

Mr Watt: The law is only violated when more than two bottles are sold.

Mr T. H. JONES: The member for Albany can make his own contribution. I have made my position clear. I support the amendment.

Mr O'NEIL: I would simply like to suggest that this debate has already taken place some time ago. I do not think there are any points which have not been canvassed or forcibly expressed.

In view of the hour, and the reason we desire to adjourn fairly soon, might I suggest to the Committee we simply put the matter to the vote.

If that is not acceptable I will have to take the alternative of reporting progress. I think most members of the Committee have already expressed themselves very freely on the issue, so perhaps wiser counsel might prevail and we might go to a vote and adjourn reasonably close to the time we set.

Progress

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

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: SPECIAL

MR O'NEIL (East Melville—Minister for Works) [5.30 p.m.]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until 11.00 a.m. tomorrow (Thursday).
Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.31 p.m.

Legislative Council

Thursday, the 18th November, 1976

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. A. F. Griffith) took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Postponement

THE PRESIDENT (the Hon. A. F. Griffith): I advise that questions will be taken at a later stage of the sitting.

AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING COMMISSION

Symphony Orchestras: Motion

THE HON. R. F. CLAUGHTON (North Metropolitan) [2.35 p.m.]: I move—

That this House views with concern the proposal that Australian Symphony Orchestras should be reduced and, in particular, the Western Australian Symphony Orchestra, and further urges the West Australian Government to make representation to the Australian Government requesting

that it take such action as is necessary in order to at least maintain the present levels of activity of the Australian Broadcasting Commission in this State.

Members of this House would be under no illusion that the continuance of the Western Australian Symphony Orchestra is under threat, as are many of the programmes that are produced within this State for television and radio. I would like first to refer to some of the comments in two reports which make it quite plain that this threat has been stated and, because of the financial restrictions on the Australian Broadcasting Commission, is something which is highly likely to occur.

The Western Australian Symphony Orchestra has 57 permanent players and has an established strength of 65 players. It is the symphony orchestra in Australia which enjoys the highest percentage of attendance of any mainland orchestra. Its attendance records indicate it plays to 9.9 per cent of the State's population, which is a very significant proportion and for this State at least it demonstrates that the charge of elitism in its audiences would be difficult to sustain. Most of the concerts conducted by the orchestra are sold out in advance and the current concert has been extended by one night, this Friday, the 19th November.

In the IAC report which was tabled in Parliament this year reference was made to the orchestra on a number of occasions and I would like to quote these for the information of members. On page 19 of the report the commission sets out what it considers to be the historical reasons for the establishment of the orchestra. I quote—

These orchestras appear to have been originally established for three reasons:

to provide classical music for broadcasting of a higher technical quality than was then possible with recordings;

to meet a need for public performances prior to the general availability of high fidelity equipment in homes for musical reproductions (both from broadcasts and recordings); and

to foster the expansion and quality of local musical talent.

Then, in partial justification for the abandonment of some of the orchestras of the Australian Broadcasting Commission, the report goes on to state—

As recordings made in special studios now provide music of a higher technical quality than that available from most public performances, as the community's access to such music has been expanded by electronic developments and as the costs of maintaining

orchestras for live performances escalate, the justification for the A.B.C. subsidising public performances to such an extent is limited and declining.

A real threat to their continued existence is contained in this part of the report. To continue—

The Commission will thus recommend that an increasing and eventually a large proportion of the funds provided for these purposes in the A.B.C. budget be redirected to education and dissemination (and, where appropriate, for innovation) in a manner consistent with the guidelines established for national assistance to the performing arts.

The report suggests that new emphasis be given to the grants for the performing arts; and the funds expended by the Australian Broadcasting Commission on orchestras and broadcasting of other performing arts are involved.

At page 105 of the report the commissioners have this to say—

As previously indicated, the Commission has concluded that future assistance to performing arts activities should be directed to the three objectives of education, dissemination and innovation. However, in order to give currently subsidised companies time to adjust their activities towards meeting these objectives, some interim assistance is considered justified.

To make clearer the lines along which the commission was thinking, it should be borne in mind that this report was submitted to the Australian Government; and the authorities will be considering how the funds allocated to the arts should be directed.

The report at page 49 deals again with the orchestras, and indicates the way these should be used. It states—

The Commission received less than full information about the activities of the ABC in the performing arts. From what it could establish, it appears that the ABC's orchestral and concert activities required reassessment and that the rationale for its actions in areas affecting the performing arts should be more reasoned and much more explicit so that effective public scrutiny can take place.

Further down the same page the following appears—

The Commission considers that, unless it is shown to be necessary for broadcasting (or if it is deemed justifiable in terms of educational and cultural contributions that cannot be achieved otherwise), the same scale and variety of broadcasting activity could now be achieved from a smaller and more varied orchestral establishment. For example, some centres could

support symphony orchestras, others chamber orchestras or smaller ensembles and others choral groups.

Page 50 of the report contains some references to the prices that are charged for attendances at concerts. It states—

This means that the cost of tickets should rise. The Commission does not consider that such price rises will have many particularly disadvantageous welfare effects since the ABC Subscriber Surveys indicate that audiences for the concerts are primarily drawn from the highest income groups in society.

As I have already indicated that cannot be held to be the case in Western Australia which has the highest attendance figures per head of population of all the States.

Page 50 of the report also deals with what the commission regards as a new basis for determining support for the arts. It states—

The ABC also provides assistance to the performing arts through its presentations on radio and TV. The cost of this assistance could not be determined with any degree of precision. However, the Commission estimates that the cost to the ABC of producing local drama, variety or music on television, in preference to importing programs, would be very substantial (see Chapter III). Whatever the amount, it involves the use of extra resources that should be considered a subsidy to the performing arts. The ABC was unable to provide any coherent rationale for either the extent of its subventions to the performing arts or for its allocation of this assistance between different art forms. In any rational national policy for assisting the performing arts, these expenditures should be co-ordinated with those incurred by other instrumentalities.

That is the view of a group which is looking at the position of the performing arts purely from the cost-benefit angle. I believe that is not the whole story, and this remark applies particularly to Western Australia.

The isolation of Western Australia from the other States is a very serious disadvantage in regard to access to live performances, opportunities available to the creative people in this State, and costs involved in mounting productions which proportionately are greater because of the distance and isolation.

The ABC has been told that it must reduce these types of performances, and as a consequence the people of Western Australia will be seriously disadvantaged because the opportunities available to us will be much fewer. It might be conceivable that with performances between Sydney and Melbourne there could be reductions in one area or another. Because

of the proximity of the populations the disadvantage to the members of those communities would not be as great as the disadvantage to the people of Western Australia.

Arising from the IAC report there was the Green report commissioned by the present Australian Government. It is a report of the Department of Post and Telecommunications. Again the same terms which the IAC used, particularly when referring to symphony orchestras, are repeated in this report.

I quote from page 138 of this document, paragraph 431 of which states—

The Inquiry believes that subsidising symphony orchestras is now a largely anachronistic and inappropriate activity for the ABC as the National Broadcasting Service.

The PRESIDENT: There is too much background noise, and the speaker on his feet can hardly be heard.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: To continue—

If the Government intends that such subsidies should be made, they should more properly be administered through some other body, such as the Australia Council, which already subsidises the Elizabethan Trust and Western Australia Arts Orchestra to the extent of about \$1.7 million a year, as well as giving ad hoc grants to amateur orchestras.

The actual aid given to the Western Australian orchestra is much less than the \$1.7 million would indicate. I am informed it is about \$20 000 whereas the State Government gives a substantially greater sum than that. So, the action contemplated will make very little difference to Western Australia. The proposal that the orchestra should be administered through some other body would not really resolve the problem which faces us because funds would still have to be made available for that purpose. There is an existing administration system within the ABC which is well equipped to cope with its needs and demands.

The ABC saves a great deal of money from broadcasting performances. The figures which have been made available indicate that whereas it costs the ABC about \$1 200 to broadcast a performance of one symphony orchestra, the cost for an Australian produced drama is about \$80 000. There is a substantial difference between those figures, and a saving in costs to the ABC is involved.

At page 167 of the report recommendation 37 states—

That the number of orchestras employed by the Australian Broadcasting Commission be limited to that number required to undertake broadcasting functions, and that the Commission initiate discussions with the

Australia Council on the future of those orchestras which may be disbanded.

I hope that what I have quoted will disabuse the minds of those members who have the idea that the orchestras are not under threat, and I would like to develop that aspect more as I proceed. Quite clearly, the extracts I have quoted illustrate a serious attempt to divorce the orchestras from the ABC. If that is done no follow-up is provided for funding to be made available through some other organisation. If the orchestras are disbanded that would be to the disadvantage of the ABC and to the disadvantage of us all.

Another aspect affecting orchestras, particularly, is contained in the terms of employment of the musicians. I am not able to inform members of the actual details, but I believe the musicians are employed under a one-year contract, which is much easier to terminate. That means those people are much more vulnerable when the question of saving funds is under consideration. About 500 musicians are employed in the orchestras throughout Australia.

This matter has also been discussed in the Press. I draw the attention of members to an article which appeared in *The Sydney Morning Herald* of Saturday, the 13th May. Under the heading "Worried ABC music men hear someone orchestrating their funeral" the article, in part reads—

Three of the ABC's six symphony orchestras are in grave danger of being disbanded early next year because the commission is likely to have to sack more than 500 people by March.

The 411 orchestral players are threatened by two Government reports just published which urge the ABC to save funds by scrapping orchestras—and playing taped music instead.

But they are most vulnerable because of the discovery that the ABC can save more money per head by sacking orchestral players than by sacking any others of the 6 920 staff.

The ABC will have to cut costs by a further \$4 million in the next six months because of national wage rises, and the orchestras are now being cited as a key target of the next round of cost-cutting.

"We could well see two or three orchestras disbanded by March and this is going to have immense cultural repercussions for Australia," an ABC commissioner, who declined to be named, said yesterday.

Further in the article the comment is made—

The ABC could save about \$2 million a year by abolishing the Tasmanian,

West Australian and Adelaide Symphony Orchestras. If the Queensland orchestra was added, the saving would be about \$3 million.

Members will already be aware that there have been a number of cuts in the programmes. The article continues—

"The ABC sacked the Adelaide Singers and the Sydney Showband early this year as part of their cost-cutting, and to hew into the orchestras will take us back to pre-war days of a few struggling orchestras.

The article goes on—

Right now, it is the ABC orchestras that are in the firing line—even though the Minister for Post and Telegraphs, Mr Robinson, has dismissed the idea of orchestras being axed.

For it will be the ABC commissioners, not Mr Robinson, who will make that decision.

I happened to hear Mr Robinson—I think it was—answer a question in the Australian Parliament on that matter. He said the Government had no intention of dismissing the orchestras. The point is, of course, that the decision would not be made by the Minister; it would be made by the commissioners who have the task of trying to keep within their budget.

I would comment at this stage that in moving this motion I am not directing any criticism at the restructuring which is the subject of legislation presently before the Australian Government. My concern is related to the activities of the ABC currently carried out in this State and which are likely to be affected by the need to cut costs.

One of the newspaper articles I have quoted referred to the need to cut the staff by 500. Other reports have mentioned a greater number than that. An article in *The National Times* refers to a staff of approximately 7 000 having to be reduced to about 6 000 in order to save the required amount of funds.

We know, also, that earlier this year there were reductions of staff already carried out, and some programmes were also deleted at that time. The cuts in staff will affect news, public affairs, music, education, Radio Australia, TV productions, outside sports coverage, engineering, and administration and on the creative side it will also affect Western Australian actors, musicians, and writers.

This will mean that for the people of this State particularly there will be a marked reduction of work opportunities, not only for adults but also for our children. These opportunities, while they will be lost here, will still be available to people in the Eastern States. I believe it is very much in our interests to make strong representations to the Australian Government to see no further reductions are made in the programmes produced within our State.

There has been a fair amount of Press comment on these matters and one such comment which I think is most pertinent was made by the Premier—Sir Charles Court—not in reference to the ABC, but in relation to the journalists and printers' union dispute with the newspapers arising from technological changes in that industry.

I will quote for members what the Premier's comment was, as I think the same situation and the same comment applies to the matters about which I am speaking now. The following appeared in *The West Australian* of the 6th November—

Call to A.J.A.

Sir Charles said he could understand some people rebelling against changes within the industry.

The A.J.A. and newspaper management had the responsibility to treat these situations sensitively and sympathetically.

Australia could ill afford to have able-bodied people thrown on the technological "junk heap."

That is much the situation, although not entirely, which is about to apply to the Australian Broadcasting Commission, and particularly to those who are employed in this State. The staff of the ABC here were asked—as were those in all the States—whether they would be prepared to strike to defend their positions.

This is entirely an industrial matter so far as they are concerned; it is their livelihood, and in a report in *The West Australian* of the 12th February it is stated that the staff had a meeting—there were about 300 of them present—and they gave a very firm "No" to that proposition.

I should think that would endear them to the members of the Government and help secure their support in getting passed this motion which I have before the House.

The question of the reduction of funds and the effect this is having on the staff of the ABC and its programmes has also been a constant theme for the best part of this year. There has been a fair amount of Press comment about this matter. In *The West Australian* of the 5th June—and there are comments which go further back than that—the following appeared under the heading, "ABC avoids cut in programmes"—

The ABC, faced with a budget of \$128 million in 1976-77, about \$4.8 million below this year's funds, has decided to give radio a better deal than the other departments.

This is because radio was substantially cut back in earlier adjustments. To continue—

In the television area some local productions will suffer but economies will be made by fewer outdoor broadcasts, by two cameras at a sporting

fixture instead of three, and by pruning back on lavish productions that cost up to \$40 000 an hour.

These are drama productions—

In the news area, there will probably be fewer regional news bulletins, less use of outside news and current-affairs broadcasts, and a tightening-up in overseas news postings.

The country people will be one of the first to be affected by these cuts because of a reduction in the regional news broadcasts. These are the easiest to disband. They can easily be replaced with nationally broadcast news.

That would be most unfortunate for the country people of the State. However, just as they have a need, and I think a right, to reports of events and happenings in their own areas, this also applies to the State as a whole.

We should not be dependent for our news on what happens in the Eastern States. From long experience we know that when it comes to a rating in importance the Eastern States sources seem to rate the news from this State at a very low priority; and that would undoubtedly be reflected in any national editions of programmes like TDT.

In *The Australian* of the 18th August there appeared the following under the heading, "\$8m Cut for A.B.C."—

The major cut is in the ABC's budget—a foreshadowed decrease of \$8.1 million from last year's \$164.3 million.

If we want an indication of what the public thinks about it, I would point out that there was a poll conducted recently and reported in the *Daily News* of the 9th July which showed the people's attitude to Australian programmes. In that poll there was a very decisive indication that the people wanted more Australian programmes rather than less. The result of programme cuts being made will mean there will be less production of all kinds of programmes dealing with Australia itself; and that applies particularly to Western Australia.

In *The Australian* of the 5th August under the heading, "Cuts fear in tight ABC budget", reference is again made to the necessity for further programme cuts because of the lack of provision for cost increases to the commission due to matters such as wage and salary rises resulting from indexation. The article states—

A crucial meeting of the ABC commissioners next week seems certain to consider cuts in television and radio productions to meet stringent budget requirements.

The likelihood of this happening is increased by the Federal Government's refusal to meet the \$1.75 million May wage indexation pay rise for the ABC's 7000 employees.

I quote that to confirm that the threat of these changes which are the subject of my motion is a real one. Then in the *Sunday Independent* of the 15th August we find staff of the ABC expressing their concern. Mr Wynne, of the staff association, said—

I feel very depressed about it, he said. It will set back television by years.

Until now, the ABC offered the only opening for actors, directors and scriptwriters.

Prestige programmes such as *Power Without Glory* or serials sold overseas would still be shown, but no more than the original 13 episodes of *Alvin Purple* would be produced.

Mr Maurice Murphy, executive producer of *Alvin*, said the move was tragic and now only imported comedy shows would be shown.

The staff of the ABC, of course, would be fairly knowledgeable about what the commission had been doing in providing employment for Australian professional people in this field. In *The West Australian* on the 22nd September reference is made to a country tour by the orchestra. The following was stated in the article—

If funds were available, the ABC would like to extend the activities of its orchestras to provide more concerts in country areas, the Senate committee on education and the arts was told yesterday.

The committee is inquiring into the employment of musicians by the ABC.

That would be possible only if the orchestra is able to continue. As the year has progressed the size of the cuts involved has steadily increased. Then we find a report in *The West Australian* of the 10th November under the heading, "ABC money crisis" in which the following is stated—

The eight ABC commissioners have agreed to seek an extra \$10 million to stave off a desperate financial crisis that may require 500 ABC staff to be sacked in the next eight months.

That highlights the fact that the amount now involved is far above the original \$2 million and could in fact reach \$10 million. In a report in *The West Australian* on the next day, we find the following—

A statement issued by Sir Henry yesterday after a meeting of the eight ABC commissioners said that the main brunt of the \$2 million cuts would fall on capital items, engineering, production facilities, film departments and TV shows.

He did not spell out the fate of TDT, but it is understood that the commissioners agreed to axe the six State editions run each week night.

When he was in Tasmania since that time, Sir Henry gave his opinion that the smaller States would be better served by one national programme. I cannot believe the people of Western Australia or Tasmania would support him in that view.

In the editorial of *The West Australian* of the 12th November, reference was made to the proposal that TDT productions in each State should be abandoned. The editorial said—

The plan to abandon separate State presentations of This Day Tonight and to replace them with a centralised production cannot be justified on any ground. It does not even make much economic sense, since the saving would be only about \$150 000.

The WA President of the Australian Journalists' Association, in respect of telegrams sent to the Prime Minister and Sir Henry Bland, said in the *Daily News* of the 12th November—

The WA president of the AJA, Mr Peter Kennedy, said in the telegrams that W.A. current affairs coverage should not only be maintained but increased.

WA faced special problems of isolation and time differences not shared by other States.

The factor of isolation and the matter of time differences are extremely important when dealing with news items. Events happening in Western Australia during the afternoon would hardly be likely to get onto a national TDT show; and by the next day, of course, they would be stale news. There is no doubt that Western Australia would be seriously disadvantaged by any move to produce a national TDT show.

I believe the information I have given the House clearly indicates the problems facing the ABC in this State. The matter is of special importance to this State. There is no way in which programmes produced on the eastern seaboard could satisfactorily fulfil the needs of Western Australia.

The factors of isolation and time differences are highly pertinent and affect what is contained in programmes. There would be a lack of immediacy, particularly in respect of news and current affairs productions. There would be a loss of those programmes which deal with a variety of aspects in our local community, whether or not we watch them. For instance, the show "Flicks" is of interest to filmgoers. Presently it is showing old productions of the 1950s, and before that it featured a whole series of old Australian films.

Most of the radio programmes which are produced, particularly those for country people, would be affected; and all the regional news programmes would be subject to this threat.

There is no way in which orchestras located on the eastern seaboard could serve Western Australia. We know the problems of the moment in getting the Australian opera, the Australian ballet, or any of the national performing arts bodies into Western Australia; they come quite infrequently. That would also be the story with the symphony orchestras. Loss of work opportunities for Western Australians would also be involved. Many highly talented people come out of our education system. Mr MacKinnon would know the quality of many of the students in the special music schools who are now playing an important part at many public functions; they are coming to be in demand for public performances.

If the ABC orchestra in Western Australia is disbanded an avenue of natural progression for outstanding children would be lost. They would have to move away from this State to fulfil their ambitions. Western Australians have been faced with that situation in all areas of the creative arts for far too long. We do not want a further loss of these opportunities by what the Government sees as a need to restrict the funding of the commission.

I hope the Government and the Premier, who is well known for his interest in music in particular, will see the value of making special representations on behalf of Western Australians in the terms of this motion. I hope it will have the support of members.

THE HON. LYLA ELLIOTT (North-East Metropolitan) [3.24 p.m.]: I have much pleasure in seconding this motion moved by the Hon. R. F. Cloughton. I think we have very good grounds for expressing concern about the possibility of losing our symphony orchestra and also about what is happening to the Australian Broadcasting Commission.

I believe members of the Fraser Government have expressed a pathological hatred of the Australian Broadcasting Commission. I wish to quote a few references to support what I have just said. I am sure all members will recall the statements made by Mr Nixon in November last year when he asked for the appointment of a moderator for the ABC. What he really wanted was someone to censor political material on the ABC. I shall quote from *The West Australian* of the 13th November. The heading is, "Call for tab on ABC". The article contains the following—

Mr Nixon accused the ABC of bias towards Labor and socialist sides of politics.

He said that the current affairs programmes "AM" and "PM" had given extraordinary exposure to the Labor side, highlighting Labor-organised reaction to Mr Whitlam's dismissal.

He also criticised the exposure given to "two-time political losers such as Mr Gorton and Mr Steele Hall."

Referring to Dr Cass the article continued—

"It is terrifying to see how quickly the Liberal and Country Parties have threatened to muzzle the ABC," he said.

.....
This is an outrageous attempt to intimidate the ABC.

Mr Nixon's use of the word 'moderator' is cynical in the extreme. He really means censor.

Sir Charles Court, in the same newspaper, levelled charges of bias against the Australian Broadcasting Commission, but I thought it was interesting that neither Mr Nixon nor Sir Charles Court were very concerned about the bias we saw in the newspapers at that time. They were concerned only because the ABC saw fit to present both sides of the argument fairly. The journalists themselves were so incensed at the bias of the Press that 400 of them went on strike in Sydney. But we did not see Sir Charles Court, Mr Nixon, or any of the other conservative members of Parliament condemning the newspapers. They saw fit to condemn only the ABC.

Senator Withers is another Liberal Federal member who has made quite clear his feelings towards the Australian Broadcasting Commission. In *The Australian Financial Review* of the 10th November, 1976, there is an article which quotes something he said in the Senate. The article says—

And there are many within the ABC who believe that the Minister for Administrative Services, Senator Withers, was echoing government sentiment when in the Senate in March this year he said, "You blokes (Labor) have been leaning on the Australian Broadcasting Commission for years. It is full of your supporters and has been pumping out your propaganda year in and year out."

That is a lot of nonsense but is another display of hatred for the ABC.

Senator Carrick made very clear his feelings towards one of Australia's foremost historians—Professor Manning Clark—who was chosen by the commission to deliver the Boyer lectures. An article concerning Senator Carrick's attitude states—

Professor Clark was recently attacked in the Senate by the Minister for Education, Senator Carrick, as an "apologist for the Labor Party" and "a political partisan".

The attack came only hours before he was named by the ABC as this year's Boyer lecturer.

Of course there have been others that I have not available today. But I think I have said enough to indicate that this

attack on the Australian Broadcasting Commission is designed to destroy its effectiveness as an independent distributor of fair and unbiased news to the community.

Earlier this year in my Address-in-Reply speech I quoted some financial cuts by the Fraser Government. In the first place, the Government tried to reduce the ABC's budget by \$14 million. This would have involved the sacking of so many people that Dr Earle Hackett, after negotiations, got the Government to reduce it to \$8.4 million, which was bad enough.

We know of some of the results of that reduction in the Budget. The ABC is approaching its gravest financial crisis in its history. It is estimated that at the end of the financial year it will have a deficit of between \$8 million and \$12 million. Earlier this year the Government refused an ABC plea for \$8.5 million supplementary assistance and it has refused to meet the cost of wage indexation. The ABC is so short of funds that it will have to either make massive staff cuts involving perhaps 1 000 jobs, or drastically cut TV and radio programmes—or both.

[Resolved: That motions be continued.]

The Hon LYLA ELLIOTT: Now why is everyone so worried about the symphony orchestras? As Mr Claughton has said, the Federal Minister has denied that they will be affected. However, he does not have any say in the matter. The commissioners are the ones who will make the decision and they will be forced into making cuts and this is one area they will have to consider.

We know already that the Adelaide Singers and the Sydney Showband were sacked earlier this year. Of course the two Government reports—the IAC report and the Green report—both recommended that the symphony orchestras be considered as an area for the saving of funds.

It is a fact of life that people must be sacked if there is no money with which to pay them. Someone will have to lose a job and it is a question of who it will be. It is estimated that three of the orchestras are in grave danger, and not only the Labor Party is saying this. The ABC commissioners themselves are apparently saying it. It has been found that they can save more per head by sacking the musicians than by sacking any other ABC employee.

Mr Claughton has already quoted part of an article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* of the 13th May this year, but I will quote one paragraph which appeared in the article headed "Worried ABC music men hear someone orchestrating their funeral". It reads—

"We could well see two or three orchestras disbanded by March and this is going to have immense cultural

repercussions for Australia," an ABC commissioner, who declined to be named, said yesterday.

In *The National Times* of the 15th November, in "The Overflow Column", is the following—

ABC chairman Sir Henry Bland will ask the Federal Government for \$3.5 million. But if he is knocked back, the commission also will give serious consideration to abandoning the Hobart and the Perth symphony orchestras.

"The sacred cows are next," one commissioner said. "We are going to have to be utterly ruthless in the name of survival. The Government is obviously not interested in doing anything more than reducing us to a bag of bones."

What will be the result of disbanding the symphony orchestras? First of all thousands of music lovers will be deprived of the joy of listening to good live music. Hundreds of musicians will be thrown out of work and, of course, this will affect their families. It will set back by many years musical development in Australia. We will find that again our best players will start going overseas.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Mr Claughton told us all you are saying.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: I am glad to know the Minister was listening to Mr Claughton.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I am able to tell you that everything you are saying, he has already said.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: I am hoping that by repeating some of what has been said, this will bring home to the Minister the importance of the subject we are raising and then perhaps he might find it in his heart to give support to the motion.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Don't get nasty. I am merely reminding you that Mr Claughton has told us everything you have said.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: Perhaps Mr MacKinnon would like to stand up later and give the motion his support or tell us where we are wrong.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Sit down and I will speak.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: I think Mr MacKinnon is being very presumptuous and insulting.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I am stating a simple fact.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: I will sit down when I want to, and not when he tells me.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I didn't think you would.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: I will ignore his rude interruptions. I was saying that it will have a tremendous impact on the cultural life of the country, which was just beginning to receive some sort of filip as a result of the injection of funds provided by the Whitlam Government. We were starting to join the rest of the world in this type of activity.

The disbandment of the orchestras will also affect the children who desire to undertake music as a career. If insecurity and instability are created in the music world children who would be looking to that area for a career will be dissuaded from doing so. Therefore it is vital that we keep our symphony orchestras in existence for the reasons I have enunciated and for those Mr Claughton has mentioned, to which I am glad the Minister was listening.

The motion also refers to the present level of activity. Therefore it is not just confined to symphony orchestras. As has already been said, many other cuts in ABC services have been announced. For example, there is talk of dropping the "State of the Nation" and "TDT" in six States. *The West Australian* of the 11th November mentioned the dropping of feature films, a television panel show, a television situation comedy, and other features.

The saving to be effected is said to be \$2 million, but the dropping of "TDT" will involve only \$150 000, and the loss of 10 jobs. I think \$150 000 is a small amount to pay for an excellent independent current affairs programme which is of great importance to the State.

Mr Claughton has already referred to the fact that we are isolated and that therefore it is of prime importance that we have our own current affairs programme which can relate events as they occur instead of having them deferred for several days after which their portrayal is too late. We have the disadvantage of only one morning newspaper which is another reason for our requiring a current affairs programme to deal with issues in depth. A News broadcast is not able to do this. So it is important that the people have access to this type of programme. We are all aware of what occurred when the radio programme "AM" was produced nationally. It contains very little news of local events.

I believe the Fraser Government does not want an independent current affairs programme, because it is afraid of the truth and wants to muzzle freedom of speech.

The National Times of the 15th to 20th November contained an article, part of which I have already read. It refers to the possibility of the ABC abandoning its education service which occupies one-fifth of the ABC transmission time. It is said that this course will be necessary if the ABC does not receive financial help.

Already the history programmes in this service have been affected because of cuts in the radio archives services funding to the extent of about 75 per cent. So the production of history programmes has been cut rather drastically.

The controversial programme "Lateline"—which I know the Liberals love because of its progressive opinions and its up-to-date news from other countries—is being silenced, and an effective way of doing this is by cutting telephone contact with other countries. The budget for international telephone calls has been reduced by \$30 000. I understand this is having quite a serious effect on the "Lateline" programme because it cannot get up-to-the-minute information.

I thought this was worth repeating: it is from an article which appeared in a publication entitled "New South Wales Education", and it says, talking about the "Lateline" programme cuts and the \$30 000 reduction in the telephone budget—

Already there has been a cut of \$30,000 announced in the budget for overseas telephone circuits with the general manager recommending that the money be saved in the areas of Lateline and the Science Department in particular. This money has been used in the past to gather large amounts of material from overseas relevant to Australia.

It seems that the Federal Government aims to reduce the flow of information from overseas in an attempt to intellectually isolate its critics. When it is remembered that the debate on uranium mining is due to start in earnest soon, with the publication of the preliminary report by the Fox Commission, this becomes quite sinister.

To conclude, I do not altogether agree with Mr Cloughton about the restructuring of the ABC. I believe it is another attempt on the part of the Government to put people of its own political kind in charge, and that the type of control it will have through the Department of Post and Telecommunications is a real threat to the independence of the ABC. With the restructuring, the cuts which are taking place, and the way the ABC is being reduced—as someone said—to a bag of bones, we will end up with a broadcasting and television service which is the puppet of reactionary right-wing forces in this country, and we will really see the beginning of the end of democracy.

THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON (South-West—Minister for Cultural Affairs) [3.44 p.m.]: Albeit though it was a trifle long and too detailed, I thought Mr Cloughton's dissertation on the problem was reasonable, well documented, and contained a minimum of the political diatribe and nonsense with which Miss Elliott followed. She

seems to have joined the revolutionary band of extreme members in the ALP, mouthing the kind of communist dogma we used to hear when we were children.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: That is typical of you people when you have not an answer.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I have an answer, and it is that I agree with the motion.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: Are you going to vote for it?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Yes, and I will ask all my members to vote for it. So the kind of nonsense Miss Elliott went on with was quite unnecessary and quite ludicrous.

Anybody with half a brain—and obviously the big majority of people in Australia—is fully aware why cuts have to be imposed, and the people made that apparent on the 13th December last year. The reason that most people applaud the action which took place on the 11th November last year is that the big injection of funds referred to by Miss Elliott was beyond the capacity of the nation to pay, to the extent that we were some \$5 000 million in deficit. Of course something had to be done.

To say we were a nation without culture up to that time illustrates a total lack of understanding. I can remember that when I was a lad virtually every town in the State had its brass band. Indeed, at one stage when the Bunbury high school needed some instruments I made a trip around surrounding towns and came back with almost a truckload of them.

The Hon. Grace Vaughan: As good as Sir Henry Bland.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Here is a lady who does not even know anything about Western Australia; she has not been here long enough. People who have been here all their life know the depth and richness of the culture of this country. There was not a town in which one could not find first-class choirs, singing groups, and so on. Be that as it may, I accept that the Fraser Government has made some economies.

Both members who have spoken contradicted each other. Mr Cloughton said we can increase the cost of the concerts because in the main the people who buy tickets are in the higher socio-economic group and—

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: I said that did not apply in this State.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: —they were predominantly Liberals. Yet Miss Elliott says we do not want culture because we are Liberals. Let us get it straight. It is our people who attend these kinds of functions.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: Do not kid yourself.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Mr Claughton was honest and decent enough to admit that our Premier has always shown a great interest in the musical and cultural activities of the State. We all know that to be true.

The Hon. J. Heitman: I have not heard that Mr Jamieson was so keen on blowing a trumpet.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: That is right—or anything else much, either. Mr Claughton also pointed out that Mr Robinson answered and said, "The responsibility is that of the ABC commissioners." So I suppose they choose the shows which have a rather minimal rating.

Miss Elliott said the Liberal Party loves the "Lateline" show—I do not know about that but I take her word for it—and it is being cut out. Does that mean we are forcing off the air every show we want? They were her words, that we love it.

Miss Elliott said we accuse members of her party of bias. Over the years I have listened for hours to accusations of bias by Labor Party members, and have read such accusations in journals throughout the country. I have seen some ABC programmes on subjects about which I know a great deal, and they have been biased all right.

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: You people believe in censorship and not in freedom of speech.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: The kind of socialism that Miss Elliott espouses reeks of censorship because the only way it can survive is with a totalitarian Government. She is using the verbiage of the revolutionary, trying to accuse us and make us sound nasty because we are conservatives. I do not accept that as being an insult and I would not accept "revolutionary" as being an insult to her, but she does.

We agree with what Mr Claughton said. He spoke in a sensible and reasonable fashion, although his speech was a bit too long and I think you were very indulgent, Mr President, in not pulling him up for tedious repetition. Nevertheless, I thought it was an excellent presentation.

Point of Order

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: Mr President, I am just not going to stand for that sort of language.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Is the honourable member taking a point of order?

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: I am taking a point of order. I have stood enough of Mr MacKinnon's insults. While I describe myself as a socialist, I am proud—

The PRESIDENT: Will the honourable member state her point?

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: I ask that he withdraws the words which accuse me of being a revolutionary.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Certainly.

The PRESIDENT: The Minister has withdrawn the words

Debate (on motion) Resumed

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I was saying that Mr Claughton had put forward a good case. I am quite prepared, as I suppose I am the appropriate Minister in this State, to write to Mr Robinson about the points raised by the honourable member. Indeed, perhaps we could send him a copy of Mr Claughton's speech.

I suppose all of us, and particularly those in Western Australia, appreciate and have a very high opinion and regard for the symphony orchestras. We are isolated in Western Australia, and it is very difficult for us to visit Sydney or Melbourne to listen to large orchestras.

On a number of occasions I have attended morning teas given by the friends of the ABC, as I am sure, has Mr Claughton. The attendance is very good, and I am sure, Mr President, that you too have attended these functions which have a large following. I agree that in the remote areas of the State it is important some of these facilities be made available.

I regret that Miss Elliott introduced a political note into what, up to that time, had been a friendly discussion in reasonable terms.

It must be stressed that in so far as it is humanly possible—and Mr Claughton emphasised this also—I believe the commissioners ought to have the say. The running of the ABC has been removed from political interference to a very marked extent. Within the framework of the budget allowed the commissioners set the format. I take it that the commissioners will decide to take off the air those programmes which have a low rating. I sincerely hope, and I am sure all members agree with me, that we do not see the withdrawal of the Western Australian symphony orchestra, nor those programmes of a cultural and educational nature which are of interest particularly to the people in the more remote areas of the State.

I suggest those members who were convinced by Mr Claughton will join with me and vote for the motion.

Question put and passed.

Sitting suspended from 3.53 to 4.16 p.m.

BILLS (7): ASSENT

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the undermentioned Bills—

1. Health Act Amendment Bill.
2. Fish Farming (Lake Argyle) Development Agreement Bill.
3. Town Planning and Development Act Amendment Bill.

4. Censorship of Films Act Amendment Bill.
5. Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act Amendment Bill (No. 3).
6. Pay-roll Tax Assessment Act Amendment Bill.
7. Licensed Surveyors Act Amendment Bill.

QUESTIONS (11): ON NOTICE.

1.

CATTLE

Brucellosis: Esperance

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH, to the Minister for Justice, representing the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) During each of the last five years, in the Esperance district, what were the numbers of—

(a) herds; and

(b) cattle;

which had been—

(i) tested for brucellosis;

(ii) quarantined for brucellosis;

(iii) paid compensation;

(iv) remained untested?

- (2) With reference to (1), what are the latest figures available?

- (3) When will area testing commence?

The Hon. N. McNEILL replied:

(1) (a) (b)
Herds. Cattle.

- (i) Tested for brucellosis—

1971-72	19	10 063
1972-73	41	13 066
1973-74	67	20 238
1974-75	48	15 026
1975-76	41	9 809

- (ii) Quarantined for brucellosis—

1971-72	23	19 625
1972-73	18	12 980
1973-74	13	4 284
1974-75	13	3 887
1975-76	8	3 155

- (iii) Paid compensation—

1971-72	20	850
1972-73	23	157
1973-74	29	152
1974-75	21	239
1975-76	22	429

- (iv) Remained untested—

1971-72	351	58 140
1972-73	334	48 574
1973-74	358	55 802
1974-75	389	65 699
1975-76	338	55 000

It should be noted that the breeder population in the district rose from 69 651 in 1971-72 to 119 813 in 1975-76.

- (2) The present situation is that in the district there are—

26 herds (17 000 head) under quarantine restrictions in which there were 111 reactors (0.6 per cent) on last test;

83 herds (28 500 head) which have had at least one clear test;

64 herds (19 300 head) which are certified free of disease;

308 herds (with an estimated maximum of 50 000 breeders) which have not yet had complete herd tests. However, all herds are subject to monitoring at abattoirs, and in 1975-76 some 10 000 breeders from 240 properties were tested from the district through abattoirs. Positive trace back infection was determined in three of these herds.

- (3) It is unlikely that area testing will commence before 30th June, 1977. However, all herds should be tested within the three years prior to 30th June, 1981. Herds adjacent to quarantine properties are tested as a routine practice.

2.

LAND

Industrial Complex: Moore River

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON, to the Attorney-General, representing the Minister for Town Planning:

With respect to the acquisition of "about 3 000 hectares of land at Moore River for a possible future industrial complex", as referred to in an article in *The West Australian* of the 10th November, 1976—

- (a) upon what dates approximately were negotiations commenced for the purchase of the larger lots;

- (b) are negotiations proceeding for the purchase of further land;

- (c) what area of land is it presently planned to acquire and/or hold in the area;

- (d) what is the distance from the area to the site presently being investigated as a possible future port site;

- (e) is the land in question the property of ILDA or MRPA or any other authority; and

- (f) what agencies or intermediaries were used in the purchase of the land?

The Hon. N. McNeill (for the Hon. I. G. MEDCALF), replied:

- (a) About November, 1974;
 - (b) No.
 - (c) Swan Location 3028, comprising 2 023.797 5 ha, Swan Location 2745 comprising 404.685 6 ha, and Swan Location 3165 comprising 344.291 3 ha will be held. There are no immediate plans for further acquisitions in the area although this might become necessary in the future;
 - (d) Location 3028 fronts the sea and includes the port site;
 - (e) Location 3028 is owned by the Industrial Lands Development Authority. Locations 2745 and 3165 are held in the name of the R. & I. Nominees in trust for the Urban Lands Council;
 - (f) In respect of Location 3028, the Property and Valuation Office, Public Works Department.
- In respect of Locations 2745 and 3165, by a reputable private land agency firm acting in accordance with directions given by a Government committee. The intermediary was R. & I. Nominees.

3. HOSPITALS

Ambulance Services

The Hon. V. J. FERRY, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is the St. John Ambulance Service the only public ambulance service in this State?
- (2) If not—
 - (a) what are the names of the other organisations; and
 - (b) under what circumstances do they operate?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER replied:

- (1) The St. John Ambulance Association is the only organisation in this State which concentrates its work on the provision of Road Ambulance Services.

A number of other authorities and organisations also provide ambulance services to the public, chiefly in the North West and remote inland areas.

Shire Councils, Mining Companies and District Hospitals in various centres, provide this sort of ambulance service, as well as the Flying Doctor Service, which provides Air Ambulance services.

- (2) (a) and (b) Answered by (1).

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Tenders: Electrical Installations

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR, to the Minister for Education, representing the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) Is he aware that recent tenders called by the Public Works Department for electrical installations, provide for the "live wire" in fuse boxes to be positioned at the top, contrary to the previously accepted practice of locating the "live wire" at the bottom of the fuse box?
- (2) If this is correct, will the Minister consider standardising this practice to avoid confusion and possible accidents to contractors engaged on electrical installations?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) This is not considered to be desirable.

The Standards Association of Australia Wiring Rules which set down safety standards for electrical installations do not specify a convention for fuse connection. Testing is considered to be a necessary safety procedure.

5. *This question was withdrawn.*

6. ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES

Country Areas: Extensions

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth, for the Hon. T. KNIGHT, to the Minister for Education, representing the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

Would the State Energy Commission consider—

- (a) appointing another team of men, with appropriate equipment, to the Albany area to overcome the two, to two and a half year delay in connections and extensions in the Nyabing, Ongerup, Bremer Bay, Pingrup, Gnowangerup, Jerramungup, Green Range, Many Peaks and Albany areas; or
- (b) the letting of tenders to private contractors to reduce the enormous backlog of work?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

- (a) The appointment of another team of men with appropriate equipment to the Albany area would involve a capital investment of some \$150 000 and the recruitment and training of suitable staff.

Having regard for the Commission's thrust to effect all reasonable economies, the Commission is not prepared at this time to appoint a further crew to this area as it is already equipped and staffed to an extent comparable with other areas of the State.

In the period since 1st July, 1975, there have been 1 500 new rural connections to the Contributory Extension Scheme and of this total 479 have been in the Commission's Albany-Great Southern region.

The rate of providing new supplies is not only dictated by the number of crews available for contributory extension schemes, but reflects also the limits imposed on the Commission's expenditure for these supplies which amounts in general to about twice the amount of the contribution made by a typical contributory extension customer. Further, the Hon. Member will realise that the supply to rural areas involves increased losses to the Commission, and hence the rate of expansion must be tempered by achieving a balance between expanded losses, increased costs, and the general expansion of the total business of the Commission—losses incurred during the 1975-76 financial year in respect of the operation of the country system and the Country Towns Assistance Scheme totalled some \$3 100 000.

The Commission has to be responsible with its capital expenditure programme which is well appreciated in the recent unanimous report of the Legislative Assembly Public Accounts Committee.

I would remind the Hon. Member, in terms of the areas to which he has specifically referred, of the work which has been undertaken to provide supplies to the rural community. I refer to the areas in the order that they were raised in the Hon. Member's question.

Nyabing: The town of Nyabing has already been brought into the Country Towns Assistance Scheme and the diesel supply is operated by Commission staff. In the area

immediately to the south of Nyabing an extension scheme bringing thirty new customers reticulated supply will be completed early in December as an extension of the supply out of Katanning. A further area to the north of Nyabing and including a reticulated supply for the town itself will be undertaken in the middle of 1977.

Ongerup: An extension scheme involving some 35 customers in the South Ongerup area will commence early next year and be finished by about the middle of the year.

Bremer Bay: The Commission is in the process of installing a diesel generating unit which is expected to be completed by February, 1977, and supply to be available to customers in the immediate vicinity of Bremer Bay by about mid-1977. The Hon. Member will be aware that consideration has been given to extending an existing line from Cape Rich to Bremer Bay at some future time, but this will need reinforcement of the main transmission works out from Albany. The planning of this area will be reviewed once it is known with some confidence the extent of the supply requirements which will develop in Bremer Bay; the Commission is expecting that there will be a significant upsurge of requirements for supply in this location once a public distribution system is established.

Pingrup: The town of Pingrup has a diesel supply operated by the Commission under the Country Towns Assistance Scheme which is the economical and appropriate method of supply at this time.

A reticulated supply as an extension of the Commission's main system at a yet unplanned time will be brought from Nyabing but this again may well require a costly back-up reinforcement to the system supplying the area.

Gnowangerup: Supply in this area is substantially completed and the Commission is not aware of any outstanding applications for supply in this area.

Jerramungup: The town has a diesel supply operated under the Country Towns Assistance Scheme and a programme of work is planned for the new year which will improve voltage conditions in this area.

To provide distributed supply throughout the surrounding districts will require a major substation and substantial expenditure on back-up transmission works.

Green Range: A reticulated supply to this area was essentially completed two years ago, and any outstanding works would relate to isolated requests for new services.

Many Peaks: This area was provided with reticulated supply some six years ago, and again, as with Green Range, any outstanding works would relate to specific individual supplies.

Albany: Supply to the rural districts in the immediate vicinity of Albany has all been completed.

In summary, it is considered that the extension of rural supplies in the Great Southern region is proceeding at a rate which is consistent with the resources available to the Commission for this important work. Where reticulated supplies cannot at this stage be given, country towns are being assisted from the Country Towns Assistance Scheme with local diesel installations. I would remind the Hon. Member that the diesel supply for Hopetoun came into service on the 11th November, and again the new plant at Bremer Bay will provide supply to that location early in the new year.

- (b) In the light of my comments under (a) above, the Hon. Member will appreciate that the rate of expansion of rural supplies is not only limited by the Commission's capacity to get work done, but must also be regulated by the overall extent of financial resources available to the Commission in providing back-up transmission works and generating facilities.

The Commission is not opposed to the use of private contractors to carry out any

of its works where this can be shown to effect economies and where the expenditure can be met from the resources available. In fact, the Commission is in the process of awarding contracts for distribution works to be carried out by private contracts in other parts of the State.

7.

RAILWAYS

Mullewa-Meekatharra Line

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR, to the Minister for Health, representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Further to the reply to my question No. 6 on the 17th August, 1976, has the Government received the results of the study being conducted in regard to the future of the Mullewa to Meekatharra railway?
- (2) If so, will he table the report of the study?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER replied:

- (1) No. The study is expected to be available by the end of the year.
- (2) Not applicable.

8.

MINES DEPARTMENT

Prospecting Equipment

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR, to the Minister for Education, representing the Minister for Mines:

- (1) What plant and equipment is available from the Mines Department for hire to prospectors?
- (2) Where is the equipment located?
- (3) Does the Government have any plans to increase the amount of plant and equipment available to encourage prospecting as a measure to alleviate the unemployment situation caused by recent retrenchments in the gold mining industry?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

- (1) and (2) Mobile compressors and rock drills are available for hire to prospectors at the following centres:
Leonora,
Southern Cross,
Norseman,
Mt. Magnet,
Cue,
Meekatharra,
Northampton.
- (3) An approach has been made to the Commonwealth for unemployed prospectors and miners to be permitted to go prospecting while drawing unemployment benefits and a reply is awaited before further consideration is

given to extending the scope of the State's Prospecting Scheme assistance.

9. **WANNOO TOWNSITE**

Change of Nomenclature

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR, to the Minister for Health, representing the Minister for Lands:

As road signs recently erected by the Main Roads Department on the approaches to the Wannoo townsite on the North West Coastal Highway indicate that motorists are nearing the "Billabong", and that this is the generally accepted name for this location, will the Minister take action to formally change the name of the townsite from "Wannoo" to "Billabong"?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER replied:

A request from the Shire of Shark Bay to change the name of the townsite from "Wannoo" to "Billabong" is to be considered by the Nomenclature Advisory Committee at its meeting to be held on 25th November next. The Hon. Member will be advised of the Minister's decision when he has considered the recommendation of the Committee.

10. **EDUCATION**

Pastoral Stations: Remote Area Allowances

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Has the Minister been approached by the Pastoralists and Graziers Association for the payment of an annual allowance of \$2 000, or the payment of a remote area allowance, to be paid for the employment of governesses on pastoral stations?
- (2) Has a decision been made on the payment of such an allowance?
- (3) Would he consider making the allowance payable to any mother who teaches her own child or children, who could either utilise the allowance for the employment of a governess, or for the purchase of automatic labour saving devices to reduce the hours of housework to enable the mother to cope with the demands of teaching?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No.
- (3) Assistance for parents of isolated children is under review at the present time.

11.

FISHERIES

Prawning Licences: Exmouth

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR, to the Minister for Education, representing the Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife:

Does the Minister have any intention, prior to the 1977 season, of varying the number of or conditions relating to prawn licences currently issued for the Exmouth Gulf area?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:
No.

**INDUSTRIAL ABITRATION ACT
AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)**

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 17th November.

THE HON. R. T. LEESON (South-East) [4.25 p.m.]: This Bill is one of several that have been on the drawing board for some time. After waiting for such a long time in the term of office of this Government for the introduction of the Bill, it seems to me that legislation such as this should not be introduced towards the end of the parliamentary session.

It also appears very likely that the legislation is being introduced, in the main, to provoke the trade union movement, because as we all know within the next few months a State general election will be held. The reasons for the introduction of this legislation are very clear to most people of Western Australia.

This legislation has been introduced to force trade unions to abandon compulsory postal ballots in the election of officials by the rank and file members. At the present time union officials are elected by the rank and file members, in the main by the financial members of unions who attend union meetings in order to vote, or who apply for a postal ballot in the prescribed way.

Originally the legislation incorporated secret postal ballot provisions in the election of union officials to various positions by the rank and file members. Recently we saw amendments which altered the situation substantially. The Bill before us, rather than allowing the rank and file to elect union officials by secret ballot, introduces a change—the election of what is sometimes known as a management committee or State council by secret ballot. After that the collegiate system of voting will apply in the election of union officials.

It is clear that this change in the legislation has come about through pressure from the Commonwealth Government, because I understand that similar legislation has been introduced in the Commonwealth Parliament. I notice the Minister for Education is laughing about this. We had prepared a case while waiting for the Bill to be introduced. All of a sudden the passage of the Bill was halted, and an attempt

was made to bring its provisions into line with those existing in other parts of Australia.

The Bill seems to revolve on a word which has been bandied around in this House a great deal in recent times; it is the word "centralism". In Western Australia we are supposed to go about our duties with a free hand, and not be tied to what has been done in the Eastern States. It is clear from the Bill before us that centralism exists to a great degree in this State.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: It is not true.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: The Minister may disagree, and he is entitled to do that.

Most awards registered under the Industrial Arbitration Act, at the present time, give the Industrial Commission power, in certain circumstances, to direct unions to elect their officers by secret ballot. We know that some unions use that system at the present time and have used it for many years. Other unions have used the system at various times for different reasons. So really there is nothing new in providing for unions to conduct that type of election.

Other unions prefer to run their own affairs in their own way, and no doubt other speakers will have more to say about ILO conventions and what they mean, and what this Government has had to say about a particular convention relating to this legislation. Some years ago the present Premier went along with the ILO convention to which I have referred.

It appears the present Government has no clear policy with regard to industrial relations. It is prepared to try anything and everything and that has been borne out by the introduction of this Bill and other proposals which have been discussed by the Minister in other States and publicised through the media in Western Australia.

When secret postal ballots are introduced in this State—as no doubt they will be—we will witness all sorts of intimidatory tactics by various people in an attempt to get unionists to vote one way or another. I well remember when I was taking an active part in union affairs at Kalgoorlie that all sorts of events occurred. I remember clearly on one occasion the DLP put up a candidate. Over 1000 handwritten letters were distributed. It was a rather long letter containing a lot of propaganda and it must have involved hours of work to write so many copies. Nevertheless, the propaganda was posted out to the financial members of the union who were eligible to vote. Everybody was bombarded by that sort of rubbish.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: There is nothing wrong with that.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: Are you suggesting that is good or bad?

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: He is just stating what took place, to which you seem to be objecting.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: I do not like to be bombarded with a lot of rubbish which usually falls out of letterboxes and blows around the streets.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You do not send out pamphlets?

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: The Minister knows very well that I do send out pamphlets.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: I do not like being bombarded with the stuff some of your candidates put in my letterbox.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: The system of sending out pamphlets has been forced on us and it seems we are to force it on another particular section of the community.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: We are not forcing it on them at all.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: Of course we will.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: You have said it has happened previously, so what will be the difference?

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: It will cause a bigger mess than was caused previously because there will be more rubbish blowing around the streets.

Getting back to the occasion to which I was referring, and the propaganda which was posted to the unionists, it did not go over—perhaps to the dismay of some people, but not very many.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: I think it is a very good idea.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: I sometimes wonder what is behind this move. Of course, I do know what is behind the introduction of the legislation now before us, but I can assure members of the Government that in 99 per cent of the cases it will backfire on the Government. It is obvious the Government expects that as a result of a wider vote many people who normally do not vote at elections will take part, and a different result will be recorded, or a better result, as far as the Government is concerned, with left-wing unions. Of course, the Government has to look at the other side of the penny too—the results that might occur with some right-wing unions. I have my own ideas as to what that might be. It could be that in the not too distant future we will have further amendments to the Act because I do not think the present move will achieve what the Government hopes.

As a result of my long association with the trade union movement I am sure this proposal will not work. During the last few months many attacks have been made on the trade union movement. This Bill is just another one of those attacks and I

understand additional legislation will add to that attack. I do not really think it will achieve what the Government hopes.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: What is it that the Government hopes it will achieve? What do you think the Government is trying to achieve?

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: Perhaps when the member opposite speaks to the measure he might tell us what the Government hopes to achieve.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: I hope he makes a better job of it.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: You are telling us we will not achieve something. Achieve what?

The Hon. G. C. McKinnon: Is the member going to tell us whether he is in favour of the measure or against it?

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: Yes.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I thought you might not tell us.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: We have not been told yet.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: Give us an idea of your view.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: Obviously, this Bill will be hotly debated by members of the Government. Everybody seems to be keen to discuss it. It seems we have a long debate ahead of us. For the reasons I have outlined, I do not think the measure will achieve what the Government hopes it will achieve, and I oppose it.

THE HON J. C. TOZER (North) [4.38 p.m.]: Unlike the previous speaker, I welcome this amendment to the Industrial Arbitration Act. While I feel I should comment on the remarks of Mr Leeson, I noticed the Minister making notes and no doubt he will carry out the task far more efficiently than I. So, I will leave it to him.

This amendment will clear the way to provide the average responsible unionist with greater opportunity to express his will far more freely. I believe that as a result of this amendment unionists will, in fact, be able to influence the course of events of their unions and, more importantly, the average worker will have the opportunity to make his voice heard and participate in the affairs of his union. In other words, I believe the amendment leaves the way open for the unionist to be responsible, and that is what we need—responsible unionism. I applaud the Government for bringing forward any amendment to the Industrial Arbitration Act which will assist towards that end.

It will be recalled that in April of this year, I spoke at some length on the industrial situation in the Pilbara as it related to the iron ore industry. More particularly I spoke of the failure of the structure which existed and I called for

something new. I suggested one possible new structure, but most of all, what I said on that occasion was that the ball was in the court of the unionists; that it was up to them to make decisions which would bring about a better state of affairs where they, the thinking unionists, could influence the situation. I believe the amending Bill before us today will make that decision a little easier and that is why I support the measure.

It really surprises me—and somewhat disappoints me—that the Hon. Don Cooley is not here today.

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: It disappoints me too; do not worry.

The Hon. J. C. TOZER: In this House it will have been recognised—at least I have recognised in my short time here—that certain members have a certain expertise they are able to use in debate; they are able to make special contributions on particular subjects. For example, the Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council (the Hon. D. K. Dans) is the man we look to when discussing maritime matters; perhaps we look to the Hon. David Wordsworth when we want to hear about rural economies, or the Hon. John Williams when we talk about alcohol and drugs. In the case of the Hon. Don Cooley, we expect to hear sensible comment on unionism and the arbitration system.

The Hon. G. E. Masters: He is a bit biased!

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: Perhaps the Minister will allow us to adjourn the debate until next week when Mr Cooley will be able to comment.

The Hon. J. C. TOZER: Perhaps it could be said that the Hon. Don Cooley is the godfather of unionism in Western Australia. After all, he was the President of the Trades and Labor Council for 12 years. I find it quite incredible that we are today discussing an amendment to the Industrial Arbitration Act, and the Hon. Don Cooley is not present. I find it even more incredible to learn that he is electioneering in the Pilbara.

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: What has that to do with the Bill?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: It has a lot to do with the Bill.

THE PRESIDENT: Order! I think the honourable member ought to get back to the Bill. The whereabouts of the Hon. Don Cooley has nothing to do with the Bill.

The Hon. J. C. TOZER: I believe it is up to all members in this House to represent not only their constituents, but all the people throughout this State. I rather feel that the people represented by the Hon. Don Cooley—his electors and all unionists—would expect him to be taking an interest in an amendment to the Industrial Arbitration Act.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: All they have to do is read his last 14 speeches because they are all the same. All he needs to say it "Ditto".

The Hon. J. C. TOZER: Alluding back to the parliamentary speech I made in April, I think the matters mentioned then are important and relevant to the arbitration system. Following my speech all the State union executives associated with workers in the Pilbara, met with Mr Cooley and wrote letters to the Premier and to the Minister for Labour and Industry accusing me, in that speech, of "inciting the workers to revolt against their union administration".

There was no need for me to incite anyone. The situation was quite clear. I had set out the facts as they existed in the Pilbara at that time, and as they still exist. One has only to look at the newspapers to find plenty of evidence to show there is no need for anyone to incite members of the unions against their executive in Perth. In the *Daily News* of the 13th June, 1976, an article appeared under the heading of "Non-strike union plan". In the *Daily News* of the 16th June, 1976, an article appeared under the heading "Breakaway hopes fading".

In *The West Australian* of the 16th June, 1976, an article appeared under the heading "Union-split at Newman". Another article appeared in *The West Australian* of the 22nd June, 1976, under the heading "Splinter union gathers support". The *Sunday Independent* of the 20th June, 1976, published a leading article which, in part, reads as follows—

But like a breath of fresh air a number of responsible unionists have not only spoken up but also acted. At long last their common sense has erupted.

A breakaway group has now thrown down the gauntlet and challenged the strike tactics of the unions.

Later in the article it is stated—

We believe in the union movement.

But this belief does not extend to those who seek absolutism and threaten the whole basis of the democratic right of the individual.

We support the men who have formed the Iron Ore Production Workers' Society and their belief that the strike weapon is not an essential part of the armoury to back up negotiations with their employers.

In the *News of the North* of the 23rd June there appeared the heading "Newman workers in breakaway bid" which referred to the activities of John Raymond, 32 years of age and Dave Shannon, 30 years of age. It is interesting to note that on the 19th July, John Raymond terminated his service with the Mt. Newman Mining Company and that on the 2nd September Dave Shannon also terminated

his service. There was no apparent sinister pressures to bring about the terminations; neither management nor the unionists on site could indicate any pressures; but pressures can be exerted in subtle ways.

I believe with the passing of this amendment to the Industrial Arbitration Act we can expect that unionists will and must speak up when they have things they want to say to influence the activities of their particular unions.

At the end of August this year a two-day meeting was held at Port Hedland. It consisted of top executives from all unions active in the Pilbara and convenors of all unions from every site in the Pilbara. This meeting was attended by Bob Hawke, President of the ACTU—or perhaps he was president of the ALP on that occasion—and Peter Cook, Secretary of the Trades and Labor Council. But guess who addressed the meeting: it was none other than Norm Marlborough—an insignificant site convenor who had suddenly come out of the ruck and been endorsed as the ALP candidate contesting the Pilbara seat.

Arising out of this a Pilbara district branch of the TLC is being formed, and I wonder whether my talk in April may have influenced the situation in some way. We are getting this measure of decentralised management in trade union affairs which is after all exactly what I was seeking when I spoke. This must lessen the ineffectual control exerted by some of our centralised union administration in Trades Hall, and we hope there will be a quicker solution to some of the problems that do inevitably arise.

When introducing the Bill the Minister gave us some interesting general comments. On page 4 of his notes he referred to the whole question of industrial harmony and said that with this would come improved productivity and I believe a measure of work satisfaction goes along automatically with this. The Minister described how this in turn would defeat the inflationary spiral and of course the associated problem of unemployment.

It is terribly important to unionists that we do have this stability in our trade union movement; it is only by achieving this that we will have sustained economic development—and I am now echoing the Minister's speech when I say this. Clearly it is implicit in his speech that this is the intention of the amending Bill.

On page 5 of his second reading notes the Minister talks about the collegiate voting system and says that in principle the Government accepts this system of voting but adds that the system adopted must be consistent with the policy of full participation by members. The Minister then goes on to use the terms "which is the foundation of democratic control . . .". This is what we need and this is why

we admire fellows like John Raymond and Dave Shannon who speak up even though it may result in their losing their jobs.

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: Can you prove that?

The Hon. J. C. TOZER: I did not say they lost their jobs specifically as a result of that; I mentioned two sets of facts.

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: It is a very big hint.

The Hon. J. C. TOZER: In the election of full-time officers we have the choice of a direct secret ballot or the adoption of the collegiate system; we will see a committee of management elected by direct vote and the management committee will then elect the full-time officers from the members.

This is not an unusual system; it is practised in many places. Those members who have been associated with local government know that a shire council can choose to elect its shire president or mayor by a full ratepayers' vote, or the electors can elect their council, which then elects the shire president or mayor from its own members.

I find slightly confusing the multi-tier system which is to be used in the election of part-time officers. I do not find anything objectionable in it because a choice is provided but perhaps the Minister may elucidate a bit on the question of filling the posts for the part-time officers.

As we consider this amending Bill today, I see that on the one hand there is a concerted programme of disruption and there exists a strong union leadership exerting influence which is out of all proportion with what we reasonably expect from the servants of the membership. In addition we also see political campaigns being directed by and through the trade union movement.

That is one side of the coin. On the other side of the coin I believe we are seeing at long last a measure of self assertion by responsible unionists who are coming to realise that they cannot continue to be led by the nose; that they must depart from their apathetic attitude of the past and endeavour to use their personal influence to guide the destinies of their own work, of the work of their mates, and of the unions generally. These men are at last questioning where they are going.

I welcome the amendment because I believe it makes it easier for these men who are seeking a measure of self assertion to speak up and make the opportunity for themselves to be self assured, independent human beings who are playing their part in the control of the trade union movement.

They will inevitably exert a moderating influence and therefore I welcome the amending Bill and support the second reading.

Debate adjourned, until a later stage of the sitting, on motion by the Hon. V. J. Ferry.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 6)

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. N. McNeill (Minister for Justice), read a first time.

Second Reading

THE HON. N. McNEILL (Lower West—Minister for Justice) [4.55 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The intention of this Bill is to complement the Land Tax Assessment Act which was re-enacted during the last sitting of Parliament.

Under the provisions of section 533 of the Local Government Act, a council may use unimproved valuations for rating purposes as assessed under the Land Tax Assessment Act. Alternatively, it may request the Commissioner of State Taxation to carry out a special valuation or have one carried out by a private qualified valuer.

Section 533 goes on to set down the method for calculating unimproved valuations. Prior to its re-enactment, the method for calculating unimproved valuations under the Land Tax Assessment Act was substantially the same as that specified in the Local Government Act.

However, a slightly different method of assessing unimproved valuations was prescribed in the new Land Tax Assessment Act. It provided that all land should be valued on a fee simple basis, and that account should be taken of what are referred to as "merged improvements" in making these valuations.

The State Taxation Department provides valuations for virtually every council in the State, and it is therefore important that the method of valuations in the two Acts be the same.

As the provisions of the Land Tax Assessment Act do not apply to rural properties, it is necessary to amend the Local Government Act, only in respect of non-rural land.

The provisions of this Bill therefore bring the method of assessing unimproved valuations for local government purposes into conformity with the Land Tax Assessment Act.

In practice, it is not expected that the requirement that "merged improvements" be taken into account in assessing unimproved valuations will make any significant difference to the amount of these valuations.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. S. J. Dellar.

PARLIAMENTARY SUPERANNUATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. N. McNeill (Minister for Justice), read a first time.

Second Reading

THE HON. N. McNEILL (Lower West—Minister for Justice) [4.58 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Last year a number of improvements were made to the Parliamentary superannuation scheme, in line with benefits applying in other parliamentary schemes in Australia.

At the time, the question of payment of pensions to widowers of female members of Parliament was raised.

The matter has been researched at the proper level, and advice received that as the Act stands, benefits payable to widows do not automatically flow to widowers.

One of the more important provisions of the Bill before members therefore is to provide for reversionary benefits for widowers.

Female members contribute to the scheme on the same basis as male members, and it is therefore logical that reversionary benefits, which now apply to widows of male members, should apply equally to widowers of female members.

The introduction of such a measure would bring the Western Australian scheme into line with other parliamentary schemes in Australia, where a widower's benefit, identical to that applicable to widows, is a common feature.

It is proposed, therefore, that the Act be amended to enable the reversionary benefit which is now payable to the surviving spouse of a male member to apply equally to the surviving spouse of a female member.

It is also proposed to suitably amend the Act to ensure that children's allowances now payable under the Act apply equally to the dependent children of male and female members.

The Bill also contains a proposal to lift the level of the minimum benefit payable to a widow on the death of her husband.

At present, on the death of a former member who was in receipt of a pension, his widow is entitled to receive a pension equal to five-eighths of his entitlement.

Where a serving member dies after contributing to the fund for no less than seven years, his widow is eligible to receive a pension equal to five-eighths of the amount that would have been payable to the member had he retired on the date of his death.

In the circumstances of a member dying prior to having served seven years, the widow's pension is calculated as though he had served for seven years as an ordinary member.

On this basis, the minimum pension payable to a widow is five-eighths of a seven year member's entitlement or 23.75 per cent of the basic parliamentary salary.

This level of minimum pension is low compared with the minimum benefit applying in other similar schemes.

For example, in New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania the minimum rate of pension for a widow is 40 per cent of the basic salary payable to a member at the date the pension emerges.

It is proposed to lift the minimum benefit payable to a widow under the present Act to 35 per cent of a member's basic salary at the date of his death. This represents a pension calculated on the basis that the member served a minimum of 16 years as an ordinary member.

While this would be less than the minimum payable in the States mentioned earlier, the difference is not unreasonable having regard to the differing rates of contribution which apply. Members in New South Wales and Queensland contribute 11½ per cent of salary, those in Tasmania 12 per cent, compared with 10 per cent for members in Western Australia.

It is proposed that the revised minimum benefit should also apply to existing widows and the Bill contains an appropriate clause to raise those pensions to the new minimum where applicable, with effect on and from the first pension day in January, 1977.

Members will appreciate, of course, that should the provisions proposed earlier in relation to widowers' benefits be adopted, the minimum reversionary benefit would automatically flow to the widower of a female member or former member.

The Bill proposes one further amendment. The principal Act now provides that the pension payable to a widow of a former member who married prior to his retirement, ceases upon her remarriage if she has not attained the age of 55 years at the date of remarriage.

Restoration of the pension can then occur only if she ceases to be married or can demonstrate financial hardship. However, if such a widow remarries after she has attained the age of 55 years, payment of the pension is not affected. There is, therefore, an anomaly between the rights of a widow who remarries prior to reaching the age of 55 years and one who remarries after attaining the age of 55 years.

For this reason it is proposed to amend the existing provisions to provide that when a remarried widow attains 55 years, her previously terminated pension be reinstated, irrespective of her marital status.

As mentioned previously, should the proposal relating to widowers' pensions be adopted, a widower in receipt of a pension would also have his pension reinstated on attaining age 55 if it were lost earlier due to remarriage.

I am sure members will agree the proposed changes to the scheme are realistic and desirable.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. Grace Vaughan.

ACTS AMENDMENT (JUDICIAL SALARIES AND PENSIONS) BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. N. McNeill (Minister for Justice), read a first time.

Second Reading

THE HON. N. McNEILL (Lower West—Minister for Justice) [5.04 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill is necessary to provide for alteration to the method of determining pensions payable to judges consequent upon a recent recommendation of the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal to pay judges an annual allowance to cover the expenses of office.

Prior to the 1st November, 1976 judges in this State were not paid allowances in addition to salary, although such allowances have been paid for some time in other States.

A retired judge who has attained 60 years of age and has served for 10 years or more receives a pension equal to 50 per cent of salary at the date of retirement. However, as the Act now stands, any annual allowance paid would not be taken into account when determining pension payable on retirement.

In Victoria, the pension allowance of a judge is 50 per cent of his salary and allowance at the date of retirement. The New South Wales practice is to exclude allowances from the determination of pension, but to pay a pension equal to 60 per cent of salary only.

It is considered appropriate to regard an annual allowance as salary for the purpose of determining pension on retirement, and the Bill therefore provides that an allowance of an annual nature payable to a judge shall be taken into account when calculating pension payable.

Consistent with the changes already proposed in the Parliamentary Superannuation Act to provide for widowers' benefits, it is proposed that the Judges' Salaries and Pensions Act be amended to provide a similar provision under that Act.

Although no female has, as yet, been appointed to the judiciary in Western Australia, that situation could change in the future; and it is appropriate that provision be made for the payment of widower pension benefits on the death of a female judge or a former judge.

Under the existing provisions of the principal Act, a pension payable to the widow of a former judge, where their marriage took place before his retirement, ceases upon her remarriage if she has not then attained the age of 55 years.

The pension is reinstated during any period after such remarriage when the widow is not a party to an existing marriage or can demonstrate financial hardship.

However, payment of the pension is not affected where remarriage occurs after the widow has attained the age of 55 years.

As is the case under the parliamentary scheme, it is considered that the widow who remarries prior to reaching the age of 55 years, and consequently loses her pension, is dealt with rather harshly in comparison with the widow who marries after attaining the age of 55.

It is proposed, therefore, that the existing provisions be amended to provide that when the remarried widow of a judge attains 55 years of age, and her pension has been previously terminated due to remarriage, it will be reinstated on attaining that age, irrespective of her marital status.

Part II of the Bill proposes amendments to the Solicitor-General Act to provide for allowances now payable to judges to be extended to the Solicitor-General.

When the Solicitor-General Act was passed in 1969, it was agreed that the Solicitor-General would be paid the same salary as a Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court but that allowances and other conditions of service would be as provided in the Public Service Act.

In view of the decision to pay puisne judges an annual allowance, it would now seem appropriate to pay the same allowance to the Solicitor-General. This is also the practice in Victoria, where the remuneration attached to the office of Solicitor-General is the same as for a puisne judge.

The Bill therefore provides for the Solicitor-General to be paid the same allowances, including a travelling allowance, as are paid to a puisne judge, but that entitlements for leave and other conditions of service shall be as provided in the Public Service Act.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. Grace Vaughan.

INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 3)

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. G. C. MacKinnon (Minister for Education), read a first time.

Second Reading

THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON (South-West—Minister for Education) [5.09 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This is a Bill to amend the requirements for workers to obtain exemption from union membership under section 61B of the Industrial Arbitration Act.

As far back as 1938 the Court of Arbitration used its broad powers to insert preference to unionist clauses in some awards. This placed a union member in a somewhat privileged position. Obviously there was a realisation then, just as there is today, that responsible unionism is of benefit to the worker.

In the interests of industry and the welfare of the employees engaged therein, it is advantageous for an employee to be covered by an industrial award or agreement. It may be expected, therefore, that such workers who subscribe to the principles of unionism should also subscribe to the cost of the organisation to enable it to provide and maintain its services to its members.

A corollary to this is that a worker should not be denied his individual right to decide for himself whether or not he subscribes to the tenets of unionism or whether or not he wishes to elect to apply for membership.

Responsible unionism does not mean compulsory unionism.

It was always intended that a unionist should accept free competition from those who preferred to remain non-unionists. For a long time the Industrial Arbitration Act has, in a specific provision, provided protection to a worker from discrimination against him if he happens to be a union member. That principle is supported.

However, the stage has clearly been reached, in view of events of the past year, where a person who is a nonunion member must also be protected from discrimination because of that fact. Society can no longer tolerate a situation where a citizen has no freedom to work except under licence from a union.

Unions in fact exist only because society has provided a legislative framework for their establishment.

We have reached a stage where the most important thing about a worker is not his character, his skills or his qualifications, but whether or not he holds a union ticket.

The right to live includes the right to work. The exercise of the right to work must be protected and maintained free from undue restraints and coercion.

The United Nations' Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on the 10th December, 1948, says in article 20(1) and (2)—

Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Some division of opinion by union leaders has been observed in recent public expressions as to the need for preference clauses in awards.

It has been said that in the case of some unions they are seldom used and could even be discarded and that good union leadership does not depend on preference privileges. Good union leadership is as important to the union movement as it is to the industry in which its members are employed.

Events in recent times in Western Australia have demonstrated that some unions will viciously penalise workers who happen to disagree with their coercive and stand-over tactics; tactics which often involve the union leaders and the unions acting contrary to the law and against the best interests of the community.

Glaring abuses of the preference clauses have occurred where union officials have confronted employers over the use of workers who are not members of the unions.

Interference to concrete pours, which can be very costly to a contractor if the pour is stopped once in progress, have forced contractors to pay union fees at the site to have workers apply for union membership immediately. The alternative is severe economic loss to the contractor.

Such blatant acts of vandalism and intimidatory tactics by militant union leaders are intolerable and infringing upon the individual rights of a worker.

It was never intended that the enforcement of the preference clause should lead to disputes affecting the public, the economy, or the livelihood of workers.

One can cite the examples of the eight plumbers at Kwinana, the risks that workers took in defying the unions' calls to strike over Medibank, and the coercive tactics used against people whom some sections of the union movement scurrilously label "scabs".

The unions regrettably have moved well outside their true industrial areas of competence and have moved increasingly to act in opposition to decisions taken by the freely elected Parliaments of this country.

Labor leaders have defended the right of unions to take industrial action on political issues, thus challenging the very establishment of parliamentary democracy.

That such union action can be sustained by way of financial resources flowing from the imposition of compulsory unionism on citizens regardless of their political beliefs, is a matter of critical concern and consequence for the entire community.

The overt actions of the militant unions and the obvious groundswell of discontent and reaction from the community against the totalitarian exercise of power by some unions on the question of union membership is so great that no Government can allow the deteriorating situation to continue without positive action to reassert the freedom on which this society is built.

It is the essence of a free society that the individual is of primary concern. It is the essence of a free society that the State exists to serve the individual.

That essence is the very antithesis of totalitarian philosophies which have never concealed their contempt for the individual.

The principles of liberalism find particular expression in the Liberal Party platform on "Employment and Industrial Relations" in this way—

Every employee has a right to join a union. Equally, every employee has the right not to do so.

That could not be clearer. Yet there is a contradiction between these principles and what is practiced by unions.

In almost every award of the Industrial Commission in this State, there is a preference provision which, in the eyes of a union, makes it compulsory for an individual to join the particular union which has been granted a monopoly on recruitment in a particular area of employment.

The options thus facing the worker or the employer on the job are these—

- (1) The worker joins the union; or
- (2) The union acts to prosecute the worker in the Industrial Magistrates Court. In recent years, the unions have prosecuted many workers for this offence which summary action also often results in forcing a worker to take out membership to avoid conviction for an offence.
- (3) The employer is required to dismiss such individual if the union produces a union member to replace the nonconformist.
- (4) The worker may within seven days of the issue being raised apply to the Industrial Registrar for exemption on the grounds of conscientious belief. Even in this case unions have still declared

work sites as "no ticket-no start" which penalises employers who may have engaged exempt labour when no union member was offering for employment.

Whilst one must recognise the importance of strong, responsible trade unions, and indeed, the desirability of encouraging people to join recognised organisations appropriate to the interests of the individual, it should be abhorrent to every supporter of individual liberty that a union replaces "preference" with "compulsion".

No individual in our community should be forced by the State to belong to any union, especially when some of the unions are so active in attacking parliamentary democracy, and when so many unions are financially supporting a political party, some of whose leaders publicly advocate extra parliamentary exercises of power in this country.

Preference to unionists has been a plank in the platform of the Labor Party for years. In 1953 it endeavoured to pass a Bill which would have made it mandatory for the Arbitration Court, on the application by an industrial union of workers, to grant preference and impose such conditions as the court thought fit. That rather embracing measure fortunately was defeated.

It was not until 1963 that the Liberal-Country Party coalition Government introduced the current section 61B into the Act, so that workers who were being affected by the preference clauses which were being more widely inserted into awards by the Arbitration Court, could obtain exemption from the need to join a union and yet have equal preference to those who are members.

It was sufficient reason to seek exemption on the grounds of "conscientious belief" whether that belief was or was not of a religious character or part of the doctrine of any religion.

The amendment to section 61B in this Bill will delete the requirement of a "conscientious belief" to apply for exemption. Instead it will allow a person who simply objects to becoming a union member to apply to the Industrial Registrar to receive a certificate of exemption.

Such persons will still be required to pay an amount annually, equivalent to the fees of the union which covers the type of work, to the State—which incurs considerable expenses in the operation of the industrial arbitration system—or otherwise of his own choice to the Distressed Persons' Relief Trust or to a public charitable or benevolent body or institution as he nominates.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. Grace Vaughan.

**ALUMINA REFINERY (PINJARRA)
AGREEMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL**
Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. G. C. MacKinnon (Minister for Education), read a first time.

Second Reading

THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON (South-West—Minister for Education) [5.20 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This variation agreement has been made necessary by the growth of the Pinjarra refinery and by certain unforeseen problems arising from the development of the inner harbour at Bunbury.

The Alumina Refinery (Pinjarra) Agreement Act 1969-1972 enables the company to submit proposals for the construction of pipelines to carry oil and/or liquid caustic soda to the company's refineries. The construction proposals are subject to the Minister's consideration and approval, and the agreement provides for the administrative machinery for the proper examination of such proposals.

While the company has not yet submitted any such proposals, it has acquired easements which traverse privately owned land.

A problem has arisen as to the registration of such easements in that the land has changed hands in some instances, without the easement being registered on the titles. Furthermore, the easements are not continuous and the dominant tenement has not been precisely set out in the documents.

The effect of proposed new clause 16 is that the requirement of setting out the dominant tenement is removed by the application of section 33A of the Public Works Act to easements acquired by the company, and provided the Minister issues a certificate that any easement in question is required for purposes of the pipelines referred to and purposes incidental thereto, then the Minister for Lands, the Registrar of Titles or the Registrar of Deeds as the case requires, will cause registration of the easement to be made in favour of the company on the payment of appropriate fees. This will streamline the operation of acquisition and registration of easements secured by the company from private owners and Crown instrumentalities.

The Bill provides for increased advances by the company to the State or the Bunbury Port Authority to assist in the funding of marine works which had been completed in Bunbury Harbour. The advances rise from \$1.5 million to a total of \$6.3 million. The increase has been made necessary by the unforeseen extent of basalt and other rock encountered in dredging

the turning basin and access channel to a depth of 12.2 metres (40 feet). The cost has risen to some \$19 million, and the company has in fact already advanced most of the \$6.3 million in 1974 and 1975 to enable the work to continue. Its action in this regard is much appreciated by the Government.

The increased funding also creates problems in regard to higher interest charges to be borne by the Bunbury Port Authority. In relation to the inner harbour, the authority will be required to bear charges of a capital nature somewhat exceeding \$1 million per year. These increased charges must be found from wharfage on bulk cargoes shipped through this section of the port, namely, alumina and wood chips.

The State expects that revenues from these sources will increase because of increasing tonnage, and the higher wharfage and tonnage dues levied.

In regard to Alcoa, the company will pay a wharfage of 15c a ton on the first million tons shipped in any year, 12c on the second million, and 10c on tonnages above 2 million tons in any one year. In addition the alumina carriers attract tonnage dues equivalent to about 5.5c a ton of alumina shipped.

These revenues would increase substantially if a second alumina refinery is established at Worsley, or some other location near Bunbury.

These charges are recognised as inadequate at least for the first six years of operation of the port. The company has therefore agreed to pay a special alumina surcharge of 65c a ton on the first 13 million tons of alumina to be shipped.

It is expected that this tonnage of alumina will have been shipped from Bunbury by 1982 and 1983, by which time the annual tonnage should be of the order of 2.5 million tons a year from Alcoa alone and the need for a special levy will be reviewed.

The alumina surcharge will be utilised by the Bunbury Port Authority to boost its revenue and assist with funding of the harbour and the associated interest and sinking fund charges.

It should be made perfectly clear that the company under its current agreement had no legal obligation whatever to increase its advances or wharfage payments to the State. It is prepared to take a responsible attitude in this matter to ensure that the Bunbury Port Authority has reasonable revenues to meet its obligations of operating the port in a manner which will ensure stable, safe and efficient handling of the company's cargoes in Bunbury.

The agreement also provides that wharfage will be reviewed in 1982 and at three-yearly intervals thereafter to enable the Bunbury Port Authority to meet any increased costs reasonably applicable to the

company's operations. Any decreases in costs would also be passed on to the company. This provision is almost identical with clause 4 (2) (f) (i), in the existing agreement and it is acknowledged that it was not practicable to devise a reasonable formula to provide for unforeseen escalation; rather it is proposed to rely on the goodwill and good sense of the parties to the agreement as exemplified in this very variation, to ensure that the Bunbury Port Authority has the necessary revenue to discharge its functions efficiently.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. S. J. Dellar.

IRON ORE (TALLERING PEAK) AGREEMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL *Receipt and First Reading*

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. G. C. MacKinnon (Minister for Education), read a first time.

Second Reading

THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON (South-West—Minister for Education) [5.27 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of the Bill before the House is to ratify an agreement between the State and Western Mining Corporation Limited, Australian Hanna Limited and Homestake Australia Limited, which I will refer to as the Western Mining Corporation joint venturers.

Members will no doubt recall that at the time of introducing the Mineral Sands (Western Titanium) Agreement and Mineral Sands (Allied Eneabba) Agreement in 1975, it was pointed out that provision had been made in each of those agreements for the State to use its best endeavours to arrange for the Western Mining Corporation joint venturers under the Iron Ore (Tallering Peak) Agreement Act, 1964 to make available to the mineral sands companies its iron ore handling system—as modified—at the Port of Geraldton.

Accordingly, negotiations with the Western Mining Corporation joint venturers have proceeded and agreement has been reached on the terms under which, in addition to handling iron ore, the Western Mining Corporation joint venturers will modify, operate, and maintain the conveyor system and make it available to the mineral sands industry.

This arrangement has ensured the continued use of a valuable facility which would possibly be otherwise wasted.

Naturally, the implementation of this arrangement has required that the iron ore handling facilities constructed at the Port of Geraldton under the Iron Ore (Tallering Peak) Agreement Act, 1964, the

principal agreement, be used for purposes not envisaged by that agreement. Therefore it has been necessary for certain amendments to be made to the principal agreement and these are contained in the Bill now before this Chamber.

It is pointed out that it was agreed with the Western Mining Corporation joint venturers that the amendments to the principal agreement should be kept to a minimum in view of the very limited changes which are necessary to enable the mineral sands arrangements to be effected.

In general terms, the amendments made to the principal agreement by virtue of this Bill are as follows. Firstly, new definitions of "heavy minerals", "heavy mineral concentrates" and "heavy mineral products" have been inserted, together with definitions of "mineral sands—iron ore handling system" and "modified mineral sands—iron ore handling system". These relate respectively, to the new products which will be handled and to the changes which must be made to the existing iron ore handling facility to enable it to handle mineral sands.

In addition a new definition, "secondary processing", which means the processing of heavy minerals to enhance their economic value, has been inserted.

A new definition "stockpile lease" has also been inserted. Under the principal agreement, the Western Mining Corporation joint venturers were granted a lease over an area of land at the Port of Geraldton for the purpose of a stockpiling area.

Provision has been made in the amending agreement, by the addition of a new clause, under which the Western Mining Corporation joint venturers are required to surrender parts of their existing iron ore stockpile lease for mineral sands purposes.

Therefore, it was necessary to define "stockpile lease", to signify that it is the stockpile lease granted under the principal agreement less any area that may be surrendered therefrom from time to time. As other references to this stockpile lease area are made elsewhere in the amending agreement the definition clarifies any doubts about which lease is being referred to.

Finally, several amendments have been made to clause 8 of the principal agreement in order to provide for the Western Mining Corporation joint venturers to continue to have the right given them under the principal agreement to have their iron ore handled for an ongoing period and also to allow them to operate and maintain the mineral sands—iron ore handling system, or the modified mineral sands—iron ore handling system, as the case may be, for handling iron ore and mineral sands.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. S. J. Dellar.

ALBANY WOOLLEN MILLS LTD. AGREEMENT BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. G. C. MacKinnon (Minister for Education), read a first time.

Second Reading

THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON (South-West—Minister for Education) [5.32 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Albany Woollen Mills Ltd. has for some considerable time been confronted with increasing problems in conducting a viable manufacturing operation in a decentralised location.

There are additional costs in operating a plant in Albany as compared with a populated centre such as the Perth metropolitan area or a regional centre in the Eastern States.

Furthermore, the mill at Albany is unique in that the bulk of its raw material, for the manufacture of carpet yarn, comes all the way from New Zealand with almost all the carpet yarn produced therefrom being returned to distant Eastern States markets.

The disadvantage of these logistical difficulties were well known to the Government which appreciated the company's very efficient operation as the only means to overcome those problems.

When, however, the company contemplated expansion it became evident that a completely new set of plant capable of independently producing carpet yarn would work much more profitably if it were installed right at the major marketplace and near the supply of raw material input. This move would save large amounts of inward and outward transport costs.

The company, therefore, with economic justification, contemplated establishing a new operation with the new plant in Victoria, gradually phasing out its Albany mills as the installed plant became more and more obsolete.

The Government, of course, aimed to prevent this from happening as it would have been a serious blow to the State's decentralised industry in general and to the Albany district in particular, whereas additional plant promises to enhance the economy of the Town of Albany and its surroundings.

As a result of discussions between the Minister for Industrial Development and the chairman of the company, the Government has agreed to provide financial assistance thereby helping the company to continue and consolidate its operation in the decentralised location.

The company, on the other hand, took upon itself considerable obligations in consideration of assistance offered by the State.

The Bill now before members contains provisions which give effect to the State's assistance on the basis of the company taking certain steps to consolidate its position and to embark on present and future large-scale expansion programmes securing its continuous presence in Albany.

Assistance of the types contained in this Bill is normally given pursuant to the provisions of the Assistance to Decentralized Industry Act, 1974, or by means of the interest subsidy scheme which, with rail freight rebate concessions operates as the implementation of the policies of succeeding Governments without the support of specific legislation. All are financed from Department of Industrial Development funds appropriated by Parliament.

However, the Government and the company consider there is a need in this instance for a separate formal ratified agreement to clearly set out the understandings, rights, and obligations of each party.

Such an agreement would ensure there are no possible opportunities for misunderstandings, both now or in the future, and enable the company to adequately secure its borrowings needed to fund the installation of additional carpet yarn plant and equipment and to progress its investigations into the manufacture of carpet in this State.

Adverting now to the content of the agreement, it requires, as a prerequisite to the granting of assistance, the installation by the company—Albany Woollen Mills Ltd.—at its premises in Albany, before the 30th June, 1977, additional plant and equipment for the purpose of manufacturing carpet yarn at a cost of not less than \$650 000.

In effect the company is being asked to carry out substantial expansion of its existing carpet yarn plant and equipment before the State is obliged to contribute by way of financial assistance.

This, of course, will result in considerable additional employment opportunities in Albany as the additional work force, once the new plant is installed, will comprise about 40 people. Members will appreciate the ancillary effects for the Albany district flowing from such additional employment.

The assistance from the State is to be by way of five consecutive annual payments the first payable on the 30th September, 1978, with each payment to be the total of the following calculations—

- (a) the total amount of pay-roll tax paid by the company in respect of pay-roll for employees normally employed by the company at its place or places of business at Albany during the preceding financial year;

(b) An amount equal to the first 5 per cent of interest charged to the company during the preceding financial year—

(i) On borrowings by the company for the purchase by it of the additional plant and equipment, for the purpose of manufacturing carpet yarn, and for installation at its premises at Albany; and

(ii) on overdraft facilities used by the company for working capital required for its operations at Albany.

The maximum payment for the total interest subsidies in any one year has been limited to \$25 000.

To enable the calculations to be made, the company has covenanted to produce the necessary books of account and records and, if required, verification from the company's auditors.

In addition to installing further plant and equipment for the manufacture of carpet yarn the company is required to continue with investigations into the feasibility of establishing a plant for the manufacture of carpet in Western Australia and to report to the Minister responsible for the administration of the agreement concerning such investigations.

At the present moment nearly all the carpet yarn manufactured by the company finds its way to markets in the Eastern States of Australia. The Government is conscious of the need to promote further manufacture and usage of local raw materials and other processed products, hence the company is being encouraged in its endeavours to investigate the establishment of a carpet manufacturing plant in this State.

The company has been given until the 30th June, 1983, to complete its investigations and if it is indicated that the establishment of plant for the manufacture of carpet in Western Australia is feasible, it must submit proposals to the Minister for the establishment of such a plant.

The agreement also contains the necessary clauses to facilitate the functioning of the agreement in a reasonable and acceptable manner and therefore provides for ratification, variation of the agreement by agreement of the parties on the basis of such variations being tabled in each House of Parliament, power to the Minister to extend periods or vary any dates contained in the agreement, determination, arbitration and rules for the service of notices.

In summary, the purpose of this Bill is to enable the State to assist Albany Woollen Mills Ltd. to continue to operate

competitively, to expand, and to remain a viable enterprise in a decentralised location in Western Australia.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. S. J. Dellar.

THE PERPETUAL EXECUTORS, TRUSTEES, AND AGENCY COMPANY (W.A.), LIMITED, ACT AMENDMENT BILL

In Committee

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (the Hon. Clive Griffiths) in the Chair; the Hon. N. McNeill (Minister for Justice) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 4 put and passed.

Clause 5: Second Schedule added—

The Hon. N. McNEILL: In his speech the Hon. D. J. Wordsworth referred to a matter he felt should be considered by the management or directors of the trustee company, dealing with the ownership of the fixed asset or property in St. George's Terrace. He suggested that consideration might be given by the directors to the renting of premises. In case other members have the same idea, and for the benefit of Mr Wordsworth, I draw attention to section 29 of the Act, a portion of which reads—

29. (1) The Company shall not without the prior consent in writing of the Treasurer of the State sell, exchange, transfer, mortgage, charge or otherwise dispose of the property belonging to it situate in Saint George's Terrace Perth in the State and being portion of Perth Town Lot L7

A portion of subsection (3) reads—

(3) The property referred to in subsection (1) of this section shall be by force of this section a security for the due performance by the Company of the duties of the offices of executor and administrator under any grant obtained in pursuance of this Act . . .

I thought it appropriate to make that observation. I am not indicating that there are not some other qualifications. I merely wished to demonstrate that it is not a simple and straightforward proposition that the company ought to give consideration to renting because under subsection (3) the trustee company must seriously consider other matters.

A view was also expressed in relation to the possible depreciation of shares if there was a large unloading of shares as a consequence of the coming into operation of the Bill. I am assured by the company that, as I indicated in the second reading speech, there are some 24 transfers in the process, but in fact there are only two companies, representing a relatively small proportion of the shareholding out of the 500 000 in Perpetual Trustees which could be involved in a so-called "unloading".

If they were unloaded onto the market they would not in any way depreciate in value. In fact it was felt that the shares have maintained and would maintain their value quite consistently, but in addition the very limited number of shares would be insufficient to cause any depreciation.

Mr Wordsworth asked that his views be taken note of by both myself and the directors of the company concerned. I think we can speak of these two companies in the one context. His views have been conveyed to the management of both companies and due consideration has been given to them.

I thank the Hon. Grace Vaughan for her support of the Bill, and also the Hon. D. J. Wordsworth for the observations he made on the Bill, the details of which are really contained in the schedule.

Clause put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by the Hon. N. McNeill (Minister for Justice), and transmitted to the Assembly.

THE WEST AUSTRALIAN TRUSTEE EXECUTOR AND AGENCY COMPANY LIMITED ACT AMENDMENT BILL

In Committee, etc.

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

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by the Hon. N. McNeill (Minister for Justice), and transmitted to the Assembly.

STATE FORESTS

*Revocation of Dedication: Assembly's
Resolution—Motion to Concur*

Debate resumed, from the 17th November, on following motion by the Hon. N. E. Baxter (Minister for Health)—

That the proposal for the partial revocation of State Forests Nos. 4, 28, 43, 58 and 63, laid on the Table of the House on Thursday, 4th November, 1976, and the subject of Message No. 130 from the Legislative Assembly, be carried out.

THE HON. R. F. CLAUGHTON (North Metropolitan) [5.50 p.m.]: The main notes on this motion are contained in the papers tabled by the Minister. I have examined them and am satisfied that the proposals are desirable based on the information provided to the House.

In regard to area No. 5, where it is sought to incorporate some small areas of land which were isolated as a result of

road adjustment, two of the areas are on the same side of the road as the private property but one of them, area "A" comprising 6.073 hectares, is in fact on the opposite side of the road to the private property, and based on the map it would appear to be more logical to include it in the area of State forest than in the private property because to utilise it the owner must cross the road. This seems to be going against the principle upon which the other areas were included in the private land. I have no strong feelings about the matter. I simply make that comment.

THE HON. V. J. FERRY (South-West) [5.51 p.m.]: I have had the opportunity to peruse the parcels of land mentioned in the motion moved by the Minister and I have pleasure in supporting the partial revocation of the areas in question.

This is a traditional motion which comes in annually. When one considers the charter of the Forests Department under the Forests Act, one realises the department has a responsibility to guard very jealously the land under its superintendence. Therefore it is not easy for parcels of land to be taken from State forests, bearing in mind the department has the responsibility to maintain adequate forest land in Western Australia.

However, from time to time it is reasonable that parcels of land be taken from State forest areas for certain purposes, and the purposes vary. One of the most common purposes is the taking of small parcels of land as a result of the realignment of a main road or a public thoroughfare. There are other purposes for which the department will, usually by way of negotiation, agree to exchange land with landowners for some advantage to both parties. This is good business.

In my experience in the south-west of this State some of the old subdivisions are quite small and irregular in shape, and from time to time the landowners find it difficult to work certain pockets of country. By arrangement with the Forests Department an adjustment of boundaries can be made. This also assists with the control of vermin and bush fires.

The problems of the Forests Department include not only the partial revocation of these kinds of parcels of land but also saving the loss of productive land for commercial purposes from the installation and construction of power lines and water pipelines. Whereas the land might not be taken legally from the forest area, nevertheless there is usually an easement through the State forest areas, and particularly where power lines are constructed there needs to be adequate clearing either side of the transmission lines to ensure there is no interference to the electricity supply through falling trees or limbs of trees during stormy conditions. Therefore the Forests Department needs to have some

assistance from all Government departments to maintain such areas of land under commercial production, and to this end I think it behoves the Government to assist the department to purchase land from time to time as it comes onto the market.

In the south-west of the State there are small blocks arising from early agricultural subdivisions which are not now economic to farm, and if they come onto the market it is reasonable for the department to enter the field to purchase them against normal competition from private persons or companies.

Reverting back to the charter of the department under the Act, I think the Government should encourage the department to maintain or increase areas for forestry in perpetuity. The department is charged with preserving the forests in perpetuity in this State and therefore deserves the utmost support at all times.

Question put and passed, and a message accordingly returned to the Assembly.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: SPECIAL

THE HON. N. McNEILL (Lower West—Minister for Justice) [5.56 p.m.]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until 2.15 p.m. on Tuesday, the 23rd November.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.57 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 18th November, 1976

The **SPEAKER** (Mr Hutchinson) took the Chair at 11.00 a.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Postponement

THE SPEAKER (Mr Hutchinson): Questions will be taken at a later stage of the sitting.

PARLIAMENTARY SUPERANNUATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 11th November.

MR JAMIESON (Welshpool—Leader of the Opposition) [11.07 a.m.]: As explained by the Treasurer at the time of its introduction, this Bill is designed to bring about equity in regard to superannuation for members of Parliament. At the moment we have three female members in Parliament affected and under the law as it

stands their spouses would not be entitled to the provisions applicable to the spouses of male members.

I do not think there is any necessity for the Bill to be debated at length. Over the years for some reason Parliament has been regarded as the domain of men, but fortunately that situation is changing. I hope that one day the representation in Parliament will be on a 50-50 basis with equal numbers of men and women members so that when visitors in the gallery look down into the Chamber they will not gain the impression that Parliament is reserved for males.

I do not know whether this Bill will encourage more females to enter Parliament, but I certainly hope it does. The Bill should be supported as should any other legislation which would encourage females to enter Parliament and take their rightful place in the legislative halls.

MRS CRAIG (Wellington) [11.09 a.m.]: I rise to record briefly my appreciation of the fact that the investigation the Premier promised to have made into the superannuation fund, was, indeed, conducted and now my spouse will share on an equal basis with the spouses of other members of this House who are not of the same sex as I am.

I believe that in the years to come in this changing society more women will work and the men will stay at home to look after the children. So those people who think this is an unnecessary provision may well be proved wrong in the course of time. I thank the Government for having implemented this provision, and I would like to record my husband's gratitude, too.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by Sir Charles Court (Treasurer), and transmitted to the Council.

ACTS AMENDMENT (JUDICIAL SALARIES AND PENSIONS) BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 11th November.

MR JAMIESON (Welshpool—Leader of the Opposition) [11.12 a.m.]: This Bill, like the last one, is desirable to change certain features in the determining of judicial salaries. The changes were recommended by the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal, and I consider this to be a wise move.