

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, the 12th October, 1978

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

MEMBERS FOR MERREDIN AND STIRLING

Party Designation: Statement by Speaker

THE SPEAKER (Mr Thompson): I have been notified by the member for Stirling and the member for Merredin that they are both members of a newly-formed party known as the National Party. Accordingly I have directed that the official record of the House show that information.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT: SHIRE OF BAYSWATER

Dismissal of Council: Ministerial Statement

MRS CRAIG (Wellington—Minister for Local Government) [2.18 p.m.]: I seek leave of the House to make a ministerial statement on a matter of important public interest.

Leave granted.

MRS CRAIG: I wish to inform the House of a matter of considerable importance and gravity.

At a meeting of Executive Council held yesterday, the Governor authorised the issue of an order for the dismissal of the Council of the Shire of Bayswater. The dismissal became effective today.

The order also provided for an election to be held on the 24th February, 1979, to restore a council and for the appointment of Mr A. E. White to act as commissioner until an elected council is so restored.

The Government has decided that this action should be taken only after a very full and careful consideration of a number of events that have occurred at the Shire of Bayswater over the past few years.

The Government is fully aware that the dismissal of an elected council is indeed a very grave measure. It is a measure that it would certainly have preferred not to have been forced to take.

However, evidence that the Bayswater Shire Council has failed in a number of serious ways to administer local government in its district satisfactorily is so compelling that the Government has been obliged to step in in order that a completely unsatisfactory situation might be brought into order.

There has been concern for some time about certain aspects of the shire's administration.

In October last year, a senior officer of the Local Government Department was directed to undertake a major examination of the shire's administration. This investigation continued until March of this year.

At the same time, CIB officers made detailed inquiries into a number of matters that were deemed to warrant police investigation.

The investigating officer from the Local Government Department submitted a very comprehensive report on his findings.

This report disclosed many serious irregularities in the administration of the shire including a number of instances where the council had failed to comply with the provisions of the Local Government Act and the requirements of town planning schemes made under the Town Planning and Development Act.

The report pointed to serious irregularities that had occurred in absent voting procedures for the municipal elections. A member of the council was subsequently convicted of offences in connection with these electoral matters.

The report dealt at length with the shire's administration of a town planning scheme and recorded a number of events and transactions, particularly in relation to land sales, that were either unsatisfactory, improper, or outside the law.

It also highlighted a failure adequately or correctly to record a number of financial transactions with respect to this town planning scheme as a consequence of which the interests of participating land owners within the scheme area were placed in jeopardy.

The report referred to instances where the council had, contrary to the requirements of the Local Government Act, let substantial contracts without first inviting public tenders and to other instances where it had sold council property by private arrangement. Again, the Local Government Act required this property to be sold on the basis of auction or tender.

The report also raised serious questions about actions taken by the council in relation to staff appointments. It presented a total picture of mismanagement, impropriety, and disregard for the law.

Since that report was submitted, it has been the subject of long and exhaustive examination and consideration by the Government, firstly to affirm that the matters raised were of serious substance, and, secondly, to determine the most appropriate way of resolving the position.

Whilst the Government has the greatest respect for the part played by local government in administering this State, it cannot treat lightly a situation where a local government body has consistently disregarded the law or has demonstrated in a very culpable way, a lack of propriety in its transactions.

It was with a good deal of regret that the Government came to the inescapable conclusion that the council of the Shire of Bayswater had not only failed dismally on both these counts but that there was also little hope that it would put its house in order if left to its own devices.

The Local Government Act empowers the Governor to order a dismissal where he is of the opinion that a council is not properly carrying out local government in its district or is not properly carrying out the powers conferred and duties imposed upon it by an Act of this Parliament.

The report not only evidenced a serious mismanagement of the shire's affairs generally but it also substantiated a number of very specific events that clearly constituted the grounds set down in the Local Government Act for the dismissal of a council.

The departmental investigating officer was therefore directed to conduct further inquiries at the Shire of Bayswater for the purpose of re-examining those specific matters and to submit a further report. I propose to table in this Parliament, the investigating officer's second report which confines itself to the specific events which constitute adequate grounds for dismissal of the council.

I do not intend to table his main report which was critical of a far wider range of activities. Although this main report presented a total picture of incompetence and impropriety, I believe that there is a danger that the glare of its public exposure might unfairly reflect on some people who may have unwittingly been involved in some of the irregularities to which it refers.

I do not believe that advantage should be taken of the privilege afforded in this Parliament to reveal additional information that may unfairly damage individual reputations and which is not vital to explain the dismissal of the Council of the Shire of Bayswater.

I seek leave to table the report and a copy of the statement I have just made.

The SPEAKER: Leave granted.

The papers were tabled (see paper No. 413).

PORNOGRAPHY

Exploitation of Children: Petition

DR DADOUR (Subiaco) [2.25 p.m.]: I wish to present a petition which bears 145 signatures. I certify that it conforms with the Standing Orders of the House.

The petition concerns child pornography and the abolition of sexual exploitation of children. It is in exactly the same terms as petitions that have been presented to Parliament in the last few days.

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

(See petition No. 33).

BILLS (2): INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

1. Prisons Act Amendment Bill.
2. Western Australian Overseas Projects Authority Bill.

Bills introduced, on motions by Mr O'Neil (Chief Secretary), and read a first time.

APPROPRIATION BILL (CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND)

Second Reading: Budget Debate

Debate resumed from the 11th October.

MR CRANE (Moore) [2.27 p.m.]: I rise to lend my support to this Bill, and in so doing I would like to make a few comments on it.

We all appreciate the problems facing Australia and Western Australia at the moment, and I am sure many of us expected that when our Budget was introduced it might have been more severe than it has been. I congratulate the Treasurer for the manner in which he has been able to use the funds which are available to us at the moment. Whilst I must voice my disappointment in some areas, I certainly cannot express any criticism of the Budget.

My main disappointment is the fact that this year insufficient money is available to proceed with the extensions to the Moora Hospital. We understand that the Government is doing everything in its power to find money so that this work may proceed at an early stage. I have every confidence that we shall do this; but I must express the disappointment of people, particularly those in the midlands, who rely so much on the Moora Hospital.

Mr H. D. Evans: The member for Subiaco was disappointed that they spent \$2 million on Royal Perth Hospital.

Mr CRANE: I should mention in passing, although perhaps it is an unfair example to make—but it is indeed factual—that my electorate has 10 000 electors and only 19 hospital beds. I know it will not be long before the Wanneroo hospital gets off the ground, and we will have 99 beds then. However, this is the position at the moment.

Mr H. D. Evans: The member for Scarborough does not have a hospital bed in his electorate.

Mr CRANE: No, but he does not have to go far to find one. I make the point that we need more hospital beds in my electorate. The Moora Hospital is overcrowded, and I believe its figures of attendance would be amongst the highest in the State. I make these points because they happen to be true. I know the Premier is aware of them, but I merely remind the House that there are areas which do require some financial assistance, and the Moora Hospital is one such area.

I am very pleased, of course, that money has been allocated to allow the proposed Wanneroo hospital to proceed, because Wanneroo is a fast-growing area; it is the fastest growing area in Western Australia, and possibly in Australia. We appreciate the fact that this hospital is a much needed facility and certainly is not being built too soon.

Throughout my electorate there have been transport problems. The problems caused by increases in freight fall particularly heavily on farmers. They have always fallen on farmers, because when it comes to heavy haulage, the primary industry is the backbone of the transport system. This year, fortunately, as a result of good seasons there will be a tremendous increase in the wheat harvest. This will swell the coffers of the Transport Commission and show its position in a much better light. North of Wanneroo, there are still problems with transport to the areas of Quinns Rocks, Burns Beach and Yanchep. I am hopeful that the suggestions by the Director General of Transport as the result of a survey he has completed at my request will be noted, and additional transport facilities will be made available as soon as possible. The people up there find themselves left out on a limb.

In relation to Moora, I have a very serious complaint; that is with regard to the Moora hostel. We know that the hostel has been allocated \$160 000. We are very thankful for that. I am concerned at the fact that we knew a long time ago that this money was to be allocated. There was a contractor who was prepared

to submit a tender for more than the two dormitories and the recreation centre presently being tendered for. He was not able to do this. Because of what I would call "bureaucratic constipation", there has been no movement in the bureaucracy of the Public Works Department and the hostels authority to enable the best use to be made of this \$160 000. We will find that the Moora hostel will have built only two dormitories and a recreation centre, whereas it could easily have had additional buildings for the same expenditure. This is a serious area which requires investigation. I would suggest that an inquiry be made by the heads of the departments. There should be co-operation by those heads with the people who are endeavouring to have these improvements made so that short-cuts may be implemented, and the money made to go as far as possible.

Whilst some say the system under which we operate now is foolproof, the process is very long and drawn out. It is very costly.

Recently we had a problem in Wanneroo with the voluntary ambulance. The professionals wished to move in as a result of union pressure. The volunteers have had to take second place. I think this is unfortunate. We should remember it is the voluntary ambulance association which plays a very important part in looking after the sick and the accident cases. The volunteers have been forced to yield to union pressure. A great disservice has been done, not only to the people who live north of Wanneroo and in the Wanneroo townsite, but also to those people who have given so many years of their lives in this service.

Mr Davies: There is still a place for them. Would you not rather be treated by a professional than a volunteer?

Mr CRANE: Not necessarily. I have seen professionals, and I have seen volunteers.

Mr Davies: Now you are insulting the ambulance drivers.

Mr CRANE: The fact that a person is a professional does not mean he or she has better skills than a volunteer.

Mr Davies: And their skills may be below the professionals—the volunteers.

Mr CRANE: Yes, they may. If the Leader of the Opposition cared to go out into the wide world, he would find that what I have said is true.

Mr Davies: I find that insulting, too. I do not believe what you said is true.

Mr CRANE: I did not expect the Leader of the Opposition would, because he would be coming down on the side of union pressure and hoping that they would receive some support as a result of this.

Mr Davies: Very properly so.

Mr CRANE: I am talking about the interests of the people.

Mr Davies: I think I am more so than you.

Mr CRANE: People are important. It does not matter whether they belong to unions, or to what they belong. They are important. I am speaking on behalf of people, and in the best interests of people. I always will do that.

Mr Davies: In your opinion it is in the best interests, but you have not proved it.

Mr CRANE: It is in the best interests of the people at Wanneroo. If the Leader of the Opposition cares to ask them, he will find that is true.

Mr Davies: Try the professionals, and see what happens then. You are being insulting to the ambulance drivers.

Mr CRANE: I believe there is room for us to consider a policy whereby people who are sitting for a driver's licence should, as the first requisite, do a first aid course. There are many accidents on the roads. People who travel the country, as some of us do, will bear this out. I have had my car for four years, and it has travelled almost 300 000 kilometres. I do a fair amount of travelling, so I possibly know what I am talking about.

I see many accidents, and I see many stupid things done. If drivers were skilled in first aid, many lives could possibly be saved. This fact also would make probationary drivers more concerned about what they were doing. This would alleviate the accident problem to some extent. It is a worth-while consideration. I suggest that other members give it a little thought.

Last weekend we had a very serious incident at Mogumber. It is not the first time this sort of incident has happened and I do not suppose it will be the last. I refer, of course, to the exploits of bikies. Eventually there were four policemen facing 32 bikies in a very ugly scene. We have to look seriously at this problem. People have the right to be protected; I do not mean only individuals, but the majority of people.

It seems that the police are unable to act in the manner which would be desired. I recall during the war years when there used to be similar problems with the people who went ashore. The shore patrols were armed with truncheons about 2' 6" long. This applied particularly to American shore patrols. It did not take those patrols very

long to break up a noisy, rowdy element. I would suggest that in future dealings with bikie gangs or similar gangs of people who have no respect for the law, the police should be armed with pick handles. They should use them, because the public need to be protected. We have pussy-footed around this issue for too long. We talk about the rights of the individuals; but let us consider the rights of the majority of people.

Mr Pearce: Quite apart from anything else, pick handles must be the worst way to go about it, surely.

Mr CRANE: They are useful instruments when one is dealing with people who do not mind what injury they inflict. I do not know whether the member for Gosnells has ever been in this sort of situation. Possibly he has not.

Mr Pearce: Pick handles!

Mr CRANE: They are certainly the most effective weapon. If the member for Gosnells would like me to give him a demonstration, I will give him one outside. I have used picks for many years.

An Opposition member: You are getting as good as Bill Grayden!

Mr Pearce: You will be a Minister one day!

Mr CRANE: I am serious about this point. As I said before, we have pussy-footed around with this rowdy nuisance element for far too long. It does not matter to which political party we belong.

We have a responsibility to protect the majority of the people. I know the Minister for Police and Traffic is listening and I hope he will take some action to protect the people in country towns from the bikie elements which swoop on them. Some people refer to these bikies as "dingoes". However, this is not right, because dingoes usually hunt on their own. Bikies hunt in packs. If we get a single bikie on his own, he is no trouble at all, because he has no guts to do anything; but if we are faced with a mob of bikies they are very nasty. I cannot speak too strongly in favour of the introduction of some form of legislation which will give the police the powers they need to protect people from these elements.

Mr Nanovich: The law to provide a stronger penalty is made for only 15 per cent of the people, the other 85 per cent are law abiding citizens.

Mr CRANE: That is right; and it would not take many pick handles to stop that 15 per cent.

Yesterday a member said the speed limit should be reduced to 100 kilometres per hour on highways and country roads. The member for Albany was not in favour of this on highways. From my own experience I am convinced the speed limit ought to be reduced to 100 kilometres per hour.

Mr Clarke: A very sensible comment.

Mr CRANE: In South Africa some years ago as a result of the energy crisis the speed limit was reduced to 80 kilometres per hour. According to a doctor I was talking to in Capetown, as a result of the reduction in the speed limit the accident rate was reduced by 30 per cent.

Mr Clarke: In the United States the speed limit was reduced to 55 miles per hour and this reduced the accident rate.

Mr CRANE: The reduction of the speed limit would have a twofold advantage. Not only would we reduce the risk of accidents, but we would increase also the miles per gallon obtained from motor vehicles. It would reduce the need for emergency facilities in a number of the major hospitals.

Mr Sodeman: Alcohol is a problem.

Mr CRANE: Alcohol is a great problem, I agree. However once again drawing from my own experience, I usually travel at a speed just under the speed limit. I find if I go to my farm which is a distance of approximately 120 miles and I drop my speed back to 100 kilometres per hour, I see a big difference in the fuel consumption and it takes me very little longer to get there.

These are important matters. A number of people go on a pub crawl and drive from one hotel to the next at the speed limit or above it. If we drive at 100 kilometres per hour we will travel long distances and it will not take us very much longer than it would if we drove at a higher speed. I support the suggestion put forward by the member for Karrinyup that the speed limit be reduced to 100 kilometres per hour.

Mr Blaikie: How do you think that would go between Geraldton and Carnarvon?

Mr CRANE: I do not think it makes any difference where one is going.

Mr Blaikie: You should ask the member for Gascoyne what he thinks.

Mr CRANE: The member for Gascoyne probably travels to Perth in an aeroplane. Whilst speaking about aeroplanes, I should like to draw a matter to the attention of the House. It is

not a complaint; but it is something which I think should be mentioned. It concerns the electoral allowance of members of Parliament.

I believe people who are fortunate enough to be served by an aeroplane service save a tremendous amount of money compared with members who are not so served. My car is four years old and has approximately 300 000 miles on the speedometer. My electorate is not served by an aeroplane service and it costs me a great deal of money to run my vehicle. It takes me eight days to travel the distance of 4 000 kilometres around the schools in my electorate.

In one afternoon I could walk around the schools in Geraldton, Albany and Bunbury. I am not trying to pinpoint those particular electorates; but I am emphasising the case. Members who are able to come to Perth by aeroplane save a large amount of money which the members who are not so fortunate as to be served by aeroplanes are not able to save.

I have made that point. I do not wish to labour it; but I do not think anyone can argue too strongly about it.

Mr Blaikie: Only the member for Geraldton.

Mr CRANE: There is not a great deal more I wish to say today because I have given my support to the Bill already. I should like to mention, however, a few matters which should always be remembered. I am referring to the fact that we should strive continually for a cut in our interest rates and taxation, because these are the two greatest contributors to inflation. I thank the Premier for his continual reminder of these very points and I support him in his endeavours to get the message through to our Federal counterparts.

Speaking about Federal counterparts, I have arranged a meeting in my electorate to which I have invited some Federal members of Parliament. I want them to listen to the pleas of the people who are living in my area and who need an extension to the comprehensive water scheme. Water is a priceless element. We hear people in the metropolitan area complaining about the new system of charging for water. Here again the member for Karrinyup pointed out very clearly yesterday that if the water allowance was doubled to 300 kilolitres per year it would cost consumers just over \$100. In country areas water simply is not available.

In country areas we have to install our own water tanks and are faced with a great deal more expense than are the people who live in the metropolitan area. We pay more for our water than people in Perth would pay in 30 or 40 years.

On my farm I have approximately 70 000 or 80 000 gallons of water stored in tanks. These tanks cost a great deal of money. We are holding the meeting I have mentioned in an endeavour to have the comprehensive water scheme extended. I hope we will be successful and that the Agaton Basin will be harnessed to feed the water into the pipeline at Pithara which will spread it south and east throughout the areas which have been suffering from lack of water for many years. These are the areas on which we rely so heavily for the income which keeps us in business.

I believe it is high time we recognised how important it is for the people living in these areas to have the same facilities we enjoy in the metropolitan area. As a result of the drought conditions in the last two years, we have not witnessed as frequently what used to be an every-day occurrence; that is, when driving to work in the morning we used to see water running down the bitumen roads from people's lawns. This occurred during the summer time. This water was priceless and one day we will be very sorry we have consumed such a great deal of it. Water is a very important commodity, one which we should conserve as much as we can, and one which we should not be afraid to charge for fairly. Even at the present price water is very cheap in the metropolitan area. I do not mind paying the charges for water in Perth. I know how much it costs me for water in the bush and it is a great deal more than people grizzle about paying in Perth.

One other point I did not make when speaking about motor vehicles is in relation to anti-pollution devices. I believe we have gone overboard completely in our use of anti-pollution devices. They have not been very effective in Australia and according to the latest figures, they are not needed here.

At a time when we are facing the present energy crisis, we have installed these devices on motorcars. We have caused motorcars to increase their fuel consumption which will in fact increase the pollutants in the atmosphere. These devices have made it more costly for people to run their cars and they are not having any worth-while effect on the amount of pollution in the atmosphere.

It is time we took strong measures to have anti-pollution devices removed from motor vehicles in order that we may conserve fuel. Another way in which we can conserve fuel is by introducing a horsepower tax on large motor vehicles, particularly on private vehicles.

I have a V8 motor in my car. It is a waste of money to have a motor of that size in a car which usually carries only one person. Perhaps

there could be some response from the hip-pocket nerve if we had a tax on horsepower. We would then have manufacturers reverting to smaller motors which would conserve fuel, and the vehicles would still be capable of travelling at 100 kilometres an hour. I believe that a speed of 100 kilometres an hour is quite sufficient, and our roads would be so much safer.

I do not wish to speak further except to reiterate my support of the Bill. I ask the Premier, on behalf of the people of Moora, to give further consideration to the much needed extensions to our hospital.

MR HARMAN (Maylands) [2.51 p.m.]: I wish to contribute to this debate on the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure. I suppose it is tempting to call it the Budget, but when one really thinks about the term "Budget", and what it means in economic terms, one realises it could hardly be called a Budget in that sense. It is not a tool for economic management, but rather a statement of receipts and expenditure.

The receipts, of course, come from money received from the Commonwealth Government and from taxes collected by the State Government. So, on the one hand there is a sum of money coming in and on the other hand that money is spent. So, this is really an administrative arrangement which sets out how the money received in Western Australia is spent.

It has been the practice of some people to describe this administrative arrangement as imaginative. I assume the Premier would refer to it as tremendous, whereas the Leader of the Opposition would refer to it as dull. Other words have included "unimaginative". So, it is possible for this administrative arrangement to take on all these emotive terms, which is really a bit of a joke. I do not wish to dwell on that particular aspect.

Today I want to take up the case for many people in Western Australia who are disadvantaged by the Liberal Government in this State, and the Liberal Government in Canberra—particularly the Government in Canberra. The attitude of that Government reflects on the Liberal Party in Western Australia because it appears the Liberal Party in this State has not taken any action to alleviate the problem. Of course, I refer to the plight of pensioners, the people receiving unemployment benefits, and the plight of people receiving family allowances.

I will explain further just what the Liberal Party has done in this respect for the aged, the invalided, pensioners, supporting parents, those

receiving sheltered employment allowances, those receiving sickness and special unemployment allowances, and those with dependants.

All those people will be indexed to the Consumer Price Index once yearly. The present arrangement is that an automatic adjustment takes place twice a year, however, the Liberals have decided that pensioners, and all those other people I have mentioned, will receive an indexed increase, according to the CPI, once a year. The situation is even worse than that because the increase will be determined in June—in the middle of the year—and paid in November. That really means the pensioners, and all those other people receiving benefits, will now have to wait for 16 months before they receive a cost-of-living adjustment. That is what has been done.

What has the Liberal Party in this State done? Has it made any representations to Canberra on behalf of the pensioners in Western Australia? I have not heard of any representation. The silence from the Government suggests that members opposite are guilty.

Mr McIver: You can include the allowance for retarded children amongst those you have mentioned.

Mr HARMAN: The proposal by the Liberals—supported by the National Country Party—is a complete breach of faith with pensioners. The automatic adjustment of pensions, twice yearly, was a firm promise of the Fraser Government. The Fraser Government claimed it was a great reform that pensioners should have only a four-month delay before they received an increase. The proposed change will mean a delay of 16 months before pensioners are recompensed for any increase in the cost of living. That is shameful and disgraceful, and will be perpetrated on thousands of people in Western Australia, and people in other parts of Australia. Not one Liberal member in this State has publicly made representations to the Liberal Government in Canberra in an effort to obtain some changes.

Mr Shalders: I do not agree with the proposal, the same as many Federal Liberal back-benchers.

Mr HARMAN: What has the member for Murray done about it? Nothing.

Mr Shalders: That is not true.

Mr HARMAN: I will now refer to the plight of people receiving unemployment benefits. It is interesting to see what has happened here. Firstly, take the case of 16 and 17-year-old boys and girls in the community who are not able to get jobs. I will go a little further into this aspect later.

Mr Blaikie: If you were to reverse your attitude in relation to mining and whaling, perhaps some of those young people would be able to get jobs. Do not be so damned hypocritical.

Mr HARMAN: I do not know whether or not the member for Vasse has made a speech yet! The 16 and 17-year-old boys and girls in our community who are unable to obtain work are registered for unemployment benefits, to which they are entitled. They receive a sum of \$36 a week, the same as similar people were receiving in 1975.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order. The member for Maylands.

Mr HARMAN: These 16 and 17-year-old boys and girls receive a sum of \$36 a week, an amount set in 1975. In a period of three years there has been no change to the amount they receive. An 18-year-old receives \$51.45 a week, and after the 1st November that person will receive \$53.20 a week. The point I make is that during the period of three long years young people in the category of 16 and 17-year-olds have received no increase in unemployment benefits. How does that stack up, or line up, with some of the statements attributed to Mr Fraser?

Mr Shalders: How does that sum of money stack up against the wages of a first-year apprentice?

Mr HARMAN: The member for Murray can tell us at some convenient time. Is it a sin to be unemployed? Are members opposite clinging to the 19th century belief that there is something wrong with people who are out of work, and that they should be placed in poor houses and not seen? Should those people be treated as second-class citizens?

Mr Shalders: Not at all.

Mr HARMAN: Let us see what the illustrious leader of the Liberal Party said in 1974. Mr Fraser suggested higher unemployment benefits for the jobless. In 1974 he said the Government should pay the minimum wage of about \$80 a week if the number of people out of work reached 250 000. That is what Mr Fraser said in 1974. He has been in office for three years now, and if he accepted that proposition then, there has certainly been no increase in the category to which I have referred. On the 6th September, 1976, he said—

Those who are economically disadvantaged through no fault of their own should be able to look to Governments for assistance.

On the 27th November, 1975, he said—

We will be generous to those who can't get a job and want to work.

What this man says and what he does are two different things, so we must have some doubt about the credibility of our Prime Minister. In 1977 he went on to say—

Unemployment is a dispiriting experience that not only undermines self-respect but creates social problems. Its effects are not just confined to the person unemployed but they are felt right throughout the whole structure of family life.

I agree with that, but he does not seem to take it any further by way of action. He does not seem to regard it as a problem that we have a colossal number of people out of work in Australia. He does not seem to have any regard for the hardship and anguish these people are suffering.

In the category of 16 and 17-year-olds alone, there are 7 205 persons out of work and receiving unemployment benefits in Western Australia. That is not a very rosy picture and certainly not one to be proud of. Yet when we read the Treasurer's Budget speech we find no mention in it of any massive job creation or job training schemes, or any schemes at all to combat the unemployment problem facing the young people today.

In Western Australia 35 000 people are out of work; so the 7 205 16 and 17-years-olds comprise roughly 20 per cent of the unemployed in this State. They therefore comprise a significant number in the community, and they are being penalised to the extent that the unemployment benefits paid to them have not been increased since 1975.

Further, the single persons over the age of 18 will no longer receive automatic cost-of-living adjustments, and this year they will receive no increase. That is a fine record of achievement by the Liberals! All single unemployed persons will now be treated as second-class citizens, to be thrown crumbs at the whim of the Government. These people are being used by the Government in order to achieve its economic aim of bringing down inflation. The present strategy is to bring down inflation by ensuring unemployment is kept at a very high level; yet these people are not only not being given the opportunity to obtain employment but also they are being further penalised by not receiving appropriate unemployment benefits.

We are all aware of what is happening in the field of employment and unemployment, but I think one aspect should be brought to the notice of this House. It concerns the scheme whereby employers are subsidised by the Government when they employ certain persons in a particular age group who fulfil the criteria in respect of the number of months they have been out of work. The way the system works is that if an employer takes on one of those persons he receives from the Government a subsidy towards that person's wages.

A number of cases have been brought to my attention from time to time, and I will quote one of them. It involves a girl who was employed at a pharmacy and was receiving \$120 a week. She was sacked and applied for unemployment benefits, which she obtained at the rate of \$53 a week. The employer immediately put on the staff one of those persons for whom he received a subsidy of \$67 a week, and he paid her \$80 a week, thereby saving himself \$67 a week. It cost him only \$13 a week to employ this particular girl, whereas he was paying the girl he sacked \$120 a week.

Mr McIver: That is rife in the country, of course. It is going on all the time.

Mr HARMAN: That is right. It is going on all around the metropolitan area and, as the member for Avon said, in the country areas. In the case I have cited, the Government is in effect paying out \$53 for the person who is unemployed as a result of being sacked, in order that the employer can take on a subsidised employee for whom the Government pays \$67 a week. So in effect the Government is paying out \$110 a week, while the employer has to pay out only \$13 a week.

If that is not a subsidy to employers, I do not know what is; and it is not really helping the employment scene. It gives people the opportunity to work for six months, because that is the limit. After that the subsidy cuts out. When the six months are up the employers sack the employees and take on other employees for six months, thereby receiving the Commonwealth subsidy of \$67 a week. That is going on in Western Australia and, indeed, in other parts of Australia. It is not very clear what real benefit it is achieving in reducing unemployment, but it is certainly providing employers—particularly those who want to take advantage of the scheme—with the opportunity to pay out less in wages than they have ever had to pay before.

Mr Shalders: If what you say is true, is there a solution to it? What is the answer?

Mr HARMAN: The answer is to reduce unemployment, and the way to do that is to increase Government spending so that we will get people back to work. There will be a demand for goods and we will have more people working and paying taxes, and less money will be spent on subsidies and unemployment benefits.

Mr Shalders: Can you think of a way to make that scheme work? You and I know it is being abused. Is there a way to improve it?

Mr HARMAN: Of course there is a way to improve it. All the Government has to do is sit around the table and work out a better scheme. The employers who take advantage of it should be dealt with in some way. After all, it is the taxpayers' money.

I now come to the question of family allowances. In 1975 a new system of family allowances was introduced whereby payments were made at certain rates per week. The scheme involved indexation of the payments to some extent, and also discontinuing the taxation deduction for children. But, of course, the Fraser Government has let us down again. The rebate was to be indexed yearly in line with the Consumer Price Index, but the substituted family allowance has not been adjusted to take inflation into account.

So we have a family allowance scheme which has not been increased since it was introduced, and we have lost all of the benefits that we once obtained from rebates for children under the taxation system. Again the people of Australia have been let down by the Liberals.

Before leaving this point I want to stress again the manner in which the Liberals have injured and disadvantaged a great number of people in Western Australia. They have done this by the introduction of a once-yearly increase in pensions, which in effect will mean that pensions will be adjusted every 16 months to incorporate cost-of-living increases. That is a longer period to wait for adjustments than when we had a system of annual wage indexation. Obviously one can see the benefits of having an indexing system at intervals of six months; preferably it should be three months, but certainly the interval of six months was accepted by all in Australia.

Secondly, despite the many assurances given by the Liberals over a number of years, and particularly by the Prime Minister, that all benefits, and primarily unemployment benefits, would be increased as the number of unemployed increased, that has not been the case. Those promises also have not been honoured, and for that the Government ought to be condemned.

The other matter I wish to raise today is that of land rights for Aborigines. This is a question which seems to obtain a great deal of Press coverage throughout Australia, but a question in respect of which the Government of Western Australia seems to have placed its head in the sand and has no intention of taking action. The other day the new Minister for Community Welfare who, I thought, had an independent line of thinking, merely tossed out the old hackneyed cries of the Government on this matter. I will deal with that in a moment.

We all recall that some time ago the Government announced that it proposed to amend the regulations made under the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act to give the Minister for Community Welfare the right to grant permits to persons to enter Aboriginal reserves.

Mr Young: Who do you think should have that right?

Mr HARMAN: The commissioner presently has that right, but it is to be taken from him. At that time I forecast that the Government would do this whilst Parliament was in recess so that we would have no opportunity to debate the matter in the Parliament. I was wrong; the Government did not proclaim that regulation and as far as I am aware still has not done so.

Sir Charles Court: We will be amending regulation 8, to be precise.

Mr HARMAN: It has not been done as yet. I started to wonder why this had not been done, but I found the reason when the Mining Bill was introduced. The intentions of the Government are spelt out very clearly in that Bill. If members look at clause 24 of the Mining Bill they will see that provision is made for mining to take place on certain classes of land. One class of land mentioned in subclause (1) (f) is land proclaimed to be a reserve for natives pursuant to the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act. So under the proposed new Mining Act the Minister for Mines may grant approval to a mining company or anyone holding a miner's right to enter upon an Aboriginal reserve.

This is subject to a qualification found in subclause (7), which states that mining may be carried out on land referred to in subclause (1) (f) with the written consent of the Minister, who may refuse his consent or may give it subject to certain terms and conditions. The provision then says that before giving his consent, whether conditionally or unconditionally, the Minister for Mines shall first consult the responsible Minister with respect thereto and obtain his recommendation thereon.

I presume what will happen is that the Minister for Mines will receive an application to mine on a reserve listed in the new Bill. He will refer it to the Minister for Community Welfare, and the latter Minister may say he objects to the Minister for Mines granting the application. However, according to the Mining Bill the Minister for Mines will not be required to take any notice at all of the Minister for Community Welfare.

Mr Young: You have been in Cabinet Government, haven't you?

Mr HARMAN: That is correct.

Mr Young: You don't know how it works then.

Mr HARMAN: I am glad the Minister has interjected, because I wish to refer to an earlier provision. The new Mining Bill makes provision also for the Minister for Mines to grant approval for mining to be carried out in a State forest. That is provided for in clause 24 (1) (d), which refers to land that is a State forest or a timber reserve within the meaning of the Forests Act. However, subclause (6) (a) says that mining may be carried out on any land referred to in subclause (1) (d) with the written consent of the Minister for Mines, who may refuse his consent or may give it subject to certain terms and conditions. The provision then says that before giving his consent, whether conditionally or unconditionally, the Minister for Mines shall first consult with and obtain the concurrence thereto, of the Minister for Forests.

That is different from the provision in subclause (7), because if the Minister for Forests does not agree to mining in a State forest that is the end of the issue under the proposed legislation. However, if the Minister for Community Welfare objects to mining on an Aboriginal reserve, then under the same new Bill the Minister for Mines is not required to take any notice of his objection. The subclauses are worded differently.

I say they are worded differently for the particular purpose of giving the Minister for Mines the ultimate authority in respect of mining on Aboriginal reserves. According to the way the Bill is presented, trees are more important than Aborigines. Trees are more important than human beings; and in the case of trees we can see what devastation can be caused by mining. We have seen what has happened to our jarrah forest. Therefore, trees are not rated very highly by the Government; yet it is prepared to write into legislation provisions to protect trees but is not prepared to include provisions to protect Aborigines.

That is what this Government is all about. The new Mining Bill really shows the true colours of the Liberal Government.

Sir Charles Court: You are drawing a long bow when you distort a Bill like that. You are distorting it completely. You have to read Statutes in conjunction with other Statutes.

Mr HARMAN: The Premier will have the opportunity when he replies to answer my criticism, and I hope he does.

Sir Charles Court: It is your responsibility to be accurate.

Mr HARMAN: I am reading only what is in the Bill.

Sir Charles Court: You are misreading what is in the Bill.

Mr HARMAN: I am not; it is a perfectly natural conclusion to reach where the two clauses are written differently. In the case of forests, clause 24 (6) (b) states—

Before giving his consent, whether conditionally or unconditionally the Minister shall first consult with, and obtain the concurrence thereto, of the Minister for Forests.

Does that not mean that if the Minister for Forests did not concur, the Minister for Mines could go no further? It is fairly clear that the Minister for Mines must obtain concurrence before he proceeds.

Sir Charles Court: You are reading one piece of legislation in isolation, and not in conjunction with the total Statutes.

Mr HARMAN: It is on page 19. Let us continue and see what it says in respect of the Minister for Community Welfare. Clause 24 (5) (b) says—

Before giving his consent whether conditionally or unconditionally the Minister shall first consult the responsible Minister... with respect thereto, and obtain its or their recommendations thereon.

It does not say anything about obtaining his concurrence thereto; it says, in effect, "obtain his recommendation thereon". I conclude from that that it is different, and that the Minister for Mines has only to take notice of the recommendation of the Minister for Community Welfare; he is not required to act on that recommendation.

Mr Young: Is it not more important for you to examine the procedures which would be adopted in the case of such a situation arising?

Mr HARMAN: I think it is the Premier who is trying to distort the situation.

Mr Young: Having been a Cabinet Minister, you must know that if there is an area of dispute between two Ministers it is decided by the Government of the day. Surely your Ministers used to take matters to Cabinet.

Mr HARMAN: Of course they did; Cabinet decides. However, in this case it will be written into the law.

Sir Charles Court: The Minister simply is trying to remind you how Cabinet Government works and that there are two Statutes involved.

Mr HARMAN: The Premier is drawing a red herring across the trail. The facts are here in the legislation. This shows the true colours of the Government. Trees are more important than human beings; trees are more important than Aborigines. Let me return to this question of land rights.

Mr Young: What do you mean by land rights? Would you define it? In all the stuff I have read when Western Australia has been criticised, they have not defined what they mean by "land rights".

Mr HARMAN: My idea of land rights is this: Aborigines were the original inhabitants of Western Australia. They have a culture system and a belief system of their own, a system which heavily depends upon features of the land. It might be a hill, a certain rock hole or a certain river.

Mr Nanovich: Or a tree.

Mr HARMAN: It might be some other feature of the land which has a particular significance in their culture and in their system of beliefs and which is in some way related to some of their ancestral heroes.

If we accept the fact there is a significant relationship between the land and the culture of the Aborigines, we must also accept they have a particular relationship with the land. They want to control and own that land which has a particular significance to them, and the way they want to do that is by a special Act of Parliament.

Mr Young: Which they already have.

Mr HARMAN: They do not want the land handed over in fee simple.

Mr Young: They do not want it? This is even more interesting.

Mr HARMAN: Can the Minister for Health tell me where they want it?

Mr Young: This is what they have at the moment—22 million hectares under the very arrangement you have described.

Mr HARMAN: I will come to that in a moment. They do not want it in fee simple. They do not want to have land they can own and subsequently sell.

Sir Charles Court: Why do they want it freehold?

Mr HARMAN: All they want is a State Act of Parliament which gives them—

Mr Young: They already have one.

Mr HARMAN:—control over the land which they have delineated as being of special significance to them.

Mr Young: They already have that.

Mr HARMAN: No they have not.

Mr Young: What is the Aboriginal Lands Trust all about?

Mr HARMAN: I have just explained to the House that the Minister for Mines will be able to approve of persons going onto any Aboriginal reserve for the purposes of mining exploration.

Sir Charles Court: They have a better title to that reserve than you have to your own land.

Mr HARMAN: Members should examine what occurred in 1956, when a great tract of land in an area of Western Australia known as the central reserve was excised by the Government of the day.

Mr Clarko: In 1956?

Mr HARMAN: Yes, and it was done by a Labor Government. That land was excised and turned into a mining reserve. An agreement was reached between a nickel company in America and the Government and that company sent its representatives here to conduct a lot of prospecting on that mining reserve.

Gradually, under the system of mining reserves, each year so much was taken from the mining reserve and ultimately, a great deal of the land returned to Crown land and was brought back into the Aboriginal reserve.

In 1967, 47 000 acres of an Aboriginal reserve in the Kimberley was taken over by the Government of the day—for the record, a Liberal Government.

Mr Young: You realise the only way it can be excised now, do you not?

Mr HARMAN: Yes, by the Parliament. But what does that mean?

Mr Young: It means this: It will not be done in the sneaky way you are suggesting.

Mr HARMAN: It means that once Cabinet decides it is going to excise or cancel part of a reserve, that proposal is brought before Parliament in the form of a Reserves Bill. The Government has the numbers in this House, so it goes through this House; and, it has the numbers in the other place, so it goes through there.

Mr Young: And if it was a freehold title?

Mr HARMAN: That is not what the Aborigines want.

Mr Young: That is what all the criticism from the pressure groups seems to indicate.

Mr HARMAN: Why does the Minister for Health not forget about the pressure groups and talk to the Aborigines? The poor old former Minister for Health got into all sorts of trouble with pressure groups.

Mr Ridge: No he did not!

Mr Clarko: Are they prepared to give up their mineral rights on a piece of land where mining would not clash with their sacred interests, or would they be happy to have for themselves the oil which comes out of the ground on these specially created reserves?

Mr HARMAN: They want the same rights as any other person. If a farmer happens to have oil under his property, he benefits from that oil; the Aborigines want the same rights.

Several members interjected.

Mr Sodeman: How did that person get his farm?

Mr HARMAN: He purchased it.

Mr Clarko: Do you know what rights I have if my local authority wants to resume part of my front yard to widen the road?

Mr HARMAN: Is the member for Pilbara suggesting that Aborigines should buy their land? There is a fine old suggestion from the honourable member! How ridiculous can he get!

Mr Sodeman: You are distorting what I said. That is not what I said at all.

Mr HARMAN: I have already said—

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order.

Mr McIver: It sounds like a corroboree!

Mr HARMAN: I have already said there is a traditional, historical relationship—a very special relationship—between the Aborigines and the land. They were the first people in this country. Now the member for Pilbara says, "All right, if they want land, let them buy it back." I think the

people in the Pilbara would be interested to know their member's attitude towards this important question.

Mr Young: Where do you draw the line?

Sir Charles Court: What suburb do you live in?

Mr HARMAN: Maylands.

Sir Charles Court: I think I will send them out there to put a fix on your land, to see how you react.

Mr HARMAN: If that is the way the Premier wants to operate, that is his business.

Mr Young: Where do you draw the line?

Mr HARMAN: All we need to do is put through this Parliament a special Bill which devolves land upon the Aboriginal community.

Mr Young: We have already done that.

Mr HARMAN: When?

Mr Young: Through the Aboriginal Lands Trust; we placed 22 million hectares under their control.

Mr HARMAN: Then the Government must give the Aboriginal communities control over their land.

Mr Young: Which they have.

Mr HARMAN: No they have not.

Mr Young: They have. In the final analysis, they make the determinations about who goes on their land. It is only where there is an area of dispute that a file ends up on my desk.

Mr HARMAN: Why is the Government changing the legislation? I believe it is because the Government wants this power I have mentioned.

Mr Young: The commissioner and the Minister can confer and the commissioner can veto a matter; we do not want that veto power to lie with the commissioner.

Mr HARMAN: Only if the Aborigines do not want it. The Minister can override the wishes of the Aborigines.

Mr Young: In the final analysis, yes.

Mr HARMAN: How can the Minister say the Aborigines will have control when he knows he has the ultimate power to say to them, "I respect your wishes but I am going to allow mining company X to go on to your reserve"? This is the power the Minister shortly will have. All the Aborigines want is the authority themselves to control who goes onto their land.

Mr Clarko: I cannot control who goes onto my land; it is discrimination in reverse.

Mr HARMAN: If one owns land privately one has that power; one is protected by all sorts of provisions in the law. I think it is about time this Government took its head out of the sand and set up a working party which could come to grips with this question. Surely that is not too much to ask. It has been done in all the other States. Already the Australian Minister (Mr Viner) has criticised the State Government for its attitude on this question of Aboriginal land rights.

Mr Young: The Pitjantjatjara people have freehold rights in South Australia and the Northern Territory. What difference would that make to their way of life? If the Government decided someone can mine on that land he still can.

Mr HARMAN: There is a tremendous moral principle involved.

Mr Clarko: If you were worried about moral principles you would take away their drinking rights.

An Opposition member: What about the United Nations?

Mr Clarko: Who cares about the United Nations?

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order.

Mr HARMAN: We have come to the stage where we have too much of this 19th century thinking. The Government must recognise there is a decision which can be made on this question of land rights. The first thing we should do is set up a working party so that we can come to grips with the subject.

In 1968 I moved for a Select Committee to inquire into all aspects of land rights but the motion was defeated. The opportunity was available then to come to grips with this subject. The Government will never solve the problem if it walks away from it; it has to sit down and come up with solutions. A working party could come to grips with the matter.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Point of Order

Mr BATEMAN: As this is such an important issue the member for Maylands is debating, would you, Mr Speaker, give some instruction to me which would allow me to move for an extension of time for the member?

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Canning knows full well the requirements of Standing Orders in respect of extension of time for a member's speech. In fact, all his intervention has achieved is to take more time from the member for Maylands.

Debate Resumed

Mr HARMAN: I believe—

Extension of Time

Mr BERTRAM: I move—

That the honourable member's time be extended.

Motion put and negatived.

Debate Resumed

Mr HARMAN: I am grateful to my colleagues for attempting to gain extra time for me to make my speech. I think the points I have made are quite clear. It seems the Government is to grant the Minister for Mines power to allow people to enter Aboriginal reserves for mining purposes. The Minister for Community Welfare shortly will have power to allow persons to go on Aboriginal reserves for other purposes, probably as well as mining, contrary, if necessary, to the wishes of the Aboriginal community. This means the Aborigines will no longer have power and control over their reserves and the Government will be unable to say they do. No longer can the Government claim the Aborigines have this control because when the Mining Bill goes through and becomes law, and when the regulations are amended, any responsibility the Aboriginal community might have thought it had will have gone.

It is most distasteful to see the way in which the Mining Bill is so worded, indicating the Government treats trees with greater respect than human beings. It is fairly obvious—and I hope the Premier has read page 19 of the Mining Bill—that it has been worded deliberately so the Minister for Forests will have overriding power and no objection to that power could be sustained. The Minister for Community Welfare has been relegated to a position where he can make recommendations only which the Minister for Mines can ignore. I ask the Government to consider my proposition of a working party and so come to grips with this subject of land rights.

MR WATT (Albany) [3.37 p.m.]: At the outset I assure the member for Canning I will not be requiring an extension of time.

Mr Bateman: I am prepared to try if you change your mind.

Mr WATT: In addressing myself to this debate and supporting this Bill, I shall comment on the Budget itself and several general issues along with some parochial topics affecting my electorate.

I realise the role of the Opposition, at least traditionally, would appear to be that of not giving credit where it is due in these matters, so perhaps it is left to those on the Government side to focus attention on features of the Budget deserving of praise. We must appreciate that the Leader of the Opposition has said the Budget is dull and unimaginative. At the same time he has not been able to be constructive in any way, and this has been commented on by speakers on this side of the House. Rather, the Leader of the Opposition was content to be destructive in his comments about the Budget.

Members need also to appreciate that the Budget was framed in extremely difficult financial times. We have recently seen a Budget produced by the Federal Government which has been described as a budget of restraint. I think that would be something of an understatement. There have been cut-backs in many areas in an effort to control inflation and the national deficit. We should applaud those controls even though there are many of us, depending on the type of electorate we represent and our special areas of concern, who are not terribly impressed with the means taken to achieve the Federal Government's aims. For example, there have been cut-backs in areas of road works and housing which are matters of grave concern to this State.

However, in the circumstances we need to recognise that the State has been presented with a good Budget on this occasion.

I wish to give special mention to one or two aspects. Firstly I refer to the \$4 million which has been provided again for the stimulation of employment. To some people \$4 million might not be a great deal, but it is an amount similar to the sum provided last year and we know that was of considerable benefit especially to the building industry, and more particularly to small contractors and subcontractors who, quite frankly, are feeling the pinch as a result of the downturn being experienced by the building industry.

Mr Bertram: Why not do something about it? You have \$13 million unspent. Why did you not put that into the economy last year?

Mr WATT: I am talking about some of the things the Government has done. If the honourable member would allow me to make my speech he would find there are many good aspects of the Budget which he is not prepared to acknowledge.

Obviously Government departments and members of Parliament would have liked many more millions of dollars to be spent in some areas. If the wishes of all Government departments and members of Parliament had been met we would have been looking at a much larger Budget which would have been achieved only by one of two alternatives; that is, a massive deficit which we do not want, or massive increases in taxes which we do not want.

Mr Jamieson: You do not understand the Budget.

Mr WATT: I have not had as much experience in this place as the member for Welshpool has had, but I am expressing my view, and he should acknowledge that fact. I am stating that I would not subscribe to either of those budgetary theories.

Mr Jamieson: You ought to look at the Auditor General's report.

Mr Bertram: He has never read it.

A Government member: Neither have you; so what is the difference?

Mr WATT: When it comes to providing finance to stimulate employment many people believe that the jobs should be created in the building trades. They do not recognise that by the provision of fairly large amounts of money in other areas such as medical services, education, police, and so on, a significant number of additional jobs have been created. We must acknowledge that many young people who have spent two to four years training for a professional or semi-professional career are denied the opportunity to enter the work force because there are no jobs available. Jobs must be made available in areas apart from construction-type work and the Government's efforts in this regard should be recognised and it should be given credit for endeavouring to stimulate those employment opportunities.

I also wish to refer to hospitals. In his Budget speech the Treasurer said that the budget for expenditure on hospitals and related medical services is \$319.3 million for 1978-79, an increase of \$25.2 million or 8.5 per cent.

One of the disturbing aspects of this subject is that the fees it is anticipated will be collected by hospitals this year will amount to \$60.8 million, which is less than one-fifth the total cost involved. Obviously it would be impossible for ordinary citizens to cover the high cost of health care services. Consequently I was rather interested in the comments the Treasurer made when he told us that a decision by the Commonwealth Government was taken recently to initiate a study by

Commonwealth and State officers on hospital productivity. I am sure we will all look forward to the results of that study, which will be to hand at some time in the future, to ascertain whether any savings can be achieved or the efficiency of the service improved so that a reduction can be made in the enormous cost facing us for the provision of health care.

Mr Young: For your interest, I indicate that I will be asking the Commonwealth to look closely at the costs in the ACT and the Northern Territory at the same time. They are much higher than the State's average.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.04 p.m.

Mr WATT: Prior to the afternoon tea suspension I was speaking about the inquiry which was to be conducted by the Commonwealth Government and State officers into hospital productivity, and the Minister for Health commented by way of interjection that he would also be asking them to inquire into the costs of health care in hospitals in the ACT and the Northern Territory. That is very appropriate because over the years we have had to learn to live with something of a "them and us" situation between the Commonwealth Territories and the rest of the States. In health care, education, and many other matters the Territories seem to fare immeasurably better than the States. So I certainly hope the Minister has some success with his inquiry in that particular area.

There are always some spheres in which either the public or pressure groups call for fairly substantial increases in funds. One of those areas this year happened to be police and traffic, and it is significant that an amount of \$61.5 million has been allocated in the Budget for the combined operations of the Police Department and the Road Traffic Authority, which is 13.4 per cent more than last year's allocation. The 13.4 per cent increase has to be seen as generous in the light of a revenue increase which is estimated to be around 10 per cent. The additional funds will provide for 43 additional policemen and 13 additional road traffic patrolmen, plus an additional 20 clerical and support staff.

It is disappointing to me that the spokesman for the Police Union, while acknowledging the extra funds, complained that he was still not satisfied. I think these people should sometimes take a more responsible approach to the problems and be a little less selfish about their own demands and their own particular departments. When we compare the ratios of police to population in Western Australia and the more populous States, we find that New South Wales has one police

officer to every 569 people, Victoria one to every 544, and Queensland one to every 553. Our ratio of one to every 495 persons compares more than favourably.

Mr Jamieson: You have to take into account the size of the State, you know.

Mr WATT: I was about to make the comment that I appreciate the size of this State makes for a different situation, and that argument can be applied to a whole range of matters. Nevertheless, I think the point should be made that the situation in Western Australia is at least as favourable as if not more favourable than that in the other States.

I was particularly interested in what is perhaps a comparatively small item but it may well prove to be a very valuable experiment as far as my electorate of Albany is concerned. It relates to carpet wool. Under the heading "Agriculture" the animal production division will be allocated funds to purchase 55 Drysdale carpet wool sheep to be transferred from New Zealand to the Denmark research station. The project is aimed at evaluating the economic utilisation of these animals as a viable alternative to dairying.

Apart from being a viable alternative to dairying, it will also have a very special significance for Albany because, as most members are probably aware, the operations of the Albany Woollen Mills have in recent years been directed almost entirely to the production of carpet yarn. At the moment almost all of the raw material is imported from New Zealand, with a little extra coming from other places—I think some comes from Scotland.

When it is realised that the bulk of the outlets of the woollen mills are in the Eastern States, it will be appreciated that the company suffers economic disadvantages in bringing its raw material from New Zealand to Albany and then, after it has been processed into carpet yarn, sending it all the way back to Victoria, mainly, and New South Wales. There are appreciable cost disadvantages. If this proposition can be proved to be a viable operation, it is hoped many farmers in the Albany region will be able to move into the production of types of sheep suitable for carpet yarn. It will mean big savings to the Albany Woollen Mills and, of course, another string to the bow of the farmers in the Albany region.

Mr Stephens interjected.

Mr WATT: I am not aware of the technical aspects of it. I simply make the point that if it can be proved to be a viable proposition—

Mr Stephens: Are you aware that there could be delays because of quarantine problems.

Mr WATT: I do not think anything worth while is ever achieved without someone having a go and taking the first step. I commend the Government on the action it has taken in this case.

Mr Stephens: I am not disputing the action, just referring to possible delays because of quarantine problems.

Mr WATT: The point is well taken.

The next matter I would like to refer to is spending on education. The amount of \$332.2 million which has been allocated for education represents, on my calculation, 22.89 per cent of the total Budget, which, in terms of the percentage of the total Budget, is the highest amount ever allocated to education.

Mr Bertram: The Budget is now about three times larger than it was in 1974.

Mr WATT: That has nothing to do with it. I am talking in terms of percentage and I am making the point that it is the highest percentage of the Budget which has ever been allocated. It is interesting that the member for Mt. Hawthorn should interject and make a comment about the situation in 1974, because after taking out some figures I found that in each of the three years the Labor Party was in Government in this State it allocated, in terms of the percentage of the total Budget, 19.27 per cent, 19.92 per cent, and 20.95 per cent respectively. In the following year the percentage was increased to 22.83, which was just short of the record which has been achieved this year.

Mr Bertram: How much came from the Commonwealth Government in those years?

Mr WATT: That is another area. The percentages I have given relate to the Consolidated Revenue Fund Budget, as the honourable member will understand. He is throwing in the usual red herrings to try to draw attention away from the *faux pas* he has just made.

It is rather disappointing to me that the Teachers' Union has had so little to say about this point. The union is always calling for more funds for education and I think the Government has been extremely fair—perhaps even more than fair—in its allocation to education. It is a pity there are not a few more honest people around who are prepared to recognise the fact and give credit where it is due.

Mr Shalders: Not one word about that in the latest edition of *The Western Teacher*.

Mr WATT: That is right. In fact, there was only a small acknowledgment of it in *The West Australian* the day after the Budget was introduced. According to my calculation, 79 per cent

of that vote goes on wages, and if we include another \$12.7 million-odd for pay-roll tax on wages it takes the amount for wages up to something like 83 per cent of the education vote. We can readily see that teachers fare very well in the State Budget.

Another problem which has been referred to relates to apprentices. We must acknowledge that a problem exists, and I am sure we would all like to see many more apprentices being employed. It is pleasing to note the action taken by the Government recently in assisting to place over 100 apprentices who had been displaced.

I would like to make one or two observations about some of the problems associated with apprenticeships as I see them. Firstly, there is the problem of workers' compensation. Most members will be aware that the basis of workers' compensation insurance is that a premium is paid on a declared wage, and that wage is declared at a maximum of \$50 a week for any one employee.

Let us say a tradesman receives \$200 a week, and for that \$200 a week he produces goods for his employer and assists his employer in earning a profit for his enterprise. Let us take the next alternative and suppose an apprentice earns \$50 a week: while he may be productive in some small way, by and large in his first year he is not very productive at all.

If we add to that the additional time he is required to take off to attend technical school and other such matters—a financial burden on the employer—members will appreciate it is not a very satisfactory system.

Obviously a tradesman earning \$200 a week and an apprentice earning \$50 a week do not represent the same risk to the insurer, and so it concerns me that the employer is required to pay the same premium for both.

Before my election to this House I was an insurance inspector and frequently I helped clients fill out workers' compensation wages statements. About 10 years ago it was required that statements should contain both the total wage paid and the declared wage to a maximum of \$50 to any one person. At that time I understood that when sufficient statistics had been collected the rates would be recalculated so that a lower rate could be charged. This would produce roughly the same amount of revenue, but it could then be applied to the total wage rather than to the declared wage.

I believe that would be a far more equitable way to charge for workers' compensation; the payment would be more in proportion to the risk

involved. Also, it would produce a significant increase in the number of apprentices employed. I have been told both by contractors and subcontractors in the building trade—and especially by contractors—that they will not employ apprentices while this situation exists. They would prefer to use the services of a subcontractor because then they are not faced with high workers' compensation payments. Unfortunately the Minister for Labour and Industry is not here today, but I will refer that suggestion to him in the hope that it will be given serious consideration.

I want to refer to a more specific problem regarding apprentices in Albany in the radio and television servicing field. This same problem may apply in other districts. Over the last few years I have been involved in attempting to have established at the Albany Technical College a course in radio and television servicing. I understand there are about eight to 10 apprentices involved in this field, and as no course is available at that college, these apprentices are required to enrol in correspondence courses and to attend a two-week practical course in Perth.

The Technical Education Service has argued that the number of apprentices in Albany is insufficient to justify such a course, and yet a course was established at Bunbury some years ago for a similar number of apprentices. It is a little hard to take when we are told that something can be done in one area and not in another. Some years ago one Albany apprentice travelled to Bunbury one day every fortnight at his own expense because it was cheaper than travelling to Perth.

There is a solution to the problem. I know of a technical teacher who lives in Albany, and he would very much like to work in that district. He was employed at the Mt. Lawley Technical College last year and in that employment he commuted back and forth to Perth. He has now been transferred to the Bunbury Technical College and he commutes from Albany to Bunbury; this is a slightly shorter distance—approximately 20 miles. This teacher has demonstrated to the college that he has the qualifications to make up the required number of hours, not just in a radio and television servicing course for apprentices, but also night courses for people interested in amateur radio and CB radio. He is qualified also in other areas; I believe he is qualified to teach maths and similar subjects so that he could easily make up the required number of hours. Yet the department steadfastly refuses to appoint him to the Albany Technical College.

I want to refer particularly to the case of one young Albany apprentice by the name of Greg Vauth who is apprenticed to one of the television servicing firms in Albany. The history of this young man's apprenticeship will illustrate some of the problems involved. He was apprenticed in 1975, and because no course was available in Albany, he enrolled in the course through the Technical Extension Service. He completed his first year in 1975 and passed it. No second-year course was available in 1976 as it had not been prepared, so in 1977, in the third year of his apprenticeship, he did the second year of the course. In 1978—this year—he is a fourth-year apprentice and so far there is no third-year course available for him.

Mr Davies: He looks like a confused lad to me.

Mr WATT: He is having real problems. During 1977 he had problems with the extension service. At one stage eight of his assignments were unmarked. He stopped sending in any more assignments because he felt he was not being given sufficient guidance. He did not know whether or not he was working on the right track; he did not know whether his answers were correct.

Mr Davies: Perhaps his instructor could not keep up with him.

Mr WATT: That is probably the problem; perhaps they were using part-time instructors. Greg then received a letter from the Technical Extension Service complaining that he had stopped sending in assignments, and that did not impress him very much. Although he had sent in 17 of a total of 20 assignments, on the 16th December, 1977, he received his trade apprentice report showing results for only seven assignments, and yet his overall mark was 61 per cent. The note at the bottom of the report was to this effect—

Enrolment in next stage—1st December. If lesson material not received by 30th January, contact TES immediately.

That was at the end of last year, and in fact no third-year course is yet available. The apprentice has still not received the papers, although in fairness to the service we must say that it did not specify which January.

On the 3rd March, 1978, I wrote to the Minister for Education, and he replied to my letter in May, 1978. I do not necessarily hold that against him, because it seemed reasonable that he would have to call for reports from his department. I would like to quote from his reply to me which said—

... it is not always possible to justify establishing a specialized training in a regional college where only a few apprentices are to

be provided for; but the matter of providing Radio and Television training at Albany is being investigated.

To help relieve the situation for country apprentices, special arrangements have been made to have correspondence material prepared by personnel from industry and preparation of the material is well advanced.

The confused situation that occurred last year was due to the fact that the apprentice was working on the correspondence course lesson material as it appeared in draft form, and his progress was obviously governed by the rate of which the course could be written.

That is a most unsatisfactory situation because obviously the apprentice was working from material which was only a draft. It seems to me that the poor young man did not have much of a chance at all. The Minister continued—

In May 1977, the employer was given the opportunity to have the apprentice attend an intensive programme at Mount Lawley Technical College but as no advice was received from him, no provision was made to include the apprentice in the course.

The marking of correspondence lessons was done under contract by part-time lecturing staff and some difficulties did arise respecting the return of worked scripts. It is to be hoped that this unfortunate circumstance will not occur again.

Mr Davies: Who was the Minister at that time?

Mr WATT: This whole situation could have been resolved by the appointment of a lecturer to the Albany Technical College. I have mentioned the person I have in mind for the job, and it is time the department did something constructive about it.

The other matter which concerns the apprentices who live in country areas is that they must attend a two-weeks' practical course in Perth when no course is available in the local colleges. It is most inconvenient for country apprentices to come to Perth, especially if they live a considerable distance away. Of course, travel is expensive, although they can seek a rail warrant. It frequently happens that if they travel to Perth by rail the accommodation provided is fairly remote from the college. They are then in a strange environment and travel arrangements in the metropolitan area can be difficult and expensive. The employer also loses money while the apprentice is away.

I would like now to turn to a brighter subject from the point of view of my electorate. In regard to unemployment, the Albany district is

in a much better position than most of the rest of the State. The latest figures for the 30th August show that there were 734 unemployed at that time, representing 3.98 per cent of the work force. As the Minister has not yet released the official figures for September, I cannot quote them, but I understand that the number of unemployed has decreased further. A new supermarket will be opened in Albany very shortly, and it is anticipated that this will absorb more workers. Perhaps by the end of the current month we will be down to about 3.7 per cent unemployment, and this figure compares favourably with the State average which is in excess of 6 per cent.

One of the criteria which the Opposition likes to use in assessing unemployment figures—and the Leader of the Opposition and I have exchanged comments about this before—is the ratio between unemployed people and the number of vacancies.

In order to give the facts, I obtained some figures for the Minister this week. The figures show that in Albany the ratio is one job vacancy for every nine unemployed people. The town with the next best figures is Northam where the ratio is one to 10. The ratio for the metropolitan area is one to 31, while the average for the State is one to 27. So while I do not for one moment suggest that we are necessarily satisfied with the situation in the Albany district, we are certainly in a better position than are many other areas.

I want to refer briefly to the matter of country prices. We always hear complaints about the higher cost of goods in country areas, and this matter certainly should be looked into. Those of us who represent country electorates frequently hear that it is the freight component that makes the difference between city and country costs. Obviously freight costs are partly to blame, but I do not think that is the whole picture.

One of the factors that concerns me—and certainly one about which I receive complaints from time to time—is that when an item is sold by a distributor it goes to a warehouse in Albany where it is resold, and when the agent sells the item, he charges a price plus what is called an into-store charge. Freight is then added on top of that, and sales tax is added onto the total. It seems to me that it is quite iniquitous to levy sales tax on the additional items.

Also, I object to the into-store charge because it seems to me it is a second profit. I want to make it quite clear that in no way do I object to a reasonable profit, but I believe such a charge as the into-store charge should be absorbed by the agent.

Obviously my complaint about the sales tax on the freight and into-store charge is not a new one. When I researched this matter I wrote to the Taxation Department. In the reply I was told that the tax payable in respect of goods sold by wholesalers in Australia is a tax upon the "amount for which the goods are sold." The letter went on to say—

By way of a general principle it may be said that all costs incurred up to the point where the property passes to the buyer and which are charged by the seller to the buyer, form part of the price for which the goods are sold.

While it is not a separate charge as such, it is not possible to exclude it from the price upon which sales tax is charged.

In 1953 the then Federal Treasurer, Sir Arthur Fadden, was concerned about this particular problem. He appointed a committee to examine it. Some three years later, on the 29th May, 1956, the report was presented to the Senate by Senator Spooner. He made the observation that this particular problem was one which had been concerning people since sales tax laws were introduced in 1930. He also made the observation that sales tax was not a tax on freight as such but on the total component of the price charged for goods.

That report is fairly lengthy. It is included in the Federal *Hansard* of the 29th May, 1956, commencing at page 1010. If anybody wishes to refer to it, he may. Certainly I will be drawing the attention of the Premier to this matter. I hope he will raise this matter with his Federal colleagues.

In that report, the committee presented a summary which suggested two alternatives for resolving the matter. The report was as follows—

Amendment of the law would be necessary to remove the cause of complaint. The amendment would evidently need to be in one or other of the following forms:—

- (a) an amendment of the sale value provisions of the Sales Tax Assessment Acts, expressly to exclude freight costs from the sale value upon which tax is payable; or
- (b) the repeal of the existing legislation and the substitution of a tax payable at the point of importation in respect of imported goods, and upon sales, by manufacturers only, of goods made in Australia.

The committee came to a conclusion which was reasonably predictable, and that was that the matter would be despatched to the too-hard basket. The report concluded as follows—

From the foregoing, it has been concluded that the benefits to be gained from either of the two proposals discussed are more theoretical than real. The adoption of either of those proposals would clearly lead to undesirable consequences which outweigh the advantages. The retention of the existing system is, therefore, considered preferable.

Mr Bertram: The Liberal Party clearly does not share your views on this.

Mr WATT: We have made advances in our handling of taxation matters since 1956. When one considers the use of computers, with their ability to differentiate between different categories of taxation, I believe it should be possible for the Taxation Department to take another look at this problem.

On the question of food prices in the country, before the last State election the Leader of the Opposition was having a great deal to say in Albany and Bunbury about food prices. I requested that the Bureau of Consumer Affairs make a comparison of food costs at the time. It was rather interesting to note that, according to the bureau, the difference in food prices was not terribly great. There was not much difference between the survey that the then Leader of the Opposition conducted and the survey conducted by the bureau.

When the Australian Bureau of Statistics recently released figures, once again I requested the Bureau of Consumer Affairs to conduct another survey. The first survey simply compared the prices between the main supermarket in Albany—and at the time there was really only one—and an equivalent supermarket in Perth, which is part of a chain. On the second occasion, I asked the bureau to include a couple of other supermarkets. A new supermarket has commenced in Albany since the time of the first survey, and there is a smaller supermarket, which is more of a corner store. It opens on weekends, and obviously it has higher costs.

Surveys of this type may be misleading. For example, while the bureau tried to compare the same items, obviously one shop may carry one item and not another. It is difficult to make a precise comparison.

The figures produced by the Bureau of Statistics indicated that there is a 2 per cent difference in prices between Perth and Albany. I went through the lists, and I totalled the cost of only those

items which appeared on both lists. The result showed that between the two stores in Albany and Perth, over a total of approximately \$29 worth of groceries, there was only 40c difference. I do not think that is too great.

There is another supermarket in Albany, and over that same order its total was about 70c cheaper. That supermarket's prices would be better than those of the Perth branch of the supermarket.

People can fiddle with figures. However, I am reasonably satisfied that, when the freight component we have to expect in country regions is ignored, the food prices in the country are not as bad as some people seem to think. Certainly the introduction of a second supermarket in Albany—and a third one will be opening shortly—has contributed to the competition which is needed to create more satisfactory prices.

I will conclude by mentioning a matter which seems to bob up in my speeches on the Address-in-Reply and on the Budget debate regularly. I wish to refer to the situation of the Albany *Progress* train. Rumours persist, and I suppose the old adage that where there is smoke there is fire may apply. The Commissioner of Railways, in his annual report last year, recommended withdrawal of this passenger service. We know that the commissioner has a responsibility to recommend to the Government this sort of action based on the economics of the situation. We also know that the condition of the rolling stock on the Albany *Progress* is very poor. Some of the coaches are around 40 or 50 years old. When one compares the service of that particular train with the modern Mercedes buses now available, some people may believe that train travel has become less attractive.

I believe that train service should be maintained. There are a number of people who have used the service and who have found it to be of considerably more advantage to them than the buses. They are able to sleep on the train overnight, do a day's business in Perth, for specialist medical reasons, or for some other reasons—

Mr Bertram: Parliament?

Mr WATT: People may require services which are not available in the country, such as specialised legal advice, or any other form of business. Those people may travel to Perth overnight on the train, do their day's business, and then return home the following night. If they had to make that trip by bus, it would take practically all day; they would do their day's business; and then they would have to go home the following day.

The whole journey would take three days. I believe the considerable saving of time is an advantage to people.

There are also people experiencing ill-health who find it to their advantage to travel on the train, where they can lie down and rest. For example, there are diabetics who need to administer insulin injections and perform tests on themselves. They can do that in the privacy of their own compartments.

I propose that instead of first-class, second-class, buffet, and sitting coaches, the service may be rationalised by providing a one-class train. That train would have a set number of sleepers. When those sleepers were filled, there would be no more. That is the system followed with aircraft, and many other forms of transport. If one is not able to book on a particular journey, one has to wait for the next day, or the day after that—or go by bus.

I urge the Minister to give consideration to this problem. I believe that the day of the train is not past. There are other arguments in relation to fuel economies, and so on. I urge the Government to give serious consideration to retaining the Albany *Progress* train.

I support the Bill.

MR BERTRAM (Mt. Hawthorn) [4.41 p.m.]: Thanks to the massive, relentless, and unscrupulous activities of multi-national tobacco companies or trans-national tobacco companies we are in the situation in Australia where Australians are smoking 2 800 million cigarettes each month. The consequence of this is that it has been said, with a good deal of accuracy, that tobacco smoking contributes each year to the deaths of approximately 8 000 Australians from heart disease and the deaths of about 3 500 Australians from lung cancer. However, this Government does absolutely or near enough to absolutely nothing on this question.

Mr Young: That is not true.

Mr BERTRAM: From time to time the Government puts on a performance for the people by bringing in legislation aimed at lessening the injury, the carnage on the road from motor vehicle accidents. Well it might! That is a serious problem.

But, how does that problem compare with the problem to which I have just referred—the attack by companies which are largely non-Australian upon the health and the lives of thousands and thousands of Australians?

The Australian Cancer Society has made the following statement—

How much longer are State Governments going to stand by and watch the people expire? While the rest of the world tackles this problem are our politicians going to sit on their hands?

It attacks the Government, which appears to have no real will or courage to deal with this question. The statement continues—

Members of Parliament must not be frightened of tackling smoking. All our surveys have shown that the majority of the people (including a majority of the smokers) want action and want it now.

On the other hand, with almost a total lack of action, interest, or desire to do anything on that front, we have the Government going through the motions of paying huge sums of money in promoting a concept called "Life. Be in it". Of course, if one does not have life, one cannot be in it. That seems to be something which escapes this particular Government.

We have seen the nonsensical picture of a Minister of the Crown scaling down the side of a cliff on a rope, publicising, "Life. Be in it". A Minister of the Crown, mark you! That is a responsible gesture?

As usual, of course, the Government is going through the motions but not delivering the goods. This, more than any other Government, is culpable on this matter because it knows the immensity of the harm which can be caused to the health of people as a result of smoking cigarettes. This knowledge is better known to the Government than it has ever been.

The tobacco companies are unscrupulous in their activities. They fly in the face of the will of the people. They do this blatantly. As we all know, the Australian Government took steps to prevent the pushing of cigarettes by means of advertisements on radio and television. What do these companies do? Well knowing the intention of Parliament and the intention of the people, the tobacco companies have organised themselves in such a manner that they are still pushing their wares, although not in the form of television advertising. If we watch the cricket or the football we see it. Whatever one watches one sees these companies pushing their wares.

The people who want to smoke will smoke. Nobody is greatly concerned about that. However, it is time members opposite took steps to stop youngsters being caught by this massive array of

junk called "advertising" which is pushed incessantly through the newspapers. The advertisements are utterly absurd. This is obvious to anybody who has the intelligence to think clearly. I should like to show members the particular advertisement I have in my hand. I do not know how many dollars it would have cost. Of course, that advertisement is aimed at the young people. These morons are encouraging young people to smoke cigarettes. That is what it is all about.

I am concerned that the tobacco pushers—unscrupulous morons that they are and they cannot be described in more gentle terms—are talking about a voluntary advertising code. The code is available in a publication. It is a voluntary code for the advertising of cigarettes in the printed media.

I should like to go on record, if I have not already, as saying that these companies should not be allowed to set up their own advertising code. They are not the sort of people who should be trusted in this direction. Recently I read a book setting out the position in the United States. The Government there is sick and tired of people being plastered with the advertising monster pushing cigarettes. As a result, the Government has banned such advertising. The tobacco companies have decided that the millions of dollars they have spent on preparing advertisements for television, etc., will not be written off. These advertisements are being sent to Australia and to developing countries. The tobacco companies are pushing their rubbish here. They are sending the material which they are not allowed to distribute on their home ground to Australia. That shows the calibre of the people who are pushing cigarettes. It cannot be contemplated that such companies are sufficiently responsible to draft a voluntary advertising code. We should not allow them to draft such a code. The idea is ludicrous.

The Government uses window dressing in respect of road deaths. It introduces a Bill every couple of months on the subject. It obtains some copy in the newspapers on the matter. However, the Government is wholly inactive on an issue of the dimensions I have set out. The Government is thoroughly culpable. I want to go on the record as repeating that assertion.

I should like to mention another topic briefly. It is in relation to the telephone facilities made available to certain primary schools. These days a number of principals of primary schools have secretaries to assist them with their work. Some of these principals are permitted to have a telephone and some of the secretaries are permitted to have one also. One might ask how on earth a secretary can be efficient without a telephone in

1978. Personally I do not know how a secretary can be efficient if she does not have a telephone; but some principals and their secretaries are permitted to have a hand-set telephone each in order that the secretary may handle some of the telephone calls.

However, other principals and their secretaries in primary schools are permitted to have only one telephone between them. The situation remains the same even if the parents and citizens association volunteers to provide reasonable financial backing to pay for the cost of the rental and calls incurred by an additional handset. No extra expenditure would be required by the Education Department. I am told that even in that situation the Education Department—that is to say, this Government—will not allow a secretary to have a telephone. If that is logical I have heard everything.

How many members of Parliament would have a bar of the situation where they have a telephone, but their secretary who is sitting on the other side of the door in the next room in their parliamentary office does not have one? Are we that much superior or lacking in efficiency compared with the principal of a primary school? It is a ludicrous situation and one which needs to be corrected.

There are ways and means of doing this. An imprest system could be introduced so that the Education Department is not responsible financially if the P & C defaults and does not pay the telephone account. It could be worked out very simply. I suggest the Government should take stock of the position and it should allow people to help themselves. The Government should be more co-operative and the question of telephones in primary schools should be tidied up very quickly.

The present situation is totally unacceptable. It makes the Government a laughing stock at the expense of the parents and children because of the loss of efficiency. We see the position where the principal is having a discussion with a parent. The principal's telephone rings and if it is a call for the secretary she must come into the room and interrupt the interview to take the telephone call. On the other hand the principal may move out of his office, taking the parent and whoever else is present, and move into the office next door. There is a great deal of unnecessary shuffling around.

In the situation where the P & C is willing and able to pick up the tab for the extra phone, it should be allowed to do so. No burden is placed

on the department. A little bookkeeping may be involved, but that is all. I hope the Government will do something about the situation.

I should like to touch briefly on the matter of articulated law clerks. From time to time the Government has introduced Bills aimed at allowing the Law Reform Commission to employ articulated law clerks and to allow the Crown Law Department to take more articulated law clerks than it could previously. I believe everybody in this Parliament thought the object of that exercise was to allow these young graduates to practise law on their own account more quickly. However, that will not happen. Some of the articulated law clerks employed by the Government will finish their year of articles and then be dismissed. However, they will not be able to practice on their own account. They must still have another year practising under supervision before they can practise on their own account. In other words, this Government appeared to be introducing legislation to enable students to take their articles and work under supervision for a year, then practise on their own account. This in fact has not come to pass.

Recently I asked the Premier a question along the following lines—

Is it his intention to sack all or any of the articulated law clerks employed by the—

- (a) Crown Law Department;
- (b) Legal Aid Commission

before they are qualified to practise as legal practitioners without supervision?

The Premier's answer was—

I have no authority to "sack" any articulated law clerks, as the member should be aware. As far as the last comment is concerned, if the Premier spoke to his deputy he would explain to him in simple terms which he could understand that it is most unwise, whether in this Parliament or anywhere else, to ask a question unless one knows the answer to it.

When the Premier added to his answer the words "as the member should be aware" he indicated he did not know the rules of the game. I believe the intention was to insult me. He did not do that. The Premier indicated to discerning people that he apparently does not know why people ask questions in Parliament. He always fancied himself as a bit of a lawyer, but the trouble was he never qualified. Here we have another example of that deficiency in the skills of the Premier.

As I see the matter, the Premier is sacking the law clerks, or is he suggesting the Attorney General will do it? The fact is that certain articulated clerks who are working this year will be admitted to the bar early next year, having taken their articles, but they will not be able to practise on their own next year. The fiscal policies of the Premier have resulted in this situation. The Premier is saying, "I am not going to pay for these law clerks. You will have to get rid of them." That is how I see the system; therefore, the Premier is sacking these law clerks. He may not go down to the Crown Law Department physically and tell the articulated law clerks that they are sacked. He is like Fraser. The Prime Minister always positions himself well behind the eightball as we all know.

Those articulated law clerks will be sacked because of the fiscal policies of the Treasurer.

Sir Charles Court: Did your question relate to their being dismissed before they were qualified, or after they were qualified?

Mr BERTRAM: My question related to the sacking of law clerks before they were qualified to practise as legal practitioners without supervision. These clerks will be tossed out and they will have to try to find somebody else to employ them. They will have to find qualified practitioners to employ them for their year of supervision. This Parliament never anticipated such a situation when the Bill was introduced. The idea was the graduates should take their articles and practise on their own. Whoever would have dreamed the present system would occur? I most certainly did not.

I want to touch briefly on the Budget. I have come to the conclusion that the Ministry does not know very much about the financial position of this State. I do not believe the Ministry has been kept in the picture. I see some mirth being expressed by members opposite, but no denial has been made. It is quite obvious that members on the back benches opposite know little about the financial position.

Earlier today we heard the member for Moore saying it is bad luck that the Government does not have the money to pay for the construction of more hospitals in his electorate; but who says the Government does not have the money? I am saying the Government has the money and has had it for years. I have pointed this out to the Parliament before, but few members have understood what I was saying and nobody was very concerned about it. Members have only to look at the questions I asked yesterday to see the true situation.

On Tuesday the 10th October I asked a simple and straightforward question of the Treasurer, without notice, as follows—

- (2) How much interest on short-term investment of Treasury cash had not been spent as at the 30 June, 1978?

The answer to that question was, \$33 430 121. That is all. We have unemployed people in this State exceeding 35 000, but we have a sum of \$33 million unspent.

Sir Charles Court: Will you tell us the rest of the answer?

Mr BERTRAM: Yes, I certainly shall. I am glad the Treasurer has raised that question because it tickles my fancy immensely. Usually when one asks a question of a Minister, one goes to the trouble to dig out the details requested. I have never had that experience from the Treasurer when it comes to the cash handled by the Treasury. The Treasurer does not like answering questions on that aspect of this State.

Sir Charles Court: It happens to be the part of the Ministry best reported on.

Mr BERTRAM: The Treasurer dodges that type of question like the plague. Cop this one: I was told to look at page 10 of the Budget Speech, and to look at the Estimates, page 4—there are umpteen pages, I do not know how many—and amongst those pages I would find certain information. That is an old trick which has been going on since Parliament was first formed. Members are referred to various other sources of information, but they have almost Buckley's chance of finding it. If one asks the Treasurer to do the right thing and provide a few statistics, in a nutshell, they are not available.

Sir Charles Court: What is the use of the Auditor General's report, and the various other reports, which are tabled in Parliament?

Mr BERTRAM: How many pages are there in the Auditor General's report?

Sir Charles Court: It has an index, the same as other parliamentary papers.

Mr BERTRAM: The Treasurer is not prepared to supply members with precise details.

Sir Charles Court: Well, the Press was able to obtain the details.

Mr BERTRAM: Instead of the Treasurer just answering that a sum of \$33 430 121 remained unspent—that was the answer brief and to the point and consistent, not using one word more than was necessary—he suddenly charged off and really gave me information I did not ask for. I did not want that information at that stage.

Sir Charles Court: I know it was embarrassing to you to get the information. You take the prize, you really do!

Mr BERTRAM: I am one of those people who is prepared to argue that the Premier has a conscience.

Sir Charles Court: The figures happen to be in the Auditor General's report.

Mr BERTRAM: I know all about that; do not try to pull my leg.

Sir Charles Court: The Auditor General's report was tabled by the Speaker, not by the Treasurer.

Mr BERTRAM: Suddenly, we are provided with evidence which I think shows the Treasurer has a conscience, because here he was telling the unemployed people of Western Australia—the builders who cannot employ people because there is no money about, and the real estate agents who cannot sell houses because there is no-one to buy them—that he has in his pocket, as at the 30th June, a sum of \$33 million.

Sir Charles Court: You stick to that figure. You are deceiving the Parliament and the people.

Mr BERTRAM: I ask the Treasurer to keep quiet for a moment. He pointed out to me, the member for Mt. Hawthorn, that I was not concerned with unemployment! His concern was manifested by his statement that a sum of \$33 million remained unspent in the Treasury, while 35 000 Western Australians remained unemployed.

The building industry is flat on its back and gasping for a little financial breath.

Sir Charles Court: What would you do with that money? Would you do anything different from what we have done with it?

Mr BERTRAM: I put this question to a person who knows nothing about fiscal matters. I asked the person why he would imagine that the Treasurer would suddenly and inconsistently become concerned with unemployment. The person said, "that was his conscience."

Sir Charles Court: I thought you said I did not have a conscience.

Mr BERTRAM: I ask members opposite: If any one of them had a sum of \$33 million in his pocket while there were 35 000 people unemployed, what would he do about it? The Minister for Transport obviously knows nothing about it.

I suggest the actual sum of money unspent is a lot larger than that mentioned by the Treasurer. Last year, or the year before, we were told that the SEC had I do not know how many

million dollars in its coffers. At the end of the financial year that money was owing to the Treasury. I intend to ask the Treasurer later, by way of a question—I find that to be a much better procedure—how much money was in the SEC coffers at the 30th June, 1978, unpaid into the Treasury. Is there any comment from the Treasurer?

Sir Charles Court: If you cannot read the published account of the Financial Statement, that is not my fault. This has been explained clearly to the House, and the details are set out in the Auditor General's report. So, why make a fool of yourself?

Mr BERTRAM: I will take that risk.

Mr O'Neil: There is no risk!

Mr BERTRAM: I have managed to keep up without admonition from opposite for quite a number of years. I am quite confident I will continue to do so.

Mr O'Neil: What makes you think you got away with it?

Mr BERTRAM: I am suggesting to you, Mr Speaker, that the Treasurer knows the figure.

Sir Charles Court: I do not need to give the answer. The figures are set out for you in the published statement.

Mr BERTRAM: I ask the Treasurer how much is owing by the SEC to the Treasury as at the 30th June, 1978? I will put up an estimate of \$10 million, and added to the figure of \$33 million, that makes \$43 million. Even the member for Vasse is able to add up those figures.

Several members interjected.

Mr BERTRAM: Now let us take the Metropolitan Water Board. How much is sitting in its coffers owing to the Treasury? The Treasurer will not tell us. He will probably say that is in the report at page 596, line 54, which I do not have the time to hunt for. I will assume another \$10 million is involved.

Sir Charles Court: You are making yourself more stupid, and making a farce of the whole business.

Mr BERTRAM: It is a farce. At the moment I am able to prove that a sum of \$33 million remains unspent.

Sir Charles Court: Why do you not tell the House where the money has been applied, or do you not want us to create employment?

Mr BERTRAM: What a comedian! If the situation were not so serious it would be laughable.

Sir Charles Court: The information has been given to the Parliament, both in the Budget speech and in the reply to your question.

Mr BERTRAM: The answer to my question was that a sum of \$33 430 121 remained unspent from the proceeds of interest on short-term investments as at the 30th June, 1978. That is what I was told.

Sir Charles Court: Give the rest of the answer.

Mr BERTRAM: I certainly shall. The Treasurer has said that in this current financial year he will spend that money; having stacked it up for years he will now spend it.

Mr Sodeman: What does that prove?

Sir Charles Court: I give up.

Mr BERTRAM: What does the member for Pilbara think it proves?

Mr Sodeman: Not very much.

Mr BERTRAM: I am not worried about the member for Pilbara. I take it he is quite happy that the unemployed should remain unemployed because the Treasurer has refused to spend a sum of \$33 million accumulated over more than one year.

Mr Sodeman: Quite the contrary.

Mr BERTRAM: The Treasurer will spend that money this financial year. Heaven only knows why there has been a sudden change this year. Is it something to do with the fact that there will be an election at the end of next year? Perhaps that could be the reason. It does not matter about the unemployed; let us have things looking good in time for the election!

So, this year the Treasurer will spend some money. He will put \$13.9 million into the Consolidated Revenue Fund, and he will put \$10 million into the General Loan Fund, and will create employment by that procedure.

Sir Charles Court: Do you not approve of that?

Mr BERTRAM: Of course I do; why should I not? Why the great delay; why the hold-up?

Sir Charles Court: If you study the Auditor General's report, and the Financial Statement, you will see there has not been a great delay. The money has to be raised before it can be spent.

Mr Jamieson: That is not correct, either.

Mr BERTRAM: In addition to the \$33 million, I am arguing there is also a credit in the SEC as at the 30th June, 1978; a substantial credit not paid to the Treasury.

Sir Charles Court: Look where the money has been allocated.

Mr BERTRAM: I am talking about last year. I have been told to look at the Auditor General's report.

Sir Charles Court: There is a carry-over every year.

Mr BERTRAM: Not a sum of \$33 million every year. A few members on this side know what is going on, but the back-benchers opposite do not know. The Government has millions of dollars available.

Sir Charles Court: Thank goodness you are not in charge of the Treasury. We would be living on IOU's.

Mr BERTRAM: I have expressed my opinion, and it is also the opinion of many people in the electorate.

I have mentioned the Metropolitan Water Board, and I would also be interested to know whether the State Engineering Works has a credit. Some time ago, that organisation had a credit of \$400 000, but it was held back on the flimsy excuse that there was talk of purchasing some new plant. That was the weakest excuse I have heard in all my life.

There are probably other funds available and I think it is just about time in our economy, with the unemployment running wild as it is, when the people were told, in the clearest terms—not hidden away in reports and financial statements—the fiscal figures so that they know whether or not the Treasurer is doing the right thing, and not just pretending. The people are entitled to know that. I have argued on this point on previous occasions. I have said the Government should publish the State's revenue and expenditure account in a daily newspaper with appropriate comments so that the people will know what is going on. Of course, the Government will not do that.

Sir Charles Court: What do you think the Auditor General's report and the Budget speech are about?

Mr BERTRAM: I know: Refer to speech 33, or something like that. Large companies publish their balance sheets. They have a responsibility to do so.

Sir Charles Court: So do we.

Mr BERTRAM: Large companies do not publish balance sheets only for their shareholders. They are available for all to see, and that is what this Government should do. The Government

regards the taxpayers as being unable to understand a cash book. The details should be published for the fiscal health of this State.

In the few minutes remaining I propose to say one or two words on the matter of majority rule.

Mr O'Neil: We just held a sweep on how long it would take you to get to that subject.

Several members interjected.

Mr BERTRAM: On previous occasions I have raised this issue when I did not contemplate doing so in order to satisfy the member for Scarborough. He does not believe in that concept. He believes that the people in his electorate should be discounted on a 15 to 1 vote. That is the principle of the member for Scarborough.

Mr Laurance: At least it seems you have read the letter in the Press from the person in Scarborough.

Mr BERTRAM: Has the member for Gascoyne seen the reply? I will touch on this question for the benefit of the member for Scarborough, and I think he will listen with great interest.

Mr Young: I will.

Mr BERTRAM: I will refer to the Premier because in recent times the Premier has interested himself very much in this matter. Nobody is suggesting that the Premier of Western Australia would have the gall, the temerity, or whatever else one likes to call it, to enter the international field and attract world attention on a breach of international covenants if he himself did not have clean hands. That would be about as foul an accusation as one could ever make, to suggest that a person with unclean hands—to use a legal term—should be pointing a finger at someone else on the other side of the world. Nobody would imagine that the Premier would do anything like that. Just one aspect of such actions is that it would be an insult to the State.

Therefore, the other day I concluded that the Premier had a new-found interest in human rights. He dressed me down in the answer to a question when he said that these were not the first thoughts he had had on human rights. So I came to the conclusion that he had not read the international covenant. He complained to Russia, and it was very timely as I understand the position, that he should have made that complaint.

Mr Jamieson: Are you speaking of the United Nations covenant?

Mr BERTRAM: Yes. Article 14, to which the Premier drew the attention of the Russian Ambassador, commences with the following words—

All persons shall be equal before the courts and tribunals.

Are the people of Western Australia equal before the courts and the tribunals?

Mr Sodeman: Of course they are.

Mr BERTRAM: We all know they are not, and they never have been.

Mr Blaikie: That is in your opinion.

Mr BERTRAM: Is it? Perhaps the honourable member cannot add up correctly.

Mr Blaikie: Not with you as the sum master.

Mr BERTRAM: That is the position. The Premier, on behalf of the State, relied upon the first line of article 14 when he complained to the Russian Ambassador, but he cannot face up to this principle in our own State.

Mr Clarko: What is the book you have?

Mr BERTRAM: I wish now to refer to article 25. Surely the Premier will do something about this now. Surely he would not expect the Russians to change their thoughts while he does nothing about the situation in our State. Article 25 reads as follows—

Mr Clarko: Are you reading from the United Nations declaration? If you are, did you read the one that says no-one should be forced to join a union?

Mr BERTRAM: Article 25 reads—

Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without any of the distinctions mentioned in article 2 and without unreasonable restrictions:

- (b) To vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors;

Mr Clarko: What about article 22(3)?

Mr McIver: Who has to belong to a union?

Mr Clarko: If you like to go to Broken Hill you will find out.

Mr Blaikie: What about our postman here?

Several members interjected.

Mr BERTRAM: I will again read the paragraph to which I referred. It says—

To vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage, and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors;

Mr Clarko: Who believes that document? You people do not.

Mr BERTRAM: Jimmy Carter for one. Does the honourable member want the name of anyone else?

Mr Clarko: All he has is a smile and a big set of teeth.

Mr Davies: And the presidency of the United States.

Mr Jamieson: He has a lot more than you will ever have.

Mr Clarko: You are one eyed for a start.

Mr BERTRAM: An interesting development occurred at a recent conference of the ALP in Perth. For quite a few years there was an attitude within the party that the only electoral wrong that existed in this State was the blatant inequitable situation in the upper House. We are now over the hump—to use a Fraserism. Do members recall that prior to the last election we were told by Mr Fraser, "We are over the hump; unemployment figures will drop suddenly"? In the ALP we do not have quite the same idea. We now recognise that the grossest rigging occurs in the lower House; it is not in the upper House.

There was a time when Governments of all persuasions cooked the books and juggled the boundaries. That was par for the course, and no-one worried very much about it. That is not the situation today by world standards. Governments are formed in the lower Houses, and not in the upper Houses. I was reminded recently that fewer than 18 per cent of the voters of Western Australia could determine the Government. That is a slightly better situation than the one existing in Queensland where the Premier's stalwart colleague, Mr Bjelke-Petersen, happens to be in power with fewer than 18 per cent of the vote.

Mr Clarko: How about developing that, and justifying it?

Mr BERTRAM: That is a statistical fact.

Mr Clarko: Your statistics are pretty wrong most of the time. You might be right, but it would be an aberration.

Mr BERTRAM: I believe the imbalance in the upper House voting is now 16 to one, while it is something like 12 to one for some seats in the lower House. In the past many members on this side

of the House have mentioned this fact, but they have all been ridiculed. I do not think the Australian Labor Party—

Mr Clarko: The ALP is not based on one-vote-one-value and you know it.

Mr BERTRAM: I do not know what the ALP is going to do.

Mr Clarko: It will certainly never have one-vote-one-value.

Mr BERTRAM: One thing is clear in my mind, and that is this: We will not allow this situation to continue for ever. If it will take my advice it will not rely too much on this forum to solve the problem. This is not the only forum; there are other forums far more powerful than this one which do not happen to be rigged. I imagine that is where the ALP will go.

It is a very sad state of affairs that we should have a Parliament such as this. Everybody here knows that the boundaries are rigged, but no-one will do anything about it. People are being forced to take extra-parliamentary action—that is to say, action outside the Parliament—to obtain a remedy for the situation.

The ALP has no hope of having amendments passed under the present regime, so I believe it will take action in other forums. It has been suggested that it will go to The Hague—the International Court of Justice. The South-West Africans went to that court. We will be forced to go to this forum against our will, and this State will attract a great deal of odium. What other remedy, may I ask, do Western Australians have?

Mr Sodeman: Why have your views changed since 1974?

Mr BERTRAM: If in due course responsible citizens go to The Hague, I hope the Government—those people sitting opposite—will not complain about it. This forum does not take the situation seriously, it never has and it never will. If the Government does not treat it seriously, the people of Western Australia will have to go to another forum or other forums, and I am more than quietly confident that that is what will happen.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Williams.

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

ACTS AMENDMENT (SUPREME COURT AND DISTRICT COURT) BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Council; and, on motion by Mr O'Neil (Deputy Premier), read a first time.

*Second Reading***MR O'NEIL** (East Melville—Deputy Premier)

[5.48 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time. Members will recall legislation was recently dealt with by Parliament to correct an area of conflict which had become apparent between the Small Claims Tribunals Act and the Stipendiary Magistrates Act.

Such action was considered desirable following the question being raised in the State Full Court as to whether a magistrate was validly appointed when acting as referee of the Small Claims Tribunal because, at the time of that appointment, he was not "entitled to practise" as a legal practitioner.

Although that point was not argued at the hearing, legislation has been introduced to validate the magistrate's appointment to the tribunal.

The qualifications of Supreme Court and District Court judges are not expressed in the same terms as those used in the Small Claims Tribunals Act.

However, it is thought prudent, to prevent any remotely similar technicalities being raised, to change the wording of the former two Acts in relation to the qualifications required for appointments to the judiciary.

The new qualifications in the Bill do not differ materially in the sense that for persons to be eligible for appointment as judges of either court, they must have not less than eight years' standing and practice. The purpose of the Bill is purely precautionary, and I commend it to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Bertram.

PUBLIC SERVICE BILL*Returned*

Bill returned from the Council with amendments.

House adjourned at 5.51 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**RAILWAYS**

Pemberton-Northcliffe and Wonnerup-Nannup

1897. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Has a decision regarding the possible closure of the—
 - (a) Pemberton-Northcliffe;
 - (b) Wonnerup-Nannup,
 sections of railway line been taken?
- (2) If "Yes" what is the nature of the decision in each case?

- (3) If "No" to (1), when is it expected a decision will be reached?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) to (3) There are no current proposals to close either of the sections of railway referred to.

However, lines which, on examination, may be found to be unviable must continue to be of concern to the Government which wishes to obtain value from its transport commitment.

The Government will ensure no line closures occur until all social benefits and costs have been assessed and duly considered.

TRANSPORT*Chemicals*

1915. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Was any inquiry carried out by the Government on the cyanide spillage on Great Eastern Highway and Murray Road, Welshpool?
- (2) If "Yes" what were the findings?
- (3) If not, why not?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) Yes, by the Road Traffic Authority.
- (2) and (3) In the case of the incident on the Great Eastern Highway, the driver has been issued with an infringement notice.

In the case of the Welshpool incident the driver of the vehicle has changed employment and is believed to be somewhere in the north-west. If the driver is located, the investigation will continue.

SEWERAGE*Extensions in Metropolitan Area*

1916. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Water Supplies:

As the Minister stated in answer to question 469 of 1978 that priority in the extension of sewerage will be given to those areas which experience problems with septic tanks, will the Minister, as a matter of urgency, arrange for the extension of sewerage to that part of Eden Hill which does not have sewerage facilities as there are possibly many problems there due to the high level of the water table?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

Current construction of sewer area 7A Eden Hill, now ensures that the greater part of the Eden Hill area will be served by deep sewerage. Several small pockets remain, but these are in the highest part of the area where the water table is not a problem.

Priority for the sewerage of these small pockets will be assessed in relation to the needs of other unsewered areas.

TRAFFIC: MOTOR VEHICLES

Sunday Trading

1917. Mr BERTRAM, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) Is it a fact that car dealers who trade on Sundays are—
 - (a) often fined;
 - (b) also at risk of forfeiting their licence?
- (2) In the case of retail stores trading unlawfully on a Sunday are any ever placed in jeopardy of forfeiting their right to continue to trade?
- (3) If "No" to (2) why are car dealers discriminated against in this way?

Mrs Craig (for Mr O'CONNOR) replied:

- (1) Under the Factories and Shops Act car dealers who trade on Sundays face prosecution, the penalties being specified in section 93B. There is no provision for forfeiture of licence for breaches of trading hours.
- (2) No.
- (3) Apart from the requirement to have a dealers' licence under the Motor Vehicle Dealers Licensing Board, car dealers are in the same position as any other shop-keeper under the Factories and Shops Act.

MAGISTRATE

Albany

1918. Mr BERTRAM, to the Minister representing the Attorney General:

- (1) Has the Minister any knowledge of any complaint, report or intimation having been made by a magistrate at Albany or elsewhere or his staff touching on the taking of documents, papers or other material from a magistrate or his office or staff by any person without the magistrate's prior knowledge or approval?

(2) If "Yes"—

- (a) was the complaint, report or intimation in writing and, if so, will he table it;
- (b) what documents, papers or other material were involved;
- (c) what action has he taken and when concerning this matter?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) The Attorney General has received a communication from the magistrate at Albany concerning the manner in which certain court records were made available by court staff to a police officer on his authorisation by warrant to receive them.
- (2) (a) The communication was in writing. It will not be tabled.
(b) Complaints, summons, and notes of evidence.
(c) Whether the procedure followed was the most appropriate is being examined.

LAW GRADUATES

Articles

1919. Mr BERTRAM, to the Minister representing the Attorney General:

How many law graduates who wish to enter articles in 1979 have been unable to obtain articles?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

The Attorney General is not directly involved with the placement of law graduates into articles, but is of course interested in the future of students.

The exact answer is not known, but information available to the Law Society indicates that 29 undergraduates may be without places at present.

TRAFFIC

Narrows Bridge

1920. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister for Transport:

What is the peak capacity in vehicles per hour on the Narrows Bridge?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

The peak capacity under normal conditions is approximately 2 000 vehicles per hour per lane.

TIMBER

Softwood Production

1921. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Forests:

- (1) What is the expected production of softwoods timber for Forests Department plantings in each of the next 10 years?
- (2) What has been the production for each of the past five years?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) Production estimates of softwood for Forests Department plantings for the next five years are as follows:—

1979	....	....	201 000	cub. metres
1980	....	....	222 000	cub. metres
1981	....	....	222 000	cub. metres
1982	....	....	252 000	cub. metres
1983	....	....	252 000	cub. metres

These figures are subject to amendment following reassessment of the effects of cyclone "Alby" and severe drought over the past three years.

Meaningful projections do not extend beyond 1983.

- (2) 1973 100 420 cub. metres
- 1974 123 393 cub. metres
- 1975 129 086 cub. metres
- 1976 105 567 cub. metres
- 1977 120 859 cub. metres

EDUCATION

School: East Beechboro

1922. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) When will the East Beechboro primary school be ready for use by students?
- (2) What ages and grades will be catered for in its first year of operation?
- (3) (a) How many children are expected to attend the school in 1979;
- (b) how many classrooms and other rooms will be available; and
- (c) how many staff will be appointed?
- (4) Are boundaries established for the area from which students will be drawn?
- (5) If so, what are they?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) February, 1979.
- (2) The school will cater for Years 1 to 7 inclusive. A single pre-primary unit will cater for the pre-school needs of the area.
- (3) (a) Initially approximately 135 (including 25 pre-primary pupils).
- (b) Six teaching areas, a single pre-primary centre. The school's administration will be housed temporarily in the two additional permanent classrooms which are included in the first stage of development.
- (c) Approximately six, including principal and pre-primary teacher. Staffing details for the new school are yet to be finalised.
- (4) Boundaries for the new school will be gazetted later this year.
- (5) The nucleus for the new East Beechboro primary school will be the area bounded on the south by Benara Road, on the east by Bennett Brook and on the west by Beechboro Road. In addition, there will be gazetted an optional bounded by Benara Road, Diana Crescent, Arbon Way, Lupton Way, Thorley Way and Lord Street. Children resident within this area will have an option of attending either the new East Beechboro primary school or the Lockridge Junior primary/primary school.

EDUCATION

Teachers: Promotion

1923. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Has any further progress been made of late in the studies by the Education Department to enable teachers to be promoted without, necessarily, shifts from school to school?
- (2) If so, what are the details?
- (3) If not, what are his plans to further this aim?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) A review of promotions in the secondary area is currently being undertaken.

BUILDING INDUSTRY*Apprentices*

1924. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

Including all Government departments, authorities and instrumentalities, what was the total apprenticeship intake in the building trades for each of the following years:

- (a) 1973;
- (b) 1974;
- (c) 1975;
- (d) 1976;
- (e) 1977;
- (f) to date in 1978?

Mrs Craig (for Mr O'CONNOR) replied:

The total intake of registered apprentices into the building trades for the respective years was:

- (a) 1972-73—449
- (b) 1973-74—398
- (c) 1974-75—456
- (d) 1975-76—693
- (e) 1976-77—472
- (f) 1977-78—954
1st July, 1978 to 30th September, 1978—183.

The figure for 1977-78 is inflated to the extent that it includes a number of apprentices who were registered before 30th June, 1977 but were not included in that year's statistics due to a computer problem. An average of the figures for 1976-77 and 1977-78 is 713 and will give a more accurate indication of the actual intake.

TRAFFIC*Narrows Bridge*

1925. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What was the average number of vehicles per day using the Narrows Bridge in—
 - (a) 1975;
 - (b) 1976;
 - (c) 1977;
 - (d) 1978?

(2) What are the estimates for—

- (a) 1979;
- (b) 1980;
- (c) 1981;
- (d) 1985;
- (e) 1988?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) (a) 75 810.
(b) 77 970.
(c) 84 980.
(d) 86 300 (to August).
- (2) (a) to (e) Estimates of future traffic are dependent upon population growth vehicle usage, changes in the road network and the redistribution of land use. Variations in the assumptions made for any of the above variables therefore will affect traffic forecasts.
Because of these factors, the Main Roads Department is using a forecast of 118 000 vehicles per day for 1983 for the purpose of estimating usage during the periods quoted.

LAND*Farm Blocks*

1926. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) What is the Government's policy with respect to the proposed release of 25 farm blocks each year for the next five years?
- (2) At what stage is the plan at present?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) and (2) The current policy in relation to land release was established in 1974, with release being for consolidation purposes. Because of the tremendous amount of detailed investigation and consideration that has to be given by many departments, including the Department of Conservation and Environment, there is no specific target in terms of the number of farm blocks released each year.

ENERGY

Solar: Research

1927. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

What are the top priorities which have been set for the research to be undertaken by the State Solar Energy Research Institute?

Mr O'Neil (for Mr MENSAROS) replied:

The board of directors aided by the Advisory Committee of the Solar Energy Research Institute of Western Australia have set the following priorities for research projects:

- (1) Improvement in water heating.
- (2) Small to medium scale power production.
- (3) Air conditioning.
- (4) Mineral processing and industrial applications.
- (5) Building design and construction.
- (6) Other solar applications.

TRAFFIC

Pedestrian Crossing: Albany Highway

1928. Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister for Transport:

In view of the refusal by the Town of Canning to provide some funds for the construction of an overpass opposite the Carousel shopping complex in Albany Highway, Cannington, as reported in *The West Australian* of Wednesday, 4th October, 1978:

- (1) Will he provide walk lights at Cecil Avenue, Cannington?
- (2) If not, why not?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Introduction of an additional exclusive WALK phase would create unacceptable traffic delays and would only benefit a small proportion of pedestrians. The area of greatest pedestrian demand is remote from the traffic signals and is serviced by a median strip which affords a high degree of pedestrian safety.

BEEKEEPING

Honey: Import and Export

1929. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) (a) Has any honey imported into Western Australia from the Eastern States been exported to Europe or anywhere else in the past 12 months;
 - (b) if so, what quantity has been exported and to what markets?
- (2) Is it intended to allow the importation of honey into Western Australia from the Eastern States to continue?
- (3) Is honey which is imported into Western Australia packed under Government supervision?
- (4) Is it intended to allow the importation of queen bees from the Eastern States into Western Australia to continue; if so, from what areas?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) (a) Yes.
 - (b) As the imported honey was blended with local honey the actual quantity involved is not known.
The marketing information sought is not available to my department.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) General supervision is maintained by the exporting authorities.
- (4) Yes. Queen bees may be introduced from Queensland and Northern NSW in view of the disease-free status of these areas.

STOCK

Sheep: Lice Infestation

1930. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) How many properties were placed under quarantine because of sheep lice infestation in each of the past three years?
- (2) How many shire councils have approached the Government this year seeking the reintroduction of compulsory sheep dipping?
- (3) (a) Does the Government intend to reintroduce compulsory sheep dipping; and
 - (b) if not, why not?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) 316,
674,
737.

- (2) Five.
- (3) (a) and (b) No. It has been decided however to allow in certain circumstances the movement of freshly shorn and dipped sheep, under permit, for open sale.

COMMUNITY WELFARE

Family Support Services Scheme

1931. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has the Australian Minister for Social Security approved of allocations of finance for the family support scheme following submissions from Western Australia?

- (2) If so, what are the details?
- (3) If not, when is such a decision expected?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) It is anticipated that an announcement is imminent.

HEALTH

Dental: Therapists

1932. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) How many dental therapists are practising in Western Australia?
- (2) How many will complete their training at the end of—
 - (a) 1978;
 - (b) 1979;
 - (c) 1980?
- (3) How many vacancies will exist in—
 - (a) the Government sector;
 - (b) the private sector,
 in
 - (i) 1979;
 - (ii) 1980;
 - (iii) 1981?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) School dental service: 170.
Private practice: 25 (estimates only available, the number varies and includes part-time employment).
- (2) School dental service:
 - (a) 49—Estimates are based on existing intakes.
 - (b) 60—Estimates are based on existing intakes.

- (c) 30—Estimates are based on existing intakes.

WAIT

- (a) 15—Estimates based on existing intakes.
- (b) 15—Estimates based on existing intakes.
- (c) 15—Estimates based on existing intakes.
- (3) (a) Trainees of the Public Health School are members of the State Public Service and all graduates are employed.
- (b) Limited, but not accurately known.

SESQUICENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS

Aborigines: Recognition

1933. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Tourism:

- (1) With reference to the 150th year celebrations, why was it decided to abandon the project concerning the Aboriginal Yagan?
- (2) Who were the "local historians" quoted by the Minister in a recent press report?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) It is not a case of abandoning a project, because it was never one so far as the Government was concerned. The idea was conceived outside of the Government and suggested as something we could support. After investigation the Government decided it was not an appropriate project for the 150th Anniversary or, for that matter, as a way of recognising the Aboriginal people of previous generations.
- (2) It is not proposed to give this information. The advice received was given in good faith and on a personal basis and it would therefore be improper to disclose the source.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

Press Secretaries and Public Relations Consultants

1934. Mr DAVIES, to the Premier:

Referring to his reply to question 1376 of 1978, will he please provide the employing department, designation, number, salary range and award for employees referred to in the note to the answer?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

Part 1			Part 2		Part 3
Department	Designation	No.	Salary Range \$	Award	
Agriculture	Senior Adviser	1	21 131–22 313	Public Service (Agricultural Scientists) Salaries Agreement 4/78	
	Adviser	2	17 044–20 138	Public Service (Agricultural Scientists) Salaries Agreement 4/78	
	Adviser	2	15 286–16 619	Public Service (Agricultural Scientists) Salaries Agreement 4/78	
	Information Assistant	1	12 637–13 808	Public Service (General Division Officers) Salaries Agreement 8/75	
	Journalist	1	14 341–14 669	Public Service (Miscellaneous Officers) Salaries Agreement 19/73	
Conservation and the Environment	Information Officer	1	15 921	Journalists' (Metropolitan Daily Newspapers) Award 1974	
Fisheries and Wildlife	Extension and Publicity Officer	1	14 284–15 072	Public Service (Administrative and Clerical Officers) Salaries Agreement 18/74	
	Publicity Assistant	1	11 287–11 632	Public Service (Administrative and Clerical Officers) Salaries Agreement 18/74	
Forests	Publications Officer	1	13 419–13 808	Forests Act Field Staff Agreement 11/76	
Industrial Development	Publicity Officer	1	16 231–16 648	Public Service (General Division Officers) Salaries Agreement 8/75	
	Journalists	2	15 921	Journalists' (Metropolitan Daily Newspapers) Award 1974	
Lands and Surveys	Information Officer	1	13 497–13 893	Public Service (Administrative and Clerical Officers) Salaries Agreement 18/74	
Premier's	Manager, Information and Inquiry Centre	1	17 141–17 612	Public Service (Administrative and Clerical Officers) Salaries Agreement 18/74	
	Information Officer	1	15 469–15 861	Public Service (Administrative and Clerical Officers) Salaries Agreement 18/74	
	Information Officers	2	13 497–13 893	Public Service (Administrative and Clerical Officers) Salaries Agreement 18/74	
PWD	Public Relations Officer	1	11 287–12 368	Public Service (Administrative and Clerical Officers) Salaries Agreement 18/74	
	Clerk	1	9 975–10 297	Public Service (Administrative and Clerical Officers) Salaries Agreement 18/74	
State Government Insurance Office	Manager: Projects and Development	1	14 284–15 072	Public Service (Administrative and Clerical Officers) Salaries Agreement 18/74	

GOVERNMENT INSTRUMENTALITIES

Press Secretaries and Public Relations Consultants

1935. Mr DAVIES, to the Premier:

Referring to his reply to question 1377 of 1978, will he please provide the em-

ploying department, designation, number, salary range and award for employees referred to in the note to the answer?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

Part 1			Part 2		Part 3
Department	Designation	No.	Salary Range \$		Award
Community Recreation Council	Publicity Assistant	1	10 618-11 632		Public Service (Administrative and Clerical Officers) Salaries Agreement 18/74
Fremantle Port Authority	Public Relations Officer	1	15 469-17 141		Fremantle Port Authority Clerks' Award
	Assistant to Public Relations Officer	1	10 482-11 632		Fremantle Port Authority Clerks' Award
Metropolitan Transport Trust	Public Relations Officer	1	15 469		Transport Trust Salaried Officers' Award 3/77
Museum	Publications Officer	1	16 597		Journalists' (Metropolitan Daily Newspapers) Award 1974
National Safety Council	Public Relations Officer	1	11 906-12 276		Public Service (General Division Officers) Salaries Agreement 8/75
State Energy Commission	Journalist	1	15 921		Journalists' (Metropolitan Daily Newspapers) Award 1974
	Journalist	1	13 626		Journalists' (Metropolitan Daily Newspapers) Award 1974
Westrail	Journalist	1	15 921		Journalists' (Metropolitan Daily Newspapers) Award 1974
	Advertising and Publicity Officer	1	18 303		Railway Officers' Award 1/76
	Advertising and Publicity Officer	1	13 103		Railway Officers' Award 1/76
	Advertising and Publicity Officer	1	10 950		Railway Officers' Award 1/76

CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

Correspondence with Russian Ambassador

1936. Mr BERTRAM, to the Premier:

- (1) (a) What was the date of the letter which he received from the Russian Ambassador touching on Article 14 of the international covenant on civil and political rights; and
- (b) when did he receive it?
- (2) Will he supply me with a true copy of the Russian Ambassador's said letter?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) (a) There is no letter from the Ambassador as such, but a letter dated 7th August, 1978 was received from the Charge d'Affairs, a.i., of the Embassy of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.
- (b) The letter was received by the Premier's Department on 11th August, 1978.
It was not personally sighted by myself.
- (2) There is no letter from the Ambassador, as such, but a copy of the letter from the Charge d'Affairs a.i., referred to in (1) above is available to the member.

HOUSING

Redcliffe-Belmont Estate

1937. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Housing:
Further to my question 1319 of 23rd August, 1978:

- (1) What are the specific planning problems (outside the responsibility of the State Housing Commission) which have caused the plans for the redevelopment of the Redcliffe housing estate to be deferred indefinitely?
- (2) In the light of the decision to indefinitely defer the redevelopment, does the State Housing Commission propose to allow the tenants of State Housing Commission rental homes to exercise their option to purchase their home, if they desire?
- (3) What is the policy of the State Housing Commission with regard to tenants who wish to proceed with home improvements on their own account?
- (4) (a) Has the State Housing Commission decided to proceed with plans to redevelop any other of its estates similar in age and design to the Redcliffe estate;
(b) if so, will he provide details?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) The decision to defer redevelopment of the Redcliffe housing estate resulted from uncertainty as to the future of the Perth Airport. It is not known when a final decision will be made by the Commonwealth Government, nor what may be the resultant planning issues coming within the State sphere of responsibility.
- (2) Existing State Housing Commission policy allows tenants in any estate reserved for redevelopment to purchase, as tenant-in-occupation, a mutually acceptable property outside areas so designated for redevelopment. This policy is currently under review.
- (3) Any tenant in any State Housing Commission rental home may undertake home improvements at his own expense, subject to obtaining necessary local government approval and to completing the work in a tradesman-like manner to the satisfaction of the commission.
- (4) (a) and (b) Yes. The area bounded by George and Hamersley Streets and the Crescent, is now nearing the final stages of redevelopment. The commission's redevelopment concepts are the result of an evolving process and modified redevelopment is being undertaken in Queens Park and in the Davis Park estate in Fremantle.

LAW AND ITS ENFORCEMENT

Seminar

1938. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister representing the Attorney General:

- (1) Who will be eligible to attend the seminar on the law and its enforcement to be held on 18th November?
- (2) How can application be made to attend the seminar?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) The seminar will be open to all interested persons.
- (2) No enrolment will be necessary.

HEALTH

Lead Content: Children's and Adults' Blood

1939. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) What surveys have been made into the lead content of—
 - (a) children's;
 - (b) adults' blood over each of the past five years?
- (2) Will he inform the House of the results?
- (3) What is the Government's policy as to maximum permissible level in the blood of—
 - (a) children;
 - (b) adults?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) No surveys have been made into the lead content of the blood of children or adults over the past 5 years, except in adult workers in occupational lead process areas.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) (a) 40 micrograms per 100 ml blood.
(b) 40 micrograms per 100 ml blood.

MEAT AND DAIRYING

Polyunsaturated Meat and Milk Products

1940. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Are experiments in the production of polyunsaturated meats and milk products by means of a controlled diet continuing?
- (2) Has there been progress in determining whether their keeping and processing qualities are adequate?
- (3) Has commercial production begun?
- (4) If so, what are the details?
- (5) Is there a demand for the commercial production of such products?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) to (5) The CSIRO Division of Food Research has conducted such investigations in Eastern States' centres for some years. I suggest the member makes a direct approach to that organisation in relation to the information sought.

STATE FORESTS

Aerial Surveillance and Burning

1941. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Forests:

- (1) What has been the cost of—
 - (a) aerial surveillance;
 - (b) aerial burning,
 by the Forests Department over the previous three years?
- (2) Who were the aviation companies involved?
- (3) What is the reason for the department's reported change to purchase its own aircraft for the oncoming year?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) The following direct costs were incurred:

	\$
(a) 1975-76	130 476
1976-77	192 910
1977-78	268 969
(b) 1975-76	297 789
1976-77	253 205
1977-78	331 857

- (2) 1975-76 Airwork Australia Pty. Ltd.
Perth Air Charters Pty. Ltd.
Trans-West Air Charter (W.A.)
Pty. Ltd.

1976-77 Airwork Australia Pty. Ltd.
Perth Air Charters Pty. Ltd.
Trans-West Air Charter (W.A.)
Pty. Ltd.

1977-78 Perth Air Charters Pty. Ltd.
Trans-West Air Charter (W.A.)
Pty. Ltd.
Airwork Australia Pty. Ltd.
Associated Graphic Services
Pty. Ltd.
Mac-Air.
Manjimup Motors Pty. Ltd.

- (3) Experience has shown that the department cannot rely on full aircraft availability by hiring. An independent investigation by the Director-General of Transport has demonstrated real cost advantages in favour of purchase compared to hire in relation to aerial surveillance. There was also a need to provide a more powerful aircraft better suited to aerial surveillance than those available for hire, at a competitive cost. The aircraft will be available to other departments during the winter season.

HEALTH

Chiropractors, Dentists, and Radiological Clinics: X-rays

1942. Dr TROY, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) (a) Have the levels of radiation emission per X-ray taken changed over the past 20 years; and
(b) if so, in what direction?
- (2) Has there been any policy of removing machines with high radiation emission levels from public hospitals?
- (3) What are the guidelines used and how are safety standards monitored?
- (4) What are the standards applied to—
 - (a) private radiological clinics;
 - (b) dentists;
 - (c) chiropractors?
- (5) How frequently are these places monitored?
- (6) Is there any way in which excessive use of X-ray investigation would come to the attention of the supervisory body?

Mr YOUNG replied:

- (1) (a) and (b) There is no information available to permit comparison of radiation exposure per X-ray 20 years ago with the exposure required today. However, technological developments and the measures taken by the Radiological Council would have resulted in a reduction.
- (2) No. Some machines necessarily have a high radiation output. Where the radiation exposure per X-ray is considered high, action is taken to achieve a reduction.
- (3) The recommendations of the International Commission on Radiological Protection are the basis of radiation safety standards. These are monitored during periodic inspections by officers of the Radiological Council.
- (4) The standards applied to radiological clinics and chiropractors are basically those of the International Commission on Radiological Protection, and to dentists, Australian Standard 3201.5-1977.
- (5) At intervals between 1 and 3 years.
- (6) It is unlikely. It is not the responsibility of the Radiological Council to supervise this aspect of the practice of medicine, dentistry or chiropractic.

MINING

Iron Ore: Marketing System

1943. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Agriculture:

Does the policy of the State Parliamentary Country Party concur with the policy expounded by the National Leader of the Country Party involving Mr Anthony's directive to the five main iron ore producers to devise a co-ordinated marketing approach or run the risk of being forced into a centralised marketing system?

Mr OLD replied:

I am unaware of any such directive. However, the policy of the National Country Party provides for a belief and faith in the free enterprise system. Control and management of resource development projects in Western Australia rests with the State Government and the companies involved.

As a partner in the Western Australian Government, National Country Party Ministers and Members have been publicly critical of Federal Government efforts to intervene unnecessarily and thus seek to assert control over many aspects of Government in this State, including resource development.

We reject any effort by the Federal Government or any Federal Minister to exert any influence which interferes with the Constitutional rights of the Western Australian Government or the responsibility of companies undertaking development in Western Australia.

Likewise, we acknowledge the Constitutional position of the Commonwealth Government in respect of export licensing, but we have made it clear, as part of the Western Australian Government, that we resent the use of this power for purposes beyond the spirit of the original Constitutional intention.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

MAGISTRATE

Albany

1. Mr BERTRAM, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

- (1) Has he before him the answer he gave today to question 1918 in his capacity as Minister representing the Attorney General in this House?

- (2) If so, does he as Minister for Police and Traffic agree with the answer given by the Attorney General to part (1) of that question?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) and (2) I could answer the question by saying, "(1) Yes" and "(2) Yes". However, I am sure the member for Mt. Hawthorn requires an explanation, and I know what he is getting at.

Some little time ago he asked a question of me to the effect—I do not recall the exact phraseology—of whether a warrant had been obtained for the purpose of obtaining documents without the knowledge and in the absence of the magistrate. The answer to that question was "No." Had the member simply asked whether a warrant had been obtained for the purpose of obtaining documents, the answer would have been "Yes."

COMMUNITY WELFARE

Family Support Services Scheme

2. Mr HODGE, to the Premier:

I direct my question to the Premier in the absence of his Minister for Health. My question follows question 1931 on today's notice paper, asked by the member for Maylands. In his reply the Minister for Health said that an announcement in respect of the family support services scheme was imminent.

The Minister gave me the same answer to question 1769, on the 3rd October. The announcement has been imminent for a long time.

Will the Premier use his influence with the Federal Minister to see that an announcement is made immediately?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

I will bring this matter to the attention of my colleague. It seems to me the answers given were appropriate, but I will have the matter investigated.

EDUCATION: TEACHERS

Industrial Dispute: Percentage Resisting Strike Call

3. Mr SHALDERS, to the Minister for Education:

Can the Minister give any figures or percentages of those teachers who resisted their union's call to strike today?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

I returned from the country only a few moments ago and I am unable to give specific figures. However, I understand around 70 per cent of all teachers were in their schools today, including about 76 per cent in the Geraldton region.

STATUTORY BODIES

Number and Names

4. Sir CHARLES COURT (Premier): The member for Yilgarn-Dundas asked question 1504 some time ago and there was discussion, subsequently, between him and the appropriate department about the exact import of his question. The information is now available in the form he required and I seek leave to table the answer.

The answer was tabled (See paper No. 414).

EDUCATION: TEACHERS

Industrial Dispute: Children

5. Mr BERTRAM, to the Minister for Education:

My question relates to those children not attending schools where teachers at their schools are on strike. Consistent with the Government's "firm hands" policy, does it intend to prosecute the children or parents under the provisions of the Education Act, or any other legislation?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

No. The position has been made very clear right from the commencement of the strikes called by the union. We have advertised that, because of the uncertainty of arrangements which prevails, if parents have any concern they can ring the numbers of the schools or regional offices involved. However, if the parents have any doubts, they can keep their children at home and have no fear of being prosecuted.