

# Legislative Council

Wednesday, 6 May 1981

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. Clive Griffiths) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

## QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

### *Procedure: Statement by President*

**THE PRESIDENT** (the Hon. Clive Griffiths): Honourable members, I wish to announce that a changed procedure will apply as from today in regard to the questions which are shown on the notice paper. In future I shall call the number of the question and the name of the Minister to whom it is directed, and it will no longer be necessary for the member to rise and ask the question. Should a member decide not to proceed with a question on notice, it will be necessary for advice to be given to the Clerk prior to the meeting of the Council.

Members: Hear, hear!

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Three cheers for progress, no matter how slow.

## QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

## CLOSING DAYS OF SESSION: FIRST PART

### *Standing Orders Suspension*

**THE HON. I. G. MEDCALF** (Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [4.43 p.m.]: Members will appreciate that there are certain items of Government legislation which must be finalised prior to the conclusion of this part of the 1981 session of the Parliament. At this stage I am unable to give a firm date for the conclusion of the autumn sitting. However, it is desirable to formulate some sort of timetable on which to operate, and 14 May has been suggested as a possible date.

This motion will enable any Bills as required to pass through all stages in any one sitting, although such action may not be necessary in all instances. Unfortunately I am not able to provide the House with a list of those Bills. We can anticipate in the main those priorities will be dependent upon the passage of legislation determined in another place. However, there is certain legislation which must, of necessity, become operative prior to or soon after the budget session commences; or legislation which is considered to be of an urgent nature. It may be taken, therefore, that any Bills received in this

House during the next week or so will come within the scope of this motion.

I assure members that, on my part, there will be full co-operation in respect of the progress of Bills where warranted; and all members will be given the opportunity to speak to them. At the same time it must be borne in mind that we need to maintain a timetable which will allow this part of the session to conclude at a date convenient to the House.

In conjunction with this motion, I wish to inform members that I envisage the necessity to introduce earlier sittings of the House next week. At present I have in mind commencing at 2.30 p.m. next Wednesday, and at 11.00 a.m. on Thursday. Members should know also that it may be necessary to sit after dinner tomorrow—necessary, although unlikely—and more certainly on Thursday of next week.

I move—

That during the remainder of the first period of this current session so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable Bills to be passed through all stages in any one sitting and all Messages from the Legislative Assembly to be taken into consideration forthwith.

Question put and passed.

## NEW BUSINESS: TIME LIMIT

### *Suspension of Standing Order No. 117*

**THE HON. I. G. MEDCALF** (Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [4.46 p.m.]: This motion supplements the previous one, and it is intended to enable new business to be commenced, and to permit the passage of Bills received by this House after 11.00 p.m. to be proceeded with to such a stage as may be deemed necessary. I move—

That during the remainder of the first period of this current session, Standing Order 117 (limit of time for commencing new business) be suspended.

Question put and passed.

## EDUCATION: BENTLEY AND TUART HILL HIGH SCHOOLS

### *Closure: Motion*

**THE HON. R. HETHERINGTON** (East Metropolitan) [4.47 p.m.]: I move—

(1) That this House—

(a) deplores the sudden decision of the Western Australian Government to close the Tuart Hill Senior High

- School and the Bentley Senior High School without any prior consultation with students, teachers, parents, or the community in general;
- (b) deplores the decision to dismember the Technical Division of the Education Department without any public discussion or consultation;
  - (c) recognises the need to examine and discuss the best method of maintaining the State's high schools while using the excess capacities of those high schools in a manner that is in the best interests of the community; and
  - (d) recognises the need to make schools real community centres.
- (2) That this House therefore calls on the Government to respond to the request of the State School Teachers' Union and the Western Australian Council of State Schools Organisations, to delay the decision to convert Bentley Senior High School and Tuart Hill Senior High School for at least 12 months so that the Government might inquire and encourage further discussion to—
- (a) establish an optimum size for high schools;
  - (b) examine the possible alternative use of high schools with excess capacity as multi-purpose schools capable of providing for the particular needs of particular communities;
  - (c) examine the educational value of having adult and TAE students attending technical colleges;
  - (d) examine the need for adults, particularly women in the home, to have further education available to them in their communities; and
  - (e) examine the best ways of providing alternatives for those people, particularly young people, who wish to return to study.

This is rather a long motion, but it deals with a most important subject. It is a subject that has caused a great deal of distress to parents in areas of this State, and to many people who have the educational interests of the children of Western Australia at heart.

It is less than a calendar month since I was shocked at the announcement by the Government

that the Senior High Schools at Tuart Hill and Bentley would be converted into senior colleges. Despite the immediate and vigorous protests by parents in both areas, the Government appears not to want to change its mind. That is most unfortunate because, in a matter as important as this one, where the structure of the Education Department and the nature of education are concerned, it would seem that greater discussion than we have had is essential, and there should not have been the sudden announcement "out of the blue" that the closures were going to happen.

I have been at two meetings of the Bentley PCA where the director general and the Minister have spoken. I have listened to the Minister's speech on the steps of Parliament House. I have listened to the Minister on 6PR speaking in a talk-back session. I have been quite interested to hear what he said; but I have found his remarks not terribly satisfactory. The Minister has said that the suddenness of the decision was brought about because the plans that had been under consideration for some time in the Education Department had been leaked when the Education Department approached the Teachers' Union. The implication is that, otherwise, there would have been adequate consultation with everybody.

I cannot see how this would have happened, because the timing of the announcement suggests that there would not be adequate time for the Minister and his department to introduce the changes in the next school year.

It is becoming increasingly evident that this was always the intention. Had the Government intended consulting with all the people concerned, starting with the Teachers' Union, then other teachers and the parents—I assume the Government would not consider talking to students, because there seems to be a view that students are to be taught but not heard—it would have taken months.

Had the consultation occurred and the decision was still made to convert the schools, we would have been told about it towards the end of the year. This would have caused even more heartbreak and disruption.

At a public meeting recently, I suggested to the Minister a proposal of this magnitude should have been approached quite differently. Many of us—I am one—have been most interested over the years to watch the declining numbers of students in high schools. We have been thinking about the best way in which to use the excess capacities of high schools. It is a most important question and it is a most important public question. Any Government which took the matter seriously and

did not want to impose its own cut-and-dried views, would have given it great consideration.

The Minister said the Government started talking about the matter two years ago. If that is the case, it seems to me it would have been highly desirable for this Government to take a leaf out of the book of various British Governments and issue a Green Paper putting forward the proposals for the use of the excess capacities of high schools. It should then have asked for input from the general public to generate discussion on the issue so that ideas could be thrown up and examined.

Some of us, and I am one, believe—this seems not to be the feeling of the Minister for Education, if I understand correctly what he has been saying—that all wisdom does not lie in the highly efficient men found in the Education Department. I am sure the Hon. Graham MacKinnon would be the first to attack me if I said unduly harsh words about the Director General of Education (Dr Mossenson). I respect him as a competent, intelligent, and highly dedicated public servant. However, on this issue, I believe he is wrong. I do not believe he is infallible, nor do I believe anybody in the Education Department is infallible.

The Minister should read a book about ministerial responsibility because he keeps saying at various public meetings “Well, the department has said this, and this is the view of the intelligent people from the department.” It is time the Minister had a view of his own. He ought to learn the meaning of responsible government. Responsibility lies not with the department and its view; responsibility lies with the Minister and his view, if he can understand the view put forward by the department. I have no evidence that he can do so. Certainly in the public utterances I have heard the Minister make on the subject, I have no evidence he has understood any of the problems to any extent.

Many other people who have heard the Minister speak on this issue have said that they do not think he understands it very well and they are most perturbed that he seems to have such a poor grasp of the problems and that he keeps throwing the whole matter back on the department and its experts.

The Minister speaks as if the department is unanimous on the matter. Of course, this is not true. There is division in the department and departmental experts disagree on the issue. Although some of them disagree with what has been said, they cannot say so publicly. It would have been a good idea for the Government to give

people time to look at this matter, rather than present it as an accomplished fact.

As a result of this decision, children will be sent to other high schools. I take the point which the Hon. Phillip Pandal made the other day; that is, that if the children have to be bussed further, it will not be very much further. I am aware of that. However, the honourable member seemed to think, when I suggested it, that if we had to bus people elsewhere, if we close one of the other schools, that much further was too much further. Nevertheless, we do not need to worry about the distances and I hope the member does not raise that issue again, because many important matters are at stake.

One of the important matters at stake is the whole question of the position of the technical section of the Education Department and the technical division. It is a sector which the present Federal Government believes should be expanded. It is probably the only matter about which I have heard which the Federal Government thinks should be expanded. I presume the expansion will be more apparent than real as the “razor gang” wields another hatchet here and there. We can understand one of the reasons the Minister was worried was that he had a sniff of what was coming at the Premiers’ Conference when this State’s real level of grants was reduced by over \$46 million. Therefore, I suppose we cannot be surprised the Minister is considering cost cutting; but, at the same time, we have to study the position of technical education colleges.

For many years these colleges have produced their specialities. Some of them have been business colleges whilst others have been automotive, trade, or vocational colleges of various kinds. At the same time, they have taught TAE subjects. They have taught adults who want to take the TAE, which was known as matriculation in the past or the Leaving before that. It has gone on for a long time.

As far as I understand it, the Minister’s rationale, as presented in the statements to which I have listened, is that the technical colleges are duplicating what is done elsewhere, so we should remove the TAE students from them. However, the Minister will set up new TAE colleges which will duplicate the work carried out in the high schools. In other words, he is perpetuating the duplication.

If that is the Minister’s reason, it can be seen it is no reason at all. It is sad that that is the only explanation given by the Minister and he cannot give any other justification for dismembering the technical colleges. Every now and then it slips out

that the Minister does not want to spend money building extra colleges, but the present colleges are becoming rather full.

I heard the Minister being asked a question at a public meeting recently. He was asked whether he had consulted the adults who were involved in TAE courses as to how the change would affect them. He said the adults would have no trouble, because most of them had vehicles and some came from as far away as Kwinana and various other places. Therefore, he said there was no problem in that regard. However, the Minister did not answer the question asked and I ask the Minister representing the Minister for Education in this House whether anybody has consulted the adults at the Fremantle Technical College and Leederville Technical College to see what they think of the proposals.

It is rather ironic that the Government has decided on Bentley in such a lighthearted and cavalier fashion—I shall return to why Bentley was chosen in due course—bearing in mind that it is situated within a stone's throw of WAIT. Already full-time students are desperately jostling for accommodation in that area.

One of the needs of full-time, adult students is accommodation. What will happen to the full-time, adult students who are attending Leederville Technical College or Fremantle Technical College at the moment if they have to go to Tuart Hill or Bentley? They will have to look for accommodation in an area which has already a serious shortage.

I wonder whether anyone has thought about that. I asked a series of 20 questions and I gather from the replies I received that departmental officers were now thinking about the matter, but no-one had thought about the whole sense of the question that followed from the proposed conversion of two high schools to senior colleges.

In other words, the whole proposal had not got off the drawing board; it was still a proposal which, in some ranks of the Education Department, was thought to be a good one. However, those concerned had not worked out the final details, but now of course they will have to look at it further.

The Minister said that the Teachers' Union broke a confidence before the Minister made his premature announcement. I hope I misheard him at a public meeting when he said "I even didn't know what the department was suggesting when they first approached the Teachers' Union." I hope it is not true, but it would not surprise me because it seems to me the Minister quite often does not know a great deal of what is going on in

the Education Department because he is relying on experts.

I would have hoped that at a time such as this, when there are vast structural changes in the economy, and when we are turing into a high technology society, the Government would increase the literacy and numeracy rates of people because no longer do we have labour-intensive industry that can mop up any illiteracy. We must have another look at our education system and we have to think what we must do about the declining population rate in schools. We must consider the alternatives and a whole range of other matters. Those who have been interested in education have been worrying about these aspects for years and it would be good if we had a Minister who had been doing the same.

I have no doubt that there are many people in the Education Department who have been worrying about these matters. I know the Director General of Education has been worrying about them and he is not the only one. There is a need for more discussion and consultation. We must discuss the whole problem.

I do not have a pat and easy answer to these problems.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: But you are good at criticising.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: Yes, I am good at criticising people who fail to obtain an input from the people who are concerned. In the same way, I was good at criticising the Education Department earlier when it was under the previous Minister and when it failed to have adequate consultation with those involved with the Belmont High School.

I am the first to praise anyone, including the present Minister for Education, when he does the right thing and consults with people. By doing the right thing and consulting with people involved with the Belmont High School, we may obtain a high school which is suitable for the people who teach there and for its students. Yes, indeed, I am good at criticising people who seem to make decisions without adequate consultation with the people who are involved and I will continue to do so if need be.

If the Minister wishes to make his usual inane interjections then I will turn aside and shout just in case he does not understand. It is unfortunate that when we believe people do not understand we believe them to be deaf also.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: I hope the rest of your argument is properly based.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I suggest the member should ignore the interjections.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I would have thought that after the pitiful performance of the Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife in response to Mr Berinson's motion there would be less talk from the Government front bench about arguments being properly based.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I suggest the honourable member should get back to his own motion.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I was attempting to point out, for the edification of the Minister—and I hope he listens—that there are people in the technical branch who think that what is being done is the right thing, but there are other people who think that what is being done is the wrong thing. There is a great deal of indecision. There are many people in the technical colleges who have said to me that one good thing about technical colleges is that having adults as TAE students adds some seriousness and maturity and it is perhaps a good influence on some of the young people. I believe that is true, but I also believe that at this particular stage with the change in our economy, in order to have a feasible education system it is a good idea to keep people in the TAE courses and so that they may become more than vocational and perhaps people doing technical courses could also do some TAE courses.

I believe also that it is desirable—that is, if it is possible and I do not know whether it is yet—that in some of the schools with excess capacity perhaps to set up particular schools where there are trade courses which could be done by people doing the TAE courses.

I think we should look into this matter in our technical colleges. We should also consider the statements that the technical colleges are bursting at the seams and that they duplicate work done elsewhere, and that we should take the full-time TAE students out of technical colleges and make two other senior colleges available to them. However, no-one seems to know much about the situation yet. There is a need for adequate examination and discussion about these matters.

I would have thought that the technical and further education section of the department is one that could well be funded and expanded. It could well be asked to put out branches into high schools where there are excess capacities and where it would be suitable.

I am one of those people who believes that people who have gone through school and have failed should be given a second chance. That is

the view of the Director General of Education also and it is a fine thing that people should be given a second chance. However, I have been told that the Minister has said that he had to get this through next year so that he has somewhere to put 16 and 17-year-olds who may not receive unemployment relief from the Federal Government. The heavy hand of "Big Brother" is still felt over this State. That fact was brought to my mind when I heard the lamentations of the Premier. Many of the lamentations of the Premier are quite correct and the things we predicted would happen under the Fraser Government's new federalism are now occurring. So, we find ourselves in a parlous and difficult position.

I would argue that if people have been through the education system and have for various reasons not obtained the skills required to gain employment in this community then we should not necessarily give them those skills by forcing them back to school. If there are people who have been through schools and do not wish to go back, but wish to escape, then I believe in the interests of the community they should be allowed to do so. They should be permitted to look for a job and to be paid unemployment relief until they find one. They should be able to find out what the real world is like and then be allowed to go back to a technical college to do their TAE or whatever they may wish. They should not be forced out of the statistics as a way to reduce the number of unemployed people.

It appears that in the next Budget the Federal Government intends to force these people into what I described the other night—and I was criticised for doing so—as the new work houses of the 20th century. I said that I was sad after reading much of the debate on the 1834 Poor Laws. I have read much about the poor law system in the 19th century. The work houses were called Bastilles and it seems that we are now to have a Bentley Bastille.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: How ridiculous.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: It is not ridiculous. The Minister should think about it for a while. The Minister should think of the threats upon the kids who are out of work.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: The Minister should think about the matter a little more, especially some of the problems faced by the young people who are out of work.

There are many people in my electorate who have children who go to the Bentley High School and they perhaps will not find my statement ridiculous, because it appears that 15 and 16-

years-olds are to be put into these colleges where it is thought they will be disciplined better if they are with adults. If they are allowed to go back to school to learn with adults that is different and I would be the first to applaud that proposal.

I do not agree with the senior college concept as I did not agree with the senior college concept put forward by the director general in Albany a couple of years ago. While it is not the first time that senior colleges have been talked about—

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Therefore, it didn't come as a great shock.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: Well, it is a different kind of senior college. It seems to be one thing in one place and another in another place, but I would be much happier if the senior college concept was not wrapped up with the idea of having somewhere to put the 16 and 17-year-olds because that starts the senior college idea off on the wrong foot. It may indeed go sour, but I hope it is not the case.

I have not been attracted by the senior college proposal. It smacks of elitism. I think it is going too far. I believe there should be greater integration of age groups in society and in school. I applaud what is being done in Kalamunda.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: You said a moment ago you disagreed with it.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: The Minister did not hear the whole argument. I disagree with putting 16-year-olds into a situation which is designed to discipline them.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: You said with adults.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I do not agree with the situation where they are put in with adults with the idea of disciplining them. I did not mean just adults; I was talking of a whole range of people under different circumstances. However, I would not expect the Minister to understand what I am saying because there is a certain amount of subtlety in the concept.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: You are not being very nice today.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: Indeed, I am not being very nice today because I think what the Government is doing is deplorable. I think we are about to remodel the education system without sufficient thought and without sufficient consultation. We may be about to destroy the good things in the technical side of the Education Department. I wonder what sort of warfare is going on in the Education Department. Who is trying to get whom and who is trying to

start a new empire—which happens in some great bureaucratic departments?

I would be happier if the whole subject had been brought out into the open and discussed over the past two years; if Green Papers had been issued on the matter so that we would know that at least the Government's decision was based on all the available facts and evidence, and that the decision represented the Government's idea of what was good for the State as a whole. Probably, I would still disagree with the Government because my view of what is good for the State as a whole is not necessarily that of the Government.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: The Education Department officers would not know about it, of course.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: As I have already said, they know a great deal about it. I have already paid tribute to those officers, as the Hon. Alexander Lewis would know had he been listening. However, as I said, people who are able and intelligent are not necessarily infallible. Able and intelligent people are not necessarily always doing things for the right motive; sometimes they have their self-interests to serve. I hope that is not the case at present. I would feel happier about the whole matter had there been more discussion.

I would be happier about the matter had we examined the performance of the technical education division in the past and the role it will play in the future. I have friends who were TAE students at the Leederville Technical College who are upset about the idea of the college losing its TAE students and, in the process, losing the ethos and the whole atmosphere of the college. They thought it was an excellent institution. I am not convinced these senior colleges replace what we already have going for us in the technical sphere.

Another aspect of the matter needs to be discussed. Recently, I asked whether there had been an examination of alternative uses of schools as multi-purpose institutions and the answer was "Yes, they have been examined and rejected." That aspect needs to be discussed. It seems to me one of the things we should be trying to do with the excess capacity in our high schools is to look at the various communities in which those high schools are situated. Some high schools have excess capacity because the people in the area are ageing and no longer are having children. If one is interested in people, as I am—

The Hon. G. E. Masters: I am sure we all are.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I hope the Minister is. I can speak for myself; I know I am interested in people.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: You know I am interested in people; in fact, you have acknowledged it many times. We are all interested in people, otherwise we would not be here.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: What we need to do is a little lateral thinking in regard to the problems experienced at each school. We should consider what is happening to the population and establish whether the use of that facility is in the interests of the community at large.

My attitude to this matter is coloured by my basic philosophies which I have developed over many years. Some people in this place might sneer at them because I got them out of books as well as from commerce, from living with people, from the Army, from schools and universities where I taught, from the Public Service where I worked, and from private enterprise, where I was a very inefficient clerk. No doubt some people will say "That explains everything. He was not a success there, so he has hated private enterprise ever since." Of course, that is not true.

One of the things which have been wrong with our industrial society is that we have allowed the development of large dormitory suburbs where people become lost and anonymous. As I am sure the Hon. Mick Gayfer would be the first to tell me, this is one of the attributes of country towns—the feeling of belonging and of community. This is one of the good things village life in England and many country towns in Western Australia still possess. This should not be knocked; it gives people a place, where they belong. Quite often they can be respected for what they are in a community which knows them. It is psychologically most important that people belong.

It has been argued at length that one of the things which made possible the rise of Hitler in Germany was the alienation of people in dormitory suburbs. They lost their sense of community and developed a feeling of aloneness, as if they were autonomous units. They were reunified under the aegis of a strong leader.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: You are casting a wide net now.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I am widening the discussion. The Minister for Lands might find it very odd that I do have a world view of things. My politics is related to my world view; it is how I see the world and how I see Western Australia in the world, and related to the rest of Australia; it is how I see what we are trying to do with people who must live in this industrial world.

I see it as a whole, and if the Minister cares to read all the speeches I have made in this House, he will find a unity running through them.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Do not give it all to us again now; get back to the subject.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I am right on my motion, and if the Minister wants to throw his remarks across the table, I will explain why I made those comments. I am quite serious about what I said. In fact, I never say anything in this House when I am talking seriously that I do not mean and have not thought about. I have thought about this matter a great deal. I am sorry if the Minister for Lands thinks I am broadening the debate too much when I am talking about an education system which has been radically modified without consultation.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: You were talking about Hitler earlier.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: Whether the Government is right or wrong, the way it is going about implementing its policies is deplorable. So many problems surround the whole issue that the matter should be discussed at length over at least a couple of years, and probably more. I am the first to admit that when I put my ideas before some teachers, they disagree with me violently, and say my ideas will not work. Perhaps those people are right. However, this matter should have been discussed.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Didn't you say you discussed this matter two years ago at Albany?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: It is a little hard to know what to do with an interjection like that.

The PRESIDENT: Order! It is very easy to know what to do with it—ignore it.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: If I do ignore it, I ignore the fact the Minister misunderstood everything I said. I mentioned earlier in my remarks an idea had been put forward in Albany to develop senior colleges in another form. Now, I am talking about a whole range of problems. The idea of senior colleges in Albany was just a piddling little idea which grew in Albany.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: You were speaking very highly of country centres a moment ago.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: As a matter of fact, I was interested in the whole problem in Albany. If the Minister wants me to develop that point a little further, perhaps he will bear with me when I say that I thought that in Albany there

was the possibility of building up a series of schools which specialised in different subjects so that there would be a choice of schools for children to attend. We could have established an interesting educational experiment in Albany. Quite worth-while courses are being developed very imaginatively at the schools in Albany, to the benefit of the children and the schools.

I take Albany very seriously, although I thought the proposed secondary college was bad for the area. I am glad to say the department has changed its mind; I do not know whether I helped it to do so, but I was down there talking about the matter. However, when compared with the whole of our educational system, the little argument at Albany is comparatively minor.

Some 26 high schools are under capacity. Is this the beginning of a series of senior colleges? What is the intention of the department as these schools shrink? We have been shown tables indicating a fall-off in numbers. These figures have been extrapolated to show that, by 1986, the enrolment at Bentley High School will be down to around 400 students. That may be the case, or what occurs at Bentley may be what occurred in a suburb I moved into. It was at a period when my wife and I had passed through our fertile period; in other words, we had had our children. We moved into a declining Adelaide suburb where the school population was falling. We brought three children to the area, and by the time we left that suburb, the school population was increasing because the older people in the area were dying off and were being replaced by young people with children. That may happen at Bentley.

The Government's contention that enrolments at Bentley High School will fall to about 400 students by 1986 does not necessarily follow unless it shows conclusively that other factors have been taken into consideration. Nothing I have heard so far from the Director General of Education or the Minister for Education—I have listened to them very carefully, because I am interested in the matter—has suggested those other factors have been taken into consideration. I am not saying they have not; all I am saying is that I do not have the evidence that they have been considered because it has not been revealed to us.

One of the things I have learnt is that the Deputy Principal of the Bentley Senior High School (Mr Bill James)—I am not saying anything to his detriment; I have no evidence that he is anything other than an able, capable, and dedicated member of the Education Department—was seconded to the planning section of the department and compiled a report

on the utilisation of high schools. That much I know for certain; there can be no debate on that matter.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Good.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I just wish to let the Minister know what I know. It is also alleged that report suggested that the first school which should be closed in this area and turned into a senior college was Como High School, not Bentley High School, and that, in fact, Bentley High School was fairly low down on the list. I wonder whether that is correct, which is why I would like the report tabled.

I mention in passing that it was rather pleasant for a change to have the Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife supply me with a very detailed answer. I hope the Minister for Education follows suit on the question of Mr James and his report, because I think it is a fairly important matter. However, I have become used to receiving short shrift from the Minister for Education.

I would like to know some of the inputs into the department. A person is not saying that people are not intelligent, dedicated, or able if he says he wants to see their reasons and does not believe the end result they have put before him is necessarily the correct one.

To get back to where I was some time ago when the Minister took me a fair way round by interjection, I believe that because of the developments in our industrial life and the kind of suburbs we have, we need to build up a sense of community, and what we should have are community schools.

[Resolved: That motion be continued.]

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I think we need to think more about the use of schools. I have listed quite seriously in my motion questions I think need to be considered by members. I will run through these fairly briefly and then sit down.

I do ask that members seriously consider asking the Government to study these matters. I know the Minister will not ask the Government, but the House, in its wisdom, might ask the Government to delay its decision for 12 months as has been requested by the State School Teachers' Union and WACSSO. Those two bodies are in agreement, as they should be. A period of 12 months would give us further time to consider the matter.

The items we should examine are those I have listed in my motion. I have not tried to pull any smart tricks. I have laid the items down for consideration by the members of the House and of course the Minister for Education and his



departmental officers, who no doubt had a look at them this morning, if they took me seriously, so they could provide some kind of answers for the Minister who represents the Minister for Education in this place.

We should examine to the best of our ability the idea of what is the best size—the optimum size—for a high school. I asked a question on this matter and I did not get a very good answer. The Minister tends to duck this sort of question and to say that the school once had 1 400 students and now has 700 students, as if that had something to do with it. What size a school may have grown to or what it is at present has nothing to do with the optimum size of a high school. The optimum size of a high school takes into account at least two factors. I would regard the first and most important factor to be covered in the question: How big does a high school have to grow before it is not possible for the teachers adequately to know the children they are teaching, to deal with their problems, and to see them as human beings?

I do not accept the idea—and I do not think the Minister would accept the idea—that our schools are established merely to inculcate skills. They are established to do that, but they are established also to deal with people. We are hoping that what will come out of our schools are responsible citizens. I am hoping that what will come out of our schools are responsible citizens with critical, inquiring minds who will make good democrats. I also think of democracy when I think of education; I think of a whole range of things because they are important. I want people with critical, inquiring minds. I have no doubt that were I a Minister in a Government I would feel I did not want them so much because they might criticise me and inquire into what I was doing; but it would make me a better Minister if I did have to deal with such people.

The second criterion is the range of courses that can be offered in a school. How small does a school have to be before it cannot satisfactorily provide an adequate choice of subjects for the students? What is an adequate choice? I will not attempt to answer those questions here, because I do not know the answers. I have always tended to accept that a school of about 500 or 700 students is around the optimum size, because I believe that once we get over 700 it is hard for the teachers to get to know the students. I have had teachers disagree with me, but I think a school of 1 000 students that adequately can deal with the total needs of those students is rare and must have a pretty good headmaster and a pretty good team of teachers.

Ever since I heard a Minister for Education in South Australia boasting that he had built another magnificent school for 1 000 students, it has been my view that a school of that size is too large. When I went to school it was to a school of 350 students, and that did not seem to be too small a school. It seemed quite a good size, but I am prepared to listen to the educational experts on this point. The matter should be discussed fully, because we have to come up with some consensus about the optimum size of a school. At a meeting the other night, Dr Mossenson suggested that 900 was a good size and indicated by implication that that was so because it was the only way students could get an adequate range of courses. I find that hard to believe. It seems to me that people also assume we must have a certain staff-student ratio, and we ought to think about that, too. We do need to examine and discuss the alternatives.

In my dealings with the Belmont Senior High School, it did seem to me that what was highly desirable in Belmont where there were many single-parent families and migrants was a special kind of school which got parents into the school and participating and perhaps coming back to school. To do that we have to spend money because we do not get married women, who have kids at home, going to school unless we provide creches for their children. Perhaps we would need to provide them with meals and a whole range of other things. It may be advisable in some schools that we set up learning centres for women or that we set up enrichment centres for the retired people who can go back and do various courses. I have met one gentleman who is retired and doing two subjects at the university—Italian and one other subject. This is to be encouraged. One of the things we tend to do in our suburbs every now and again, and especially in Cannington, is to build autumn centres a long way from schools with excess capacity. Why not bring them together and perhaps find an alternative and better use for the excessive capacity at Bentley High School?

One concomitant feature of bureaucrats—and here I am not being unduly harsh on bureaucrats—is that they tend to extrapolate from one point right across. It has been suggested to me that it would be nice to have women come back into schools, but that they would not come back anywhere but at Kalamunda. As you, Mr President, would be aware, your colleague in another place would be the first to tell you that at Kalamunda they have a fairly devoted set of intelligent middle-class women who are interested in setting up learning centres. They have the atmosphere for these and they have support and

encouragement. In other areas it would be necessary for the department to do that. This would be desirable, but it is something we cannot achieve overnight; we would have to look into it and examine the possibilities.

The Minister may tell me—if he does I will accept his point—that we do not have the funds at the present time. I am sure he does not have the funds, but that does not mean we cannot look ahead to see whether we can find a little bit of funding here and there and start planning for how we are to develop the Education Department in the future and decide what we are going to do with the technical and further education sector. We must decide whether we will make it the sector which provides the flexibility in the department or whether to chop it back and make it a vocational sector and nothing more.

I would like these questions discussed because they are important. We are not just setting up a little college, a one-off thing. We are changing the structure of our Education Department and our education system, and this is important. I would be the first to agree that the structure needs changing, but we must discuss what kind of changes are necessary.

Certainly this sudden decision made in petulance because someone was alleged to have leaked information which was put before the Teachers' Union is not the way to make decisions that affect the whole future of our education system in Western Australia. I think we should examine whether there is an educational value in having what I suggested before; that is, adult TAE students with the young apprentices in technical colleges. We should inquire into this aspect.

We should also inquire into the value of forcing 16 and 17-year-olds, who do not want to go to school, into colleges with adults. We should ascertain whether that is a good idea in that instance. We want to look at both these different aspects. There will be a different relationship and there is a different relationship between adults and young people in senior colleges compared with that of adults and young people in technical schools. We must ask ourselves whether the one is worth keeping and whether the other is worth producing. My quick answer on the evidence I have available is that the technical school relationship is worth keeping and the senior college relationship is not worth developing; but I am open to correction. I would like these matters to be discussed.

If, as schools diminish in number, we close them so that those remaining become further and

further apart, I am worried about the people who do need a second chance, particularly women at home with children, women in families which may not have two cars and where the husband may use the car to go to work, or in families without any car—and these do exist and there are going to be more of them as fuel prices rise. Public transport will be relied on more and more and we will need to have a more efficient public transport system, as my colleague the Hon. Fred McKenzie has quite rightly told us time and time again and will tell us on numerous occasions in the future. This aspect is also tied up with the education question because people must be able to get to education centres.

It seems to me that if we are going to get the people who most need education—and I do not mean the people who were the first to benefit, and I do not object to this; I taught some of them under the schemes put forward by the Whitlam Government for married women to return to school, and I got lots of matrons from Dalkeith, some of whom were very bright, and I had some interesting tutorials—and if we are going to extend this possibility of making available opportunities for education to women in working-class districts, we must have educational establishments close to them and we must think of establishing high schools that are multi-purpose in nature.

Of course, there will be drawbacks, but the advantages may be much greater. We have to look at whether on occasion, if a primary school gets too small, we might have to shift the school holus-bolus into one end of a high school. We would then have a school ranging from kindergarten to TAE, and that might be a good thing. It might not be, but I personally believe it would, and I would like these matters discussed publicly because none of them has been. If the Minister representing the Minister for Education tells me that these matters have been discussed within the department, well, I will say "Bully for them. I am glad to hear it".

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: I would be surprised if they had not been.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I, too, would be surprised if they had not, but the closure should have been discussed outside the department. Some of the people aware of the problems are the people receiving the education. No matter how well meaning the experts may be, they do not always see the problems and, sometimes, we need an input from the people affected by a decision.

It is terribly easy for me to say that we can do this or that and that people must travel long distances, but I have a motorcar and many of the people in my electorate do not. They have their problems which I am trying to understand. I am growing to understand them more the longer I am in Parliament, but I do not understand them all and I need the people in my electorate to come to me to tell me their problems, and that is what the Education Department needs—people to go to it with their problems.

I am particularly concerned about the present situation. One of the vital aspects—I agree here with what Dr Mossenson said—is that it is most important we give young people who have come through the school systems—without for some reason the right motivation, aptitude, or skills needed to survive in our society—the opportunities to succeed.

I mentioned recently that I visited the Riverbank institution and saw there young men who cannot tell the time, read, or measure. They have gone through their schooling and obtained no skills at all that are necessary for them to live in our complex industrial society.

We must think about the best way to give them a second opportunity. If such boys have just turned 15 and have tried to escape from school we will take unemployment relief away from them in an attempt to force or prod them into going back to school, or to a college, when they really do not know what they are looking for.

After being out of school for a couple of years they will realise some of the problems associated with living in our society, and realise what kinds of schooling they really needed. They will become more motivated.

Some youngsters are quite motivated now and there are schemes in technical colleges to educate these kids in skills. I have met some of the disadvantaged kids at Leederville Technical College, and they have shown me their particular house and said how delighted they are with what is being done for them and the opportunities being made available to them. I am glad that is being done, and I am pleased, and give credit to the Federal Government department which makes the money available—I hope it continues to do so.

We must examine all the problems, and what we must realise is that our unemployment rate is high with people who are not necessarily out of work because they want to be, but because work is not available. What we are trying to do is offer them the opportunity to obtain skills in order that they might find work, and the education in order

that they might be able to cope in a work situation, which is probably harder to do.

These matters need to be discussed; so, Mr President, I suggest to members in this House that they consider carefully my motion and support it because it asks—it is a fairly mild motion—the Minister for Education to defer his decision for at least 12 months—I do think two years would be better—so that we can discuss this whole range of problems. Otherwise we might go off half-cocked with the restructuring of the Education Department to the detriment of our education system in Western Australia; and, if that happened, it would be a great tragedy.

I commend my motion to the House.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: I second the motion.

**THE HON. P. G. PENDAL** (South-East Metropolitan) [5.52 p.m.]: A few weeks ago this House engaged in a similar debate and I took that opportunity to express my personal disappointment as one of the members in whose electorate one of the schools exist, and to express my disappointment that the decision to close the school ever had been made. On this occasion I use the opportunity to reinforce that expression of disappointment that the decision ever had to be made. At the same time I use this occasion to reinforce another comment I made, and that related to the conversion of Bentley Senior High School to a senior college—it was inevitable. It has been suggested that something sinister is involved in the decision of the Government, but I do not think anyone has put forward evidence to sustain those sorts of allegations. The evidence supports the inevitability of the closure of, at least, the Bentley Senior High School.

Earlier the Hon. Bob Hetherington referred fleetingly to some of the student figures involved, and I want to dwell for a moment on them. In 1969 the Bentley Senior High School experienced what was regarded then as its peak enrolment when it had a total student population of 1 465. Eight years later that number had fallen to 925, a dramatic fall in anyone's estimation. In every year since, the student enrolment of that school has fallen. In 1978 it went down to 848; in 1979 to 767; in 1980 to 691; and in 1981 to 631. Next year the projected student enrolment is 574. I ask members who are considering the motion put forward by the Hon. Bob Hetherington to bear those figures in mind. Twelve years ago there was a peak enrolment of 1 465 students, and for next year there is a projected enrolment of 574.

If anyone in this House, in this Parliament, or, indeed, in the community, can dispute that those

figures represent a vast underutilisation at present of an important Government-provided establishment then I would like to hear from him. The end result is that the taxpayer provides the funds for facilities of that kind, and has every reason to demand that the present Government make better use of a school which only 12 years ago was carrying a student population of in excess of 700 over and above the number it carries at the moment.

I use the opportunity of this debate for another reason; and that is, publicly to set the record straight in regard to some comments I made recently in the House when I quoted the Principal of the Bentley Senior High School (Mr W. J. Eborall). At that time in good faith I used some of his comments which were reported in the "South Suburban News" of *The West Australian* of 15 April this year. I do not suggest that report in its impact was totally inaccurate, but it was brought to my attention after I used certain quotations from it—I drew attention to comments reported to have been made by Mr Eborall—that the Press showed the closure of the school as inevitable. As a result of my comments Mr Eborall wrote to me, and in fairness I will read his letter to the House. It is dated 22 April and states—

Could I make some comment on recent debate in Council on the closure of the Bentley Senior High School to make way for a Senior College.

In the debate you made reference to an interview I gave to a reporter Ms Bonnie Keane of the "West Australian". The emphasis you put on my reported remarks is understandable but not accurate.

My recollection is that I told the journalist I had been aware for many years that the enrolment trend made it inevitable for future rationalization to be needed. I had been surprised by the Government's decision because there were other options which would not have impinged on the Bentley school community so directly.

The interview was given a certain construction by the journalist and each time the material is used it drifts further.

I wish to put to you then that I am not a supporter of the—

Previously I did not suggest he was a supporter, but I did suggest that his comments appeared to show that he, too, thought it was inevitable. To continue—

—moves to close this school even though the enrolment trends are worrying.

The concepts of providing "second chance" education and adult education are laudable, but the dismantling of schools is a heavy price to pay and most painful for the people immediately concerned.

If there is any good in all the controversy about saving the schools it is that the public has been made aware that students and parents support their local schools. Another benefit is that great tolerance has been given for people like myself to debate the issue. This is because the teacher's position is an invidious one; he being required to carry out and explain Education Department policy on the one hand and on the other to assist his students and parents to effectively protest when they feel hurt by that policy.

Thank you for past courtesies and for your expressions of interest and support in the transition period to which we now address our attention.

Yours faithfully,  
(Signed W. J. Eborall)  
Principal.

I read that letter to make up for any shortcomings that, perhaps, were apparent in my understanding of what was recorded on 15 April. Mr President, you might say that the most rational approach made by Mr Eborall in his letter to me is laudable; indeed, I would say that the sort of rational argument he put in a decent way in his letter to me unfortunately has not been reflected in the discussions emanating from other quarters in the community.

*Sitting suspended from 6.01 to 7.30 p.m.*

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: Before the tea suspension I was paying a tribute to the Principal of the Bentley Senior High School (Mr Eborall) for the response he made in recent days to me by way of a letter in which he outlined his position very clearly in regard to the closure of the high school. I was particularly making the point that I was grateful that he at least had conducted the debate so far in a most rational manner. I was making the point also that that did not apply to other sections in the community whose only desire, it would appear, was to turn the matter of the conversion of the high school into a political dog fight.

I refer in particular to some material distributed on the campus of the Bentley Senior High School in the days following the announcement that the conversion would take place. For example, people from a group called "Resistance", who do not seem to have any address or any explanation of who or what they

represent, but who are rightly referred to as left-wing activists, moved into the campus in order to make the best possible political use of something that ought never have been brought down to a party political level. Indeed, the group forced one responsible authority to complain to the Director General of Education in the following terms—

Dear Sir,

This morning school staff dispersed a group of left wing activists who were distributing the attached propaganda to students outside the school.

It seems that the people involved are trying to buy into the school closure situation for their own publicity purposes and ulterior motives.

Students have been warned to be wary of this type of unsolicited support.

I make the point that I do not make that charge against members of the Opposition; but I make the point also that this responsible authority whom I am not prepared to name made it very clear that people unconnected with the school and without any interest whatsoever in education were doing their level best to turn the matter into a political issue.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: How do you know they had no interest in education? What is your evidence for that?

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: I am assured that is the case.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: How would your authority know?

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: I remind the honourable member, who makes a habit of interjecting in this House when he has not heard the foregoing, that the lead speaker for the Opposition was heard in silence, and I would appreciate being heard in silence also.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: Answer the question.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: I would be most interested to hear the honourable member's contribution to this vexed question a little later.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: That is not quite right; the front bench did interject.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: The material about which I have spoken includes, in fact, a couple of rational statements, albeit statements with which I do not agree. One is—

We need more teachers, smaller classes and better facilities . . .

I guess that is an ideal that no-one in the community would dispute. I guess it is an ideal that everyone has as an objective, but it is an ideal

that would cost an awful lot of money; and the only group in the community of which I know which could give the amount of money necessary to provide more teachers and smaller classes is the taxpayers. I do not know that many members of the Opposition would be prepared to go into the community and ask the taxpayer to pay a higher level of taxation than he is already paying in order to achieve some of these ends.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: Just abandon two Ministers and two members of Parliament, and that will do it.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: The group then went on to make a comment to which no-one could take a great deal of exception. I quote as follows—

It is true that we need more adult education centres, but the government should build new facilities, not close down high schools, to meet this need.

As an ideal, I would have to agree with that; but again it is an ideal that can be achieved only at the expense of the taxpayers' pockets. There are many facilities which people in the community would like, but when the realisation comes that taxpayers must pay for them, people tend—and properly so—to scale down their expectations.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: One can justify not spending money on any basis.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: One of the most obnoxious comments contained in this little piece of "lefty" propaganda, which was put around the campus is "Court's war on education". To support that sort of extravagant and silly claim one would be entitled to assume that the Court Government has savagely gone through its outlays and has disadvantaged education, that it has viciously slashed spending on education.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: Dead right.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: My friend on the right over here—

The Hon. Peter Dowding: On the left.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: —sits there and makes the rather stupid comments that he is noted for making in this House. He says it is correct, and he obviously agrees that "Court's war on education" has caused cuts in education spending. Let us look at the facts.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: In all areas.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: If the honourable member had bothered to listen to the Budget debate late last year he would have known that the Budget introduced into this Parliament allowed for an estimated revenue increase of something like 13.2 per cent for the whole of the

State. He would have known also that the Government decided to increase the level of its education funding by 16.8 per cent.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: That is a disguise, and you know it.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: That does not sound to me like a Government which has no commitment to education when, on the one hand, the total revenue coming into the Treasury is increased in the order of 13.2 per cent and, on the other hand, the Government is prepared to increase the education vote to the extent of 16.8 per cent. That to me does not sound as though the Government lacks any sort of commitment to education.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: You know perfectly well that figures can be made to say anything.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: Let us look further into the education spending programme to which the Government was prepared to commit itself in the 1980-81 Budget. On page 1666 of the debates last year one finds reference to the increase being made available to technical education in Western Australia. Anyone who read the documents concerned would have known that the increase in respect of technical education was in the order of 24 per cent. Bear in mind I have already said the increase in revenue for the State was to be in the order of 13.2 per cent; and in the light of that the Government was prepared to increase technical education spending to the tune of 24 per cent. That is in spite of the laments not only from, presumably, my friend on the right over here, but also certainly from people involved in this little, ratbag movement "Resistance" who were trying to suggest—

The Hon. Peter Dowding: Why is it a ratbag group—because it disagrees with you? That is typical of your attitude.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: —that this State Government has no commitment to technical education.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: It is like Tangney's attitude towards QCs—indefensible.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: I want now to turn particularly to the motion introduced into this House this afternoon by the Hon. Robert Hetherington.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: A very proper motion.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: In particular I want to refer to paragraph (1)(b) wherein Mr Hetherington deplores the decision to "dismember" the technical division of the Education Department. The most charitable thing

one can say about that is that it is extravagant nonsense. The fact is that all the four strands of education which will be taught at the senior colleges are studies at secondary school level. The fact also is that all those studies will be conducted by secondary education teachers. That means the conversion of the high schools has nothing to do with technical education in any case.

The very fact that we have TAE and other students attending technical division colleges at the moment is no more than an accident of history; and anyone, including the mover of the motion, who is prepared to research the matter properly would find that the reasons TAE students attend places like Leederville Technical College or other adult education-oriented institutions can be traced back to the early 1960s. One of the reasons is that during that era a great influx of Malaysian students was experienced in this State. Those Malaysian students could not be accommodated in the senior high schools for the simple reason that insufficient room was available, and an arrangement was entered into by technical division authorities to permit these people to attend technical colleges, even though strictly speaking they were not undertaking technical college courses.

That, in itself, is part of the reason that the Government has seen fit to return technical colleges to the function which it was always intended they should perform; that is, to concentrate on vocational and industrial training. It was never intended that technical colleges should be catering for the people who currently attend them and who currently are making the institutions burst at the seams. That is not to say there is not a place for those people; indeed, that is the whole point of the Government's intention in creating senior colleges—to take them out of the technical colleges where it was never intended they should be, and to give them a system of education which would be helpful to them in the area oriented towards vocational and industrial training.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: That is rubbish! That is saying because there are too many people there are too many people.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: Another part of the Opposition's motion calls for a 12-month delay and further consultation about the implementation of the senior college proposal. I put it to the House that is quite unnecessary for the reason that the further consultation to which the Opposition refers is already taking place.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: With whom?

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: If the honourable member would like to be quiet, I will tell him.

The Opposition has shown itself to be most fond of committees. There was a comment made earlier by Mr Hetherington about taking the advice of committees; and I will return to that at a later stage. The Government has committed itself to undertaking the very consultation that Mr Hetherington refers to in his motion.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: Not before the decision is made. That does not make sense.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: For the edification of the noisy people who would like to prevent me from making my speech, I will read the following, so they can digest it. The Government proposes the establishment of—

1. A committee to coordinate the phased transfer of Bentley and Tuart Hill students to other schools. This committee will also deal with issues affecting the secondary school teachers concerned.

The Hon. Peter Dowding interjected.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: I wish that we had noise abatement legislation, about which the member was going on the other night, applying in this Chamber.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: Is it the level, or the nature?

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: Both.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: Or the perceptiveness?

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: I continue—

2. A committee to coordinate the transfer of students and staff from technical colleges.
3. A committee comprising representatives from the Education Department and the Teachers' Union to determine the staffing structure of the senior colleges.
4. A committee comprising representatives of the Education Department and the W.A. Federation of State School Organisations to discuss the division of property provided to Bentley and Tuart Hill senior high schools by parents' organisations.

I will return to that question later. I continue—

5. A committee to work out—

The Hon. Peter Dowding interjected.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: I will tell Mr Dowding everything, if he will just be quiet for a minute.

Opposition members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (the Hon. V. J. Ferry): Order!

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: The quote continues—

—in fine detail the educational policy of the senior colleges, this policy to come into effect after the transition year, 1982, in which only tertiary admission courses will be available to mature age students.

There are all the committees in the world, as the Labor Party is advocating in this House. There are more than sufficient committees to solve this problem, and any others of the Education Department affecting senior colleges, for the next decade.

The delay requested would achieve nothing. I respect the opinion that the State School Teachers' Union put to me personally last Thursday night. Amongst the people giving the opinion was Miss Nennie Harken, whose view on these matters I value very highly. Nonetheless, since then and at the request of Miss Harken, I have given a great deal of thought to the matter; and in all conscience I cannot go along with the union's suggestions, notwithstanding the fact that the suggestions were made with the best intentions.

One could argue for years with educationists, trying to sort out the most appropriate philosophies to achieve a certain end. One could lock two educationists in the same room, and one still would not have a decision in a week.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: But at least you would let them have a discussion before you made a decision. That is the difference.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: I hope the House takes note of the fact that I am relating more to the motion than the mover was prepared to do—

Opposition members interjected.

The Hon. Tom Knight: I hope you treat that interjection with the insignificance it deserves.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: Listen to the big noise from across the road.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! Interjections are disorderly.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: Paragraph (2)(a) of the motion reads—

establish an optimum size for high schools;

As an idea or as a concept, I would agree entirely with that. I would go even further. It would be marvellous to run an educational system with small high schools with about 300 or 400 people.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: It is the proper utilisation of the available space that is being discussed.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (the Hon. V. J. Ferry): Order! As all members know, under Standing Orders interjections should not persist in this manner. If any members wish to make a contribution to the debate, there will be opportunity for them to do so. In that same context, the member on his feet has the privilege and the right to be heard; and I expect members to give him that opportunity.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: Thank you, Sir.

No-one in this House and no-one in the community would deny that there is an optimum size for high schools. Presumably "optimum" would be on the lighter side; and we would have small, individual high schools, or primary schools for that matter.

The Hon. R. Hetherington interjected.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: I have just had another lecture from Mr Hetherington. Okay, we are talking about optimum; we are talking about maximums. "Optimum" can relate to the size of a high school, or the size of a primary school, or the size of the metropolitan area. That is an optimum size. That is really to let these people know that I have a little understanding of what I am talking about.

There is no-one in Western Australia in educational circles who has yet come to any consensus about the optimum size of a school. Indeed, one could go throughout Australia, and there would be no agreement on the part of anyone about the optimum size for a high school.

There is another aspect. The range of subjects in any educational institution depends to a large extent on the numbers that have been gathered together. The most reputable educationists in this State, and the most reputable educationists in Australia, suggest that where there is a small number of people, one could not possibly offer the variety and range of courses, such as could be arranged for people in a bigger school. That is a fact of life.

Many of us would like to experience the situation of small high schools, or smaller high schools and smaller primary schools. However, no-one has ever been able to determine what is the optimum size, and no-one has been able to come to grips with that sort of thing.

I refer now to paragraph (2)(b) in which Mr Hetherington refers to the better use of the excess capacity in high schools. I put it to the House that the senior college concept is the way to achieve

exactly what is being asked for in paragraph (2)(b) of the motion. The senior college concept does precisely that. It makes better use of the facilities that have been provided by the Education Department.

Now we come to paragraph (2)(d) which reads—

examine the need for adults, particularly women in the home, to have further education available to them in their communities;

That is a complete red herring. We are not talking in terms of converting Bentley and Tuart Hill High Schools merely for women. We are not talking about the mature-age women in the community who ought to have access to educational facilities. We are talking about everyone in the community.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: They are part of it, are they not?

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: Of course the mature-age women are part of the community.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: Why can they not be included in the motion?

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: We are talking about young people who have "missed the boat" on the first time round. If Mr Dowding cannot see that, he had better read the original announcements, and read the debates by his colleagues in another place. Then he would find we are not discussing the rights and the wrongs, the merits and the demerits, of mature-age women having access to post-secondary education. It is patent nonsense, and it is a red herring.

Let us accept for a minute that that part of paragraph (2)(d) has any relevance at all. I know that right at this moment in the metropolitan area, and possibly in the country areas, mature-age women are already attending high schools. They are already taking advantage of the secondary school component of our educational system.

If that has any relevance—and I suggest it does not because we are talking about unemployed young people generally—Mr Hetherington ought to be aware of the fact that these same women who want to upgrade their educational abilities will be given access to the senior colleges. If he does not believe that, I would like him to interject right now and say that these women will be excluded from the senior college system.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: You did not listen to what I said.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: I suggest to the member—



The Hon. Peter Dowding: You want to stifle discussion.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: By jingos, Mr Dowding is doing a good job of that himself. I suggest to the member who moved the motion that the senior college concept will make more places available to women who want to upgrade their educational skills. Can he deny that?

The Hon. Peter Dowding: You do not want community participation in the decision process. You want to make a decision and justify it afterwards.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: Now I move on to paragraph (2)(c) which reads—

examine the best ways of providing alternatives for those people, particularly young people, who wish to return to study.

If the Labor Party had its way, it would return those people to the high school situation. That has been made clear.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: Come on!

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: The best advice I have received, in talking to many educationists in recent days, is that there would be nothing more detrimental to people who left school two years ago, who have had the taste of life outside school, without the discipline of school, where outside they can wear what they like, smoke, and act like adults, to tell them that they have to go back into the school system. There would be nothing more detrimental; but that is precisely what members opposite would do.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: That is not true.

Opposition members interjected.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: You are distorting everything I said. You are not speaking the truth.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: You have been reading those Press releases again. You must avoid them, you know.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: On reading the motion, I am tempted to ask "What is it that the Labor Party really wants to achieve?"

The Hon. Peter Dowding: A public discussion before the decision is made. It is a simple question and a simple answer.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: I invite every member of this House to read the motion.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: You ought to read it and see what it means.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: They will find that in that motion there is no attempt to condemn the concept of senior colleges. In his speech, Mr Hetherington—and presumably if Mr Dowding

makes a contribution he will do the same—made no condemnation of the concept of senior colleges.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: No-one is condemning them. We want to discuss it.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: We have not prejudged the situation or decided one way or another. We want to discuss it, and I said that in my speech. I shall say it again when I reply.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: Mr Hetherington has not prejudged the situation. He has not said whether or not he wants senior colleges.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (the Hon. V. J. Ferry): Order! I am endeavouring to follow the honourable member on his feet. I ask him to direct his remarks to the Chair.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: We have just had an admission from the Hon. Bob Hetherington who, up until 18 months ago, was the shadow Minister for Education in this State. He has admitted, and I think *Hansard* will record it, that he and the Opposition have not made up their minds about the concept of senior colleges and whether or not they are a good thing. I am sorry to tell the Hon. Bob Hetherington and members opposite that their own colleague, the current shadow Minister for Education, has categorically rejected the notion of senior colleges and they would have known that had they read Mr Pearce's comments, which appear in this week's issue of *The Western Teacher*.

This is what Mr Pearce has to say, quite categorically in his own words: "I don't support the senior colleges concept." I hope that informs Mr Hetherington and his friend over the back, who does not appear to know anything about the subject, that the official remark made by the Labor Party in Western Australia is that, quite categorically, it does not support the concept of senior colleges.

However, we heard Mr Hetherington, who moved this motion, say three minutes ago that he was not sure. If that is not a condemnation of what the policy of the Labor Party is meant to be, I do not know what is.

Mr Pearce has more in store for us, because he goes on to say "I am very much in favour of diversity in education."

The Hon. R. Hetherington: So am I.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: That contradicts what he said in the first sentence. Let us repeat the two sentences together. They read as follows—

I do not support the senior colleges concept. I am very much in favour of diversity in education.

What is the senior colleges system about? In fact, it is about diversity in education. The only way in which one does not obtain more diversity in education is if, right from the start, one abandons the idea of senior colleges.

The best advice I can give to the two members here is that they check with Mr Pearce and find out the real policy of the Labor Party, although, after all, the Labor Party is not in a position to have a policy anyway.

Mr Pearce goes on to say "There is no great cost saving in having students transferred from one building to another: The only saving—" and I would ask Government members to listen to this, because it tells a story of its own "—is that the Government is not building the new technical colleges." What an extraordinary comment to make! He is condemning the Government for finding ways to achieve a situation in which it does not have to spend an extra \$50 million of taxpayers' money on building new technical colleges. Members opposite are quiet. They are condemning the Government for saving taxpayers' money.

That is not all Mr Pearce had to say. He said further "If in 1983 we have a Labor Government—" I like that bit, "if"! That is what Mr Pearce wrote. He said "If in 1983 we have a Labor Government we will offer to reopen the Tuart Hill and Bentley High Schools." That is not a categorical statement that this crowd opposite will reopen those schools.

Members opposite have pulled the wool over the eyes of the parents at Bentley and Tuart Hill by saying that, if they were the Government, they would reopen these senior high schools immediately, but, in Mr Pearce's own words "We will offer to reopen them." Members opposite will think about it. There is nothing at all in the form of a categorical undertaking. Indeed, it is pretty namby-pamby sort of stuff compared with the vigorous remarks made by Mr Hetherington tonight.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Do you think they will offer it to the students, or to whom do you think they will offer it?

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: I honestly do not know to whom members opposite will make the offer, because they have referred tonight to all sorts of consultations. They might even go to the rabbits in the Collier pine plantation and ask their opinions about it.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: We will just talk to the people in the areas.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: Frequently the Labor Party tries to convince the community it is

the champion of the underdog and the unemployed and it acts as if no-one else cares about such people. I put to the House facts which members opposite cannot dispute, because I checked them this afternoon with the ABS. At the moment in this State 13 100 young people are unemployed and these are the category between the ages of 15 and 19 years. That represents approximately 40 per cent of the total number of unemployed people. The figure is reducing and, for each consecutive month for the last 14 months, the unemployment level has dropped. However, no-one in the Government is satisfied with that.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: That is not true. You have juggled the figures somehow.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: If we go along with the proposition of the Labor Party, a big proportion of those 13 100 young people will be on the scrap heap. That is exactly what would occur if the senior college proposal was not proceeded with.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: That is not true.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: The only way in which many of these young people can upgrade their skills and the only opportunity at their disposal to re-enter the work force with a new skill is for them to be accommodated at a senior college.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: The jobs are not there. How are they going to re-enter the work force?

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: If we pass this motion tonight, a big proportion of those 13 100 unemployed young people between the ages of 15 and 19 would end up on the scrap heap and the Labor Party could accept full responsibility for that.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: If you believe that, you would believe anything.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: He would believe anything.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: In conclusion, I should like to point out that, throughout the last four weeks during which this issue has been discussed—I remind Mr Hetherington and his friend over the back that I have specifically confined my remarks to the terms of the motion, which is more than the mover did—and since it has become a matter of public interest, not one person has challenged the philosophical basis of a senior college—Mr Pearce is the exception—and not even Mr Hetherington or his friend over the back have disputed it.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: I said I thought they were elitist.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: Neither of those two members has made a categorical rejection of the concept of senior colleges. Anyone listening to the laments of the Labor Party in this regard over the last few weeks would think we were dealing with a problem which affects only Western Australia. In fact, it is a world-wide problem which is being experienced in Canada, the United States of America, Great Britain, and the Eastern States of this country.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: It is being perpetuated by the policies of your Government.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: The problem is that schools which were built years ago and situated close to the heart of major city or suburban centres suddenly become empty as people move out of the areas. Anyone with the most basic and fundamental knowledge of sociological trends is aware that is the case.

Therefore, it is patently untrue for the Labor Party to run out to Bentley or Tuart Hill and feed into people's minds the idea that we are suddenly confronted in Western Australia with a situation which has been caused by the Court Government. In fact, what is happening in this State is happening in the nation and all around the world.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: Why can't you discuss it before making the decision?

\* The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: My friends opposite are so keen about what the Labor Party would do that I ask them this: How is it that, in New South Wales, Mr Wran as the head of the Labor Government has found it necessary to close six metropolitan senior high schools in Sydney for the very reason we are talking about tonight?

The Hon. Peter Dowding: Why don't you discuss it before the decision is made?

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: Mr Wran has not bothered to convert those schools into senior colleges as the Court Government intends to do here. He has closed them. They are high schools no longer and any children who live in the areas affected have to travel a far greater distance to an alternative location than the extra distance which may have to be covered by children affected as a result of the decision made by this Government.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: That is not an argument and you know it.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: It was only the beginning when the Wran Government closed the six metropolitan senior high schools in Sydney, because since then a whole range of senior high

schools throughout New South Wales has been closed for the same reason.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: And did they have the same protests on the part of the parents over there as you have had here?

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: I assume that would be the case.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: Why don't you talk about the issue here? Why couldn't it have been discussed before the decision was made?

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: I ask the member who has just interjected: Why cannot he keep quiet?

One of the very relevant issues which has been raised in the debate outside this House—not by the people who have raised the issue inside the Parliament—concerns what will happen to the teachers. Each of the teachers involved knows exactly what will happen, because all teachers have been given a personal guarantee by the Government and the department that they will not be ill-affected by this decision. No teacher will lose his job or promotional opportunities.

Members should compare that situation with what occurs in a country like the United States of America when the same position arises. When schools are closed as a result of the decay of major centres, Governments in the USA are a little less interested in the welfare of teachers, and they do not find alternative jobs for them elsewhere in the education system; they sack the teachers.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: Go on! Pull the other leg.

The Hon. H. W. Olney: What does that have to do with it?

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: Mr Olney asks what that has to do with the matter. It has this to do with it: The fact is that, from the early stages of this debate the teachers quite rightly wanted to know whether their positions would be protected. The answer which came back from the Government was quite resounding and to the effect that no teacher would lose his job or be disadvantaged from a promotional point of view.

The Hon. H. W. Olney: What is the situation in America?

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: Such a situation does not obtain in a place like the USA where teachers in this position are sacked.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: Of course, I didn't put that in the motion.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: In his speech, Mr Hetherington referred to the fact that people

leave school and, three, four, or five years later, realise they should have taken advantage of the opportunities offered during their school days. That can happen to anyone. If this motion were passed, these people would be denied the chance to have a second go.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: Which paragraph does that?

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: In the first place, the paragraph which seeks to defer the decision for a year; and, secondly, the decision Mr Hetherington announced tonight that he would be happy with a two-year delay. During that period of two years, a big proportion of the 13 100 young unemployed people in this State would be denied the chance to attend a senior college and upgrade their educational skills which would enable them to obtain a job.

Such a policy is being put forward by people who say they are interested in the underprivileged and those who have not had the opportunity in the past to obtain a decent education.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: You are skirting around one theme. Why is that?

The Hon. G. E. Masters: You will tell us what it was all about. You can't wait.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (the Hon. V. J. Ferry): Order!

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: On the surface, one of the most telling questions which was asked referred to the PCAs of these various schools. This matter was worthy of consideration so far as the Government was concerned and the question asked was about what would happen to the facilities which were built up by the PCAs in these particular schools? There would not be a member in this Chamber who has not observed a PCA in action. These associations provide facilities which Governments—Labor or Liberal—could not afford.

In the case of Tuart Hill Senior High School, a swimming pool was provided and since the announcement of the conversion, people involved with that school have correctly asked what will happen to the swimming pool. They felt that surely they, as parents who had worked so hard for the pool, were entitled to some recompense.

Those people have been reassured that such things which are fixed assets will be the subject of negotiation with the Education Department. A facility such as a pool will be open for normal public use within the community.

When we consider that the Labor Party states that school facilities ought to become part of the community facilities and that not only students

should have the chance to use them, it is worth noting that Opposition members remain silent on this point.

Another aspect which has been mentioned is that the Teachers' Union has been fairly volatile on this matter. I do not blame the union for that because its job is to represent the views of its members. However, it is fair to say that there are other professional teacher bodies in Western Australia, apart from the Teachers' Union, which have some input to make to the educational system in Western Australia. The Senior High School Principals' Association is one such organisation and I think there is also an association for district high school principals as well.

Something like a dozen professional education bodies in all are entitled to have some input into the decision-making processes in Western Australia and any suggestion on the part of the Labor Opposition that the Teachers' Union is the only body to have that role is quite incorrect.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: I have not suggested that at all.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: The motion of the Opposition has been based on the belief that the people in the community are dealing with an insensitive Government.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: That may well be true.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: In a series of statements, the Minister for Education made it quite clear that there were still more initiatives being made to soften the blow.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: That is right.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: Moves were being adopted to soften the blow and to minimise the dislocation caused to the parents, students and teachers.

On 29 April Mr Grayden made it clear, in a statement, that the Government had realised that extra bus costs would be a burden and that he had already taken steps to ensure that those students affected would be able to travel to and from school in 1982-83, at no added cost to their parents. What is the matter with that?

The Hon. R. Hetherington: Nothing at all.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: Yet, the Opposition believes that the parents are dealing with an insensitive Government.

I will finish where I commenced by saying that I am disappointed that a school in my electorate must close. I would prefer to see that school remain open.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: But you would not, make up your mind.

The Hon. P. G. PENDAL: However, I accept that it is inevitable that the school will close because of the declining numbers of students at that school and at schools in neighbouring areas. It is an unavoidable decision. The Government is doing no more than making better use of the taxpayers' money.

The Labor Opposition forgets fairly frequently that the people who pay for schools are the taxpayers. If Mr Hetherington had become the Minister for Education—God help us!—he would have been faced with precisely the same situation and would have had to make the same decision that this Government had to make. The school would still have to be closed down. It was not an easy decision.

The Opposition has put forward no reasons to support the motion; for that reason I oppose it.

**THE HON. A. A. LEWIS** (Lower Central) [8.20 p.m.]: I feel that it is probably a waste of time speaking after the magnificent address of the Hon. Phillip Pendal. He has dealt with and diminished Mr Hetherington's motion, but the only reason I rise to speak is that a very junior member in this Chamber, who has not had the distinction of being a shadow Minister on anything, started to scream from the back blocks during the time Mr Pendal was talking. I think we should refer to some of the statements he made.

Before I deal with Mr Hetherington's motion—which is not worth any time at all because the research put into it is about equal to the research put into Mr Dowding's interjections—I should like to refer to the interjection which stated "You didn't scream like that in the Whitlam days."

Some of us who happened to serve on the Schools Commission in those days did scream. We did scream to the Whitlam Government, but it was the wrong thing to do because no notice was taken of us; none whatsoever. Those tied centralist grants kept the centralist socialist policy going, whatever we thought, as members of the commission.

It is very interesting to hear from new members when they make comments without any knowledge of the background involved. Perhaps we should first deal with government because I have always felt that government is about making decisions; of course, they will not always be the correct decisions.

Another interjection of Mr Dowding's was that what they were talking about was the proper

utilisation of public funds. It will be interesting to hear his contribution to this debate in order to compare the Wran Government's closing of schools altogether, and leaving desolate, empty places, with the Western Australian Government's contribution of transferring types of education from one aspect to another, but still utilising Government funding—taxpayer's funds. That is using funds that taxpayers have paid—their hard-earned income which they contribute and on which they expect the Government to make decisions for its use.

I am sorry that we have had interjections such as the one from Mr Hetherington when he spoke about optimum numbers and the ideal, not the maximum. I guess the ideal number at a high school would be a one-to-one situation in every subject. When the Opposition speaks, it appears that that is what they want whether the school be in Karratha, Derby, Boyup Brook, Albany, or Bentley. I do not think the taxpayers would be very interested in that.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: They are not very interested in additional politicians either.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: That is the sort of comment we hear when we are debating a motion on education and that is the sort of interjection I would expect from Mr McKenzie because he knows nothing about the subject. He is just like Mr Dowding; he wants to have something to say.

Unfortunately we must look at this motion seriously. I will deal with the motion bit by bit later on, but I wish to deal with the interjections first.

Mr Pendal spoke about the mature-age women who may attend these colleges and Mr Dowding screamed "Only some of them". Of course, only some of them wish to go to these colleges. The Hon. Peter Dowding kept interjecting about public discussion. I wish he had said on which part of the motion he wished public discussion. I realise he has been here a very short time, but as I read through this motion, and having had something to do with the Education portfolio, I can see no portion which relates to educationists. This makes me a little worried about Mr Hetherington. I wonder whether he is trying to regain his former glory as Opposition spokesman on education when he puts forward a motion such as this.

Apart from paragraph (1)(a) every point in the motion has been discussed in the public arena for at least seven years. Are we all to interpret this motion as meaning that Mr Hetherington is trying to make blocks of education? I do not believe Mr Hetherington honestly believes in the

motion he put forward because he has been so deprived of information on what is going on in the public arena.

Knowing Mr Hetherington as I do, I do not believe that this is his motion. There is no way that a man as orientated and as educated as Mr Hetherington would move a motion such as this, knowing what he knows. It worries me that that centralist Caucus just grabs hold of all the members of the Opposition and tells them what to do. I am worried that it has got hold of a very good friend of mine and has forced him into moving a motion such as this. It really devastates me that a man of letters, such as Mr Hetherington, should put forward this motion. Mr Gayfer and I are alike in that we are uneducated—and have been here for only a few years!—and do not have letters after our names; CBH does not rank.

Mr Hetherington knows these subjects have been publicly discussed for a number of years. He must be very sad to be required to move such a motion.

The Hon. Peter Dowding challenged the figures provided by the Hon. Phillip Pental; he called them "gerrymandered" figures, or something like that. As it happens, the Hon. Phillip Pental obtained the figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. If I remember correctly, the Australian Bureau of Statistics was one of Mr Whitlam's favourite subjects; he said statistics provided by that organisation must be right because the bureau could not be infiltrated. Yet here we have the young man coming into this Chamber and making noises.

My friend, the Hon. Fred McKenzie, screamed about jobs not being available. That is not an accurate statement in the Western Australian context. I can see by the slight smile on his face that he agrees with me. Obviously, it was a slip of the tongue. The silence from the Opposition spells out that its argument is shot from now on.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: You feed from my interjections, which is why I am not having anything to say.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: It is a strange thing that the Opposition does not have the intelligence to interject on me. I am virtually an uneducated fellow, and I am surrounded by QCs, pharmacists, LL.Bs and BAs—I will not go on because I might get the initials wrong. I wonder how they had the hide to move a motion such as this.

The Hon. Robert Hetherington talked about women and creches. I do not know whether Mr Hetherington realises it, but creches for the

children of working mothers have been established for a number of years. They were established during the Hon. Graham MacKinnon's reign as Minister for Education. The Labor Party did not worry about them; it was not concerned enough to worry.

The Hon. Neil Oliver: They did not bother.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: It is typical Labor philosophy.

The Hon. Philip Pental has covered the ground fairly adequately; there is no need for me to rub salt into the wound of my friend, the Hon. Robert Hetherington. I know he has been told to move this motion by his party, and members of the Labor Party always do as they are told by their Caucus.

I grant the Hon. Robert Hetherington the right to deplore the sudden decision. In fact, the decision was made over a number of months, and the move will not take place for another nine or 10 months. Yet the Hon. Robert Hetherington calls that "sudden". Probably, it is sudden to the Labor Party which is accustomed to moving fairly slowly; it obviously has caught them on the hop. Paragraph (1)(a) of the motion deplores the fact the decision was made without any prior consultation with students. With all due respect to high school students, I do not believe their knowledge is such that they should be consulted on where high schools should be situated, whether teachers should be removed or otherwise, or any other matter dealing with administrative detail. They are in high schools to learn, just as the Hon. Peter Dowding and the Hon. Robert Hetherington are here tonight.

The Hon. Neil Oliver: To learn.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: They will learn, if they listen; however, if they converse with each other as they are doing now, they will never learn. It is claimed there was no consultation with teachers. Has Mr Hetherington any information he has not given this House indicating that teachers were not consulted on the matter of senior colleges? No he has not, because they were consulted; discussions were held with them years ago on this subject. Knowing the historical background of certain subjects, I find it is interesting to note the silence of the Opposition.

The motion goes on to claim parents were not consulted. In fact, over the years parents have been included in discussions on these matters. I can remember discussions with parents prior to 1977, yet Mr Hetherington describes this as a "sudden" decision.

The motion also complains that the community in general was not consulted. We have discussed

teachers, students, and parents; I suppose the shopkeeper and the farm machinery dealer also should have been consulted about proposals relating to the Tuart Hill and Bentley High Schools. That is the only aspect of this part of the motion with which I could agree; obviously, the entire community should not be consulted on these administrative matters.

The Hon. Peter Dowding interjected very loudly on the Hon. Phillip Pandal when he discussed paragraph (1)(b) of the motion which reads as follows—

- (b) deplores the decision to dismember the Technical Division of the Education Department without any public discussion or consultation;

I realise the Hon. Peter Dowding is an expert on the subject, because he knows all. However, he is a technocrat rather than a professional. He makes a lot of noise. He is not a professional because he does not apply professional standards in his conduct in this House and in the manner in which he makes interjections. The Technical Division of the Education Department is not being dismembered; it is being assisted in its operations by provision being made for more places for students in technical colleges.

Paragraph (1)(c) reads as follows—

- (c) recognises the need to examine and discuss the best method of maintaining the State's high schools while using the excess capacities of those high schools in a manner that is in the best interests of the community;

That is a complete and utter insult to the Education Department and its many fine officers. Does the Hon. Robert Hetherington think these decisions were made overnight without any discussion or thought? Of course he does not. This again leads me to the thought that he was told to move his motion.

Paragraph (1)(d) reads as follows—

- (d) recognises the need to make schools real community centres.

That is an interesting thought. When I first became a member of Parliament, I was in opposition to the Tonkin Government. Could we get the Labor Party to think of schools as community centres? There was no way whatever that any school could be used for the community. Luckily, we got rid of the Tonkin scourge and the Hon. Graham MacKinnon became Minister for Education and we had at least some community use of schools. There was not enough use, but at least there was some, and it started to snowball.

Therefore, for the Labor Party to move such a motion is a disgrace and an insult to the intelligence of those of us who have been here for some time.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: I thought the House might join with us in recognising that fact.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: At last we have a word from the Hon. Robert Hetherington. If he would like me to move an amendment stating that the Parliament recognises the need to make schools real community centres under the edicts issued by the Hon. Graham MacKinnon when he was Minister for Education, I would go along with it. Why did the Hon. Robert Hetherington not give credit to Mr. MacKinnon when moving his motion? It was because he was trying to be snide and underhand and trying to break down a system and a department, which is working extremely well.

Paragraph (2) of the motion states—

- (2) That this House therefore calls on the Government to respond to the request of the State School Teachers' Union and the Western Australian Council of State Schools Organisations, to delay the decision...

Having disposed of paragraphs (1)(a) to (d) it is absurd now to proceed to discuss the second part of the motion. However, for the sake of the exercise, I intend to discredit the rest of the motion. Paragraph (2)(a) reads—

- (a) establish an optimum size for high schools;

The Hon. Phillip Pandal gave us the enrolment ranges, but what did the Hon. Robert Hetherington say? He said "Somebody must make a decision". For how long has somebody been trying to make a decision as to what is an optimum size?

There is not one other part of the motion which is worth commenting on, except perhaps paragraph (2)(e) which reads as follows—

- (e) examine the best ways of providing alternatives for those people, particularly young people, who wish to return to study.

I take exception to the words "particularly young people" because people of all ages have a right to education. If the Hon. Robert Hetherington intends to use unemployment as an argument, he should know it is a non-argument in this State compared with the rest of Australia. The Government has laid out, albeit an experimental plan, to look at the role of senior colleges in the community due to decreased enrolments at

certain high schools. It is a revolutionary initiative which probably should have belonged to the Labor Party. However, the Labor Party never takes any initiatives; all it is interested in doing is closing down high schools, as Mr Wran has done, without using those facilities for the benefit of the people. This Government has taken a step; I do not think anybody in the Government has said it must be the right or final step.

The Minister for Education has bent over backwards to accommodate people whenever complaints have been made. At times he has said "We have not looked at that and we will help you there". Yet the Opposition has not made one constructive suggestion. Members can read through the motion and not find one constructive suggestion. There is nothing in the motion which has not been handled by the Education Department in the past, or which is not being handled now.

The great problem is that the Hon. Robert Hetherington knows the higher and tertiary levels of education and he knows all about the politics and discussions concerning them, but he does not know about the education system which other members and myself know, because we experienced primary, secondary, and technical education.

There is only one real worker on the Opposition side—a man who has worked up through the union movement. The rest of the Opposition members have never had their hands dirty. They are people with degrees who have experienced higher education. They cannot understand what the people in the street—the electors—want from education in this State. I completely oppose the motion.

**THE HON. F. E. McKENZIE** (East Metropolitan) [8.46 p.m.]: I thank the Hon. Sandy Lewis for making that comment about the people of the State because he has inspired me to rise and participate in this debate.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: You were told to.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: No, I was not. I decided to participate because Mr Lewis prompted me. It is with regard to the people that the Government is losing the argument. What it has failed to do and what we are seeking to do in the second part of this motion is to create discussion—discussion which should have taken place prior to the decision being made. That is why the Government is in trouble with the people in the electorates concerned. That is why mass meetings have been held, at which resolutions have been overwhelmingly accepted condemning the action of the Government and the Education

Department. Had the Government's decision been explained to the people and to the Opposition, perhaps we would not have adopted our current attitude. But the Government explained nothing and that is precisely why we have moved this motion, which I support.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: It is an arrogant dictatorship, and they know it.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: The Government always tells us in these sort of situations that we are playing politics, but that is not the case. The Hon. Phillip Pental mentioned a group which went to the Bentley High School, a group calling itself the "Resistance". Apparently it was a left-wing group. I state now that the group has no association with the Australian Labor Party.

The Hon. P. G. Pental: I said that.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: I am glad the member did, but his colleague in another place, the Minister for Education, accused the Labor Party of playing politics. He did this in a letter to the editor of *The West Australian*.

The Hon. P. G. Pental: I think you are.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: We are not, and neither the member nor the Minister has any evidence of this. We are responding to the requests of the people we represent. We are not oblivious to their requests, even if the Government is. This is the very reason the Hon. Robert Hetherington moved his motion. We wanted to allow for discussion among the people so that they could understand the reason—which may or may not have been valid—for the school being closed down. The decisions have been made by bureaucrats and not by the people, and this is where members of Parliament are failing, because they are not listening to the ordinary people.

The Hon. P. G. Pental: Why do you have elected Governments?

The Hon. Peter Dowding: Why do you have elected members?

The Hon. P. G. Pental: Sometimes they make the right decisions and sometimes the wrong ones.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: Exactly. If the Government has made the right decision, why has it not consulted with the people?

The Hon. Peter Dowding: It is afraid.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: The Bentley Senior High School may well be in the Hon. Phillip Pental's area, but I remind him that the bulk of the students attending that school come from the areas that Mr Hetherington and I represent. They also come from the area Mr Jamieson represents. I will be interested to hear the answer to the question of which I gave notice



today because it has been said to me that it should not be the Bentley High School which should be closed, but rather the Como High School.

The Hon. P. G. PENTAL: If you close the Como High School there would be far more children who would have to travel a far greater distance to get to school.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: That is the Hon. Phillip Pental's answer, but it must be remembered that if the Government closes the Como High School it is closing a school that is fully represented by Mr Pental. I will be interested to hear what Mr James had to say in his report. We probably will not be told, which often is the situation with questions of that nature.

The Hon. P. G. PENTAL: Would you agree that if we had closed the Como High School, you people would not have taken a scrap of notice?

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: I do not believe that would have been the case. We would not have closed either school. I happen to support the people I represent. I have not had the rationale behind this decision adequately explained to me, so I do not know whether the decision was justified. Certainly most of the people affected do not believe the decision is justified. Perhaps the optimum size for a school is 500 or 900, but that is what this motion is wanting to ascertain. The people in the areas affected believe 500 is a viable figure. Perhaps they believe small is beautiful, which it may very well be.

If the decision had been explained to us we might have been satisfied. But whether it should have been Bentley or Como, others will follow. There is nothing surer than that the sun gets up every day and that other schools will be in the same position if we consider the figures. Other schools will be affected if the optimum size is to be 500.

The Hon. P. G. PENTAL: Just look at Mr Wran.

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: I asked the member whether there had been any protest in New South Wales, and he could not tell me. Perhaps the Labor Government explained the situation to the people before it made its decision. Over here, as soon as the protest started, the Government accused the Labor Party of trying to turn it into a political exercise. We do not do that; we do not exploit such things.

The Hon. P. G. PENTAL: Oh no!

The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE: The Minister said the same thing about the Belmont Senior High School, and now he is saying it about the Tuart Hill and Bentley High Schools. Mr Pental

mentioned a certain group. But the dog fights are not started by the Labor Party.

I do not want to get involved in the philosophies of education because this is not one of my strong points, but I do remind members that we are here to represent people. We are not representing bureaucrats. If bureaucrats want to make decisions that affect people, they should explain those decisions before anything is implemented. As members of Parliament we are failing in our duty to the people because we are allowing the bureaucrats to make these decisions without consultation with the people. What might be right in the eyes of the bureaucrats might be wrong in the eyes of the people we represent, and that is clearly the case in this instance. I fully support the motion.

**THE HON. D. J. WORDSWORTH** (South—Minister for Lands) [8.55 p.m.]: There is one thing we have learned from the Hon. Robert Hetherington's motion, and that is that this problem of high schools has been around for a long time. Mr Hetherington admitted that he has been thinking and talking about it for a long time. His chief objection seemed to be that he was not there when the decisions were made and so was unable to put his oar in. He was not even the shadow Minister at that time. He has to remember that the public and the electors of Western Australia elected the Court Government, and that Government made the decision that had to be made.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: Did you announce it before the election?

The Hon. P. G. PENTAL: I hope you make a speech after all these interjections you have made.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: The Court Government examined the facts fully. This was not just a decision of the Minister for Education. The Cabinet looked at the evidence presented to it and made a decision. Now it will be up to the staff of the Education Department to implement that decision. I have the greatest confidence that they will be able to do that and liaise with the staff, unions, and students, and that this will take place smoothly so that the students will not be disadvantaged.

We have already seen some of the things taking place with regard to the bussing of those students and the use of the facilities, such as the swimming pools, by the general public.

I congratulate the Hon. Phillip Pental for the way he went through the motion point by point. His presentation was particularly good and he was ably supported by Mr Lewis, so I will not go through the motion point by point again.

The Government made a decision and that seemed to be the vital thing to do. We seem to be looking at these matters for years. If Mr Hetherington had his way we would be looking at these matters for years to come. It is little wonder that the electors decide to vote for Liberal Governments so that they can have decisions made. Liberal Governments do not vacillate as does the Opposition. The Opposition's main argument was that it was not involved in the decisions. Governments are elected to make decisions and this Government does make decisions, something for which it has a very good reputation. As for Mr Hetherington talking about sudden decisions in petulance, and describing his debate as subtle, there was little subtlety in his reference to the Bastille and Hitler's Germany.

The Opposition has not been constructive and its motion does not present any alternatives. It seemed all it wanted was an opportunity to join in the discussion. This debate has allowed the Hon. Robert Hetherington to do just that. He has presented his case, but he has not put forward any satisfactory alternative. The Hon. Phillip Pandal has summed up every one of the little worries Mr Hetherington had in the back of his mind and I am sure this House and the public would be satisfied with the points Mr Pandal presented.

**THE HON. R. HETHERINGTON** (East Metropolitan) [8.59 p.m.]: I have been saddened by this debate. The Minister said very little and he swept aside our arguments and called them nonsense, although they were made quite seriously. If he does not understand what I said in regard to Hitler's Germany and the mass society, that is unfortunate, but right now that is one of the things which are wrong. I would like to take up one point Mr Lewis made, because I think it is important. He pooh-poohed the idea that we consult with students. He asked "What would they know?"

One of the things I discovered when we tried to do something about rebuilding the Belmont Senior High School was that the students had ideas and something to say. The building now being constructed—the combination years 8-12 block—is being constructed in its present form partly as a result of the input from students. They said the final-year students should be close to, and have some way to get to, first-year high school students so that the latter feel as though they are part of the school. That was an input from the students, and a good one. It was accepted by the parents and staff and then by the Education Department. Sometimes students have something to offer if one can tap their thoughts or listen to them.

Some time ago when I was on the Hollywood Senior High School foundation council the teachers tended to ignore the students. I found that if we listened to them, and tried to sort out their points of view, they had quite an input to make.

The Hon. Neil Oliver: What year was that?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I think it was in the early 1970s.

The Hon. P. H. Lockyer: BC?

The Hon. Neil Oliver: Hollywood High School had a fairly good record in the late-1969-early-1970 period.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I am talking about the input from students. I am not talking about the academic record of that school.

The Hon. Neil Oliver: I was not talking about the academic record; I was talking about its general record.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I was talking about the input from students and that students on a school council can add something useful. I am saying that if we consult students sometimes we will find useful points put forward.

The Hon. Neil Oliver: What I was saying was that you said the input and, therefore, the record at that time was not a particularly good one.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: Mr President, I will not repeat my remarks. If the honourable member tomorrow wants to read in *Hansard* what I have said he will see it is quite different from what he suggests I said. The other point I would make about the speech of the Hon. Alexander Lewis is that he said very little about the motion.

The Hon. P. G. Pandal: You started that trend, I might say.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: He involved himself in some heavy-handed denigrations and insult.

The Hon. H. W. Olney: Which he is very good at.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I certainly will not take any advantage of his suggestion that what I said is not really my fault, but is all the fault of that terrible centralist body—the Labor Party Caucus. In fact, I went the other day to the Caucus meeting with the motion I had written and asked whether I could present it and I was told I could. That is the way we work in the Labor Party. I take complete responsibility for the motion, and therefore all the insults, on my shoulders. I am unbloody and unbowed because

the honourable member's remarks were nonsensical.

The main apologist for the Government, because the Minister did not feel like saying anything, was the Hon. Phillip Pandal who sorted out the brief of the Education Department and said all the kinds of things the Minister has been saying for some time and I have found so unsatisfactory.

I point out to the honourable gentleman that the word "optimum" in the little dictionary I have before me means "most favourable conditions; best amount". It does not mean the smallest amount and, certainly, to cover what the Hon. Sandy Lewis said, it does not mean a one-to-one situation. I would be the last person to argue that in primary and high schools we need a one-to-one situation. What we need in schools is socialisation, and I would point out in case members become frightened of my using the word "socialisation", that I mean it in the sociological way, not the political. It is a need for young people to learn to move in society, to learn to know one another and mix with their peer groups. All this is quite important.

There has been a great deal of debate about what is the optimum size of a school, and it is a good idea to continue the debate so that we have some idea of what an optimum size is, and meet that criterion. Dr Mossenson apparently believes the optimum size of a school is 900 students. In Tasmania the secondary division of its Education Department has put forward a report in which it states that the optimum size is between 500 and 700 students. If that is the case we have waited until Bentley High School has reached the optimum size before closing it. If that is not the case, we have to work out what the optimum size is; therefore there is room for plenty more discussion.

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: What is the optimum size in the UK? It is 2 200. What is the optimum size in Peru?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: The optimum size never would be 2 200 students, but it may be the best one can have.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: Some years ago the parents' association said the optimum should be 900. That is fairly close to what Dr Mossenson said.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: Some years ago there were various views as to the optimum sizes of schools and classes, but those views have changed in many ways; so, I suggest we should further consider the position. After all, that is all I have suggested.

What I found quite deplorable in the Hon. Phil Pandal's speech as I have found in the Minister's various statements, was the attitude of "Look, we have set up five committees to ensure there is a smooth transition". Statements like that have nothing to do with the motion I put forward.

The Hon. P. G. Pandal: They have everything to do with it.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I know committees have been set up to ensure a smooth transition, and I am glad of that. If the decision is to be carried out the more smoothly it can be carried out the better. I am glad the Minister is now consulting with the people concerned—as is the department. However, what I object to is the attitude put to us—as it was at the Bentley Senior High School by the director general and tonight by the Hon. Phil Pandal—that the Government believes in consultation once it has made a decision. Putting that attitude forward the honourable member completely ignored my motion which relates to consultation before a decision is made.

The Hon. P. G. Pandal: Why didn't you say that? Let us have a look.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: That is what my motion is all about. I do not intend to plough laboriously through my notes, so I will make the point quite clear that I am not in a collision course with my friend, Mr Pearce—

The Hon. P. G. Pandal: I am sorry, you are, and *Hansard* will show it.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: —in regard to my attitude towards senior colleges. If the honourable gentleman refers to *Hansard* he will find I said my personal view is that senior colleges are elitist and undesirable. That is my personal view, and it was my personal view when the department proposed a senior college for Albany. I believed the concept was undesirable, and I pointed that out when the department's representatives went to Albany and consulted the teachers on the proposition. The teachers also decided it was undesirable at that stage for Albany.

The Hon. P. G. Pandal: You didn't have the guts to put in your motion a condemnation of senior colleges.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: He knows the teachers and parents agree with the idea.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I have pointed out what my personal view is, but unlike the honourable gentleman who is so busy interjecting I do not regard myself as infallible. The concept should be discussed more than it has

been. There should be more specific discussion based on a Green Paper put forward by the Government before the decision is made.

When we have an elected Government—I do not have the aristocratic wig attitude to representation—that does not mean we stop thinking about matters and have the Government go away and make our decisions for us. In a democracy the electors still have a part to play and an input to make, and they should be listened to. Sometimes even elected Governments, elected by a majority of the people, make mistakes.

It is my contention that the Court Government is making a mistake on this present issue. I am prepared to discuss the matter to see what people think about it. When I say I believe in free and democratic discussion, I am accused of having two bob each way. That is what I expect from the members who have been interjecting because they do not know anything about freedom and democracy. They have a 19th century attitude to representation and do not believe at all in democracy as we will see in due course when certain legislation is put before us.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: What about a referendum?

The Hon. P. G. Pandal: That is what he is talking about.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Not a referendum.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: Previously I have said in this House I do not approve of referenda as general things. We cannot govern by referenda, but various pressure groups have an input to make and should be listened to. The Government necessarily does not have to agree with them, but in matters as major as this one, it is a good idea to have discussion.

The honourable gentleman who spoke for the Government, because apparently, the Ministers in this place were not good enough to do the job, did the very thing the Director General of Education and the Minister have done at other meetings; that is, listed the numbers of students very carefully. In 1969 there were 1465 people at Bentley.

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: There were 87 on the staff.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: Now there are 631 at Bentley, and I have no argument about those facts. There never has been an argument about them except that I quoted the 1981 figure as being 613, not 631. I accept the honourable gentleman was probably more accurate in his facts in that instance than I was. It may be that a lesser number of people are presently at that

school. However, what I am saying is that these figures are put forward continually, extrapolated as though there will be no change. Before I accept the projected figures I want to know something about the sociological and demographic changes in the area servicing Bentley Senior High School.

Figures do not necessarily go along a straight line year after year, and as I pointed out, I found that out for myself with the Mitcham infant school in South Australia when I moved to the district. I have had some experience with figures going the opposite way to that which was expected. It may well be that this will happen at the Bentley Senior High School.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: What was the impact you had on that Mitcham school?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I produced three new students; that was one of the reasons. By the time I left, the example was so well followed that the number was increasing and the school did not need us any more; so, we came over to boost the numbers in schools in Western Australia!

I know there is vast underutilisation of schools in Western Australia; I admitted that in my speech. It is one of the things I have been considering for a long time, and we must do something about it. It does not follow that because there is underutilisation, the way the Government has decided to solve the problem is the best way. It does not follow at all.

The Hon. P. G. Pandal: Look at what Mr Wran did.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: Nor am I here to defend the actions or activities of Labor Governments here or in other places. I am interested in discussing what is happening in Western Australia and it seems to me we may be able to do something better than is being done. That, of course, is not being party political. I am disagreeing with the Government, and, as I told the director general, I am disagreeing on educational grounds. I may be right and I may be wrong. I think I am right, and I am prepared to argue the matter. I would have been glad if somebody in this House had stood up to deal with my arguments. The only arguments dealt with were some I did not make.

The honourable member used a speech he had prepared from his interpretation of the motion. He prepared his speech before he had heard any of the arguments I produced. I did not notice much reference to my own arguments. Whatever may be said to my detriment by members opposite, I do not accept the fact that I am stupid or that I know nothing about primary and

secondary education. I may be able to fool the honourable gentleman who is trying to interrupt, but that is not hard! After all, I have been a secondary school teacher—a very bad one—I have been on the Labor Party education committee here and in South Australia for many years, and I have been looking at the problem. I have been talking to teachers.

I have been wrong at various times; I do not think I am wrong this time, but I may still be wrong. That is the reason I would like the matter discussed; not so that I can make an input necessarily—I am not here to make some sort of comeback as was suggested. The kind of cheap remarks made by some members during this debate ill-became them, but they can make them; they do not hurt me. I was dealing with argument; I was dealing with debate. I was not dealing with personalities when I made my statement. To rubbish me does not get rid of my arguments and the arguments will appear in *Hansard* for people who are interested to read them and so will the arguments of the Hon. Phillip Penda. People will be able to read them and see how he dodged most of the issue.

The Hon. P. G. Penda: On the contrary, I dealt with the issue more than you did.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I was quite interested to hear the honourable member talk to us about the Budget, and from his own figures, it appears that I must look at the Budget some time. He said that the Budget increased 13.2 per cent, education 11.8 per cent, and technical education 24 per cent. So I assume the estimate for some sections of education may have been reduced, and perhaps we should look at that. Perhaps we should look at what is actually happening.

In regard to the "Resistance" paper, I had not heard about it before. At least if the people concerned are looking at the need for more teachers, smaller classes, better facilities, and more adult education centres, they seem to be interested in education. They may be hopping on the bandwagon. However, even if we assume these people belong to a left-wing Marxist group, I would like to refer again to the remarks of Mr Ben Chifley: "Wherever there is a fire you will find communists there pouring oil on it." That does not mean that the fire was communist inspired; it means that there is a real issue and that others are joining in. So let us look at the issue and not at who is joining in. That would be a good idea.

The honourable gentleman who delivered the argument for the Government—such as it was—said that the Government was going to put

back the technical colleges where they were intended to be. That is a mistaken attitude, because although things happen by an accident of history, we cannot necessarily put them back where they were intended to be once, nor is such a course necessarily desirable. After all, if one puts eggs and milk together, one can make scrambled eggs, but it is a bit hard to put them back as they were intended to be.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: That is very true, Mr Hetherington.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I am glad the Hon. H. W. Gayfer sees the point. In the same way it is possible—and this has been put before me by many people who are concerned about technical colleges and it is one of the reasons I would like an inquiry—an historical accident can produce an organisation or institution which turns out to be good in itself. This has happened quite often in the past.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Will the honourable member direct his comments to the Chair?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I am sorry. The other members no doubt will say I am speaking through the back of my neck. I regret having turned away from you, Sir.

The Hon. I. G. Pratt: You are very perceptive tonight.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: Sometimes things that happen accidentally prove to be good, and sometimes they prove to be bad. Sometimes an accident has beneficial effects that were not expected.

Before we break up the technical colleges, we should discuss the issue. It is no good trying to do what was intended to be done in the 1970s, the 1960s, or the 1950s. If we go back far enough, we will have a fine colonial society to match our fine colonial Government.

For the member to say the senior college concept makes better use of the facilities of high schools is to make an unproven assertion. It would be a good idea to discuss the matter at more depth.

Sometimes even the competent, capable, expert people in bureaucracies have been there for such a long time that their thinking ossified 20 years ago. They are not always right, and in my opinion—and it is my opinion and my very strong opinion—the concept of senior colleges is a matter of ossified thinking.

I wish to refer to two other matters about which I was taken to task. We are a bit tired of this business of dismissing anything we have to say as though it were nonsense.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: You still have to make up your mind what you want. You admitted that.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I know what I want as the end result. I am one of those people who still has a certain humility. I believe that after discussing, listening, and talking, we still have to do a little experimentation. There might be a better way of getting what I want. What I want, of course, is an educated society, and I think it is insolent of the Hon. Phillip Pental to suggest I was thinking only of married women at home and not of adults generally. In my motion and in my speech I referred to both.

I am very much concerned with adults, as I am very much concerned about everybody who has left school. Of course, on the other hand, when I talked about young people, I was accused of forgetting the adults. There are groups of people who generally have problems, and there are many adults who need new skills.

In one of my first speeches in this House I talked about the need for retraining. I was not talking about a need for greater expenditure on education, but I talked about the very problems I am talking about now. Of course I was not listened to. I was pooh-poohed by the superior people because members opposite did not want to listen. They just want to harass and use their numbers. Let me remind members that at one stage the present Minister for Education in regard to the Belmont Senior High School, listened to various people including students, Opposition members, parents, and teachers, and he then made the right decision. Even this Government can learn by listening to people occasionally. If it listened to people more, it may learn more, and we may have better government. Even if we assume the Court Government is producing good government—which I do not think it is—it does not mean it cannot produce better government by listening to people of goodwill. Even the Hon. Alexander Lewis said on one occasion I might be foolish, but at least I had some goodwill on the matter.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: You are after sympathy now.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I do not need any sympathy. I can stand on my arguments; I am not worried about what members say of me. I know what I am saying is honest, and I know that most of what I am saying is right.

I know we have to consider some people, especially among the adults. I have not mentioned certain people before, and this is not because I am not concerned about them. We have to consider

people who have lost their skills and who need retraining in new skills.

The Hon. P. G. Pental: We agree with that.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: That is a very urgent task and I know the Government agrees with me about it. In 1977 I suggested to the Government that it should get on with it. It took some time to take action and it did too little too late, but at least I am glad that the Government now agrees with me.

I am very concerned that women are regarded as second-class citizens in our society, and I am very concerned with the problems of women at home with families.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: I wonder whether Mr Pental is.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I am concerned about the women who want to get out and get education and to develop their capacity as human beings. They have a whole range of capacities, because women who are mothers are people. Children also are people; they are not just people to be told what is best for them. They are people to be listened to.

I am very concerned that some women, in this mad post-industrial world, are being kept quiescent with valium. When a woman visits a medical practitioner, quite often he will say "Oh, poor dear, take some valium." The doctor does not say, "You are a human being and you are not fulfilling yourself. Try to get out and do something." I know we have some creches, but not nearly enough. My wife fought bitterly for more child-minding centres at the university. We must have more consideration for other people.

The Hon. Phillip Pental told me we need to think about the young people who have tried school and who, for various reasons, have not succeeded. If we reorganise our technical colleges and put branches in the underutilised high schools, we might achieve the same or better results. The matter should be looked at, but it is no good saying "Look, we are giving them a second chance". Heaven help them if they do not succumb to discipline when they are 16 or 17 years old! We certainly have our problems. George Orwell's 1984 is closer than we think. If we do not do something today, develop a sense of community, and expand our educational system so that it looks after all people from those in the primary schools up to people older than I—the geriatrics—then we are failing in our task.

We need to look after the 70-year-olds, the 80-year-olds, the 90-year-olds, and the 16-year-olds; we need to look after them all. In this State we need to develop the notion of continuing

education for everybody, not to talk in terms of "What can we cut back here?" and "What can we cut back there?" I know we cannot do it all and I will be glad one day when a Government comes out and says "These are our ideals; this is what we are aiming for. We cannot do it all," and then takes step after faltering step to see that it all can be achieved eventually; because in our society with our degree of productivity and our technology, we should be able to do it all.

Certainly I will say as I have said before that I do not mind paying more taxation in order that this might be done. I believe people in the top 5 per cent can pay considerably more taxation in order to achieve some of these things.

The Hon. Peter Dowding: It would be a help if some of them actually paid some taxation.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: It would be a good idea if some who dodged taxation, paid it.

So my motion stands untouched by the gentlemen opposite who have spoken, because they did not discuss it; they touched it and set up straw men. They did nothing about it at all. I would be glad if there were enough men of goodwill in this Chamber to go across and vote with me for the motion.

I commend the motion to the House and I make no apologies for it. I think it is a good motion and I will now sit down and put it to the test.

Question put and a division taken with the following result—

#### Ayes 7

Hon. J. M. Berinson	Hon. R. Hetherington
Hon. J. M. Brown	Hon. H. W. Olney
Hon. D. K. Dans	Hon. F. E. McKenzie
Hon. Peter Dowding	

(Teller)

#### Noes 18

Hon. V. J. Ferry	Hon. P. G. Pendar
Hon. H. W. Gayfer	Hon. W. M. Piesse
Hon. Tom Knight	Hon. R. G. Pike
Hon. A. A. Lewis	Hon. I. G. Pratt
Hon. P. H. Lockyer	Hon. P. H. Wells
Hon. G. E. Masters	Hon. R. J. L. Williams
Hon. Neil McNeill	Hon. W. R. Withers
Hon. I. G. Medcalf	Hon. D. J. Wordsworth
Hon. Neil Oliver	Hon. Margaret McAleer

(Teller)

#### Pairs

Ayes	Noes
Hon. Lyla Elliott	Hon. G. C. MacKinnon
Hon. R. T. Leeson	Hon. N. F. Moore

Question thus negatived.

Motion defeated.

## BULK HANDLING AMENDMENT BILL

### Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. D. J. Wordsworth (Minister for Lands), read a first time.

### Second Reading

THE HON. D. J. WORDSWORTH (South—Minister for Lands) [9.36 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This bill seeks to amend the Bulk Handling Act 1967-1979 for the following purposes—

To extend the period giving Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. the sole right to handle wheat and barley; and

to ensure that it is clear that where Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. is acting as an authorised, or licensed receiver, the appropriate standards are those specified to CBH by the relevant marketing authority.

The Bill extends the sole right of Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. to receive, handle, transport, and deliver wheat and barley to 31 December 2000, which is 15 years beyond the current expiry date of 31 December 1985.

Extension of the sole right for Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. to handle wheat and barley is essential for the State's grain industry. CBH has always maintained a very high standard of grain hygiene at its country receival points and port terminals, which is necessary to meet the nil insect requirements of overseas buyers.

Retention of the sole right by CBH beyond 1985 will ensure that these standards are maintained and also avoid unnecessary duplication of CBH's facilities. Moreover, CBH's franchise always has been an important consideration for lenders when contemplating loans to the company. The extension of the franchise, therefore, will enable CBH to plan and fund its building programme to meet the expected steady increase in Western Australian grain production over the next 20 years.

The Bill provides also that where CBH is acting as an authorised or licensed receiver, the appropriate grades and dockages on grain it receives will be those notified to it in writing by the relevant marketing authority, after the marketing authority has consulted with CBH.

Where CBH is not acting as an authorised receiver—that is, in a warehousing situation—the appropriate grades and dockages will be those set by CBH by arrangement with the relevant marketing authority, such as the Grain Pool in

the case of oats, and any other organisation or individual whom CBH considers appropriate.

The grades and dockages will not come into effect until CBH has notified the Director of Agriculture and published them in *The West Australian*.

These amendments also remove an inconsistency with the Western Australian Wheat Marketing Act that is hampering the effective implementation of the varietal control scheme for wheat, as the appropriate standards will no longer be those specified in the Bulk Handling Act regulations.

The Wheat Marketing Act specifies that the Australian Wheat Board sets the discounts and premiums for the quality and variety of wheat. On the other hand, at present, CBH must abide by the regulations in determining quality standards and dockages as part of its statutory responsibilities.

This Bill ensures that the appropriate quality standards, dockages, and varietal discounts for wheat applied by CBH are those notified to CBH by the Australian Wheat Board.

The removal of the grades and dockages from the regulations also overcomes a problem the Department of Agriculture has been experiencing as an arbitrator in disputes between CBH and growers over the quality of grain delivered to CBH and docked because of inferior quality. The grades and dockages need to be altered at least annually, and even during harvest occasionally, to meet the changing requirements of the marketing authorities; that is, the Australian Wheat Board and the Grain Pool.

The regulations cannot be altered this regularly, especially during harvest. Indeed, the regulations specifying grades and dockages have not been altered since 1975. Under the provisions of this Bill, the department will be able to arbitrate on disputes over quality on the basis of the most recent set of standards.

The Bill also allows CBH if it wishes, to take a sample of wheat when it is delivered at a siding and forward the sample to the Australian Wheat Board so that its variety can be determined.

If CBH takes a sample for this purpose, it will be required to advise growers that the sample has been taken. Once the Wheat Board has determined the variety, it will then inform CBH, which will advise growers accordingly. Officers of CBH still will be able to determine quality and dockages relating to quality at the siding or, if the determination is not to be made at the siding, forward a sample to another office of CBH for

the determination to be made if the grower consents.

Under the provisions of this Bill, neither CBH nor the Department of Agriculture will arbitrate on disputes over the Australian Wheat Board's varietal determinations. The board has access to the CSIRO wheat research unit in Sydney for an independent determination if necessary.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. J. M. Brown.

## MINING AND PETROLEUM RESEARCH BILL

### *Third Reading*

Bill read a third time, on motion by the Hon. I. G. Medcalf (Leader of the House), and passed.

## GRAIN MARKETING AMENDMENT BILL

### *Second Reading*

Debate resumed from 30 April.

**THE HON. J. M. BROWN** (South-East) [9.43 p.m.]: I appreciate the urgency regarding the passage of this Bill as 8 May is the deadline set by the Commonwealth in respect of receiving funds from the Grain Pool for the establishment of a new fund for research into barley. At the outset I say the Opposition supports the measure and feels great value can be achieved from the proposal to amend the Grain Marketing Act 1975 to facilitate the transferral of the State barley research levy to a Commonwealth barley research levy.

The second reading speech of the Minister for Lands referred at satisfactory length to the amendment to section 28, but it did not deal with the amendment to section 33 of the Grain Marketing Act. The amendment to section 33 was an amendment to the Bill passed in another place, after being printed on the notice paper of that place. That amendment mentions the Bulk Handling Amendment Bill.

I wonder whether the Minister was aware of the amendment to section 33, which would be of great importance to us. Possibly it should be discussed at length in the future when debating the Bulk Handling Amendment Bill.

Section 28 provides power to terminate and vary the levies, and also to enable moneys collected under the Act since the advent of the Commonwealth barley research levy and the Barley Research Act to be withdrawn from the grain research fund and transferred by the Grain Pool to the Commonwealth. The present situation is that there is a levy of 15c per tonne. This levy is



paid into the grain research fund, which is administered by the Minister for Agriculture, on the recommendation of the grain research committee.

The Australian barley research scheme was set up by the Commonwealth under the Barley Research Levy Act and the Barley Research Act. This was done with the agreement of the States, through the Agriculture Council. Those Acts were assented to on 17 December, 1980. The Commonwealth levy commenced with the 1980-81 harvest; and in Western Australia it will be collected by the Grain Pool. Once again, the levy will be 15c per tonne. It will be paid into a trust fund, with a matching Commonwealth contribution.

As in the past, the funds collected in Western Australia will be allocated for research purposes under the direction of the Minister for Agriculture, on recommendations from the grain research committee. The Commonwealth funds will be allocated for research by the Minister for Primary Industry, on the recommendations of the barley industry research council. It remains to be seen whether this poses a problem.

A great deal of negotiating occurred to convince some of the States that this was the best scheme that could be organised through the Agriculture Council. South Australia was not readily agreeable to the proposition, and it was under some sort of threat. However, eventually it agreed to join, in the interests of grain growers throughout Australia.

As I say, there could be a conflict of interests between the States in relation to the research levies under the direction of the Minister for Agriculture, and the research levies under the direction of the Minister for Primary Industry. The results will be watched with a great deal of interest and concern by the barley growers in Western Australia and, no doubt, by the grower organisations.

There is an injection of funds for research from the Commonwealth. We hope co-operation will occur between the Minister for Primary Industry and the States and, in particular, the State of Western Australia. We can see nothing but real benefit flowing from the amendments to the Act.

Now I turn to the amendment to section 33, which deals with grades and dockages. As I mentioned before, that was not referred to in the second reading speech of the Minister for Lands. If the Minister is not aware of the situation at this stage, perhaps we might have it reviewed in the Committee stage.

I will discuss the matter further when I hear the Minister's comments on the amendment to section 33.

The Opposition supports the Bill.

**THE HON. D. J. WORDSWORTH** (South—Minister for Lands) [9.52 p.m.]: I thank the Opposition for its support for the Bill. The member pointed out that the second reading speech did not explain one of the minor amendments.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: Minor?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: Yes.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: The whole future of varietal control is in that amendment.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: The amendment moved in another place—

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: The one not mentioned in your speech.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I am somewhat surprised at the interjection—

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: If it is going to be complementary to the Bulk Handling Act, it has to follow it.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: —of the member, because of his understanding of what I said. The amendment made in another place was made because there was a constitutional problem. The Bill refers to a Federal Act, so the wording had to be changed—

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: In order that varietal control would come into being.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: That was the reason for that amendment.

The Hon. J. M. Brown: It deals with grades and dockages. It is not a minor matter.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: While the matter is not a minor one, it is a minor amendment to cover the need to change the wording. Previously it referred to something in a Federal Act.

The Hon. J. M. Brown: I am aware only of the State Act.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: There is a constitutional difficulty if a State Act refers to a Federal Act.

I hope I have been able to answer the member on the matter.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee*

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (the Hon. R. Hetherington) in the Chair; the Hon. D.

J. Wordsworth (Minister for Lands) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2 put and passed.

Clause 3 : Section 33 amended—

The Hon. J. M. BROWN: Whilst the Minister said that the amendment was of minor significance because of the Commonwealth Act, the grain growers view this situation with a great deal of concern. As I said earlier, the Bulk Handling Amendment Bill gives us another opportunity to discuss the problem of varietal control, which was mentioned by the Hon. H. W. Gayfer. That is of tremendous importance to grain growers in Western Australia. It cannot be taken lightly, because the amendment to the Grain Marketing Act relates to the CBH Bill. The amendment to the Grain Marketing Act was necessary because of the impingement of the setting of standards.

Section 33 of the Act is as follows—

33. For the purposes of this Act, classifications and dockages in respect of a grain delivered to the Grain Pool shall be determined in accordance with the procedures provided in relation thereto by and under the Bulk Handling Act, 1967.

The words "thereto by and" are to be deleted by clause 3, to be replaced with "to grades and dockages by or". The section, as amended, would then read—

33. For the purposes of this Act, classifications and dockages in respect of a grain delivered to the Grain Pool shall be determined in accordance with the procedures provided in relation to grades and dockages by or under the Bulk Handling Act, 1967.

Furthermore, clause 3 provides for the insertion of an additional proposed new subsection as follows—

(2) Subsection (1) of this section shall come into operation on the date on which the Bulk Handling Amendment Act 1981 comes into operation.

Whilst I recognise that the amendment is not of great importance, it is tied up with varietal control, which is of great importance. There is grave concern that in the future this will affect the producers. The grades and dockages will be determined by the Grain Pool and submitted to CBH; so CBH will not be the arbiter in this field. The Australian Wheat Board will be the arbiter of varietal control and standards. The fields of grain handling and grain marketing are tied; and, most importantly, there is the aspect of varietal

control. I will be discussing that under the Bulk Handling Amendment Bill.

The Eastern States consider that the standard of grain produced in Western Australia is not of the same quality as that produced in the Eastern States. I want to make members aware of the situation so that they will share my concern. If it is intended that our grain standards are to be controlled by the Eastern States, we should consider the matter carefully, particularly in view of what has happened in the past. Under the legislation provision is made for grades and dockages to be determined by the Grain Pool and transmitted to CBH which will then act on them in the same way as does the Australian Wheat Board.

This situation is of great concern to producers and I do not believe we should underestimate the importance of this legislation, because it will greatly affect grain growers in this State.

The future of the industry in Western Australia is dependent on the activities of CBH, the Australian Wheat Board and the Grain Pool. This is a very vexed question and, in his reply, I should like the Minister to comment on the meaning and importance of the Bill.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I am sorry I did not follow what the honourable member meant when he spoke in the second reading debate. He said he was concerned about the amendment and I thought he was referring to the wording of it when, in actual fact, he was referring to the gist of the legislation with which we will deal later when the Bulk Handling Amendment Bill is before us.

We are making a major change to the concept of grain marketing in Western Australia. Undoubtedly it will have major effects on the grain-growing areas and the types of grain produced. New varieties are being introduced which have a high yield, but which are perhaps of poorer quality. This matter was not mentioned in the second reading speech on this Bill, but it was explained in some detail in the second reading speech of the other Bill.

The Hon. J. M. Brown: No, it was not.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: It does not change the position.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: It may be members would prefer to deal with both Bills together and that can be arranged.

The Hon. J. M. Brown: It would be ideal.

The Hon. H. W. GAYFER: I seek your guidance, Sir. I refer members to the wording of the amendment and ask you, Sir, where it is

intended proposed new subsection (2) be inserted in the Act?

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (the Hon. R. Hetherington): If the honourable member will be patient, I will have a look at the principal Act and see if I can guide him on the matter.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: It would not be usual to have an amendment of this nature, because such drafting changes are usually made by those printing the Bill. It appears that the designation (1) is required after section 33, so that there will be subsections (1) and (2). However, I shall leave the experts at the desk to determine the matter.

#### *Progress*

Progress reported and leave given to sit again, on motion by the Hon. D. J. Wordsworth (Minister for Lands).

### **CLEAN AIR AMENDMENT BILL**

#### *Second Reading*

Debate resumed from 5 May.

THE HON. H. W. OLNEY (South Metropolitan) [10.09 p.m.]: The Opposition does not oppose this Bill, which has the object of bringing about a number of changes with respect to the Clean Air Act. Some of the changes which are made are obviously of advantage in that they improve the legislation, but, in many respects, we are not very happy with some of the other changes envisaged.

The Bill has a number of purposes, one of which is to increase the size of the Air Pollution Control Council from 15 to 17 by the addition of two new members. Therefore, although we now have a council of the size of the State Cabinet in its expanded form, we will increase its size to two more than the State Cabinet. Some significance will be placed on that aspect later in my remarks.

The alterations which are to be made to the Air Pollution Control Council will change the representation on the council and the net effect will be that the Local Government Association will have two members instead of one and the Confederation of Western Australian Industry will have four members instead of three.

In the second reading speech, the Minister made no attempt to explain the reason for increasing the representation of the Confederation of Western Australian Industry and, although I have read the debates which have taken place on the Bill elsewhere, there does not appear to be any real reason that the Air Pollution Control Council needs to be increased from 15 to 17 members or that there should be additional representation

from the Confederation of Western Australian Industry.

It is all very well to say, as it has been said, that there are different aspects of industry and it is necessary to have those different aspects represented separately. Already on the Council the mining industry is represented by a ministerial appointment and, in the past, there have been three other representatives from the Confederation of Western Australian Industry, and no case has been made out for the necessity to increase that representation.

When one has regard for the real role of the council—that is, the control of industries which pollute the atmosphere—one wonders why it is appropriate that the very people who are sought to be controlled should be represented so heavily.

We are concerned at the trend of giving strong representation to people with a vested interest, and a vested interest contrary to the objectives of the legislation. The TLC, which again has a vested interest in looking after the welfare of members of its affiliates, has a single representative on the Air Pollution Control Council and there is no suggestion that that representation ought to be increased.

This is not a matter on which we would go to the barricades on this occasion, but I raise it particularly because nothing in the explanatory information, such as it is, contained in the second reading speech, justifies this particular increase in the size of the council.

As I pointed out, the council has 15 men operating on it, as many as the State Cabinet, including the Honorary Ministers, and it now needs a couple more and we are not told the reason for the increase.

The most significant amendment in the Bill is the most important one, and it is the one which amends section 24 of the Act. This is found in clause 12 of the Bill. This clause will give the council the power to impose conditions to revoke or vary conditions attached to licences issued under the Act.

If members are familiar with the Act they will appreciate that under section 23 it is necessary that a person who is the occupier of a particular type of premises—that is, those premises which are likely to pollute the atmosphere—must hold a licence issued under the Act.

In the past when licences have been issued it has been possible to attach conditions to them, and indeed to the renewing of licences issued by the council. This amendment to the Act will be a very worth-while addition to the powers of the council because it will enable it, during the

currency of the licence, to give notice to either revoke the licence or suspend it for a period of up to six months. It will also be possible to attach conditions to the licence. We applaud that change because it has been found in the past that the Act had very few teeth with which the council could bite offending operators. This will provide additional authority which, hopefully, the council will be able to use to good effect.

It is hoped that by the use of this additional power in the authority to attach new conditions the council will be able to achieve, without the necessity of prosecution, the desirable end that offending operators of industries which do not comply with the reasonable requirements of the legislation will face the ultimate sanction which will be of course the suspension of the licence to operate. We support that amendment.

One amendment, contained in the legislation, which we view with some concern is a new provision which will allow appeals from the decision of the council to be made to the Minister. In the past, these appeals have been to the Local Court and now we have the situation where an appeal will be permitted either to the Minister or to the Local Court.

With the greatest respect, I would suggest that these circumstances which will now provide a dissatisfied person with an alternative as to which tribunal he may appeal—which is quite right—give that person a chance of playing one tribunal off against another. Under this Act an appeal to the Minister will preclude an appeal to the Local Court and vice versa; so any person who desires to appeal from a decision of the council will select the one which is most appropriate.

Under the Local Government Act there are many occasions where appeals of this type, in respect of the sort of decisions as are made by the Air Pollution Control Council, can go to the Minister; but that does not mean it is desirable. With this Bill the Government has introduced an administrative appeal as an alternative to a judicial appeal, again, without explaining the reasons for such a decision.

We have a situation where the legislation has provided for a judicial appeal and it is being changed to provide also for an administrative appeal, that is a political type of appeal but there is no reason given for the change. If the judicial type of appeal is unsatisfactory, then the provision should be repealed, after advising us of the circumstances that have led to the desirability of this being done. However, a case has not been made out by the Minister as to why there should be an alternative right of appeal.

The loading of the council with extra representation from industry causes us some concern and we feel that although a number of useful changes are in this legislation, it does seem to be loaded somewhat against the successful working of the Act. Firstly, there is more industry representation on the council and, secondly, there is the introduction of a ministerial appeal.

I do not wish to deal with the emotive discussion that took place in the other place, but I wish to raise one valid point. I would be interested to hear the Minister's answer as to whether the existing appeal provision has proved to be unsatisfactory and in what respect it has proved unsatisfactory. If it has not, what is the explanation for the introduction of an alternative means of appeal?

Several points have arisen from the second reading speech, and I feel they need to be referred to. I seek the Minister's assistance in putting me right because I must plead ignorance on one point. On page 15 of the second reading speech in the second paragraph the Minister stated it is proposed that the council be given the power to exempt any person, premises, or firm from compliance with the regulations where it is considered appropriate. That statement is couched in terms that suggest the Bill contains a provision that will give the council the power to exempt from compliance with the regulations any such body it thinks fit. Search as I may I cannot find the provision in the Bill which does that job. The Minister may be able to give me some guidance on that. My colleague in another place (Mr Hodge) also was unable to find it.

On page 16 of the Minister's second reading speech he dealt with the increase in the fines that are to be imposed for breaches of the Act. I think the greatest increase is from \$200 to \$10 000. The others are not quite so spectacular, but they are certainly welcome because, after all, we are dealing with industries which have a fair amount of clout financially.

It is appropriate that breaches of this very important legislation ought to be penalised in a way which will be meaningful to the offender. In support of the changes in the scale of fines, the Minister said that local authorities have often criticised the \$200 maximum penalty as offering absolutely no discouragement to an industry committing an offence. He said it is claimed that it is cheaper to pay an occasional fine than remedy the defect.

That sounds acceptable, and if that were true then one would think that the imposition of very substantial fines may well do something to

decrease the offensive discharge of pollutants into the atmosphere by industries which are affected by the Act. However, when one examines the record, we find that in the last five years one successful prosecution has been made for a breach of the Clean Air Act and that no successful prosecutions have been made for breaches of the clean air regulations.

When the Minister says that local authorities have often criticised the maximum fine of \$200, I query whether in fact that is correct. Certainly it has been claimed that it is probably cheaper to pay the fine rather than comply with the Act. I made some inquiries with the people in authority and I must say that those who deal with this matter in the relevant Government departments are most agreeable and co-operative in answering queries about the Act. It appears that there are many defects in the administration and that the legislation has no real teeth.

It seems that, apart from increasing the fines and extending the period of time in which prosecutions can be brought, the only significant change being made to this Act is that authority is given to the council to impose alternative or additional conditions to the licence granted under section 24 of the Act.

I believe the only people who will appeal to the Minister will be those dissatisfied industrialists who do not wish to comply with the conditions imposed by the council. I believe such appeals will go to the Minister on every occasion.

I believe this Bill is cosmetic at the best and nothing has been done to impose the sort of enforcement provisions which are required to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Air Pollution Control Council.

The history of attempted enforcement in the past has been a very sorry one. I understand there have been numerous occasions when officers of the Department of Public Health have prepared cases and detailed evidence and placed abundant material before the Crown Law Department for the purposes of prosecution, only to be told by the Crown Law Department "The Act is deficient in this respect or that. We cannot prove your case. We recommend you do not prosecute." That is the reason only one successful prosecution has been made in the last five years, and that was probably against a poor little fellow who did not know the case was on, because I understand the loopholes are so big that everybody has managed to get out of prosecution even when the Crown Law Department thought there was enough ammunition to have a go in court.

So, whilst we do not oppose this legislation and can see some marginal advantages in it, we are disappointed the Government has given with one hand and appears to be taking away with the other.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. Margaret McAleer.

*House adjourned at 10.32 p.m.*

## QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

### SUPERANNUATION BOARD

#### *New Building*

246. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the Minister representing the Treasurer:

- (1) What is the yield on \$429 500 expended by the Superannuation Board towards the construction of a new office building in East Perth to be leased to the Government?
- (2) What is the expected total expenditure by the Superannuation Board on this building?
- (3) What is the expected expenditure for this building in the financial year 1981-1982?
- (4) Is expenditure on this building causing any liquidity problems for the fund?
- (5) What amounts of money are being put into other investments in this financial year, or are most moneys committed to the new office building in East Perth?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

- (1) 9.8 per cent.
- (2) Approximately \$20 million.
- (3) Approximately \$9 million.
- (4) No.
- (5) The board's approved investment programme for the 1980-81 financial year is as follows—

	\$m
Local and Semi-government authorities	10.5
Government guaranteed investments	5.2
Property, mortgages and debentures	13.0
Education Department building	10.0
Company shares	0.5
	<hr/> 39.2 <hr/>

### TRANSPORT: BUSES

#### *MTT: Fremantle-Perth*

247. The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Will the Government provide concession fares on MTT buses travelling between Perth and Fremantle for former

Westrail employees who enjoyed a concession for rail travel between Perth and Fremantle before the closure of the Perth-Fremantle railway?

- (2) If so, when will such concessions be introduced?
- (3) If not, will the Minister explain the reasons for the decision?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) Concessional travel is available to former Westrail employees who previously enjoyed the privilege prior to the closure of the Perth-Fremantle rail passenger service and who are entitled to the issue of a Westrail permit card. The following conditions apply—
  - (a) the person must have retired prior to 31 December 1979;
  - (b) the person must reside in the postal districts of those suburbs previously directly served by the Perth-Fremantle rail service;
  - (c) the concession is available only on the following services for travel between Perth and Fremantle—
    - (i) rail replacement services routes 760, 761, and 766;
    - (ii) for any such person wishing to board or alight at either old Swanbourne or Grant Street rail stations, the concession is applicable on routes 70, 72, and 73.
- (2) Concessions were introduced in February 1980.
- (3) Not applicable.

### SEWERAGE

#### *Metropolitan Area and Midland*

248. The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT, to the Minister representing the Minister for Water Resources:

Will the Minister—

- (a) (i) provide me with a map indicating the areas in the metropolitan area that will be sewered in the near future; and/or
- (ii) advise me the streets to be sewered;

- (b) provide a timetable for the programme of installation; and
- (c) advise when sewerage will be installed to complete Wroxton Street in Midland and the surrounding area?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

- (a) (i) and (ii) A plan will be provided in two to three weeks;
- (b) the timing of the planned works will be marked on the plan;
- (c) there are no plans to complete the sewerage of Wroxton Street and surrounding area in the current five-year plan.

### RAILWAYS

#### *Transmark Report*

249. The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Has the Government conducted an investigation into the number of people who will be replaced by the introduction of machinery as recommended by the Transmark report?
- (2) If so, how many people will be affected?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) 21 progressively between now and 1984.

### SUPERANNUATION BOARD

#### *Provident Account*

250. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the Minister representing the Treasurer:

- (1) What was the interest rate paid on subscriptions to the Superannuation Board provident account at 30 June 1980?
- (2) What was the average earning rate of the Superannuation Board investments at 30 June 1980?
- (3) Why was there a difference between interest paid and interest received on provident account moneys?
- (4) Why is there disparity in interest paid and interest earned when there is no sharing of risks between provident account subscribers?

- (5) How is the excess of earnings over payments on provident account moneys distributed?
- (6) Will the Superannuation Board give consideration to altering the provident account interest payable, to stop the growth in superannuation fund reserves at the expense of provident account subscribers?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

- (1) The interest rate paid on subscriptions to the provident account at 30 June 1980 was 8.5 per cent per annum and was increased to 9.5 per cent per annum as from 1 September 1980.
- (2) The average earning rate of invested funds at 30 June 1980 was 10.08 per cent.
- (3) and (4) The board fixes the interest rate paid on provident account moneys below the average earning rate of the fund to protect the fund against the possibility of a reduction in interest returns and because of its guarantee to subscribers that they cannot suffer a capital loss regardless of the board's investment performance.
- (5) The differential between interest earnings and payments is retained within the fund.
- (6) The board reviews from time to time the rate of interest to be paid on provident account moneys and will continue to do so.

### RAILWAYS

#### *Transmark Report*

251. The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is it the intention of the Government to make public the Transmark report on the Midland Railway workshops?
- (2) If so, when will the report be made public?
- (3) If not, will the Minister explain why the Government is not prepared to make the report public?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) to (3) The Transmark report is a normal internal Westrail study and as such will not be publicly released.

## SUPERANNUATION BOARD

*Company Debentures*

252. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the Minister representing the Treasurer:

- (1) Is the Superannuation Board continuing to invest in company debentures?
- (2) Is the marketable value of the current portfolio of company debentures now below the book value?
- (3) If the answer to (2) is "Yes", by how much?
- (4) What was the yield on the portfolio of company debentures—at book value—at 30 June 1980?
- (5) How does this yield compare with the average earnings of the superannuation fund?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

- (1) Yes, when suitable opportunities arise.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) The difference between book and market value of company debentures fluctuates in line with movements in interest rates generally, as is the case with any fixed interest security including Commonwealth bonds.  
At 30 June 1980 the differential was approximately \$200 000.

- (4) and (5) The yield on company debentures held at 30 June 1980 was 11.79 per cent, compared with the fund's average earning rate of 10.08 per cent.

## RAILWAYS

*Midland Workshops: Industrial Safety*

253. The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Labour and Industry:

Why are Government industrial inspectors not permitted to examine industrial safety at the Midland Workshops?

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS replied:

Both factory and shop inspectors and construction safety inspectors are permitted to examine appropriate safety matters at the Midland Workshops.

Machinery inspectors do not inspect machinery at the Midland Workshops since it is exempt from their inspection under section 7(2)(g) of the Machinery Safety Act 1974.