

# Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 15 December 1987

THE SPEAKER (Mr Barnett) took the Chair at 2.15 pm, and read prayers.

## SEX SHOPS

### *Control: Petitions*

MR HASSELL (Cottesloe) [2.16 pm]: I have a petition which reads as follows --

To the Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly in Parliament assembled --

We, the undersigned petitioners are concerned about the recent proliferation of Sex Shops and 'Adult' Video/Book Shops operating within shopping centres throughout Western Australia. The ready availability of extremely offensive and degrading, violent and sexually explicit videos and publications in our community is a matter of grave concern to all responsible citizens, particularly the parents of young children and teenagers and those who rightly deplore the exploitation of men, women and children.

Extensive research highlights the destructive and desensitising role of such materials in undermining moral values and encouraging deviant and violent tendencies in our society. Indeed, such materials are a major factor in fuelling the increased incidence of crimes of physical violence and sexual abuse in our community.

Further, the distribution of explicit materials which depict and condone various degrading homosexual and heterosexual activities can only assist the spread of the deadly AIDS virus, Hepatitis 'B' and other sexually transmissible diseases.

Your petitioners therefore request the Parliament

To approve amendments to the local government district town planning scheme so as to prohibit the operation of sex shops and 'adult' video/book shops within shopping centres.

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will every pray.

The petition bears 508 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

(See petition No 122.)

Similar petitions were presented by Mr Greig (504 persons), Dr Watson (453 persons), Mr Rushton (64 persons), and Mr Trenorden (190 persons).

(See petitions Nos 123 to 126.)

## BOLD PARK

### *Extension: Petition*

DR LAWRENCE (Subiaco) [2.21 pm]: I have a petition which reads as follows --

To the Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly in Parliament assembled --

We, the undersigned, request:

That in accordance with the recommendations of the Environmental Protection Authority's System 6 Report, endorsed by Cabinet in 1984, that Parliament undertake all possible action to ensure that the area of bushland bounded by Stephenson Avenue, West Coast Highway, Oceanic Drive, to the west and south of Bold Park be retained as bushland in perpetuity and added to Bold Park for all present and future Western Australians.

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

The petition bears 5 004 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

(See petition No 127.)

### ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

#### *Administration: Petition*

MR BLAIKIE (Vasse) [2.23 pm]: I have a petition in the following terms --

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

We, the undersigned Aboriginal people, are concerned by a number of issues that have taken place since Hon. Ernie Bridge, MLA, has been appointed Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.

They include the number of Ministerial appointments to Government Departments without prior advertising and proper selection criteria applying. Some positions have been filled by known 'black action' group activists. The positions are obviously Public Service positions and are paid at Class 7 and 8 levels, which would normally require a person in the Public Service to work their way up to the 'promotional ladder'.

From the Aboriginal initiatives funding of \$100 million over a five year period, Mr. Bridge has expended \$90,000 in the 1986/87 financial year for his travelling expenses and the majority of funding appears to be channelled into Ministerial administration and budget items associated with administration. These funds should have been re-allocated to Aboriginal organisations that are struggling to administer their community-based programmes that relate directly to Aboriginal people.

It is of further concern that an unproportional amount of Federal and State Government funding is directed to the north of the State without proper regard for Aboriginal people and communities in the south west of the State.

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

The petition bears 133 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

(See petition No 128.)

### INNALOO POLICE STATION

#### *Staff Reduction: Petition*

MR BURKETT (Scarborough) [2.24 pm]: I have a petition in the following terms --

To the Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly in Parliament assembled --

We the undersigned members of Neighbourhood Watch and residents of Innaloo and surrounding suburbs wish to make it known that we disapprove of the part closure and reduction of staff at the Innaloo Police Station. Crime would appear to be on the increase in the Innaloo area and concerned citizens would like it made known that they are made most uneasy by the fact that there will be less policing of the area done in the future under this new policy.

We, therefore, request you consider the reduction in manning and hours of Innaloo Police Station. Local police have a better understanding of our area and this is most important in providing a good image of police effectiveness to the public and thus to aid in the reduction of crime both locally and generally.

Your petitioners therefore request the Parliament maintain manning levels as to this present proposal to change policing in the Innaloo area, ensuring that police numbers are sufficient and local knowledge is such that crime in the Innaloo area does not

increase and the citizens of the area are assured that their property and security are not in jeopardy as it may be should such services be withdrawn.

And your petitioners as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The petition bears 264 signatures and I certify that it conforms to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

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

(See petition No 129.)

## PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND EXPENDITURE REVIEW COMMITTEE

### *Reports: Tabling*

On motions by Mr D.L. Smith, resolved --

That the reports and minutes of the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee be laid on the Table of the House and printed.

(See papers Nos 629 to 634.)

## APPROPRIATION (GENERAL LOAN AND CAPITAL WORKS FUND) BILL

### *Second Reading*

Debate resumed from 20 October.

MR TRENORDEN (Avon) [2.31 pm]: I refer first to the East Beverley extension to Avondale and the growing of lupins in that high-rainfall area. The highly-promoted project is near completion and will be of great benefit to production in the higher rainfall areas of the central wheat-belt. The areas which border the Avon Valley have tremendous potential to produce good, consistent levels of lupins and other grains.

The Avon River has been dying for a number of years -- in fact, since the crossing of the ranges and the discovery of the river. In the early days the river contained fresh water crustaceans, and supported a great deal of bird life. Unfortunately, the river has degenerated to the point where urgent attention is needed. The people of Perth should realise that as the Avon River flows into the Swan River, the silting up of the Avon will have an effect on the Swan. Prior to the Second World War the Boolong Pool outside Northam in the Avon River was thought to be bottomless; however today the pool has vanished, and one can drive across that area.

Mr Bryce: And the local member can now walk on water.

Mr TRENORDEN: Yes, at the right time of year. I am sure most members of this House will be concerned with this situation because it is a beautiful river and hosts much wildlife. The upper reaches of the river take in salt lakes around Beverley, with the source of the river covering a tremendous area approximately the size of Tasmania. Salt, superphosphate and other chemicals run from the land into the river creating further problems. Many years ago the river base was cleared by bulldozer causing the river to flow twice as fast and changing its nature. The weir at Northam is now a shallow lake, despite the fact that dredging was undertaken a decade ago at a cost of \$1 million. The white swans which have always been the pride and joy of the township of Northam are now under some pressure. More importantly the areas around Toodyay, and between Toodyay and the metropolitan area, have become affected by the condition of the river water. People who know and love the river have pointed out the decline in the wildlife of the area, and the decrease in the crustaceans and fish in the river.

I asked the Minister for Environment some months ago to give consideration to placing a member of the Avon River Management Authority permanently on the Swan River committee as the problems of the Swan River will be exacerbated by the problems of the Avon River. Action should be taken to slow down the degeneration of the Avon River. In the past, restrictions to the river flow, such as tree stumps and natural growth, have been bulldozed away. Now the river needs urgent attention to reduce the speed of its flow, as the river flows too swiftly at present and carries debris with it. Animal life which lives and relies on the river is dying and the river itself is fast becoming a lost river. The loss of the Avon

River would be a crime as it is one of the most beautiful natural resources of this State; it is one of the bigger rivers in the southern section of Western Australia and has much potential for recreation. The Avon Descent bears witness to this as it has become one of the largest and most successful spectator sports in this State each year. The people who run the committee have raised surplus money, some of which will be spent on trying to fix up problems with the Avon, but it will cost millions, not thousands of dollars.

In the last Budget the Pingelly school received an allocation for an ablution block, and I pass on the community's appreciation to the Government. I think it cost \$180 000. That school also needs a covered assembly area. It is one of the few schools in my area which does not have one -- a facility which it is important to have in the early months of the year, and also during winter. Bakers Hill school is under some pressure as a result of the growing community. As the urban sprawl continues, the population of Bakers Hill is growing rapidly, and in the last few months the population in the primary school has jumped dramatically. However, the facilities are scarce, to say the least. There are two temporary classrooms in the kindergarten, and classes 1, 2, and 3, which are not adequate for the needs of that area. Quickly growing areas like Bakers Hill are in urgent need of Government funds.

One very important event of 1987 is that the Technical and Further Education Division is being established in the Town of Northam, and it will be very important for the community. Many of the courses and facilities supplied by TAFE are urgently needed. A great many young people go to the metropolitan area to attend courses twice a week, which they should not have to do. We now have this magnificent facility in the Shire of Northam, together with Muresk College. I have high hopes that education will play a prominent part in the activities of Northam. I hope that it will be possible to extend the courses offered by Muresk Agricultural College into business and community education.

We have a very active art group in Northam called the Avon Valley Arts Society, an extremely busy organisation involved in a tremendous amount of work. It was interesting seeing the wooden ducks which were used in connection with the America's Cup shown by that group only a few days ago. The ducks were put into a natural setting with gum trees and leaves, and the result was dramatic. This group of people is trying to bring a different type of education and art to the rural community. People in the city take many of these things for granted, but retired people and those who want to develop a talent need to be able to obtain the facilities offered by TAFE and higher education by institutions such as Muresk without a great deal of difficulty.

The permanent care unit in the Town of Northam was completed this year, and a great deal of credit for that should go to Ken McIver, the previous member for Avon. He put a lot of work into that facility, which is now up and operating. It will be of substantial benefit to the Town of Northam.

I am very concerned about the police in my area. It appears that there are not sufficient policemen to man the roster in the Northam region. I hear many conversations in the Northam region discussing the rapid increase in crime. The police do a magnificent job, and if it is true that they are undermanned -- and I believe it is -- and that officers are doing well above what they are meant to do and are normally called on to do, that deficiency should be corrected very quickly. I am told that if sickness occurs in the ranks of the police, or if members go on leave, there is a substantial chance that small police stations will be closed. When emergencies occur in the region, normal patrols cannot be carried out. One of the real difficulties in the Northam region is the tremendous increase in petty crime such as housebreaking, breaking into cars, slashing of tyres, and smashing of windscreens. A police presence is very important to stop activities of that sort. Police officers in the town of Northam, outside their normal duty hours, have taken to riding bicycles round the streets at nights so that they are quiet, and they have apprehended a number of people in the process of breaking the law. But they have been forced to do that outside their normal working hours. Because there are only three policemen on a shift, and one needs to man the emergency radio system, in the event of a call the police station is vacant.

I have said many times in this place that people have called the Northam Police Station only to be told that the police cannot attend a problem. I see the Minister sitting there now. A few days ago in Bakers Hill an elderly person saw his next-door neighbour's car being stolen. He rang up the police and said, "Somebody is stealing my next-door neighbour's

car", and the police said, "Sorry, we are unable to do anything about that." The person concerned was too old to confront the couple of young car thieves, so the car vanished.

Mr Gordon Hill: I suggest it would be responsible for you to give that information to the commissioner so that he can investigate it.

Mr TRENORDEN: I shall be happy to do so, but it has probably already been done through officers of the Northam force. To be fair to the Minister and to the system, I am not trying to put pressure on the officers who man the system in Northam, because they have done an exceptional job. I mentioned they have ridden round quietly on bikes outside their normal hours to catch people. One police officer sat outside the house of a young person who had been bothered by a peeping tom. He stayed there all night, although he was off duty, in the middle of winter, in the hope that he would catch the offender, who did not actually turn up. We all wish that he had. He might have been in another tree.

There has been a problem with the Wundowie Progress Association and the facilities at the Wundowie school. An agreement has been reached over a number of years between the Education Department, the Northam Shire, and the Wundowie Progress Association about the use of facilities. Wundowie school does not have an oval or a grass surface; it uses the facility provided and maintained by the Northam Shire Council but the responsibility of the Wundowie Progress Association. Talks are going on between the Minister for Education and the Northam Shire. I hope that the progress association will be able to get some money from the education system to maintain this oval, because it is responsible for a yearly payment to the Northam Shire for running the ovals. The main user of the ovals is the school. The association runs two very successful events during the course of the year, but as a result of rising costs, the funds raised no longer cover the bills. It is absolutely essential that the Education Department come up with the money to enable that facility to be maintained.

The regional office for the Water Authority has now been established in Northam and is running successfully. I know that there are plans to change the administration of the authority in that area, and I am sure the people of the Northam region will get better service from the senior people who have been placed there. There is much concern held in the Avon electorate and the surrounding community, with which I deal as well, about water supplies. We are keen to see the Agaton water system brought on line because it could be introduced quickly and without great cost. People living in the Avon Valley and regions further up in the Mt Marshall and Merredin electorates are concerned about water restrictions. Over the years those people have been told that they could rely on that system. I am pleased that November was not hot and that the draw on the Mundaring Weir must have been less than expected. I am told that the Mundaring Weir is at its lowest ebb for a considerable number of years. If well above average rainfall is not experienced next year, water restrictions are a certainty in my region, and that would be a disaster for many people. We would like to see further action taken in relation to the Agaton water system to relieve that position.

Another matter causing much concern, and probably the most important issue in my electorate at present, is the movement of sodium cyanide through the area. It is proposed that the sodium cyanide will travel 350 kilometres through the Avon Valley to Boddington instead of from Kwinana to Boddington by a shorter, 150 kilometre, route. Every community in my electorate is up in arms about this matter. I put the Government on notice that it will not be at all possible to get any of the shires or towns in my electorate to agree to the transportation of sodium cyanide through that area until it has been proven conclusively that the shorter route cannot be used. On the surface, the argument in relation to this movement seems to be that the movement of sodium cyanide in the metropolitan area is dangerous for people, but people must cease to be people once over the Darling Range -- that it matters nothing about country people as long as city people do not die. That is an extreme statement but, under the argument put forward at the moment, that is what it comes down to -- that the mass of population in the city is more important than the thin population in the country. That is not acceptable, particularly when sodium cyanide has to be taken off rail at some point in my electorate, either at Avon marshalling yards or Pingelly, so there must be some risk of spillage. If it were taken directly from Kwinana to Boddington it would not need to be off-loaded at all. This issue has a long way to run, and we will wait with interest to see how matters proceed.

I turn to the matter of the Country High School Hostels Authority. I have concern about the education of country people, particularly those in high schools where the unit curriculum and quota system are causing serious disruption to education in country areas. It is a fact that unless class levels reach 20 students in my region, they cannot be held. If the Northam High School cannot get 20 students for maths, physics, chemistry, or French, that subject will be removed from the curriculum. That is direct discrimination against country children. It is important that regional high schools get a number of teachers over quota so that the curriculum can be met. If a local school does not meet a desired subject such as maths 3 in the metropolitan area, the next high school, which is only a few kilometres away, can. If people live in Mukinbudin, Bencubbin, Beverley, or Goomalling, and the Northam High School does not cater for a subject, where do they go? There is nowhere to go. Regional high schools must be staffed above their quota so that they can maintain the subjects that children need. Each regional high school should be looked at individually at the beginning of the year, as it is absolutely essential that curriculum needs are met.

The argument that each high school will have a quota and that that is fair does not hold water because, as I have said previously about the metropolitan area, children in the metropolitan area have a chance to move to another high school, an option that does not exist in the country. I will be a very annoyed member if regional high schools are unable to meet their curriculum needs. There are concerned parents in country areas, particularly the parents of students who have some ability and who wish students to move on to bigger and better things. If maths 3, physics, chemistry, or a language is not available, the students are discriminated against, and that is not acceptable.

A crucial and unbelievable situation exists at the Northam High School. The Aboriginal education aide was moved into the school halfway through the year because of serious disruption to students. He was funded with Commonwealth money, and he performed an excellent job, thereby causing tension in the school to drop away because he was able to relate to both Aboriginal and white children. He stopped disruption and allowed the school to get back to running beautifully by the end of the year. However, his funding is to be stopped. That is an absolute sin, mainly because there is another issue involved apart from disruption to the school. Because of this person's ability to get on with the students, he would be able to encourage Aboriginal children to go beyond year 10 to years 11 and 12, thereby bettering themselves. He is needed absolutely in the Northam High School. I noticed two years ago that Commonwealth expenditure on Aboriginal matters was \$570 million, so it seems unbelievable that some \$20 000 to \$30 000 cannot be found to fund a person who is doing an excellent job, who is respected by the whole community and whose performance has been perfect. That is beyond words!

Mr Thomas: What about a work levy?

Mr TRENORDEN: I would pay for this person out of my own pocket, but I know that the member who has just interjected is not concerned because he lives in the city. However, this is a crucial issue to people whose children go to the Northam High School.

I am concerned about the Small Business Development Corporation only having funding of a couple of million dollars. I placed a paper before this House some months ago in relation to local enterprises. I believe that if these people could get reasonable funding and were able to project some activity into country towns, two important things would happen. Firstly, the decline in the population of country towns would cease or reduce dramatically, as has been proven to be happening in the wheat areas of the United States and Canada, so we are not talking about pipedreams because in those two nations local enterprise schemes have been highly successful in maintaining local populations and creating wealth. When these small businesses are able to get a foot in the door, the wealth they create will more than compensate for any investment we make in the Small Business Development Corporation. That is an area of government in which I have a very high interest. The availability of loans for small business is very poor, with finance being available for up to only five years. All those sorts of areas have been addressed by most Western countries, but not in Australia, for some reason. In England one can get loans for 20 years and in Canada for 15 years to develop or create a small business, but in this country a person who goes to the bank manager with an idea for a small business and a bit of collateral will get a loan for five years and the pressure of repaying that capital absolutely kills the enterprise. It is absolutely essential that a much higher profile be given to small business.

Last, but certainly not least, is the Tourism Commission. The Avon Valley will become a very important part of Western Australia. We have the beauty, the resources, the sights, and the desire to create a lot of activity in the tourism area. Places like Balladong Farm have been stifled because of the lack of venture capital. People cannot get their hands on money at a reasonable rate for a long enough period to develop the enterprises that are bursting to be developed in my region. If we could solve those problems -- and they are simple to solve if this Government really wanted to do it, without very much money -- enterprises would quickly rise throughout the Avon Valley and it would be an even greater tourist attraction than it is now. But, also from the point of view of tourism, it is essential that the Avon Valley be considered as a region of its own, because people the whole length of the Avon Valley, which extends beyond my electorate, are a tight-knit group, and are interested in helping each other develop. If that region is kept within the physical boundaries of the Avon, it will develop.

**MR RUSHTON (Dale) [3.02 pm]:** I want to touch on a couple of points which are of concern to me relating to the Government's actions and its lack of communication with the public. I suggest to the Treasurer that future Budgets be dealt with somewhat as they were in the past; that is, that members have the opportunity of speaking progressively to the Budget rather than there being an attempt to put the whole Consolidated Revenue Fund Budget through in one sitting on the last night. I think that indicates arrogance on the part of the Government. The Budget contains matters of public interest and should be debated, and members of the Opposition should be given an opportunity to make the points they have a duty and responsibility to make in the public interest. No doubt the Government can say it was due to mistiming, but I think it was planned that the House should go into recess about three weeks ago, and that one week should have been taken up with debating the Budget.

People are becoming more and more aware of the Government's move to remove the referendum powers, or the people's say, in the changing of local government boundaries. At a City of Armadale dinner on Saturday night, councillors who normally would not speak about anything political at such meetings raised the issue; each speaker was very disgruntled with what Minister Carr was doing about ward boundaries, and which in time will lead to the total destruction of local government. I hasten to say to the Treasurer that the Minister for Planning was there and he came back in attack and defended his colleague. The general opinion throughout local government is that they are very unhappy indeed that their point of view is being given no regard by the Government. The idea of one-vote-one-value for ward boundaries is very destructive of local government and does not take into account the commonsense --

**Mr Gordon Hill:** I understand a lot of councillors were very embarrassed by the political comments of some members of the council.

**Mr RUSHTON:** The Minister has some funny thoughts out his way and he will pay the price in time; but of course, that is up to him.

I also mention the actions of the Western Australian Development Corporation and the selling-off of the farm that is taking place. I feel very apprehensive about what is happening with one reserve, and there are many others. The Heathcote reserve should not be subdivided and sold off to just a few people who want to put exclusive residences there so that the Government has a few million dollars to place in the Consolidated Revenue Fund. Careful thought should be given to the future use of these pieces of land; they should be there for the long term. If we carried this policy to its logical conclusion, we could well see part of Kings Park subdivided and sold off when a bit more money was needed by the Government, and the task would be given to the WADC. It made me apprehensive recently when I saw that the WADC was to examine the feasibility of constructing a monorail through the City of Perth. I know that would completely destroy the public transport system. These are warnings. I mention them briefly because in the years ahead, when I will not be here, people will be thinking about these things in much more detail.

I touch briefly on another point which I find quite offensive to the people of Western Australia and certainly to the Perth City Council; that is, the recent remarks of the Minister for Planning. I regret he is not here today. These remarks were quoted in *The West Australian* of 28 November under the heading "Sydney expert for city plan inquiry". The article began --

A Sydney expert in town planning and law has been appointed to inquire into planning procedures for central Perth.

The Minister for Planning, Mr Pearce, announced yesterday that Mr John Mant would examine local planning practices and recommend ways in which they could be reviewed.

He would also attempt to determine the roles the State Government and Perth City Council should play in making these decisions.

Mr Pearce said he had found it hard to select a committee or single representative from WA because of their involvement in local interest groups.

I thought that a very arrogant statement. It is insulting that the Minister should appoint Mr John Mant to carry out this task. Fortunately, the Government supplied me with the curriculum vitae of the same gentleman. I had in my memory his involvement in the past, so I asked a question and the Minister supplied me with the information. Here we have the Minister for Planning declaring that Mr John Mant would not have bias, and would have the necessary impartiality to enable him to produce an unbiased report on the management of planning in the City of Perth and in local government, and he has this background: He was the Town Planner, National Capital Development Commission, Canberra, from 1971 to 1972, and the senior adviser, Minister for Urban and Regional Development, Parliament House, Canberra, in 1973. Anybody who was in local government at the time would remember that the Department of Urban and Regional Development, or DURD, as it was known, was managed, or rather administered, by the then Minister, Mr Tom Uren, and his ambition was to socialise planning in all the metropolitan cities. He was setting out to turn our holdings into leaseholdings and to destroy the individual title of people's property. This is the person who was involved in that department and who was the adviser to the Minister over that time, and we have him in preference to a person such as David Malcolm, QC, whose name is mentioned in the Minister's remarks. The report further advises that Mr Mant was Assistant Secretary, Department of Urban and Regional Development, Canberra, 1974; Assistant Secretary, Community Relations and Information Branch, NCDC, Canberra, in 1974-75; and the Principal Private Secretary to the Prime Minister of Australia -- that is, Mr Gough Whitlam -- Parliament House, Canberra, in 1975. Anybody who had any knowledge of what took place in those days would realise that this person must have a bias in respect of planning. I notice that in the last few days there has been a reaction in the newspaper because somebody has picked up the information that was in this answer, and the Perth City Council now has stated that it objects to this inquiry's being handled by Mr Mant. It is essential that justice should not only be done, but also should be seen to be done. When the inquiry begins, it will be suspect because a person with the background I have outlined will be involved.

I want to touch briefly on the report entitled "Planning for the Future of the Perth Metropolitan Region". It is basically a political and service-type report. As far as I am concerned, it does not have the integrity for planning the future of metropolitan Perth as did the Stevenson and Hepburn report. Those two men, with the Commissioner of Town Planning, John Lloyd, involved local government in the detail of the planning procedure and its implementation. It is essential for the people of the metropolitan region that that be done so that we have planning by the people for the people. Under the Government's policy, it will be planning by Government for Government. It will destroy the confidence and integrity of our planning procedures as they have existed until recently.

I am concerned because the report also makes the claim that the price of land will be held. What is proposed in this report with the confining of the development of Perth and services being a dominant factor, will lead to a boom in land prices and young couples not being able to afford a house and land. That will come about during the lifetime of most people in this House. There is only one way to control the price of land, and that is to demonstrate to the public that plenty is available. Services are taking over and are becoming too expensive to finance and implement, particularly deep sewerage. This needs to be changed; we need to look at overseas experience and use far more sophisticated types of septic tanks unless we are going to be tied to deep sewerage with all its limitations and cost. We have to look at other ways of affording it and enabling young people to buy a home and land, which is most desirable for anybody.



On page 88 the report talks about the electrification of suburban railway systems, and it is a point about which I have warned previously. The report states --

Electrification of the suburban railway system is proposed at a high cost. This could create considerable opportunities for urban development and redevelopment, including changes to residential densities and increased commercial activity. It is assumed that the State Government will lend the same commitment to such changes to the urban form as it has to the electrification itself.

When the Government made its decision for political reasons to introduce electric trains -- well ahead of their time, if they are ever to be introduced given the changing technology -- I prophesied that the electric train would determine our lifestyle. It means high-rise development along the railway track in order to have sufficient numbers of people to catch the train to make it economic. I can imagine what the members for Cottesloe and Victoria Park will think if we see these large flat developments which really are just boxes and tend to destroy community life, certainly that of lower income groups. Maybe higher income groups can manage such densities, but lower income groups and their families should be in single unit houses. I put that on record because a time will come when land will boom unless we look at this question seriously during the period of this Government. It has been selling off the farm and extracting every dollar it can. That has caused an escalation in the price of land since the time of our last Government, and people are losing the opportunity of owning a house and land.

We hear all sorts of remarks about the future of Australia and its economic position, and we are aware of an increase in vandalism and crime. It may be a simplistic argument, but I believe a lot of this comes from a lack of esteem among young people because they are unable to get work experience. In recent times the Hawke Government has been giving thought to privatisation and talking about deregulated industrial policy, but of course that is resisted. The Hawke Government realises that unless we do these things young people will not get work experience. People like the Federal Treasurer say most of the troubles come from the fact that previous Governments have not encouraged manufacturing in Australia. That is ludicrous; manufacturing could not be developed to a great extent because of inflexible work conditions, and we have seen evidence of this in the north west during the Robe River dispute.

All members need to consider this matter deeply and to forget their political background. We need to make progress here in such a way that the work force can see the benefits for itself. It is urgently essential that young people gain work experience. Productivity needs to be encouraged and this can only be done if we change the present methods of assessing wages and conditions. Things were difficult when I first started working and I was pleased to get a job. One received only a low wage, irrespective of the profession or occupation. I was grateful to receive the experience I did, and one worked hard to improve oneself. As one's productivity increased, so did one's wage. We need to get back to that situation in our present society. Families must be held responsible for their children to a great degree. I am talking in general terms because it does not apply in all cases -- circumstances are different.

MR WIESE (Narrogin) [3.19 pm]: I take this opportunity to put before the House some of the problems which have arisen in the Narrogin electorate and some matters of great importance to people in that area. One of the main areas of worry to many farming people in the Narrogin region is the direction that the Department of Agriculture in Narrogin seems to be taking and that the department in general seems to be adopting in relation to the Narrogin region. I have raised some of my worries in this area previously, so I will not dwell at length on the problem. However, I want to raise some of the real problems as regards the facilities the Department of Agriculture has in its Narrogin office.

I will refer specifically to the problems in the way in which they relate to the Budget and the efficiency of the operation of the department. Firstly, there is a desperate need for some kind of shed or cover to be installed over the plant and equipment the Department of Agriculture uses in the Narrogin area. Presently, the department's plant is left in the open uncovered, and is subject to the mercy of the elements. I am sure all members would agree that the equipment should not be left uncovered and that if the same thing applied to a farmer's machinery we would be pointing the bone at him and saying that he should not be running a farm. However, the department says that it has insufficient funds and, as a result, the

equipment is left uncovered. Some provision should be made for protecting the equipment. Likewise, the old building that houses a large proportion of the department's facilities is of wood and corrugated iron construction. It is used for post-mortem work and is inadequate and should be replaced. I am aware that the department knows of the problems, but somewhere along the line priority should be given to upgrading the facilities to which I refer.

Another aspect concerns the future of the department in the Narrogin region. Correspondence has been received from the Minister acknowledging that the department's operations in Narrogin will be maintained at their present level of activity. We also have on record the Minister's statement that additional resources may be available for research into crop production, water erosion, waterlogging, and salinity. They are areas of major concern to producers in the area, and the cropping programme impacts heavily on our ability to farm and crop successfully. We certainly have not had problems with water erosion and waterlogging this year, but in a normal year there is too much water and it is a major problem with regard to crop production. There is a desperate need for more research to be undertaken in this area. In the Narrogin office we have had top personnel in that field, and it is important that the department continues to place great emphasis on these aspects of farming in the Narrogin area. The Minister is certainly aware of the problems, because a large amount of correspondence has been sent to him, but I hope that he will eventually realise the importance of the department's continued presence in the region.

I refer briefly to two aspects of education in the Narrogin region. First, I refer to the provision of technical education facilities in the Narrogin region -- it is a question which is raised year after year. Once again, Narrogin has been bypassed this year with regard to the provision of a technical education facility. There appears to be no argument that the facility is required, but there is a complete unwillingness on behalf of the Government to address the problem. I hope that in the next financial year the Government will give very high priority to the provision of this facility to service the Narrogin region. I hope that there will be some action to provide this facility.

Secondly, I refer to the East Narrogin Primary School. I understand that the P & C association and the teachers have been pressing for the provision of a covered area, a storage area and a sick bay, which facilities the school is lacking. The department has replied to the P & C association advising that it is looking into the provision of a covered area, and that priority is given to schools without verandahs and with large student populations. I am not sure what constitutes large student populations, but the student population at the East Narrogin Primary School is in the vicinity of between 350 and 400. The number varies during the school year, but by country standards it is a reasonably large school. When it comes to "of a design without verandahs", I would have to admit that this school does have a verandah, but unfortunately it happens to be completely open to the prevailing weather and in winter there is no protection whatsoever for the students. They have to seek refuge during lunch breaks in the classrooms, the library, and one of the passages. During winter the weather in Narrogin comes from the north, the north west, and the west, and all the verandahs at the school are open to the elements. I believe that the school, under the department's criteria, has a high priority and it is a matter of urgency that a covered area be provided at the school.

The school is completely deficient in any type of sick bay facility. At present if a child is ill he is placed in the storeroom which is adjacent to the principal's office. The storeroom has no ventilation whatsoever. If a sick or injured child requires to be washed, there is no hot water facility in the school except in the teachers' staff room. That is where a child is taken if he needs to be washed, and I think all members would agree that it is a most unsatisfactory situation to be washing children in the staff room where teachers eat. It is not good enough, and it is high time priority was given to upgrading the facilities at the school.

I take this opportunity to refer to the closure of the railway lines in the Darkan, Wagin, and Bowelling region. The closure of those lines has been announced, and to all intents and purposes they have ceased to operate. However, people who have previously been served by the railway lines are uncertain about how their produce will be moved out of the area and how superphosphate will be brought into the area. They are also concerned about the form of transport that will be used in the future. Previously all the grain went out by rail, either via Narrogin through to Kwinana or via Bowelling through to Bunbury; but that option is now closed and we have no idea which way the grain will be moved -- from the Bokal bin or

the Darkan bin, or whether it will actually go by road. We do not know whether it will be brought to Darkan and then transported out on the Darkan-Narrogin railway line. This uncertainty impacts on the local people because the shire council, which is responsible for providing and maintaining the road network, will have to find sufficient funds to cater for any road usage, because if the grain is to be moved by road, as is presently assumed, the roads in the area will need attention because they are presently not suitable. They are 12-foot bitumen roads and have not been built to handle heavy transport. The major Darkan-Bowelling-Colлие Road is completely inadequate for the type of transport and the increased transport that will be involved if the grain is to be moved to Bunbury and if all the superphosphate is to come into the area by road from Bunbury. It is therefore very important that a decision be made and announced advising how grain and superphosphate will be handled in the area.

The same applies with the bin closer to Wagin, where the railway line has been closed. Although the bin at Warup is only 12 kilometres from Wagin, the grain will have to be out-loaded onto road trucks, transported into Wagin by road, and then unloaded there for later forwarding by rail. It seems crazy that this should be the case when, for the sake of meeting the upkeep of about 12 kilometres of line from the Warup bin into Wagin, all of the grain could have been loaded onto trains and then transported by rail to Albany or Kwinana. This arrangement is complicated, wasteful, and time consuming, and indicates that a wrong decision has been made, at least as it affects that little section of line.

I can understand the maintenance problems Westrail has in keeping these lines open, but what is to be the overall cost to the local community and to Western Australia generally? We would have been better off to keep the line open. We will now have to upgrade the road system and face major costs with ongoing road repairs and maintenance. We must also consider the wear and tear of the vehicles and the double-handling of the grain. The other and unseen cost is that we will lose the only east-west rail link between the agricultural areas and the coast. Once the line is closed it will eventually be removed and never replaced. Serious consideration should have been given to keeping the line open for whatever future use it might be put to, and weighing the cost of maintaining that line against the cost we will now have to face in maintaining the road network that is to replace the railway line. I seriously doubt that the best long-term decision has been made in closing these lines.

My next subject is the Marribank Village in my electorate. This was previously a Baptist mission and has had a fairly chequered career since being established in the very early 1900s. It has now developed into a village used for rehabilitation work, educational purposes, and particularly for training of Aboriginal people. It serves an absolutely vital purpose and is doing an excellent job of providing needed services for the Aboriginal people in the great southern area. However, it is presently facing a very desperate situation in that it has no water supply. The village houses a permanent population of 90 people, including 30 or so children. Its numbers are swollen during the day by students who are unable to be accommodated at neighbouring schools in Kojonup and Katanning. They come to the village during the day for schooling and training in a wide variety of subjects, most importantly in crafts and skills.

The normal water supply to the village comprises rainwater catchment from the roofs of the houses at the settlement. There are approximately a dozen 20 000 litre concrete tanks, one at each of the domestic houses, and these constitute the water supply for the inhabitants of the village right through each summer. Since the very late 1950s there have been about three years only when sufficient water has been available; practically every year water has to be carted to the village. So the problem is not a short-term one because of the present drought; it is a long-term problem and it is time steps were taken to find an answer to it. A contract has just been let for 100 000 gallons of water to be carted to the village at a cost of around \$3 500, but this is only a short-term solution, not the long-term solution that is needed to solve the desperate problems facing the village.

At the time I first went to the village back in early November, water had been carted from a nearby pool in the river, perhaps 150 yards away. That water was being carted by bucket to provide water for the septic systems in the village houses. The people now have a pump to provide this water. However, the water being pumped from the river is salty and has a revolting smell, but it is better than nothing. The domestic water is turned on for a couple of hours at 6.00 am, and it then remains off until the evening when it is again turned on for a couple of hours. That is the water supply system for this village of 90 people.

A grant was provided by the Government to search for water for domestic purposes, and I commend the Minister for Housing for providing that money. Unfortunately, despite all the predictions of the local people, after a week of drilling at the village no suitable domestic water supply was found. That really was the tragedy that precipitated the urgency of the problem facing the people of the village. Water was found but it was not of a quality that could be used as a domestic supply. It will be able to be used for the farm to water the stock. The situation facing the people is a most unfortunate one. The Minister for Water Resources is aware of the problem, and I have no doubt he will bend over backwards to find a permanent solution to it. I have mentioned the problem today so that all members would be aware of the severity of the situation and the desperate need for a permanent water supply to be found for the people of the village. The work which is being done is quite brilliant, and some of the craft material is being sold in the metropolitan area, in Albany, and from the village. The produce is top quality, original, and well worth the inspection of those travelling through the area.

The last point I wish to make on the Narrogin electorate concerns a matter of road safety on the Perth-Albany highway. I commend the Government on the magnificent job carried out on the upgrading of the highway to a standard needed to maintain road safety in today's traffic conditions. The problem which I wish to bring to the attention of the Government is one which apparently will not be addressed in the near future. A fatality has already occurred in the area of the Beaufort Tavern, and no doubt fatalities will occur in the future due to the dangerous situation which exists. The Beaufort Tavern provides magnificent facilities for travellers, and incorporates stopping facilities for trucks together with tavern facilities for the residents of the area. A large patronage is attracted to the excellent facilities. Unfortunately, this creates a dangerous traffic situation with traffic turning in and out of the area in the face of the normal traffic stream on the Perth-Albany highway. The road has a normal 24-foot seal and has wide gravel edges; there is no speed restriction whatsoever through the area, and no double white lines, which creates a very dangerous situation. As I have said, a fatality has already occurred. The residents of the area have brought the situation to the attention of the shires, and the shires have contacted the Main Roads Department. The situation is desperate and action should be taken to alleviate the problem.

The shire council has put forward three suggestions to the Main Roads Department to alleviate the problem in the short term: firstly, that the speed limit should be 90 kilometres per hour. Unfortunately, the Main Roads Department believes that that would disrupt the normal traffic flow and would not help the situation. I find that explanation almost impossible to believe. Anything that would slow down traffic speed in the region would allow a driver more time in which to react and in which to realise the dangerous situation. If by some terrible chance an accident did occur, the impact would not be so severe because passing traffic would not be travelling at perhaps 110 kilometres per hour. The Main Roads Department does not accept that suggestion as a solution. I believe the department should consider the situation again.

Action should be taken quickly to put in place double white lines to ensure no traffic passing manoeuvres take place within the 800 metre section of road adjacent to the Beaufort Tavern. This would appear to be a simple and logical step to take, but once again the Main Roads Department will not accept that suggestion as an option. I do not understand the department's outlook.

Another solution put forward by the shire is one which the Main Roads Department has agreed to; and widening of the road in the vicinity of the tavern is at least one ray of light for the future. A letter from the Main Roads Department points out that the road widening will not take place for several years at least because road works are taking place approximately 50 kilometres north at Tarwonga and working in a southerly direction. Road works in the area of the Beaufort Tavern and at another section to the north where Robinson Road joins the Perth-Albany highway should take priority. The Main Roads Department should move in and upgrade those sections of the road as a matter of urgent priority and then return further north to continue working southwards. I put that suggestion to the Minister as the situation needs urgent attention and the Main Roads Department should reappraise the situation.

Many other problems exist in the Narrogin electorate some of which are associated with the drought conditions which prevail in the area. These may appear to be short-term problems;

however, they impact on the economy of the shires in which drought declarations are made and drought conditions exist. The problem will also impact on the economy of the State as the area is one of the most productive regions in Western Australia. The drought declared areas in the south of my electorate will not be making a contribution to the economy of this State this year and will probably be a drain on the resources and revenue of the State. The long-term viability of my electorate is certain, but in the short term problems will be faced. We appreciate the Government's assistance in the area in the past, but we will look to the Government for further help in the next couple of months when the remaining stubble from crops has been eaten down. A serious situation will be faced at that time with feed shortage and water shortage in the area. I am sure we can look to the Government for further help in alleviating the problems in the area.

**MR BRIAN BURKE** (Balga -- Treasurer) [3.48 pm]: I thank the Opposition for its support of this Bill and answer some of the points raised by the Leader of the Opposition and some of the speakers, apart from those who today addressed electorate matters of which I have not the knowledge necessary to provide the answers required.

The Leader of the Opposition raised the general issue of the exclusion from the Estimates of some statutory authorities; and in particular he referred to the Main Roads Department and to major tertiary institutions such as the University of Western Australia. The Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly require Estimates of Expenditure to be tabled for the Appropriation Bills immediately after the second reading speech of the Treasurer, and these are submitted both for information purposes and when considering items of expenditure in Committee. When we look at the Main Roads Department and at the University of Western Australia, Parliament has enacted separate legislation authorising and prescribing their financial operations. They do not receive appropriations from the General Loan and Capital Works Fund, and there is really no substantive reason for their inclusion in the annual Estimates. I suppose we could say that the State Energy Commission and the Water Authority of WA should also be excluded for the same reasons. However, both of those agencies require considerable amounts of debt capital, and the provision of that capital features in these Estimates and is funded from the borrowing allocation provided for in the global allocations; and in those circumstances those two agencies properly figure in the Estimates now before us. The planned expenditure programme of the Main Roads Department is shown in the supplementary Budget document, so that is the explanation of the point raised concerning that department.

The member for Floreat indicated he believed that fewer items, or less money, was now being appropriated under the loan Budget. That is not correct; in fact, the reverse is the case. Prior to the introduction of the Financial Administration and Audit Act, in 1985-86 an amount of \$165 million was subject to appropriation out of a total planned expenditure of \$1.2 billion. In this financial year an amount of \$388.6 million is appropriated, against a capital works programme of about \$1.21 billion. We maintain that the greater appropriation indicates that the Government is determined to provide Parliament with the greater control that comes with legislation such as the Financial Administration and Audit Act.

At the same time it is difficult to understand the point of view put forward by the member for Floreat, who seemed to be saying that all funds over which an agency has statutory control must be appropriated by Parliament, particularly when the legislation that we passed to establish these statutory authorities gives them control over their revenues and expenditures. There is much talk these days about the operation of Government and statutory authorities in a commercial or private sector mode, and the member for Floreat's suggestions, which seem to congregate all expenditures through appropriations by Parliament, fly in the face of what seems to be the popular clamour. I really do not know that the member for Floreat meant to say what he did when he indicated that the Opposition's view was that all funds over which an agency has statutory control should be appropriated by Parliament. The Government does not share that view. The annual reports of statutory authorities must comply with the Financial Administration and Audit Act, and in compliance with that Act the comprehensive reporting requirements dictate that all financial transactions be referred to and identified. These accountability requirements will ensure that departments and authorities provide both quantitative and qualitative information for Parliament and for the scrutiny of the public. In recent years substantive changes have been made in the method of presentation of the Estimates. I do not think it can be argued that those changes have been anything but

illuminating in terms of the information that has been provided and the way in which it has been provided. To give one example, the estimated total project costs are now shown together with actual expenditure up to the previous financial year, programme subtotals and total programme costs and expenditure; so in effect, we are providing a greater breakdown, on a programme budgeting basis, of project costs.

The member for Floreat raised also the question of the decrease in the level of funds being made available to the Building Management Authority. In this respect the decrease to which he referred complies with the philosophy that has been evident in the Government's decision-making and policies in the past five years, where we have tried to devolve to constituent authorities the financial ability and the means to manage their own affairs. The Building Management Authority, fitting into that broad policy, naturally experiences a decrease in funds directly under its control in respect of expenditures made for constituent departments. As far as the Government is concerned, the broader philosophy of letting the managers manage means that the Building Management Authority is now engaged for project management and is not engaged and not appropriated sums for the engagement as a major client in its own right on behalf of the constituent departments.

The Leader of the Opposition raised the question of the capital injection of \$19 million into the R & I Bank. Although I have addressed that question in some detail, I restate that that injection was to move towards meeting the prudential requirements as at 31 March 1987 under the Reserve Bank guidelines. While we are not compelled to observe those prudential requirements, both the Government and the R & I Bank believe it is prudent and appropriate to so do. The injection of capital of \$19 million was made on a commercial basis. The basis on which the bank is to cope with future expansion, as it is required to comply with the prudential requirements of the Reserve Bank, has yet to be decided, but the bank is talking to the Government about the way in which it can increase its capital base to meet both the demands of the Reserve Bank and of its own future expansion.

Mr MacKinnon: Are you saying it does not currently meet the prudential requirements?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: My understanding is that it does, but there is a new benchmark to be met some time in the next year.

A question was asked about why Western Australia has been permitted to nominate its total Government loan programme for housing. That permission was given to all the States in 1987-88, and the 100 per cent nominated by our Government allows us to take advantage of the very attractive interest rate of 4.5 per cent on which the funds can be made available for housing. The Loan Council has reduced the level of funds available for nomination this year, and the Western Australian Government this year has supplemented the funds made available through the Commonwealth through its own sources to ensure that we will meet our commitment to construct 6 000 homes during the present term of office of this Government. We have a philosophical or social commitment to housing, and I think we are honouring that commitment by nominating these funds, as well as believing that we are taking advantage of very attractive and commercially-efficient interest rates.

The financial activities of the Rural Adjustment and Finance Corporation was also the subject of a considerable amount of debate by the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the National Party. To understand more fully the activities of RAFCOR, it is appropriate to consider separately each item in the 1986-87 Budget. First, although an amount slightly less than \$1 million was appropriated for loans to grape growers in the 1986-87 Budget, only \$200 677 was advanced to growers. The corporation is looking at the reason for the lack of applications and the ways in which it can inject into the industry the desired level of funding. One of the proposals currently being actively considered involves amendments to the scheme to allow loans for the development of irrigation systems in the Swan Valley. The level of funds drawn under the farm water supply scheme does not reflect the level of assistance actually approved. Loans approved to farmers amounted to \$445 000 under this scheme with only \$166 000, roundly, drawn by 30 June. However, the scheme provides loan funds for the construction of dams, sinking of bores, and related water resource facilities. Once a loan is approved the farmer engages a contractor, and RAFCOR advances the funds after the contractor has completed the work and presented an account to the farmer. The draw on the funds is therefore really dependent upon how quickly the work is completed; and last year, RAFCOR's first year of administering the farm water supply scheme, saw the time taken

between loan approval and actual advance of funds to be nearly six months. The corporation expects to advance the full 1987-88 Budget provision, so the lag in the construction of the facilities that attract the assistance explains the lack of draw-down on the appropriated amount.

Under the interest rate relief scheme, loans of \$3.8 million were approved but only \$3.5 million was actually advanced in 1986-87 against the Budget allocation of \$10 million. The interest rate under this scheme was pegged at 15 per cent, and many farmers found that they could obtain borrowing at competitive or only slightly higher rates from normal commercial sources. Others found the interest subsidy arrangements available under the rural adjustment scheme a more attractive way to reduce their interest burden.

Turning to the rural adjustment scheme, although advances under the scheme amounted to \$7.1 million compared to the \$29 million allocated, actual assistance was considerably greater. Interest subsidies of \$1 million supported commercial borrowings by farmers of \$14.7 million, bringing total rural adjustment scheme assistance to \$21 million; that is, \$8 million less than the allocated amount. The corporation's budget for 1987-88 has been predicated on the best information available at the time, and the programme's performance will be monitored throughout the year.

I thank the Opposition for its support of the Bill and commend it to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee*

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (Dr Lawrence) in the Chair; Mr Brian Burke (Treasurer) in charge of the Bill.

**Divisions 1 and 2: Agriculture, \$1 575 000; Arts, \$69 000 -- put and passed.**

**Division 3: Community Services, \$4 926 000 --**

Mr CASH: Under this Division, it is intended to spend \$4.294 million on child facilities, and I ask the Treasurer to outline what that expenditure is all about. But, more than that, I am interested in the situation at the moment in respect of the Children's Courts around metropolitan Perth.

The Treasurer, or certainly the Minister for Community Services, would be aware that I have asked a number of questions as to the Government's intention regarding the upgrading of both the Perth Children's Court and the Fremantle Children's Court. The situation at the moment is most unsatisfactory, not only for the people who currently are appearing before the courts but also for the various witnesses called and the members of the Department for Community Services and solicitors who represent the children. Is the Treasurer aware of the current conditions of both the Perth Children's Court and the Fremantle Children's Court, and what action does the Government intend to take to try to improve those facilities? He may be aware that complaints come from most sections of the community required to use those facilities.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I really cannot answer these sorts of questions on behalf of the Ministers. I can refer the member to page 9 --

Mr Cash: I have that here, and that is what I am referring to.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I can refer him to page 9, and apart from that I can tell him I will refer his comments to the Minister and she will reply in writing to the member.

**Division 3 put and passed.**

**Divisions 4 to 6: Computing and Information Technology, \$406 000; Corrective Services, \$27 675 000; Crown Law, \$2 949 000 -- put and passed.**

**Division 7: Primary and Secondary Education Buildings, \$41 974 000 --**

Mr CASH: I want to raise points that I have raised in the past but which again have been overlooked by the Government for the 1987-88 Budget. They relate specifically to the library resource area at the Mt Lawley Primary School and the covered area at the Coolbinia Primary School, both of which have been requested for a number of years, not only by

parents and staff, but also by the students in those schools. At the Coolbinia Primary School the children are required to stand out on an asphalt quadrangle in the hot sun for considerable periods of time during assemblies and, considering some of the other expenditure on primary and secondary education buildings we see in this Budget, I think it behoves the Government to pay more attention to the needs of this area.

I also mentioned to the Minister the problem that the Coolbinia Primary School has with transportable classrooms, which have been erected on the oval area for some time. I ask the Minister to tell the Chamber for how long the students at that school will be required to put up with those transportable classrooms. I am aware that in the past when questions were asked about the replacement of transportable buildings with more permanent structures, the Minister has generally said that the Budget has not gone that far and the department has to work on a priorities system. I accept that, but the students and staff, having some knowledge of the way the Government is spending its funds this year, believe that this area is being neglected and they seek an adequate response from the Government.

There seems to be a general understanding in the community that there is to be a cutback in the education support units area. I know that over at the Mt Hawthorn education support unit, a number of parents are very concerned about the level of activity that will occur during the 1988 school year. Comments have been made about the future of the education support unit staff who presently work from the Education Department head office in East Perth. As most members would know, parents of children who are required to use the education support units are very much of the belief that it is in the interest of the Government and the State generally for certain services to be provided to those children early in their formative years so that we do not have a situation where the Government is required to spend huge amounts of money at a later stage. I hope the Minister will make some comments about the future of that unit. The community, especially the parents of children who presently use that service, are concerned about the future of the education support units.

Mr MacKINNON: I first wish to give a couple of bouquets to the Government in respect of activities in my electorate in the education area. The first relates to the Leeming High School, which is a new high school that has pioneered a concept which Governments of all political persuasions should seek to continue in the future. The Education Department, together with the local authority and the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation, has funded the construction of a joint high school-community recreation facility. As a consequence, the facility is far better than one which would normally be able to be built and operated by a school; in addition, the community has a facility which is bigger and better than one which it could normally expect, and earlier than it could reasonably expect. It is a great project which is nearing completion and which should be ready for use by the community and the school in 1988. From the outset the project has had my support and I look forward to its completion, as do the people I represent. I hope that that example is not an isolated one, but is one which is continued by the Government into all other parts of Western Australia. I hope we can jointly construct those assets, which are then much better able to be used by the community. In my view it is wasteful to build large capital assets that will not be used virtually seven days a week, 18 hours a day, as that facility now will be used.

Secondly, on behalf of the people of Bibra Lake I again thank the Government for the well-overdue construction of a school in that locality. The people there fought long, hard and very responsibly to get a school in their area. The parents and children are very appreciative of that facility, and I thank the Government for belatedly agreeing to construct the school and then proceeding with the construction.

However, I have two brickbats for the Government. One matter relates to the Canning Vale Primary School, which I have raised in Parliament before. I find it hard to find words to express my condemnation of the Minister for Education. He participated in what I think was a cheap political trick in two elections -- in 1983 and 1986 -- in making a promise to the people of Canning Vale that their school would be replaced with a school of similar character and nature. The Minister, now that he is the Minister, did not honour that commitment. The people of Canning Vale feel betrayed, and rightly so. I want to place on record my condemnation of the Minister for Education for his failure to honour that commitment. It is not as though the people of Canning Vale are looking for or have asked for a top quality, Rolls Royce-type school; all they are saying is, "Please relocate our school; we will take transportable units if you like, but we want a school of the character and style to which we



have become accustomed and which the Minister previously promised we could have." As I said, the people of Canning Vale feel betrayed, and the Minister stands condemned for the shallowness of his commitment at that time. The people of Canning Vale, at the very least, should receive from the Minister a prompt explanation about what will happen next year in respect of the transport of their children. The parents are still concerned about where the children will go next year, and how they will be transported, and I think it is time the Minister made a clear and categorical statement about what is going to happen.

My second brickbat is in respect of one which concerns an area in which I have a longstanding interest -- that is, the area of deaf education. Again, the Minister received a deputation from the parents and others associated with the education of deaf children, mostly at the Swanbourne Senior High School. Their concern is with the quality of education being delivered and the failure of the Government to adequately address the problem of ensuring properly-qualified staff are in attendance at that school to administer what is termed "total communication" in education -- in other words, communication by sign for students who are not able to communicate verbally. The Minister saw those people once; I sought a second appointment with the Minister, which he refused, and I have again written and asked for that appointment. I know the Minister is not here today, which is unfortunate because he cannot answer for himself but I urge the Treasurer to ask the Minister to, at the very least, listen to what the parents have to say. The Treasurer, because he is a parent, knows that with handicapped children in particular, parents have a very close understanding of what is necessary and what is involved. I think it is very shallow and callous of the Minister to dismiss these people out of hand. They have a sincere interest; they want to put a point of view -- they cannot put it forever -- and they have sought my support in arguing their case to the Minister, and I have agreed to do so. At the very least, the Minister could give those people a hearing and let them, together with me, put their point of view to him. I hope that the Treasurer prevails upon the Minister for Education to allow us to put that case on behalf of the parents who are generally concerned about the quality of the education being delivered to their children. There is no doubt that the quality of education delivered to children, particularly at an early age in the area of handicapped education, is absolutely crucial to their further development. If one does not supply quality education at the earliest possible time, great difficulties will be experienced later in their education in overcoming those problems. It is only commonsense and I have witnessed it at first hand with my own son; therefore I again prevail upon the Treasurer to ask his Minister to acknowledge the sincerity of the representations of those people and see his way clear to seeing us so that we can argue properly and clearly, and without heat -- but with a great deal of passion -- our point of view in the hope that we can convince the Minister to come to our point of view in respect of this very important matter.

**Mr BRIAN BURKE:** I will refer the comments of the member for Mt Lawley and the Leader of the Opposition to the Minister. I was approached about the problems being experienced by people communicating with the deaf, and the member for Scarborough saw a delegation on my behalf and prepared a report for me. I am in the process of discussing that with the Minister for Education and I foresee no difficulty in acceding to the Leader of the Opposition's request that the Minister see the delegation. I will arrange that and refer all the comments to the Minister.

**Division 7 put and passed.**

**Division 8: Technical Education Buildings, \$26 716 000 --**

**Mr WIESE:** I bring to the attention of the Minister and the House the urgent need for the proposed Narrogin technical education school. The need for this facility has long been accepted but the situation is now being aggravated because the Narrogin Joblink project has been closed down. That project provided much of the type of education that the technical college will provide but perhaps at a more practical level. A large number of young adults were taught practical skills under that project and the resources included tools and machinery, computers, and stoves and cooking facilities. That project is now in limbo. The use made of that facility is proof, if proof is needed, of the need for that type of education. It is geared to the needs of the community and the region, and will keep people in the region rather than their having to move to the coast. Their alternative is to go into the labour force with no skills and that has been happening too often to children in country areas because their only opportunity for a technical education was to leave the town or the region. Many of

them decide to stay at home and, therefore, have no skills. That situation needs to be urgently remedied. I impress on the Government the need to upgrade the priority for the provision of a technical education facility in Narrogin.

**Division 8 put and passed.**

**Division 9: Fisheries, \$586 000 -- put and passed.**

**Division 10: Health, \$85 877 000 --**

**Mr BRADSHAW:** The vote in this item has been decreased by \$10 million. I am not saying that the Government should not curtail its expenditure in this area but, considering the urgent need for the construction of the new Margaret River hospital, I wonder why money has not been included for that item. It is important that this hospital be built in the very near future because the present facility is very ancient and the white ants have a hold of it.

**Mr Hodge:** There is a lovely hospital just down the road at Augusta.

**Mr BRADSHAW:** It is not a bad hospital but it does not satisfy the people of Margaret River; it is 40 or 50 kilometres away. Margaret River is the largest town in the area and its population is growing. I understand that statistics in the last census indicate that the population had increased enormously compared with the rest of Western Australia. Bearing in mind the tourist development in the region, it is not anticipated that the area will go backwards. The white ant problem is so great that someone who leant against a wall fell through it. I am disappointed that the Government has not included provision for it in this year's Budget in view of the fact that it has decreased the allocation in this area by \$10 million.

**Mr BRIAN BURKE:** I will refer this matter to the Minister. I understood the Minister to say publicly that money is provided in this year's Budget for the planning work for the Margaret River hospital.

**Mr Bradshaw:** We cannot find it although it did receive a mention in the Budget speech. Normally such items are included in the capital works programme.

**Division 10 put and passed.**

**Divisions 11 and 12: Land Administration, \$12 232 000; Local Government, \$50 000 -- put and passed.**

**Division 13: Marine and Harbours, \$12 593 000 --**

**Mr CASH:** My first item of interest in this area is the redevelopment of the Fremantle fishing boat harbour, which is allocated \$129 000 this year. I am interested in finding out what additional works are required in that area. Secondly, I refer to the Hillarys boat harbour, which is allocated \$6 962 000 this year. I thought most of the work had been completed in that area, so I ask the Minister to explain the progress made and to indicate when the final works will be completed.

An allocation of \$965 000 has been made for computing equipment under "Administration". In the Estimates discussed the other day, considerable funds were set aside for both computer and other equipment, and I ask the Minister to explain why this computer equipment is required against the capital works account when much of the other computer and other facilities are charged against the account with which we dealt the other day.

**Mr MacKINNON:** In relation to the Marine and Harbours vote, I have a question on the Dawesville Cut expenditure item. This year the estimate is only \$21 000 for channel investigations. That is very small compared with what I would have expected, and there is no allocation for land acquisition. Does the Government own all the land needed for the proposed Dawesville Cut or does it have to acquire any more? If no, what is it planning to do with the balance of the land? What is the progress being made with the investigation into the Dawesville Cut, and when does the Government expect to make an announcement? I predict that an announcement will be made, sometime between next June and the following February when the election is due, that the Cut will proceed. But heaven forbid that this Government should be returned; we would not see the Dawesville Cut for many years. I have come to the view that the only way we will address the problem in that estuary, despite the fact that I would like to see the Cut for my own personal reasons -- my beach house is close to it and I would like to live in privacy -- is, for the good of the community, to

construct the Dawesville Cut. The Government, which came to power with this great promise, still has not addressed the question.

**Mr BRADSHAW:** The Government has talked about the entrance channel to the Yunderup canals. There was an arrangement between the Government and the developer in the early 1970s that the Government would maintain that channel after 1982. A few months ago I put a question to the Minister asking whether it would be dredged in the near future, because it needs it. The Minister said -- and I quote from question 2100 on 14 October --

The Government is not planning to dredge the entrance channel. I am aware that boats are having difficulty at times navigating the channel particularly at low tides, however the responsibility for dredging the channel lies with the Murray Shire Council.

The agreement between the developer and the Government in the early 1970s was that from 1982 onwards the Government would be responsible for that channel to the Yunderup canals. There has been other correspondence, and I quote from a letter from the Treasury dated 20 January 1977 --

In addition, the Public Works Department will assume responsibility for maintenance of the access channel upon the expiration of the Developer's lease in 1982.

It is strange that the Government is trying to put the responsibility on to the Murray Shire. I believe the Government has a legal responsibility, but it took advice from the Crown Law Department which was to the contrary. If one goes to a solicitor, one receives the advice one requires, not necessarily what is correct. If I went to a solicitor and asked for an opinion on whether the Government was responsible, the answer would be that the Government was responsible. Even though the Government has had that advice, it has a moral obligation under the terms of the agreement which existed in the past. It is now trying to palm off the responsibility to the Murray Shire, which is quite wrong. The Government should face up to its moral responsibilities, let alone its legal ones, and dredge that channel. I have had an answer to a question today which indicates that the Government has had second thoughts and has decided to look at dredging that channel this time and it will work out an arrangement for the future. I am disappointed at that attitude. The Government has a moral responsibility, although the original agreement may not have been the best one. It could have been done better and shown that it was not the Government's responsibility, but that agreement was drawn up and the Government is trying to renege on it.

**Mr BRIAN BURKE:** I cannot answer the member for Mt Lawley's question about the Fremantle fishermen's harbour or the Hillarys harbour, or the member for Murray-Wellington's question about the legal agreement regarding the Yunderup Canal. Each of those matters will be referred to the Minister and in due course a written answer will be forthcoming.

In respect of the Dawesville Cut, my understanding is that we have purchased all the land which has become available for purchase as it has become available. We have not purchased all the land required, but there are prospects of land in other ownership being able to be swapped and left in that other ownership without interfering with plans for the Dawesville Cut. It is unfair of the Leader of the Opposition to say that we are deliberately delaying a decision or that the Government does not intend to proceed with it. It is a major decision which will cost, if implemented, something in the region of \$30 million. We are now reaching the stage where a decision will be made within the next six months or so. We are finalising all the data, and hopefully we will be able to make a decision which is in the best interests of the community and of the estuary as soon as that data is finalised. It is a major decision, and we are not convinced, neither is the scientific community, that any decision can be guaranteed to be 100 per cent correct. The proposition is a very complex and doubtful scientific one, and it is attractive only because of the great value of the natural asset we are trying to protect.

**Mr Cash:** Before you sit down, what about the computer equipment?

**Mr BRIAN BURKE:** I will refer that to the Minister.

Division 13 put and passed.

Division 14: Mines, \$8 686 000 -- put and passed.

**Division 15: Office of Government Accommodation, \$38 692 000 --**

Mr CASH: There are two rather significant amounts in this area; significant in so far as they are for renovations and improvements where it is intended to spend \$1 560 000 on Dumas House, and \$1 million on Curtin House during the 1987-88 period. Can the Treasurer advise why that sort of expenditure is required on Dumas House, and also the current amount of vacant space in that building? Also, what is the reason for the \$1 000 000 on Curtin House? Is it designed for a particular department to shift into?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I will refer both those questions to the Minister. I have some scant knowledge of Dumas House and the cost of asbestos removal and other things, but I do not want to confuse the member by trying to convey to him my primitive and scant knowledge. In due course he will have his answer.

**Division 15 put and passed.**

**Division 16: Office of Racing and Gaming, \$500 000 -- put and passed.****Division 17: Police, \$8 147 000 --**

Mr CASH: This year, under "Police", a Budget allowance has been made for \$8 147 000. That is down about \$1 million on the actual expenditure for 1986-87. Much of this year's work is finishing-off work for buildings which were announced some time ago, and commenced some time ago, although I note that in respect of Joondalup stage 1 an amount of \$500 000 has been set aside. It would not be news for the Government for me to say that I do not believe it has allocated enough this year for the general law and order portfolio and in particular for the Police Department. It would be easy for members of the Government to say, "If you make those comments, all you want is for the Government to spend more money, and if it does that it has to raise more taxes." If that comment were made, it would show that the Government does not regard law and order as having the same high priority as the Opposition thinks it does.

Very little appears to be allocated for work on police headquarters in Perth. One only has to go into, say, the fingerprint department there to find it almost impossible to walk about without tripping over equipment that is necessarily left on the floor as insufficient storage facilities are provided. Life is made very difficult for the hardworking officers of the department as they are required to work in what is a totally inadequate working environment. Obviously many other sections of police headquarters are in need of attention and it was my understanding that the Minister for Police and Emergency Services recognised that the \$1 million allocated for Curtin House would have provided accommodation for police at some stage. I hope that is the case.

Many police stations and buildings throughout the State are in need of a lot of attention. One that comes to mind is the Cue Police Station, which is in dire need of capital expenditure. Whilst from the street it appears to be a very adequate building, once inside it can be seen that the police working there are doing so in conditions which are quite inadequate and almost deplorable. The buildings housing the Bunbury general duties police and the Bunbury CIB are in need of money being spent on them. This also goes for the Morley general duties station, which has inadequate interview rooms. As the Morley general duties office is in my electorate I have at times referred people to the station and have had reason to go down there on constituency work and so am in a position to advise that the facilities there are totally inadequate, as is the situation next door at the CIB office. I ask that the Minister for Police and Emergency Services be advised of my comments. I am sure that during the year he has been around the State and seen for himself some of the deplorable conditions under which police officers are working. Given the priority that the community demands be given to law and order, I hope that next year we see a greater amount allocated to this section of the capital works programme.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I will refer the member's remarks to the Minister.

**Division 17 put and passed.**

**Divisions 18 to 21: Premier and Cabinet, \$350 000; Regional Development and the North West, \$1 191 000; Resources Development, \$4 500 000; Services, \$444 000 -- put and passed.**

**Division 22: Sport and Recreation, \$3 288 000 --**

Mr CASH: An amount of \$2 716 000 has been allocated for the Graylands Sports Complex. Is that a final payment for the Superdrome? I presume that is what is being referred to here as the Graylands Sports Complex. It seems the Treasurer does not know.

Mr Brian Burke: I could make a guess, but I have not heard it referred to previously as the Graylands Sports Complex.

Mr CASH: Nor have I, and that is one of the reasons for my question. Last year \$16.4 million was spent on this item, and not knowing any other similar building in the area I have assumed this item refers to the Superdrome. Perhaps in due course the Treasurer will seek advice and let me know. Along with a number of other Opposition members I had the pleasure about a month ago of attending the opening of the Superdrome. The Opposition has always supported the general concept of such an establishment although it has always cautioned the Government on the recurrent expenditure that will be necessary to continue its funding. I know that Professor John Bloomfield, the chairman of the managing committee of the Superdrome, is very conscious of keeping down the recurrent expenditure, and we are hopeful that he will rein in costs so that any overruns are not significant.

Another item listed is "Point Walter -- Dormitories" showing a proposed expenditure of \$32 000. Last year \$900 000 was expended. When I visited this establishment during the America's Cup it seemed to me that it provided fairly luxurious accommodation, which at the time had been leased to one of the Italian syndicates taking part in the America's Cup. Whilst I have no objection to having the facility managed by the Department of Sport and Recreation, it would be very interesting to find out just how much revenue is raised from this accommodation during 1987-88 and to see how it compares with the capital cost of the buildings. Members would probably be aware that the dormitories were erected on what was the old Pt Walter immigration hostel land. It is magnificent land commanding tremendous views across the Swan River to Perth City. The department has a duty to see that there is a high utilisation of the facilities. I am sure the public would be very upset to find that the \$1 million expended on the buildings was not matched by a high utilisation factor.

I refer now to the Woodman Point development, where \$544 000 has been allocated. I think it was in January this year that I predicted that the work to date appeared to be almost wasted. Having been down there in the last three months and inspected the development some nine months after my first inspection, I believe an awful lot of work has yet to be done and that the expenditure to date does not appear to be such that it is enjoying much public support. It would be in the Minister for Sport and Recreation's interest to look at some of the car parks and the sandhills down there which still continue to be blown all over the place, causing some inconvenience to people living in the general area, and to ensure that the expenditure on this facility achieves practical results.

**Division 22 put and passed.**

**Divisions 23 to 26: Treasury, \$250 000; Hedland College, \$2 274 000; Kalgoorlie College, \$350 000; Western Australian College of Advanced Education, \$120 000 -- put and passed.**

**Division 27: State Housing Commission, \$44 650 000 --**

Mr LEWIS: In the second reading debate I touched on some anomalies which I found in the way the appropriations in this area have been effected over the last two or three Budgets. I would particularly like to ask the Treasurer what has happened to a figure that I add up to about \$94 million which would seem to have gone sideways from the previous two Budgets. To explain a little further, in 1985-86 under Homeswest -- or the State Housing Commission, as it is referred to in the papers -- the Government said it intended to spend \$232.7 million on housing. It is very enlightening to notice that the actual expenditure was only \$187.2 million. The thing that concerns me is that there was a shortfall of expenditure over that Budget of \$45.5 million or thereabouts, which is roughly 20 per cent of the estimate budgeted in 1985-86, and I am not quite sure where that \$45.5 million went. That is repeated in the 1986-87 expenditures, where there was a budgeted figure of \$204.89 million. The actual expenditure that year was \$155.76 million, which represents a shortfall of \$49.13 million on the amount that had been proposed to be expended on housing. If we quickly add up those figures we are looking at about \$94 million or \$95 million which effectively has gone missing over those two Budgets.

What has not been said is that the Government has been budgeting for these very large amounts -- \$232 million in 1985-86, \$204 million in 1986-87, and \$164 million this year -- but has failed to say that it has not spent the money it budgeted in the previous year. The Treasurer proudly says, "We have had a modest increase on the housing expenditure last year." Indeed, that is very true; but what the Treasurer fails to say is, "We underspent what we intended to spend on housing this year." So, rather than having a modest increase on what the Government spent, it actually spent, in two years, about \$95 million less than it said it would.

Will the same trick be pulled this year with the proposal in this Budget to expend \$164 million -- which, by the way, in the Year of the Homeless, compared to \$232.7 million budgeted for nearly two years ago, is a decrease of something like \$70 million? Is it a confidence trick on the public to say, "This is what we are going to do in housing: We are going to spend more than we spent last year", and when the figures come out the Government has not spent anywhere near the amount it intended to spend -- in fact it has underspent by something like 25 per cent? It is very easy to say, "We have a slight increase on last year because we spent only \$155 million", but unfortunately the whole picture does not become clear until we pick up the previous year's Estimates, do a few sums, and realise a bit of a trick is going on. The public are bluffed into believing the Government is spending all these funds on housing, when in fact over the last three years the Government consistently has budgeted to spend less every year.

I challenge the Treasurer to say in this Parliament that that is not true. The Treasurer said in his Budget speech, "We have a modest increase in housing again this year." That is completely untrue. The facts are that over three consecutive years what has been budgeted for public housing and what actually has been spent have been diminishing amounts. I ask the Treasurer whether the same thing will be done again this year. We have a Budget figure of \$164 million, but will the actuals come out at \$120 million?

The very important point to be taken on board is that, coincidentally, the figures on the waiting lists for housing have risen. In June 1986 the figure was 11 190, but in June 1987 the number of people waiting for public housing had risen to 13 485. In other words there was an increase of 2 295 applications, or a 20 per cent increase in the waiting lists. On one hand the Government has been saying that it is spending more money every year on housing when in fact it is spending less, and on the other hand the waiting list numbers are going up; and then the Government trumpets about what a great job it is doing on housing.

The questions to be answered are, firstly, where has that \$94 million-odd gone which has been carried over two Budgets -- 1985-86 and 1986-87; and secondly, is it not true that over the past three years the Government actually has been diminishing its expenditure on public housing contrary to what has been professed by this Government?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I asked the Minister for Housing to come in to answer the questions, and I will let him do that in a minute. I suppose it is a matter of personality and presentation, but I do not think anyone is quite so annoying as the member for East Melville. He cannot seem to present a point or an argument without trying to turn it into a confrontation.

Mr Lewis: I have not been personal; I have just put a case.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I am just trying to make an observation without heating things up too much. The member cannot seem to put an argument or a point of view without accusing someone of telling lies, of doing something that is not true, or of ringing a confidence trick on the public. I will be brief because the Minister for Housing will answer the member's questions, but I suppose that each of us gets the sort of treatment that he throws out on the waters and that will come to pass in due course.

The Government is very proud of its efforts in housing. We have done a great deal in housing, not just in terms of the numbers of units of accommodation but also in terms of the standards, and the approach to the needs of people who are welfare housing recipients. Even the most narrow-minded person who looks at the standard of Homeswest homes now will see that there has been a very big improvement. We are providing a great many more loans to people to build houses, and in terms of comparison with the previous Government we have lifted the number of units of accommodation from something less than 1 300 a year to more than 2 000 a year. Everyone except the member for East Melville acknowledges that we have not done too badly in housing.

Mr Lewis: The waiting list obviously has not decreased, though.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: But the waiting list for indigenous people's relief has also increased. The waiting list is not just a product of the number of houses built, but of a range of things. Even though we have provided a lot more money for relief for indigent people, the number of people requiring that relief has increased, and that is not because we have not provided enough money but that other factors have put them into that position.

Mr Lewis: Has your appropriation on housing been diminishing?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: No, it has not. I am surprised the member would maintain that that was the case because we could not have built the number of units we have if the allocation were diminishing. We are not only building more units each year, but also they are costing more, and the member's argument is that we are spending less money.

Mr Lewis: The figures do not lie.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The member will hear about the figures in a moment. The member's observation says a lot about the need to understand the information presented.

Mr Lewis: That is why I am asking.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Exactly. If the member makes that point without accusing everyone of telling lies --

Mr Lewis: I did not say that.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The member said I presented information to Parliament which was palpably untrue.

Mr Lewis: It is misleading.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: If the member presented his argument by saying other than that, I do not see a problem. I do not see a problem in his presenting it the other way -- I am quite comfortable either way. However, presentation in the former rather than the latter way is just a touch annoying, but that probably says something about me too.

Mr WILSON: I am pleased to provide the information to the member, although I was at a meeting and came in at the end of his comments. The point that needs to be made is that when the member for East Melville says the Government has been guilty of misleading or some confidence trick he should look at the matter from the point of view of trying over a longer period than 12 months to get down to some form of sound management of moneys, given that over such a longer period the amount of money likely to be available, particularly from Commonwealth sources, can be drastically cut or rearranged in a way that can then cause big gaps in one's programme.

Because of their external employment-generation potential capital works budgets need to be carefully formulated to avoid boom and bust situations such as I have been referring to. The member must realise that they are compiled early in the year on the expectation of funds being made available, not only in the particular Budget year but also in future years. It is not as though one has a static situation in any one year or that one is addressing only what one can do for that year. For instance, in 1985-86 the budgeted programme was \$232.8 million, and the actual expenditure was \$187.2 million. The Budget was framed on the expectation of Commonwealth-State housing nominated funds of \$93.1 million being available during that year and in 1986-87 and 1987-88, because Treasury is always encouraging departments and agencies to look ahead, not only to next year, but also to the next two years for responsible budgeting.

During 1985-86 the department became aware that nominated funding, to which the Treasurer has referred previously and which would be understood by the member, would be reduced in 1986-87. To ensure continuity of work within the building industry the 1985-86 expenditure was reduced by increasing its carryover. There is nothing wrong with that; it is a responsible Budget technique.

Mr Lewis: Provided you spend it.

Mr WILSON: Of course. It is committed. It is not as though it is not being spent. It relates to funds which are committed and carried over to the next year. In 1986-87 the budgeted programme was \$204.9 million, and actual expenditure was \$155.8 million. Nominated

funding available was \$71.7 million, and once again the expectation was for this level of funding to continue, although within the rumour mill and the sort of vibes one gets from the Commonwealth there was some indication of a decreasing level of funding in the future. It became very apparent during 1986-87 that there would be a substantial reduction in this funding source, and once again the programme was adjusted and a three-year rollover programme was adopted. The 1987-88 Budget is \$164.3 million, and this is based on the substantially-reduced nominated funding of \$34.5 million but able to be achieved because of the carryover decisions made. Because that flexible approach was adopted the department has been able to maintain a desired reasonably constant level of activity even with the substantial reductions in nominated funds. That does not mean to say the money has not been spent.

I cannot really understand how the member for East Melville, with his background and experience, cannot cotton on to the idea that carryover funds are funds which have been committed. They are works carried over to another year, but they have previously been committed. It is not as though we are double-dipping or double-dealing; we are talking about funds which have been committed. We are talking about their being spent in a responsible way so that we do not get into a boom and bust situation. This is very much appreciated by the building industry because it does not want a boom and bust situation to develop. We are adopting this approach to avoid that situation -- that is one of the main reasons -- and to deal with the fact that we are looking a year ahead, not knowing what our resources are going to be.

The member tried to make some capital out of what he sees as greatly increasing waiting lists for housing. Obviously the lists are not what we would want them to be, but one cannot just go on talking about waiting lists in that way. One of the more significant factors in the overall housing situation is the period for which people are waiting for accommodation. Because of our extensive building programme, and because we have poured three times as many resources into the rental area and an even greater proportional amount into the purchase area, we have been able to hold waiting times without their blowing out. That is the important thing to remember. In 1986-87 the public rental housing programme placed 6 444 applicants. In one year six and a half thousand people were placed. Housing expenditure per head of population was \$147.47, compared with the national average of \$115.40. Those figures bear out what the Treasurer has been saying. The waiting time for public housing has been held and, in some cases, improved. As far as the loan programme is concerned, in the years 1982-83, 528 loans were made, and since 1983-84, 4 399 loans have been made. It should be noted that 4 000 of those people were dually listed for rental accommodation and housing loans, and were dealt with in those respects at the same time.

The criticism levelled at the Government by the member for East Melville is unsubstantiated. There is a lot more to be done to meet the needs and alleviate the misery of people still on waiting lists, but the Government's record is good in that over 5 000 people have received rental assistance in the private rental market. People still waiting have not been left in the lurch with no alternative. The Government is taking every opportunity to meet the needs of those people, and those means have been enhanced by the allocations made since the Labor Party has been in Government.

Homeswest cannot use high-cost borrowing, and even if the member's rationale had been pursued and the Budget had not been adjusted during the three years because of knowledge which only became available during those years, capital works in 1987-88 would have been approximately \$60 million less than in 1985-86, which would have been an unacceptable and irresponsible management approach to the overall situation.

Mr LEWIS: I accept what the Minister has to say about the carry-over. What I cannot accept is that the Government is telling the public that it is spending more on housing this year than was spent last year. That is factually correct but the public have received a decrease in expenditure on housing in the last three Budgets. The Government is not being completely open with the public in saying, "We have not had the moneys from Canberra. We have not been able to spend that." The Minister has said, "We have had modest increases in housing expenditure." What the Minister does not say is, "I did budget to spend that much last year. We can only spend this much this year, and because of the Commonwealth situation, unfortunately we have to spend \$40 million less." The Treasurer is saying housing



expenditure has increased, rather than saying that it has decreased, which is the point I am making.

**Division 27 put and passed.**

**Divisions 28 to 34:** Western Australian Government Railways Commission, \$6 936 000; Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority, \$466 000; Building Management Authority, \$28 326 000; Rural Adjustment and Finance Corporation, \$1 057 000; Technology and Industry Development Authority, \$2 090 000; Western Australian Museum, \$377 000; Advances to Independent Schools, \$5 000 000 -- put and passed.

**Division 35: Advances to Sundry Bodies, \$13 205 000 --**

**Mr MacKINNON:** There are two items under this heading about which I would appreciate some comments from the Treasurer. The first concerns the loan of \$5 155 000 to the Catholic Education Commission. That is part of the total loan, as appears from the Budget papers, of \$8.5 million in this financial year. I would appreciate some comments as to what the reason is for that loan.

Secondly, there is an allocation to Soccer Headquarters for \$750 000. I understand that a similar allocation has been made in the past, but I would like an explanation from the Treasurer as to what will happen to that three quarters of a million dollars.

I understand that the advance to the State Cycling Facility is part of a national programme.

**Mr Wilson:** That cycling facility is a State programme, not national.

**Mr MacKINNON:** But I understand it is part of the national programme.

**Mr Wilson:** No, they have not given us any national funding.

**Mr MacKINNON:** The items I am interested in are the loan to the Catholic Education Committee and the Soccer Headquarters allocation.

**Mr BRYCE:** The Treasurer indicated that he would be out of the Chamber for a short time and, if a situation like this arose, for me to say that I will draw these points to his attention and the information will be conveyed to the Leader of the Opposition in writing.

**Mr MacKINNON:** That is not acceptable. The Treasurer is in the gallery. This important Bill is his responsibility, and he should give us his comments. I have been meaning to say before that it is not acceptable for the Treasurer to say throughout this debate, "I have not got the answers. I will refer it to the appropriate Minister." Most Ministers are in this Chamber and they should be here during the debate to answer any points raised which are their responsibility, as did the Minister for Housing, and I give him credit for that.

I thank the Treasurer for returning to the Chamber. I am concerned about the loan to the Catholic Education Commission of \$5 155 000 out of a total budget of \$8.5 million dollars. My second point concerns the allocation of \$750 000 dollars to the Soccer Headquarters; is that to proceed and, if so, when, and on what basis is that commitment to be made?

**Mr BRIAN BURKE:** The appropriation for the Soccer Federation Headquarters is contingent upon agreement being reached between the constituents of the sport about the way in which the sport should proceed in future. That provision was made in the last Budget, and perhaps in the one before that. Certainly this is the second Budget in which it has been present. I cannot guarantee that the money will be appropriated or spent.

**Mr MacKinnon:** What is the problem?

**Mr BRIAN BURKE:** They were arguing with each other, essentially. They do not agree with the task force recommendations within the Soccer Federation; the Junior Soccer Association is arguing with the federation; there are two amateur soccer organisations and they are arguing with each other. There is considerable difficulty, and I would not guarantee that the money will be spent. The Government has told the sport that until it gets its act together the Government will not provide the money.

I am sorry, but I do not have the answer in respect of the Catholic Education Commission. I will provide it later for the Leader of the Opposition.

**Division 35 put and passed.**

**Division 36: Loan Floatation Expenses, \$100 000 -- put and passed.**

**Schedule 1 --***Point of Order*

Mr CASH: I seek your advice in respect of debating Government undertakings. I understood that if there was no vote there was no debate, but how is one to obtain advice in respect of, for instance, the Metropolitan (Perth) Transport Trust, which this year will spend \$36 710 000 on capital works alone, and obviously other items affecting the transport area would interest me.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Dr Lawrence): I understand that at the beginning of the second reading there can be debate even if there is no vote, so the appropriate time to raise it would be during the second reading debate, and, failing that, during the third reading.

*Committee Resumed*

Schedule put and passed.

Schedule 2 put and passed.

Clauses 1 to 4 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

*Report*

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

*Third Reading*

MR BRYCE (Ascot -- Deputy Premier) [5.24 pm]: I move --

That the Bill now be read a third time.

MR CASH (Mt Lawley) [5.25 pm]: On the advice of the Deputy Chairman of Committees, I understood that this was the appropriate time to raise the issue of the Metropolitan (Perth) Transport Trust. It is, in fact, a fairly simple item.

Mr Brian Burke: May I say that you are not right; you cannot raise new matters during the third reading.

Mr CASH: I understood --

The SPEAKER: May I help you? I was not listening to the Committee debate; I was in a meeting. Is this new material?

Mr CASH: It is very new material.

The SPEAKER: Unfortunately it is not appropriate to raise it now.

Mr CASH: It was my understanding --

Mr Brian Burke: I was not taking a point of order.

Mr CASH: I want to clarify my position. Only a moment before you resumed the Chair, Sir, I understood the Deputy Chairman of Committees (Dr Lawrence) to say that the third reading was the appropriate time to raise this matter. However, considering the comments that you have made, I must have misunderstood what the Deputy Chairman said.

The SPEAKER: How long will you be?

Mr CASH: Less than two minutes. It is a question.

The SPEAKER: Why do you not save it for five minutes and have it as a question? I shall give you the call first.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

**LOAN BILL***Second Reading*

Debate resumed from 28 October.

MR BRIAN BURKE (Balgownie -- Treasurer) [5.27 pm]: I thank honourable members for their contributions in support of this Bill, especially the new members, the member for

Gascoyne and the member for Darling Range. I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee, etc*

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

*Third Reading*

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr Bryce (Deputy Premier), and transmitted to the Council.

[Questions taken.]

*Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.15 pm*

**APPROPRIATION (CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND) BILL**

*In Committee*

Resumed from 10 December. The Deputy Chairman of Committees (Mrs Henderson) in the Chair; Mr Brian Burke (Treasurer) in charge of the Bill.

Progress was reported after Division 74 had been partly considered.

Further consideration of Division 74, and Division 75 postponed, on motion by Mr Bryce (Deputy Premier).

Division 76: Tourism Commission, \$14 131 000 --

Mr COURT: Almost a year ago Western Australia had reached a stage of great excitement with the build-up to the America's Cup. Many visitors came to the State and, by and large, the influx of tourists was handled very well. The lead-up and the event itself were very successful. However, since then we have not taken advantage of the fact that we held the America's Cup in this State. I hope the Minister regards my criticism as constructive, although I am very critical of the lack of action by the Government in this regard. During the build-up to the America's Cup, Fremantle became known as the "Home of the America's Cup," and it was the first time that America's Cup races had been held outside the United States of America. When the cup was lost, the Government obviously did not have a contingency plan to enable it to continue to capitalise on this event having taken place in this State.

Since a few weeks after the event, on travelling to Fremantle one has not been able to see a 12-metre yacht. The City of Fremantle became known as the home of the America's Cup but no 12-metre yachts remain for tourists to see. This was brought home to me when visitors from the Hyogo Prefecture, which recently sent out a large contingent of 100-odd people, told me that they had not been able to see an America's Cup yacht. *Australia II* is in Western Australia at the moment. However this yacht is to be sent to the new National Maritime Museum which is part of the new Darling Harbour complex in Sydney. As members of this Chamber would know, and to the point of boring them, I have been a very strong advocate of having *Australia II* remain in Western Australia and, in particular, in Fremantle. It is one thing to spend a lot of money to properly handle the America's Cup activities, but it is a disgrace that a 12-metre yacht is not on display at Fremantle for the public to view. It does not matter which 12-metre yacht it is. The Government should do what is done in the Whitsunday Passage; that is, a modified 12-metre yacht is available for tourists to sail in. As the Minister for The Arts is aware, I have a small involvement in a development at Fremantle. I have said to people at the museum that they should try to get *Australia II* displayed permanently.

Mr Parker: They have got the boat and they are negotiating about a display venue for it.

Mr COURT: I want to give the Minister an offer of assistance.

Mr Parker: To put it in your development?

Mr COURT: It can be put wherever the Minister likes, but the Liberal Party will do all that is possible to support this Government in ensuring that *Australia II* always remains in

Western Australia and is not displayed in New South Wales. It is one of the greatest tourist assets Western Australia has and it should be the greatest attraction that the Minister has in his electorate. I am one of those people who would like to see the WA Maritime Museum at Fremantle upgraded. Not only does it have one of the finest collections in the world of Dutch ships that were wrecked on the west coast of Australia, but also experts come from all over the world to view the display at the museum. The most important thing is that Fremantle was the place in which the America's Cup was held and for that reason I would like to see *Australia II* on display. One would have thought that straight after the America's Cup a 12-metre yacht would be made available for tourists to look at, walk over, feel the steering wheel and, as in the Whitsunday Passage, pay a few dollars to sail in it. As I have already said, I do not care which 12-metre yacht is used. This matter may be a small thing to raise in this Chamber, but it is the best tourist attraction we have in this State.

Mrs Beggs: The best?

Mr COURT: Yes, the best. There was so much build-up to the America's Cup and it has now been allowed to collapse. It is an absolute disgrace that the Government allowed that to occur. There are many tourist attractions on the Queensland coast and if that State had had the opportunity to promote something like the America's Cup I bet my bottom dollar that it would have had a successful promotion of 12-metre yachts. That is the main point I wanted to raise. The Government did not have proper contingency plans in place when we lost the America's Cup. It is now one year after that magnificent event and Fremantle is not in a position to show people a 12-metre yacht. Where is *Australia II*?

Mr Parker: I cannot tell you precisely where it is. It is in storage. It is not a question of finding any place and displaying it. It is a matter of negotiating with the Museum of Australia. I agree with you about keeping it here, but we do not want to display it badly.

Mr Brian Burke: When we moved to buy it initially people criticised us for giving money to Bond.

Mr COURT: The Government did not move to buy it. Mr Bond offered the boat to the Government.

Mr Brian Burke: You are wrong. You forget we arranged with the owners of the casino to purchase it. Don't you remember that?

Mr COURT: The deal went like this -- I know it only too well: Mr Bond offered *Australia II* to the State Government to purchase at a price of, I think, \$2 million, but the offer was rejected. The Federal Government immediately came in and said that it would purchase it and offered \$2 million. It was not quite like that. The Federal Government had to make a downpayment and some weeks after the America's Cup, it took delivery of it and made the final payment. I have spoken about it before in this place and I went to the trouble to find out what were the arrangements. It is now going to New South Wales.

Mr Parker: That is not finalised.

Mr COURT: I have made an offer to the Government that the Opposition will help the Government to make sure that it does not cross the border --

Mr Parker: My argument is that the building in New South Wales will never be built and that is the reason it will stay here for a long time.

Mr COURT: I do not think the State Government should buy it now. It has been purchased by the taxpayers of Australia and it is owned by the Federal Government. The natural home of *Australia II* is in the electorate of Fremantle.

Mr Parker: I do not mind if it is owned by the Federal Government, as long as it stays here.

Mr COURT: It could be a bicentennial project. The Government could have obtained a 12-metre yacht to display at Fremantle. With all the money that is spent on tourism it would have cost very little to do that and that is the point I want to make.

The final point I wish to make about tourism concerns the international airport about which I have been critical. Just after it was built I had to meet someone at the airport and when I walked into it I found that it has the same standard layout as any airport which was built in the 1960s or 1970s. Airports are the first impression a visitor has of a country. Greater imagination should have been used in the design of the Perth Airport. When visitors land at Perth Airport, a picture of the State should be painted for them. I remember that on my first

visit to Hawaii there were palm trees everywhere and that became my image of the place. I know that the airport is a Federal Government matter, but the State Government could have made some input. Everyone has his own ideas but I would have thought, with the success of the America's Cup, that a yachting image would be appropriate at the airport. And in the drive from the airport to Perth that image could have been reinforced.

Mr Brian Burke: How can you have yachts everywhere? You cannot have yachts all along the road.

Mr COURT: It could be whatever image the State wanted to promote as a tourist attraction; for example, it could be kangaroos or whatever. The drive from the airport goes through an area that is like a desert. Certainly one's first impressions of Perth are not too flash. In tourism, attention to detail has much to do with the success or otherwise of a city. Western Australia has been left behind in the tourism race. Queensland has successfully promoted that State -- many international flights call at Cairns Airport, which offers a great deal. Some things in tourism are very simple and more attention should be paid to the first impression made on visitors at the Perth Airport. Western Australia has not properly prepared itself to capitalise on the success of the America's Cup and the amount of money spent on that event.

Mr MacKINNON: I agree totally with the remarks of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition on both counts. One does not have to travel very far to find an airport which creates a good first impression. For example, the Shanghai Airport shows some imagination in design.

Mr Parker: It is no great shakes from an architectural point of view.

Mr MacKINNON: It is 100 per cent better than Perth Airport and it leaves a far better impression. It is a great tragedy that we waited so long for an international airport which is second rate. Why not have the best international airport we can afford? With a bit of imagination the airport could have been much better and have created a better impression. By no stretch of the imagination could the drive from Perth terminal to the city be described as picturesque.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition made a valid point about *Australia II* -- it is a national disgrace that it should be housed anywhere but in Fremantle.

My question in this area relates to Denis Connor. I understand that he was recently in Perth and that he has been contracted by the Government to do something for Western Australia. I would appreciate the Minister's explaining the nature of that contract, how much he will be paid in this financial year and what is expected in return for that payment.

Mr BRADSHAW: I also support the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's stance on *Australia II*. When I visited the Greenwich Maritime Museum in London I was impressed to see the *Gypsy Moth*, the vessel in which Sir Francis Chichester sailed solo around the world, and also the *Cutty Sark*. *Australia II* played an important part in Western Australia's history and it means more to Western Australia than to the Eastern States. I congratulate the Federal Government on purchasing that yacht but it pulled a roort on Western Australia in the sense that it deducted the purchase price of \$2 million from the \$30 million granted to Western Australia for the America's Cup. *Australia II* should be displayed at Fremantle so that people can touch and walk on the yacht. It would be a major tourist attraction if it were displayed in Fremantle.

Mrs BEGGS: In the last Budget debate the member for Nedlands raised some questions with regard to keeping *Australia II* in Western Australia; certainly I have no argument with his point. I have made strong representations to my Federal counterpart about the need to keep *Australia II* in Western Australia. I understand that the yacht will become part of the Fremantle Maritime Museum display very shortly.

Mr MacKinnon: But only until it goes over to Sydney.

Mrs BEGGS: That is correct, but while there is life there is hope. I operate on that principle and I think the most appropriate place for that yacht to be displayed is in Fremantle.

Mr Court: It is a bit late. It has been purchased by the Federal Government and committed to New South Wales. We have been asking since the sale went through for the Minister to move quickly. Now 18 months have passed and we still do not have the yacht.

Mrs BEGGS: I am the eternal optimist and I suggest to the member for Nedlands that *Australia II* will probably find a permanent home in Western Australia.

Mr MacKinnon: What do you mean by shortly -- a month, two weeks or six weeks?

Mrs BEGGS: It depends on the maritime museum's ability to house it effectively.

Mr MacKinnon: It has been dependent on that since the America's Cup and the yacht is still not displayed. What are you doing to help?

Mrs BEGGS: The Minister for The Arts and I have had discussions about this matter. The Minister for The Arts has also had discussions with the maritime museum and we are doing everything that we can to ensure that it is displayed.

Mr MacKinnon: So the answer is that you are talking about it and still have not got anywhere.

Mrs BEGGS: I think that the Leader of the Opposition is in a belligerent mood, but I am not; I am calm and relaxed about this matter, so if he wishes to argue with me, he can.

Mr MacKinnon: It was knocked out and 12 months later you are saying, "We are having discussions about where we will put it on display."

Mrs BEGGS: As the Leader of the Opposition should know, the maritime museum is not in a position to use it at this time.

Mr Court: I know the financial position of the maritime museum. If it cost \$500 000 to display it that would be earned straightaway because it is a major tourist attraction. You have your priorities all wrong.

Mrs BEGGS: That may be the member's priority, but it may not be mine.

Mr Court: Can you tell me a better tourism attraction?

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mrs Henderson): Order!

Mrs BEGGS: I agree with the member that it is a tourist attraction. I do not agree that it is a major tourist attraction. It has some value as an attraction to interstate and intrastate visitors, and I suppose to a percentage of international visitors. The member is suggesting that if we had that boat, or another 12-metre yacht displayed that people could touch, they would come from international destinations.

Mr Court: People would travel here to see it; they go to see *Gypsy Moth*.

Mrs BEGGS: Is the member seriously suggesting that people would make a special visit to Western Australia from overseas to see *Australia II*?

Mr Court: To see one of the finest maritime museum displays one can see, including *Australia II*. The historic yachts the *Perie Banou* and the *Parry Endeavour* should be there too as they have done a lot more than *Gypsy Moth*.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mrs BEGGS: I do not disagree with that; it would add to our tourism product, but the member misunderstands what tourism is about.

Mr Court: If it is not a priority for you, that is your prerogative.

Mrs BEGGS: I am not saying that it is not a priority, but that all those things contribute to the tourism product of a destination. However, it is not a tourist attraction that would attract somebody to visit an overseas destination. The member cannot tell me that South East Asians, our most lucrative tourists, or New Zealanders, would be attracted here on the basis that they could see *Australia II*? I think the member is totally incorrect.

Mr Court: Keep it in a shed, if that is what you want.

Mrs BEGGS: I do not want to keep it in a shed and I am telling the member that I agree with him.

There have been discussions about the international airport. I receive letters from tourists from interstate and overseas on a whole range of issues and I can tell the member that I have received only half a dozen complaints about the international airport and they have had nothing to do with the structure but with things related to inconvenience, such as

immigration processing and luggage processing. What people have to understand about tourism is that one can never be complacent about any aspect of it. When developing tourism one has to be mindful of all sorts of details. That detail is sometimes tedious and may seem insignificant, but in developing a tourism product it is absolutely essential that one crosses all the t's and dots all the i's.

As a general rule, the comparison between Queensland and Western Australia is a good one. It has to be remembered that tourism started to boom in Queensland about 20 years ago with the development of Surfers Paradise. At that time Western Australia was disadvantaged in lots of ways in developing the tourism industry because of factors that I suppose were perceptions in regard to distance, lack of international and domestic flights, and the high cost of travel. Those things have now disappeared to some extent, and Western Australia is well placed to take advantage or to be as competitive as any other State in Australia and to compete fairly with Queensland, New South Wales and other east coast destinations.

Instead of being negative about this matter it would be much more productive for the Opposition to be positive. Although I do not disagree with the matters mentioned, there perhaps needs to be some improvement in the image of the international airport to ensure that we capitalise on all of the advantages that we got from the America's Cup. Western Australia has done very well, and the America's Cup was of great advantage to Western Australia in terms of tourism -- it certainly put us on the international map.

Mr Court: I have raised the point that if one goes to Fremantle he cannot see a 12-metre yacht. Don't you think you have failed?

Mrs BEGGS: I want to know what research the member has done.

Mr Court: I said that a group came from Hyogo Prefecture and I asked whether they enjoyed their visit to Fremantle and the reply was that they went there and could not find any 12-metre yachts.

Mrs BEGGS: Did it stop them from coming here?

Mr Court: That is what Fremantle is famous for, whether you like it or not.

Mrs BEGGS: It is one aspect of Fremantle, but not the total picture. I know that the bent of the member for Nedlands is yachting.

Mr Court: I love sailing, and the Minister is becoming a convert, too, which is good to see.

Mrs BEGGS: I respect that, but I think that the member is way off beam in terms of what tourism means. I do not think that he understands. The marketing segmentation studies conducted prior to and after the America's Cup in all of the markets that we know are of value to us -- that is, South East Asia and New Zealand -- have indicated that the yacht and the yacht race were fairly insignificant in the minds of people when they came here. What was important was that they were coming to a gala event, and Fremantle managed that very well. The member knows as well as I that thousands upon thousands of people visited Fremantle during the America's Cup and did not go near a 12-metre yacht.

Mr Court: Don't defend the situation; you have not got a 12-metre yacht to display down there, yet it is the major attraction for Fremantle.

Mrs BEGGS: No, it is not. The member can say that until the cow comes home, but he is totally incorrect -- it is not.

Mr Court: If one goes to a little village in America there is a sign on the inn reading "This is where George Washington slept for three nights" and that is then the centre of significance for that little town. That is how they build up tourism, but *Australia II* is internationally renowned.

Mrs BEGGS: Has the member for Nedlands visited America to see where George Washington slept; was that his specific purpose?

Mr Court: I have been to Annapolis and to England to see the yacht displays, and if I came to Perth and Fremantle having the slightest interest in going to the water's edge, I would go to Fremantle, and in showing someone around I would say proudly, "This is where the America's Cup was held, and that is the boat", but we cannot show people one.

Mrs BEGGS: As I have said, that is the honourable member's bent.

The Leader of the Opposition asked whether the contract with regard to Denis Connor was with Denis Connor Sports Incorporated and whether it was \$200 000. Denis Connor played a big part in the America's Cup and that was a follow-on, a marketing exercise as a result of the exposure that we had had with the America's Cup. Denis Connor was a great ambassador for Western Australia, and nobody could deny that. He appeared on dozens of television talk shows and spoke highly of the way in which Western Australia conducted that international event and spoke highly of Western Australia generally and what it had to offer, which was most important.

Mr MacKinnon: Because we gave him money.

Mrs BEGGS: I will disregard that remark. There is no doubt that Denis Connor is a national hero in America and what he had to say was listened to by a lot of American people who I am sure, judging by the figures we have to hand, were encouraged, post-America's Cup, to visit Western Australia. I think that that is what counts.

Division 76 put and passed.

Division 77: Office of Racing and Gaming, \$3 560 000 --

Item 1: Salaries, Wages and Allowances --

Mr WIESE: I rise to once again put before the Minister and the Parliament the problem that is occurring with the transfer of licences from some of our small country hotels. I am aware that the Minister is au fait with the problem that is occurring, which is continual and is worrying a lot of the smaller country centres. I listened with interest recently to an announcement that the moratorium on licences is being renewed and is going to continue, I presume for another 12 months, although I am not sure that a period of time was announced. However, I believe the moratorium is creating the problem affecting the small country hotels. When a new development is taking place, whether it be on the coast or wherever, and the developers are not able to get a licence through what I would call the normal channels, they are forced to go out into the country to find a willing seller of a liquor licence. It is very attractive for some of these smaller country hotels that are battling a bit against the existing situation to sell their licence, and that satisfies the demand that exists from developers, but it leaves that small country town with a pub with no beer because once that licence is sold, there is no liquor outlet in that town. It is not very long after that happens that the community of that town begins to disintegrate. I know the Minister is aware of this problem and has promised to bring forward recommendations in the future, but I draw to her attention the urgency of addressing the existing problems.

Mrs BEGGS: I thank the member for again raising this matter. The member said, quite rightly, that I was aware of the difficult situation existing regarding the transfer of the only licence that exists in a country town. The member may have noticed in recent days that we have given notice to the industry that we intend to lift the moratorium on liquor licences. I believe that is part of the problem for country towns, where the value of those licences has risen considerably and it has become attractive for those licences to be transferred from those country towns to perhaps an inner city area or an area where the licence can be more profitably used.

The review of the Liquor Act has been completed and is now before me for review and to make recommendations to Cabinet. That will result in legislation coming forward in the autumn session of Parliament next year. I gave a commitment to the National Party -- which I intend to honour -- that I will allow consultation on the review, and that will take place as soon as possible in the new year, after I have had time to consider the review documents. I would expect that some of the proposals in the review will protect the licences of some of these country areas.

It is very difficult to say to people who are offered an amount of money for something that they own to not sell it. The Government and the member could not say to any licensee in a country town that they do not want that licence to be sold. However, other avenues will be available where country towns can perhaps operate a licence on a profitable basis, without huge overheads. We are looking at those matters, and I trust that will protect the social aspects of a licensed facility in a country town.



Mr MacKINNON: There is an allocation under this division for eight people working in the Events Liaison Office. I would appreciate an explanation from the Minister of what function this office performs, bearing in mind our earlier comments to the Treasurer about the hospitality section.

Mrs BEGGS: The Events Liaison Office -- or the America's Cup Office, as it was called previously -- was left in place by the Government to ensure that there was a continuation of the work that it had done with the America's Cup. That office was responsible for the preparation of a report to Government on the America's Cup and the effects that it had. I believe all members of the Opposition received a copy of that report.

Mr MacKinnon: I think we did.

Mrs BEGGS: It was considered by Government at the time that it was essential to keep in place a team of people who had great experience of the America's Cup for all the events that we would hope will take place. These people were responsible for the coordination and liaison for the Tall Ships project. Some of these people have been deployed to coordinate and assist in other events that have taken place in Perth and throughout Western Australia since the time of the America's Cup, but it is now planned, since the operations have wound down, that some of these people be transferred. The staff currently paid by the Events Liaison Office will change in the next couple of months because some of them will be deployed to other areas. I do not have the details about that because they have not yet been finalised.

I am anxious to have kept intact the expertise that was developed during the time of the America's Cup, and to ensure that some of the events we are now bidding for -- and some of those are major international events -- that we hope to procure in 1988-89 have the services of that expertise.

Mr MacKinnon: Is not that what EventsCorp is supposed to be doing?

Mrs BEGGS: Yes. It is responsible for procuring some of those events, but it is not a liaison group that would be able to ensure that the event was run smoothly and that all of the liaison between the various departments was correctly done so that it had the success of the America's Cup. The people in the Events Liaison Office are very experienced. As the member for Nedlands pointed out, we want to maintain our reputation as a boating and yachting city.

Mr MacKinnon: So how do this group and the EventsCorp work together? Are their roles different?

Mrs BEGGS: Their roles are not completely different; they are complementary. EventsCorp is responsible for procuring the event, and once the event is here it would have to call on extra facilities, staffing and expertise to ensure that the event was correctly run. I assure the Leader of the Opposition that some of the events we are now confident of getting for 1988-89 will require more expertise than has formerly been able to be provided, and that is why I was anxious for these people to be kept intact so that at any time we could call on them to ensure that the events we were able to attract would be run successfully.

Mr MacKinnon: Will you charge EventsCorp for the work you do on its behalf?

Mrs BEGGS: I do not think that is the case.

**Division 77 put and passed.**

**Division 78: Marine and Harbours, \$17 511 000 --**

**Item 1: Salaries, Wages and Allowances --**

Mr CASH: The administration and finance expenditure allocation has risen significantly from \$1.23 million last year to \$1.822 million this year. There is also a drop in the marine area. Can the Minister explain the significance of the additions in respect of administration and finance and the reduction in marine generally?

Mr TROY: In essence from the administrative point of view the Department of Marine and Harbours is restructuring following the amalgamation of the old Public Works Department and the previous Department of Harbours and Lights. There is some readjustment in the administrative area to accommodate these changed functions. In regard to marine operations

one has to be very cautious in making a comparison between estimates for the coming year and those of the previous year because the America's Cup had a considerable impact on that year.

**Item 10: Regulation of Shipping and Boating --**

Mr CASH: Actual expenditure last year was \$2.725 million and this year estimated expenditure is \$2.240 million. Is the Minister's last comment in respect of the America's Cup the reason for the reduction of nearly \$500 000?

Mr Troy: That is right.

**Division 78 put and passed.**

**Division 79: Transport, \$2 579 000 --**

Mr CASH: I want to make some points about the road system generally in Western Australia, and as this area deals with the policy secretariat, so to speak, it is the appropriate point to raise these matters. For a number of weeks I have been asking the Minister how much is to be collected in 1987-88 from the State fuel levy. About 12 months ago the Minister introduced a Bill to increase the rate of the levy. At the time there was a considerable amount of criticism from the Opposition as to the use of that fund. This year, as I understand it, the estimated State fuel levy will be \$85.2 million. We originally were led to believe by the Government that that \$85 million was to be ploughed back into the road system in Western Australia and while the motorists would never have been happy they would have at least seen some of the fuel tax applied to the roads they use. But surprise, surprise! We later found out that the State fuel levy was to be used for a number of different purposes. One is listed under this item -- the \$3 million that goes from the levy straight to the Department of Transport, so motorists in Western Australia can be quite confident that their fuel taxes are being used to fund the administration of the department.

There are other areas where the levy is applied, and this year it is anticipated that \$37.5 million of the \$85 million will go to Transperth; about \$49.7 million to the Main Roads Department; and there is a motor spirit subsidy of \$600 000. While it is estimated that the collection will be \$85.2 million, expenditure is to be \$90.8 million, which includes a carryover from last year. So the money we thought would be ploughed back into the roads is being spread around the town generally to subsidise the bus service and pay the administrative costs of the Department of Transport, and generally to be used by the Government, some would say to camouflage the losses other departments would sustain if this method of accounting were not used.

What concerns me greatly is the fact that the Commissioner of Main Roads made it clear in his annual report that the Western Australian road system was reaching a crisis point, and rather than the Government pouring an adequate amount of money into the road system, it was skimping, and the end result was the breakdown of the road system. Most members would be aware of this situation on the roads; it is usually argued that roads can have a life of up to 35 years assuming a proper maintenance programme is carried out. That means that skins are put on the road as soon as it starts to crack to prevent water from getting into the base. Once the water gets in, the base begins breaking up and the road starts to collapse. If the Government decides to save on what would be hidden expenditure and use the money for the glossy items we have talked about it will begin to destroy the capital asset that forms the road system of this State.

I have a question on notice of the Minister at present asking him to estimate the capital value of roads in Western Australia. I think it is an important point that we recognise the road system as an asset of this State. Unless it is maintained in an appropriate manner we are building up a huge contingent debt for the future. That was generally the message contained in the Commissioner of Main Roads' annual report. He was very concerned that the maintenance and rehabilitation programmes which the Government was currently funding were insufficient to maintain the road system in a reasonable manner -- that is, maintain the capital value of the roads -- and we were facing a crisis in respect of maintenance. That crisis was directly related to the road funding situation. This matter concerns me greatly, as it does the professional organisations involved in road work and construction throughout the State, particularly the Asphalt Association of Australia, and I would assume they have spoken at length with the Minister and tried to encourage him to the view that realistic funding of a maintenance programme is the only way to protect the system as we know it.

The *Daily News* of 8 December carried an article under the banner headline "Killer roads are under attack", which suggested that Western Australian motorists were dying on neglected country roads because of the totally mad policies of the Federal Government. I know we are dealing with a State matter at the moment, but much of the road funding generally is by way of Commonwealth grants, so any reduction in Federal Government funding will have an overall effect on maintenance and construction programmes for the State road system. The Country Shire Councils Association of Western Australia launched a bitter attack in this article and talked about the Federal Government's chickenfeed funding of its road programme. The association claimed that the Federal Government was responsible for unnecessary deaths and was jeopardising a \$90 billion investment in roads. I assume that \$90 billion relates to the capital value of a road system it was talking about at the time.

It is worth this State Government reflecting on its road maintenance and reconstruction programme. It is fine to let things go and try to hide the necessary maintenance of the system but it catches up with us eventually, and when it does, the costs are often five times greater. An article in *The West Australian* of Wednesday, 25 November 1987 claimed that the Main Roads Department in this State was fighting a losing battle against aging and deteriorating roads, according to the annual report tabled in the State Parliament that day. The article referred to a former Main Roads Commissioner, Don Aitken, who had recently retired from the Main Roads Department, warning that thousands of kilometres of State roads were near the end of their life, yet the department was not getting the necessary funding to maintain and, where necessary, reconstruct those roads. The article referred to the "four Rs" programme: Resurfacing, rehabilitation, restoration and reconstruction. If a road is not resurfaced or rehabilitated when the time is due, and there is not a proper restoration programme, the end result is reconstruction, which means rebuilding the road at considerable cost -- something like five times the normal resurfacing cost.

In recent weeks we have witnessed some terrible accidents resulting in death on Western Australian roads and much talk has been heard about the drink-driving problem. Although it has been proved over and over again that alcohol and driving certainly do not mix, there is no doubt in the minds of road engineers that well constructed and well engineered roads have a positive effect in reducing the road toll; that is, there is a hidden element in the road toll in this State and often accidents, in which alcohol is not involved, occur as a result of a road breaking up. Examples of such poor roads can be seen in the near country regions of this city which in some cases are breaking up because inadequate funding has been allocated to the road system by this Government. I know from my experience in local authority, how much local governments monitor the conditions of their roads to get optimum value from each dollar spent. It is not much good putting a dollar aside and doing nothing or spending it on some glossy item if, in fact, a few years down the track it will cost five times as much to repair the damage caused by not getting on with a proper maintenance programme. The Minister must recognise the need for adequate funding for the road maintenance programme in Western Australia. This matter was raised by the Commissioner of Main Roads in his annual report, in which he sounded an alarm. In each of the last three annual reports the number of kilometres of roads in Western Australia older than 35 years has increased; that is the age at which most roads on a normal road programme are reconstructed. It is an important matter, and I hope the Minister will heed the comments I have made. I remind the Minister of the \$85.2 million he will collect on the full levy this year, only half of which is intended to be applied to roads. It could be suggested that that in itself is a fraud on the motorists of Western Australia.

Mr TROY: I will correct one significant error made by the member for Mt Lawley. The Government has not tried to trick anyone with regard to the Transport Trust Fund; it made it quite clear that the key element of the fund was to allow a greater degree of flexibility when approaching this problem. If public transport were not available in Perth to handle the traffic in the peak hours, enormous resources would be needed on our road system simply to cope with that peak demand. The availability of the Transport Trust Fund in addressing the public transport requirements avoids huge capital costs which would be otherwise necessary to cope with the limited number of peak traffic hours each week. The net result is that resources can be applied to roads elsewhere in the State. I have no beef with that and the Government has already recognised the great potential and flexibility offered by the programme. I draw to the member's attention the significant increases in main roads grants from last year to the present

year, as part of the Transport Trust Fund. Without any doubt it allows the Government to address the transport problem generally and it will be for the overall benefit of transport in this State.

I refer to the member for Mt Lawley's point on road maintenance. I am delighted to learn from his comments that he has read the document titled "Roads Outlook" which my office forwarded to him. It is important that the document be understood by Opposition and Government members alike. That document is part of an MRD corporate planning process and clearly outlines the aging of our roads in Western Australia. However, there is no need to bring that to bear on the State Government in the manner the member is attempting. I am sure that if the member for Mt Lawley analysed the resources allocated by the State Government to the maintenance sector of our roads, he would be pleased with the emphasis given to that area. Another new document, from the National Association of Australian Road Authorities, will be posted to the member for Mt Lawley. Its findings are completely in step with those in the "Roads Outlook" document. This brings very clearly into the focus of the public and the Federal Government the need to address the problem of aging roads. It is important that this be done, despite the Federal Government's having given a commitment to expand the ABRD programme beyond 1988. This State has been fighting to bring to the Federal Government's attention the need in reviewing the ABRD programme to change the present allocations to various road categories.

The ABRD road programme does not allow for maintenance work and that is a very severe restriction. Through the efforts of the Main Roads department -- and I compliment the retired commissioner on the very strong thrust he has made here, because roads were unquestionably his life -- a very good contribution has been made to the State. Anyone who has had anything to do with Don Aitken would acknowledge that. This point is raised in a very legitimate way. He realised a need to raise the level of debate, and he did it with my full support. I have just returned from a Transport Ministers' Conference in Sydney on Friday, where this matter came up. I again took the opportunity to reinforce the need for a changing categorisation of roads in any future ABRD programme. As from February this year, we have put our view forward on how funds should be apportioned across those different accounts and I am hopeful that in the next few months we will have support from the Federal Government. Our proposal addresses the problem of aged roads in a very effective way.

While it is becoming very evident that the problem must be addressed, at this stage we are not in a crisis situation as the member suggests. That is fortunate, particularly in Western Australia, because so much of our road network is somewhat newer than that in the Eastern States, but it is time the debate was brought into the open, and that is occurring very effectively. If the member for Mt Lawley cares to examine that area which has been under the control of the State and our part of road funding, he would be more than satisfied with the attention being given to maintenance.

The Minister also raised the matter of the Country Shire Councils Association's public concern. I have been in very close contact with that association for some time and I acknowledge and support its basic intentions. This is a question of political debate which rages across this nation. Five or six years ago the question of road funding was seen to be of much higher priority than it is today. The Country Shire Councils Association's thrust is to bring that matter to the attention of the public so that due consideration can be given to it. I have no argument with that. However, some of its argument does not hold up. We commonly hear a demand for all revenues raised in road taxes and levies to go into the building of roads. The reality is that it does not matter which Government is in power in Federal or State scenes, we will never have a situation where the Federal Government of the day will undertake to redeploy all collections in the road scene back into roads. It is a basic argument; it is essentially a broad-based tax, and the more sane argument is to ensure some continued dedication of road funds.

As members will be aware, under ABRD there has been the commitment to continuing to have 2c per litre go directly back to road funds, and that is most helpful to road construction authorities. Provided that consideration of the category change emerges, as I indicated earlier, most road authorities will be happy with the continuation of their 2c per litre levy for the next five years. With regard to the CSCA, the concern applies particularly to local roads. Local government is becoming concerned about local roads. In Western Australia we have

seen urban and country-urban councils undertake an effective programme to determine their requirements, and as a result of the roads needs study they have been able to determine their cash requirements well into the future.

Unfortunately that is not the position on country roads, where they are not yet in a position to nominate their requirements other than on two very broad, historical bases. One is that they had so much last year, and they should receive that plus X per cent the next year. The second criterion is a subjective judgment about whether those funds are needed on that road or on some other road. I have told them that the onus is now very heavily on country shire councils to come up with much more objective criteria in determining funds needed for local roads. That is emerging, I am pleased to say. We have offered the Country Shire Councils Association the support of the Main Roads Department, as we did to country-urban councils, to develop such a programme. There is still a long way to go, but if we are to argue for resources in a time of national cutback in Government expenditure -- and no-one could deny that roads must take their fair share in that cutback-- we simply cannot determine that fair share unless we have gone about our assessment in a very objective way.

There is one missing link at the moment. Country shire councils accept that. I am pleased with the response they are making, and I hope that in the not too distant future we will have a consolidated argument which I shall be happy to take to any Transport Ministers' Conference of State and Federal Ministers.

The matter of road maintenance raised by the member for Mt Lawley has some credence. I can assure members that requirement has long been recognised by the Burke Government and a vigorous attempt is being made to address them.

#### **Item 1: Amount required for Services for the year --**

Mr CASH: I am interested in the fact that fees and service charges will reduce this year by something like \$600 000. I invite the Minister to comment.

The lack of maintenance of the road system builds a massive contingent liability which the State will have to meet at some stage. A future debt is building up, and that is something the Department of Transport will have to address in the way the Main Roads Department is addressing it, and it must become an important agenda item in future years.

It is said that a dollar spent on maintenance today will save spending \$5 in five years' time. Apart from the Commissioner for Main Roads making comments which would lead us to believe that we were entering a dangerous period in respect of the maintenance of roads, the 1 586 timber bridges in Western Australia would also require attention in the future. I think the Minister recognises that we have a problem. The Government, in not contributing sufficient funds to its maintenance programme, is putting tremendous pressure on the Main Roads Department and on the road system in Western Australia.

Mr TROY: The member for Mt Lawley has overlooked two points. I am not sure if he is asking for fees and charges to be increased. If the member read the Budget documents fully, he would see an undertaking to the road transport industry that we would move from a permit system of licence for the north west to an annual one. That will mean a cost to the State in lost revenue of about \$500 000. There is a significant transfer onto the Ocean Freeway roll-on-roll-off service to the north in the form of trailers, and a loss of revenue as a result. However, to offset that, road damage is significantly much less now as a result of the movement of semitrailer operation from road to ocean, so the net benefit to the State is very significant.

Mr Cash: That is an interesting point. If we could work out the cost benefit, we could settle once and for all whether those fees that are being paid by the big trucks are covering the damage they cause to roads.

Mr TROY: I am pleased to advise the member that we are close to doing that. After working diligently for 12 months, the Department of Transport and the Main Roads Department have almost finalised figures. We have found that the Royal Commission into grain handling has also done some work as a result of our initial efforts, and its figures confirm what the Department of Transport is coming up with. So we will be in a position in the not too distant future to know totally what is the cost recovery on road transport.

**Division 79 put and passed.**

**Division 80: Metropolitan (Perth) Passenger Transport Trust, \$8 200 000 --**

Mr CASH: I am interested to hear from the Minister the future programme regarding the replacement of a number of the transport trust buses. I noticed that there is an amount of about \$20 million set aside in the capital works programme for a replacement programme this year, which basically equals the amount that was expended last year.

The Minister will be aware that I have put on notice a number of questions regarding his recent overseas trip -- along with the member for Scarborough -- to some European cities. The member for Scarborough told me that trip was of immense value to the Minister and himself in assessing the worth of the various vehicle fleets in European cities. Can the Minister give any indication whether decisions have been made to purchase buses or chassis overseas, and just what is the latest position in that area?

We can see in this Division that the 1987-88 expenditure is expected to be \$8.2 million. I guess that is the net loss to the State having regard for the massive subsidies that are paid by way of the different grants to the commission. Gross expenditure is expected this year to amount to \$129 321 000, of which there is a huge recoup of fares and other reimbursements and concessions, which brings down to \$8.2 million the net cost to the trust.

Mr COURT: Under this Division I would like to make a few comments regarding the new bus station that is proposed to be constructed at the bottom of the city around Mounts Bay Road. I do not support that concept. We see headlines in the paper such as "Airport-style plans for city bus junction". I can think of nothing worse than to have a so-called airport-style plan for a city bus junction. I would like to think that in the late 1980s we could come up with a better solution to public transport problems than building a city bus station on the edge of the river.

Mr Peter Dowding: It is not on the edge of the river.

Mr COURT: It is reclaimed land, which is where the river was.

Mr Peter Dowding: Do you know where it is?

Mr COURT: I know exactly where it is.

Mr Peter Dowding: It is on the city side of the freeway.

Mr COURT: I have seen the model for the station.

Mr Troy: How many lanes of traffic are there between the proposed bus station and the river?

Mr COURT: Before the Minister jumps, he should let me finish.

Mr Peter Dowding: You said it was on the edge of the river.

Mr COURT: I am telling the Minister that it is on reclaimed land, and the freeway system also is. The Government talks about trying to make Perth a more beautiful city. I do not support having a big building built in that location, whether it is a bus station or anything else. I would like to see the Government use a bit of imagination to come up with a better proposal for public transport. The concept of having city bus junctions went out years ago. If we go to cities such as New York, we will see there is nothing flash about a bus station. Why should we have a whole heap of buses based in the city? The idea is to get people quickly in and out of the city, not to have a bus station built on the edge of the river.

Mr Hassell: The problem is that the Government was given a lot of money for the Bicentenary and it had to find some way to spend it. That is the beginning and end of that bus station proposal.

Mr COURT: Future generations are going to ask why have we built a bus station here; why did not the Government of the day use its imagination to spruce up the area and make it more attractive? The area is a car park at present and is next to the river. We should use a bit of imagination to develop a beautiful riverfront to improve the city, and not make it worse by putting on the edge of the city an ugly building.

Mr Gordon Hill: You have no idea.

Mr COURT: The Minister for Police and Emergency Services can say I have no idea, but I happen to know that area pretty well.

Mr Gordon Hill: You have no idea about the building that is going to be constructed.

Mr COURT: Is the Minister saying that what is published in the paper is not correct?

Mr Gordon Hill: You have not bothered to inform yourself.

Mr COURT: That location is the last place in the city where we should be putting a bus station.

Mr Troy: Where would you suggest it should be located?

Mr COURT: I do not see anything wrong with expanding the present bus station, if the Government has to have a bus station. Why not look at something more exciting? When the Government came into office, it spoke about putting in an underground railway system for public transport. What happened to those plans? The Government can surely use a bit more imagination than flogging an old fashioned idea. Bus stations were popular in the United States in the 1940s, but went out of fashion years ago. They are no longer the way we should be tackling the problem of public transport.

Mr Troy: Are you suggesting that we take buses out of the Perth public transport system?

Mr COURT: Not at all; I am saying the Government has to find a better way of getting people in and out of the city than by building a new bus station on the edge of the river, on a congested part of the road, which has a lot of traffic around it. The Government is making a mistake, and years down the track future generations will ask why did the Government put a 1940s-style bus station there. I want to put on record that the Government is making a mistake and is being very shortsighted. The Government had a pressure on it to spend money because it was a bicentennial grant. By all means spend it on improving public transport, but not on putting that building on the edge of the river.

Mr TROY: First of all, let me address the question raised by the member for Mt Lawley. The cost of buses for the Perth public transport system has certainly given us concern and basically that was the reason I took that group overseas to assess the availability from other sources. Certainly we are reasonably confident that there will be some acceptable vehicles at the appropriate price, and while we have not finalised any matters at this stage I can indicate that, as of two weeks ago, we were visited by a Hungarian group following up discussions we had with them. I am reasonably optimistic that it is well worth pursuing further. Of course, before making a decision in favour of any vehicle source from that area we would carry out the normal precautions, as we did when Renault and Mercedes Benz vehicles were introduced. They ran prototypes on Perth streets and proved their worth before any decision was made in favour of them. When we came into Government the average age of Perth buses was about 23 years. We have been able to reduce that very appreciably. With the massive rebuilding that has been occurring with buses over 12 years of age, we are moving to a point where we may be able to avoid that high outlay and get a far more economical unit as a result of it.

The question of the bus station is absolutely old hat. It staggers me that the member for Nedlands has failed to make himself familiar with what is proposed. Certainly we would be prepared to show him the model and I think he would change his mind overnight. Some of the fundamental arguments he raised were old hat. The proposed station is not on the edge of the river; it is a considerable distance from the river, and whether or not it is on reclaimed ground is a completely different issue. The point is that there are 14 lanes of traffic plus a significant amount of grassed area between the bus site, or what perhaps should more accurately be described as a central city park, and the river. It is no longer a bus station but is something much more. In fact it is a magnificent gift by this State to the City of Perth. When one considers just how that place will be improved as a result of this development going on there, I do not think one person would question it.

The member for Nedlands talks about a big building. Not one part of the development goes above the ramps of the freeway between the site and the river. It is not a big building -- we have reduced it significantly. It is all low profile. On top of that, instead of people having to stare out at a very ugly car park which has existed for a number of years, this Government has taken the initiative to tidy up a corner of Perth which people will be proud of, not only aesthetically but also because it will serve a very useful purpose in terms of recreation and relief to the city generally. That comment tonight is the first criticism I have heard about the bus station since I announced the decision last week. Certainly in the contact I have had with

the media and many other people who have contacted our office, they have been delighted with the initiative taken by the Government to tidy up that area.

Mr CASH: Last year expenditure in this area was \$281 000. This year it is estimated to be \$8.2 million. I believe I can see the various items of income and expenditure, but can the Minister give a very quick indication of why it should have jumped by \$8 million?

Mr TROY: The answer lies in the 1986-87 column and the contribution from the Transport Trust Fund.

Division 80 put and passed.

Division 81: Western Australian Government Railways Commission, \$255 901 000 --

Mr BRADSHAW: I would just like to say a few words about the new *Australind* which has turned out to be a very acceptable train. Some of us had the privilege a few weeks ago of having a trip to Bunbury and return on it, and it is a credit to the people who built it. It certainly is a great service. I must admit that I have been surprised at the amount of patronage it has had since its inauguration; how long that will continue remains to be seen. At this stage it is being patronised very well. Even though the heavy patronage may be short term, one of the problems people have spoken to me about concerns booking seats on the train. Each area such as Harvey and Waroona is allocated a certain number of seats, which are taken up very quickly, and people trying to ring Bunbury to book a seat cannot get through. The phones there are continually engaged and people have great difficulty trying to get a seat on the train. At the Perth end, people go to the booking office to book a seat and have to join a queue. One can wait for half an hour in the queue and when one gets to the booking office one finds there is no seat available. Something should be done to ensure that people do not have to wait so long, and perhaps more phones should be put into the Bunbury office so that people do not become so frustrated when the phones ring and they are not able to get through. Even before the new *Australind* came into operation I tried to ring the Bunbury station on occasions and had trouble getting through. Whether or not they leave the phone off the hook, I do not know; but it was a problem before, and now that the *Australind* is operating and being well patronised that has added to the problem. I would like the Minister to look at doing something to overcome that problem in the short term until things settle down and we know what will transpire with that service.

Mr Court: On the same point, I have received complaints about the *Prospector* from people trying to book seats from places like Meckering. It is a difficult exercise to book a seat on that train. I think I asked the Minister a couple of questions about that.

Mr BRADSHAW: One other area that concerns me is that the *Australind* does not stop at every station on every trip. I know the Minister, or Westrail, certainly came to the party because originally it was not intended to allow people from places like Waroona, Yarloop, and Brunswick the opportunity to come to Perth and return on the same day. That is possible on three days of the week but I feel it should be available to those people every day of the week. Some people do not have cars or access to people who can drive them to the nearest station -- which may be Harvey or Pinjarra -- to enable them to take the train from there and go to Perth and back in the one day. Often people have medical or other appointments which necessitate their going on a specific day. It would add only a quarter of an hour to the running time of the train for it to stop at all stations along the way. Fifteen minutes in a two-hour trip is not a lot of time. I feel the Minister should look at allowing the train to stop at those stations every day on the trips it makes to and from Perth.

Mr CASH: I ask members to cast their minds back a few years to the time when the member for Dale was the Minister for Transport. He introduced a system which, had we remained in Government, would have made the Western Australian Government Railways more efficient and effective. I have to give some credit to the next Minister for Transport because he attempted to continue the good work started by the member for Dale. The present Minister for Transport has also done his best, under very difficult circumstances, to continue with the very important master plan. I would like the Minister to explain how far along the track we are with that plan and how effective its implementation has been. At times members of the various railways unions have expressed concern about cutbacks. I know they, and the public, will recognise that the expenditure this year for WAGR of \$255 million -- admittedly that is offset by income earned by the railway system -- is a very significant item. The employees



of Westrail, and the public as shareholders of that organisation, are entitled to know how those efficient measures which were introduced some time ago are progressing. *The West Australian* dated 24 May 1986 -- some 18 months ago -- carried an article under a banner headline saying "Westrail Warns Unions. 1200 workers to lose jobs". The article said that for Westrail to break even by 1987-88 there would need to be a staff reduction of around 1 200. I can see that there have been some reductions, but I ask the Minister to say how many jobs have been taken out of the system during the past year, and how many are intended to be taken out during 1987-88.

I am also interested in the Minister's comments on the success or otherwise of Total Western Transport Pty Ltd. There are good opportunities for other sections of Westrail to be taken over by private sector transport operators or, if not taken over wholly, for joint ventures to be established. The Minister and I have spoken about his intention to create a possible privatised joint venture on the Perth-Albany road bus service. That is commendable. Other operators are capable of doing the job and their costs are being increased by the fact that Westrail runs that sector. There are other areas within the whole system which present workable propositions for joint ventures.

I would like to know the present position regarding the electrification of the metropolitan rail system. We heard, as a pre-election promise in 1986, that the Government intended to continue to electrify the railway. It seems, since then, that costs have increased. I would like the Minister to tell me the present state of the electrification programme, and the proposed timing of it.

I would like to mention the problem which exists in Walkaway, although some may regard that as insignificant compared with the \$255 million that Westrail will spend this year. The Minister will be aware that Mrs Margaret White, formerly of Walkaway, wrote to most members of Parliament indicating that when the trains passed through Walkaway they did so at such a speed as to cause alarm to school children and other people in the district. Mrs White has written on a number of occasions again to find out what the Minister and/or Westrail intend to do about the matter. I have spoken to the member for Greenough, in whose electorate Walkaway is, who tells me that it could be a dangerous situation, and there are ways of overcoming it. I would like the Minister's comments on that. I do not think it is too much to ask that the trains slow down before they reach Walkaway. Although that would cause additional cost to Westrail I feel that safety should be the first priority. This Parliament, and certainly the Minister, would be in a very difficult situation if someone were injured as a result of the high speed at which trains presently travel when they pass through that area. Finally, I ask the Minister to comment on what he believes the losses will be for Westrail for this year. I am aware of the 1987-88 estimates, and I am aware of the revenue.

Mr COURT: I would like to ask a question following on from what the member for Mt Lawley has said in connection with the privatisation of Westrail bus services. An article in *The Western Mail* dated 15 November said that the Burke Government was planning to privatise Westrail's road bus services as part of its drive to slash spending. According to the article, the Cabinet Budget committee wants private operators to take over the 37-coach service which runs from Perth to various country towns; the committee believes the move could save \$500 000 a year. The article says that the Government suggested opening up the services for tender from July next year. What stage have those proposals reached? On the question of buses, the bus service out of Geraldton on a Sunday leaves at some time in the afternoon. It is very difficult to get bus or plane transport out of Geraldton on a Sunday morning. I would like the Minister to look into the situation to see if there could be some changes made. There are a number of buses run by private operators which come from the north but are not allowed to pick up people at Geraldton because it is a regulated area. I was caught in Geraldton on a Sunday and could not leave until the afternoon. Could the Minister find out if it is possible to reschedule Westrail services, or allow private buses coming from the north to pick up passengers and bring them to Perth.

Mr LIGHTFOOT: I ask the Minister whether any provisions have been made specifically for those areas in the goldfields. I have noticed in the past few hours, if not the past few days, that a great deal of the revenue increase and, as a result, the reduction in our national deficit, has been due to the production of gold and wool. Paradoxically those areas suffer by having some of the worst roads in Australia, if not the world. I think particularly of those roads in the eastern and north-eastern goldfields and in the Murchison and eastern Murchison that go

form Menzies, through Sandstone to Meekatharra, and from Payne's Find, east through Sandstone again, which is a major dirt road to Agnew and which connects with Leinster, and also from Leinster, which is a dirt road, through to a position which is south of Mt Newman which I think is called Ned's Corner. It seems that we have a chicken and egg situation -- the Minister will quote figures which will say that only a certain number of people use the roads, but I would say that only a minimum number of people use the roads because a person could bury a Landrover in some of the potholes and bulldust holes that occur as a result of heavy transport. I have had people write to me and telephone me saying that their radiator has fallen out of their truck and a lot of damage has occurred to their vehicles. I know that road trains chop up the dirt roads and that millions of dollars a year are spent by the struggling shire councils of Meekatharra, Sandstone, Wiluna, Laverton, Leonora, and Menzies. Notwithstanding the millions of dollars which are spent, hardly any of that money results in the upgrading, in a permanent or semi-permanent fashion, of the roads I have mentioned. It is high time the roads were sealed. I trust the Minister will be in a position to say whether some money has been set aside, remembering that not much in the way of sealing has taken place during the tenure of the Burke Government. I refer to the last five years. I am concerned that although revenue is coming from that area, total revenue has been cut from the local shires to the point --

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Thomas): Order! Is the member aware that we are debating the Western Australian Railways Commission?

Mr LIGHTFOOT: Yes, I am coming back to it, but I wanted to enlarge on the road situation.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Will the member get back to the railways.

Mr LIGHTFOOT: Yes. In fact, the railway lines have been pulled up and my point was that there has to be an alternative to that. I seem to be entertaining the shadow Minister for Transport, which I am rather pleased about. Because of the pulling up of the railway lines, particularly the Meekatharra railway line, I want to know whether any provision has been made, as a result of savings from that railway, for the sealing of the roads I have mentioned.

Mr TROY: I am delighted at the comments of the member for Murray-Wellington, with regard to the *Australind*. No doubt it was a significant decision of the Burke Government to reintroduce that rail service and the Government is very pleased with the way in which it has been accepted. It was a bold, but appropriate decision. The patronage is, to some extent, pleasingly embarrassing, but it has overloaded the computer booking system. It will be some time before I can say that the matter has been rectified. In the meantime, additional staff have been employed to overcome the problem. The same situation applies to the *Prospector*. The demand for the *Australind* is certainly being sustained well beyond what we originally anticipated. That is pleasing and I am sure that the popularity of the service will continue for many years. The member for Murray-Wellington continually puts up the argument about the people along the Perth-Bunbury route; that is his role as a local member. In essence, the train service is providing a service to three different markets -- Bunbury-Perth, Bunbury, and the regional areas beyond Bunbury. It is very hard for that service to cater satisfactorily for those three different markets. Prior to the commencement of the service a review of the timetable was carried out and certain adjustments were made which I am pleased people have accepted. A degree of balance between the three markets has been appropriately considered. We have indicated that we will be prepared to review the timetable as the usage pattern emerges.

The member for Mt Lawley asked questions about Westrail. Westrail has certainly gone through a period of significant change. It is to the credit of this Government that it was able to accommodate a large part of that change. It is hard to imagine that any Liberal Government would have been able to steer effectively through those levels of redeployment and redundancy that occurred with the modernisation of Westrail. It has been tremendously successful and approximately 4 000 people have left Westrail during this Government's term in office. Westrail has been put on an efficient footing and it is now much harder to pare it away further. However, it is being done with a high level of cooperation from the unions. They appreciate that their task in railway transport is a competitive one and it has been a matter of re-education for them. The unions recognise the need for it and their approach is very positive. We are well on target to achieving the necessary changes in the organisation.

The Total West operation has been very successful in recent years and Westrail has a 50 per cent share in it. It is operating in some areas which dovetail the rail operations and the Government is pleased that this road transport development has been very successful. Westrail certainly keeps its eye open for opportunities with regard to joint ventures. There is scope for further expansion in that area and a number of opportunities have been examined in the past and will continue to be examined. Some are under consideration at the moment. With regard to the road bus service it is the Government's intention to call for expressions of interest for coach service operations and that will be undertaken in the very near future. I might add that the performance of the road bus service by Westrail has improved dramatically. We have seen a net loss in excess of \$2 million reduced to 25 per cent of that figure. It is a dramatic improvement to the road bus operation and a credit to the management and staff involved. Perhaps the member for Nedlands overlooked this matter by referring to the old figure of 37 coaches. A significant reduction in the size of the coach fleet has taken place, and the utilisation of those vehicles would be something that other bus operators would be pleased to follow.

Mr Cash: What about electrification?

Mr TROY: The electrification decision is proceeding with a small delay in the overall timetable. Some significant decisions will be made in the very near future. There has been no blow-out of the Budget estimates and we are pleased with the way it is progressing. We believe it will stay on target.

Mr Cash: Is it \$150 million as suggested by some people?

Mr TROY: The Government has been cautious about divulging that to the public because it is receiving tenders. People can put two and two together and form their own conclusions. Until the tenders have been let, that information should not be divulged. That is an appropriate upper limit.

There are two other issues with regard to walkways raised by members opposite. One was the question of damage to the museum, the old railway station. My comments as picked up by Mrs White were in relation to the museum and never reflected on the possibility of accidents at the crossing. It is unfortunate that the Press chose to pursue that matter following her published letter to me without fully appreciating the context of my views. The Government always stands by its obligations in relation to safety. The State crossing committee adjudges these dangers and has reported to me; I am happy with the answers that it has given. That committee considers both road and railway operations and has given me advice on this matter as part of its very wide experience on these matters. Westrail has pursued that advice in the work being done. There is some degree of danger at any level crossing if due care is not taken. In the case of children there should be the necessary precautions taken and reminders to them have to be put in place.

The other matter raised by the member for Nedlands concerned transport out of Geraldton, and I take that on notice.

Division 81 put and passed.

Division 82: Western Australian Coastal Shipping Commission, \$16 013 000 --

Mr CASH: Some time ago I asked the Minister for Transport about expected losses with Stateships and his reply was: For the 12 months ended 31 December 1984, \$20.3 million; to 31 December 1985, \$17.7 million; to 31 December 1986, \$18.4 million; and for the 12 months to 30 June 1987, \$16.3 million. Some could argue that there has been a reduction in losses during that period.

It concerns me greatly that the State Shipping Service, rather than operating a shipping service to north west ports -- that is, our State ports -- is now embarking on a shipping service to Papua New Guinea and the Cocos Islands, and I understand the Minister is interested in providing a service to Singapore. It seems quite clear that the existing Stateships vessels *Irene Greenwood*, *Pilbara* and *Koolinda* are certainly not the types of ships that, because of their draft, can go into the Cocos Islands. As most members would know, at Cocos there is a shallow area near the lagoon and a vessel of shallow draft is needed if our State Shipping Service is to service that area.

It is not in the interests of the State Government to allow Stateships to take on the Cocos run. An operator presently works out of Darwin providing a service to the Cocos Islands. He, in fact, contracts to the Federal Government. Any attempt by Stateships to enter the Cocos run would require the State Shipping Service to tender against that private operator and in so doing it may disadvantage that operator for no other reason but to attempt to reduce the losses of the State Shipping Service in Western Australia. I say "attempt" because it is not shown that there would be any reduction in loss as we do not know what the tender situation is. For our State service to purchase or lease another ship just for that run seems to be a ridiculous idea; it is not necessary and should not be encouraged.

As to Stateships generally, in Government the Liberal Opposition would maintain its policy to phase out the service. We do not believe that the State can justify a loss of \$16 million to \$18 million a year just to service the north west ports. We do not believe that Stateships should be in the business of taking freight to New Guinea, Cocos Islands or Singapore where private operators presently run services, but that is not to say that we would not provide a shipping service of sorts into the north west ports. Calculations have been done that show that we could quite adequately invite private operators with available ships to service those areas at much less than the present loss of the State Shipping Service.

On many occasions when I ask the Minister questions in relation to Stateships he assumes that the answer will breach some sort of commercial confidentiality and that private operators will be looking at those figures and deciding that they can do it better or cheaper than State ships. It seems that the Minister is quite wrong in believing that his answers would breach commercial confidentiality. Also, there are plenty of operators who at the moment would not have a bar of the existing runs serviced by Stateships. The maintenance of Stateships is a political exercise on the part of this Government in much the same way as the organisation of the Port of Fremantle is a political exercise designed to repay past favours. That is something that the Government can either accept or reject, but there are certainly arguments that can be raised to support that suggestion.

I will ask the Minister specific questions later about particular areas, but for the time being I ask him why does he want Stateships to go to Papua New Guinea, the Cocos Islands and Singapore when it is quite obvious that private operators are already providing a service and that, if they are not already providing that service, they are in a position to do so. If the argument is, as the Minister has said in the past, that Stateships allow an export trade to develop between Western Australia and New Guinea, then I put to him that there are plenty of private operators or charter ships available for that run and that any suggestion that the present export trade to Papua New Guinea would be reduced is absolute rubbish.

Mr TROY: One very easy answer to the question put by the member for Mt Lawley is that Stateships in its expanded services offshore from Western Australia is now providing in the order of \$20 million in trade opportunities to Western Australian industry. I draw his attention to answers I provided him in answer to a question on notice about the extent of trade between Western Australia and Papua New Guinea being \$1.1 million in 1985-86. At the end of 1986-87, after a mere seven months of Stateships' operating into Papua New Guinea, it was running at \$12.4 million and it is currently estimated at over \$20 million. I rest the Government's case in that regard.

Mr CASH: Private ships are available to take the same cargos.

Mr TROY: If they have seen the market they have not had the entrepreneurial flair that the member assumes that they have because they had an opportunity and did not bother. The other key point is that it is having a significant impact on the operations of Stateships. It is doing very well on that route. Any consideration we have towards South East Asia -- and it is not just the Cocos Island but a circuitous route that is planned -- is on the same basis that the routes have to prove their worth. There is to be a trial period and, if they are not operating successfully, they will be withdrawn.

Item 1: Amount required for Services for the year --

Mr CASH: In item 1 the number of full-time staffing equivalents is noted. I am interested in the six gangway watchmen. I put a number of questions to the Minister in respect of the Western Australian Coastal Shipping Commission, but I have not received the answers. I do not know how long the Minister will take to give answers to the various questions that have been raised. I think there are 21 or 22 questions outstanding tonight.

Mr Troy: You have overloaded my department, I am sorry.

Mr CASH: There are 22 questions outstanding tonight, of which about 13 are owed to me on transport matters. I wonder whether the Minister's department is having some difficulty in finding answers to the various questions.

Mr Troy: They do not have unlimited resources.

Mr CASH: The Parliament hopes to get up tonight for this week. I do not think it is going to, but that is just a personal view; I think we should be here tomorrow. But it may be sitting on Tuesday, 22 December. There is no way in the world that we can afford to leave those questions outstanding.

Mr Troy: They won't be. They will be answered.

Mr CASH: I appreciate that. Will the Minister therefore tell me about these gangway watchmen and what they do when the ships are not in port? What is their function in life? Are they temporary or full-time positions? I see them recorded as full-time equivalents, but what is the situation when ships are not in port?

Mr TROY: I am not sure whether that is one of the questions outstanding, and I do not know the answer to that specifically. However, I am quite happy to respond to the question that has been put on the Notice Paper.

Division 82 put and passed.

Division 83: Small Business Development Corporation, \$2 204 000 --

Mr LEWIS: My comment is about the Small Business Development Corporation generally. Contrary to what the Treasurer said this evening about my trying always to see some bad side, and so on --

Mr Bryce: No, it was a question of intimidatory and extravagant language, that is all.

Mr LEWIS: I have a little difficulty with the Small Business Development Corporation on the basis that it is not monitoring its own performance. There is no tangible way of measuring the performance of the corporation. I have a personal belief -- indeed, I believe most members on my side of the Parliament accept the fact -- that small business in Australia contributes well over half of tax, GDP, employment, and the like. What I find difficulty in accepting is the Government's performance in this area. To be quite frank it is very puny because there is nothing tangible whatsoever. Where I think the corporation is falling down is that it seems to have a lack of policy direction by the Minister and, indeed, by the Government. If one wants to rationalise the amount of productivity or taxation that is generated by small business against a pretty puny \$2.2 million expenditure by the Government, to my mind it is way out of kilter with the importance of small business. The Deputy Premier can shake his head, and carry on, and act like some sort of clown; that is up to him.

Mr Bryce: Listen, do you realise by what factor the funding for that corporation and field of Government activity has increased since we have come into office?

Mr LEWIS: I know what it has been increased by in this Budget -- I can give the Minister the figure. I think it is 16 per cent of actuals.

Mr Troy: Where was it five years ago?

Mr LEWIS: We could go back to what happened 13 years ago, if the member wants. What I am very much aware of is that small business in Australia has borne the brunt of the huge increases in taxation and charges, and all the extra revenue that has been raised in this country. If there is a charter for the Small Business Development Corporation, which from time to time I doubt because of the way it is currently structured, the charter would be to rationalise and put a case to the State and Federal Governments about how small business really has been screwed over the last four or five years. It has been accepted that we can pass everything on to business and commerce automatically, but there comes a time when there is just no juice left in the orange, only the skin and the pips. That is where small business is at the moment. I do not want to be unkind but I must say that the commitment that this Government has made to small business has been insignificant; small business certainly has been the poor relation. I believe the only reason it is a ministerial responsibility at all is that perhaps it was considered to be the in thing to have something to say about small business.

However, if we are to measure performance to assess small business, it is clear that the performance of this Government and, more particularly, the Federal Government and the way in which it has attacked small business in this country by imposing taxation and all the other charges and regulations, has in fact given small business great disincentive to produce. I would like the Minister to take on board just how important small business is to the country and, on behalf of the Government, to try to accept some proportional responsibility and provide incentives to encourage small business activity.

We believe that the charter of the Small Business Development Corporation is to imbue Government with the understanding of the need to put incentives back into business -- incentives for those businesses to generate wealth. If small business is going well and generating wealth, obviously the whole community benefits by the employment that is provided, the taxation and wealth that is generated, and the resulting strengthening of the dollar. The Small Business Development Corporation's charter should be targeted to those areas where small business is attacked. Unfortunately the only thing that attacks small business is Government. Government is the burden on small business. If we think about it, we should look at providing more relief from payroll tax. In his Budget speech the Treasurer announced some insignificant amount of relief from payroll tax and said, "We are providing relief from payroll tax to small business."

Mr Troy: To how many this year?

Mr LEWIS: I accept that relief has been provided, but what did it cost? A quarter of a million dollars or some such nonsense.

Mr Troy: Three hundred small businesses benefited this year.

Mr LEWIS: But the Minister should look at the financial relief that was given, not the numbers. It was absolute peanuts in comparison with the take of payroll tax -- a tax which works as a disincentive for small business to employ people. There has to be more understanding that payroll tax really hurts small business; it gives small business no incentive to employ people and --

Mr Troy: That is why we have taken the burden from more than 3 000 of them.

Mr LEWIS: By what -- \$100 each? Big deal. On the other hand the Government has put up water rates and land tax and fuel franchises; the Government has given with the one hand and taken tenfold with the other hand. The Minister can say that the Government has given relief in payroll tax; I accept that but it was peanuts. The Government is not attacking the problem. The SBDC should be doing research and analysing how much payroll tax hurts small business, the particular areas it hurts, and putting in submissions to the Government and saying, "Look, this is what you should do to encourage small business." The SBDC should also be trying to give relief from water rates for commercial properties. It is an absolute nonsense that simply because someone runs a small electrical repair business out of some pocket handkerchief-sized factory unit which has been subdivided six or seven times, he should pay \$1 000 in water rates for two cups of tea a day. Why should such a person pay more than someone who lives in a residential property down the road?

It is unfortunate that everyone thinks that small business people are making a fortune. That is the crux of the problem. Small business people are living from hand to mouth and most of them have take-home earnings which are far lower than a person on a salary, working, for example, in the middle management of a bank or in some Government department. These things should be considered by the Government. If the SBDC is to be effective, it should be researching these things and saying to Government, "Hey, this is inequitable. You should not be charging \$1 000 for two cups of tea and a visit to the toilet a day." There is no rationale for it; we are turning --

Mr Bridge: You ought to be talking. You fellows make me grin going on like that. Those very points you are raising tonight as worthy of consideration are currently being considered by this Government. You had 12 years at the helm before we came into Government and you did sweet stuff all.

Mr LEWIS: Those are the facts. Members should look at land tax. Who pays land tax? Sure, it is exempted on individual's residences but if one happens to own another residence, one is not exempt. If one happens to run a small electrical repair business -- as I mentioned earlier -- one pays land tax. What is the purpose of land tax? Originally the metropolitan

improvement tax, or land tax, was introduced to look after the acquisition of roads and regional open space for future generations of Western Australians. It was originally introduced as an across-the-board tax; everyone paid it. However, today the only people paying this tax are business people and people who own more than one residential property. Those commercial property owners are paying for the well being of future generations, to enable them to have the benefit of regional recreational areas; they are paying for the acquisition of major traffic arteries, whether rail or freeways or whatever. Thus the initial thrust of the metropolitan region improvement tax has now become a burden pushed on to the backs of small business, because that is the sector of the community which principally pays it. That is what the SBDC should be researching and reviewing; the SBDC should be making recommendations to Government and saying, "Hey, this is inequitable. Let us look at this."

The SBDC should be looking at access to finance. Sure, an amending Bill went before Parliament a month ago, which opened up the area of guaranteeing business loans to small business, but it was a puny attempt; it was half-hearted and half-baked. The SBDC is itself half-baked when one considers the number involved. I think 80 loans were taken up over the last three years, which is chickenfeed when one considers that there are 70 000 small businesses in Western Australia. The SBDC should be looking at different methods of funding and facilitating lines of credit; it should be going to banks, to the SGIC, to the State Superannuation Fund or to any of those other Government agencies which, whenever they like, can find \$500 million at a time to invest.

We should look at doing something positive rather than looking at helping the huge corporations of this country out of their problems. We should look at putting money into lines of credit and at structured authorities which give a preferment of interest to bona fide small business people. The SBDC should look at these areas, make recommendations to the Minister and to the Government and say, "Small business has difficulties in raising funds because of the intransigence of banks and other people in the funding sector." The SBDC should report to the Minister and to the Government on what the Government can do and whether it can go to Federal Government and say, "Look, there is a need federally to get off the back of small business. There is a need to give incentives to increase this country's manufacturing base." Every day of the week we hear from Canberra, and most of the commentators there say that we must get our manufacturing base cranked up. To do that one must put incentive back into industry to invest money into new plant and new enterprise and to make those changes. The SBDC should be researching and putting submissions to this State Government, which could then be taken to the Federal Treasury and the Federal Government, saying, "Look, why can't we have a sliding scale for enterprise. In the first year, if you pour those profits back into your business, you will not have to pay any tax; next year you will get a certain percentage of tax relief"; and over a five-year plan, there will be genuine incentives for people to invest their profits back into small businesses. Members must remember that every major corporation in this country started out as a small business. That is the crux of the matter; small business begets big business. We must get off the back of small business in this country.

The other charter for the SBDC in researching these areas is to put credible submissions to Government so that it can then put credible submissions to the Federal Government. The SBDC should be more involved -- and I note this is mentioned in the annual report -- in advising educationalists on what main areas they should target in secondary and tertiary education courses. One of the biggest problems with Australia at the moment is the lack of education relative to business activities. People may have reading, writing, and arithmetic skills and know what constitutes the various cultural aspects of our society, but the fundamental thing in our society is to produce wealth. The aspect that is most lacking with SBDC-type institutions and Government itself is that they are not looking at the reasons why our manufacturing industries, which should be one of the bases of our economy, are so weak. Fundamentally it is because our children have not been educated in the ways of commerce, and our educators have not grasped the nettle and said that we have not been doing that. Our children are not taught in school that profit is a good thing and that it begets jobs and provides for the payment of taxes and charges. Our children have grown up with the idea that anyone who makes a profit is a bit of a rogue and a vagabond.

Another area SBDC should be looking at is reaching our educators and telling them they have to start imbuing our youth and our society with the idea that they must be equipped to increase productivity and our manufacturing base. I could go on much longer, but I understand that we must draw the session to a close. I make these statements very constructively. SBDC is heading along the wrong track. It produces a glossy annual report and says what it is supposed to be doing, but one cannot measure one tangible thing that it has done. It needs to be redirected along the lines I have suggested.

Mr TROY: The Government is already considering many of the comments raised by the member for East Melville. I wonder whether he has been absent from this State for more than a week because pretty well every item he raised has been got under way by this Government. Until five years ago none of these issues was under consideration by the Government of the day. We have made our mark in small business and will continue to do so. I am pleased at the manner in which the SBDC is going about it.

I remind the member for East Melville that he is asking for a massive injection of funds above what is a considerable increase in funding this year when a large part of the business sector believes there is no role at all for Government in the small business area. I fail to understand his line of argument other than that he wanted to occupy the time of this Chamber. He has done that very effectively. The matters he raised are being addressed and will continue to be dealt with in a very vigorous way.

**Item 1: Amount required for Services for the year --**

Mr LEWIS: In reading the annual report of the SBDC I noticed the auditor has particularly targeted the expenditure of \$39 000 which is principally ministerial expenses. In the 1986-87 Budget there was a vote of \$10 000, but actual expenditure on ministerial expenses was \$39 060. That is a 300 per cent overexpenditure. I note that the previous year there was no budgeted item for ministerial expenditure. What expenses were incurred and can the Minister give some explanation of how he overspent the vote by 300 per cent?

Mr TROY: There is a very simple answer to this. The expenditure was related to consultancy services associated with the business migration scheme and a move to properly account for my office and its involvement with small business. The member forgets that in previous years it came under the office of the Deputy Premier and the Department of Industrial Development, and therefore it was not accounted for specifically as a separate item in that area. I had no hesitation in bringing forward any item raised in my area as a proper accounting technique.

**Division 83 put and passed.**

**Division 87: Police, \$179 707 000 --**

Mr CASH: I will speak very briefly to this Division although most members would have expected me to speak for about an hour. I gave it some thought and realised that if one considered the lack of action of this Government and the Minister in respect of law and order there was really no need for me to repeat what I have said so many times in this Chamber. We have a situation in Western Australia where crime is up and police morale is down, and the achievements of the Government in relation to law and order are almost nil. There is no more for me to say when it comes to the achievements of this Government and the Police portfolio.

The people of Western Australia at least have one thing to look forward to; that is, when we return to Government in the near future we will place law and order as our No 1 priority. I know it will cost us millions of dollars to try to overcome the problems that this Government has created for the State in this area, but I guess that is a burden we will have to accept, and it is a burden which the community in general would want us to accept.

The only achievement this Government has made this year in respect of law and order is that after the Opposition had made the point probably 20 times in this place the Government recognised that police morale was near zero and decided to pump \$500 000 into a public relations scheme aimed at improving the image of the Police Force in Western Australia. It seems to me that if the Government and the Minister were doing their job properly in this portfolio there would be no need to spend this money and police morale would not be rock bottom as it is. One other comment will indicate the situation in respect of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services' office. The Treasurer's office has 17 ministerial officers,



and that may be considered a reasonable number to assist the Premier and Treasurer of this State; the Deputy Premier has 13 ministerial officers; and the Attorney General, who is often considered the No 3 in this Government, has six ministerial officers. The Minister for Police and Emergency Services needs nine ministerial officers to prop him up. The achievements of the Government in the Police portfolio are nil and there is really no need for me to continue my comments.

**Division 87 put and passed.**

**Division 88: Bush Fires Board, \$2 029 000 -- put and passed.**

**Division 89: Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission, \$931 000 --**

**Mr THOMPSON:** It is a great pity that Helen Cattalini is no longer the Commissioner for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs. I pay tribute to the work she did while she occupied that position.

The ethnic communities of this State must be saddened by the lack of delivery of the promises implicit in the wooing of those communities, firstly, prior to the 1983 election and, latterly, prior to the 1986 election. There has been much promise and little delivery in the Government's performance in this area. It is time the Government stopped using the multicultural groups in our society as political pawns. The Government's action with regard to the level of representation at ethnic functions around this State is an indication of its attitude. When the Government was first elected, the Treasurer or the Deputy Premier, or a very senior Minister if neither of those was available, was present at most functions. These days, in some cases very junior backbench members represent the Government at these functions. The disquiet that has come to my attention from these various ethnic communities is an indication of the disappointment they feel at the treatment they are receiving from the Government.

There is no doubt that the various ethnic communities in our society need a lot of support from the Government. In some cases ethnic communities are somewhat unreasonable; they expect the cheque book to be produced and, if it is not, one is regarded as a failure. However, the Government can do many things to stimulate interest in the various activities of the ethnic community that do not cost much money but would enhance the richness of the contributions made by those communities to our society. Many things could be done within the framework of Government without building a major bureaucracy in the form of a commission or department. Certainly the commission has a role to play in ensuring that the various Government departments have regard for the special place in our society filled by ethnic communities.

One area of considerable importance to which attention should be paid, and which would not cost much money, is education. I noted with interest the unrest in ethnic communities following decisions made earlier this year to alter the "English as a second language" programme. I imagine very few members in this Parliament, and certainly few members of the Opposition, were not approached in one form or another by people in the ethnic communities expressing concern about the downgrading of the programme. It is a tragedy that the downgrading occurred. Someone commented recently that when a second language is taught many benefits accrue to the society although they do not immediately become apparent. I spoke to Helen Cattalini when she left her position about the role she had played and she expressed concern about that issue. That is only one area in which Government, without much expenditure, could have made a contribution to the ethnic communities.

The Government can assist in other areas. The Treasurer recently attended a function at Spearwood, at which I was present, and made a sizeable contribution to a project undertaken by the community to provide facilities for their aged people. I applaud the Government for its support. Other communities in this State could benefit from some guidance along the lines pursued by that ethnic group, bearing in mind that it is a well-established group within the community, whose members are leaders in the wider community. For example, the Sumich family has made a tremendous contribution to the production and distribution of fruit and vegetables in this State and is exporting them at a great rate. That family is associated with the project to which I referred and they gave it a tremendous boost. Without detracting in any way from the activities of that family -- they are doing a great job -- that community is much better able to assist itself than are some of the smaller communities.

One area of concern of smaller ethnic groups is finding somewhere they can call home. Italian, Greek and other well-established ethnic communities in our society have resources and are able to establish their own facilities. However, many smaller communities are battling. The Government can assist those communities to find a permanent base from which to operate. Clearly, the Government cannot afford, and taxpayers should not be expected to foot the bill for, a number of buildings to be used for a short space of time by any one group. However, facilities could be provided to be shared by a number of smaller ethnic communities. The Government would need to ensure that there was harmony and general goodwill between the respective communities but I am sure there are ways of providing such a facility. Obviously there would have to be some contribution from those groups, but with some support from the Government they could provide a facility that had an area common to all parties but with a small part of the building made available exclusively to them for the purpose of storing equipment and the like. However, on the days that the major facility was allocated to them they could use the common space, such as a hall or major covered area where they could carry on the activities peculiar to their group.

Many ethnic communities feel let down because the Government has not kept the promises it made when it wooed the ethnic groups and campaigned for their support. I have a 50-page booklet here about this matter. I do not want to sound too critical of the Government, but this booklet was produced in relation to the efforts undertaken by the present Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs, Hon Gordon Hill, and a lot of trouble went into producing it. Its pages reveal all that has been done for various ethnic groups in our community.

Mr MacKinnon: Does it take long to read?

Mr THOMPSON: The Minister can take it home to read; I think that he will understand it, too. The booklet was produced by an ethnic community and it gives the Minister, and us, a message that this Government has failed the ethnic community. I say to the Treasurer that it has not gone unnoticed that his Government is represented more and more often at the various ethnic community functions by junior members of his Government and that is not appreciated by them. When an ethnic group has a national day, that is the highlight of their year -- and I do not want to be discourteous to members who go because they do what they are asked to do -- and it is seen by some of those communities as a discourtesy for the Treasurer or a Minister to be represented by a fairly new backbench member of Parliament.

Mr GREIG: My remarks relate to the English in the Workplace programme and particularly to a trend that is likely following a recent case in the Industrial Relations Commission where non-English-speaking employees of the Water Authority were granted the right to attend an English in the Workplace programme to be conducted fully in the employer's time. This issue has been around for some time and, so far as the Minister is concerned, is not an easy matter. The Minister would be aware that a tripartite committee exists which covers employers, the trade union movement and all of the various Federal and State Government departments associated with it. That committee seldom meets; it has met once or twice and has not been able to come to grips with this task. I urge the Minister to address this issue and to tell me of any initiatives that he feels could be undertaken to ensure that an appropriate and worthwhile programme for both non-English workers and employers could be encouraged to the point of widespread use in the community. My concern is held notwithstanding policy statements made by Federal Minister Hurford that he holds a particular view about what is a fair thing in respect of the industrial conditions associated with the implementation of English in the Workplace programmes in enterprises, and that was particularly associated with the time that they should be conducted. In essence, his position was that it was fair enough to be 50/50 employer/employee time. As a result of the decision of the Western Australia Industrial Relations Commission not being appealed by the Government an industrial standard now has been established -- albeit with one particular instrumentality and in the public sector. However, the consequences of that decision having been established is the potential for it to flow into other awards.

My concern is that when that prevails in awards of a more general nature, not restricted in the way it is in the Water Authority, that will place potential barriers in the way of employment of people not literate in English, because I suspect that smaller employers, when faced with the possibility of hiring an employee with another condition of employment attached saying that that person is entitled by right to have 100 hours a year training at a time that suits the TAFE extension service, will find a way to employ someone else who does not need that

extra service. The Government finds itself in a cleft stick in relation to this matter. On the one hand it wishes to encourage the use of that service for employees in the Water Authority; on the other hand, it is potentially putting employers, particularly small employers -- despite the fact that they will come up against equal opportunity legislation -- in a position where they will find a way around that requirement. By trying to do the right thing by non-English employees we will create a bar to their employment. Will the Minister give serious consideration to ensuring that what was generally accepted by employees and employers in industry -- that a 50/50 time allocation is a fair thing -- will not result in a proliferation of these sorts of standards in awards that will become a barrier to the employment of non-English speaking workers?

It was only as a result of a decision related to the Water Authority in New South Wales that this became an industrial issue which was taken up by the Trades and Labor Council in Western Australia, and the ACTU said that that would be the ambit claim and that it would settle for nothing less. I ask the Minister to take up further within the Government moves to ensure that we do not end up with a proliferation of these sorts of standards in awards that will be a barrier to that migrant employment. What can be done with that new industrial standard? What initiatives will the Minister take to get that tripartite committee streamlined and into a proper working environment when clearly the pursuing and extending of English literacy in the workplace has support from all sides in the industrial relations arena?

Mr GORDON HILL: I was disappointed to hear the comments of the member for Kalamunda criticising the workings of the Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission. I was disappointed also to hear the negative attitude that he expressed in relation to multicultural and ethnic affairs issues. I heard nothing positive come from him tonight, or at any time since he has been shadow Minister for Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs. If I had not from time to time attended functions that he has attended, I would not be aware of his responsibilities.

The member for Darling Range made some pertinent points. Those issues ought really to rest within the responsibility of the Minister for Labour, Productivity and Employment, who did launch an appeal against the decision made by the Industrial Relations Commission. He subsequently had the opportunity to launch a further appeal, but for some technical reason which I am not familiar with and not able to explain, he did not take that opportunity. However, the Minister for Labour, Productivity and Employment is mindful of the concerns expressed by the member and did undertake that initial appeal. The Government acknowledges what the member has mentioned tonight, and I am happy to again discuss with the Minister the points raised.

**Division 89 put and passed.**

**Division 90: Sport and Recreation, \$8 738 000 --**

**Item 1: Salaries, Wages and Allowances --**

Mr CASH: There are now seven persons in the Minister's office, and the estimated expenditure for 1987-88 is \$182 000. It seems rather strange to me that it is necessary to have a Minister to administer only the Department of Sport and Recreation, with a total expenditure for the year of only \$8.7 million. Most members will recall that when the present Minister for Sport and Recreation was appointed, he had also the dual role of being Parliamentary Secretary of the Cabinet; however, it seems that responsibility became too much for him and it was necessary to take that responsibility from him and give it to another member. The Minister's department certainly plays a significant role, but its expenditure is fairly limited. I notice that when I suggested there was possibly little need for a Minister to have as his sole responsibility a department with an expenditure of only \$8.7 million, the Minister for Local Government made some comments. I am conscious of the fact that the Minister for Local Government's portfolios cover an expenditure of only \$6.22 million, but I make the point that he has other responsibilities in view of the large number of local authorities in Western Australia and the huge range of matters that are brought to his attention by virtue of the Local Government Act and other Acts of Parliament. However, I would be interested to know how the Government can justify a Minister's having sport and recreation as his only responsibility, with only seven people in his office.

Mr WILSON: I suppose it would be easy to make the point about ministerial responsibility made by the member for Mt Lawley, solely on the basis of the expenditure for which the

Minister is responsible, about a number of ministries. However, the member for Mt Lawley neglected to recognise that this area of responsibility covers not only the whole of the State but is organised on a regional basis and broaches a range of organisations and individuals, which requires a great deal of consultation and personal contact with those groups and individuals. The present Minister for Sport and Recreation has become known for the fact that he is available for that sort of consultation on an individual basis with groups and organisations around the State, and he has been effective in that role because he has been able to operate in that way.

The present Government has been able to place greater emphasis on the role of sport and recreation in our community life than has any previous Government, and nobody epitomises that more than the present Minister for Sport and Recreation. We should not underestimate the importance of this Ministry and the fact that we have been able to give recognition to the value of sport to the community and to the State, and to the prestige this wins for our State and the way sport links in with tourism and with bringing important events and people to our State. The member for Mt Lawley perhaps sells himself and this State short in failing to appreciate the value and work of this Ministry. The Minister's office is a new office, and it covers the whole of the State, irrespective of the expenditure involved, and requires the Minister to be available across the State. There is no reason to doubt that seven staff are necessary for the proper functioning of the Minister's office.

Mr CASH: I understand the comments made by the Minister for Housing, but I point out to him -- and this is a genuine comment -- that when he was Minister for Sport and Recreation he also had additional responsibilities, and he was regarded as a very good Minister for Sport and Recreation.

Mr Wilson: You have not always made that sort of comment.

Mr Lightfoot: It is like drawing a tooth.

Mr CASH: Yes. I do not like having to acknowledge it, but I do because I regard it as the truth. That was acknowledged recently at the opening of the Superdrome, when a significant facility within that Superdrome was named after the former Minister for Sport and Recreation, the now Minister for Housing.

Mr Wilson: I might say that caused me great embarrassment.

Mr CASH: I think that was a fair acknowledgment of the work done in that area by the former Minister, and I am pleased to be able to say that because that has been said by many people within the sport and recreation field in Western Australia, and it is only fair that Parliament should hear those comments. In saying that and in recognising the good job done by the former Minister for Sport and Recreation, I still make the point that I do not see the need for a single Ministry to administer an expenditure of only \$8.7 million. I know that the Department of Sport and Recreation has State-wide responsibilities because I have that department as one of a number of responsibilities in Opposition. However, it seems to me it is almost a case of a job for the boys.

#### **Item 13: Western Australian Sports Centre Trust --**

Mr CASH: An expenditure of \$727 000 has been estimated for this item for 1987-88. I would like the Minister to explain what that is for, but before he does so I want to take the opportunity of recognising the tremendous work that has been done both this year and in past years by Wally Foreman and his committee from the Western Australian Institute of Sport, and in recognising their work I would like some comment from the Minister on the present financial predicament that the institute now finds itself in.

I also want to acknowledge the tremendous work done by Mr Mick Aitkin of the WA Sports Federation who is working with a fairly tight budget. I have made the point to him in the past that while he works on a tight budget and does a good job he enjoys the support of the Opposition, but I hope his committee will never turn itself into another Department of Sport and Recreation and start duplicating all the work done by that department. I think it is appropriate that Parliament should recognise the work done by Mick Aitkin and his team of hard-working sporting enthusiasts and also the great work of Wally Foreman and his committee for their contribution to sport generally in Western Australia in recent years. I am sure it will continue in 1987-88.

Mr WILSON: The total expenditure of more than \$770 000 on the State Sports Centre -- the Superdrome -- compares very well with similar centres in other States. The equivalent centre in Sydney, the Homebush Bay centre, which does not have a swimming and diving facility associated with it, operates on a deficit of \$500 000 a year; and the centre in Brisbane, which is mainly an aquatic centre, operates on a deficit equivalent to the one we are facing with the Superdrome. I do not have before me the figures the member requires, but I undertake to provide them to him.

With respect to the Western Australian Institute of Sport, the State Government, recognising the problems which have arisen as a result of decreased private sponsorship, has recently increased its allocation for the institute by \$75 000. Those extra funds take the total Government funds for the institute this year to \$530 000, which is \$180 000 more than the previous year. I think that is a fair recognition of the problems which the institute has found itself in unfortunately as a result of reduced private sponsorship.

Coupled with savings already introduced by the institute, this additional amount means the institute will be able to maintain its current programmes during this year. I certainly endorse the comments made by the member for Mt Lawley both with respect to Wally Foreman, who has played an outstanding role in putting WAIS on the map, not only in this State but across the Commonwealth -- it is recognised as the most progressive State institute of sport -- but also with respect to Mick Aitkin who, since he came from England nearly five years ago, has made a singularly important contribution to the development of sport in Western Australia and has brought a very professional approach to sports administration. It is because he is such a professional and such a good administrator that he manages so well on fairly sparse funding.

**Division 90 put and passed.**

**Postponed Divisions 74 and 75 now taken.**

**Division 74: Western Australian Alcohol and Drug Authority, \$7 588 000 --**

Mr BRADSHAW: The authority has an education unit and last week the Minister indicated that it was mainly for professionals. The Health Department also has a health promotion and education unit under Michael Dall. There appears to be duplication there although the units serve different people. The Health Department unit is for the public at large whereas the Alcohol and Drug Authority's unit is supposedly for the professionals. Surely those two education units could be put together to cut out some duplication. In that way we would either save some money or expand our education programmes to get to more people.

The authority looks after the National Campaign Against Drug Abuse and the Health Department also promotes education about drug abuse. The main drug we need to look at is alcohol, which is the biggest problem in Australia, and probably worldwide. We should not underrate the "glamour" drugs like heroin and marijuana, but I do not think we have given enough thought, publicity and education to trying to curb the alcohol intake of people in Western Australia. I know the Government has put \$500 000 into this area, but we should not be duplicating our efforts.

Quite an amount of money from the National Campaign Against Drug Abuse is being expended this year, and 38 people are working on that, which seems to me to be a fairly large number. I wonder whether it is not becoming a bureaucracy instead of spreading the word on drug abuse in the community. More is spent on wages than on the campaign itself -- about \$1.1 million compared with \$900 000. So over half of the \$2 million to be spent is going into wages. I wonder whether this bureaucracy should be looked at and dovetailed into the Western Australian programme to educate people against drug abuse.

Mr CARR: I will respond very briefly by indicating to the member for Murray-Wellington that the Minister concerned is not able to be in the Chamber tonight. Rather than answering the question about which I know very little, I will give an undertaking that I will refer the member's remarks to the Minister for Health and request a response in writing to the member.

**Division 74 put and passed.**

**Division 75: Consumer Affairs, \$5 060 000 --**

Mr WATT: I would like to record my appreciation for the work done by the staff of the

Department of Consumer Affairs who have a diverse role and a busy task. They are involved in a number of areas and obviously, as the name implies, consumer complaints is one of their principal roles. The department also plays a valuable role in public information, investigation of product safety, and education of the public in those areas. One of the catch 22 situations in which the department finds itself is that the more publicity that is given to consumer issues, the more work is created because of the increased public awareness. The result of that is that there needs to be an increase in the staffing levels of that department to be able to adequately perform the tasks that are being asked of it. I will address the staffing situation when we deal with items.

The one area of the department's operations I wish to criticise is its Price Check scheme. Since the scheme's inception the Opposition has been critical of it and that criticism has not diminished in any way. Indeed, it has been enhanced and it is very difficult for anybody to be able to claim that any single public activity affects food prices.

Almost every month there is some sort of Press statement made by the Federal or State Price Check schemes stating that the prices have increased or that they have decreased. One of the departments will say that a certain result is either because of its efforts or that supermarkets are ripping off people, depending on what has occurred. It is difficult to have a regular pattern, but an article which appeared in *The West Australian* in November stated that prices had increased in supermarkets, and in another article in December it said that prices had decreased. One of the articles which appeared in the newspaper earlier this month said that the basket of groceries that is used as the sample for testing had increased by only a small amount in the last three months, but had increased at a rate lower than inflation. Various Government agencies wanted to claim credit for that. I did some checking and I was advised by one of the food chains that the rate of increase in food prices has increased at a rate lower than inflation for each of the last five years. It reflects the highly competitive nature of the food industry.

Another owner of a reasonably large supermarket operation told me it was true in the early days of Price Check that some supermarket operators went a little mad with prices and for a short period they were trying to outbid each other and they found, very smartly, that in their efforts to do so they were reaching a situation where there was no profit for their businesses. If a business does not make any profit, it is in trouble. He claimed there were a number of store proprietors, particularly from the larger stores, who became quite clever at being able to manipulate the system by working out which items were in the sample basket. As a result they reduced the prices accordingly to make them look good. I could give lots of examples as I have been given a great deal of information about the dissatisfaction in that area.

I refer now to a letter that was sent to the Premier recently by two brothers and their wives who have purchased a supermarket. With your indulgence, Madam Deputy Chairman (Dr Lawrence), I will read some of the paragraphs from the letter because they demonstrate what is the problem. They explained that the prices in their shop prior to their taking it over were very high and they progressively reduced the price on all commodities to the level of those recommended by the chain of Foodland Stores. The store owners were annoyed and upset to find out that after they had concentrated on trying to get their store as competitive as they could with other stores the store was listed as No 122 on a recent Price Check list. They were the second highest of all the stores listed and were adamant that the prices in their store were not so high as to attract a restriction on the store. One would not be surprised to learn that the turnover of that store in the following week, which incidentally was a pension week which is normally a better week, was down by \$3 000. The letter states --

We can only assume that errors occurred in figures taken from our shop or manipulation has occurred. We are at the mercy of Price Check, there is no way that we can confirm the accuracy or the eventual authenticity of the figures taken from our store. We find this position untenable.

We are endeavouring to operate the store with fair prices and top service. The supermarket business is extremely competitive and we accept that competition, but we find it hard to accept government interference which, with this scheme, is favouring the larger stores with their massive buying power.

Further on the letter states --

The price check scheme is unfair and wide open to manipulation and fraud, disturbing qualities that seem to be permeating throughout our society.

Again further on it states --

From discussions with other supermarket operators, it appears evident that somehow some stores have prior knowledge of basket commodities and the calling time of monitors.

They asked a number of questions of the Premier and they were obviously concerned about the reliability of Price Check and the honesty and trustworthiness of some of the people involved. I am not making that accusation -- they were questions asked in that letter. The final paragraph of the letter stated --

If you sense from my letter that I am upset - I am. We are fighting for the survival of our business and our lives' savings. We are fighters we will succeed. We can fight competition and the many difficulties that private enterprise presents, but it seems unfair and unAustralian when Government interference helps the large National operators to the detriment of the small family operator.

That depicts the sort of reaction so many people have had in respect of the Price Check scheme.

When the scheme was first introduced the Opposition urged the Government that if it was to be dinkum in its approach to these things it should introduce a checking mechanism for Government taxes and charges. It was therefore rather interesting to read the following in *The Australian* on 10 September ---

The Federal Government is set to broaden and intensify its effort against unfair price increases during the next three years.

The chairman of the Prices Task Force, Mr George Gear, recommended that Government taxes and charges . . . be monitored . . .

He said the Government could also be criticised for being political if it did not scrutinise its own activities.

These were precisely the sentiments we expressed at the beginning of the Price Watch scheme, so I indicate my support for what that Federal member has indicated and urge the State Government to adopt a similar role in taking a supervisory or inquiring role into its own taxes and charges.

Mr WILSON: I appreciate the comments of the member for Albany, most of which have been directed towards Price Watch. In the first place he made some complimentary comments about the staff of the Department of Consumer Affairs, and I am sure they are appreciated, because, as he said, this is a small band of people who are constantly under pressure, often betwixt and between. They are not able to satisfy all the people, and they often find themselves under great stress. The level of burnout in the department is high because of the stress they work under. People's expectations are very high, usually unrealistically high, but that is the nature of consumer affairs. People have high expectations of what consumer affairs can achieve for them.

With respect to Price Watch, the member is only repeating comments that he has made before, but the Government feels that the programme has been very successful. Price Watch sets out to demonstrate how prices differ, not to claim that they are too high. By providing information about the range of prices available for the same basket of groceries, Price Watch aims to help shoppers to use their buying power to best advantage, which in turn stimulates competition.

The results can be analysed differently from the way the member analysed them, because we can see that, following the trend in other countries where supermarket surveys have been published, there has been an immediate drop in many prices and a slow rate of increase after its introduction. The cheapest basket price in the first three surveys fell from \$93.90 to \$90.32 to \$86.59, while the number of stores charging less than \$100 increased. In the three months 13 March to 12 June, despite increases in the price of bread and milk, the average cost of the metropolitan basket rose by only 19c. Nearly 100 metropolitan supermarkets

charged less for the same basket of groceries in June than they did in March, and the same trend was seen in country towns. The same basket was surveyed again in October, when a rise of only 1.7 per cent was recorded for the seven-month period since March. Significantly, 20 per cent of Western Australian supermarkets surveyed were still charging less in October than they were in March.

There has been a very positive public response to the campaign, with more than 1 500 people phoning the price monitoring unit since March. Recent figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that Perth food prices have just recorded their lowest yearly increase for nearly three years. Food prices in Perth went up 4.9 per cent in the 12 months ending the September quarter, which is the best result since the 4.7 per cent rise recorded for the year ending December 1984.

One can make claims and counterclaims about these things, but the fact of the matter is that the Government saw the need to act in this way. It took this action, and that has been generally appreciated. I regret the circumstances -- as anyone would -- revealed in the letter the member read out, but in a sense he has perhaps only pointed to the success of the Price Watch scheme. If, as a result of certain results being published, consumers have gone elsewhere, the success rather than the failure of the scheme has been proved. If that letter has gone to the Premier, I am sure he will refer it to the department and ask for that situation to be investigated if case anomalies have reflected negatively on the performance of that business. I do not think one can read out one letter about one person's experience and say that as a result of that the whole scheme is flawed. It points to the need for constant monitoring, and I can assure the Chamber that constant monitoring is in place. However, if an anomaly is shown and the matter has been referred to the Premier, I have every confidence that it will be thoroughly checked. If errors or mistakes have been made, then the matter will be put right.

#### **Item 1: Salaries, Wages and Allowances --**

Mr WATT: This item deals with wages and the staffing of the Department of Consumer Affairs. In respect of the number of investigation and enforcement officers, in his annual report the commissioner referred to the staffing levels in two or three different places. The first reference is in respect of consumer contact by telephone inquiries. During the year head office responded to 61 400 telephone calls. That demonstrates the enormous strain placed on the Department of Consumer Affairs.

The constant difficulty is that although there is a queuing system, so that callers are put in an automatic queue, even though a new telephone system has been provided -- I am not sure about that --

Mr Wilson: It is included in the Budget.

Mr WATT: Is it? The ability of the department to cope is still not adequate. This probably has more to do with the number of telephonists rather than the telephone system, but at least two more telephonists would clearly be needed to cope adequately with the number of calls coming in. Apart from the irritation on the part of consumers telephoning, and the time they must wait, many callers must drop off in view of that long wait. If we are to provide a service, it must meet the demand, however difficult it might be. If we are to create these departments, we have a duty to make sure they are adequately staffed.

I will read out one paragraph from the commissioner's report on page 22, where he says --

Coping with the large number of incoming telephone calls is still the greatest cause of stress for the consumer services officers. There is little respite between telephone calls, with it not being uncommon to have 3 or 4 calls "banked on" each telephone. This has the effect of "beeping" out parts of the consumers call and frustrating the officers attempts to gain full information.

Another area of concern relates to consumer complaints investigators. That is referred to on page 29, where he refers to the "caseload" having to be carried by each of the investigation officers. I rather suspect most members from time to time have had people come to them and complain about the amount of time being taken for their inquiries to be investigated by the department. It is said in the commissioner's report --



At the beginning of the year, the caseload allocation to individual officers was limited to a maximum of 80 formal complaint files in a bid to ease pressure on individual officers.

This led to a backlog of unallocated complaint files which was not acceptable to management or consumers. In order to eliminate the excess time delay to consumers before enquiries were conducted, management lifted the ceiling on file allocations, and established a pilot team system to examine work procedures within an atmosphere of mutual support and expertise.

The report goes on to say that --

Nevertheless, an investigations officer's case load continues to range between 90 and 120 current files at any one time, which is an unacceptable level.

While I share the views of the Minister who responded a few moments ago about the stress and burnout levels of the staff who have to handle these complaints, the fact is that there is a limit to how long people can work at that level and to the adequacy with which they can do the work that is being asked of them. That is obviously going to lead not only to an unsatisfactory result for the department but to a feeling of considerable dissatisfaction among the people being asked to do that work.

I want to make two other comments about the extra work that is going to come to the Department of Consumer Affairs. The Fair Trading Bill has recently been passed and is going to cause further workload for the department. Another area of the department which has been under-serviced relates to misleading advertising. There is plenty of scope for investigation into that area but it is not possible for that to be undertaken because of the under-staffing of the department. While the department obviously does the best it can with the resources available to it, it is obviously limited.

I have another comment to make regarding the price monitoring unit. The Minister mentioned before the number of telephone calls which had been received by that unit. I am not sure of the number he mentioned, but in response to a question I asked on 26 November, the calls amounted to 1 486 from March to October. It must be stated that nearly 900 of those calls were received in the first two months, and since that time there has been a considerable dropping off, to the point where in the last three months there have been only 60 or 70 calls per month. So it was a two-day wonder, and I think that has been demonstrated by the number of calls received.

Mr WILSON: The member for Albany has to some extent ignored the fact that this item shows an increase of \$526 000 compared with the previous year, and part of that includes an amount of \$121 000 which is provided for the chattels security registry staff to be established under the new legislation.

There is a reference in item 3, under communications, to an increase of \$191 000, which represents the cost of a new switchboard and communications system, which will allow quick access to consumer advice and also better access for all people who have dealings with the department. So we cannot just take a narrow view and say that only expenditures on staff are going to help ease the burden. We have here a considerable increase in expenditure which is going to assist to ease the burden.

The Government has increased staff levels every year since the department was created in April 1983. The Minister would say that we have for some time now been in the position where the level of staffing of the Public Service has been under considerable scrutiny, and all areas have been expected to contribute to staff reductions and restraint. I know, because I was the Minister responsible, that this department was given special dispensation during the staff freeze to fill vacancies before the three per cent reductions were achieved.

Mr Watt: That really demonstrates the need, does it not?

Mr WILSON: Yes, and that need was recognised in that way. However, a department cannot ignore the fact that it is not acceptable at the moment to have a very stringent watch over staffing requirements and the need for increased staff, and cannot be exempted from that stricture and responsibility. It is simply a matter of priorities and of doing things in a better way. In this regard considerable improvements have been made in staff training, word processing equipment, computerisation and the introduction of the new switchboard and

communications equipment. As the member has said, there are still delays in handling formal complaints and investigations, but I am advised that those delays have been reduced by the reorganisation of the consumer services branch into a team environment.

I think we can say that the department has done very well from a Budget point of view since the present Government came to office. If we look at the 1982-83 Budget, the expenditure in actual terms was \$2.076 million, which has increased in the 1987-88 Budget to \$5.060 million. In spite of the fact that there are those difficulties, the Government has been prepared, where necessary, to give special consideration to the difficulties faced by the department and has responded as sympathetically as has been possible.

#### **Item 11: Small Claims Tribunal --**

Mr WATT: I want to comment very briefly about the situation relating to the accommodation of the Small Claims Tribunal. The only change made to the tribunal as a result of the Select Committee which reported in November 1985 was in response to a recommendation that it should be physically removed from the Department of Consumer Affairs, and the tribunal was relocated down St George's Terrace. However, even though the situation is good regarding the hearing rooms and office accommodation of the tribunal, the waiting room facilities are hopelessly inadequate and small.

There will be an increased workload for the tribunal as a result of the Residential Tenancies Bill, and I realise that is a few months away, but the situation presently is that the tribunal has as its waiting room a very small, cramped area, and it is embarrassing at times for the people who are waiting in that area. They are often representing different factions of the case, and they are sitting there in that tiny area, staring at each other. I ask the Minister to take up with the department the possibility of the tribunal's waiting area being expanded into one of the adjoining areas. I am sure if the Minister has a chat about this with either the registrar or the chief referee, he will confirm for him what I have said.

Mr WILSON: I am not familiar personally with the current situation but I will ensure that the Minister for Consumer Affairs takes on board the comments made by the member for Albany. I am sure his attention would have been drawn to this difficulty already, and as a result of the member's comments I am sure he will have the department look at that situation again in the hope that improvements can be made.

Division 75 put and passed.

Clauses 1 to 4 put and passed.

Schedules 1 and 2 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

#### *Report*

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

#### *Third Reading*

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr Bryce (Deputy Premier), and transmitted to the Council.

### **ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: SPECIAL**

On motion by Mr Bryce (Deputy Premier), resolved --

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, 22 December, at 2.15 pm.

*House adjourned at 11.04 pm*

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## QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

## BARGE HARBOUR

*Fremantle: Establishment*

2811. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Further to question 1622 of 1987, what is the progress in the establishment of a new barge harbour at Fremantle?
- (2) Is this project to go ahead?
- (3) When will some definite decision be announced?
- (4) What is the involvement in the matter of --
  - (a) Government departments and corporations;
  - (b) industry?

Mr TROY replied:

- (1) Discussions are continuing between the Department of Marine and Harbours and the Fremantle Port Authority with a view to arriving at a development which will optimise the use of the site referred to in question 1622 of 1987.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) It is not possible to determine a commencement date for the barge harbour project at this stage.
- (4) Discussions regarding the barge harbour are taking place between the Department of Marine and Harbours and the Fremantle Port Authority. Contact will be made with the potential industrial users once the concept plan for the harbour is further defined.

## STATESHIPS

*General Manager: Information*

2888. Mr CASH, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Further to his answer to question 2621 on 19 November 1987, is he aware that the General Manager of Stateships, in an article published by the *Daily Commercial News* on 5 August 1986, was quoted as providing the information sought in my question and which he claimed was not the policy of the Government to publicise?
- (2) How can he reconcile the information being made available to the *Daily Commercial News* and not the Parliament?

Mr TROY replied:

- (1) I have obtained a copy of the article referred to by the member. The approximate details referred to in the article hardly constitute the information sought under parts (3) to (5) of question 2621. Furthermore, information released in August 1986 is not relevant to the competitive trading position now occupied by Stateships in the approach of the year 1988.
- (2) Answered by (1).

## CONSERVATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

*Staff: Prescribed Burning*

2910. Mr RUSHTON, to the Minister for Conservation and Land Management:

- (1) Do any employees of the Department of Conservation and Land Management receive overtime for prescribed burning?
- (2) (a) If yes, how much was paid in overtime for prescribed burning in 1986-87 and to date in 1987-88;

- (b) how much was paid in overtime for prescribed burning in each of the northern, central, and southern forest regions for each of the same periods?
- (3) How many hectares of State forest, timber reserves, and other Crown land that will be included in the following national parks has been prescribed burnt this year or will be burnt before the areas are declared national parks --
  - (a) Wattle-Soho-Mount Frankland National Park;
  - (b) Shannon National Park;
  - (c) D'Entrecasteaux National Park?

Mr HODGE replied:

The information is being collated, and I will reply to the member in writing in due course.

#### WA HERBARIUM

##### *Transfer*

2913. Mr RUSHTON, to the Minister for Conservation and Land Management:

- (1) Is it a fact that the Government is planning to transfer the Western Australian Herbarium from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Conservation and Land Management?
- (2) (a) If yes, is it planned to carry out the transfer;
- (b) why is the Herbarium being transferred?
- (3) Will the emphasis of the Herbarium's research continue to be on the taxonomy and description of the Western Australian and, in some cases, the Australian flora?
- (4) Will the Herbarium continue to publish its two journals, particularly *Nuytsia*?
- (5) Is it planned to appoint a new curator on retirement of the current Herbarium curator?
- (6) If yes to (5), is it intended to continue the practice common to all of the Australian States, the Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory of appointing a qualified plant taxonomist as curator?
- (7) If not, why not?

Mr HODGE replied:

I will provide the member with a written response as soon as I have examined the matters raised.

#### DREDGING

##### *Yunderup Canals*

2922. Mr BRADSHAW, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Adverting to question 2100 of 1987, has further consideration been given to the dredging and maintenance of the channel to the Yunderup Canals?
- (2) If yes, will the Government accept responsibility for the maintenance of the channel?
- (3) If yes to (2), under what terms?

Mr TROY replied:

- (1) Yes. The Government is giving further consideration to the dredging of the entrance channel into Yunderup Canals.
- (2) The Government accepted the advice given to it by Crown law, which was that the State has no contractual obligations to the Shire of Murray in respect of the maintenance of the entrance channel.

- (3) Not applicable.

**TRAFFIC FINES**  
*Collections*

2926. Mr STEPHENS, to the Minister representing the Attorney General:

- (1) In each of the previous five financial years respectively, what was the total amount collected in traffic fines?
- (2) Of those amounts, how much was collected on infringement notices?

Mr PETER DOWDING replied:

- (1) Information on traffic fines is not readily available as they are collected by individual Courts of Petty Sessions.
- (2) Traffic infringement revenue for the previous five financial years is --

1982-83	\$6 216 982.03
1983-84	\$6 158 845.72
1984-85	\$6 878 668.60
1985-86	\$6 389 289.32
1986-87	\$8 225 171.42

**STAMP DUTY OFFICE**  
*Delays*

2935. Mr CASH, to the Minister representing the Minister for Budget Management:

- (1) Is the Minister aware of concerns expressed by solicitors and settlement agents on the apparent delays in having documents stamped at the stamp duty office in Perth?
- (2) What action has he taken to reduce the waiting time to have documents stamped?

Mr PETER DOWDING replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Planning is well advanced for a major upgrading of the State Taxation Department's stamp duty procedures. This will include a redesign of the department's public assessing facilities and the introduction of computerisation. Pending the introduction of the upgraded procedures, special arrangements have just commenced to reduce the waiting time for routine assessments to a maximum of five days.

**STREET LIGHTS**  
*Stirling Highway: Failures*

2936. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

- (1) Has he received any representations on the reported frequent failures of the street lights on Stirling Highway in the Claremont, Cottesloe, and Peppermint Grove area?
- (2) Is he aware of a particular problem in this area?
- (3) Can he state if the State Energy Commission is taking any action to overcome the problem?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) No, but I understand the State Energy Commission has.
- (2) Yes, failures were caused by trees interfering with the street light control circuit and lighting.
- (3) Local authorities have been asked to prune the offending trees. The SEC will inspect them again shortly.

**SILICON PLANT***Location*

2937. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

Can the Government give an assurance that the Barrack Mines silicon plant will be located on a site where industrial pollution will not affect the surrounding residential areas of Eaton, Glen Iris, and Clifton Park?

Mr PARKER replied:

The impact of the Barrack silicon plant on surrounding residential areas is currently under assessment by the Environmental Protection Authority. The EPA will provide recommendations on acceptable levels of environmental impact which the project will be required to meet.

**NAVAL BASE***North West*

2939. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Defence Liaison:

- (1) Is the Australian Navy investigating the possibility of a north west harbour for the development of a patrol boat or naval base?
- (2) If so, what sites are being considered?
- (3) When is it likely that a final decision on a site will be made?

Mr BRYCE replied:

- (1) Yes, the Australian Navy is investigating the possibility of establishing a north west harbour facility. The progressive development of such facilities is an initiative announced by the Commonwealth in its white paper, "Defence of Australia 1987".
- (2) A number of sites are likely to be considered as options.
- (3) It is unlikely that detailed consideration of this matter will take place within the next 12 months.

**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE****KWINANA FREEWAY***Contra-flow Lane*

508. Mr CASH, to the Minister for Transport:

In the capital works programme is an amount of \$5.8 million for a Kwinana freeway contra-flow lane. This year it is intended to spend \$2.9 million on that. I ask the Minister to provide the House with some details of that proposal, and as to the success or otherwise of the existing contra-lane on the Kwinana Freeway.

Mr TROY replied:

A decision was made to trial the contra-flow bus lane, and that trial was undertaken for a period of two months to determine the capability of such a device to operate on our freeway system. Subsequent to that decision and the trial period, it became obvious that the southbound traffic on Kwinana freeway, by the year 1992, would require the full three lanes of that freeway; therefore, an alternative programme has been put up which will provide for a dedicated bus lane. That is being examined at the moment as an alternative.

The overall cost will be almost the same. That matter has not been finalised to date, but it appears that a permanent bus lane will be a better alternative to the contra-flow on that section of the highway. I must underline the fact that the contra-flow concept was very successful and will have application in other parts of our freeway system.

TELEPHONE CHARGES

*Approval*

509. Dr ALEXANDER, to the Minister for Communications:

- (1) Does the Minister approve of the proposal for Telecom to levy time charges on local calls?
- (2) Can he comment on the likely inequitable effects of such a charge, particularly on low income earners and pensioners?
- (3) What action does the State Government intend taking in relation to this proposal?

Mr BRYCE replied:

(1)-(3)

The Parliamentary Labor Party and the State Cabinet have carried resolutions on this subject expressing very grave concerns for the future of the Federal Government's viability in office if it proceeds down this track. In fact, frankly, I think --

Mr MacKinnon: We made a statement about this matter five days ago; we didn't need to have special meetings.

Mr BRYCE: I thought that the Leader of the Opposition would take comfort from my taking this opportunity on to reinforce in the Parliament that the Government feels -- as does the Opposition -- that it would be electoral suicide for the Federal Government to proceed with this proposal. I think that they would be a bunch of mugs.

Mr Wiese: They are a bunch of mugs.

Mr BRYCE: That is where we disagree. They would be a bunch of mugs if they accepted Telecom's advice to introduce this new system of charging on a time basis. I happen to believe that they are not mugs, but I also happen to understand the technicalities of the matter to a very minor degree and know that it will take an estimated two years to bring all the switching, timing, and monitoring gear into place, which would mean, in a very mechanical sense, that the citizens of Australia would be about to receive their inflated telephone bills on the eve of the next Federal election. I do not think that one needs to be very smart to realise that that would not be smart politics, so we will go out of our way to point that out to the Federal Government because we just happen to believe that Telecom is not politically very smart in many of the things that it says and does. Telecom has been floating this idea at various forums over the past 12 months and then, when pressed, has been retreating from reality and denying that it intended to even float the idea in a serious fashion. Quite apart from the politics involved, which we think are crazy, there is no moral justification for this happening, either. We happen to believe that it does not matter what the rest of the world does, and we are well aware of the tendency in the so-called sophisticated countries of the world to adopt these sorts of pricing policies; and apparently Canada is about to join that list next year as the most comparable country in the world. We happen to accept the view that as we are a country where 95 per cent of all families now have the telephone installed and that telephone has become an essential service for Australians -- no matter whether they live in the metropolitan area or in remote Australia -- frankly, it would be an abhorrence to take that step. We are dead against this happening. We have made submissions to the Prices Surveillance Authority about this matter. I understand that, if Telecom wants this move to be seriously considered, it would have to go before the Prices Surveillance Authority. A short while ago, when it sought to increase charges by a small fee, we went before the Prices Surveillance Authority about that matter, and would do that again if this occurred. Even more significantly, we shall seek to tug the political whiskers of certain people on the other side of the country in an attempt to

convince them in a slightly more painful fashion that they would be committing political harakiri if they did this.

# ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

## *Compact: Support*

510. Mr LIGHTFOOT, to the Premier:

Does the Government support in principle the conclusion of an Aboriginal compact in Australia?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

This question has been answered previously by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. The answer is that the Government has given its in principle support to the process by which an agreement will be reached about the obligations mainly encompassing funding, I understand, but to a broader degree even than that we have to ensure that the Aboriginal community of this country is properly cared for.

Mr Lightfoot: Do you think that would include land rights, for instance?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: My view is that it would not, but I am talking about a situation in which we have given an in principle decision.

Mr Lightfoot: Would you oppose the inclusion of land rights?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I would not like to say that I would start to pick this piece or that piece out. The member is a smart young chap and has been here long enough --

Mr Lightfoot: I agree to the former but not the latter.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: -- to know that I am pretty easily tricked, so I think it is just a bit unfair of the member; I am trying to say that, in principle, we agree, and now the member wants me to go into detail.

Mr MacKinnon: Pretty important detail.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Of course it is, but we may object, agree, or seek modification of any number of a range of details.

Mr MacKinnon: You're not prepared to give a commitment. You will oppose any land rights commitment that might be contained in it.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: We are on the record as saying that while we are in Government in this State we will not have land rights for the Aboriginal people. We are on record as saying that time and time again. What I cannot say is that everyone else who is talking about this compact will not raise that or some other point. I cannot stop them doing that. However, our position on land rights is perfectly clear and always has been. But whether or not people will seek to have that raised as part of the compact I can tell the member when we have got somewhere down the track.

Members opposite seem to think that there is a major political issue that they can grasp, apart from one or two members on the fringes of their party who have a sort of reflex view about this matter. Members opposite think there is a big political issue here, and I suspect that there is, but not the one that they think is the issue.

I believe that, broadly, Australian people accept that while they do not want Aborigines given land rights they do want them to be given a fair go.

Mr Lightfoot: I agree.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: And they agree that they have not been given a fair go up until now. Having said that, I believe that the issue that will leave people opposite stranded is their failure to come to grips emotionally with the obligation that most Australians feel; that is, that it is time to give Aborigines a fair go and to not say, as so many people seem to want to say -- for political purposes sometimes -- that every Aborigine is a



drunken vandal, or in some other way cares not one whit for his or her child.

Mr MacKinnon: Who says that?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Time and time again public statements are made by people who say that Aborigines are living off --

Mr MacKinnon: For example.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Let me finish -- are living off social welfare and doing nothing but spending social welfare money they receive on grog. That has been said time and time again.

Mr MacKinnon: By whom?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: All I can say is that apart from numerous people who have telephoned from time to time to say this, both on the radio programme on which I appear publicly, and privately at home, I have seen stories on television about Wiluna and some of the problems experienced there, and about the problems at Mullewa when the people who were involved in the difficulty were interviewed and said, "These Aborigines were coming into town, getting drunk, and doing this and that." Perhaps the member is right, and they are not saying that, but I suspect that they are.

Mr Lightfoot: To be fair, I have always praised the Aborigines and have pointed out in this place the successful ones. I have been pleased to do that as there are very successful Aboriginal people in the community; so there are two sides to every story.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I do not disagree with that. In conclusion, our position on the compact has been set down perfectly, and the one thing about the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs is that he has shown that he is very accomplished in the presentation of a very soft and gentle attitude towards a problem that he has every right to be very antagonistic about; instead, the antagonism rests on the member's side of the House.

#### ABORIGINAL-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

##### *Mining Industry Response*

511. Mrs BUCHANAN, to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs:

What is the response of the Western Australian Government to the mining industry's support for a fresh start to relationships between Aboriginal people and the broader community?

Mr BRIDGE replied:

As the Premier fairly clearly outlined in his comments a few moments ago, we have gone through a very unpleasant debate in this Parliament in the last week revolving around the question of the compact of agreement.

Mr MacKinnon: What was unpleasant about it?

Mr BRIDGE: Well, I think the way in which we approached each other. Allegations were made by either side. Certain comments were made by various speakers that were not as pleasant as ordinarily, so I think that in itself is regrettable. As I said the other day, at a time when we had some very significant matters to deal with in this Parliament it was unfortunate that we should spend so much time on a matter and in the way in which it was dealt with. That was a very negative approach.

Mr MacKinnon: Was it not you who spent most time casting the abuse? In fact it was, if you look at the record. Just have a look at the record and see who it was who was participating in the abuse.

Mr BRIDGE: I was delighted last week to read of the position the Australian Mining Industry Council took in respect of the Prime Minister's announcement, in the sense that the industry came out in support of the Government's plan to revamp Aboriginal policies in this country. What can be said of this is that the council very accurately has assessed the

mood of the nation and has understood that that mood does require us to proceed down the path of acknowledging that there must be some kind of reconciliation in 1988.

Just for the record today, I had a meeting yesterday with CRA concerning a certain issue in this State -- a mining matter -- and the gentleman with whom I spoke yesterday was the very same gentleman to whom I spoke about another matter of a similar kind 10 years ago in the Kimberley. He agreed with me that, despite the lapse of time, in 1988 we are still in the same position as we were 10 years ago when we really had to depend on trust, goodwill, conciliation, preparedness to give, and preparedness to take, as we sought to resolve these matters. In no way was there a mechanism in place to deal with these matters.

The AMIC's announcement has pushed the Western Australian Liberal Party further into a position of being on the extreme right on this issue. I think that the plan of approach which is being mounted in this Parliament, led by the member for Cottesloe, supported by the Leader of the Opposition, and recklessly followed by the member for Vasse, has placed them in a position now of being on the extreme right of this debate. Being in that position in our society, one has to identify them alongside another group that currently seems to be on the extreme, but on the other side of the coin; that is, the likes of the Tasmanian, Michael Mansell. One could say that what we have in this State, effectively, which is perhaps a reflection of their general attitude, is Mansell on one side of the coin seeking not to be prepared to go down any path of reconciliation, and on the other side this small group identified here within the Liberal Opposition going down a similar path. The ultimate goal is simply to create further confrontation, bitterness, division, and so on in 1988.

These attitudes are in stark contrast to the attitudes of the Federal Opposition. The Federal Opposition spokesman on Aboriginal affairs, Mr Miles, has outlined to the House of Representatives views which largely support the Western Australian Government's position in respect of this matter. Mr Miles said -- and I will quote him for the purposes of the record -- that before there can be genuine progress there needs to be a recognition by both Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people of a deep desire to work together and to be reconciled about our history. There are deep hurts and there needs to be reconciliation, Mr Miles said. He also said that before we start to address the needs of the Aboriginal community we should at least attempt a reconciliation at the hearts and minds level. So Mr Miles welcomed full discussion on the Federal Government's proposals.

During debate, the Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs clearly demonstrated that there would be extensive consultations between the Federal Government and the community. This was something that the Opposition here dwelt on at length and said that in fact it would not happen. The Minister's speech clearly indicated that, and the Minister went on to say how, as a result of this lengthy consultation, a position would be reached when the people -- the public -- had clearly made known to the Federal Government their position.

Mr Hassell: Those consultations will be like your consultations on land rights where, having committed yourself to a compact, you will then consult people about how you would do it, not whether you should have a compact.

Mr BRIDGE: The Minister went on to say --

When the discussions reach this point, I believe it would be appropriate to set up a group of people with high-standing in the community and with the appropriate background and skills to undertake the vital and sensitive task of refining options put

forward by the Australian community for consideration by the Government.

It is clearly laid out that at a time when this information is being made available to the Government a mechanism will be put in place to look at the various proposals put forward. Nothing could be more fair --

Mr Hassell: -- objectionable than having a compact. Once you have a compact you have divided the nation. That is what you are about -- dividing the nation.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BRIDGE: That clearly shows the position which the Federal Government seeks --

Mr Hassell: And which you support, along with Mr Mansell and other extremists.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BRIDGE: I made the point a little while ago for the member for Cottesloe --

Mr Hassell: I heard you making that point.

Mr Brian Burke: You cannot control yourself on this issue, can you?

Mr Hassell: I know what the issue is and I know what you are committing us to. I know it is just like land rights when you try to get people to help you draft the legislation so they become locked into supporting it.

Mr BRIDGE: What is upsetting the member for Cottesloe is that we have been able to demonstrate very clearly to this House and to the public of Western Australia that he on one side and the likes of Michael Mansell on the other are the only groups of people at this stage who are voicing real rejection of this compact, and they both have a clear intent at this stage -- that intent is very clear. They do not want to see harmony in 1988; and that group on either side will be extremely saddened if the large group of Australians deny them that very process.

The SPEAKER: Order! I take the opportunity of pointing out to members that currently seated in the Speaker's Gallery is Hon Ron Davies, Agent General in London for Western Australia. Welcome home, Ron.

Mr Brian Burke: Hear, hear!

[Applause.]

#### STATE ENERGY COMMISSION *Compulsory Payments*

512. Mr HASSELL, to the Treasurer:

I agree with the Treasurer's reported remarks in opposition to Telecom's time charging proposals for local calls, and I understood him to say that he thought those proposals amounted to a tax on consumers. However, I refer the Treasurer to the situation in this State with the State Energy Commission, which is controlled by the State Government, and point out to him that the 1986-87 annual report of the SEC indicates that in the past five years compulsory payments to the State Government from the SEC have exceeded SEC profits by just on \$20 million -- \$19.75 million.

Mr Parker: You introduced that. We have not changed it.

Mr HASSELL: I know we introduced that.

Mr Parker: Sir Charles Court introduced it.

Mr HASSELL: This means, of course, that the SEC consumers have been taxed that amount. It seems to be the same principle as is now proposed by Telecom. Will the Treasurer effect a change to the SEC arrangement so that people stop being taxed and that only its profit is taxed, as is the case with the State Government Insurance Commission?

**Mr BRIAN BURKE** replied:

I take issue with the member for Cottesloe about his reflection of my comments. I actually said that Telecom should not be used as a taxing agent by the Commonwealth, not that any proposal -- the details of which are as yet unclear -- constituted Telecom acting as a taxing agent. There is a slight, but significant, difference.

In respect of the three per cent that is presently charged on the turnover of the SEC and the Metropolitan Water Authority -- now the Water Authority of Western Australia -- I can see some substance in the remarks made by the member for Cottesloe. I have no doubt that accurately represented those imposts as taxes. They may not always be taxes and it may not always be the case that those two bodies pay an amount greater than the profit they earn to make up the three per cent which is charged of them. In my view there is a difference; nevertheless I would that we did not have to charge any taxes or make any charges.

**Mr Hassell:** With the SGIC legislation, and a couple of other Bills that have gone through in recent times, you have provided for the equivalent in income tax to be paid, but with the SEC in the past five years you have had \$68 million in profit and \$88 million in payment to the State revenue.

**Mr BRIAN BURKE:** Yes, but the member acts as though the SGIC arrangement is something new when it is not new; and that arrangement is one which has been affecting the SGIO -- as it was previously -- and, for example, the R & I Bank in two different forms for many years.

**Mr Parker:** There is an alternative way of doing this. It has been done in Victoria. One can ask the SEC to provide a return on the capital employed. There is nothing wrong in asking for a return on the taxpayers' capital employed. I think you will find that if you did that, you would be asking for more money.

**Mr Hassell:** That might be exactly what Telecom is doing.

**Mr BRIAN BURKE:** I think there is a fundamental difference. State policy under the previous Government and our Government has differentiated between utilities like the Water Authority of Western Australia, the insurance operations that we have, and banking operations carried out by the R & I Bank. There have been different policies in each instance. However, in one respect I am sure the member will join me in congratulating the Government on its performance. Leaving aside the question of the three per cent, when one looks at electricity charges, for example, one sees that when the Liberal Government was in office the average annual increase was 12.7 per cent, whereas during our period in Government the average annual increase is only 8.2 per cent. I am sure --

**Mr MacKinnon:** If one looks at the SEC's own published accounts, it shows that your increases have been much greater.

**Mr BRIAN BURKE:** In any case, if that does not meet with Liberal Party members' approval, they should look at domestic gas charges --

**Mr Thompson:** If you don't hurry on, you will not meet with my approval.

**Mr BRIAN BURKE:** Meeting with the member's approval is not something that preoccupies me.

Domestic gas charges under the Liberal Government rose by 15.1 per cent each year on average; under this Government they rose by only 8.2 per cent.

**Mr Lightfoot:** Were they justifiable increases?

**Mr BRIAN BURKE:** Which increases?

**Mr Lightfoot:** The SEC increases.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The eight per cent which this Government managed to keep the increases down to were as a result of the most stringent and assiduous attention to costs, something that the member's Government, with its born to rule attitude, was not capable of achieving. We did manage that; I cannot account for the previous Government's performance.

I will finish now because the member for Kalamunda wants to ask a question, but the question was raised of the tax on consumers. If one looks at the metropolitan water domestic fixed charge, one finds that the Water Authority pays the three per cent too. The average annual increase under the Liberal Government was 21.6 per cent; under this Government it has been 4.4 per cent. Even the member for Mt Lawley, who never has anything good to say about anybody -- he would milk his neighbour's cow through a crack in the fence -- cannot deny that that is an outstanding performance. As far as the member for Cottesloe is concerned, I am pleased that he raised the opportunity for me to present him with an outstanding performance that more than makes up for the three per cent annual impost of his Government.

#### RACING INDUSTRY

##### *Allegations: Member for Murchison-Eyre*

513. Mr MARLBOROUGH, to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:

- (1) Does the Minister know whether members of the racing industry are investigating the serious allegations made by the member for Murchison-Eyre in Parliament last week, which cast a shadow over the horseracing industry in Western Australia?
- (2) Will the Minister please advise the House whether the Minister has kept his widely publicised promise to present what he said was important evidence to the racing inquiry?
- (3) If not, can the Minister do anything to ensure that he does so?

Mrs BEGGS replied:

(1)-(3)

As early as this morning, I was advised by the chairman of the racing inquiry that the member for Murchison-Eyre, certainly in debate in Parliament, had not supplied sufficient detail for the inquiry to permit any new line of the investigation immediately. That is not surprising considering that the allegations were lacking in detail; but I was surprised to learn also that the member for Murchison-Eyre had neither provided any evidence nor even given notice of any intention to give evidence to the inquiry in relation to the allegations he made in Parliament last week, even though he has publicly -- very publicly -- stated that he intends to take what evidence he has at his disposal to that inquiry. Unfortunately I do not have any power at all to ensure that the member for Murchison-Eyre takes those serious allegations to the inquiry. However, I suggest to him that he should, if he has any evidence at all to back up his serious allegations, immediately take it to the inquiry. I understand that today on the radio, the member for Murchison-Eyre said he would wait until Parliament finished and that he would seek legal advice or take a lawyer with him to ensure that the names of the people who gave him this information --

Mr Lightfoot: I have not said anything on the radio today.

Mrs BEGGS: It was a day or two ago. Whenever it was, the member said he would ask the chairman of the inquiry to guarantee that the names of the people who were supposed to have given information -- and not just information but evidence also -- would be protected.

I advise the member for Murchison-Eyre that the inquiry is almost at a closing stage. It has been given an extension of time to complete the inquiry by the Government, and I understand that the report and the

recommendations will be produced to me in early February. If the member is serious about his allegations, and if he is absolutely sure he has any evidence -- the allegations that the member made were very serious -- he should present it to the inquiry immediately so that it has the opportunity to investigate those allegations as thoroughly as I think they need to be investigated so that the racing industry in this State can be protected and to ensure that the names of the people he mentioned, either directly or indirectly, can also be protected.

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