It is important when considering this matter to accept that not all parents require education for their three-plus children.

Mr Pearce: I think that is true; some parents don't want to start their children at six.

Mr CLARKO: That is an equally helpful comment! Some parents do not want to send their children at the age of four-plus, and that is why the system is voluntary. A greater number would not like to send their children at three-plus, and if we considered children at two-plus there would be an even greater number of—if not all—parents who did not want to send their children.

Some people in the community would be glad to see the expansion of pre-school and pre-primary centres so that they become a permanent child minding establishment. We do not propose to do that, and certainly child minding is not a responsibility of the Education Department.

Mr Wilson: You are trying to do that with child welfare education.

Mr CLARKO: The fundamental question is: How should the education programme for three-plus children operate? The Opposition has not put forward the system it would follow. Would the programme be a duplicate of the one for four-plus children?

Mr Pearce: I will explain our pre-school policy clearly and explicitly when we get to the appropriate item. You can speak on that then.

Mr CLARKO: I am not saying the Opposition does not have something to offer, but I ask the

fundamental question: What should the three-plus education programme be? Should it be the same as that for four-plus children, or does the Opposition propose that three-plus children should do what four-plus children do; four-plus children do what five-plus children do; and five-plus children do what six-plus children do?

Educationally it is questionable whether an acceptable argument can be put forward that children in the first year of their formal schooling should do work equivalent to that which children in the year above them have to this stage carried out. Perhaps the three-plus and four-plus programmes would be very much the same. The children are given a piece of paper with nine elephants and one giraffe depicted on it and asked to indicate which animal is the odd one out. Perhaps tennis players and football players are depicted. Will these children merrily play with their paints and so on? Someone needs to put forward an education programme, and include a clear demonstration of the educational advantages that could be achieved by the programme.

As we all know, many people argue that we should not be concerned just with education, but also with the social aspect, and this matter is argued particularly in regard to needy children.

Mr Pearce: I would argue that in regard to high schools as well.

Mr CLARKO: I believe the social aspect is significant, but schools predominantly are available for other reasons; the social aspect is secondary to the prime role of giving an education. I know some people may question that view, but the fundamental question that should be asked is: How should the system operate?

Another point relates to children born on 1 January as opposed to children born on 31 December. We are not talking about just a period of almost a year; the important point to remember is that for the first couple of years of a child's life he undergoes a growth and development pattern; his mood and physical aspects are developed. A child of three-plus has for the first couple of years of his life been learning to eat, sleep, walk, and so on. One year is a huge part of that child's life, so we must be careful with any system we adopt for three-plus children.

Mr Pearce: Some of that is true of five-year-olds in primary schools.

Mr CLARKO: I was leading to that exact point; we must consider the beginning of formal schooling for children who are five-plus. We have these lovely young teachers who get the kids together—

Mr Pearce: That is a sexist remark.

Mr CLARKO: I hope we always have female Grade I teachers in this State.

Mr Blaikie: Are they loving people like Alsatian dogs?

Mr CLARKO: In her class there will be three identifiable groups; one of children who have had four-plus education; one of children who have had three-plus and four-plus education; and one of children who have had no pre-school education at all. This situation creates a dilemma for the Grade I teacher unless there is a highly structured system in the class.

Mr Wilson: Children are always at different levels of development.

Mr Pearce: The less the system is structured in the lower levels, the fewer problems are created.

Mr CLARKO: It is true that we will always have different levels; that is the quintessence of the education system. For many years we have had to discuss individual differences. I am suggesting that with five-plus children the differences will be even more obvious with a three-tiered system.

I say one other very important thing: There are reputable educators who seriously question the desirability of a full three-plus and four-plus programme for all children who want it.

Mr Wilson: Can you name some of them?

Mr CLARKO: As I said, Dr Little, an educational psychologist, probably has not taught in a classroom for many years. She taught me educational psychology a long time ago, but she was not teaching at schools at that time, but university undergraduates.

Mr Wilson: What are you implying?

Mr CLARKO: She made the allegation of play-groups being a place for coffee drinking mothers, which I reject. When I was a councillor in my own district I was associated with the establishment of five kindergartens and that motivated me into having an interest in the subject because in my district one could not get a place for four-year-olds. One could not find any. I have three daughters and the only one who received a kindergarten education was the one who was able to attend when I was transferred to Katanning; the other two were not able to find a place.

Mr Pearce: That was a dreadful situation.

Mr CLARKO: It got worse. I moved to my district 20 years ago. Over the previous 10 or 15 years the situation had become worse. It depended on local governments and councils having an interest in the matter. Parents who were interested had to depend on local

government taking the right line. That was the position that the Government was in when it refused to adopt the Nott report.

Mr Pearce: It is largely the responsibility of Gough Whitlam and the Federal Labor Party.

Mr CLARKO: No, we proposed this before Whitlam came to power.

Mr Pearce: Who provided the money?

Mr CLARKO: My party proposed it before the Nott inquiry came out, and recommended exactly what that inquiry recommended. That was before the Whitlam Government came into power. The Labor State Government refused to look closely at any programme which gave universal pre-school education to the four-plus age group.

Government members: Hear, hear!

Mr CLARKO: So all these things are of fundamental importance. Finally, it is my understanding that the Minister has communicated with various interested groups in relation to this matter and has requested them to forward him information. When the Minister receives that information we will be in a position where we can move onto the next stage.

Mr Wilson: You have already made the decision.

Mr CLARKO: I keenly look forward to the report and the decision the Government will eventually make. If one compares the record of the two major parties of this Chamber in regard to pre-school education, we stand light years ahead of the Labor Party.

Government members: Hear, hear!

Mr Wilson: It does not stand light years ahead of anything.

Mr TUBBY: I take this opportunity to make a few comments on a problem that has been mentioned by the member for Geraldton, and it might surprise members to learn that I go along with his thinking and thank him for his support in a problem we both share. He has a high school in his electorate that has surplus children and I have a very good high school in my electorate which has surplus accommodation and, in view of that situation, the logical thing to do is to upgrade John Willcock High School to a senior high

school and to take advantage of the excellent facilities at that school.

I agree with almost all the remarks the member for Geraldton has made and at this late hour I am not going to canvass in detail why it perhaps does not have to be upgraded. The situation is that Geraldton High School has students in demountables and transportables whereas we have a new high school, the John Willcock High School, just over the boundary in my electorate that is not being fully utilised. It has excellent grounds and facilities and a wonderful supporting PCA. It is a school that, considering the disadvantages it has had, has progressed very well indeed and I am proud of it. I know the staff and the supporting PCA are also proud of it. I do not agree with the problems mentioned regarding its being upgraded to a senior high school is the inherent extra costs involved. Another school in my electorate at Morawa has been upgraded and that school takes students right through from pre-primary to year 12, all in the one school. It is an excellent school and I cannot speak too highly of the fact that the students are able to spend the greater part of their educational life in the one school. I do not believe there should be a problem in Geraldton because the facilities are available at John Willcock High School. However, it will not grow and attract students while it is being used for only three years of education, and does not have the opportunity to build up numbers and compete equally with other schools. I strongly support and thank the member for Geraldton for his co-operation in our jointly shared problem. I support the Bill.

Mr Pearce: Hear, hear!

Mr GRAYDEN: On the face of it, it seems a simple matter to upgrade a district high school into a senior high school. In the case of Willcock District High School, as the member for Geraldton knows, we have made exhaustive inquiries over a long period, in an attempt to help the school.

Mr Pearce: Rubbish!

Mr GRAYDEN: It is a very costly process, as the member knows only too well, and I am astonished that he is not aware of this.

Mr Carr: You haven't got a leg to stand on.

Mr GRAYDEN: During this debate members have said much which surprised me. Many of the statements were hopelessly untrue. In particular, members seem to have a misconception of the Government's attitude in respect of the pre-school situation. As we will have the opportunity to debate these matters on the various Items, and as the member for Gosnells has indicated that he would wish it that way, I will not touch today on the matters that have been raised.

Mr Pearce: We will be here all next week.

Mr GRAYDEN: I look forward to doing so when we get onto the actual Items.

*Progress*

Progress reported and leave given to sit again, on motion by Mr Pearce.

**QUESTIONS**

Questions were taken at this stage.

*House adjourned at 4.35 p.m.*

## QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

2594. *This question was postponed.*

### TOWN PLANNING: CORRIDOR PLAN

#### *Morley Drive Extension*

2598. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

- (1) Is the Government committed to a corridor plan?
- (2) If "Yes", why then has the issue of the Morley Drive extension not been taken further than a concept prepared in the eastern corridor study three years ago?
- (3) At what stage is the planned feasibility study of the above and what is the estimated date of completion of the study?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) The Government has endorsed the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority's corridor plan.
- (2) and (3) The need for the Morley Drive extension is currently being assessed in association with a number of route options. The work is being conducted with the resources available to the instrumentalities participating in the study. A recommended timetable will be submitted for consideration by the steering committee in one month's time.

### RESEARCH STATIONS

#### *Closures*

2599. Mr EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) What research station or facilities are to be closed between now and the end of 1982?
- (2) What research programmes will be terminated or curtailed in this same period?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) and (2) All research stations are under review. A statement will be made when this review has been completed.

## AGRICULTURE PROTECTION BOARD

### *Programmes*

2600. Mr EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

What programmes of the Agriculture Protection Board will be conducted at a lesser level in 1982 than they were in 1981?

Mr OLD replied:

Control—

two dogging contract groups in pastoral areas have been withdrawn, subsidies for the use of chemical in the control of grasshoppers and weeds have been reduced.

Research proposed programmes on—

black cockatoo control, red kangaroo biology, the effect of marri forest flowering on silvereye numbers will not proceed.

Extension—

A proposed publication on exotic mammals has been deferred.

### STOCK: SHEEPSKINS

#### *Treatment: Tests*

2601. Mr EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Is he aware of a report of the Chief of Division of CSIRO of 2 November 1981 to the Director of Agriculture on the results of tests carried out on Clout effected wool supplied by private treaty wool buyers on 27 October 1981?
- (2) (a) In view of the fact that the report, in part, states: "... we would therefore expect that normal processing of wool in the condition of the sample tested would show residual "Clout" after scouring, carding and gilling ..." does he intend to take any action to deregister this chemical until the problems associated with it have been resolved; and  
(b) if not, why not?



Mr OLD replied:

- (1) Yes. This report is based on a 550 gram sample of wool shorn from the back line. The findings are in conflict with the previous CSIRO report based on a 278 kg sample.
- (2) (a) and (b) I am most reluctant to consider de-registration of this product which is widely accepted by sheep producers. Recognised problems are confined to tanned skins. The extent of the problem with prem-shorn wool is not clearly defined. The current recommendation by the Department of Agriculture is that Clout be not used on sheep that will be sold or shorn prior to the next shearing. On balance it seems unreasonable to de-register a product which represents a considerable technological breakthrough to the majority of the industry, particularly as a new formulation of the product without side effects is expected to be released in the near future.

# GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND INSTRUMENTALITIES

## *Postage Stamps: Used*

2602. Mr HERZFELD, to the Premier:

- (1) Is he able to advise what becomes of the thousands of used postage stamps received by departments, statutory authorities and Government instrumentalities?
- (2) As bulk quantities of used postage stamps have some value would he consider having envelopes made available to sheltered workshops, and charitable organisations who may wish to process them?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) In the time available it has not been possible to contact all departments, statutory authorities, and Government instrumentalities, but inquiries have been directed to a number of departments where there is a significant volume of inwards mail. In two instances, the used envelopes are collected by charitable organisations. In other cases, the envelopes are discarded.

- (2) There is no objection to used postage stamps being made available to sheltered workshops and charitable organisations which may wish to process them, provided satisfactory arrangements for storage and collection are made with the department concerned.

2603. *This question was postponed.*

# WATER RESOURCES: MWB

## *Land: Kalamunda*

2604. Mr SHALDERS, to the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) What is the area of land on which the Metropolitan Water Board's service tank is situated in Nangana Way, Kalamunda?
- (2) How much has it cost for the provision of a firebreak and other associated maintenance works recently carried out on that tank site?
- (3) How many persons were engaged in the maintenance operation referred to in (2) above, and what plant was used?
- (4) For how many hours were the—
  - (a) manpower; and
  - (b) machinery, used?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) to (4) The information requested in this question will take some time to collate and I will therefore reply to the member in writing as soon as the figures are to hand.

# JEWELL HOUSE

## *Use*

2605. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is it a fact that the former nurses' home, Jewell House, is still empty and unused?
- (2) When did Jewell House cease to be occupied by nurses?
- (3) If the Government has no immediate use or plans for Jewell House, would he invite interested charitable or community based groups to submit proposals to him for the use of the building?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) Jewell House is currently used as a temporary furniture store. The incinerator on the site is still used by Royal Perth Hospital.
- (2) 29 June 1981.
- (3) The future of Jewell House is a matter for decision by the Board of Management of Royal Perth Hospital. I understand that one community-based organisation submitted a proposition but agreement could not be reached.

#### WATER RESOURCES AND SEWERAGE: CHARGES

##### *Melville Glades Golf Club*

2606. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) When was the Melville Glades golf course declared by the Governor to be exempt from water rates?
- (2) Why did the Governor declare the Melville Glades golf course to be exempt from water rates?
- (3) What criteria are used by the Governor to decide whether a particular property should be exempted from water rates?
- (4) How many sporting clubs in Western Australia have been declared by the Governor to be exempt from water rates?
- (5) Is he able to estimate how much revenue is being lost to the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Board annually by sporting clubs exempted from paying rates under section 72(h) of the Act?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) to (4) The Melville Glades Golf Club comes under the provisions of the following notice published in the *Government Gazette* on January 31, 1969—

#### METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY, SEWERAGE, AND DRAINAGE ACT 1909-1968.

Metropolitan Water Board,  
Perth, 31st January, 1969.

NOTICE is hereby given that His Excellency the Governor, acting pursuant to paragraph (h) of section 72 of the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Act, 1909-1968, has been pleased to declare that

any land used solely for the purposes of a society, club or association which—

- (a) conducts sporting, hobbying or like activities as its sole or principal activity;
- (b) is not carried on for the purposes of profit or gain to individual members thereof; and
- (c) is not a society, club or association specified in the schedule hereto;

is exempt from rates under that Act."

#### Schedule

The Western Australian National Football League.

The Western Australian Turf Club and any club or association formed for the conduct or promotion of horse races in Western Australia.

The Western Australian Trotting Association, and any trotting club or association formed for the conduct or promotion of trotting or pacing races in Western Australia.

- (5) The information on which to base an estimate is not available.

#### HOSPITALS: PUBLIC

##### *Nurses: Wage Increase*

2607. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) How many nurses are employed at present in Government hospitals and what was the figure 12 months ago?
- (2) What was the total amount spent on nurses' wages in the 1980-81 financial year?
- (3) Has the Government recently received an application for a pay rise for nurses, or if not, is it expected that an application could be forthcoming in the near future?
- (4) If a pay increase application has been received, what percentage increase is being sought?
- (5) Is he aware that a very substantial pay increase was recently awarded to nurses by the New South Wales Industrial Commission?

- (6) Is the Government satisfied that it has made adequate provision in the 1981-82 Budget to meet pay rises that may be awarded to nurses and other health care staff by the WA Industrial Commission during the financial year?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) Number of nursing staff employed in Government hospitals at
- |                  |          |
|------------------|----------|
| (a) 30 June 1981 | 7 727.5* |
| (b) 30 June 1980 | 8 099.5* |
- \*Full-time equivalents.
- (2) \$115 834 216.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) The following percentage increases have been applied for—
- |                                  |                    |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| (a) Nurses                       | (Public Hospitals) |
| Award—10% to 12%.                |                    |
| (b) Nursing Aides and Assistants |                    |
| Award—10.45%.                    |                    |
- (5) Yes.
- (6) The member is referred to the Budget speech by the Treasurer which comments in some detail on the Government's policy with respect to wage increases in 1981-82.

#### DAIRYING: MILK

##### *Unpasteurised*

2608. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is it a fact that the Commissioner of Public Health has recommended to the Government that a ban be placed on the sale of unpasteurised milk?
- (2) If the Commissioner of Public Health has made such a recommendation—
- has the Government accepted the recommendation and made a decision to act on it;
  - when was the Commissioner's advice received by the Government;
  - to whom did the Commissioner tender the advice?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) and (2) Yes, the Commissioner advised me on the 26 October 1981 and later on the 28 October 1981, he discussed it with the Deputy Premier. The recommendation will now be examined by the food and drug advisory committee with a view to amending the appropriate regulations.

#### COMMUNITY WELFARE: EMERGENCY RELIEF

##### *Guidelines*

2609. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Community Welfare:

- (1) In view of his answer to part (9) of question 2499 of 1981 in which he confirmed that emergency assistance was not confined to a once only basis, why did the Mirrabooka office of his department refer a client from Koondoola who approached that office on 11 November 1981 seeking such assistance to forestall action by the State Energy Commission to disconnect power supply to her house, to the Distressed Persons Relief Trust on the basis that the department had already assisted her once before with the payment of rent arrears?
- (2) Is his department aware of the strains being placed on the dwindling resources of the Distressed Persons Relief Trust due to increase requests for assistance, particularly with respect to the increasing numbers of people unable to cope with high State Energy Commission accounts?
- (3) If "Yes" to (2), why is his department continuing to offload the responsibility for meeting such requests for emergency assistance on to the trust and other voluntary agencies, when it must be assumed from information provided by him that prime responsibility for providing such emergency relief rests with his department?

Mr HASSELL replied:

- (1) The client in question was not refused assistance and referred to the Distressed Persons Relief Trust because the family had previously been assisted by the department. On this occasion a different name was used by the applicant to one previously used by the family when seeking assistance from the department.

Emergency assistance paid out by my department under the Welfare and Assistance Act is not normally paid to settle debts with other Government authorities unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The Distressed Persons Relief Trust will, if appropriate, assist in the payment of debts to Government authorities if in the opinion of the trustees the debts were brought about by unavoidable and unforeseen circumstances.

In this particular case, referral to the Distressed Persons Relief Trust was appropriate.

It has been learned today that the Distressed Persons Relief Trust is unlikely to assist this family as assistance was given by the trust in 1979 for the payment of an SEC account. On that occasion the correct name of the family was used.

In the light of this further development the family's application will be further considered by my department.

- (2) I am aware of the strain placed on many agencies involved in the delivery of emergency relief.

The Government has made payments to the Distressed Persons Relief Trust on an annual basis for the provision of emergency relief. In December 1980 a payment of \$29 177 was made. Provision has been made in the current State Budget for a similar sum to be made available when requested by the trust.

In addition, the Commonwealth Government has made available a sum of \$43 000 in 1980-81 to the State Government for distribution to the non-Government welfare agencies for emergency relief.

- (3) It has been the practice of my department to consider providing emergency relief where destitute families, faced with eviction or energy disconnection, have been denied assistance through the Distressed Persons Relief Trust, where there are health problems which create grave risk to the family's well-being should eviction or disconnection ensue.

My department is not off-loading responsibility for emergency assistance. The provision of emergency relief in this State is administered by Government and non-Government welfare agencies using moneys provided by the State and Commonwealth Governments.

## TOURISM: CARAVAN PARKS

### *Health Regulations*

2610. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has he received recommendations for new Health Act regulations governing caravan parks?
- (2) If "Yes", when did he receive these recommendations?
- (3) What is proposed in these new regulations?
- (4) When does he expect to be in a position to introduce these new regulations?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Draft regulations based on a report prepared by an interdepartmental working party were received in January 1981. This draft has been discussed with senior officers of the Public Health Department, Department of Local Government, tourist board and other interested persons. Minor amendments have been made.
- (3) The introduction of new standards for—
  - (a) Long term occupancy of parks.
  - (b) Transit parks.
  - (c) Nature parks.
- (4) I hope to introduce the regulations early in the new year.

## TOURISM: CARAVAN PARKS

### *By-laws: Uniform*

2611. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) When did she receive recommendations for additions to proposed new uniform caravan park by-laws?
- (2) What is proposed in these recommendations?
- (3) When does she expect to be in a position to introduce the new by-laws?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) If the member is referring to recommendations from the Save the Children Fund, they were received on 15 April 1981.

- (2) Those recommendations included the fencing of caravan sites, minimum open space requirements and provision of a public telephone, electricity meters for individual caravan sites, pedestrian ways, and a community multi-purpose shelter.
- (3) I am not able to indicate when this will be.

### HOUSING: FLATS

#### *Emergent: Mirrabooka*

2612. Mr WILSON, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Can he confirm that there is now a two to three months wait for those listed for emergency allocation of flat accommodation in the area administered by the State Housing Commission's Mirrabooka office?
- (2) If "No", what is the average waiting period for those on emergency listings for flat accommodation in this area?

Mr LAURANCE replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Emergent applicants assessed as suitable for flat accommodation would be assisted within one or two weeks in all areas other than Lockridge. There may be some delay where ground floor accommodation was desirable for a young family.  
Flat accommodation at Lockridge is available with no delay for emergent and wait-turn applicants.  
Wait-turn applicants in areas other than Lockridge would have a two to three months' wait for flat accommodation.

### HOUSING: ABORIGINES

#### *Commonwealth Funds*

2613. Mr WILSON, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Housing:

- (1) What Commonwealth funds were made available to the State for Aboriginal housing in the years—
  - (a) 1975-76;
  - (b) 1976-77;
  - (c) 1977-78;
  - (d) 1978-79;
  - (e) 1979-80;

- (f) 1980-81; and
- (g) 1981-82?

- (2) What funds did the State Government itself spend on Aboriginal housing in each of those years?
- (3) How many houses for Aboriginal families were constructed in each of those years in—

- (a) the metropolitan area;
- (b) each other region of the State?

Mr LAURANCE replied:

- (1) to (3) As the information will take time to collate the member will be advised by letter.

### QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

#### MINING: DIAMONDS

#### *South African Industry: Investigations*

785. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Resources Development:

- (1) Is it a fact that his department has investigated thoroughly the operation of the diamond industry in Southern Africa in recent months?
- (2) Could he inform the House of—
  - (a) the level of royalties, and
  - (b) the system of assessing royalties paid on the production of diamonds in South Africa, Botswana, Zaire, Angola and Namibia?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) Some investigation of the industry in South Africa and Botswana has been made by Department of Resources Development.
- (2) (a) and (b) Comparison of royalty and income tax in different countries is difficult, because of variations in method of assessment and other factors, in particular taxation.  
In South Africa royalty is assessed for diamonds on an individual mine basis and, for the larger mines, is assessed by a formula involving profit and revenue.  
In Botswana, royalties are payable on the basis of 10 per cent of gross market value.  
In both countries royalty and income tax are collected by the central Government.

## MINING: DIAMONDS

*Royalties: Ashton Joint Venture*

786. Mr BRYCE, to the Premier:

- (1) Will the Premier confirm reports in today's Press that the royalty system to apply to Argyle mines will be a profitability based royalty system?
- (2) Whether or not he decides to confirm that, and in view of the fact that the Parliament has yet to receive the agreement, will he indicate whether or not the Government intends to adopt special accounting rules to define the question of gross profits or will routine accounting procedures be used by the Government?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) and (2) In answer to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I think it is very bad that there is so much conjecture about an agreement of such importance before it is explained to the Parliament and before it is finalised with the parties involved.

Mr Bryce: We think it is discourteous that we did not receive the information before the Press.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The member should talk. His side of politics is the greatest disseminators of unauthorised information I have ever seen.

Mr Pearce: But you have always seen it first.

Mr Carr: You disseminate it.

Several members interjected.

Sir CHARLES COURT: As far as the Government is concerned it is prepared to go no further than to say this agreement is at an advanced stage of negotiation between the Government and the joint venturers. There are some some unusual features to the agreement, and I have already said publicly, and as I think the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has heard me say; namely, they relate to the method of fixing royalties, of controlling the marketing, and the requirements in respect of sorting and processing in all its forms, as well as security.

The Government is not prepared to go beyond that and when the agreement is placed before the Parliament the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, try as hard as he will, will find it difficult to be

anything but satisfied, as a citizen of this State, with the deal that the Government will have made. It is unique in a number of particulars and it has had regard for the special circumstances which surround diamonds anywhere in the world. I believe the Minister and his team, in interpreting the directions they received from the Government, have done a first class job. However, I emphasise there is still some fine tuning to be done and we are at a critical stage.

In my long experience in negotiating agreements, nothing is worse—from the point of view of the Government and of the State—than having all these Press headlines, conjectures, and leaks—so-called—just at a time when we wanted to have the confidence of the people with whom we are negotiating so as to obtain the last ounce we can obtain for the benefit of the State and of the nation.

Mr Bryce: You are not blaming us! This is on the front page of tonight's paper.

Sir CHARLES COURT: No, but I am blaming the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for complaining. I am criticising him for adopting the hypocritical attitude which he adopted when he asked the question by interjection. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition should have blushed, if he were capable of doing so.

Mr Pearce: He can blush to the top of his head, which you can't do!

Sir CHARLES COURT: I repeat: There are special provisions in this agreement and I think members will agree that a good job has been done.

## PRISONS BILL

*Prison Officers' Union: Discussions*

787. Mr PARKER, to the Chief Secretary:

- (1) In the last few days did the Chief Secretary have discussions with executive officers of the Prison Officers' Union concerning amendments to the Prisons Bill currently before the Parliament with respect to sections of it dealing with prison officer disputes and connected matters?
- (2) Has he finalised his response to the union as a result of those discussions and what is that response?

- (3) If he has not finalised that response, when is it expected it can be finalised?

Mr HASSELL replied:

- (1) I advise the member that I did have discussions with two members of the Prison Officers' Union yesterday, although it was not strictly the executive of the union—one person was the president and the other person was the secretary. Not only that, but as I said during my second reading speech, I have had a number of discussions with representatives of the union prior to the introduction of the legislation. In those earlier discussions a significant number of items were raised and significant items were conceded as requested by the executive of the union.

In the last few days the representatives of the union sought further discussions on the legislation. A number of submissions were put to me at the meeting yesterday. Some of these were repeats of submissions which had been put in early discussions and which were not acceptable. Nevertheless, I undertook to re-examine them.

- (2) The submissions put to me yesterday have been considered partially but not finalised, so there is no finalised response.
- (3) As I explained to the representatives of the union yesterday, I certainly will give them a full and proper response but I did not say when. I told them it would not necessarily be this week, although subsequent to our meeting the union issued a rather optimistic Press statement saying that it hoped to receive a reply by Friday. I had told the representatives pretty clearly that I could not reply by then. Eventually I will give a full and proper response.

I explained also that even if I did not respond before the debate on the Bill in this House, that would not necessarily preclude me from dealing with the points to which we were unable to respond in accordance with the union submission.

#### EDUCATION: PRE-SCHOOL

##### *Pine Valley*

788. Mr PEARCE, to the Minister for Education:

As a preamble to my question I will say to the Minister that I hope he enjoys his

dinner tonight with Dennis Lillee. My question is as follows—

Would he like me to pass on any message to the people who are organising the meeting tonight at the Pine Valley Pre-school which meeting he will not be attending?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

Could I say that the department intended to send a representative to the meeting tonight, but we certainly would not permit him to attend a political bunfight. As the member for Gosnells is attending, undoubtedly that will make it so.

#### CULTURAL AFFAIRS

##### *WA Film Council*

789. Mr TRETHOWAN, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Industrial Development and Commerce:

- (1) Has the Honorary Minister seen the announcement in today's edition of *The West Australian* concerning the changes to be made to the WA Film Council?
- (2) If so, is it true that funding for the WA Film Council, as the article's heading suggests, has been reduced?
- (3) Why were the changes made to the council, and what, in general terms, were the changes made?

Mr MacKINNON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No, funding for the council has been maintained at the level committed by the Government; that is, \$1 million in five instalments of \$200 000 ending in the 1982-83 financial year.
- (3) Experience gained over the past three years, together with changes in Federal tax initiatives, indicated that a change in council philosophy was necessary. It became evident that direct investment in feature films was not now the principal way to assist the local industry and that more good would come if the Film Council turned its attention to grass roots assistance.

To achieve this it was necessary to reform the council with members experienced in other areas, commensurate with this change in philosophy. As a consequence the council now consists of a writer—Mr John Beaton—a producer—Mr Don Shephard—and a distributor—Mr David Pye—with an independent Chairman—Mr Bernard Wright.

Council will focus attention and provide funds to encourage the development of the industry.

It will encourage the development of skills within the industry and assist producers to develop film properties in Western Australia.

Council will also co-ordinate film related activities within Western Australia to avoid duplication and waste and provide funds to selected productions where it is considered appropriate to do so.

An important addition to the council's role will be to assist in the training of industry personnel outside the established institutions by provision of awards, or by means such as by selected candidates undertaking special courses at the Australian Film and Television School.

Furthermore, Government departments or instrumentalities, having a need to produce documentaries or publicity film, should refer details to council which will co-ordinate production and call tenders for the work. This will ensure the maximum local content. Departments which already have substantial in-house facilities will not be required to make this reference.

The new council has been selected after long examination of many proposals and recommendations received from the various sectors of the film industry.

#### DAIRYING: MILK

##### *Unpasteurised*

790. Mr HODGE to the Minister for Health:

My question is supplementary to question on notice 2608 of today concerning the recommendation made by the Public Health Commissioner that a ban should be placed on the sale of unpasteurised milk. I ask—

- (1) Can the Minister clarify his answer and inform me whether the Government accepts in principle the advice given by the commissioner?
- (2) If so, what regulations need to be changed?
- (3) Can the Minister advise me of the membership of the food and drug advisory committee?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) The statement by the Commissioner for Public Health in respect of the treatment and sale of milk has been accepted in principle by the Government. Obviously, when the commissioner makes a determination in respect of any foodstuff, the Government of the day must consider it very seriously. There is a great danger to the public in the event of some bacterial infection being present in unpasteurised milk.
- (2) The matter of the type of restrictions or bans which may be imposed are the subject of the study which will be undertaken, and which will be presented to the Government.
- (3) I cannot supply this information off the top of my head; however, I undertake to provide the member with an answer in writing.

#### COMMUNICATIONS

##### *National Satellite: OTC*

791. Mr SHALDERS to the Premier:

- (1) Has he had discussions with OTC about the proposed national communications satellite?
- (2) Is he satisfied Western Australia's interests are adequately protected?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) Yes, together with the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Industrial Development and Commerce—in the absence through illness of the Minister for Regional Administration and the North West—I had a very comprehensive two-hour briefing today, which was much appreciated.



- (2) My belief is that at this stage OTC, the company responsible for putting together Aussat—the organisation which will actually control the operations of the satellite—is very conscious of the representations made by and the concern expressed by Western Australia. We did have some reservations about the proposed siting of the satellite so far as it related to Western Australia. However, the explanation given today by the commission's technical staff as to why the satellite should be located to the east of Australia was very convincing.

Coincidental with that, it was pointed out that if, after further studies of the briefing we had today we were not completely satisfied, OTC's technical people would be available for detailed discussion with our technical people. However, I must say the detailed explanation given by the company's staff was very convincing. It was quite obvious that not only had the company used the best expertise available within Telecom and OTC, but also it had sought outside advice.

Western Australia also expressed a reservation that the system of national satellite communications to be established could endanger Western Australian television stations, both city and regional, and that we could finish up with a situation in which we were completely swamped by networks in the Eastern States.

I am satisfied that OTC and others associated with the project are very conscious of our objections and have taken action as far as they can at this stage to ensure the Western Australian beam which will come in from the other side of Australia will be a separate one, quite independent of the other three beams, one of which will service the Northern Territory and South Australia, one of which will service Queensland, and the other which will service New South Wales, Victoria, and Tasmania. Western Australia will have a completely independent beam—or, to use the technical term, "footprint"—which will protect us from the situation which would arise if there were only one beam covering the entire continent.

We have expressed the view there should be further protection through a licensing arrangement in the hands of the Commonwealth. Even though the Aussat organisation is to be 51 per cent Commonwealth-owned and 49 per cent private enterprise-owned, we still believe there needs to be a licensing system associated with the project which will ensure States like Western Australia will have their independence protected.

Our last reservation related to telephone communications in remote areas. I am quite satisfied that in regard to communications affecting things like School of the Air, isolated television, and so on, the service will improve dramatically. We have yet to receive the answer we need in respect of more readily and generally available telephone communications at a cheaper rate; however, progress is being made in that direction.

#### RAILWAYS: COMMISSION

##### *Annual Report: Tabling*

792. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that section 91 of the Government Railways Act requires the Western Australian Government Railways Commission to present its annual report before both Houses of Parliament in the month of September in each year if Parliament is sitting?
- (2) Can the Minister explain why the annual report of the Western Australian Government Railways Commission has not been tabled in the House as required under the Act?
- (3) When can members expect the commission's latest report to be tabled?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) to (3) I have spoken to the Commissioner of Railways about the matter. The report has not always been tabled in time, due to printing and other requirements. I understand that again the report has been held up due to printing problems; it was not able to be produced within the time specified. Subject to those printing and other requirements, I am endeavouring to have the report ready for tabling as soon as possible.

## COMMUNITY WELFARE: EMERGENCY RELIEF

### *Guidelines*

793. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Community Welfare:

- (1) In view of the growing number of requests for emergency relief, particularly from low income earners, who are unable to meet increasing charges, particularly SEC accounts, why is the Department for Community Welfare referring such applicants to other agencies for assistance?
- (2) Why does his department not normally make emergency relief payments to settle debts with other Government departments?
- (3) Does the Welfare and Assistance Act preclude such relief payments in settlement of debts to other Government departments?

Mr HASSELL replied:

- (1) and (2) The member for Dianella has pursued a number of questions in relation to emergency relief and in each case I have sought to give him answers which indicate the overall position.

Emergency relief is not solely the responsibility of the Department for Community Welfare. It is an overall governmental responsibility which may involve the State Government in a number of agencies and in a number of ways: or it may involve the Commonwealth Government—but in general, emergency relief is a State responsibility—or it may involve the private sector, either because of its voluntary efforts or because it receives subsidies from the State or the Commonwealth to enable it to provide emergency relief.

The Department for Community Welfare is not seeking to avoid its responsibilities, and it has not done so. I do not accept the suggestion and implication that it has.

As to the provision of emergency relief for the payment of accounts to other State Government departments, the position is that the Department for Community Welfare rightly has pursued a policy of declining, except in exceptional circumstances, to provide emergency relief, because the

departments have procedures available for dealing with people who have a genuine reason for being unable to pay. They provide arrangements for deferment where deferment can and should be made.

It is not appropriate for one Government agency to provide a system and then to have another Government agency providing money, cutting across that system.

In relation to the question of emergency relief involvement in the financial affairs of the person who has difficulty in paying on a long-term basis, that becomes a matter for the Commonwealth in the field of pensions and other relief.

However, as I said in answer to a question on notice today and on other occasions, the Department for Community Welfare will provide emergency relief in the circumstances that State Energy Commission or other State Government charges are outstanding, if exceptional circumstances apply. Otherwise, other agencies can and do provide relief in those circumstances.

- (3) To the best of my knowledge, the Welfare and Assistance Act does not preclude such payments.

## DAIRYING: PRODUCTS

### *Standards*

794. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Health:

In relation to the answer he gave to the member for Melville regarding the Government's possible acceptance of the Public Health Department's report on unpasteurised milk, if the Government adopts the policy, will he ensure that all dairy products brought into Western Australia from other sources will be required to meet the same Public Health Department requirements?

Mr YOUNG replied:

Naturally I would not want to see Western Australian producers disadvantaged as compared with anyone else. To my knowledge, in Western Australia, any products brought into the State are regulated thoroughly and examined on a sampling basis. They

have to comply with certain standards set by the regulations in respect of food and drugs. I imagine that they would continue to apply.

The answer I gave the member for Melville was in respect of milk alone. The member for Vasse asked the question not only in respect of milk, but in respect of milk products. I can assure him that any products brought in would be imported on terms similar to those applicable to sale by Western Australian producers, so the regulations would obviously encompass those who would sell any of their milk products in Western Australia.

## CULTURAL AFFAIRS

### *WA Film Council*

795. Mr PEARCE, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Industrial Development and Commerce:

- (1) Further to the question asked by the member for East Melville regarding the Western Australian Film Council, can he give any amplification of his answer that there is no diminution in spending for the WA Film Council?
- (2) How much of the \$238 000 to be contributed to the Film Council in the current financial year is expected to be expended during that year, and how much will the council give to the trust fund?

Mr MacKINNON replied:

- (1) and (2) Last night I meant to give the member a short educational lesson in accounting principles. Firstly, the \$200 000 that goes into the trust fund is a revolving trust fund in which the money is deposited on behalf of the Government. If money is invested on behalf of the council to give a return, the money returned goes into the trust fund; so the fund will fluctuate from time to time—

Mr Pearce: I just want to know about the money allocated this year.

Mr MacKINNON: —above and beyond the \$200 000. In some years the fund may increase, and in some it may decrease.

I cannot say how much the council will spend in this year because that is a matter for the council to decide. It has

made a commitment to a joint venture with the BBC; and that represents an expenditure on the council's part of \$300 000. It cannot go spending money willy-nilly around the community.

The short answer is that I am not aware of exactly what the council will spend this money on; it is the council's job to determine that.

Mr Pearce: Let us hope it is more than \$16 000, because that is what it spent last year.

## FUEL AND ENERGY: PETROLEUM

### *Petroleum Technology '81*

796. Mr SODEMAN, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Industrial Development and Commerce:

- (1) Is he aware of a major petroleum technology exhibition and conference known as Petroleum Technology Australia '81 to be staged in Perth this month?
- (2) If so, to what extent are—
  - (a) the Government, and
  - (b) his department
 involved in supporting the exhibition and conference?
- (3) Are any regional areas represented and being assisted by the State Government?

Mr MacKINNON replied:

- (1) Yes. This conference and display will be held at the Entertainment Centre from 24 November to 27 November.
- (2) (a) The Government is jointly hosting a function to welcome all visitors to the State, at which the Premier will officially open Petroleum Week. Special arrangements have been made for senior Government officials to brief visitors on policies and developments concerning the State's hydrocarbon exploration and development programme.
- (b) My department has co-ordinated a Western Australian stand at PTA '81. It has arranged a number of meetings for visiting businessmen to make contact with local industrialists with a view to establishing joint venture operations in WA.

It has compiled information for the production of a register of WA organisations involved in the oil and gas industry, for circulation to visitors.

The production by my department of an audio visual presentation and a publication of investment opportunities has been advanced to attract investors to the industrial climate and joint venture potential in WA.

- (3) Yes. A Pilbara exhibition will be staged jointly by the Karratha Chamber of Commerce, the Roebourne Shire Council, and the Pilbara Regional Administrator.

A representative delegation from Karratha will attend the exhibition and conferences. They will produce a special brochure on their region for widespread distribution.

In response to a request and the initiative taken by the Karratha chamber and shire, my department has assisted the region by making available exhibition stands, material, and advice for their display.

#### WATER RESOURCES: MWB

*Chairman: Cover-up*

797. Mr BRYCE, to the Premier:

Does he recall the famous statement by the Prime Minister of Australia when he was Leader of the Opposition: "There could be circumstances, I believe, in which a Treasury official could regard his overriding duty to Australia as being greater than his duty to a government"?

In view of the State Government's endeavours to cover-up the truth about the Batty affair, has it occurred to the Premier that a Western Australian may consider that his greater duty is to Western Australia rather than to the State Government?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

In answer to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition—please excuse my voice—

Mr Pearce: I am not surprised you have lost it, with a question like that.

Sir CHARLES COURT: No nonsense from you, my boy!

Mr Pearce: I am back to his boy. Every Thursday I am his boy. It is a comment on his weak paternalism.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I do not recall the statement attributed to Mr Fraser when he was Leader of the Opposition. Even if I did, I do not know that I would agree with it.

So far as the second part of the question is concerned, I take strong exception to it. Never at any time have we tried to withhold any information regarding the expenses payable to Mr Batty.

It has only been the warped mind of members of the Opposition—particularly the Leader and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition—that have endeavoured to give the impression to the public that there is something sinister in all this. Even the letter they claimed was written by me to the Minister—parts of which they have read to this Chamber and parts of which have been published in the newspapers—indicates only that the Premier of the day took a very responsible and sensible line in asking for more information about the matter. Everything that has been published has indicated that the Government has acted properly, yet the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has the hide to accuse the Government of withholding the truth.

Mr Bryce: To protect a crony.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I take strong exception to that last remark.

Mr Bryce: Whom you appointed.

Sir CHARLES COURT: He was appointed by the Government. It is typical of the standard adopted by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and his leader that they should take the opportunity to make the sort of statements they have. In spite of what might have been printed in the media and in spite of the way the Opposition has endeavoured to misrepresent this situation, at all times the Government has given the full information regarding Mr Batty's expenditure. We are entitled to take exception—and do take exception—to the attitude of the Leader of the Opposition and his deputy, particularly to the remarks this evening by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.