

Sir CHARLES COURT: We are just as much entitled to it as the Leader of the Opposition is because we had to run the Budget until the end of the year. I can assure the Leader of the Opposition we were not idle in those three months.

The member for Morley dealt mainly with education. His point about refuse disposal is noted because it is in the policy of our own party to have some research done in this matter. We are facing a situation—not immediately but in the foreseeable future—when something must be done about it.

Some of the other speakers dealt at great length with the incident at Forrest Place. It was a regrettable incident and I do not suppose we will ever know the full cause of it. There were faults in many places and it is one of those things we hope will not happen again. I, for one, am not prepared to stand by and let the farmers take the entire blame.

Mr J. T. Tonkin: A number wrote to me and said it was a definite protest on their part.

Sir CHARLES COURT: They made a protest, but I am speaking about the ugly incidents of which much was made by the member for Ascot and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

The member for Clontarf spoke mainly about the SEC charges. The Minister for Electricity—which title he must have until the legislation is amended—has made it clear why the charges were imposed on such a basis. However, I will have another talk with him to see whether any relief can be given in a practical way, but I do not hold out much hope for that at the moment.

Mr May: Is that because you are finding difficulty in arranging the *pro rata* basis?

Sir CHARLES COURT: I understand there are some practical difficulties.

Mr May: It was done in 1971. Why not now?

Sir CHARLES COURT: I will have a talk with the Minister but I am not holding out much hope in view of the information given to me.

Mr J. T. Tonkin: I thought you were going to put things right.

Sir CHARLES COURT: That is what we are doing.

Mr Jamieson: The general manager said gas would become cheaper, not dearer.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I do not propose to labour this matter any more. Members on the other side have had an opportunity to air their grievances and they will have many more opportunities to do so when we deal with the Estimates.

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.

House adjourned at 11.44 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, the 31st July, 1974

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. A. F. Griffith) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS (15): ON NOTICE

1. FLOOD DAMAGE

Carnarvon

The Hon. G. W. BERRY, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) (a) Has any survey been carried out and an estimate made of damage caused by the recent flooding of the Gascoyne River in Carnarvon;
- (b) if not, is one contemplated?
- (2) What is Government policy regarding such flood damage?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER replied:

- (1) (a) and (b) A survey of the damage caused by flooding of the Gascoyne River is in progress.
- (2) Government action will depend upon the nature and extent of the damage and consideration of the damage report.

2. RAILWAYS

Derailements

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) In view of a statement made on television on the 28th February, 1974, by the Commissioner for Railways, indicating he agreed with the submission of the Western Australian Amalgamated Society of Railway Employees that the rail used in the original construction of the standard gauge track was too light, does the Government intend to re-lay the track with a heavier rail?
- (2) How many derailements have occurred since the introduction of cyclic maintenance on standard gauge, main and branch lines?

- (3) How many of the derailments have been subject to departmental inquiries?
- (4) Were joint reports made by the District Traffic Superintendent, District Loco Superintendent, and District Engineer, in the areas involved, in respect to those derailments, not subject to inquiry?
- (5) Will the Minister supply a copy of the findings of inquiries and joint reports?
- (6) If not, why not?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER replied:

- (1) to (6) It will take a little time to collate the information requested. However, I will arrange for the information to be passed to the Hon. Member as quickly as possible.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Subiaco Development

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON, to the Minister for Education:

As the proposed development of No. 160 Onslow Road, Subiaco, has been referred by a citizen to the Department of Environmental Protection, will the Government take action to ensure no work is carried out on this site until the Department has reported on the environmental effects of the proposed development?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

The Government will not take action to ensure that no work is carried out on this site because a building permit has been issued in accordance with the present zoning of the site. However, I have asked my colleague, the Minister for Conservation and Environment, to have a departmental officer pursue this matter further and carry out an inspection, and report back to him.

4. MINISTERS OF THE CROWN

Official Visits: Notification

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS, to the Minister for Justice:

Is it this Government's intention to follow the example of the Brand Government where Ministers notified all the local Members of Parliament prior to their visits to electorates on Government business, or is it intended to follow the Tonkin Government's example where, except in isolated cases, only Members of Parliament who supported that Government were notified?

The Hon. N. McNEILL replied:

Ministers have been advised that it is the Premier's wish that all local Members of Parliament be notified of Ministers' visits prior to such visits into electorates on Government business.

5.

HOSPITAL

Warburton Range: Finance

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

With reference to the advice forwarded to me on the 1st July, 1974, by the Minister for Works, that a new hospital is to be constructed at the Warburton Range at a cost of \$729 796, what will be the source of the funds for this project?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER replied:

Australian Government Grants for Aboriginal advancement.

6.

HOUSING

Karawara Project

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS, to the Minister for Justice:

With regard to the State Housing Commission Karawara development, would the Minister advise—

- (1) (a) Has the Town Planning Board granted final subdivisional approval for the whole of the estate;
- (b) has complete agreement been reached with the South Perth City Council on all aspects of the development?
- (2) If the answer to (1) (a) or (b) is "No" would the Minister give complete details of the reasons, and in the case of (1) (b) the areas of disagreement?
- (3) (a) Have any building contracts been let;
- (b) if so, to whom; and
- (c) for what number and type of housing units in each case?
- (4) If the answer to (3) (a) is "Yes" what is the completion date for the contracts?

The Hon. N. McNEILL replied:

- (1) (a) On the 29th March, 1973, the Town Planning Board approved of the subdivision of Karawara.
- (b) No.

- (2) To a varying extent all three (3) stages of development are affected by the following incomplete items with the City of South Perth—

time and performance schedules;

retention of trees;

plans of all services;

siting of community buildings;

road construction and road drainage designs;

provision of bus bays;

footway and connecting footpath treatment;

vehicular crossovers;

underground power;

street lighting layout.

- (3) (a) Yes.

- (b) and (c)—

Jaxon Construction Pty. Ltd.

18 single detached houses and 96 apartments, including pensioner accommodation units.

A. V. Jennings Industries (Aust.) Ltd.

44 Town Houses.

Argus Building Co. Pty. Ltd.

40 Town Houses.

- (4) The completion date of the contract for the 18 single detached houses is August, 1974, and the completion date for the remaining contracts will be determined by renegotiation with the contractor when development approval is obtained from the City of South Perth allowing the contracts to proceed.

7. PENSIONERS

Drivers' and Motor Vehicle Licenses

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT, to the Minister for Health:

As the Hon. Premier, in his policy statement for the recent State election, expressed concern about the economic plight of retired people, and acknowledged the fact that "As they move into retirement many of these people move into difficulty", will the Government exempt pensioners from the proposed increase in motor vehicle license fees and drivers' license fees referred to in *The West Australian* of Saturday, the 27th July, 1974?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER replied:

A general exemption from the proposed increases in fees is currently being investigated. However, at this stage, no decision has been made.

8.

SCHOOLS

Admission of Five-year-olds

The Hon. GRACE VAUGHAN, to the Minister for Education:

With regard to the reported introduction of enrolment of five year old children at Government schools in 1975—

- (1) Will there be an experimental programme before any general implementation of five year old schooling?

- (2) (a) If there is an experimental programme, will various types of accommodation be used so that a determination may be made as to the general form of accommodation to be adopted later;

- (b) if so, what types of accommodation are proposed?

- (3) (a) Have any arrangements been made for the specific training of teachers of five year old children in readiness for any experimental programme;

- (b) if so, will primary school teachers already trained and working in the Department be given extra training;

- (c) if not, will recruiting be outside the Department from among trained kindergarten teachers?

- (4) During any experimental programme, will variation in school commencing and finishing times, and variation in school hours, be made?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

- (1) to (4) An expert committee is examining methods by which the scheme can be introduced on a phased basis. The committee is giving attention to the nature of the training to be offered, the curriculum, types of buildings, availability and further training of teachers where necessary, hours of attendance and other related matters. The possibility of pilot or experimental projects is also under consideration.

9. HOUSING

Busselton

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

- (1) How many rental units have been programmed to be built by the State Housing Commission in Busselton during 1974-75?
- (2) What categories of rental units will be built?
- (3) (a) Have contracts been let for this work;
- (b) what will be the cost of the completed units; and
- (c) when may it be expected that the units will be ready for occupation?

The Hon. N. McNEILL replied:

- (1) 14.
- (2) 4 three-bedroom single detached houses.
2 two-bedroom duplex.
8 (2 x 4) cottage flats for pensioners.
- (3) (a) (i) Tenders for the single detached and duplex units close on the 19th August, 1974.
(ii) It is planned to call tenders for the pensioner units in February, 1975.
- (b) The construction cost of the completed units has been estimated at \$184 000.
- (c) It is anticipated that the 6 units currently out to tender will be completed in February/March, 1975.

10. FEDERAL ELECTIONS

Kalgoorlie: Postal Voting

The Hon. G. W. BERRY, to the Minister for Justice:

With reference to the postal vote ballot papers for the Division of Kalgoorlie for the Federal Election on the 18th May, 1974, can the Minister ascertain—

- (a) the date the ballot papers were received by the Returning Officer for distribution;
- (b) when distribution of the ballot papers commenced?

The Hon. N. McNEILL replied:

- (a) and (b) Endeavours are being made to obtain this information from the Commonwealth Electoral Office and if available will be passed on to the Hon. Member direct.

11. ECONOMIC SITUATION

Government Controls

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON, to the Minister for Justice:

As reference was made in the Governor's Speech to tighter Government controls in the State sphere, would the Minister detail where these controls have been exercised?

The Hon. N. McNEILL replied:

A limit has been imposed on the growth of the Public Service and expenditure in 1974-75 is being closely studied and supervised so that it can be reduced to the minimum.

12. EDUCATION

Finances

The Hon. LYLIA ELLIOTT, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) For each of the financial years 1969-70, 1970-71, 1971-72, 1972-73 and 1973-74, what was the capital expenditure on Government primary and secondary education from—
 - (a) Loan Funds;
 - (b) Specific Purpose Grants other than from the Australian Schools' Commission;
 - (c) Australian Schools' Commission Grants?
- (2) What funds have been made available to the States through the Australian Schools' Commission for the year 1974 for—
 - (a) recurrent expenditure; and
 - (b) capital expenditure?
- (3) How have the grants made available through the Australian Schools' Commission been spent for the six months the 1st January to the 30th June, 1974, and how will they be spent for the period the 1st July to the 31st December, 1974, under the following categories—
 - (a) general recurrent;
 - (b) general building;
 - (c) libraries;
 - (d) disadvantaged schools;
 - (e) special education; and
 - (f) in-service training (excluding teachers' centres)

and specifying the number of additional teaching staff, non-teaching professional staff, and ancillary and para-professional staff under each category?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

- (1) to (3) Considerable research is involved in obtaining and compiling the information required. Answers to these questions will be supplied to the Hon. Member as soon as possible.

13. SCHOOLS

Admission of Five-year-olds

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) (a) Is it the Government's intention to implement its policy of enrolling pre-school age children at State primary schools this year;
(b) if so, what schools are involved?
(2) Which schools will be required to enrol pre-school age children in 1975?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

- (1) and (2) An expert committee is examining methods of implementing the policy on a phased basis. The investigations and planning are not yet sufficiently advanced to indicate schools involved in the initial phase.

14. EDUCATION

Finances

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT, to the Minister for Education:

For each of the financial years 1971-72, 1972-73 and 1973-74, what was the total recurrent expenditure on Government primary and secondary education from—

- (a) State Consolidated Revenue Funds;
(b) Commonwealth Specific Purposes Grants other than Australian Schools' Commission Grants; and
(c) Australian Schools' Commission Grants?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

(a)—

		Primary \$	Secondary \$
1971-72	37 696 151	29 000 278
1972-73	42 363 838	35 856 672
1973-74	Not yet available	Not yet available

- (b) None of these grants was of a recurrent nature since they did not provide for the continuing employment of staff.
(c) Schools' Commission Grants were only introduced in the 1973-74 financial year. Estimated recurrent expenditure is \$1 499 800.

15.

STATE FINANCE

Expenditure

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT, to the Minister for Justice:

For the financial years 1971-72, 1972-73 and 1973-74, what was the total State Government expenditure excluding—

- (a) expenditure from Commonwealth Specific Purposes Grants; and
(b) expenditure on business undertakings;
but including—
(a) deficits on business undertakings; and
(b) funds removed from State responsibility due to the Commonwealth's decision to fully finance tertiary education?

The Hon. N. McNEILL replied:

Adjusted expenditure from the Consolidated Revenue Fund was—

	\$
1971-72	357 992 591
1972-73	415 682 488
1973-74	498 407 430

SUPPLY BILL

Standing Orders Suspension

THE HON. N. McNEILL (Lower West—Minister for Justice) [4.51 p.m.]: I move, without notice—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended so as to enable a Supply Bill to have precedence each day before the Address-in-Reply, and to be passed through all stages at any one sitting.

Question put and passed.

DEPUTY CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES

Election

On motion by the Hon. N. McNeill (Minister for Justice), resolved—

That in accordance with Standing Order No. 34, the following members be elected to act as Deputy Chairmen of Committees for the present Session—the Hons. C. E. Griffiths, R. J. L. Williams, and Lyla Elliott.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION

Election

On motion by the Hon. N. McNeill (Minister for Justice), resolved—

That in accordance with Standing Order No. 37, the following members be elected to the Standing Committees for the present Session—

Standing Orders.—The Hons. R. Thompson, C. E. Griffiths, and R. J. L. Williams.

Library.—The Hons. V. J. Ferry and Lyla Elliott.

House.—The Hons. J. Heitman, C. E. Griffiths, D. K. Dans, and R. T. Leeson.

Printing.—The Hons. S. J. Dellar and H. W. Gayfer.

SUPPLY 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.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: THIRD DAY

Motion

Debate resumed, from the 30th July, on the following motion by the Hon. J. C. Tozer—

That the following address be presented to His Excellency—

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

THE HON. A. A. LEWIS (Lower Central) [4.55 p.m.]: Mr President, I think it would be fairly silly of me, having spent a little time in another place, to ask for this speech to be treated as a maiden speech. The main reason is that maidens always scare me!

To commence, I congratulate you, Mr President, as I do the Minister for Justice, the other Ministers, the Leader of the Opposition, and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition on their appointments. I am sure the Leader of the Opposition will find his deputy to be a very efficient helper. I have always found that in this capacity he could always be relied on to fetch the goods whenever they were needed.

With those congratulations I will move on to the matters which affect my electorate. It is an electorate which includes pretty well everything we have going for us in Western Australia. As its major town is Collie I will start by pointing out that its potential is unbounded. On many occasions we have heard various Governments claim they have been responsible for making Collie what it is. However, my claim is that nobody has yet made Collie; it has a long way to go.

Many facets of Collie need to be improved, from education and communications to the further development of coal deposits in the vicinity of the town. By

the development of those deposits we will get our improved education and communications. I do not believe that Collie will reach its full potential until private enterprise is allowed to fully develop the coalfields without interference.

I will now move on to Manjimup and, firstly, thank the Minister for Industrial Development for the speed with which he moved when a shortage of apples occurred at the cannery. Within a period of two days the Minister was in Manjimup where he got the directors of the cannery and the apple growers together. As a result of his efforts the cannery had to decline any further intake of apples a fortnight ago. The cannery had filled its requirements and I believe it was only as a result of the swift action by the Minister that it acquired sufficient apples. We are all aware that the cannery has been through many adverse situations but under the present management, and the present board, it will continue to expand.

While speaking about boards I will touch on potatoes, and the slowness of the Potato Board to take action at any given time as prices vary in the Eastern States. It seems to me that the potato growers in this State have a great deal to complain about, because any price movement seems to be three months behind any similar movement in the Eastern States. The grower is disadvantaged at every turn. Not only are the potato growers disadvantaged, but their future is most uncertain because of the lack of export markets. I will deal with what I believe should be done for rural marketing at a later stage of my speech.

Let me now turn to Bridgetown, and the actions of the previous Government in relation to this town. By administrative action the Government attempted to cripple Bridgetown by seeking to remove a rail depot to another town. With one stroke of the pen, the population of Bridgetown would have been reduced by something like 15 to 20 per cent. Not only was this an example of shocking public relations on the part of the Railways Department, it was also an example of the power-hungry administration wanting to rule the lives of the people with a stroke of a pen. Luckily the plan has been deferred for the time being, and we hope that Bridgetown is permitted a testing time to build up its resources against the future removal of the railways depot.

I will now leave my electorate as I wish to comment on the arts. With the Federal Government carrying on the way it is, the State is being disadvantaged at every turn in the arts and culture field. Apart from pleasant little visits when some members of the Australian Council for the Arts come here, at no time do Western Australians get a fair crack of the whip.

There has been talk that the budget for arts in Australia will rise from \$15 million to \$20 million in the next financial year. I wonder whether Western Australia will receive the very paltry proportion of this budget as it has done in the past. The board consists of 46 members, and only four of these representatives are from Western Australia.

At this time last year, or perhaps a little later I suggested that our share of the budget should be administered through the Western Australian Arts Board. However, this has not happened—the money is handed out in most miraculous ways. In another place I mentioned something last year about jobs for the boys. I see that some 12 months later a gentleman by the name of Max Hawkins referred to this matter in the *Daily News*. He also suggested the Australian Council for the Arts as a possible follow-up to the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority as a suitable subject for the Auditor-General's attention. The sooner the Auditor-General looks at this matter the better the arts world will be.

Right throughout the art world people are asking for consolidation in the distribution of the money; not that every little hamlet and every little committee should be granted money for arts. Then in *The West Australian* of the 11th July we see the heading, "TLC gets art grant". The article commences—

The Trades and Labor Council has been granted \$4 500 by the Australian Council for the Arts to assist with a programme of activities in factories and other work places.

The article then goes on to list well-known figures as the trustees, including a Mr Harry Bluck. It continues—

Mr Bluck said yesterday that no programme had been worked out, . . .

And yet the Federal Government can give \$4 500 for this purpose. In this State we have the Playhouse, an opera company, and other groups screaming for funds. These people could have put on any programmes required by the factories, but they have been starved for finance because the Federal Government cannot get its administration apex in the right order. Here we see \$4 500 set aside for a programme which has not been worked out and trustees have been appointed to look after the money. If it were not so serious it would be funny.

I would like to turn now to education. Like so many of us here, I am extremely worried about the direction in which education is leading this country. What is happening to the huge amounts of money that are going into education? Are we following the right track in building huge tertiary education institutions? It has been proved overseas that such institutions are not used to their full extent. Numerous

countries have built tertiary education facilities only to find that many of them have been closed while others are not used to their full extent.

I would like to quote from a lecture delivered by Douglas T. Wright of the Canadian State of Ontario on the 19th May. The report of the lecture was given to me by the Minister for Education and I was very interested in this gentleman's remarks.

I wonder whether Australia, and particularly Western Australia, is running into the type of problems already apparent in Canada and the United States of America. We hear constant talk about equality; everyone must be equal and have equal chances of education. In his lecture Mr Wright quotes from a book entitled *Inequality* by the American sociologist, Christopher Jencks. He says—

Equalising educational opportunity . . . does not make adults more equal . . . school reform is never likely to have any significant effect on the degree of inequality among adults.

Mr Wright then goes on to say—

In many jurisdictions Government-appointed commissions and semi-official boards of enquiry have studied and reported suggesting that education in its traditional form has been over-sold and perhaps overdone and that more fundamental changes are required.

We now have people leaving tertiary institutions to take up apprenticeships because they can earn \$30 000 per year as a plumber or a carpenter whilst they would earn only \$20 000 a year as a doctor. When one looks at the tertiary institutions built up under the American and Canadian systems, one wonders how much these tertiary institutions have become places for higher profit rather than places for true education for those who attend. Mr Wright goes on to say—

New policies require a rational framework for addressing a number of simple questions: Who will go? Where? To do what? When? Who will pay? How much? Who will benefit? And who will decide?

All of this suggests that the real debate on the future of post-secondary education is just well underway. Notwithstanding some of the current crisis affecting education and the kinds of evidence and argumentation that has been brought to bear from various points of view, the outcome is by no means determined.

That this is so should not be surprising. The stakes are very high. We are talking about the procedures through which our so-called post-industrial societies have tended, increasingly, to allocate social status and prestige.

One contradiction the public has learned to appreciate is that massive increases in enrolment and programmes of the sort that until quite recently led to high social status will not confer that status upon the masses, but may very well create widespread frustrations.

We can compare this with what is happening at WAIT and at the University of Western Australia. No doubt we will see the same sort of thing at the Murdoch University. Confusion is apparent in our tertiary institutions. I feel that before very long our education system must be given a thorough overhaul.

Many of us, myself included, managed to enter the university, but we then dropped out. If our education system had been working properly, the number of drop-outs would have decreased over the years. Unfortunately, from a five to 10 per cent drop-out rate at Australian universities, we have gone to a 45 to 50 per cent drop-out rate in about 25 years. Is this progress? Are we wasting valuable natural assets and the time of the students by insisting that we want better education for our children? Perhaps the teacher with the blackboard and a piece of chalk did more towards educating our children than do the teachers with the new-fangled teaching aids and a completely free type of teaching. Looking around this Chamber I would say that most of us received a reasonable sort of education. We got on fairly well to be here, and yet we were in classes of 35 and 40 children—a shocking disadvantage by today's education ideas. This country has prospered well under many people taught in this fashion.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Sometimes two and three classes to a room.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: In some country schools the teacher could have seven grades in the one room, and yet these pupils did not seem to miss out on anything. Maybe the educationalists can give us an answer in the future, because up till now they have not been able to find the answer.

The educationalists have shown a certain amount of selfishness because they have not gone back to the people; back to teaching classes. They get into the academic sphere and keep rolling around there. Our education system has suffered because of this.

I was extremely interested to read in this morning's *The West Australian* that the Leader of the Opposition has taken the Premier to task. He said how shocking it was for the Premier to criticise the Commonwealth Government. I do not believe criticism is necessary all the time, but I was a little fascinated to hear this, considering the portfolio held by the Leader of the Opposition in the last Government.

In fact, I wonder why he did not sound off a little at the Federal Government himself, because on the 2nd October, 1973, the Federal Minister for Social Security and the Western Australian Minister for Community Welfare (Mr Thompson) threw out some \$284 000 for a social welfare programme which was called the Australian Assistance Plan. We heard a lot about this plan, and some of us even went down to hear experts lecture on the subject at the tourist authorities theatre. We were told how this money would be given on a \$2 per head basis with no strings attached. If we did not want the administration suggested by the Federal Government or by the Minister for Community Welfare, we need not have it—we could run our own show. I did not hear the Leader of the Opposition say much about that last night. I would have thought, being the man he is, he would have hopped up and said, "Well on certain issues I could talk fairly severely to the Federal Government myself."

I should now like to refer members to two newspapers published last week in my electorate. The headline in the *South Western Times* of the 25th July stated, "Government grants plan big 'let down'". The article goes on to say that of the \$244 000 sought for community and welfare needs in the south-west and southern agricultural areas, only \$22 350 had been granted. The plan was that the money was to be allocated to this autonomous board which was to pass it out. We were told that there would be no problems and that we could have the money. However, the board has referred all requests for grants to the Federal Departments of Health, Education, Urban and Regional Development, Social Security, Tourism and Recreation, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Council for the Arts. I doubt whether we will ever see any of that \$244 000 by the time it has been put through that mob. Of course, the money was due before the 30th June.

I refer now to an article in the *Great Southern Herald* of last Friday which states—

Katanning sub region members of the Southern Region Social Development Board are incensed by the few recommendations ratified by the Social Welfare commission in Canberra . . .

I do not believe in Santa Claus. I think that the Minister who was in charge of the Bill knows my thoughts, and knew my thoughts, on this matter last year in relation to how the entire exercise would work. Let us consider the Federal Minister for Social Security, who is controlling this allocation of funds. Is our health scheme going to be conducted on the same proportion as these grants are being allocated in relation to what is applied for? Will we get one-tenth of our health scheme or one-tenth of what Mr Hayden says we are

going to get? Mr Hayden is the Minister who brought forward this proposal. Admittedly, he is having a lot of bad luck because of late nothing he touches seems to go right. But nothing will ever go right with a proposal which does not require people to contribute something. In this world, we never get something for nothing and at this stage of Mr Hayden's career, which I believe will be very short, he has bungled pretty well everything he has touched.

Mr Hayden will find that in this world we get nothing for nothing. It tickled me a little that a person could get up in this House and complain about the Premier belting Canberra when one of the speaker's own prize schemes was let down by his colleagues in Canberra. That really fascinated me. I just wonder how much discipline applies in the Australian Labor Party. Can we not say what we think? I believe that some of us can and I hope we continue to do so. I am disappointed the Opposition did not attack Canberra over this matter, because it represented one of its key proposals. It said it was going to do so much for the people, but all it has done is to raise their hopes and then drop them in the manure. If this is the kind of Government that Canberra expects to give us, frankly, people in this State will begin to expect that sort of Government. Its promises are not honoured.

Inflation is another issue at which we should have a look. I will make only one short suggestion on inflation. It may be greeted with derisive cheers, but I believe that inflation is caused by the lack of productivity.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Good God!

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: No, He does not create inflation, it is due to the lack of productivity and the lack of work, which the honourable member cannot understand. However, I believe there is one quite simple solution to inflation. Right across the board, with no exceptions, from the members of the Legislative Council down to the other place and in Canberra and everywhere else, everybody should do four hours' extra work a week for no extra pay. At least we might get rid of some of the time wasted on tea breaks and get some productivity back into the economy. Let us look at the industrial affairs scene today. People are walking off the job in the middle of cement pours. I wonder just how long it will be before the insurance companies, under their contractors' all-risk policies, sue the people who have walked off a job or sue the unions responsible for the walk-off. That is a sobering thought and if it occurs, the insurance companies, whether it be the State Government Insurance Office or one of the private companies, in effect will charge that money to us.

The irresponsible people in this State who are trying unfairly to take advantage of the employers will disadvantage not only the employers but also everybody possessing any type of insurance in this State. I believe that this type of industrial action is just another contributor to inflation. Any union which cannot by negotiation with the bosses or by arbitration get what it wants should make sure that it does not cost the public money before it takes action. But have these organisations made sure they do not cost the public money? I do not think they have.

Mr President, I do not intend to continue my remarks. I believe that the Court Government will do more in the fields of education, community welfare, recreation, and almost every other aspect of government than did the previous Government, because the Court Government is a group of managers. It contains people who are used to managing things. Despite the terrific millstone that we carry on the east coast—I refer of course to the Australian Government in Canberra—and the boffins sitting on their behinds at great pay setting out the economic policy of this country, this State will go forward with leadership and drive, with the best management of any State in Australia; and while the Premier continues in that position, this will continue to be the case.

THE HON. GRACE VAUGHAN (South-East Metropolitan) [5.22 p.m.]: Mr President, I apologise for not hopping to my feet sooner. I am not yet *au fait* with the procedures of this Chamber. I should like to say to you, Sir, and to the House how grateful I am for the warm welcome which has been extended to me by yourself and by other members of the House. I also pay tribute to the wonderful service which is available from the staff of this Chamber. I have been quite overwhelmed by their offers of help and their sympathetic understanding of my lack of knowledge of the procedures of Parliament. I also pay tribute to the people in my electorate who put me into this position, which is one of honour. I am very touched by the tradition which surrounds this House. But to me, tradition is a useless abstract unless it shows us development from the past and how we can learn from it. Unless it involves a learning process, tradition is useless. Perhaps I did not think seriously enough about this before I accepted endorsement and, to the surprise of some people, was elected to this place, despite the fact that I was of the wrong sex; but it seems to me that I have landed myself in the strange position of being in the type of House that would be better suited to the days of the rotten boroughs of England, some centuries ago.

I was amazed to hear Mr Tozer speak about the high cost of living in the north-west. He referred to how much it costs people to live up there. In my opinion, cost is a matter of survival. We should give people enough on which to survive, but we do not seem to be doing that with 65 per cent of the population of this country—the men who are receiving less than the average weekly earnings. However, the most valuable thing to a person living in a democratic country is his vote. It seems to me that one of the cheapest things Mr Tozer's electors possess is the price of getting a member into this House. The north-west-Murchison-Eyre area has a population of some 21 000 which elected some eight members to the Houses of Parliament. But it takes 91 000 people in my electorate to elect seven members to the Parliament. It would appear to me that while Mr Tozer's electors are paying a high price for their butter and bread, they are not paying much to get their members into the House. I will not make a value judgment at this stage on the worth of those members.

One of the things that Mr Tozer mentioned was the cost of water. I made a few inquiries about this matter. He said that one day, we from the metropolitan area would come cap in hand to the north and ask for concessions. I should like him to give us a concession rate in regard to votes. As I understand it, the price of water has not increased in country areas—as a matter of fact, there was a slight decrease during the rural recession of 1970—since 1965, whereas in the metropolitan area it has increased by some 80 per cent. Mr Tozer can hardly expect the residents of the metropolitan area to carry on their backs the people in the country areas any more than they are now doing. I intend to speak later about compensation. I believe country people should be compensated, but not to that ridiculous extent. What Mr Tozer suggests is that if I cared to live on the top of the Porongorups and asked for water and electricity services, I should pay the same rate that is paid by people who live in East Perth. That is a ridiculous suggestion.

Turning again to the abstract matter of representation in this House, given that we have an Electoral Districts Act which is reminiscent of the rotten boroughs operating centuries ago, we do have people who have been elected to this Chamber. I hope they will bend their minds to the welfare of the people of this State and not in their decisions reflect this quite monstrous inequality between the representation of city people and that of country people. The way in which I see this House functioning is as a House of Review. Perhaps it should have much more equal representation than the Lower House because this is a pluralistic society and a House of Review surely is supposed

to examine legislation from the point of view of all the people within all factions within our society.

Because we are the Upper House perhaps we imagine we are somewhat closer to that celestial court and have much more expertise in making decisions about what is best for the people. By definition a democratic representative is one who is elected by the people, whether or not the representation is inequitable. We have such representatives here and I hope they will attempt to be nonpartisan in their review of legislation which comes before the House.

One of the ways in which I consider the members of this House could obtain and therefore present the opinions of all the people is by listening more to them and by participating more in community affairs. In this way they can learn what legislation, in the opinion of the people, should be passed and what should not be passed in Parliament.

It seems to me that the Government when it was in Opposition had, and now that it is in Government has, a very peculiar attitude towards people who wish to express their opinion. I was a very scared witness at one of the protests, but I must say I support the Forrest Place protest, because it was a manifestation of what the people felt. They considered they were impotent and they wanted to express their opinion. The fact that the farmers were demonstrating because their hip pocket nerve was affected does not detract from the principle. It seems to me that the police treated them in a very soft way—and I have my opinion about this—and we know the result of the inquiry, if it can be called that, because no-one who was right on the spot, except the police, were questioned. Nevertheless, I believe that those concerned were within their rights in making some sort of protest.

However, the police dealt differently with another group of people who were protesting not because their hip pocket nerve had been hit, but rather because they felt strongly about a moral issue; that is, the situation at Exmouth. I am afraid I can think of no reason for the different treatment unless it was because a change of Government occurred and the police had been instructed to be tough with all protesters in future. Surely it was not because the Government considers some people can protest with immunity while others are to be literally jumped on.

I was quite amazed to hear Mr Heitman ask why we had not said something about the Forrest Place incident. I think he was referring more in terms of how we lost votes because of the incident. From my experience at Forrest Place and since, I would say certainly a number of farmers were present because I recognised some I knew. However, I do not recall any of them saying later, when I challenged them, that they were not there. The people who

said they were not there were those who spoke from such vantage points as Canberra. I am aware that Senator Reid is a tall man, but I do not think he is tall or smart enough to have been able to see right across Australia and witness what occurred at Forrest Place. I admire Don Eckersley as a great organiser and a man of principle, but I was rather surprised that he said, from his vantage point at Subiaco, he could see what occurred at Forrest Place and that the farmers, for whom, incidentally, he was waiting for 1½ hours, were not in Forrest Place at all.

It is a little difficult for one to be objective when one has an eye full of pie, is showered with Coca-Cola, and has an overripe tomato trickling down one's back. Nevertheless, I say that I support the people who feel they must protest. I believe they should be able to do so. This is part of community involvement and it is a way we can obtain the opinion of the people. However, I do not believe that people should have to reach the point where they feel they must protest in this way.

As legislators we should be sounding out the people and listening to their views. We should be getting out into our electorates to meet the people whose opinion is indicative of the grass roots of the electorate.

At this point I would like to refer to what Mr Lewis said concerning the Australian assistance plan. This plan is an opportunity for people at the grass roots level to involve themselves with the Government; it is an experimental programme and one which the Minister for Community Welfare welcomed as an opportunity for Western Australia to receive funds for the sorts of things about which Mr Masters was speaking last night; that is, those things which are necessary for an improved quality of life. Such things should be available.

However, I am sure that members of this Government would have been the first to protest if there had been a divergence from the usual accountability to which Governments are subjected in the expenditure of public money. What is happening in regard to the Australian assistance plan project in the south at the moment is that any requests which involve other Government departments are referred to those departments for a decision as to whether they will be able to fund them. Then they go back again to the regional board for further submission to the Australian Government. However, accountability, as all members know, is of great importance when public moneys are involved.

Tonight I am not speaking in regard to specific matters concerning my electorate. I am a new member and as yet I do not know enough about my electorate to be able to refer to its specific problems. In

any case such problems are better dealt with by reference to the relevant Ministers as time goes by.

I hope that my background and experience may be of some use in the House and that Government members will not be so proud to think that they cannot ask me for any help I might be able to give, as I will surely ask them if I know they have some expertise in certain areas and are capable of providing me with information.

As legislators we should be, with vision and optimism, and with much energy, attacking the problems we find in the social environment. It seems strange to me that in these modern days of technological advance we have a great cultural lag and find it impossible to overcome social problems.

For instance we say we will never exist without war and we will never overcome the problems of poverty, want, and misery. Nevertheless we are able to put people on the moon and engage in a gigantic space exploration programme. We are able to make the most marvellous technical and medical advances. It was very sad tonight to hear that our latest heart transplant patient has died. Nevertheless we still approach this kind of problem by analysing the knowledge we have gained. Though the heart transplant patient died, the doctors know why he died and they have available all the particular variables which are concerned with heart transplants. The next time an attempt is made in this direction the doctors will have profited by what they have learnt on this occasion.

It seems that in the social environment we do not learn. We seem to go backwards rather than forwards. We have no confidence in our ability. How do we attack the problems involving the physical environment? We do it by analysing the information we obtain and we can apply this same analysis in the social world.

Over the centuries we have accrued knowledge of mathematics, physics, and chemistry, which has enabled us to designate those things which need to be controlled. I sincerely believe we can do this also in the social world. We have the knowledge accrued by philosophers, social scientists, thinkers, and politicians who, from the early days, have been able to add to the growing body of knowledge and from that source we could draw sufficient information to be able to tackle our social problems in a much more scientific and analytical way than has been the case to date.

The first step to take in a programme to overcome our social environment problems is to compensate those people in areas where shortages abound. We can think of many ways in which people can be handicapped socially, physically, mentally, and emotionally, and these are the people we should help by attacking the specific variables involved.

In Australia it is an advantage to be thought worthy and those who are thought worthy are those who have achieved certain things. However, it is very difficult to attain a high level of education, an occupation which is highly valued, and an opportunity to live in a residential area of high prestige. The difficulty is we are not all born in the perfect set of circumstances. These circumstances would be that a person would have to be born to a fifth generation Australian family, preferably on the land—squatters, not cow cockies. A person would also have to be white, would have to follow the Anglican faith, and must not be too different from the average in build, although it is better to be a little taller and slimmer.

Not many of us are fortunate enough to be born with these ascribed statuses. Some of us can improve our situation by marrying into the right family, by dieting, or by getting rid of our skin colour by some means or other. In this way we can perhaps attempt to reach what could be the perfect state of the "WASP"—that is, the white Anglo-Saxon protestant—brought up on a farm on which the great-great-grandfather had squatted.

Having admitted that only a very few of us have this great advantage, we must determine how far we can advance in order to achieve the statuses I mentioned first. I am referring to a high level of education, a nice place in which to live, and a good job with reasonable income. How do we get these? We must begin to tackle the problem by using the knowledge we have gained. Mr Lewis mentioned education. I think he was talking a lot of nonsense. He said that he was a drop-out. Perhaps the wrong kind of people are attending university. Nevertheless, some studies have been made and here again—

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Mr Thompson, I think you ought to remind Mrs Vaughan about the rules concerning a maiden speech.

The Hon. GRACE VAUGHAN: Have I said something wrong, Mr President?

The PRESIDENT: Not that I am aware of.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I was having a conversation with the Leader of the Opposition.

The PRESIDENT: I think the reference might have been—if I heard the interjection correctly—to the fact that if the honourable member wants to be provocative she cannot expect to be immune from interjections.

The Hon. GRACE VAUGHAN: I am quite prepared for that, Mr President.

I am sure the Minister for Education was interested in the remarks concerning education which were made here this afternoon. Many people are disadvantaged in that they do not have the opportunity to continue on to tertiary education or, indeed, to finish their secondary education.

I do not say a high level of education is essential for all the occupations which need to be filled in our society. Nevertheless, surely equal access and opportunity for a high level of education is something to which, as a democratic country, we should be aspiring.

Many of the studies of educational opportunity which have been made, particularly in Australia, show without question that the children of well educated people in the professions who have a high income are much more likely to go to university than are other children. I think the ratio is something like 30 to one in favour of the children of professional people over those of unskilled workers. Nowhere is this situation worse than in the country areas, where there is also a differential. The children of well-to-do people in the country are just as likely to go to university as are those in the city, but this does not apply as one goes down the income scale.

There are many ways in which this situation can be overcome but I think, first of all, a community sense of responsibility must be engendered in people, and we must recognise that this is not a matter which is the sole responsibility of parents but it is also a matter of community responsibility.

After all, children may be disadvantaged even if they are born into a "WASP" type of atmosphere, unless they receive sympathy and understanding from the adults who are socialising them to compete in our very competitive society. If this community responsibility is engendered in people, and particularly in legislators, we can begin to attack in a scientific way the shortcomings which some people experience in life.

I want to refer to the tremendous disadvantages suffered by people who are physically, mentally, or socially handicapped. I think we should begin to regard them as a part of society rather than as apart from society. They feel very strongly that we relegate them to a different section of society from that which we ourselves occupy. I recently went to a meeting at which representatives of all types of handicapped people had come together to attempt to co-ordinate their ideas and make a concerted approach to people of influence who could help them to gain recognition of their right to be a part of society and not apart from it.

I cannot emphasise too greatly the importance of seeing handicapped people as a resource in our society, rather than as a liability. We need all the resources we can gather by way of intellectual people and those who can be trained in rather intricate work. Many handicapped people are in sedentary type occupations and are therefore more likely to persevere with the intricate craftsmanship for which other people perhaps do not have the patience.

These people can therefore be an asset rather than a liability to the community, and this is the way in which they want to be seen—not as a drag on the community. This is another way in which culture has lagged behind technical and medical advances. We are able to save people who would once have died at birth, and we can preserve them so that they grow into adulthood.

Another pressing problem concerns the mentally deficient adult. We always think of such people as children. Intellectually, they do remain like children, but they grow in body and strength and cause increasing stress to parents. I shall be bringing to the notice of the Minister for Health a movement among parents who have reached the end of their tether after caring for mentally handicapped children for perhaps 20 years.

We cannot simply think of handicapped people as being individuals. We must think of them in the context of their family and friends. The ramifications of the misfortune of having a mentally deficient or physically handicapped child cannot be estimated. I hope the Minister for Health will give his attention to these matters.

It worries me somewhat that the attitude of the Government and the parties it represents has in the past been one of extreme intolerance, which has caused great concern among professional people who are attempting to help those who are disadvantaged. I was appalled to read in the policy of the National Alliance a statement that it would take quite a long time for Aborigines to make any advance because it would be necessary to wait until the community was ready for it. If "the community" means all of society in Western Australia, I think we will wait a very long time. Among the ascribed statuses which can be disadvantageous to people, in some areas skin colour is the most disadvantageous. Perhaps it runs just ahead of being born the wrong sex, but I will come to that in a moment.

To most people in this State, the stereotype of the Aboriginal person is one who has below average intelligence and is over-sexed and a drunkard. I am sure not everyone in this House or outside it is of that opinion, but that is the stereotype in the minds of some people, and we must get rid of it. We will not eliminate it from society entirely until we make up for some of the shortcomings which now cause Aborigines to be oppressed. If we wait until the community is ready for Aborigines to be given advantages, I am afraid we will merely be chasing our tails and the vicious circle will never be broken.

I hope there will be some change in the attitude of the conservative parties and that they will begin to see the value of change. Change is inevitable. We might think we are remaining the same, but while conditions are varying and time is passing we must and will change, and

even the most conservative will find they have changed in spite of attempts to hold back the clock.

Despite what the honourable member said, to me the most important of the disadvantages suffered by the people who are not born into the "WASP" set relates to education. I refer to education in the sense of leading people to knowledge, not in the sense of preserving the "establishment" which seems to be the dominant factor in most of the education systems in Australia. Some community schools are starting up in Victoria and New South Wales, and I hope the Minister for Education will give consideration to this type of education in an attempt to get away from the "establishment" and "the three Rs".

One of the statuses which we achieve during our lifetime is income and, no matter how much is spoken and written about the inequalities of income in this country, it seems people are still labouring under the peculiar illusion that unskilled labourers are able to earn as much as specialist physicians do. Of course, that is a lot of nonsense; they are not able to do that at all. If they go into business they may be able to do so, and in that way a plumber may be able to earn as much as or more than the specialist physician. However, it is a phenomenal occurrence and can scarcely be regarded as the norm.

Aborigines, particularly, are suffering in this regard, and the average school leaving age of Aborigines in Western Australia is very low compared with that in other States of Australia. I hope this situation will improve. The majority of Aboriginal children in this State leave school before they reach the prescribed school leaving age of 15. They are usually encouraged to do so by teachers who seem to labour under the illusion that if those children go to work the pay packet will be an incentive for them to behave themselves.

Another disadvantage and handicap which may be suffered by some people is to be a single parent, perhaps through an accident before or after the birth of a child. I would particularly like to mention my concern for deserted fathers. We have heard much about deserted mothers, and I hope members are well aware of the disadvantages of being a deserted wife; but deserted fathers have a great problem and no provision is made for them. I hope the Minister for Community Welfare will have a look at this matter. It is becoming an increasing problem and it is worthy of examination.

Furthermore, this problem could be overcome not for deserted fathers alone, but also for others, by the establishment of a subsidised housekeeping service which would be of great advantage. We do have an emergency housekeeping service run by a very worthy and voluntary organisation but, without Government assistance, the task is far too great for

this organisation. Accordingly I hope we can in the future see the establishment of an emergency housekeeping service.

I now wish to refer to the question of recreation about which the Hon. Gordon Masters spoke so eloquently and so well last night; and particularly would I like to emphasise the quality of life in the matter of recreation in its wider sense and mention the work carried out by the University extension service and stress the good job it is doing in expanding tertiary institutions into the community. Here again because there are so many people here who represent the country areas the need may be seen to send extension officers out of the metropolitan area. Already there is an extension officer working in the Bunbury area who has initiated quite a number of courses there.

In the main this is not an expensive service because it sets out to find people in the community who could provide staffing for such courses. I hope the Minister for Education will have a look at this aspect with a view to placing more extension officers in the country areas. The service is a very good one; it helps stimulate people to enter spheres in which they may enrich their lives; and, of course, when an individual's life is enriched, the community's life is also made much richer. It may appear that I have dwelt unduly on the matter of social welfare but, of course, members will appreciate that this is my sphere of experience and activity.

I would like to make particular mention of the Western Australian Council of Social Service which, for a long time, has been doing an excellent job with a very small income and limited means. Within this service are representatives of practically all the voluntary organisations in Western Australia and they have proved to be a great force in bringing this aspect to the notice of the public and other agencies. I hope members here will heed their plea. This council consists of expert people who give their time voluntarily outside their other jobs to inform those who will listen of the need for social welfare extension in Western Australia.

Sitting suspended from 6.06 to 7.30 p.m.

The Hon. GRACE VAUGHAN: Mr President, I would like to continue along the line I adopted concerning the need for compensatory action to be taken by members of this House through community involvement and an understanding of the problems of those people who have shortcomings in relation to their climb up the status ladder, by going on from speaking about Aborigines and their disadvantages to refer to migrants. This is a problem which was touched upon by the Hon. G. E. Masters last evening, and it is one which I think is particularly relevant to the theme I adopted in relation to the inequitable representation of country and city in this Chamber.

In particular we find that the ratio of migrants to Australian-born population is so very much higher in the city than it is in the country that it means the members of this House may have to lend their minds to an understanding of this problem. In the population of Australia today more than one in five is a foreign-born migrant who came here since the war which finished in 1945. Half of these people are non-Anglo-Saxons, thus cutting out two of the letters from our "WASP". So there is a need for members to be particularly understanding in this regard. If we take in the number of children of postwar migrants we find that we are approaching something like 30 per cent of the population, and that is an enormous section of the community.

Following along my theory concerning the inadequacy of status factors affecting the achievements which can be gained by members of our population, we find that in the main these migrants are in low-paid jobs, and that their level of education is very low compared with that of the rest of the population. These are all validated and reliable statistics. One of the most disadvantaged sections of our community is comprised of women. I am not speaking now in all areas because I like being a woman—in fact I particularly like it—and I would not change for quids. But let us face it, in terms of the way society values people and the way in which we accentuate material gains, women are certainly disadvantaged in the areas of income and of access to the opportunity to choose their occupations and to take whatever educational courses they wish to take.

We have some burgeoning and very excellent organisations—such as the Women's Electoral Lobby—which are doing a very good job in bringing these shortcomings to the notice of the rest of the population. I hope these organisations will be so successful that they will be eliminated in the near future. We should not need separate organisations for women, but we will have them until such time as women recognise that they can either take or leave their chance to be equal and still feel worthy in our society. I want to emphasise that because occasionally we do find the case of a woman who writes a rather plaintive letter to the Press saying, "Forget about all these lobbying women: what about the good old mother and housewife?" Of course, if that is what she chooses to be—and "choose" is the operative word—then all power to her. In the few years of my life that I have been able to enjoy not working, I have enjoyed myself just as much as I have during my working life when I was making my way up the occupational ladder. Some people might say that I have gone down a few steps by coming to this Parliament; but that is a matter of opinion. I hope that does not prove to be so, and I hope this will be a fulfilling job and one in which I will be able to be of value to our society.

One of the steps taken by the Tonkin Government which I hope the present Government will expand is the introduction of special advisers in the north-west. I think the women in the north-west have a particular problem, and the female advisers who are employed in the north-west are doing an excellent job in helping the women there to express their desires for a better life and for better opportunities for their children.

I want to move now straight from women to children, and I point out that I am about to touch on a related problem in regard to child care. I will talk about this problem in three areas, the first of which is day care. Again, I recognise that country members are probably disadvantaged in that perhaps they do not understand much about the working mother. Perhaps they have in mind the stereotyped rather greedy little woman who wants to race out and get a lot of goodies from a department store by taking an extra job when she should be in the kitchen.

The average weekly earnings of adult males in Western Australia is now about \$111. We find that something like 65 per cent of adult males earn less than the average weekly earnings. I am sure members have all heard in relation to the word "average" how a statistician drowned in a river which he had estimated to have an average depth of two feet. We can be very much misled by that word. If we stress the number of adult males who earn less than the average wage and take into account the fact that women on the average earn about 69 per cent of that wage—that is on an hourly basis, because that is an acceptable figure—then we realise how disadvantaged women are in regard to the income they receive for the work they do. There is an increasing number of married women in the work force; they now comprise well over 60 per cent of the female work force, and the number is increasing. Although it is difficult to estimate, from a Bureau of Census and Statistics survey carried out in 1969 we can say that half of those women have children who are of school age, and a considerable number have children of pre-school age. Consequently there is a real need to worry about child care.

A system has been introduced by the Australian Government whereby those people in the community who like to raise money will be able to have a major part of their costs for the running of child care institutions met by that Government. However, these institutions are based on the existing child care regulations in each State; and I think we ought to begin to consider what the mothers want and not what some politicians—mainly males—have decided should be the regulations in respect of day care institutions.

Most women would prefer to have another woman of their own choosing looking after their children in a family setting

while they work. They are not keen about the aseptic, education-orientated type of child care institution which most people seem to envisage when they think about this subject.

Another matter which is vexing the minds of many people who are concerned with social welfare, and particularly the mothers of children, is the residential day care position in Western Australia. The Council of Social Service has a special standing committee on child care which has been looking into this matter with great diligence. It finds that residential care centres which cater for children who are temporarily or permanently unable to be cared for by their natural parents or by their adoptive or foster parents are in a very grave position. I think we should bend our minds very much to this matter, because the disadvantages suffered by children in institutions are great enough when the institutions are well catered for in respect of finance and expert staffing, let alone when they have to begin to scratch around for money as many have to do now and have had to do ever since they came into being.

We must upgrade these institutions and see that their staffs are well and truly recompensed for the job they are doing for society. The same applies to foster parents. We have a weird and wonderful idea about them; we are inclined to think that they are making money out of looking after children. That concept is a lot of nonsense and it is something we should begin to rethink. We heard the Leader of the Opposition saying that foster rates should be upgraded to cater for inflation, but I think we should go beyond that and start to think about the compensation we should give to the children and to the foster parents who are unselfish enough to take on this very difficult task.

I spoke previously about handicapped people, and I want to reiterate my remarks because I want to impress upon the members of this House how important it is that they give a lead to the rest of the community as far as taking a new look at the handicapped is concerned. Throughout history we have treated our handicapped people in a way that is not always to be admired. Traditionally we have thought of these people as being incomplete and as people who are not a part of society but, as I said before, apart from society.

I want to stress this point because the percentage of handicapped persons in our population is increasing as a result of medical and other advances. It does not require much in the way of professional opinion to come up with an answer regarding the importance of turning what is a liability into an asset.

I turn from that sphere of social welfare which has a sort of sick orientation—that is, trying to heal that which is inflicted on people either by birth or by accident—to the matter of the pollution

of our State of Western Australia. I think the indication is that many people are thinking about this problem, and this is borne out by the proliferation of groups which are concerned with keeping the air clean or with keeping our ears from being inundated with noise. This to me is a very refreshing phenomenon, and I hope it continues. I think the people concerned have a most difficult task because they must buck the establishment; and once we have set up a department or a way of doing things we are inclined to want to defend that empire and to justify its existence.

When we come to think of how our cities and towns, and probably the whole State, for that matter, are being polluted, I think the greatest blame can be placed on the automobile. Instead of worrying so much about vested interests we should worry more about the future and about those who, by some ecological turnabout, may be born without legs. We should think about cutting down on the production of automobiles. We should be thinking of doing away with their lifelines; that is, the roads. We should be thinking of alternative means by which people will be able to move around. We should not, of course, do away with the automobile altogether because we could not possibly live without it completely. Nevertheless, we should use more efficiently the resources that are now available to us instead of overlooking them so that we can find other means of transport in place of the private motor vehicle.

We should stop building freeways into the city. We should think in terms that the city is for the people, and we should "pedestrianise" it. We should not permit any cars to travel through the centre of the city. The central business section could do without them. Access to the city should be given only to taxis and buses. If we erected a car park within easy distance of the city and had it served by a fleet of buses, this would meet the needs of those people who are obliged to enter the centre of the city. In suggesting this, immediately I can almost hear people saying, "That would be very nice, but inevitably we have to put up with the automobile because it is so convenient."

I emphasise again that we should be able to use our expertise, our technical knowledge, and our brain power to solve the problem of changing our social environment so that it serves us instead of whisking us along in whichever direction it wants to take us. In saying that I am thinking of the industries which rely on the automobile and also various Government departments. One may say, "What would the Main Roads Department do if there were no automobiles?" Nevertheless I am sure that very effective work could be found for that department to do in other directions.

As a further means of providing access to the city a river transport system is about to be encouraged and this is something we should defend. I am all in favour of the Southern Foreshore Protection Society and I will do all I can in this House to assist that organisation.

Moving from pollution to conservation I would like to speak on the preservation of existing beauty spots and many forms of architecture about which some of our people are becoming quite excited. As one who is always speaking to the people about the quality of life and the true aims of life it is of great concern to me to know that the buildings we have erected in the past are now being threatened with extinction. There are protests being made about this trend, especially by young people who are taking a great deal of interest in the historical features of this State.

We must bear in mind that the first European ever to place foot on the soil in Western Australia, with the intention of settling here, arrived about 1829. In certain parts of the City of Perth there are what would be considered by people in other countries relatively new pieces of architecture, but which, to us, in fact represent half our historical life. In this regard I am thinking not only of the Legislative Council in making an attempt to preserve buildings that have some architectural value; I am also thinking of asking those in private enterprise to become interested in this subject. An exercise which is being performed at the moment is being watched by me with great interest. I am referring to that group of people in Maylands who are appealing to the Swan Brewery to be generous by co-operating with them in a community venture. If the Swan Brewery agreed to such a request it would mean that 68 cars would no longer have a home, or rather the home that is to be built for them would not come to fruition. This, of course, may prove to be very upsetting to the owners of those cars, but instead of the car park there would remain an old historical hotel—the Peninsula—which would be transformed into a community centre. The building would be preserved to house all the activities of the area and it would thus become something of historic value. The age of this building is about 68 years, which is almost half the history of Western Australia.

I hope other members of this House will take an interest in this venture and assist in persuading the Swan Brewery to be generous in its approach, thus ensuring its success. In other parts of the world it is a trend that private enterprise is realising that part of its responsibility is to the community which ensures that shareholders in various ventures profit by their shareholdings.

I have spoken of the inequitable representation in this House and I hope that some of my remarks are getting through

to other members. One of the great dangers we learn from our political history is the elitist system. There is no doubt that we have many "WASPS" here and we are moving closer to the adoption of an elitist system. We have many people who are highly educated. We have many people who are Anglo-Saxon and Protestants, and we have many people who come from the country. All these are essential factors which tend to blind those at the top of the status ladder. I issue a warning about the dangers of elitism. I am most serious about that.

In the Liberal Party policy speech there was an interesting paragraph about the importance of the Public Service, about upgrading it, and of giving public servants a chance to singularise themselves in those areas in which they have expertise. I was rather surprised to find that in another section of the policy speech a slur was made on the professional people who work in that section of the Department for Aboriginal Affairs of the Australian Government. In the Speech it was stated they were inhumane, ineffective, and were computerising their ideas. This is a very ill-advised attack on professional people and, personally, on behalf of my colleagues in the profession, I resent this. I am sure it is something about which the Premier will change his mind, because he will realise he will need these professional people to guide him in what he is doing for the State. Also, whilst he had said in his policy speech he would listen to the professional people and take notice of what they had to say I did not like very much what his deputy in the Liberal Party stated; namely, that he thought the Australian Minister for Housing was listening too much to long-haired hippies.

One of the matters that has been raised in this House in the last couple of days has been the very difficult and vexed question of inflation. We heard one member say it was due to low productivity. It may be simplistic but I believe inflation is due to the problem of money. No doubt the Hon. Margaret McAleer has more knowledge of this subject than I have, but I think it was the kings of Lydia in the seventh century who decided it was much easier to stamp out small pieces of metal to be used as a means of currency than to barter with pigs, oxen, or other forms of produce. This new system of currency was introduced so that it would be more convenient for society. However, it has turned out that money has become our master and usury is the order of the day instead of people using money for their own convenience.

In the book outlining the Liberal policy speech I also noticed that the Leader of the Liberal Party stresses the importance of Commonwealth-State relationships. However, I think he made a very bad start with references made in the Governor's Speech. In fact there were 15

contradictory references made in respect of the Australian Government and I hope the Leader of the Liberal Party will have another look at his own policy speech in which—if I may quote from it—he said—

The direct relationship between the State and Federal Government will be no longer coldly financial but warmly personal and total in its coverage.

In attempting to make a warm personal approach, I think he has succeeded in putting his foot in it.

Where co-operation is needed we need not, of course, cut off our noses to spite our faces. There is a considerable amount of money available and it must be borne in mind that in 1942, when the High Court decided that the Australian Government was to be the income taxing body, we lost a great deal of our power. We have to admit that, because these days we consider money is most important and to lose money is to lose power. If we are to benefit from some of the schemes put forward by the Australian Government there is urgent need for co-operation.

This need is evident in Aboriginal affairs, because in this State the problem of Aborigines is very great. We do not have the greatest number of Aborigines of any State in Australia, but the problem is very real here because of the enormous area of Western Australia and because of the many part-Aborigines among the population. It is indeed an extremely big problem.

During the regime of the Tonkin Government we were able to get rid of many of the reserves that were an eyesore and a real disadvantage to the State in the eyes of those in other States and, indeed, in the eyes of those in other parts of the world. If we can take advantage of what is being offered by the Australian Government I think the people of Western Australia will be grateful to this Government and realise it is big enough to recognise that where the money lies there lies the power.

In regard to co-operation being shown by other departments, I hope this Government and the Minister for Community Welfare in particular will ensure that no political bias is shown, because if it is it will mean that people are left high and dry; because, traditionally, this State has always filled the breach with emergency payments whenever there has been a hold up in any payment from the Australian Social Security Department. In taking such a step this is actually no skin off our noses because we are compensated for such payment from the Australian Government Social Security Department.

I therefore hope the Minister for Community Welfare will ensure that this custom is continued and will not introduce any spite in the handling of this matter because, if he does, we may find that disadvantaged people will be left high and dry without any money.

One of the points I want to raise tonight, which has been very clear to me as an elector, and not as a representative of the people, is the lack of co-ordination and planning among departments. We know that under the system of Cabinet Government most decisions are made by the Ministers and when we come to the House it is really a sort of numbers game. We hope that what we have to say, both inside the House and in the party room, and between parties, will influence the course of legislation and policy making. However, in the main, decisions are made by the Cabinet.

In the complex society which exists today we have to recognise that Ministers rely very much on advisers and professional people and that it is necessary for there to be some sort of co-ordination between such people. The only way to achieve that co-ordination is to ensure communication between those people. However, as I said previously, some of those entrenched organisations—be they private industries or Government departments—are inclined to want to build their own empires. Quite often a decision will rest either on the strength of the Minister or on the brilliance or perseverance of his advisers, and such decision will influence the importance of the department.

I would emphasise that this is a human failing which cannot be overcome, perhaps, without some structural change within the Government. It seems there may be some form of co-ordination by way of the formation of a new department under the direction of the Premier whereby he will be able to see where his priorities lie and plan for the future.

Although I am aware that I have a different political opinion from that of the Premier I do not place very much credence on his promises which were outlined prior to the election. I have been quite astounded by the lack of activity in the hundred-odd days—very odd indeed—since the election. It seems to me that the Government, unlike the elephant which laboured mightily, has not even brought forth a mouse. I am hoping that as there are pressing problems in this State, particularly in relation to social welfare, the Government will begin to get cracking very soon. Certainly the Government will receive stimulation by way of questions from the Labor Party members in this House.

One of the biggest problems associated with co-ordination and planning, apart from empire building, is the reluctance on the part of some departments to come forward—even though they have been providing established services—because they fear that one particular section of the community is receiving more than it is worth. It is the word "worth" which causes the trouble. The problem is in regard to

compensation to people who need to have a chance of equal access to opportunity so that they may gain worth.

I come back to Aborigines as an illustration because the Aboriginal Affairs Department of the Commonwealth Government is attempting to upgrade the position of the Aborigines so that they can have equal access to opportunity. It is important that other departments do not withdraw and decide that the Aborigines are being looked after and nothing further needs to be done. That would nullify the whole intention of the course of action recommended by professional people.

I would like to conclude by asking members in this House to recognise that one of the most valuable actions which the Tonkin Government took while in office was to get rid of an enemy of this State which has plagued certain people for a long time. I hope the present Government will continue with the good job already started, which is, getting rid of the blowfish at Rottnest.

THE HON. I. G. PRATT (Lower West) [8.06 p.m.]: May I reaffirm the congratulations I have previously given to you, Mr President, personally, on your appointment in this Chamber. It is widely recognised as a fitting achievement for your years of services while carrying out your duties both in this Chamber and throughout the State. My congratulations also go to those members who have been appointed to the ministry; the Hon. Norman Baxter, the Hon. Graham MacKinnon, and at a more personal level, a very special congratulation to the Hon. Neil McNeill who has not only been appointed a Minister but is also Leader of the Government in this House. He is my co-member for the Lower West Province and his advice and experience have been extremely valuable and of great assistance to me in my campaign to become a member of this House. For that I thank him most deeply.

I also extend my congratulations to the Hon. Ron Thompson on his appointment as Leader of the Opposition; and to those members who have been elected to the House as a result of the recent elections. For those who have been returned to this place, with which they are quite familiar, this will be old hat, but for those of us who are new members the experience promises quite a bit of excitement and interest. I hope the excitement will not be dulled by the time we spend here.

I believe it is usual during the debate on the Address-in-Reply to do either, or both, of two things: to discuss some topic of interest to the member, or discuss one's electorate. I intend to be quite brief but I also intend to touch on both of these areas.

THE PRESIDENT: The honourable member may discuss anything he wishes on the Address-in-Reply debate today.

The Hon. I. G. PRATT: Firstly, I wish to raise a few points concerning government. It is my opinion that, to be effective, government must be very meaningful. It must have a high level of involvement between the elected and the electors. To my mind this means that we need our present system of Government and it must continue. I refer to the system where we have local government, State Government, and Federal Government, each carrying out its responsibility within the legal bounds set for it.

We have with us today a factor which makes it difficult for this system to function, and I refer to inflation. This trend is making the duties of both State Government and local government very difficult indeed. I have been involved in local government for many years and I am deeply interested in the welfare and well-being of local government. I believe local government to be the most meaningful form of government, because decisions are made on the spot by people who are directly responsible to the electors. Of course, the electors are also on the spot and can see what is happening, and they are able to hold somebody responsible for actions taken.

I am concerned with the effect on local government, and consequently on the people of my electorate, of certain issues, the first of which is inflation, an issue which I have already mentioned when I pointed out the problems it was causing. I now wish to go a little more deeply into this matter which the Prime Minister intimated he had beaten when he was seeking votes for the Federal election earlier this year. Inflation is hitting local government very hard; to the extent, in fact, that shire rates will have to be raised by a large percentage this year; otherwise, staff will have to be put off which, of course, is a dreadful alternative.

Some two months ago it was not uncommon, when talking to shire councillors throughout the State, to hear the figure of 30 per cent being mentioned as a possible increase in rates this year. However, if one now talks to the same councillors one hears the figures of 40 per cent, 50 per cent, and even 60 per cent being mentioned. Even the figure of 100 per cent was mentioned recently. Let us examine the effect these increases will have on local government.

Firstly, one pay increase for one section of the staff on a shire in my province has added an amount of \$50 377.60 to the expenditure for the coming year. That is just one increase in one section; there are many more. The cost of bitumen has already risen by 53 per cent this year. I am referring to hot bitumen applied at the rate of over 13 000 square metres a day.

The interest rate on loans has risen to the extent that some loans taken out in the past month have been at a rate of over

10 per cent. These costs have to be passed on to the ratepayers in order that the shires can carry on. The reserves of the ratepayers have already been depleted by inflation, and by the increased proportion of taxation, which has been taken by the Commonwealth Government.

The second item I wish to touch on in this sphere is that of road funds. The attitude of the present Commonwealth Government will mean that rates will have to be increased further if realistic works programmes are to be carried out by shire councils to maintain employment. In the shire to which I have already referred, the figure allowed last year for what is commonly known as free choice moneys—Commonwealth moneys, as members are aware, are in various categories—spent on local roads and maintenance was \$150 249. The amount of money available this year, under the new scheme, has been reduced to \$81 428. Not only has there been this drastic cut, but under the new scheme that amount of money has to be matched, which means the shire has to raise the difference to bring the total up to \$150 000. That action has to be taken in order to get road work done to the value of \$150 000, and this does not mean the same amount of work will be done this year as was done last year; it will be slashed because of inflation. In actual fact, to make total use of the grant of \$81 428 allowed in that particular category the shire will have to raise an extra \$112 142. So it is seen that once again the people will have to pay as is the case in almost every area of endeavour affected by the present policies of the Commonwealth Government. In many cases people will be called upon to pay beyond their means.

The effect of this inflation together with other increased costs could mean that some of the small one-family farms close to the metropolitan area will go out of business; they will not survive.

I turn now to consideration of my own province. In so doing I am reminded of an experience I had some years ago when I joined a club involved with public speaking. We were visited by another club and I was rostered to speak on a certain subject. The previous speaker spoke on the same subject and when I stood up to speak I realised that everything I had to say had already been said and I now find myself in a somewhat similar position tonight. Many of the points I wished to raise have already been mentioned by my colleague, the Hon. Gordon Masters, when he spoke yesterday.

This is natural, for we represent very similar provinces. Our backgrounds of community services are somewhat similar, and from his speech it is obvious that we identify very similar problems. In particular we identify the problem of indiscriminate development by the State Housing Commission and the social problems that

this causes. It was mentioned by an earlier speaker that no sooner do we have a State Housing Commission suburb established under the present situation than it is declared a depressed area. In part of my province we have a situation where State houses are still being built and the area has been already recognised by the Commonwealth Government as a depressed area. A kindergarten was promised by the Commonwealth Government but it is not clear now whether or not the money will be forthcoming to pay for it.

What we should aim for, and what I am sure the present Government will aim for, is an integrated community where people who need welfare housing are mixed in with those who do not. In this way people living in State houses become an integral part of the community. The children mix and share the community facilities, the wealth, and perhaps the working ability of the people. The rest of the community can be of assistance to the people accommodated in State housing.

While the Hon. Gordon Masters' province includes the northern half of what has come to be known as the peripheral shires, mine includes the southern band and the areas immediately to the south of this. The Lower West Province is geographically a well-defined area stretching from Kelmescott in the north to Waroona in the south. It includes the section of the Darling scarp and nestles between that and the Indian Ocean.

It is an area of diverse activity, including large areas of urban development, major industrial undertakings, dairy farming, fruitgrowing, market gardening, forest management, and the timber industry. It is a significant area of poultry production and fishing. More and more horse training establishments are being developed in the area, and in fact, almost every small type of farming activity can be found within the Lower West Province.

Probably the most significant fact to the rest of the State about the Lower West Province is that it is the major source of water supply for the metropolitan area with a succession of dams and future dam sites extending south along the scarp. All the major centres of population within this province lie within the path of the future urban corridors, although in many cases it will take years for urban development to reach these centres. It is important, however, that we plan carefully in order to preserve the present way of life when this happens. The continuation of farming activities must be encouraged, and the Government of the day must give rural industries the support and encouragement that they need to survive.

Adequate transport systems must be devised and new industrial areas positioned to provide employment for the people who will live in the urban corridors. The lessons so obviously apparent in the present urban

expansion must be learnt and planning must be orientated to what the people want to do rather than what planners think people should want to do.

In the years to come this province will be an area in which things will really happen. I foresee it as a challenging and exciting era and I look forward with pleasure to representing the Lower West Province in this House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. D. W. Cooley.

SUPPLY BILL

Second Reading

THE HON. N. McNEILL (Lower West—Minister for Justice) (8.20 p.m.): I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This measure seeks the grant of supply to Her Majesty of \$350 million.

The Revenue Budget and the Loan Estimates for 1974-75 are now in course of preparation and will be presented with respective Appropriation Bills, later in the session.

In the meantime, it is necessary of course, to carry on the services of the State and the Bill now before members is to authorise the provisions of funds for this purpose.

An issue of \$315 million is sought from the Consolidated Revenue Fund and \$30 million from moneys to the credit of the General Loan Fund. Provision is also made in the Bill for an issue of \$5 million to enable the Treasurer to make such temporary advances as may be necessary.

The proposed issue from the Consolidated Revenue Fund is greater by \$65 million than the corresponding provision in the Supply Act of 1973. The amounts to be drawn from the General Loan Fund and the Public Account are the same as were provided last year.

The increased issue from the Consolidated Revenue Fund is required to meet the expanded cost of Government services resulting from the current high rate of inflation.

The magnitude of the additional sum sought to enable the services of the State to be financed for a period no greater than is customary, is a clear indication of the impact that inflation is having on the State's finances.

Whatever may have been the genesis of the current inflationary spiral, there can be no doubt that it is now feeding on wage and salary increases that are far in excess of the economy's capacity to absorb them. There can be no escaping the simple fact that if industry, commerce and Government are required to meet wage increases of the magnitude that have now become commonplace, they have no alternative but to increase prices.

The services that State Governments are called upon to provide, such as education, hospitals, police, public transport, and general administration, are labour intensive in the sense that wage payments constitute a very high proportion of total cost. The Government is therefore hit hard by general wage inflation and there is little capacity to absorb increases from the normal growth in revenue.

Award increases granted during the year just concluded require additional payments from the Consolidated Revenue Fund amounting to \$70.1 million in a full year. As the increases were granted at various times during the year, the cost to Consolidated Revenue in 1973-74 of those higher payments was \$31.7 million, with a further \$38.4 million to be provided in the current year's Budget before any allowance is made for new award increases granted in the course of this year.

Award increases already granted in the first four weeks of this financial year amount to the staggering figure of \$14.9 million which indicates that provision will have to be made in 1974-75 for an even greater sum for wage increases than was the case last year.

In framing our Budget this year it appears that the Government will have to provide for additional expenditure of about \$75 million on account of higher award payments alone apart from other inescapable cost increases arising from higher interest payments, increased postal and telephone charges, and a wide range of other price increases.

In the absence of substantially increased financial assistance from the Commonwealth, there is no way the Government can provide for this huge lift in expenditure without substantial increases in State taxes and charges.

At the recent Premiers' Conference, every Premier stressed the seriousness of the financial situation with which he was confronted this year and pressed for a special addition to the Financial Assistance Grants to enable the inevitable lift in State taxes and charges to be kept within reasonable limits.

As emphasised at the time, the Treasurer believed the Commonwealth Government must accept responsibility for the financial crisis now facing the States. At a time of unprecedented wage demands the Commonwealth Government has turned a blind eye to the inevitable consequences of unbridled wage claims.

It has even pursued a policy of allowing the Commonwealth Public Service to take the lead, not only in pay increases but in other costly concessions such as an extra week of annual leave and leave loadings. While these benefits may be justified in more normal circumstances

there was no possibility of the additional costs involved being absorbed when wages were also escalating at an unprecedented rate.

The settled principles of wage determination are such that increases in one sector of government flow rapidly to all others and State Governments are forced to agree to broad parity of wages and conditions even though we do not have the money to meet the added costs.

The plain fact is that, because of the consequential rise of income tax collections, the Commonwealth Government does not face the same problem in meeting wage demands as do the States.

Indeed, from a purely revenue consideration, inflation tends to solve the budgetary problems of the Commonwealth and assists it to finance its own expenditure programmes, whereas inflation is a crippling burden on the States.

There is no escaping the fact that if the States had not been deprived of their right to levy income tax, we would not be in the position we are in today. The impact on our Budget of these huge wage rises would have been balanced by an automatic growth in taxation revenue.

We did not seek to be in a position of not being able to solve our own financial problems—that was imposed on the States by the wartime grab of income tax by the Federal Government.

That being the case, I believe there is an obligation on the Commonwealth Government to ensure that the States are provided with sufficient revenue to discharge their responsibilities.

In asking for a substantial increase in the Financial Assistance Grants, the Premiers were merely seeking the States' rightful share of the greatly inflated income tax receipts now flowing to the Commonwealth.

However, the Prime Minister and the Federal Treasurer were obdurate. They were well aware that a refusal to help the States would mean massive increases in State taxes and charges but made it clear that it was their intention to bring that result about.

Not only did the Prime Minister refuse to supplement the formula grant, but an amount of \$25 million paid to the States last year as a special supplementation was discontinued as was also a supplementary grant of \$3.5 million paid to Western Australia in each of the last two years.

As a result of this attitude, the Government had no alternative but to take immediate steps to review all State charges and a number of increases have already been announced. As I have previously stated, taxation increases are inevitable unless there is a change of attitude on the part of the Commonwealth Government.

We are not alone in this predicament and a short time ago Sir Charles Court met with his fellow Premiers in Melbourne to consider a further approach to the Prime Minister seeking reconsideration of his earlier decision.

It is hoped that a meeting can be arranged for early next month so that the Commonwealth can be informed of action already taken by the States to raise additional revenue and of the revenue gap still confronting us in the light of recent wage increases.

At the same time, we propose to discuss the serious inflation problem which has now assumed the character of a national emergency and will offer to co-operate with the Commonwealth on agreed steps to check the spiral.

I am hopeful that the meeting will be able to reach agreement on measures that can be taken by all Governments in a concerted attack on an evil that is endangering the whole fabric of the nation's economy. Unless inflation is brought under control, no-one will be able to plan ahead with any confidence and Budgets become mere expressions of hope as to what the final outcome for the year will reveal.

Returning now to the year just ended, it is to be noted that although revenue and expenditure both exceeded the Estimates by very substantial sums, the deficit was held within the Budget Estimate.

The final deficit for 1973-74 was \$5 732 000 which was \$1 216 000 lower than the amount allowed for in the Budget.

Expenditure for the year exceeded the Estimate by \$20 041 000 due mainly to outlays on account of wage increases far exceeding the sum provided in the Estimates.

Revenue collections were \$21 256 000 higher than the Budget Estimate.

Commonwealth payments under the Financial Assistance Grant arrangements were \$10 500 000 more than had been forecast mainly because the increase in average wages taken into account in the formula was higher than anticipated when the Budget was framed.

Higher wage rates than were expected in 1973-74, were also reflected in pay-roll tax collections which exceeded the Budget Estimate by \$4 579 000.

Other State taxes which exceeded the Estimate were probate duty by \$2 588 000, stamp duties \$1 641 000 and land tax \$1 035 000.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. R. Thompson (Leader of the Opposition).

House adjourned at 8.32 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, the 31st July, 1974

The SPEAKER (Mr Hutchinson) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS (55): ON NOTICE

1. STATE INFORMATION SERVICE

Centralisation and Cost

Mr J. T. TONKIN, to the Premier:

- (1) What was the cost of the special report to the State Government commissioned and compiled by W. W. Mitchell and Associates relating to a proposal for the establishment of a State information service reported to involve an expenditure exceeding \$1 million?
- (2) Does the plan recommended which provides for the centralisation of the information service in the Premier's Department not conflict with his election undertaking to decentralise administration and decision making into the main regional centres "so that people can talk to Government on the spot, get answers, and get action"?
- (3) Is it still intended to set up a substantial Government centre in the main regional centres, "headed by an officer with a high status in the public service", and "staffed by public servants selected for their dedication to the regional concept of administration and decision making"?
- (4) Will he explain how he can possibly adopt any of the proposals referred to in the above questions and at the same time achieve the "severe cut in the growth of the State Public Service this financial year", which he has been reported to have ordered?
- (5) Is the proposal for the establishment of a State information service at more than a million dollars a first step in his "campaign of getting costs down"?
- (6) If not, when is it expected the first step will be taken?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) \$600.
- (2) No. On the contrary, the proposals submitted to the Government for improved State information services provide for the distribution of information to State Government offices established in regions of Western Australia, and for feed-back of information from the regional offices to a potential State information service headquarters in Perth.