

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, the 6th April, 1978

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

AERIAL SPRAYING CONTROL ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR OLD (Katanning—Minister for Agriculture) [2.18 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time. This Act came into operation in 1971 as part of uniform legislation intended to be introduced into the Australian States. Its main purposes relate to the protection of crops and pastures from aerial spraying or spray drift; and aerial operators are required to have insurance cover to meet the cost of any damage caused by their spraying operations.

The provisions of the Act have also been used to prevent the application of the insecticides dieldrin, aldrin, chlordane, and DDT to crops and pastures where residues are likely to be found in food products.

Some problems have arisen in relation to the administration of sections of the Act and the present Bill is designed to overcome these difficulties.

The requirement for operators to have insurance cover has been simplified so that in future it will be mandatory for all aerial operators licensed to carry out spraying to be covered. Exemptions will, however, be possible for operators who do not intend to carry out aerial spraying.

The Bill provides for the amount of cover to be changed so that, although a limit of \$30 000 is placed on any one claim, there is no limit to the number of claims possible. This arrangement will protect farmers in situations where an operator may have already had claims against him totalling \$30 000. There will be no increased cost to the operators, because the only policies at present available provide unlimited cover.

Provision is also made for the appointment of inspectors under the Act. This will give authority for undertaking inspections required to administer the Act in an effective manner.

The penalties provided in the Act have also been increased and have been more directly related to the importance of the offence committed.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr McIver.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: EIGHTH DAY

Motion

Debate resumed, from the 5th April, on the following motion by Mr MacKinnon—

That the following Address-in-Reply to His Excellency's Speech be agreed to—

May it please Your Excellency: We, the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of the State of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, beg to express loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Excellency for the Speech you have been pleased to address to Parliament.

MR WILSON (Dianella) [2.21 p.m.]: Mr Speaker, the most remarkable aspect of what is perhaps the most unremarkable Speech ever delivered by the Governor on behalf of the Government is not what it said but what it left unsaid, as the Leader of the Opposition has already stated. In the long list of wearisome platitudes, strung so haphazardly together, the most remarkable features were those so obviously omitted and so conveniently forgotten. One such obvious omission was the Government's serious basic record of failure in its relationship to the bureaucracy and the way this is reflected in the less than adequate quality of service being offered to the people of this State.

It is a failure that shows up nowhere more than in the area of education. Technical, secondary, and primary education all received a passing mention in the Governor's Speech, even if in an oddly disjointed way. Pre-school education missed out completely, and that is an omission which is doubly strange. After all, even in the Government's own terms, 1978 marks the beginning of a new era in pre-school education. On the 31st December, 1977, the former Pre-School Board was ceremoniously abolished, and the new year ushered in the Government's pet creation, the much heralded Early Childhood Branch of the Education Department. Surely that was worth a mention in the Governor's Speech.

Mr Davies: Perhaps they are ashamed of it.

MR WILSON: Secondly, the Minister himself, in the course of debate in the last session, promised amendments to the Education Act during this session to facilitate the formation of a parent body. Again surely that would be worth a mention in the Governor's Speech, this being one of the pet creations of the Government.

So then we must ask what the reason was for this rather large omission. I want to suggest that there is more than a clue to the answer in the

Minister's very odd posturing in relation to the Community Kindergartens Association formed towards the end of last year.

For the benefit of the House, let me refer to some statements made by the same Minister during the course of public meetings prior to the legislation being brought down in the last session. At such a meeting on one occasion the Minister stated—

The aim in setting up the new branch was to maintain the involvement of a cross-section of the community.

Asked about the possible loss of the good communication that existed between parents and the Pre-School Board he replied—

The relationship to the previous administration of the department may not be all that I would encourage. Let us forget the past and start again. Communication is what we are about. I hope there will be some machinery for parent representative elections.

In contrast to these statements, it is most informative to look carefully at the drastic change that has taken place in the attitude of the Minister.

On the 28th November, the Secretary of the newly-formed Community Kindergartens Association wrote to the Minister to inform him of the formation of the association, detailing names of the committee members, and very politely—ever so politely—requesting that the Minister—and remember this was the Minister who said “communication is what we are about”—might receive a deputation to discuss matters raised at the meeting of their delegates. I quote from the letter that I must assume was received by the Minister—

It is the Committee's desire for you to have prior notice on any matters to be raised at such a deputation.

Our aim is to work with you and your Department in ensuring that parents have a choice in deciding the future of the education of their five year olds and that we as parents can be assured of real involvement in the planning of education of pre-schoolers.

That was very good; that was great stuff. This is the way a democracy should work. No apathy is shown here; the parents are responding freely and positively to the encouragement offered by the Minister. However, the Minister's response was somewhat less encouraging. He implied that the new association was something of a spoilsport by butting in on the operations that the Minister had regarded as being very much under control—under his control no doubt.

In conclusion the Minister did relent a little, and he sought information about the new association's aims and objects, and the constitutional

situation. This request was complied with, and the information was forwarded to the Minister on the 14th December. I would like to quote from the letter forwarded by the association to the Minister. It reads—

We are encouraged by your support of community based kindergartens. Their continued existence allows a choice for parents. We appreciate your allowing us to meet at the Pre-School Board premises.

We understand that the independent kindergartens, the pre-primaries and the playgroups all have separate associations to further their objects and represent their views. This Association has been formed for the mutual benefit of all community based kindergartens. We respectfully submit that one organisation could not effectively represent the differing views or objects of each of the above groups.

We hope that any Parent Body established under the Education Act would consist of delegates nominated by their Associations and invited by you to join. We also hope that such body will not be excluded from policy making decisions as appears to be the case with the Parent & Citizens Association. If our Association could be involved in discussions relating to preparation of regulations and other matters, this could minimise unnecessary duplication.

Again I put it to members that is very conciliatory, very co-operative. Once more we have a situation where the parents are offering to be involved, where they are accepting a situation in which there will be differing views and objectives.

On the 9th December another letter was forwarded to the Minister with a further request for him to receive a deputation prior to the abolition of the Pre-School Board and outlining matters to be discussed. Neither the letter of the 9th December nor that of the 14th December was ever responded to by the Minister.

Mr P. V. Jones: That is not right you know.

Mr WILSON: Was this the same Minister who said “communication is what we are about”?

Mr P. V. Jones: Have you got the letter there of the 8th February?

Mr WILSON: I am coming to the letter of the 8th February. The Minister's next communication with the association was in a letter which was dated, as he says—quite correctly on this occasion—the 8th February. The association's letters of the 9th and 14th December were ignored. The Minister simply referred to his own letter of

the 7th December as though the association had sent no intervening communication to the Minister. The style of his letter of the 8th February is a clear indication of a complete turnabout in his attitude. I would like to quote extensively from that letter which he has admitted writing. In it he said—

I now want to advise you of action which is being taken as a necessary foundation for parent participation in the field of early childhood education services.

As though there had never been parent participation before: talk about teaching his grandmother to suck eggs! The Minister went on to say—

In March and April four seminars have been arranged for the metropolitan area. These Parent Involvement Seminars will also be conducted in rural centres soon after. I intend to participate in as many of these seminars as possible along with educators, professional workers in the field and parent leaders.

Just examine the mentality of that statement. The Minister calls them parent involvement seminars, so they will be parent involvement seminars—perhaps we should add, "or else". Who are the parent leaders referred to? So far the Minister's seminars have been conducted at high schools and presided over by high school principals. In his long letter of the 8th February, the Minister goes on to say—

There is a need to involve as many parents as possible in exploring ideas in the early childhood area at a participating level as a support for any formal parent organisation formed at a centre level or to provide for a group of centres. The emphasis will be on the unity of purpose within this area of education.

The vigorous system that had been growing for many years prior to the takeover by the Government showed that parents did not need seminars or lectures from the Minister to realise this. He goes on further to say—

... I have arranged the seminars which will serve to bring parents together and establish the principles under which a full parent participation in early childhood education will be initiated.

Is this really a Minister in a western democratic Government speaking? Surely those comments are much more representative of a Minister from the central Presidium of the Soviet Union or some other centrally controlled State where people

are told what will be done and how it will be done by some "Big Brother" sitting in a central office in the Education Department.

The next public statement by the Minister was recorded in *The West Australian* of the 14th March, and it was reported as though the statement had been made at the first of his seminars. However, in fact his reported comments were not made at the seminar but were contained in a Press release issued by the Minister before he attended his seminar, thus ensuring they would hog the limelight in the morning newspaper. The newspaper contained no report of the actual proceedings of the Minister's seminar.

This was his strangest statement to that point; it was totally taken up with haranguing the association with a completely unsubstantiated array of what one could only call gibes. He said in his released statement that the association was trying to dominate policy on pre-school education. He went on to say it wanted to be recognised as the sole parent organisation. He said it was difficult for parent committees who wished to remain independent to claim priority or to justify their inclusion in any policy-making group.

In that case he was doing what he had done previously in respect of the question of teachers' employment, when as soon as he got off the plane from his overseas trip he misrepresented the statement of the Opposition in respect of job-sharing for teachers and made a spurious statement to the effect that job-sharing was not a panacea. However, of course, as the member for Gosnells has already indicated, nobody on the Opposition side said it was.

These quite wild utterances were a complete and apparently deliberate attempt to misrepresent the aims and the objectives of the association, which had been clearly set out in the correspondence it had addressed to the Minister. There seemed to be no reasonable explanation for this unwarranted belligerence on the part of the Minister. The association had been most careful, most conciliatory, and most co-operative in its approaches. In fact, the group of people concerned with this association are very mild mannered, responsible, and co-operative in their attitude, and it is unknown for them to exhibit any aggressiveness.

On the 15th March I put a question to the Minister, still hoping I might get a reasonable response, regarding his refusal to receive a deputation from the association in the overall interests of a positive contribution to parent involvement. His response had not changed at that stage; it was still a matter of his evading answering questions, and still a matter of him repeating his

misrepresentation that the association wanted to be the sole organisation involved in pre-school education.

When he was further pressed in a question without notice on the 21st March, the Minister tried to pretend that he had acceded to the association's request and had met with its members on the previous night.

Mr P. V. Jones: I said I spoke to some of them, yes.

Mr WILSON: That is what the Minister said; in fact he spoke to two members.

Mr P. V. Jones: I spoke with Mrs Scott and—

Mr WILSON: The Minister was trying to pretend that he had met with the association at its request.

Mr P. V. Jones: I did not do that at all.

Mr WILSON: Of course he did.

Mr P. V. Jones: I said "some members" of the association.

Mr B. T. Burke interjected.

Mr P. V. Jones: What would you know?

Mr B. T. Burke: You could not even build a brick wall at a pre-primary centre, let alone be a preacher.

Mr WILSON: Two members of the committee of the association did happen to attend the second seminar organised by the Minister, and did put questions to him. After the meeting the Minister spoke to the vice-president of the committee for a short time, and he referred to that as a meeting, implying that he had acceded to the committee's request to listen to a deputation. He wanted us to infer that he had made an adequate response to the request put to him—a very reasonable request, and one that still remains unanswered by the Minister.

Mr P. V. Jones: No it is not; your informant is a little behind.

Mr WILSON: The question must be asked: Why is the Minister adopting this exaggerated, hard line in response to the request of the association?

Mr P. V. Jones: What is your information?

Mr WILSON: I happened to attend a meeting of the association last night, so my information is more up to date than the Minister's.

Mr P. V. Jones: Are you still saying I will not meet them?

Mr WILSON: I am still saying that the two letters addressed to the Minister and requesting a meeting with him, remain unanswered.

Mr P. V. Jones: That is not correct.

Mr WILSON: They have been unanswered.

Mr P. V. Jones: That is not right.

Mr WILSON: They were not referred to in the Minister's letter of the 8th February; he simply referred to his letter of the 7th December, as though the association had not written to him in the interim.

Mr P. V. Jones: Are you saying that I had written nothing since then?

Mr WILSON: In view of the Minister's complete turnabout and seemingly feigned belligerence, the kindest answer one can offer is that he has allowed himself to become the captive of his bureaucrats. He is a weak Minister who has been prepared to surrender to the bureaucracy the initiative of policy-making and direction.

The Minister who was elected to represent the people has become the representative of the bureaucrats, whose greatest motivation is to build up their self-perpetuating empires, centred on themselves, resentful of any intrusion from outside, especially from anyone who might be an ordinary member of the public.

A Government member interjected.

Mr WILSON: If the honourable member listens, he might learn something. The Minister, who was appointed a Minister of State to ensure that the educational needs of the people of Western Australia were properly dealt with, has surrendered his authority to the bureaucrats and has become their tool for implementing decisions, formed at a remote distance from those they affect.

In particular, this weak Minister has become the instrument of the top bureaucrat of his department, whose obsession is to have all decision-making strictly centralised, with everybody deferring to his office. This weak Minister is allowing himself to be lead tamely by the nose by the Director-General of Education.

The personal attention the director-general has given to the department's unrelenting attempts to take over pre-school education has not been an incidental one. When the first moves were made under a Government of the same colour in 1974-75, this director-general evinced a distinct distaste for attendance at public meetings with parents, where he was forced to confront them and take the trouble to explain the changes, which were really foregone conclusions.

His preference for detachment and his contempt for those situations in which he had to be publicly accountable for departmental policy were most evident. These experiences appear to have

left him with a ferocious determination to bring pre-school education under the same tight, central control as applies to other areas of education.

Under this director-general, with the tacit approval of this weak Minister, there was no chance that the preciously nurtured values of local control, parent participation and advisory consultation would be allowed to infiltrate the rigid system of the department.

Mr Laurance: Are you not getting a bit carried away?

Mr WILSON: The member for Gascoyne asks me whether I am getting carried away. He is the same member who, a few weeks ago, was very critical of the education system in this State. However, he did not have the intestinal fortitude to put the blame where the blame lay; namely, on the man responsible for education. Instead, he was weak and he tried to put all the blame on the teachers. He was not prepared—no doubt, as the Parliamentary Secretary of the Cabinet—to put the blame at the feet of the man responsible for education. Perhaps I should say the Minister for Education has a pseudo responsibility for education matters, because that responsibility has been taken over from him by the top bureaucrat. The same member who criticised the education system did not have the plain, common guts to place the blame in the proper quarters. I am glad he interjected because I wanted to direct his attention to that fact.

Mr Laurance: You are very immoderate today.

Mr WILSON: I take the lesson from the member for Gascoyne.

Mr B. T. Burke: The Minister has become known as a puppet.

Mr Laurance: You are using very intemperate language.

Mr WILSON: If I might interject on the member for Gascoyne, the only possible result was the suborning of every carefully developed practice by the centralised departmental machine. I would like to hear from a few members opposite—the champions of private enterprise, of personal initiative and of pruning Government departments and Public Service costs—on this subject to see just where they stand.

There is other evidence, too, that all the fears held by opponents of the Government takeover of pre-school education, about bureaucratic stultification are being borne out in practice. For instance, former employees in administrative positions with the Pre-School Board who have been transferred over to the Early Childhood Education Branch are finding they have no part in decision-making in that branch. What happens, I

believe, is that a system has been established whereby memos must go to the superintendents' meeting and then to the Director-General of Education; very rarely do they hear any more about it.

I might for instance raise a matter that has been raised by my colleague, the member for Balcatta. We have on the boundary of our two electorates a pre-primary centre which is a converted section of the Balga Junior Primary School. In September, the member for Balcatta, who has some constituents whose children attend this pre-primary school, was asked to approach the Minister about having a fence constructed outside this pre-primary school. It actually fronts onto a major road and there are quite substantial dangers for children playing at the front of the school, which constitutes the play area for the pre-primary centre.

The member for Balcatta made his approach last year and received an assurance from the Minister in September last year that the matter would be dealt with forthwith. However, that fence remains uncompleted; in fact, it has not been started, six months after the member for Balcatta had an assurance from the Minister that it would be erected.

If that is not an example of the way in which the bureaucracy of the Education Department operates, I would like to have a better one. That is the system the Minister for Education has put forward as being a superior system for pre-school education in Western Australia to that which existed before.

I know what would have happened before. The local committee would have got busy on the matter; it would have got the local government authority busy on it and seen that something was done. But not under the Minister's system. We must wait for the Public Works Department and the Education Department to get their hooks untangled and get busy on it. Six months later it is still not done.

Mr B. T. Burke: But do you know what has happened now? An employee of the department has been out to the pre-primary school and said that, despite the Minister's assurance, the fence is a silly idea and they are not going to get one.

Mr WILSON: No doubt the Minister will be in touch with the member for Balcatta later.

Mr B. T. Burke: When the Director-General of Education tells him.

Mr WILSON: Yes, if Dr Mossenson allows him to. I believe that children at the same converted school premises now used as a pre-primary centre during the recent hot weather have been sitting

in their seats sweating through no exertion, but simply because of the very nature of the building. When I asked what action had been taken to alleviate these conditions, and whether any application had been made to install any fans or some such small measure, I was told there would be no point in doing that because they would not be approved, anyway. So, at least somebody knows the score, and knows what is worth doing and what is not worth doing in the bureaucracy of the Education Department.

The other instance of the bureaucracy governing the department is the way in which the planning has gone completely awry in the Balga area. Without much consultation, new pre-primary centres were established at North Balga Primary School and Westminster Primary School; but this year, those centres cannot be filled. At the same time, a pre-school centre which asked to be taken over and which was taken over and attached to the Westminster Primary School cannot fill the places in the pre-school centre. So, there is something wrong with their planning as well.

We have the instance, also raised by my colleague, the member for Balcatta, about the requests for lists of names, addresses and ages, whereas before they have been interested only in numbers.

We were told by the Minister that they really did not need the names but they wanted them anyway. If there is any better example of Parkinson's Law I should like to hear about it. I suppose that by asking for lists of names which they do not really need they are making a contribution to the unemployment problem by keeping somebody in a job. But what a futile sort of occupation!

Mr Laurance: You are against that?

Mr WILSON: I am against it and so, I hope, is the member against the use of bureaucracy and the increase of the bureaucracy for no good end. I have not heard the member respond to that.

Then we had the great mess-up when the Minister's famous seminars were announced. About five messages went out. Each one had to be corrected because the one before it had given wrong information. I suppose a few hundred dollars or more were spent on postage in sending out five consecutive notifications because the previous ones had contained wrong information.

Mr Herzfeld: You are blaming the Minister for that?

Mr WILSON: Of course I am. The Minister is responsible for his department. Does the member not agree with that?

Dr Dadour: No, it is the other way around.

(16)

Mr WILSON: Of course it is. That is what I have been saying, and I thank the member for Subiaco for putting members on the Government side right.

Another thing that is happening with regard to these marvellous pre-primary centres administered by the Director-General of Education is that the parent committees are disappearing. We now have mothers' clubs meeting on Friday afternoons—very pale imitations of the kindergarten committees we used to have.

Mr B. T. Burke: I want to know why the director-general is not here to answer questions.

Mr WILSON: Hopefully the Minister will pass on the message. The style of the department presided over and run by the director-general and acceded to by his captive Minister is borne out by the situation which erupted at the beginning of the school year about the staffing arrangements in primary schools already alluded to in his speech by the member for Gosnells. In my electorate a great deal of hostility was expressed towards the department by parents at the Dianella Heights Primary School when they learnt that it was not possible for their local principal to be trusted to allocate staff within the school, but that every detail had to be authorised by the department centrally as a result of a directive from — guess who? Not the Minister. In fact, the departmental spokesman at the time gave the game away completely. He spoke of an edict to that effect from the director-general. I always believed that edicts were the preserve of emperors, let alone Directors-General or Ministers of Education or even the present Premier of Western Australia. I do not think he has issued any edicts yet.

Other schools in my electorate such as the Warriapendi Primary School in Balga and the Koondoola Primary School, fast growing schools in new areas which have not had a chance to establish adequate supplies of reading materials, also suffer from the centralised bureaucracy's failure to come to terms with the special needs of individual situations. The consequence is that large numbers of children are disadvantaged by an inadequate supply of reading material. I have been told that in one of these schools all that is allowed is \$3 per child per year for reading material. One easily recognises how little that represents in view of current prices and what little opportunity it allows for growing new schools to build up a good range of adequate reading material.

This gives me cause to repeat an observation from an article by Professor Tannock, Professor of Education at the University of Western Australia, which I have used in this place previously

but which obviously must continue to be repeated while the Government does nothing about our unwieldy, overcentralised, and bureaucracy-dominated education system. The professor says this—

... One disappointing feature of education in Western Australia is the lack of community involvement in determining school policy, and the lack of genuine decentralisation of the planning and decision making process. It seems quite anomalous to me that non-Government schools, in all areas of the State, can function successfully with school boards, parents and professionals running their own budgets, determining policy and giving their children a satisfactory education, when such freedom and involvement are not available in Government schools. There seems no logical reason why school communities in the public sector should not exercise many of the same powers and responsibilities...

Obviously we need to go outside the system to find a viable alternative model. Anyone who has experienced the degree of freedom for parent and community involvement in local parish schools—both primary and secondary schools—and the benefits that brings to the education of the children in those schools must surely question the continuing basis of the State system.

I wish to pay tribute to one such school in my electorate. The school is Mercy College in Koondoola. It has 277 children with plans for further growth at both primary and secondary levels. It has a keen principal and staff and a hard-working parents and friends association. Decisions about budgets, courses, staff allocation, and special programmes are made locally. Yet, to put a child through this school costs only 50 per cent of the cost to put a child through a State school. This is certainly a system worth looking at and worth learning from.

Mr Herzfeld: How many of the teachers are paid 100 per cent?

Mr WILSON: A majority, which is increasing.

Mr Laurance: Do you want to get away completely from the State system and have a completely private system?

Mr WILSON: Do not misrepresent what I am saying; that is an absolute misrepresentation.

Mr Herzfeld: How many of them are religious teachers?

Mr WILSON: In this school, one out of 19.

Mr B. T. Burke: She is paid half rate as well.

Mr WILSON: As the member for Ba'catta indicates, she is paid half rate anyway. As I was saying before I was misrepresented, it is certainly a system worth looking at, learning from, and supporting. Unfortunately, in spite of the fact that this school has been shown to be operating with a high level of efficiency, it faces a deficit of perhaps \$20 000 this year. The biggest factor—and this is for the benefit of the member who interjected earlier—is the salaries bill. It is to be hoped that the Government and the Minister might consider further assistance to parish schools to help them with impending salary increases.

Consideration also should be given to the particular needs of new schools in newly developing areas where there is a significant proportion of families on low incomes, otherwise the much-vaunted right of choice which this Government says it upholds will become no choice at all because of the inability of many of those people to pay fees, although this school and many others like it already carry a fair proportion who cannot pay fees. The introduction of increased *per capita* grants on a needs basis to non-Government schools in low-income areas is certainly an initiative the Government should look into.

The State Government has never acted on a needs basis in its allocation of funds to non-Government schools; it is certainly an initiative it should give some attention to.

The provision of what are considered to be basic items in State schools, such as hard surface play areas and school ovals, should also be considered as items to be supplied over and above *per capita* Government grants if we are to give expression to the idea that all Western Australian children deserve equal treatment.

Mr Speaker, something of immense value is at stake; and for every thriving example of this alternative system of locally administered schools, providing such a high degree of freedom and involvement for children and parents, that are forced to close through financial difficulty, the total loss to the community at large in terms of the model it represents for a less centralised, less bureaucrat-dominated, less non-involving system of State education would be immense.

To those who say it is not possible the answer is that it has never been tried. All talk by the department about parent involvement and regionalisation is just that; just so much talk. The will for effective action is just not present.

In the few moments available to me I want to remark upon two other aspects of the Government's failure to come to grips with the bureaucracy affecting my constituents. The first is in

regard to a matter of noise abatement. One of my constituents has a problem with an air-conditioner in the house next door to his. Three years ago he made a complaint to the noise abatement section of the Public Health Department requesting action be taken. He virtually was told to run away and talk to his neighbour and settle the matter between them.

The prolonged heat this summer caused a real crisis in his home as his neighbour's air-conditioner was on continuously, which resulted in a very high level of noise very close to the bedrooms of his two young children.

He made another complaint to the noise abatement section and the local authority and an officer from the local government authority came out and looked at the situation. The officer said nothing could be done because the house was on a road where the level of traffic noise was already too high for action to be taken to control the noise of the air-conditioner. An officer from the noise abatement section, to his personal credit, did say that the noise was above the desirable level and further action should be taken. He promised to investigate the matter further and said he would be in touch again. He got back on one occasion and told my constituent he was not able to give any further information.

Subsequently, after many attempts to contact that officer without receiving satisfactory attention at his office, my constituent contacted me. I contacted the officer in question who said there was a problem and that he was going to make a recommendation to the local government authority and if it was not handled at that level the matter would be taken up with the Commissioner of the Public Health Department.

When I got back to him a week later he could not give me any further information and I was told if I had any further inquiries they should be taken up with the commissioner. On the 17th March I wrote to the commissioner giving details of the case and included a complaint about the officer concerned. To this date I have not received a reply from the commissioner who has not even given me the decency of an acknowledgment.

If this is the treatment given to members of Parliament elected to represent the people of this State what hope has an ordinary member of the public in dealing with the bureaucracy they are confronted with?

What we are confronted with on one hand is a Government which allows a weak Minister to be the captive of the bureaucracy, thus placing the bureaucracy between itself and the people who elected it to government. On the other hand we

have the instance of the Government having weak and inadequate legislation placing the bureaucracy between itself and the people, and the Government excusing itself from correcting the legislation which is not adequate to meet the needs of the people.

This is a Government which has failed to come to terms with the bureaucracy on both counts and in doing so is failing to satisfy the everyday needs of the people of this State. The Government is making more and more of the people completely dissatisfied with the system we have and making them completely frustrated with the way the Government is failing to meet their needs.

MR GREWAR (Roe) [3.06 p.m.]: I rise to support the motion so ably moved by the member for Murdoch but I do so with some apprehension; apprehension which arises from a belief that the economies of the world are becoming much more lethargic. This is so because the nations are thinking more inwardly and adopting attitudes of protectionism and self-sufficiency.

These policies worry me because they were the precipitating factors of the depression and recession of the 1930s. Economists since that time have been propounding the evils of these policies but more lately Governments have been taking less and less heed and there is now an obvious swing away from the doctrines taught by Keynes and others on the evils of these measures.

In the past few decades we have seen groups of countries combining into economic blocs commencing firstly with the Soviet-East European bloc, followed by the EEC and more recently many others. Member countries of each group have seen the need to amalgamate for political and/or economic stability. While such a movement may develop and foster these policies, it results in self-sufficiency in supply and utilisation of the countries' products and resources.

The result is that preference is given to member nations of the bloc without recourse to goods that may be available more cheaply from another source. As an example of this we see that the UK has declined from a major market for Australian meat to one of the smallest, having been compelled to buy from the intervention stocks of Europe.

What has happened to meat has happened to many other products, both primary and secondary. Levies and tariff impositions on goods imported from nonmember countries make this trade uneconomic for nonmember countries which are often best able, in terms of price, to supply.

Let us face it; some nations of the world because of the abundance of a resource, their low capitalisation, or their cheaper labour costs can supply goods more cheaply and have a definite advantage in meeting world trade requirements. With uninterrupted free trade countries could be concentrating on supplying goods and services which they are efficient in producing. The result would be much healthier and more buoyant world trade. Instead through protectionist policies we have countries doing things they are economically unable to do very successfully by sheltering behind tariff barriers.

It must be admitted that there is justification for some tariff protection but not to the degree that many nations have now instituted, and Australia cannot condemn other nations for the policies they have adopted. Australia has a parallel tariff system which is making things very difficult for other countries which trade with us.

Mr Tonkin: Are our tariffs too high?

Mr GREWAR: Australia's tariffs on many goods are too high. Our entrepreneurs are not meeting the real challenges of competition and our consumers are being denied many cheaper goods. While nations of the world continue to think this way global prosperity will be denied to us all.

I make the plea to the Premier that when talking with the Prime Minister he press this subject in order to find a way of relieving the tariffs which we impose on other countries in the hope that they may reduce some of their tariffs. It is regrettable that ultimately tariffs imposed by Australia affect the Australian primary producer. It has been calculated that our protectionist policies cost each Australian farmer \$11 000 per annum. The farming community is one section of the community which cannot survive under this system. We could well see our most efficient industry crumble under this system.

However, the subject about which I wish to speak is not the economy as such, suffice it has been to make the point, and I should like to refer to that later. Rather than ramble around my electorate, on this occasion I wish to direct my remarks to two main subject areas. I wish to debate value systems and also the continuing role of agriculture in our economy.

The reason for choosing my first subject is the result of certain matters brought home to me following a most enlightening study tour of the Peoples Republic of China three months ago. When the opportunity to visit mainland China and other near Asian countries presented itself, I must regrettably admit that I was not overly enthusiastic. At the time, it represented to me a

trip into the past, to a fairly primitive country with tight marshal law, where the rights of the State have precedence over the rights of the individuals; where freedom was unknown; and where the people have a hatred of and disdain for foreigners.

Mr Tonkin: Do you mean Red China?

Mr GREWAR: Yes. I believed it was a nation which was going to give rise to the great yellow hordes which were ultimately going to engulf us.

Mr Bertram: Do you say the same of mainland China?

Mr GREWAR: As a result of the articles we read in the media, could anyone hold a different impression?

On entering the country through the so-called "bamboo curtain", an eight to 10-foot high steel mesh fence topped with barbed wire and manned by a great number of Red Guards, I had reservations about continuing further. Perhaps all that had been said about China was in fact true and one, especially a conservative member of Parliament, might never return through this barrier. Once inside, I was prepared to confront a nation of people set on conquering and dominating the world; a nation which wished to subvert all the people to its Communist cause; a nation set on denying the individual any self-determination, self-expression, or other human rights. I still suffer some pangs of guilt for feeling ill of the Chinese people. I am left only with great admiration and respect for the people of mainland China.

These people demonstrated to me how many of the human values we have lost in our quest for a materialistic society. We have lost a great part of our ability to enjoy simple pleasures of working hard and doing all we can for our fellows and, above all, we have lost a great deal of our national, patriotic spirit.

A visit to China is a visit back in history to a nation which is just emerging from a feudal system far more severe than anything we have known from reading our history of Europe and the United Kingdom several hundred years ago. Industry and agriculture are still fairly primitive—more so than I imagined.

The human is still the beast of burden throughout China. There is limited technology. There is poverty, if we judge poverty on material possessions and housing standards; but there is a richness to the life that we tend to lack. The people are happy and friendly, and go to extreme lengths to make the foreigner welcome.

Everywhere one goes one finds serenity, with the people going about their tasks peacefully, considerably and intent on doing the very best job

they are able to. On no occasion did I witness any disturbance, whether it was simply children fighting or a scuffle involving adults. This is all the more remarkable when one considers the number of people one sees on a trip of this kind, literally millions.

Since returning to Australia I have examined the faces of the people on the streets in an endeavour to discover whether Australians really are happy, contented, and at peace with themselves. I regret that I do not find them to be so. We, and I am speaking collectively and generally, have a perennial greed and a great desire to satisfy our own self-interest. Many of us have a desire to shirk work and our responsibilities, to extract as much reward as possible, to go as far as the law will allow us. These qualities were not evident in China and they certainly would not be encouraged.

Communism has given these people a great sense of purpose and freedom which they obviously did not experience under the previous imperialistic system. They appreciate their new-found freedoms and are building upon them. All the Chinese work hard—men and women alike. It is obvious that there is no discrimination against females in China and it would be a great lesson to our feminists in this country to see if this is what they want. Women work beside men frequently in domains which we consider to be the province of men. In some instances it upset me to see women pulling heavy loads far beyond their capacity; but I guess this is the price we pay for equality.

There is no 40-hour week; no weekends; no annual leave; and no tea breaks. An eight-hour day is normal, six days per week. Shift work is common in a great number of industries with the factories being open 24 hours a day. The peasants work in the fields from dawn to dark. The shops are open very early in the morning until at least eight o'clock at night; some shops are open until 10 or 11 o'clock, seven days a week.

If this is what Australian unionists want, it would do them a great deal of good to go to China.

Mr Tonkin: Do you think the Police Special Branch will take an interest in your speech?

Mr GREWAR: I do not know. It would be interesting to note the reaction the Chinese worker would have to the militant Australian trade unionists. I would hazard a guess that such a person would be treated with far greater disdain than we tend to treat him. Such a person, set on disruption or disputation, would very promptly be regarded as an enemy of the people and would be rushed off to a commune for re-education.

Everyone is dedicated to the cause and determined to do the best for his country. Unionism in China would have no place. As I saw and experienced communism, it leaves me with admiration. It is certainly not the brand of communism which Australian communists are portraying.

Mr Bertram: Are you referring to the Chinese communists, the Maoists, or the Moscow communists?

Mr GREWAR: I am referring to the Australian communists. The Australian communists would be regarded as deviants or reactionaries. The moral standards of the people are extremely rigid, even more rigid than those of our Victorian ancestors. Permissiveness of any form would not be tolerated. The people frown very noticeably on any flaunting of sexual attributes and even regard women in European clothing which highlights parts of the human anatomy as something of an evil.

The family unit is extremely strongly bonded. It was a revelation to me to see people so closely knit—husbands and wives arm in arm with their children, attending to the wants of one another in a pleasant, understanding, and loving manner. The society was extremely well disciplined and it was not disciplined by the police but by each member of the society. If any member of a group deviated from the norm it was the group that reminded him of his responsibilities. There was little need for a Police Force as such. In fact we saw nobody upholding the law.

Mr Tonkin: Do you think the attempts to stop people deviating from the law prevent people from making progress?

Mr GREWAR: No, I do not. We were initially confused by the activities of the Red Guards and believed they might have had a peace-keeping role. However, we learnt their most important function was to be engaged on national projects, building of roads, bridges, and numerous other activities which were evident wherever we went. No doubt the Red Guards have another role which is that of maintaining national defence. We did not visit the border areas in order to witness this. There was a great wish among the young people to join the Red Guards and to become involved in activities to rebuild China.

All adults—men and women alike—work. There is no unemployment. Many of the tasks performed are uneconomic or unjustified, but it is the will of the people that everyone should

work, the belief being that people gainfully employed create a healthier society and are not recipients of welfare.

The society tends to be egalitarian, but not to the degree we expected. The Chinese encourage initiative and ability. There are different salary scales for different vocations and within each vocation there are different levels of payment. The range is not as wide as we would expect in our society. For instance, a doctor or professional man receives only two or three times the salary of a labourer.

The society is bombarded by the ideals and teachings of Mao which even we must admit are the very core of good living. Human society needs such a code of living, ethics, and standards, and these ideals are continually preached to the Chinese in schools, factories, and fields. These values are of great worth and unite the people under a common goal. I may be old-fashioned, but I regard these as basic for the survival of human society.

The education system is compulsory. Selection beyond the high school level is on ability. Only the more able intellectually are sponsored. Every encouragement is given in the school system to those with special talents, whether they be in the arts or in the sciences. Extra curricula work is extended to those with ability and children strive for a place in the institutions. All tend to excellence; mediocrity is not encouraged.

It is interesting to note that in China English is compulsory in schools and is the second language.

Health and welfare needs are catered for in a variety of ways. Medical services are excellent. The more complicated tasks are performed by highly competent doctors and the less complicated by barefoot doctors or trained nurses who journey through provinces and districts and tend the needs of the sick in their own living quarters. Older people—those retired from the work force—can join a welfare brigade and tend people in need. If one chooses, one never need be discarded from the work force because of age or infirmity.

The high ideals of their society are spelt out in the media. Only values of worth are emulated. One does not read of crimes or violence or anti-social behaviour. They obviously occur, but are not portrayed in the Press. They are not made news as our media tend to do to sell their papers.

The arts are encouraged and well patronised. Citizens in pursuit of opera, ballet, and music find them readily available and at very little cost. Films are based on portraying high morals or high work standards. True life drama films are

full of propaganda for the Chinese cause. It was interesting to note that the story of Dr Bethane, the Canadian medico who accompanied Chairman Mao on the long march, was one of the main feature films when we were there. It was the message that the people's congress is now anxious to portray the Americans as friends and, possibly, allies.

China is opening its doors to many foreigners and Australians seem to receive favoured treatment. In many respects I regret to see the Western ways permeate the lives of the Chinese people.

The Chinese people work extremely hard to make foreigners' visits informative and pleasant. No restrictions are placed on one's movements. One can go freely where one wishes without fear of being intimidated or molested. Even in the dingiest of dark alleys in Kwangchow or Shanghai, one's daughter would be completely safe.

Everyone is dedicated to the cause of China and is determined to do his best for his country. Obviously people enjoy their work and strive for perfection. There is an oft-quoted phrase we heard everywhere we went. It was, "We will try harder".

Members may well accuse me of having been indoctrinated.

Opposition member: It sounds like it.

Mr GREWAR: Nothing is further from the truth, as those who know me well would understand. I was not indoctrinated. The worth of their society was so patently obvious that one could not help being moved by it.

I would like to see Australia and China fostering an exchange of youth. I am sure such a project would encourage better relations between our two countries. It would be very desirable for the Australian youth to live and work close to the Chinese. They would return here with a great deal more purpose and would be more appreciative of the treasures we have in our country. The Chinese youth on the other hand would gain points from our society which would be of value to them.

I could not leave this subject without referring to the parliamentary system which I found to be entirely democratic, even if dominated by one party.

Members opposite can well laugh!

Mr Tonkin: It seems to be a contradiction in terms.

Mr GREWAR: The country is governed from the grass roots of society with the process of election commencing at the lowest level of the village or factory and progressing through to the district or province, and ultimately to the national

congress. It is a Government almost without a party—a Government of individuals with a variety of ideologies, despite the fact that many are members of the so-called Chinese Communist Party.

We must foster relations with China. It is a great country, destined to be a major world power as well as a major trading nation. Her vast resources of manpower are capable of tremendous production and I visualise China becoming a world leader in industry once her technology passes out of what to us is almost the stone age.

Australia could provide a great deal of China's needs in food items. We are now supplying a large amount of wheat, but China has potential markets for meat, wool, and possibly livestock. China's potential is probably many times that of Japan's, and we should spare nothing to continue and expand our relations. Western nations have been hesitant to foster relations and have not obtained the confidence of the Chinese. The first countries to achieve this will gain a great deal.

The Chinese are fanatically honest and have a high standard of integrity. Any trading nation which does not respect these principles and tries to "rip off" a deal will be shown the door very quickly just as were the Russians.

I now wish to turn my attention to agriculture. Possibly no more important subject is debated in this House than the development of natural resources. From these stem our standard of living and quality of life we expect and demand.

Australia's major resource is still primary industry and it is to this subject I wish to devote most of my attention. I wish to highlight the dire position the farmers of this country now face with the returns falling and costs rising. It is my intention to suggest corrective actions which could go a long way to improve the position for Australian producers.

Some of the suggestions, and possibly the major ones, will depend for their success on the co-operation of other nations. It is not only the Australian economy which is experiencing difficult times. The problem is global and, in the main, it must be solved on a global basis.

In introducing my subject, I must firstly point out that primary industry was responsible over the past 100 years of our history for the Australia we know today. This industry has been the cornerstone of our development and it has made Australia the great trading nation it now is. We were—and I put the emphasis on the word "were"—a very efficient nation in production of agricultural goods, and provided competitive products on the world markets.

Over the past 10 to 15 years we have witnessed the rapid development of alternative industries—notably mining and secondary industries. These, in combination, now earn more than agriculture in the way of foreign exchange and have given our citizens a more stable and balanced economy. They are less fraught with cyclic booms and busts which feature in agriculture in isolation. However, the development of these industries has done some harm to agriculture. No longer can the value of our currency be adjusted to the fortunes of agriculture. In periods of recession it was once possible to devalue the Australian dollar and make goods competitive. We must now ride out our uncompetitive situation in the best way we can, and this means that farmers must absorb their losses.

The good fortunes of the mining industry have had a dire effect on primary producers' terms of trade. This industry has engendered prosperity and allowed wages and other costs to rise considerably.

Secondary industry development in Australia has, in many ways, harmed primary producers as a result of general inefficiency. To enable these industries to survive, a massive tariff barrier had to be created resulting in farmers' input costs being raised. Sir John Crawford, in opening the 1978 agricultural outlook conference said that "tariffs are a tax and all taxes must ultimately fall on agriculture."

The results of these influences are very apparent to Australian farmers today. Costs have risen to a point where economic operation is no longer possible in many instances and we have lost a great deal of competitive ability on world markets.

These effects have been manifest in three ways. In the first instance farmers have reduced labour units. This has had a major influence on unemployment and on the depopulation of rural areas. It is interesting to note that there has been a drop of almost 10 per cent in the work force in agriculture in the past 20 years.

Secondly, there has been an obvious fall off in the principles of good agriculture. The primary producer is now hell-bent on using all his energies to extract a maximum income from his property and he is making this his major goal. Unfortunately the result is exploitive techniques with less care for soil conservation, less fertilisation, and so on.

Thirdly, farm borrowings have increased to make up the shortfall of farmers' incomes. Unfortunately much of the borrowing is at high

interest rates. The farmer is mortgaging his future in the vain hope that prosperity will one day again return him to viability.

With this brief introduction I hope I have outlined some of the problems of the primary industry. I wish now to detail actions which I believe would aid in their resolution. They are as follows—

- (1) The percentage share of the consumer dollar which is going to producers must be increased.
- (2) Tariff barriers must be lowered.
- (3) Inflation must be reduced.

Dealing with the first point, the decline in the producer's share of the consumer dollar has become very obvious in the past few years, and it appears the trend will continue. The primary producer is becoming increasingly a price taker, being left with a smaller and smaller share of the market price.

What is seemingly happening is that products available to the consumer are being changed in form very markedly in the transition from the farm gate to the consumer's plate. The consumer's price is not rising in parallel with the cost of these extra and sometimes expensive transformations, with the result that the producer is receiving proportionately less for the original article.

In earlier times, and prior to the mid-1950s, our products in most instances were not subject to great change. Wheat, for example, was simply ground, the flour was extracted, and it was baked into a simple wheaten loaf. Today, flour is ground and refined to a very high state. It is generally fortified with additives of milk powder, soya bean meal, fibre, etc., and before being sold the loaf is usually sliced and wrapped.

These additional processing and marketeering costs are not being passed on to the consumer, as they should be. Instead, the wheatgrower is paying a higher and higher proportion of them. This is borne out by a study of bread prices. In 1949-50 a wheatgrower received 55 per cent of the retail price of a loaf of bread; today he is receiving only 15 per cent.

There are parallels in other rural industries. Wool has dropped from 15 per cent in 1949-50 to 2 per cent today; butter from 75 to 80 per cent in 1955 to approximately 50 per cent today.

The smallest decline in the percentage of the consumer dollar going to the producer is in those products which are still marketed in a simple form, and meat is an example. But here again we are beginning to see changes, with the presentation in individual plastic packs and so on.

Better presentation of goods is not all detrimental to producers. Advantages often result from better product sales leading eventually to increased demand.

Marketing charges have increased dramatically in the past 10 or 15 years, due to changes in the collection of primary products, additional conversion of the form of the product, improved food packaging, various additional inspections and valuations, and different methods of distribution and selling. Most of these processes are labour intensive and therefore bear a high cost. Many marketeers are looking at improved efficiency and improving structural and technological changes. However, these are slow to implement, and in the interim it is the primary producer, because of his weak bargaining position, who is bearing an increasing and disproportionate share of the marketing charges.

The producer can do little to counter these pressures, and as a result has been accepting a relatively lower and lower price. The only way he can do anything is to develop a price-setting role for his product—the recent referendum in the meat industry was an attempt to do this—and develop some involvement in the marketing chain to perform some of the initial processing.

Farmers world-wide have found they must develop farmer-controlled authorities or co-operatives, or seek Government help to develop statutory marketing organisations to insulate them from their weakness in the bargaining situation. With producers taking their stand responsibly, marketeers will be forced to develop efficiencies in their role. The farmer has done much to improve his efficiency and there is little scope for further improvement in it.

The trend of the primary producer's share of the consumer dollar falling must be stopped, and as I foresee it the only way is for primary producers to become price setters.

My second proposal to aid the viability of primary producers concerns the reduction of protectionist policies. I raised this issue earlier in dealing more generally with the whole economy. I now want to relate it more specifically to agriculture.

Perhaps the protectionist policies of the EEC have done more harm to Australian agriculture than any other factor. Member countries of the EEC were once major importers of our products. The quality and variety of goods was tailored to their requirements. With the formation of the EEC, tariff barriers were established which blocked off any hope of significant trade with those countries.

Our exporters have sought and developed new markets in Asia. The potential for development of these markets is possibly very large, but a shortfall of foreign exchange is a limitation at present. To compound our problem we have an expanding product brought about largely because of improved technology in agriculture during the 1960s.

Our markets appear to be able to be expanded only in three main ways. Firstly, by the reduction of tariff barriers into our previous trading partners. Secondly, forcing countries subsidising their agricultural exports to cease doing so under the terms of the GATT agreements. Thirdly, subsidising our exports; that is, by violating the GATT agreements ourselves.

We can only hope to break down protectionist barriers by being seen to do so ourselves. If we do not show a willingness in this regard, we cannot expect other nations to do likewise.

Any country which imposes tariff barriers should be taking a very hard look at its justification for this. For a country to be protecting some of its industries at above a 20 per cent level appears incomprehensible. In some instances, surplus product is then exported by these countries. The burden to the taxpayer must be of major significance and it must be a big factor in creating inflation.

Fortunately protectionist policies bear within them the seeds of their own destruction, but it comes down to how long we, as once efficient producers, can wait.

The third factor by which primary industries can regain some of their lost viability is by the further control of inflation.

Inflation has been world-wide. Its rate has varied considerably between countries for a variety of reasons and policies. Australia's inflation has been higher than many of its competitors, and because of our higher production costs in many instances we have now ceased to be competitive in the overseas market place.

The cure for inflation is in part global, and in part Australian. The Federal Government has made significant advances in reducing inflation, but it will have to do better. Even with a 10 per cent inflation rate, when many of our competitors are operating at a much lower rate, we are disadvantaged competitively.

The recent downward trend of the US dollar is a very disturbing influence because much of our foreign reserves are in US currency, and this must lead to further inflation. Many of the other countries of the world have learnt that gold reserves obviate this type of disaster which could beset us.

The inflation problem in Australia must be controlled and corrected. The burden is being borne largely by the primary producer and other industries selling products to the overseas market. The cure will be tough and it must mean restraint in many areas of public spending and especially in areas where there is little productivity, such as the fields of health, welfare, and education. Individuals utilising these services must learn to bear part of the increasing burden of the cost; it cannot keep falling on the taxpayer. If progress is to be made in the three areas I have mentioned, strong positive Government influence is demanded.

Improvement cannot be expected to be rapid; in fact, corrective measures may well take years before they have significant effect. In the interim, the farmer will have to endure his poverty, but his burden can be lightened by more sympathetic borrowing provisions.

There are many excellent loan schemes available—long term and at low interest—but regrettably many farmers are not eligible for assistance. In fact, I would say most better farmers are not eligible for assistance through these schemes. These producers, because they are not in drought areas, because they are not dependent only on cattle enterprises, and because they are normally viable, do not qualify for many of the low-interest long-term loan schemes. In fact, it would appear from the studies I have made that the more generous loan schemes have been deliberately designed to exclude these applicants. Because of their inability to fund capital works from their own sources, many farmers are now resorting to the only finance available—that offered by the hire-purchase and leasing companies. It is shameful that the Government should let its industries which generate foreign exchange, whether in agriculture, mining, or secondary industries, resort to this method of funding.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.08 p.m.

Mr GREWAR: Before the afternoon tea suspension I said it was regrettable that the Government should allow industries which generate foreign exchange to resort to the method of funding which I outlined. There is no way in the present economic climate that borrowing money at an interest rate of 20 per cent can be economically justified.

It is to be hoped that the new rural bank legislation will be able to cater for this large group of primary producers who are the very backbone of our industry and who are now in very serious trouble.

I support the motion.

Debate adjourned until a later stage of the sitting, on motion by Mr Shalders.

(Continued on page 491)

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

SUITORS' FUND ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR O'NEIL (East Melville—Chief Secretary) [4.53 p.m.]: 1 move—

That the Bill be now read a second time. The Rules of the Supreme Court of Western Australia make provision for persons under disability to be permitted to be represented in the court by a next friend or guardian *ad litem*. For the purpose of order number 70 of the rules, a "person under disability" means a person who is an infant or a patient.

A patient, as defined in the rules—and the Bill—includes an incapable person within the meaning of the Mental Health Act and any person who, by reason of mental illness, defect, or infirmity, is declared by the court to be incapable of managing his affairs and any person who is an incapable patient or an infirm person within the meaning of the Public Trustee Act, 1941.

In any matter where there is a claim by or against a person under disability, no settlement, compromise, payment, or acceptance of money paid to the court is valid unless it is approved by the court. In the event that an appeal is pending, the approval of the Full Court is required.

There can be instances where approval of a proposed settlement is refused by the court and the matter subsequently goes to trial. If the amount awarded at the trial or on appeal is less than the amount offered on the compromise, then the costs can be awarded against the next friend of the person under disability.

This, of course, seems unjust and the Bill proposes that in such a case the court may, upon application being made to it, grant an indemnity certificate as to the costs to the person under disability or his next friend.

This would entitle the person granted the certificate to be paid the costs up to a maximum of \$5 000 or such other amount as may be prescribed from time to time from the Suitors' Fund.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Bertram.

MURDOCH UNIVERSITY ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR P. V. JONES (Narrogin—Minister for Education) [4.55 p.m.]: 1 move—

That the Bill be now read a second time. This Bill seeks to amend sections 12 and 14 of the Murdoch University Act, and contains no major changes in policy.

Since the inception of the Murdoch University the Government has been aware of certain difficulties associated with the composition of the senate as stipulated in the establishing legislation.

Many members present will recall the debate in this House when the parent Act was considered some five years ago, and considerable time was spent debating the merits of appointing members of Parliament to statutory bodies such as the Murdoch University.

The experience of the last five years has tended to confirm our views that such appointments are undesirable. The Government has no objection to continuing the arrangement whereby under the provisions of the Act the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition each nominate a representative who is not a member of Parliament.

This Bill merely seeks to delete the requirement that both the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition nominate a person who shall be a member of the Legislature of this State.

To make up for the reduction in the size of the senate it is proposed to increase the number of members appointed by the Governor on the recommendation of the Government of the day by two to six.

The second amendment also relates to the senate of the university. The university authorities have expressed to the Government some concern that as the Act now stands members of the senate may serve only two three-year terms before vacating office. In conjunction with casual vacancies this is causing a rapid turnover in membership, resulting in a situation where the great majority of the present members of the senate are newly appointed or will have to be replaced in the near future.

The opportunity has been taken, therefore, to include in this Bill a clause extending the maximum number of consecutive terms an appointed member may serve on the senate from two to three.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Taylor.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: EIGHTH DAY

Motion

Debate resumed, from an earlier stage of the sitting, on the following motion by Mr MacKinnon—

That the following Address-in-Reply to His Excellency's Speech be agreed to—

May it please Your Excellency: We, the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of the State of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, beg to express loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Excellency for the Speech you have been pleased to address to Parliament.

MR T. D. EVANS (Kalgoorlie) [4.58 p.m.]: Mr Speaker, I intend to direct my remarks, brief but cogent as I hope they will be, to a centre which is 412 kilometres by rail from the East Perth Railway Terminal. However, I listened with a great deal of interest to the speech of the member for Roe this afternoon and I would first like to make a passing comment on that part of his speech relating to his recent visit to the People's Republic of China.

I have a very close friend who only some 18 months ago visited China, and I have listened to him discoursing on that country. While the political philosophies of the member for Roe and my friend would be poles apart, it is quite interesting to find their observations largely coincide.

My friend mentioned in the course of discussion with a group of people in China that something like one out of 10 people in Australia were unemployed, and a humble, simple Chinese man asked him, "Isn't your country big? Isn't there any work to be done?" I think there is a lesson here for our national Government and that much is to be learnt from the life-style, work ethic, attitude, and philosophy guiding the people who live in the People's Republic of China.

Having made that comment, I now come to the centre which is 412 kilometres from Perth; and I refer to Kalgoorlie.

Some people are born into greatness, others seem to have it thrust upon them, and others of necessity sometimes seek it.

Mr Tonkin: And some of us miss out altogether.

MR T. D. EVANS: That is quite true. I find myself in the position of seeking some form of greatness, along with many other former members of this Legislature who in the past have seen fit to come pleading to the Government to rescue the goldmining industry. On this occasion I am

not pleading for the rescue of the goldmining industry; I am pleading for the rescue of Kalgoorlie and district, and I believe with Government help that rescue will be forthcoming by a resurrection on a long-term basis of the goldmining industry. In other words, we will not rescue the goldmining industry; the goldmining industry will rescue the eastern goldfields if it is given timely, sufficient, and practical assistance by the Government.

The goldfields at the present time present quite a paradox. On the 8th March the price of gold had never been higher in the history of Australia, yet in Kalgoorlie we had one operative goldmine. Over the years we have seen the number of mines in the Golden Mile dwindle from 30-odd to only one operative mine, yet the price of gold has never been higher in the history of Australia.

Some years ago one of the best prospects on the Golden Mile—and I believe it is still the best prospect—because of the economic conditions then prevailing in regard to the price of gold, converted its plant to the treatment of nickel from surrounding mines, one in particular being Redross near Norseman. I refer to the North Kalgurli mine and its leases. By treating nickel ores the mine has been able to sustain a work force of 105 persons.

However, with the recent decline in the price of nickel ore the decision has been made that the great Poseidon or Windarra operations are to cease, and the smaller but very significant operations at Redross are also to grind to a halt at the end of May this year. When that latter event takes place, there will be no ores for the North Kalgurli treatment plant to deal with, and the situation will be that most if not all of the existing work force of 105 will have to be dispersed. If those workers are dispersed the very real chances are they will be lost to the community. Skilled tradesmen will find work elsewhere, and if there is not a resurrection of the industry later on those people will not be replaced; they will be entrenched elsewhere.

As I say, the price of gold has never been higher. The manager of this particular company a few weeks ago candidly discussed the situation with the Hon. R. T. Leeson, member for the South-East Province, the member for Yilgarn-Dundas, and myself. He indicated that an approach had been made to the State Government for assistance consistent and concurrent with research being undertaken by the company as to the viability of reconverting to full-scale goldmining operations the treatment plant which is now treating nickel and will become redundant if the Redross mine closes as expected at the

end of May. The assistance sought from the Government would enable the work force to be retained so that the treatment plant could be reconverted for the treatment of both free milling and refractory gold ore.

I understand officers of the company saw the Premier when he was in Kalgoorlie and put this proposition to him, promising to let him have a detailed submission within a few weeks. I would be rather surprised if that detailed submission has not already been in the hands of the Government for something like three weeks. I hope the Government will give it earnest, early, serious, humane, and practical consideration.

As I say, some people seek greatness. *Hansard* will record that over the years—particularly in the early years, when the number of goldfields seats in this Legislative Assembly comprised a substantial proportion of the total number of seats—goldfields members have stood in their places making pleas for the rescue of the goldmining industry. Today I make a plea for the rescue of Kalgoorlie because it is going through a crisis. A solution must be found. Goldmining will provide that solution and, I believe, lead to the long-term survival of the eastern goldfields. The need is for the Government to give the matter earnest and urgent consideration.

Unfortunately—and I have spoken about this subject previously—when all these pleas have been made to Governments it has been like trying to lock the stable door after the horse has bolted. On this occasion I ask the Government to give North Kalgurli the opportunity to retain its work force after the end of May for the purpose of reconverting its plant to the treatment of gold, in the earnest hope that the research the company is carrying out with its own resources and at its own cost will be completed a short time thereafter and will indicate that a return to goldmining will be profitable and have long-term viability.

I hope further that the Government will give earnest attention to a plea I made in this Chamber some two years ago for the establishment of a supervisory committee embracing senior officials from the Mines Department, from industry, from commerce, and from the unions; in other words a broad-based committee composed of people who from time to time would be able to monitor the changing conditions within the mining industry.

The principle of such a committee does not apply necessarily to goldmining only; it can apply to any form of mineral extraction where indicators could be seen and steps taken to avoid these dips and rises which have become so common in mining in Western Australia. If this advice had been followed in the past, the present situation existing in Kalgoorlie would have been avoided.

If it is followed in the future, it may well be the end of pleas to the Government for assistance; in many cases suggestions are made after the horse has bolted.

Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Bateman), I can sense you are becoming very anxious to share some of my appreciation of your elevation to that high position, so I will not say a great deal more on the subject except that whereas 30 years ago there were in excess of a score of mines operating in the Golden Mile, there is now one only—the Mt. Charlotte mine. However, several leases are owned by a consortium known as Kalgoorlie Mining Associates—and this includes the one existing goldmine, Mt. Charlotte. Other leases at Fimiston are held by this consortium. The chairman of the consortium (Mr Brody Hall) spoke to the member for Yilgarn-Dundas and me just a week ago. He has promised to go to Kalgoorlie tomorrow and we will meet with him on site. He has indicated that his company is endeavouring earnestly to make a decision before the end of June as to whether the other Fimiston leases—apart from North Kalgurli which is privately owned—will return to active goldmining.

We are now seeing a complete reversal of history. Normally we see the closure of goldmines; the lid is put on an operation and the history book is completed. Someone is rewriting history, and I believe the Government has an opportunity to provide the foreword in this history book. So I make a final and earnest plea, and I regret the Treasurer is not present in the House at the moment although I appreciate his pressing reasons for not being here. I hope the humanity he is now demonstrating elsewhere in the State in these troubled times when people are coping with the effects of nature gone wild, will spread and that he will show concern also for the goldmining industry. I have made my plea; the ball is now in the Government's court.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Shalders.

House adjourned at 5.14 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

FREMANTLE TRAFFIC BRIDGE

Amateur Fishermen

307. Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is it a fact that persons fishing from the fender system of the Fremantle Traffic Bridge do so at their own risk?
- (2) Who, or under what authority are the eight notices displayed?

- (3) If "Yes" to (1), why are amateur fishermen being threatened with arrest by the local police for fishing under this bridge?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) Yes.
 (2) The Main Roads Department on advice from the Crown Law Department.
 (3) On one occasion in recent months the Harbour and Light Department requested local police to ask fishermen to vacate the fender system adjacent to a navigation arch on the Fremantle Traffic Bridge to allow the passage of a ferry vessel through the arch.

This was done in the interests of safety of the fishermen concerned.

It is an offence under the Navigable Waters Regulations to fish under a navigation arch of a public bridge so as to obstruct or interfere with the free movement of vessels.

POLICE STATION

Forrestfield

308. Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

In view of the rapid increase of housing development in the Forrestfield area and the continual complaints of vandalism, petty crimes, etc., will he advise—

- (1) Does his department own land in that area on which to build a police station?
 (2) If "Yes" when will such development take place?
 (3) If answer to (1) and (2) is "No" will he take immediate steps to have such an important and necessary community facility provided?
 (4) If not, why not?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) and (2) No.
 (3) No.
 (4) Since 1976, the concept of suburban policing has changed to provide an improved service through better utilisation of manpower, aided by mobility and communications. The concept of establishing police stations in each locality as in the past is no longer viable.

EDUCATION

Balcatta High School

309. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Has any request been made for funds to allow Ms Elaine Wilson to work full time in the Balcatta Senior High School's sensory perception unit?
 (2) If "Yes" from whom did the request come?
 (3) What decision was made on the request?
 (4) What amount of money was involved in the request?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) to (4) No formal request has been received.

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Noise Abatement Branch

310. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) What is the present establishment strength of the noise abatement branch of the Public Health Department?
 (2) How are these staff members presently deployed?
 (3) What was the staff strength and deployment for each of the years—
 (a) 1972-73;
 (b) 1973-74;
 (c) 1974-75;
 (d) 1975-76; and
 (e) 1976-77?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) (a) Scientific officer (Noise);
 (b) Laboratory Technician (State Noise Inspector);
 (c) Laboratory Assistant (Noise)—to be appointed.
 (2) Under the provisions of the public Service Act. Duty statements can be supplied on request.
 (3) (a) and (b) The Noise Abatement Act 1972 was administered by the two Occupational Health Physicians and two nurses;
 (c) and (d) The Noise Abatement Act and Noise Abatement Annoyance of Residents Regulations, 1974 were administered by Occupational Health staff (as in 1972 to 1974) and the Laboratory Technician (State Noise Inspector);

- (e) Administration of the Noise Abatement Act and Regulations became the prime responsibility of the Scientific officer (Noise) and a distinct noise abatement section was formed. Assistance in hearing conservation activities was still provided by the Occupational Health staff.

Local authorities have health surveyors especially trained in noise abatement and appointed as inspectors.

The services of experts from other departments are also available.

ST. JOHN OF GOD HOSPITALS

Belmont and Subiaco

311. Mr DAVIES, to the Treasurer:

- (1) How much funds has the—
 - (a) State Commonwealth;
 - (b) Commonwealth Government, committed to building improvement for each of the St. John of God Hospitals in Belmont and Subiaco in the past three financial years?
- (2) From what area of State Government finance have the loans been forthcoming?
- (3) What is the nature of building improvements completed, in progress, or scheduled for each of the hospitals?

Mr O'Neil (for Sir CHARLES COURT) replied:

- (1) (a) Interest subsidies in respect of moneys borrowed by the Subiaco hospital administration to construct a new maternity wing, nurses quarters and surgical unit were paid as follows:

	\$
1974/75	45 980
1975/76	15 196
1976/77	10 919

No subsidy was paid in respect of the Belmont hospital in those years.

- (b) I am not aware of any Commonwealth payments relating to building improvements for the St. John of God hospitals.
- (2) The funds were provided from Consolidated Revenue.
- (3) Improvements completed: New maternity wing, nurses quarters and surgical unit at Subiaco.

Improvements in progress: Upgrading of maternity wing and conversion of nurses quarters to doctors consulting rooms as part of a general redevelopment at Subiaco.

Improvements scheduled: A major redevelopment of the Subiaco hospital is proposed and on 15th March 1977 the Government agreed to the issue of guarantees under the Hospitals Act to secure borrowings of \$17 200 000 for the purpose. \$2 580 000 of the funds has already been loaned by the State Superannuation Board to upgrade the maternity wing and nurses quarters and the balance of the requirement is currently being negotiated with the Commonwealth Superannuation Fund Investment Trust. In addition the Government agreed to provide an interest subsidy at the semi-governmental interest rate on \$16 600 000 of the funds to be borrowed.

EDUCATION

Bullsbrook High School

312. Mr HERZFELD, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Has a recommendation been made to his department by one of its officers to renew the front fence of the Bullsbrook District High School?
- (2) (a) If "Yes", is it intended to have the work carried out; and
(b) if "Yes" when?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) It is not the intention of the Education Department to replace the fence.
- (2) Not applicable.

HEALTH

Plastic Containers

313. Mr HERZFELD, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is he aware of any effects injurious to human health arising from the consumption of—
 - (a) edible oils;
 - (b) wine;
 - (c) vinegar, that has been stored in plastic containers?
- (2) Is he aware of any legislation in the United Kingdom or America which bans the sale of these products in plastic containers?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) There has been an awareness of the possible health hazard which may have resulted from the migration of specific components of certain plastics into edible oils and alcoholic beverages. This matter is under constant surveillance.

As yet no proven hazard to health has been demonstrated. Any future toxic hazard by ingestion of these components will be greatly reduced by the compilation and publication of rigid standards for plastics for food contact use by the Standards Association of Australia. Manufacturers abide by the published standards thus eliminating the main risk factors involved from migration of the plastic into foods.

(a), (b) and (c) No.

- (2) Yes.

STATE ENERGY COMMISSION

Contributory Extension Scheme

314. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) Has the Government yet decided whether it intends to overturn the State Energy Commission decision to increase charges by 100 per cent for connecting rural properties to power supplies?
- (2) (a) If "No" when is the decision expected; and
(b) will he make the decision public?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) and (2) The Government considered the matter at the time of the increase in the charges and agreed with the position adopted by the SEC. However, the Government is at present reviewing a number of aspects associated with both the immediate and longer term operations of the contributory extension scheme and an announcement will be made as to the final outcome.

HEALTH

Noise: Domestic

315. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is it a fact that existing legislation covering domestic noise is adequate?
- (2) What action is the Government contemplating in order to ensure that such legislation gives people fully effective recourse to the law in situations where domestic noise from neighbouring pre-

mises is disruptive and detrimental to their well-being, especially in view of legislative moves already made in other States?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) and (2) The Noise Abatement Act in practice has proved to be extremely effective and a very large number of noise nuisances have been resolved. However, there are defects and deficiencies in the Annoyance to Residents Regulations. These have been reviewed by the Noise and Vibration Control Council and new regulations are in the process of preparation.

EDUCATION

Children of Members of Armed Forces

316. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is he aware of the possible problems affecting the children of members of the armed services arising from frequent interstate transfers and the variations in the education systems of different States?
- (2) If "Yes" can he say what current action is being taken to try to overcome such problems?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) With variations between States, schools, students, and between teachers, a unified single system throughout Australia would be impossible and undesirable.

Teachers are expected to cater for reasonable differences between individuals, and with the exception of the TAE type courses for pre-tertiary admission, other problems appear to be overcome satisfactorily.

HEALTH

Noise Emission from Motor Vehicles

317. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) What regulations exist to govern noise emission from motor vehicles?
- (2) Who is responsible for policing such regulations?
- (3) If no such regulations exist, what consideration is the Government giving to the problem of vehicle noise in view of legislative moves already made in other States?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) See answer to Question 306 4th April, 1978.
- (2) Road Traffic Authority.
- (3) Legislation in Western Australia is the same or better than in other States. In practice, control in other States is no more effective than in Western Australia.

TECHNICAL EXTENSION SERVICES

Quarrying 2

318. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Education:

Will he advise when the Technical Extension Service will be in a position to distribute material to persons wishing to qualify for Quarrying 2 in connection with the course diploma in surface mining as required under the provisions of the Coal Mines Regulation Act?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

The first lessons will be available in approximately two weeks' time and the total course to be completed and available by June.

MINING

Collie Coal

319. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Mines:

What are—

- (a) the proven extractable open cut coal reserves at Collie; and
- (b) the proven extractable deep mine coal reserves at Collie?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (a) 168 million tonnes.
- (b) 118 million tonnes. "When proven" is accepted to mean "measured and indicated".

320. *This question was postponed.*

MINING

Collie Coal

321. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Mines:

- (1) What is the amount of coal produced at Collie—
 - (a) open cut; and
 - (b) deep mine,
 for the year ended 31st December, 1977?
- (2) What is the anticipated production for the year ending 31st December, 1978?

- (3) (a) What is the anticipated production when the two units at present under construction at the Muja power station, Collie, come onto load; and
- (b) when the units at Kwinana are converted back to coal?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) (a) 1 819 978 tonnes.
- (b) 538 028 tonnes.
- (2) 2.5 million tonnes.
- (3) (a) and (b) Precise figures cannot be given because of the uncertainty in the demand for coal at the power stations and by private industry.
As an indication however coal production from Collie should increase to over 3 million tonnes when the units at Kwinana are converted to coal and to over 3.5 million tonnes when the Muja units come into operation.

HOUSING

Collie: Vacant Houses

322. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Housing:

Will he list the number and addresses of State Housing Commission houses vacant at Collie, and the dates on which they were last vacated?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

Collie—vacant, under maintenance—

Lot No.	House No.	Street	Date Vacated
1838	27	Christie	28/11/77
662	26	Bedlington	29/11/76
47	38	Simpson	31/10/77
1822	62	Porter	7/11/77
767	22	McKinley	21/11/77
1514	16	Atkinson	26/12/77
139	1	Benwell	23/1/78
1726	2	Delahunty	12/12/77
174	6	Bowden	27/2/78
1847	30	Lane	13/3/78
184	26	Fowden	27/3/78
896	14	Doyle	3/4/78
826	122	Jones	27/3/78
684	20	Caufield	27/2/78
1637	35	Moore	27/3/78
1734	69	Porter	3/4/78
1715	24	Bickerton	3/4/78
1823	60	Porter	16/1/78

Collie—vacant, under offer—

1676	4	Caufield	11/4/77
1731	75	Porter	11/4/77
1724	42	Bickerton	23/5/77
1632	36	Porter	30/6/77
1548	12	Moore	28/11/77
59	23	Evans	5/12/77
1798	1	Telfer	12/12/77
765	214	McKinley (To be occupied by SEC)	5/12/77
1968	21	McKinley	19/12/77
1849	26	Lane	19/12/77
14	27	Deakin	26/12/77
1630	32	Porter	23/3/78

HOUSING*Collie: Construction and Pensioners*

323. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Housing:

Will he advise if it is the Commission's intention to—

- (a) construct additional Commission homes at Collie;
- (b) construct additional pensioner units at Collie?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (a) and (b) Yes. However, until the financial position is clarified by the Commonwealth and State Budgets, no precise statement can be made as to size and timing of the programme for 1978/79.

POLICE AND RTA*Overtime*

324. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

- (a) Will he list, on a monthly basis, the amount of overtime worked on an individual basis by the Police Department and the Road Traffic Authority for the six months period ended 31st March, 1978; and
- (b) the costs involved?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (a) and (b) Overtime paid by the Police and Road Traffic Authority during the last six months was—

In late December, the payment of salaries was converted to a computerised processing system and some delay in processing overtime payments was experienced in January and February. These were cleared during the month of March.

					Police		Road Traffic Authority	
					Hours	Amount \$	Hours	Amount \$
October 1977	....	....	....	....	13 210.75	97 327.64	16 653.50	102 429.83
November 1977	....	....	....	....	10 287.25	96 974.10	12 912.50	118 646.92
December 1977	....	....	....	....	10 109.80	110 870.97	9 513.60	85 905.30
January 1978	....	....	....	....	6 943.70	69 131.90	6 129.10	53 822.44
February 1978	....	....	....	....	9 308.40	92 901.00	3 518.00	40 437.35
March 1978	....	....	....	....	19 404.20	146 572.12	6 518.20	59 738.32
Totals	....	....	....	....	69 264.10	613 677.93	55 244.90	460 980.16

STATE ENERGY COMMISSION*Bunbury Office*

325. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) Will he advise if the State Energy Commission office at Bunbury is to close, and the date of the closure?
- (2) If the office is closed, where do consumers pay their accounts and where do they make any inquiries in relation to queries?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) Bunbury town office was closed on 25th November, 1977.
- (2) Any branch of the following banks which are located in the Bunbury area will accept payment of SEC accounts.

Rural and Industries Bank.

Australia and New Zealand Bank.

Bank of New South Wales.

National Bank of Australia.

Commercial Bank of Australia.

Inquires may be made in person or by telephone to the Depot office at Picton.

STATE ENERGY COMMISSION*Collie Office*

326. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) Is it the intention of the State Energy Commission to close the office situated in Forrest Street, Collie?
- (2) If "Yes" where will consumers pay accounts and where must inquiries be directed?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.

FEDERAL PETROL SCHEME

State Legislation

327. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Premier:

Is it the State Government's intention to introduce legislation during this session to complement the Federal Government's petrol scheme?

Mr O'Neil (for Sir CHARLES COURT) replied:

Yes.

HOUSING

Pensioners: Federal Funds

328. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Will the State Government make representations to the Federal Government seeking large-scale increases in funds for pensioner housing when the three year Federal-State agreement on pensioner housing expires on 30th June?
- (2) Will he ask for a greater share of the allocation between States for Western Australia?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) I have already made a submission along those lines to the Federal Minister for Environment, Housing, and Community Development.
- (2) I will be seeking an adequate share for Western Australia, but it would be optimistic to expect a better proportion than this State has had in the past four years, since the allocation has been based on the number of pensioners in each State.

BAUXITE MINING

Alcoa

329. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

- (1) (a) Does the Environmental Protection Authority approve of proposed expanded bauxite mining on the Darling scarp by Alcoa Ltd., and if so,
 - (b) what precise conditions of management will be required?
- (2) What area of mining for bauxite per annum on the Darling scarp will be approved by the Environmental Protection Authority as being environmentally safe?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) and (2) The Environmental Protection Authority will not make decisions on these matters until it has examined the environmental review and management programme currently being prepared by Alcoa, together with any public submissions which may be made upon it.

STATE FORESTS

Bauxite Mining: Area Involved

330. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Forests:

Regarding her reply to part (1) of question 1185 of 1977, and reply to part (1) of question 89 of 1978, concerning the area of land mined for bauxite in 1976, why is there a difference in the two figures given—277 ha and 122 ha?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

The difference in the two figures 277 ha and 122 ha for 1976 relates to the first being the area actually cleared for the purposes of bauxite mining and the second relating to the actual area mined for bauxite. This was noted in the answer provided to question 1185 of 1977.

LAND RESERVE 34607

Mining

331. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Is it a fact that the Rudall River area is gazetted, subject to existing mining leases, as a reserve on 14th April, 1976?
- (2) Is it a fact that it was later gazetted as a national park class A reserve, No. 34607?
- (3) Is it a fact that under section 275 of the Mining Act, reserve No. 34607 at Rudall River has been opened for mining as from 25th November, 1977?
- (4) For what reasons was this national park being made open to mining?
- (5) What minerals are being searched for in this area?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) and (2) In the *Government Gazette* of 22nd April, 1977, Reserve 34607 comprising the Rudall River area was created and proclaimed a Class "A" National Park with vesting in the National Parks Authority.

(3) Yes.

(4) and (5) This information is not available in the Lands Department.

PORTS

Esperance Harbour and Fishing Boat Harbour

332. Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) Will he set aside funds in the next budget for the planning and development of a permanent fishing boat harbour in Esperance and for an early start on proposed harbour works?
- (2) Is he aware that the present lack of adequate facilities, for the fishing industry in Esperance, is possibly hampering the development of a fishing industry with a potential of \$15 million annually?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) The Public Works Department has been carrying out extensive investigations into the feasibility of providing a protected fishing boat harbour in the Esperance area and it is anticipated that a comprehensive report will be available in July this year.

Once the report is available, planning can proceed. Start of development in the 1980-81 financial year will depend on availability of finance.

- (2) No. There are facilities to enable catches to be landed and boats to be serviced at present which, although overcrowded, do not unduly hamper the industry at this stage of its development.

EDUCATION

Geraldton Schools

333. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Education: What stage has the Government reached with regard to the provision of new primary schools in Geraldton—

- (a) in the Anderson Street area of east Bluff Point;
- (b) in Waggrakine;
- (c) in the Karloo-Utakarra area?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

As I announced recently, a new primary school will be built at Waggrakine for the beginning of the 1979 school year. This will relieve the Bluff Point Primary school and will make a new school in the Anderson Street area unnecessary.

Consideration will be given to the need for a new primary school in the Karloo-Utakarra area in subsequent building programmes.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Finance

334. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) Will he please table a copy of the formula used for disbursement of element A of funds provided by the Federal Government to Local Government in Western Australia?
- (2) Will he please table a statement of the means of distribution of element B of funds provided by the Federal Government to Local Government in Western Australia?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) Details of the formula used for the disbursement of element A funds are contained in the report of the Western Australian Local Government Grants Committee for 1977-78.
- (2) To the present, element B funds have been distributed on the recommendations of the Western Australian Local Government Grants Committee. A copy of the committee's report covering its recommendations for 1977-78 is tabled herewith.

The report was tabled (see paper No. 130).

BAUXITE MINING

Stanford Institute Report

335. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Premier:

- (1) When is the report of the Stanford Institute on the effects of bauxite mining on the Darling Scarp expected to be completed?
- (2) Will this report—
 - (a) be tabled in the Legislative Assembly;
 - (b) be available to members of the public?

Mr O'Neil (for Sir CHARLES COURT) replied:

- (1) The Stanford Research Institute has been engaged by the Government to carry out a study with the following terms of reference—

“(1) Examine existing Government procedures for planning for multiple

use of land within the Darling Range;

- (2) review existing and potential conflict between different land uses;
- (3) recommend appropriate machinery to develop an optimum land use planning system for the area."

The study will not therefore be examining the effects of bauxite mining, as implied in the member's question.

The report is expected to be completed by the end of May.

- (2) (a) and (b) As the study is aimed at improving government machinery for land use planning in the Darling Range, it is seen essentially as an internal report. No decision has therefore been made as to whether the report will be tabled in Parliament, or made available to members of the public.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES

Street Lighting: Shepperton Road

336. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) Is it intended to upgrade the street lighting along the entire length of Shepperton Road, Victoria Park?
- (2) If so, when will the work be completed?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) Yes. A proposal has been submitted to the Perth City Council.
- (2) Subject to acceptance of the proposal by the Perth City Council and available work force.

HOUSING

Teachers in Geraldton

337. Mr TUBBY, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Has the State Housing Commission or Government Employees Housing Authority recently had delay caused in building homes in Geraldton for teachers?
- (2) If so—
 - (a) what is causing the delay; and
 - (b) when can it be expected building will proceed normally?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) The Government Employees Housing Authority has experienced delay in relation to construction in Geraldton of a

block of six apartments (each two bedroom) of which three are to be allocated for teaching staff.

- (2) (a) A delay of four months was experienced as a result of objections lodged by local residents pursuant to town planning procedures, and the Geraldton Town Council view that approval would not issue until the objections were satisfied or withdrawn.

The objectors were requiring the use of a particular style of Perth manufactured brick in external walls.

- (b) A building licence was issued by Geraldton Town Council on 10th March, 1978. Work has commenced, and completion is expected in August, 1978.

DAIRYING

Milk: Pilbara and Exmouth

338. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Would he advise those areas of Western Australia under control of the Dairy Industry Authority for the supply of milk?
- (2) Would he advise whether towns in the Pilbara area, i.e., Port Hedland, Newman, Tom Price and Exmouth, receive reconstituted milk in addition to normal milk?
- (3) From which State do processors receive supplies of products that form the basis of reconstituted milk?
- (4) Is the Dairy Industry Authority aware of these practices and is he able to advise names of processors involved in supply?
- (5) (a) Has the Dairy Industry Authority made any assessment of the market available for milk in the Pilbara and Exmouth area and, if so,
 - (b) would he please advise?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) The South Western area of the State bounded by and including the shires of Northampton, Mullewa, Morawa, Perenjori, Dalwallinu, Mount Marshall, Yilgarn, Coolgardie, Boulder, and thence to the South Australian border, excluding the Shires of Esperance and Ravensthorpe.

- (2) Yes.
- (3) I understand that the processor has received raw material from Victoria and New South Wales.
- (4) Yes. The names of the suppliers are however confidential to the companies concerned.
- (5) No. However, the Western Australian companies have assessed the market and are supplying it to the extent of its apparent needs.

HOUSING

Naval Base

339. Mr TAYLOR, to the Minister for Housing: With reference to comments made by Government Ministers and spokesmen with respect to residents of Naval Base who are required to vacate premises on leasehold land:
- (1) Has he had an application from a Mr Herkmans of Hart Parade and spouse?
 - (2) If so, was an inspection made?
 - (3) Is he aware that water and electricity have been disconnected?
 - (4) Is he aware that some windows, bath, stove, etc., have also been removed?
 - (5) Is he aware that Mr Herkmans is a recipient of social service payments?
 - (6) Why will he not help this couple?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) The Housing Commission received an application on 2nd March, 1978.
- (2) Yes, on 15th March, 1978.
- (3) and (4) The inspecting officer was not made aware of these matters on 15th March, 1978.
- (5) No. At time of inspection Mr Hurkmans (62 years of age) advised he was a self-employed cleaner, earning \$109 per week. In addition, his de facto wife (32 years of age) was in receipt of Social Service payment of \$49 per week (Invalid Pension).
- (6) Applicant is not prepared to accept apartment accommodation and wants only a duplex or individual house. The only accommodation presently available for a family of this size is a one-bedroom apartment, and hence the Housing Commission is unable to assist this applicant at present.

CARAVAN PARKS

Minimum Requirements

340. Mr PEARCE, to the Minister for Local Government:

What are the minimum requirements for the supply of—

- (a) water;
- (b) electricity;
- (c) sewerage; and
- (d) ablution facilities, in caravan parks within the metropolitan area?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

Minimum requirements for caravan parks are prescribed in the Health Act (Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds) Regulations 1974. These regulations have State-wide application.

Model By-laws made under the Local Government Act also set down certain standards for caravan parks. However, these by-laws are subject to adoption, with or without variation, by individual Councils. The situation at a particular Council would therefore depend on the by-laws adopted by that Council.

A copy of the Health Act Regulations and the Model By-laws are tabled herewith for the information of the member.

The paper was tabled (see paper No. 131).

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT

Amendment

341. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

- (1) Is the Government in accord with the Federal Government's request for uniform legislation on the environmental assessment of major projects involving Federal funds?
- (2) If "Yes", is it intended to amend the Environmental Protection Act?
- (3) If "Yes", to (2), when?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) to (3) There has been no direct request by the Commonwealth for uniform legislation. A request has been made for discussions to be held with a view to establishing a statutory framework to identify agreed administrative arrangements for State/Commonwealth co-operation in the environmental assessment of pro-

posals. At this stage it is not possible to predict whether changes to legislation will be required.

EDUCATION

Balcatta High School

342. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is he aware that Ms Elaine Wilson, the person responsible for running the sensory perception unit, intends to take up an appointment in Sydney?
- (2) Is he aware that her decision follows the Education Department's decision that Ms Wilson should not, or could not, be employed full time at the Balcatta Senior High School?
- (3) Will Ms Wilson's departure mean the closure of the sensory perception unit at the school?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) and (2) Yes.
- (3) Miss Wilson's work was experimental. No firm decision could be reached on its value. It is likely that no other person with Miss Wilson's qualifications and experience will be available.

SCHOOLS AND NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

MTT Buses: Cost for Excursions

343. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is it a fact that the cost of hiring an MTT bus for a non-Government school for an educational excursion is 43 cents per kilometre, whereas the cost to a Government school is 30 cents per kilometre?
- (2) If "Yes" is the difference due to the subsidy the Government through the Education Department pays the MTT?
- (3) If "Yes" to (2), why is the subsidy not made available to Western Australian children in non-Government schools?
- (4) Is his department in favour of buses for educational purposes being made available without any charge to children?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) and (2) Yes.
- (3) The *per capita* grant to non-government schools is provided to cover this type of operating cost.

- (4) No. The cost of providing free transport for educational excursions would significantly reduce the amount of finance directed to other areas of education.

HOUSING LAND

Dianella

344. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) What plans does the State Housing Commission have for the development of the land bounded by Hayes Avenue, Molloy Street, Grand Promenade and Oliver Street, in Dianella?
- (2) When is it anticipated that these plans will be implemented?
- (3) Is it anticipated that such plans will incorporate the provision of additional public open space?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) None, as planning is dependent on sewer provision.
- (2) No forecast is available.
- (3) This will depend on statutory planning requirements.

HOUSING LAND

Dianella

345. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) What plans does the State Housing Commission have for the development of the land bounded by Oliver Street, Grand Promenade, Adur Place and Timewell Street, Dianella?
- (2) When is it anticipated that these plans will be implemented?
- (3) Was this land previously set aside as open space or for public utility use?
- (4) If "Yes" to (2) and if this was the situation presented to neighbouring residents when they purchased their land 12 years ago, is it a fact that the Commission is under a moral obligation as regards the current proposed use of the land in terms of the need for more adequate recreational facilities in the area?
- (5) Is he willing to reconsider the use of this land for purposes other than its sale for private development for what will possibly amount to a huge profit for the Commission?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) None, as planning is dependent on sewer provision.
- (2) No forecast is available.

- (3) Not by the State Housing Commission. Portion of the land (Location 6400) was originally reserved for a school site and subsequently acquired by the Housing Commission for residential use.
- (4) Not applicable. However, the adjoining land was not subdivided by the commission, hence no moral obligation can be implied.
- (5) The use of the land will be determined by the future planning of the commission's holdings.

RENTAL ACCOMMODATION

Rents: Rebates

346. Mr NANOVICH, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) What number of State Housing Commission tenants receive rebates on rent?
- (2) What percentage is this of all State Housing Commission tenants?
- (3) What is the total amount of rebate?
- (4) On a percentage basis, how do our rebates compare with other States?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) 10 320 as at 31st December, 1977.
- (2) 42.76 per cent as at 31st December, 1977.
- (3) \$147 084 per week as at 31st December, 1977.
- (4) More than favourably. Because of criteria and formula basis, it is not possible to give the percentage basis. However, I realise that in New South Wales about \$6 million a year is rebated and we give about \$7 million. We have about half of the population of that State which will indicate the generosity of this State in this area.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD

Applications

347. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

Would he advise the following facts in respect of each application awaiting hearing before the Workers' Compensation Board:—

- (1) Names and addresses of each applicant and respondent?
- (2) Date the application was lodged?
- (3) The date, if any, they are listed for hearing?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

It is against the policy of the Workers' Compensation Board to release information of this nature except to parties concerned or their duly authorised agents, and I approve of this policy.

I am informed that similar requests have already been made both to the board officially and to several of its staff unofficially and that the information is required for purposes completely unconnected with the due process of litigation.

UNDER-SECRETARY FOR LABOUR

Canadian Visit

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

- (1) What was the purpose of the 1977 visit to Canada of Mr A. Jones, the Under-Secretary for Labour?
- (2) Has a report been made on the findings of that visit?
- (3) If so, upon which subjects?
- (4) Will he table the report?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) and (3) Mr H. A. Jones paid a short visit to Canada when returning from the 1977 ILO Conference at Geneva, at which he was part of the Commonwealth Delegation. His visit was to discuss in general terms industrial training, manpower planning and other labour matters.
- (2) and (4) Mr Jones reported to me verbally on these aspects.

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Job Allocation Formula

349. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) Would he advise the number of jobs, under the Government's recently announced 250 new job scheme that will be allocated in the—
 - (a) metropolitan area;
 - (b) North West areas; and
 - (c) country areas, i.e.,
 - (i) Bunbury;
 - (ii) Albany;
 - (iii) Geraldton;
 - (iv) Kalgoorlie?

- (2) Would he advise the criteria followed by the Government in arriving at a Government job allocation formula?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) (a) Metropolitan area—231;
 (b) North West areas—5;
 (c) Country areas—
 (i) Bunbury—1;
 (ii) Albany—3;
 (iii) Geraldton—5;
 (iv) Kalgoorlie—2;
 (v) Other towns—3.
- (2) When the first 250 positions were allocated, the metropolitan area placements were made according to the places available and the type of persons applying, having regard for the Government's objective of providing employment training for young people.

Seventy of these 250 places were allocated to country areas. These allocations were determined after liaison with the Commonwealth Employment Service to ascertain the major areas of unemployment.

Allocations for the second 250 places have been made after obtaining advice from departments as to the number of young people they can gainfully employ and train.

At present there are 19 places available in country areas. Should the Public Service Board be notified of any further suitable places in country areas these will be filled by re-allocation from the metropolitan quota, up to a limit of 50.

HEALTH

Fluoridation of Water Supplies

350. Mr BLAICKIE, to the Minister for Health: Following the recent announcement concerning fluoridation of water supplies for the towns of Bunbury and Busselton, can he advise what action he proposes to take?

Mr RIDGE replied:

In conjunction with my colleague, the Minister for Works, an approach to the Treasury has been made seeking financial assistance for this project.

RESEARCH STATION

Bramley

351. Mr BLAICKIE, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Can he advise what future purposes will be served by the Bramley Research Station?
- (2) (a) Under which section of the department is this research station controlled;
 (b) since when;
 (c) has any consideration been given to changing this control, and if so,
 (d) to what section?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) Bramley Research Station is one part of the department's research facilities servicing the meat, field crop and viticultural industries of the State. The emphasis on the particular research work undertaken at the station in future is dependent upon the research needs at that time.
- (2) (a) "Research Stations", Division of Plant Production.
 (b) 1st July, 1977.
 (c) No.
 (d) Not applicable.

RURAL RECONSTRUCTION SCHEME

Policy

352. Mr GREWAR, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Since implementation of the rural adjustment scheme, has the amount of lending been reduced?
- (2) Has there been any change in policy in regard to debt reconstruction in recent months?
- (3) (a) Has there been any increase in the demand for this assistance; and
 (b) if "Yes" how are these requests to be met?
- (4) (a) Has there been a reduction in the number of applicants or the amount requested for property purchased; and
 (b) if less money is being allocated to this sector, is there to be an increase in the amount available for debt reconstruction?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) and (2) No.
 (3) (a) Yes.

(b) From funds allocated by the Commonwealth.

(4) (a) No.

(b) Not applicable.

FARMERS

Loans: Rural and Industries Bank

353. Mr GREWAR, to the Premier:

(1) Has there been any cut back in the amount of funds lent to primary producers in the past two years by the Rural and Industries Bank?

(2) Could he provide a break-up of rural lending by this bank over the past five years?

Mr O'Neil (for Sir CHARLES COURT) replied:

(1) No.

(2) Published statistics of advances by the trading banks are limited to total advances and details of advances by specific categories are treated as confidential business information which is not published. The member will appreciate that the Rural and Industries Bank is in a competitive situation and needs to be able to preserve the confidentiality of some aspects of its operations.

FARMERS

Loan: Schemes

354. Mr GREWAR, to the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Could he briefly outline all loan schemes available to primary producers administered by the State?

(2) (a) How many applications have been received; and

(b) how many have been successful since the inception of the various schemes?

(3) How much money has been provided under each scheme?

(4) Has there been any cut back during the past two years in the amount of money allocated?

Mr OLD replied:

(1) to (4) The information requested will involve considerable research and as soon as this has been carried out the information will be tabled for the Member.

FARMERS

Loans: Emergency Relief

355. Mr GREWAR, to the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) How many applications have been received for assistance under the new land emergency relief loan scheme since its inception?

(2) How many applicants have received assistance?

(3) What has been the average size of loans?

(4) Could he provide an annual break-up on the above figures?

(5) With possibly increasing difficulties being experienced by primary producers outside the drought areas, is the Government giving any consideration to increasing the size of these loans?

Mr OLD replied:

(1) 33.

(2) 20.

(3) \$9 104.

	1976-77	1977-78
Applications received	20	13
Approved	12	8
Average amount	\$9 232	\$8 912

(5) The Government has not yet received any information which suggests an increase in the size of the loan is necessary.

FLOODING IN SOUTHERN CROSS AREA

Cause

356. Mr GRILL, to the Minister for Works:

(1) Is he aware that earthworks constructed by the Railways, Main Roads and Public Works Departments possibly contributed to the build-up of water during the last flood and previous floods in the Southern Cross area and indirectly caused the cutting of road and rail links in the area?

(2) Does the Government intend to take any action to prevent a possible recurrence of the problems in future?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

(1) and (2) The flooding at Southern Cross occurred because of intense localised rainfall. There are no significant embankments on the main road which would contribute to the build up of water at Southern Cross, and the adequacy of waterways through the standard gauge railway alignments to meet such isolated occurrences is under investigation to ascertain whether the railway embankment had any effect on

the cutting of the road during the last flood. There is no evidence that the standard gauge railway construction worsened the effect of the flooding.

The Public Works Department has no earthworks in the Southern Cross area which have contributed to the build up of flood waters.

Mining

Marvel Loch Gold Mine

357. Mr GRILL, to the Minister for Mines:

- (1) Are recent newspaper articles indicating that there are plans for the imminent reopening of the Marvel Loch Gold Mine at Marvel Loch factual?
- (2) Whether the articles are factual or not, could he indicate as to what the prospects of renewed gold mining operations in Marvel Loch are?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) Without knowing the newspaper articles referred to, I am unable to say whether or not they are factual.
- (2) As far as I am aware there are no firm prospects at present.

FISHERIES

Minister's Authority

358. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife:

- (1) What Act bestows upon the Minister the right he claims to have that allows him to direct fishermen to sell their catch to a certain cannery?
- (2) Does the same Act allow him to set the price of the catch?
- (3) Does the same Act allow him to cancel a fisherman's licence if he fails to send his catch to the nominated cannery?
- (4) Will the price per tonne paid to the fishermen by the nominated cannery equate with the rate they are now receiving for their catch?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) Fisheries Act 1905 (amended).
- (2) No.
- (3) and (4) Yes.

STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICE *Advertising and Government Policy*

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

- (1) Is it not a fact that the State Government Insurance Office is advertising in the newspapers far more and at much

greater expense than the private insurance companies?

- (2) If "Yes" is this consistent with what is said to be the Government's policy, namely, fair and equal competition (except as to unequal franchise which prevents the State Government Insurance Office from providing any competition at all in many kinds of insurance)?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) No, not compared with private companies writing motor vehicle insurance business on a similar scale.
- (2) Not applicable.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT RATES

Exemptions

360. Mr BERTRAM, to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) Does he declare land or a portion of a parcel of land exempt from municipal rates?
- (2) Is such declaration made under section 532 of the Local Government Act?
- (3) Is all church land given an exemption by him if requested?
- (4) If "No" to (3), what are the criteria which he applies in determining whether or not an exemption shall be given?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Section 532 (10) provides:

The Governor may from time to time—

- (a) by subsequent declaration cancel or vary any declaration made by the Governor under subsection (8) of this section or under any repealed Act which declaration exempts land from municipal rates;
 - (b) declare that any land or portion of a parcel of land is exempt from municipal rates and by subsequent declaration cancel or vary the declaration.
- (3) No, but subsection 3 (a) is as follows:
Land is not rateable property—
- (a) if it is land belonging to a religious body and is used or held exclusively as a place of public worship, a Sunday school, a place of residence of a minister of religion, a convent, nunnery or monastery, or is occupied exclusively by a religious brotherhood or sisterhood.

- (4) In making a recommendation, each case is considered on its individual merits including the effect on other ratepayers and the nature and extent of the use of the land.

LAND

Crown Reserve 29753

361. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

Can he say when the Department of Lands can expect to receive an answer to its request for the urgent comments of the Town Planning Board on the proposal of the City of Stirling for an appropriate portion of reserve No. 29753, public recreation, to be separately reserved and vested in the council for an autumn centre?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

The Town Planning Board is to consider the matter at its next meeting on 11th April after which the Lands Department will be advised.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNIFORM BUILDING BY-LAWS

Telephone Services: Pre-wiring

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

- (1) Is he aware of the possibly long delays being experienced by people moving into newly constructed home units and flats in having phone services connected or re-connected due to variations in requirements made on builders concerning pre-wiring for telephone installation?
- (2) Will he investigate the possibility of introducing amendments to the uniform building by-laws to make pre-wiring for telephone services in home units and flats mandatory on builders?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) No. At no time has this question been brought to the attention of my department.
- (2) Not unless it is demonstrated that such an amendment is necessary and desirable.

HOUSING

Naval Base

363. Mr TAYLOR, to the Minister for Lands:
With respect to housing on leasehold land at Naval Base—

- (1) How many houses at this stage are scheduled for demolition?

- (2) How many applications have been made to allow extension of time to remove dwellings to other areas?

- (3) How many applications have been made to allow extension of time to the occupants to find alternative accommodation?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) Sixteen houses are likely to be demolished with clearing up debris and residues on a further 11 sites.
- (2) There are three applications where occupants or lessees have requested time to remove their structures to other areas.
- (3) Three.

HEALTH

Chiropractors Registration Board

364. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Does the Chiropractors Registration Board prepare an annual report?
- (2) If "Yes" to whom is it submitted?
- (3) If there is a report, why is it not tabled in Parliament?
- (4) If there is an annual report, how can I obtain copies for the past five years?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) to (4) No. There is no statutory requirement.

TRAFFIC LIGHTS AND ACCIDENTS

High Road-Metcalf Road Junction

365. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) When was the Metcalfe Road-High Road intersection at Lynwood opened for traffic?
- (2) How many accidents have occurred at this intersection, on a monthly basis, since it was opened?
- (3) Are there any immediate plans to install traffic lights at this intersection?
- (4) If not, when can it be expected that these traffic lights will be installed?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) November 1977.
- (2) None reported up till 31st December, 1977. Because of the current transfer of all accident records to a computer-based system, any reported accidents for 1978 will not be accessible for another month or so.

(3) No.

(4) The installation is dependent upon funding and priorities which have not yet been resolved.

BAUXITE MINING

Parliamentary NCP Policy

The SPEAKER: Yesterday the Deputy Leader of the Opposition asked a question without notice of the Minister for Agriculture. I asked the honourable member to put the question on the notice paper as I was in some doubt as to whether it was one that should be admitted. It is my view that the question does conflict with Standing Order 107. However, on closer examination I find that former Speakers have allowed almost identical questions and therefore, as it has been a practice of the House to accept such questions, I have decided to accept this one.

I will submit this matter to the Legislative Assembly Standing Orders Committee in order that the committee may consider whether or not Standing Order 107 ought to be amended in the light of past practice of this House.

366. Mr BRYCE, to the Minister for Agriculture:

What is the policy of the Parliamentary National Country Party towards the proposed expansion of bauxite mining in the Darling scarp?

Mr OLD replied:

I refer the member to our Policy document—in particular to that section under Minerals and Energy.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

EDUCATION

Balcatta High School

1. Mr B. T. BURKE, to the Minister for Education:

My question is based on the Minister's answers to two questions asked by me which appear on today's notice paper. The questions I refer to are 309 and 342. The first part of question 309 reads as follows—

Has any request been made for funds to allow Ms Elaine Wilson to work full time in the Balcatta Senior High School's sensory perception unit?

The Minister's answer was—

No formal request has been received. Can the Minister tell me whether any request has been received, formal or informal?

In the third part of question 342, which is a three-part question, I asked whether the departure of Ms Wilson would mean the closure of the sensory perception unit. The Minister's answer was as follows—

It will be difficult to find anyone with her qualifications and experience.

Can the Minister say whether these difficulties will mean that the centre will be closed?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

I can only advise that certainly no request has been received by me, or by my office. Certainly no formal request has been received by the department. Whether an informal request has been received I am only too happy to establish for the member and I shall advise him by telephone tomorrow. However, no formal or informal requests have been received by me at my office. As far as the centre itself is concerned, I understand efforts are to be made to see whether it is possible to obtain a replacement who can continue the work; but as I have indicated it does appear as if there will be some difficulty in doing so.

DISASTER RELIEF

Frozen Goods

2. Mr BATEMAN, to the Deputy Premier:

I wished to ask the Premier a question without notice which was brought about by the fact that hundreds of homes in the metropolitan area still do not have electric power. However, as the Premier is absent I shall direct my question to the Deputy Premier.

Mr Blaikie: You could also include some country areas too.

Mr BATEMAN: I am referring to the metropolitan area. My question is as follows—

(1) In view of the Government's attitude towards those unfortunate people who have suffered severe losses caused by cyclone "Alby", will he give the same consideration or assistance to those people who

have lost all their frozen foods through a complete loss of power for over 48 hours?

(2) If not, why not?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

(1) and (2) This is a matter which I discussed briefly with the Premier on his arrival at the airport at Bunbury today. I have discussed it also with the Under-Treasurer. It is a matter concerning the problem of providing emergency relief for the people who have been affected by fire and flood in the southern districts and it relates also to the damages occasioned in the metropolitan area. I cannot give an undertaking to the honourable member that his request will be met. If that were the case, I would probably be first in the queue. But, being more serious, one does appreciate the great inconvenience that has been experienced by the people in the metropolitan area. However, I suggest that many of us who had the opportunity to see not only the inconvenience, but also the problems that have been faced by people in the south in the way of flood and fire damage, would consider ourselves to be extremely lucky.

FIRES IN SOUTH-WEST

Report

3. Mr SHALDERS, to the Minister for Forests:
Is the Minister able to provide a situation report on the south-west fires?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. I need to seek your indulgence, Mr Speaker, in replying to this question because it is rather long, but I believe it is information of which the House should have possession.

The SPEAKER: The Minister may proceed.

Mrs CRAIG: The answer is as follows—

During the run south of "cyclone Alby", the very high winds caused almost every fire burning in the open at the time to escape and move rapidly. The extreme winds and low visibility rendered aircraft and fixed lookout fire detection systems unusable

and caused the dislocation of telephone communications and road access. The broad scale loss of SEC power added to these difficulties.

In these circumstances, the mounting and co-ordination of fire suppression efforts were carried out under most hazardous and generally adverse conditions. It was necessary to depend on local initiative for many hours and only today has it been possible to collate a reasonably detailed picture of the fire situation which developed on Tuesday.

The initiatives which stemmed from control centres at Manjimup, Kirup, Harvey and Como and numerous Bush Fire Brigades in the south-west were, to say the least, exceptional as were the courage and determination displayed. The effectiveness of the fire suppression efforts resulted in minimising fire size and damage.

The radio network of the Forests Department was of utmost importance during the emergency together with radios of the Bush Fires Brigades, which were for many hours the only means of communication for co-ordination and direction of fire-fighting forces.

Emergency services activated on Tuesday night involved support from the Army, special Air Services, Police and Main Roads and local government.

The volunteer brigade and Bush Fires Board officers were of course, involved much earlier on Tuesday. The remarkable fire-fighting effort by the Forests Department staff and volunteers from the Bush Fires Brigade organisation received valuable support from men and equipment of the timber industry, Collier miners, Greenbushes Tin Company, numerous shires and other rural groups. Most of these people worked through Tuesday night and Wednesday without rest. Fortunately, the cyclone was followed by rain and this aided fire control efforts. All fires are now checked and mopping up will continue for the next few days until there is no risk of further spread.

There has been a slight alteration to that in the last hour. There are four fires which are still causing some concern. The information we now have shows that within State forests and in the rural areas adjoining, there were 82 fires which covered 31 500 hectares. Of these the distribution and cause are as follows: In the State forests 4 630 hectares have been burnt; in private property 26 100 hectares; and in "other" which would be Crown land 705 hectares have been burnt. I have the cause of only 78 of the 82 fires, because the figure has recently been updated. The causes are as follows: Private property escapes 54; Forests Department escapes 11—those 11 escapes were, in the main, in areas of regeneration and the total area burnt in those escapes was about 80 hectares. SEC power lines, three; sawmills, three; and the cause is not known for seven of the fires.

The extent of the damage is still being assessed but it is known that the damage includes the loss of four houses; one sawmill and shed; 22 other sheds; plus, of course, unlimited amounts of pasture, fences, and stock. To that should be added the figure of 313 hectares of Forests Department pine plantations and about 150 hectares of private plantations.

The area concerned in the larger fires was as follows: Palgarup 2 250 hectares; Maranup 6 000 hectares; Cundinup 900 hectares; Bridgetown 1 750 hectares; Happy Valley 1 270 hectares; Boyanup 2 200 hectares; Gervasse 4 200 hectares; Brunswick Junction 3 000 hectares; Coolup 1 000 hectares; Mundaring 1 500 hectares.

Mr Speaker, I could add to that the fact that there are 470 kilometres of fire edge, 16 kilometres of which still need breaks around them. An area of 330 kilometres has already been mopped up and 140 kilometres remain to be mopped up. Fires that are causing concern and which we consider still to have some dangerous potential are in the Brunswick area, the Gervasse area near Collie, Boyanup-Preston, and Maranup ford in the Bridgetown area.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES

Cool Stores in South-west

4. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

As a result of discussions I had this morning with the Donnybrook fruit growers and on-the-spot inspection, I have been asked by the fruit growers to draw the attention of the Minister to their concern about the nonavailability of power for their cool stores. The Minister would be aware that if power is not forthcoming in the near future thousands of bushels of apples will be wasted. I wonder whether the Minister would approach the General Manager of the State Energy Commission at the earliest opportunity so that power may be connected at the earliest possible moment.

Mr MENSAROS replied:

I think the House would be aware of the large-scale power failures. I can assure you, Sir, and the member for Collie that everything that is humanly possible has been done to restore power. The needs of one single individual as compared to another are reasonably equal. I believe it would be a mistake for me to issue a direction removing workers from one point and sending them to another point, because a complaint has been received. I believe the SEC treats everybody in an equal manner. Therefore, I definitely would not register a protest, as the member suggests, because there is nothing to protest about. I am doing the best I can.

Mr Jones: I did not ask the Minister to protest at all.

Mr O'Neil: The power was on when I was there at 10.30.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr MENSAROS: I can assure the honourable member everything is being done; but I will be quite happy to draw the matter to the attention of the commissioner without giving any directions.

HEALTH

Fluoridation of Water Supplies

5. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Health: Following the answer he gave to question 350 today concerning the fluoridation of water supplies at Bunbury and

Busselton, and the fact that in each place many thousands of dollars will be involved in the installation, will the Minister check out his answer further to ensure that the financial assistance sought by his colleague in fact will cover the installation costs, and will he provide the information as soon as possible?

Mr RIDGE replied:

So far as the financial implications of the projects are concerned I would have to confer with my department and the Minister for Works. I would suggest that the honourable member put his question on the notice paper, but, alternatively, if he is prepared to give me a copy of his question I will be happy to follow up the matter and inform him when the answer becomes available.

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