

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, the 22nd March, 1978

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

ROAD

Tom Price-Nanutarra: Petition

MR McIVER (Avon) [2.17 p.m.]: I present the following petition addressed to the honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned people of the Pilbara Region sign this petition in protest against the current condition of the Tom Price-Nanutarra Road and request that this road be sealed immediately.

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

Mr Speaker, this petition bears 1 172 signatures and I certify that it conforms with the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly and I have signed it accordingly.

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

ARCHITECTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr O'Connor (Minister for Works), and read a first time.

SECURITY AGENTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR O'NEIL (East Melville—Minister for Police) [2.20 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time. The Security Agents Act, 1976, imposes an obligation on banks to disclose on demand to authorised persons particulars of each account to which a licensee under the Act had deposited any money.

In a practical sense it is sometimes impossible for the bank to perform this duty unless the authorised person nominates the accounts which he wishes to inspect. The Bill proposes to restrict this requirement to accounts so nominated.

The bank carries the normal legal obligation to maintain secrecy of clients' accounts and hence the onerous responsibility to ensure that it does not disclose particulars of any account to which the licensee had not deposited money.

The Bill makes provision for the relief of liability by the bank where it is complying with a specific demand by an authorised person.

The Act presently contains an immunity provision covering the Commissioner of Police and others discharging a duty under the Act and this Bill now seeks to include bank managers and other bank officers in this immunity.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr B. T. Burke.

CEMETERIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR RUSHTON (Dale—Minister for Local Government) [2.22 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time. The Bill seeks to amend the Cemeteries Act in respect of three principal matters. Firstly, it provides for public cemeteries to be conducted without religious denominational sections. Secondly, it proposes an increase in the maximum penalty for acts of vandalism to cemetery property, from the present \$40 to \$200; and, thirdly, it provides for the removal of the limit presently imposed in respect of various registration and search fees.

The proposal that cemetery trustees should not always be obliged to set aside sections of a cemetery for the various religious denominations was instigated by the trustees of the new Pinnaroo Valley Memorial Park Cemetery which is being established in the Wanneroo district.

The trustees are anxious to develop this cemetery in a parkland setting and believe that this concept and its overall administration would be hindered if it were necessary for burials to take place in scattered sections of the cemetery grounds.

The Pinnaroo Valley trustees also administer the Karrakatta Cemetery and have been very mindful of the need to respect the wishes of the different religious faiths.

A survey which it carried out showed that the non-denominational development of the Pinnaroo Valley Memorial Park was favoured by a majority of the religious faiths in Western Australia. The trustees have received confirmation from most faiths, including the Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Uniting Churches, that the concept is acceptable to them.

The trustees found that over 90 per cent of the burials at Karrakatta took place in either general sections or sections allocated to churches which favoured the development of Pinnaroo as a non-denominational cemetery.

The trustees have advised that adequate land is available at Karrakatta for the other religions which wish to continue using special denominational sections.

The Bill provides that cemetery trustees may decline to set aside denominational sections only if the Governor approves. This should allow adequate control to ensure that denominational sections are not unreasonably withheld from any public cemetery.

I do not think that there could be any argument with the proposed increase from \$40 to \$200 in the maximum penalty for vandalism in a cemetery. A maximum of \$40 is obviously inadequate for such a despicable act.

The Cemeteries Act presently prescribes limits of 10c and 25c for various registration and inspection fees. The Bill proposes the removal of these limits and for the fees involved to be prescribed by by-laws. Any such by-laws would, of course, be subject to approval by the Governor.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Carr.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT GRANTS BILL

Second Reading

MR RUSHTON (Dale—Minister for Local Government) [2.25 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time. The Commonwealth Local Government (Personal Income Tax Sharing) Act, which came into operation in 1976, provides for the payment to the States of funds for distribution as general purpose grants to municipal councils.

The Commonwealth legislation requires a minimum of 30 per cent of the amount allocated to each State, to be shared amongst councils on the basis of a formula, with the balance being distributed on the recommendations of a State grants body.

This State received funds under the scheme in 1976-77 and 1977-78 and in both years 80 per cent was divided amongst councils on the basis of a formula. The distribution of the remaining 20 per cent has been made in accordance with the recommendations of a committee which was formed for the purpose and which is known as the Western Australian Local Government Grants Committee.

The committee of five has comprised an independent chairman, a nominee of both the Local Government Association and the Country Shire Councils' Association, and an officer from both the Local Government Department and the Treasury Department.

The scheme has operated very satisfactorily and has generally been well accepted by councils. It has been a satisfactory demonstration of the operation of the Federal system. The Commonwealth has spelt out broad guidelines for the disbursement of the funds, but responsibility for determining allocations to individual councils rests entirely with the State.

One of the requirements, which is specified in the Commonwealth legislation, is that each State must constitute its State grants body by legislation prior to the 30th June, 1978.

This Bill provides for the establishment of a body to be known as the Western Australian local government grants commission which will have the responsibility of recommending the allocation of that portion of the Commonwealth funds which is not distributed on the formula basis.

The Bill proposes the continuation of the arrangements which have operated so successfully to the present.

It provides for the composition of the Western Australian local government grants commission to be the same as that of the present Grants Committee and provides for funds, initially at least, to be apportioned 80 per cent on a formula basis and 20 per cent on the recommendations of the Western Australian local government grants commission.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Carr.

ACTS AMENDMENT (CONSTITUTION) BILL

Second Reading

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier) [2.31 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time. This Bill and the speech I am about to make on it will have a familiar ring to members.

In the last session of Parliament a similar Bill was introduced but lapsed due to the fact that it did not obtain the required constitutional majority in the Legislative Council.

Mr Bertram: Providential intervention.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The principles espoused in this Bill are so important that the Government has decided to reintroduce the Bill as it is part of our policy statement made to the

electors for the period 1977-1980. That statement contained the following quote referring to any attempt to damage or destroy the status of the Parliament of Western Australia. I again quote from that policy statement as follows—

We will legislate to block any further attempt to damage or destroy the rights and status of the Parliament of Western Australia, without the consent of the people.

This policy stems from a series of Australian Labor Party moves culminating last year in a decision of the State A.L.P. Conference that a future Labor Government would not appoint State Governors.

Quite rightly—then and now—we have interpreted this decision as part of the long-term Labor Party goal of destroying State Parliament in the interests of centralising all Government in Canberra.

Mr Carr: Rubbish!

Sir CHARLES COURT: To continue—

We accepted the challenge at the time of the A.L.P. decision to make this an election issue.

Mr Bertram: Not much of an issue you made of it.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I am quoting from the document, which continues—

We therefore give notice that our intended legislation to block such moves without the people's consent is a policy proposal for which we seek a clear-cut mandate from electors.

Our proposed legislation will protect and preserve both Houses of our State Parliament, and with them the office of Governor.

We have reason to believe that attempts could be made to abolish either or both Houses of Parliament, reduce the numbers of the members of either House in an attempt to weaken them, or to by-pass the right of the electors at large to elect the members of either House.

Mr Pearce: You should do away with the germynder.

Sir CHARLES COURT: To continue—

We also have reason to believe that attempts could be made to alter the office of Governor, to abolish or water down the right of the Queen to appoint the Governor, to by-pass the Governor's role in giving assent to every law, or to make the Governor a rubber stamp of the Government as part of the process of undermining our State Constitution and our Parliament.

To protect Parliament—our legislation will provide that no changes of the nature mentioned, can be made concerning either House of Parliament without the approval of a majority of the State's electors at a referendum.

To protect the position of Governor—there would have to be similar approval by referendum to any Bill which would abolish or alter the office of Governor, or the Queen's sole right to appoint the Governor or issue instructions with which the Governor must comply in performing his duties, or which would alter the requirement that the Governor's assent must be given to every Bill before it becomes law. This means that unless the people agree otherwise, the Governor's role will continue exactly as it is and will be protected from political manipulation.

The major role of the Governor is to ensure that not even Parliament can exceed the authority the people give it. If Parliament does so, the Governor can send it back to the people, who have the ultimate authority. We reject the misconception fostered by the A.L.P.—that the Governor has some kind of power over the people which he should not have. In fact, he merely has constitutional authority for and on behalf of the people. This authority has never been used, but the fact that it remains in reserve is a powerful safeguard against abuse by a government of the rights of the people.

The Bill seeks to achieve three purposes. The first is to emphasise the role of Her Majesty the Queen in the Parliament of Western Australia. The second is to protect and preserve the existence of both Houses of the State Parliament and to ensure their continued role as an integral and essential part of the law-making process.

The third purpose of the Bill is to confirm by Statute the office of the role of Governor, and that appointments to the office of Governor and the instructions with which the Governor must comply in performing his duties are both made and issued by the Queen personally, as happens at present.

The Bill proposes to spell out clearly in our Constitution the fact that our Parliament consists of the Queen and the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly.

The Bill also proposes that any future Bill which would abolish either House of the Parliament, or which would reduce the numbers of members

of either House, or which would permit either House to be constituted by members not elected by the electors at large can become law only if such a Bill is passed by an absolute majority of both Houses of Parliament and is approved of by all of the electors of the State voting at a referendum.

The referendum would have to be held not less than two months and not later than six months after the passage of the relevant Bill through both Houses of Parliament. Here I would like to emphasise that this is slightly different from the wording of last year's Bill, the limiting periods being similar to those provided for Commonwealth referendums.

It will be recalled that a query was raised last time the legislation was before the House as to why there was no limit on the time during which the referendum could be held.

Mr Davies: You suggested then that a Government might not go on with the referendum.

Sir CHARLES COURT: We were queried as to why we did not have a limitation. At the time, quite frankly, I was not very concerned about it, and now I am still not; but if it does make it tidier so we are precise about the minimum and maximum times, we felt it would be wise to include the six months, particularly as it has a relativity with Commonwealth referendums.

The same procedure would also apply to any Bill which would abolish or alter the office of Governor, abolish or alter the sole right of the Queen to issue instructions to the Governor as to the performance of his duties, or alter the requirement that every Bill must be presented to the Governor for assent before it may become law.

The proposed Bill, in so far as it deals with the office, obligations, and powers of the Governor, makes no change in long-standing constitutional conventions and practices, but is intended to ensure that those long-standing conventions and practices cannot in the future be altered without the consent of a majority of the electors of the State.

A reference to the Governor includes any other person properly appointed to administer the Government or exercise any powers or authorities during his temporary absence.

When I introduced a similar Bill last year I made a particular point of emphasising the role of the Governor and it is worth repeating again.

The major role of the Governor is to ensure that not even Parliament can exceed the authority given to it by the people. If any alteration to the Parliament or any part of its operation which

affects the role of the Houses or the role of the Governor is to be contemplated, then it is only right that the people should be consulted. They are, after all, the ultimate authority for each member in these Houses of Parliament and I will mourn the day when that is no longer the case.

The principles in this Bill are simple and are designed to give the people in Western Australia stability in Government and security for the future.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Davies (Leader of the Opposition).

SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNALS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR GRAYDEN (South Perth—Minister for Labour and Industry) [2.40 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time. The Small Claims Tribunals Act came into operation in January, 1975, and the "appointed day" on which the tribunal first had jurisdiction to hear and determine claims referred to it was the 21st March, 1975.

As was expected, consumers have taken advantage of a cheap method to have justice dispensed—\$2 a claim—and over three years the number of claims lodged has increased considerably.

This, of course, was accentuated when an increase in the amount of a small claim from less than \$500 to less than \$1 000 occurred on the 12th August, 1977.

The wide variety of claims brought before the tribunals has disclosed a need to make two important amendments, one of which—an amendment to section 20—will particularly benefit consumers, and the other—an amendment to section 25—will give the tribunal the power to summon persons before it after the initial hearing has commenced, where it is considered that the evidence of such persons is relevant to the proceedings.

In respect of section 20, a typically important matter touches upon motor vehicles, but in other cases other goods as well are affected.

It is a widespread custom to purchase second-hand engines from wreckers and in some instances these are satisfactory. There are, however, cases coming before the tribunals in which absolutely unsatisfactory engines are being sold, and at high prices.

In one case a wrecker purchased two vehicles for \$150 and sold an almost useless engine from one for around \$300 to \$350.

Another example was a wrecker who sold a worthless engine for \$240. The expert evidence was that it was worth only \$40 to \$60 as scrap, its value probably being in the block.

Under the Act, the tribunal can only make an order for payment of money or for rectification of faulty goods or services. Once the property in goods has passed to the buyer, his only remedy is to claim damages. He is, however, landed with useless goods.

In the two cases cited, the buyer has to sell the useless engine, if he can find a buyer, and the tribunal can award him only the difference between the selling price and what he paid for it. A recent case in Victoria also highlighted that position.

In the two cases mentioned, it would have been very desirable to make each wrecker take the engine back and refund the purchase price, or alternatively, to provide an engine, passed as satisfactory by technical officers of the Bureau of Consumer Affairs.

In South Australia, under the Consumer Transactions Act, a consumer is entitled within a reasonable time—not exceeding seven days—after delivery of the goods, to rescind the contract for breach of condition by the supplier.

To prevent abuses, that Act provides that the purported rescission of the contract is of no effect if the goods are not returned to the supplier within a reasonable time or if they have become unmerchantable or damaged by abnormal use after delivery to the consumer.

Furthermore, a rescission can be declared invalid on the ground that it is an inappropriate remedy in the light of the nature of the goods, the conduct of the parties or the circumstances of the transaction.

The amendment to section 20 will enable a referee, in circumstances mentioned, to order the return of an engine to the wrecker and for money paid to be returned to the consumer. Protection of buyers is considered to be justified in such instances.

A further amendment to section 40 will enable forms of service of papers issued by the tribunal to be made in accordance with the Interpretation Act.

The mode of service provided in that Act is broader than that provided in section 40 of the Small Claims Tribunals Act where notice is required to be sent by pre-paid certified mail, which has considerably increased expenditure with rises in postal rates in more recent times. Other forms

of service by mail will be more economic and yet at the same time be deemed to be good service for the purposes of the Act.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Skidmore.

TOM PRICE-NANUTARRA ROAD

Petition: Speaker's Ruling

THE SPEAKER (Mr Thompson): I regret to advise that the petition presented by the member for Avon with respect to the Tom Price-Nanutarra Road does not conform with the Standing Orders and practices of the House in that—

- (a) It is not properly addressed to the House. The face sheet provided by the member does not conform with the text of the actual petition signed by the petitioners in this regard.
- (b) It is not respectful, decorous, and temperate in its language as required by Standing Order 86(f).

Mr Bryce: The boys at Tom Price will appreciate that!

The **SPEAKER**: I therefore rule the petition out of order.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: FIFTH DAY

Motion

Debate resumed, from the 21st March, on the following motion by Mr MacKinnon—

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

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

MR B. T. BURKE (Balgla) [2.46 p.m.]: I believe that this State is on the verge or the brink of perhaps one of the gravest social crises that it has had to face in its relatively short period. I am referring to the drug problem and to what appears to be the impotence of Governments throughout the world in their attempts to combat the problem and to save the terrible waste of worth and goodness that results from the addiction by members of our society to dangerous drugs.

I am not one of those members who would pause to criticise the Government for the efforts it has taken so far. I believe that so far as its

efforts have gone, they are commendable. But I do believe that the immensity of the crisis and the terrible waste it promises cannot be denied and must be seen to be urging this Government to ever-greater lengths in the preparedness of our society in treating offenders and addicts who find themselves in this terribly unfortunate position.

A short while ago it was the practice that general practitioners throughout the community were permitted to prescribe methadone as part of the methadone maintenance treatment of former heroin addicts; a practice whereby general practitioners were allowed to prescribe this drug so open to abuse. As a result, as the Minister will no doubt know, some doctors were prescribing thousands of milligrams of methadone every week to addicts who could not control their habits, to addicts who abused the system, and to addicts who forged prescriptions.

It must be recognised that general practitioners were in a difficult position under the previous practice. They are human, the same as we are, and they found it difficult to deny some desperate addict in need of an addictive drug for which he craved. It was much easier for a general practitioner to tell an addict that the prescription he was issuing would be his first and last, and to warn him not to return to that particular surgery.

Thank goodness that practice has now been discontinued to a large degree, and the limitations placed on these people to prescribe methadone are much more restrictive. However, there are a great number of other areas that cause concern and I will quote to the House a letter I received from a psychiatrist engaged in the treatment of methadone and heroin addicts. I will not advise members of the name of the person who wrote the letter but if the Minister, or any other member, wishes to know from whom the letter was received he is at liberty to ask me. The letter reads—

The situation is once again becoming out of control. Palfium tablets are being demanded by addicts for a variety of reasons, they tell me that half of the family doctors can be persuaded to give them scripts.

Local chemists inform me that many patients who are receiving Methadone at the Alcohol and Drug Clinic are also taking excessive quantities of Palfium. Two of these have asked me to treat them; they stated that they were getting between 100 and 150 tablets a day in addition to their Methadone.

Measures urgently need to be taken.

I think that letter alone illustrates quite vividly the tendency this problem has, once controlled in a certain strain, to break out in another area.

It seems to me there are several quite elementary steps that can be taken in the short term to overcome some of the practical problems in the Government's present programme. I am not proposing that these steps will cure the problem—of course they will not—but there are steps that can be taken so that the problem can be more clearly identified and more precisely attacked.

If we are to have drug traffickers in our community, let us isolate them to the best of our ability. Let us identify them clearly. Let us see who our opponents are going to be and take the strongest possible measures against those who seek to trade in the misery of others.

Among the measures which I think can be taken is, firstly, the introduction of dangerous drug prescription pads. Members will perhaps be surprised to learn that of all the methadone prescribed in our community an estimated 40 to 50 per cent is prescribed as a result of prescription forgeries; that is, prescriptions written out on prescription forms taken from pads stolen from doctors. It is an elementary step to organise the distribution of dangerous drug prescription pads to doctors who are legally able to prescribe drugs of this sort. It is necessary to prevent the theft of prescription pads, because doctors need to carry them at all times.

Mr Ridge: What you are saying is basically correct, and the Government will be taking action during this current session to legislate to overcome the problem.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I am glad to hear of the Government's intention. There are one or two other matters to which I intend to refer which might also find a place in the legislation to be introduced, if the Minister thinks they are worth while.

In addition to preventing the theft of prescription pads and the subsequent forgery of scripts for methadone, it may be necessary in some cases to request chemists to return to doctors some of the prescriptions they make out, because another of the favoured practices of addicts is to change the number of tablets the prescription allows them to receive. Quite frequently the figure 15 will be changed to 75, and instead of receiving 15 tablets the addict will walk out of the chemist's shop with five times the number of tablets the doctor thought it was advisable for him or her to receive.

Mr Ridge: I am happy to say that is another aspect of the proposed legislation. That will be dealt with also.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I am pleased that also will find a place in the proposed legislation.

Referring specifically to the Alcohol and Drug Authority, a number of criticisms can quite easily be levelled at the authority, and I suppose there will always be criticisms when an organisation is only beginning to function. However, it is my intention to draw the criticisms I have to the attention of the House, and the Minister in particular, because at least by highlighting them, even though they may already be known, they might be remedied more quickly.

The addicts seem to find the atmosphere of the Alcohol and Drug Authority to be far too impersonal. It is difficult to obtain the services of a doctor after four o'clock in the afternoon or at weekends. Now, one of the prime parts of the therapy as far as the addicts are concerned is the maintenance of the addict in employment. It is very difficult if addicts are forced to attend the Alcohol and Drug Authority during working hours and must seek the permission of employers, who often do not understand.

It has been said in the past that the authority is manned throughout the day on a 24-hour basis. That does not seem to be true. It is particularly not true as far as the availability of doctors is concerned.

It is also the case that alcoholics and drug addicts, when attending the centre, are forced to use the same waiting rooms. This might not seem to us to be improper or objectionable, but it is true that between the alcoholic and the drug addict there is a mutual feeling of disgust. I am informed it would be desirable to provide separate waiting rooms for drug addicts and alcoholics as quickly as possible.

Mr Watt: How would you label the waiting rooms?

Mr B. T. BURKE: I suppose they could be labelled with the names of the doctors, if different doctors treat different addicts; or they could be given numbers and people could be told to wait in waiting room No. 1 or No. 2.

Mr Ridge: I share your concern over these issues, but we have recently appointed a new director and a new chairman to the authority. Both of these people have some rather good ideas which we hope to be able to implement quickly.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I have no criticism of the new director and look forward to the things he will do and the changes he will make.

Another point is that on occasions several visits are necessary before methadone is prescribed. This again creates problems for the addict who is employed and has to take time off work, realising that continuation in employment

is an important part of the therapy he is being provided with by the authority and under the guidance of the authority's doctors.

A very important point concerns the rehabilitation period the addicts go through after the withdrawal symptoms have ended, or at least the worst stages of them. It seems to me the Government should be looking at a sheltered workshop where addicts, in the proper environment and atmosphere, can, we hope, overcome permanently the problem afflicting them. It seems to me that employment within sheltered workshops is not looked upon as something that stigmatises a person or makes him someone to be avoided, and that for drug addicts, just as for people suffering from one of the more debilitating diseases such as polio, a sheltered workshop is desirable for their treatment.

Mr Ridge: Are you aware of the existence of the committee associated with drugs and alcohol in industry, comprising people who liaise with employers and employees with a view to rehabilitating addicts in industry?

Mr B. T. BURKE: I am not aware of it.

Mr Ridge: It is a good committee. It is chaired by Mr Bluck.

Mr B. T. BURKE: Another matter I draw to the Minister's attention is the end use of the alcoholics' centre at Kelmscott. I wonder whether it could be adapted to cater for the treatment of addicts, if it is not being used properly or to its full capacity in the treatment of alcoholics.

I also wish to emphasise the point that often-times addicts are given quite large doses of methadone which are to be consumed when they are given on the premises of the Alcohol and Drug Authority, and the addicts are then left to find their own way home. All members will realise that large quantities of this drug can severely impair a person's ability to manage for himself or herself. I am informed that leaving the addict to find his or her way home often results in a serious accident and injury to the addict as a result of the accident.

A matter associated but not strictly concerned with the Alcohol and Drug Authority is the alarming increase I have noticed in the area in which I work in the sniffing of methyl benzene, which is an additive used in fuel for racing cars and similar high-performance engines. At the present time the sale of methyl benzene is unrestricted in this State, and it is possible for people who are addicted to sniffing the liquid to have drink bottles filled with it at garages, for example,

and then to walk around the streets sniffing it. Two or three instances of that have been drawn to my attention.

In other States restrictions have been introduced on the sale of methyl benzene, and before the problem arises here too vividly I think we should be looking at similar legislation or regulations to prevent the widespread use of methyl benzene.

It is difficult to become anything but blasé about the drug problem because everybody reads about it, everybody hears of other Governments' failures, of other Governments' efforts to control the problem. It seems from the American experience that the only way in which drug addiction is successfully combated is for the counter-culture that eventually develops as a result of people dying from overdoses to finally find currency amongst addicts, warning addicts themselves that the practice is an unhealthy, undesirable, and quite a dangerous one. At the same time I would not at all mind a system which forced members of this House to spend one week each working at the Alcohol and Drug Authority to see the misery and the terrible waste of sometimes quite excellent people caught in the grip of something they cannot control, caught in the grip of something that is going to destroy them, destroy their families, and bring so much misery.

It is a terrible, heartbreaking problem, and I believe members have an obligation to familiarise themselves as much as possible with it. It will not go away by pretending it does not exist, and it will certainly increase far more than it would otherwise unless we take some sort of sensible, sympathetic, and compassionate steps to assist those people who are addicted and those regarded as being in the danger area in terms of their age and situation.

Mr Hassell: Do you support the relieving of penalties for the use of drugs?

Mr B. T. BURKE: I am not prepared to say what I think about penalties for the use of drugs because it is much too complex when we commence talking about use. However, if the honourable member is talking about the penalties imposed on people who traffic in drugs, then I will admit in times gone past I always thought we should be perhaps more sympathetic than harsh; it is easy to be harsh. I am not afraid to say that I have now changed my mind. As far as I am concerned, I do not believe the penalties provided for drug trafficking are too harsh at all.

Another matter I want to touch upon is the pay-as-you-use water charging system. Previously the Opposition has said that the concept of a

pay-as-you-use system, a system that more precisely assigns the responsibility for paying for water to those who actually use it, is a desirable thing, especially at times when we have such a severe water crisis as we have now. However, at the same time there are one or two points that need to be drawn to the Minister's attention to be sure that the pay-as-you-use system does not turn into an excuse for higher water rates across the broad mass of the community.

Firstly, the Opposition believes there should be some sort of per unit cost imposed on those who use the water, according to the use to which the water is put. We believe people who use water for domestic purposes should not be charged as much for the water as those who use it in processes from which they make money; in other words, for commercial processes. That principle is reflected in the different tariff rates charged for electricity. At the same time, we must bear in mind that some families have many more members within their confines than do others and it seems unfair to penalise a family where there are five or six children simply because that family uses more water to do the same things as families where there are fewer children. So the Opposition says that these matters should be paid attention.

We note also that many highly rated areas are not big users of water; the city block is an example of that. While we talk of the per unit cost as one means of overcoming the disparity in the usage and cost of water, it may also be necessary to exempt certain areas from the pay-as-you-use scheme. For example, it may be necessary to exempt from that scheme the city block, or perhaps we should work out some form of charging that allows the recurrent capital cost of the facilities which enable the water to be connected to properties to be covered. In many city blocks I believe water is used only for toilet purposes, but then the capital cost on the connection may be higher. That may be one factor to help overcome the problem, but it may be necessary to lift such consumers out of the pay-as-you-use scheme.

Mr O'Connor: A large organization in one city block uses something like 60 000 gallons a day, on air conditioning, which surprises me.

Mr B. T. BURKE: In conclusion on that subject I would just say that any system which encourages people to think that because they are rated a certain amount for a certain quantity of water they are able to use within the scope of that rating system, then they should use that water, is a system that has a great many faults. These faults are most exaggerated at times of scarcity of water.

The next matter upon which I wish to touch is the State Housing Commission, and I will refer firstly to a matter raised by the Minister when he said that he wished people would stop passing about rumours in regard to the commission. There have been rumours about interest rates, rents, and changes in the policy of the State Housing Commission. It is all very well to say that people should not pass about these rumours, but everybody knows a new agreement is being negotiated and that the new agreement will be ratified shortly in Tasmania. Everybody knows also that the agreement will result in changes. So it is unfair to expect people so directly concerned not to wonder what will happen in regard to such an important payment as the rent they are paying for their houses, the interest rate they are being charged on their mortgages, the cost of maintenance that needs to be undertaken on their houses, or the housing and accommodation their family needs or will need in the future. These are areas of major concern for most people, and it is natural for people to wonder and speculate about them. The surest way to cure the speculation is for the Minister to clear the air and to report on the progress in discussions made about the new agreement.

Mr O'Connor: I have answers to questions you asked today that indicate there are no major changes.

Mr B. T. BURKE: In particular, the things that seem to be causing concern are firstly whether or not the 1945 Chifley housing agreement principles are to be scrapped in the new agreement. On the question of market rentals, we need to know also whether there is to be a revision of the rebate system because if there is not, then the question of market rentals, which in many ways is a very desirable concept, can find no fairness in its application.

If the present rebate system persists, then the adjustment of rents to market rents will result in great inequities. Of course this is one area where rumours flourish when we talk of the elevation of rents from \$32 to \$35 a week up to \$45 a week, because we are talking of the deprivation of a large percentage of the income of many people.

We need also to clarify the different policy that may result in regard to rental and purchase houses. We know in the past Federal Governments have promoted rental housing as the first priority of State authorities and have advised State authorities not to put their money into the production of additional purchase homes. If that is still the situation, will it result in the embodiment of a new idea within the agreement? That

is something about which there is speculation because many people are on the waiting lists of the State Housing Commission for purchase homes.

We need to know also whether those people waiting now will receive any priority if the system of purchase home provision by the Housing Commission is transferred from the commission to terminating building societies or other agencies. We need to know this so we can assure people who have waited for many years that their priority will be maintained.

We need to know also about the future of interest rates as they affect mortgages arranged under the terms of the Housing Commission with its co-operation through terminating building societies. Is it true, as this Government in the Federal sphere has previously said, that the Housing Commission should be using money 1 per cent below the interest rate of the long-term bond rate?

If that is true, how is that interest rate to be attained? Is it to be attained with one massive impost, or will it be imposed gradually upon these people who currently and in the future have obtained funds from the State Housing Commission?

It is questions such as these that are causing the rumours which are concerning the Minister. All of those things, if clarified by the Minister in some sort of public report, will result in the killing of the rumours that are causing him concern.

The other matter I wish to touch on is the question of interest rates, the question of the harshness of the Federal Government's monetary policy, and the failure of this Government to relieve that harshness as it falls upon members of our community. There has been nothing more criminal in the past few days than to see Alan Bond explain to the world that he sold 7 000 hectares of Western Australia to the Japanese because the structure of our interest rates prevents him from developing properly the resort for the benefit, presumably, of himself in the first instance, and of Western Australia perhaps in the second.

Mr O'Connor: You accept his view as being accurate?

Mr B. T. BURKE: Well, I will develop that a little later. I accept that it is his view, and I accept that is the reason he gives for having quit the property. It may be that his company was geared to an extent that did not allow it to proceed; I do not know. However, I repeat that it is scandalous that 7 000 hectares of our State has been sold to the Japanese by a man who says that our interest rates are such that they prevent him from maintaining his interest in the property.

I am not a great supporter of Alan Bond, and most members in the House would know that I am not likely to be a supporter of his in the future—

Mr Rushton: You don't know much about commerce, either.

Mr B. T. BURKE: —but certainly it seems very clear that the interest rate structure he blames is the interest rate structure incorporated in the Federal Government's fiscal policy, and that policy is one which is taking the country to the verge of credit squeezes and to the verge of crises; there is no doubt about that. There is a very great danger that always exists in areas like this in following the thin red line between a credit squeeze and the dampening down of inflation. This is a very real worry, and I believe it is something the Federal Government has failed to realise and failed to note in its fiscal policies.

In fact, it seems very clear that the present Federal Government and the State Government which supports it have lost control of the country's economy. We had the pitiful spectacle of our Premier running to building societies and asking them to reduce their interest rates when the societies were being inundated by people wanting to borrow money. By his own philosophy he must realise how silly that is. Members opposite talk about supply and demand and try to impose on one small sector of the money market arbitrary decisions on interest rates, which cannot be done.

As a result of that impossibility, we have seen first of all banks applying reductions in interest rates very selectively. We have seen building societies applying them in stages. We have seen building societies with money held in long-term investments and long-term securities being forced to provide short-term concessions. By the very philosophy and principles of members opposite, this cannot happen; they cannot impose on the supply and demand situation the arbitrary decision on interest rates.

However, of course, it is politically advisable to do so, and that is what happened on that occasion. That is why some people are not being given their reduction in interest rates until August or even later, and it is the reason that people are having the terms of their mortgages reduced automatically rather than being asked whether they want the same term of repayment and a lower rate of repayment. That cannot be done, and that points up what has happened in this country. The Federal Government has completely lost the power to set the lead as far as the reduction of interest rates is concerned.

The gross investment, and excessive investment in many ways and in many areas, from overseas has resulted in the finance conference reading the Riot Act to the Federal Government. It has warned the Federal Government, as was exemplified after the last 0.5 per cent reduction in interest rates, of the great repatriation in funds that would occur after the Federal Government forced the interest rate down lower; and, of course, it warned that the compounding effect of the withdrawal of those funds and their repatriation would increase unemployment and result in stagnation and economic crises. That is why the Federal Government will not lower interest rates, because it has not got the power to stand up against those people who will say that again in that area we will lose by the repatriation of such massive millions of dollars that the economy will shudder to a standstill, and that unemployment which is now so bad will be even worse.

The Premier knows if he maintains any sort of advice about the economic changes and the situation of the great repatriation of funds that followed the decrease of 0.5 per cent in interest rates quite recently, that millions of dollars left the country.

Sir Charles Court: I am afraid you are being very naive in your assessment of the money market, and you have not gone back to the base. Why did they go up, and who put them up? Who built this figure into the Australian money market, which the Federal Government is now committed to reduce? The Whitlam Government.

Mr B. T. BURKE: That sort of argument prompts me to say that the Premier is the man who promised to bring down interest rates.

Sir Charles Court: They are coming down.

Mr B. T. BURKE: But he cannot bring them down, and he knows as well as I do that the present Federal Government is impotent as far as interest rates are concerned. Of course he cannot bring down interest rates.

Sir Charles Court: They have come down more than 0.5 per cent.

Mr B. T. BURKE: The area on which I wish to concentrate my remarks is the area of the State Government's responsibility. Certainly it is not responsible for making up and enforcing the fiscal policies of the nation, but it certainly is responsible for action to alleviate the harshness of interest rates and the harshness of this very regressive national fiscal policy. This State Government has done nothing whatsoever to relieve

the plight of people who face such massive burdens and who reside in the electorates represented mostly by members opposite.

The State Government has done nothing about struggling home owners who have been faced with massive hikes in their interest bills. It has done nothing about prospective home owners who are unable to arrange finance to build or buy the home they have dreamed of for so long. In fact, it is becoming very evident from the State Government's own domain or backyard that it cares little, because while these things are going on in the private sector the Government is allowing people on the lists of the State Housing Commission to borrow finance at an interest rate of up to 17 per cent to purchase the homes for which they have waited for six or seven years.

It is just not on that any State Government can say that its housing authority is in the business of financing home building using money borrowed at 17 per cent. We are going back to the days of usury; to the days of the Merchant of Venice; to the Shylocks; and the pity of it is that we are going back to those days at the instigation of a State Government that is supposed, through the State Housing Commission, to provide housing for low-income families on terms they can afford.

The Government is not doing that; in fact it is ensuring that one out of two applicants for State Housing Commission assistance either rejects or defers his application because he cannot afford to take up the offer made to him. He cannot afford to take up the offer because, firstly, the second mortgage finance—if he can get it—is made available at 17 per cent; and, secondly, the amount of the deposit he is required to find has escalated from 5 or 6 per cent to 15 or 16 per cent of the total purchase price of the home.

So if we are worrying about the Government's taking amelioratory action in the private sector, then we are flying kites in dull breezes because the Government in its own backyard is allowing this situation to go on. It is not an acceptable situation to the Opposition, and I suspect it is not acceptable to the Minister and the Premier.

I urge the Government immediately to undertake the investigation and the provision of supplementary sources of second mortgage finance, perhaps by the Housing Commission or, as the Premier said in answer to a question yesterday, if it can be done more efficiently, by someone else. But for God's sake let us do it. People who have waited five and six years and are then being told they no longer have the right to purchase houses for which they have waited so long are being absolutely destroyed. Members opposite are always talking about the fabric of the

community. One of the certain ways to destroy the fabric of the community is to take away from unemployed people their prospects of obtaining a home.

Another matter that draws criticism from the Opposition as far as this Government's refusal to take action to alleviate the harshness of interest rate rises and the restrictive monetary policy is concerned, is the question of the mortgage bank. This is a matter that we brought up and canvassed in this House on four or five occasions. It is a matter that until now the Government has apparently not seen fit to give attention to.

I am pleased indeed that the Government is starting to talk about investigating a national mortgage market and a national mortgage bank; but, of course, it is then finding very ready excuses about differences in mortgage documents. The Opposition is talking about a State mortgage bank and a State mortgage market. We are talking about smoothing out the bumps in the cyclical lending programmes of building societies.

We are talking about building societies being caught short, and about the need from time to time for Governments to inject massive amounts of money into the building society system. But this Government has done nothing about the mortgage bank, and nothing about the mortgage market of which we have spoken time and time again in this House. Let us see some action in this direction.

Mr O'Connor: Have you thought about where the additional money will come from for this bank?

Mr B. T. BURKE: Without going into a long harangue about a mortgage bank, let me say with an initial injection of funds and the subsequent trading between societies, which could both buy and sell mortgages from the bank, the drain on the initial injection of funds which would result from this trading should not be excessive. But the Minister is talking only about the initial input of funds, the size of which I do not think would need to be excessive. However, even if it were we would be justified by the end result which would be lower interest rates, because building societies could manage their programmes much easier. We are not talking about buying mortgages from societies; we are talking about a bank which redeems them and, perhaps, sells them to other societies.

Another matter the Labor Party has canvassed is the way in which building societies can be helped to overcome the limitations placed on them by the Income Tax Act—the limitations which, if they are obeyed, result in societies retaining their favoured tax status. We have ex-

plained to this Government time and time again that it is possible for the Government to establish some sort of investment fund which complies with the requirements of the Act but which also allows the societies to recover at least the cost of carrying funds which they find necessary to keep in liquid assets.

Still the Government has done nothing in that direction; the harshness and the burdens continue, and they are very real burdens. People are finding that the part of their income they must devote to housing costs is assuming a very major part of their disposable income. This is a matter which has been raised previously in the House. This Government has a responsibility to act in this direction but in the two years I have been referring to the problem the Government has not seen fit to act.

I wish also to discuss the harsh effects of this restrictive monetary policy on certain sectors of industry. I instance the construction industry, and the escalation of unemployment that has occurred there. As a result of the tightfisted policies of the Federal Government being reflected through that sector of the economy which always seems to exhibit first the signs of a slide, unemployment within the construction industry has grown from 178 adult males in 1973, 864 in 1974, 776 in 1975, 932 in 1976, and 1367 in 1977. That represents a massive dislocation within the industry, a massive redeployment of resources that will not be easily grasped again should we return to any sort of level of prosperity.

The number of approvals for new dwellings in 1974-75 was 9 652; in 1975-76 it rose to 11 425; in 1976-77, approvals ran at 11 343; however, in 1977-78, approvals fell by nearly 2 000 to 9 413. These compounding sorts of effects are a result of the harsh policy of the Federal Government and of the failure of this State Government to act in its area of responsibility to relieve the harshness of the measures about which I have already spoken.

There has also been a decrease in the advances by savings banks to people wishing to purchase their homes. In 1976-77, \$167.2 million was advanced, while in 1977-78, only \$152.2 million was forthcoming. In real terms, that represents a dramatic fall; even in money terms, it is a decrease of \$15 million in funds made available by banks for the building of houses over the past year.

I have already referred briefly to savings bank deposits and I repeat there has been a considerable increase in the amount of money people are holding in savings, from \$608.1 million in 1972-73 to \$960.5 million in 1977-78.

This Government constantly trumpets about confidence, but those figures do not reflect confidence in anything except the continuation of this stagflation and the crisis in the building industry.

In all of these areas we are able to see that the harsh monetary policies of the Federal Government are being reflected in Western Australia and are not being countered by this Government.

Mr O'Connor: Are they being countered by other State Governments?

Mr B. T. BURKE: I am not aware that they are but I would not absolve my own responsibility by saying someone else has fallen down on the job.

There are things that this State Government can do. The Premier well knows that with a sympathetic and compassionate approach to this very vital area and with the promotion of home ownership to the front ranks of our economic concerns, we can relieve these burdens. Yet nothing is being done. We are still dilly-dallying with the question of a national mortgage market and seeing the problems which arise there.

Sir Charles Court: How is that going to get the interest rates down? You should look at the mechanism of it.

Mr B. T. BURKE: In the brief time which is remaining to me I will explain it to the Premier, if he cares to listen. The way it is going to get interest rates down is by allowing these societies more confidently and certainly to predict the future and to accommodate the drain which will be made on their resources. For example, it will allow societies to even out their lending programmes and to spread their fixed costs over a much wider range of mortgages.

Sir Charles Court: It sounds very pretty, but in practice, of course, it will not have the effect you think. We have told the building societies the very point you are making. When we negotiated the 0.5 per cent reduction I undertook that we would do what we have done this week.

Mr B. T. BURKE: It is strange that the mortgage bank as proposed will not do these things, yet we have the Building Societies Association and the Chairman of the Perth Building Society calling for the establishment of such a facility.

Sir Charles Court: I am not opposing the establishment of a mortgage bank but I am saying that you should not think it is the panacea that is going to lead to lower interest rates. It is the mechanism of the money market that will do that.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I am not saying that but I am saying we have been suggesting it for 2½ years, and today the Premier has finally said,

"I am not saying we are not going to do it."

Sir Charles Court: This is nothing new; we have been looking at this.

Mr Bertram: It is a pretty slow look!

Mr B. T. BURKE: It certainly is not anything new; it has had currency in this Parliament for a continued period of time and only now are even the most preliminary sorts of statements being made about the matter. It should have been established years ago; the Premier's Government has fallen down on the job by not implementing it earlier.

Amendment to Motion

I wish to conclude by moving the following amendment—

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

but we beg to inform your Excellency that your Government is deserving of censure for failing to relieve the burden imposed on the people of Western Australia—particularly home owners and prospective home owners—by harsh monetary policy and high interest rates.

MR PEARCE (Gosnells) [3.30 p.m.]: I am pleased to second and support the amendment as I believe it is a very significant and serious one. In my own Address-in-Reply speech I spoke about the pressures that were being experienced by the housing industry and the resultant lack of employment and the high cost of loans. To illustrate that the interest rates are indeed a burden on people I merely draw to the attention of the House how much a component of housing costs interest rates actually are.

It will not be news to members that building costs generally are rising at something over double the rate of general inflation, and this at a time when inflation has been around 12 per cent per annum. Building costs have been increasing at something over 25 per cent. The Government itself has raised these figures to defend its inability to find funds for building construction.

If one looks at the situation one realises that housing costs increase by a much greater proportion—a geometric rather than a direct progression—and the total overall costs of houses increase also. I give my own case as an indication of this. I borrowed \$17 200 to construct my house. I borrowed that money at the low rate of 7½ per cent from a local building society. That was the current interest rate at that time—1973.

Mr Laurance: Did you have to take out a share?

Mr PEARCE: I was depositing with that particular building society.

Mr Laurance: You don't have to own a share in a building society?

Mr PEARCE: It depends on the society. In this case I owned a share in one society and I had savings with another. I took the loan from the one in which I had my savings invested.

Mr Laurance: Did you pay a dividend?

Mr PEARCE: The dividend does not relate to my loan. It does in some cases; it is on a separate balance sheet again.

Mr Laurance: I wondered what you did with the investment.

Mr PEARCE: I do not see the proceeds for 10 years. It is interesting in that building societies have their own systems of shares, and of the allocation of loans and other things as they are competing with one another in a superficial way for existing funds. Someone might want to put funds into one building society rather than another and that has an effect on interest rates.

Mr Laurance: Owning your own home and having shares in a building society indicate you are becoming close to a capitalist.

Mr PEARCE: No. From the honourable member's idea of a Chinese communist the other night I thought he was becoming a communist.

Mr Blaikie: The member for Gascoyne mentioned this four years ago.

Mr PEARCE: I borrowed \$17 200 with monthly repayments of \$176 allowing for fluctuations. If I had to pay the whole rate of \$176 a month for the 30-year period I would pay in all \$63 360; that is for a house I paid about \$17 000 for. That is excessive.

Mr O'Connor: Plus rates, taxes and insurance.

Mr PEARCE: Yes, and all the other burdens. I do not know why the Minister for Housing is laughing because money charges are levied on the home owner by the Government. I was almost bankrupt because at the time I was a poor struggling teacher. These charges are still levied at a time when people cannot really afford to pay them. This is a harsh policy and it is what this amendment is about.

Mr Rushton: How much would a lease have been?

Mr PEARCE: If I had paid a high interest rate to buy the house and then subsequently rented or leased it to someone else, I would have had to take back more in rent, etc. to cover the amount borrowed for the original investment. High interest rates increase the burden on people buying their own homes and on people renting.

Mr Rushton: Gough Whitlam forced interest rates up and that created the situation.

Mr PEARCE: It is too simple to say Gough Whitlam forced interest rates up, but there is no denying interest rates did rise sharply when he was Prime Minister. As the member for Balcatta has said, interest rates were going up and the Premier, the then Leader of the Opposition, said the situation was reversible on a State by State basis. He now says even the national mortgage bank could not achieve the aims of the member for Balcatta.

The Minister for Housing asks where the money is to come from to effect a reduction in interest rates. He should ask the Premier who said four years ago that this could be achieved State by State. We are asking the House to do something about this today. We are asking the Government to bring down interest rates in this State. If the Government did this the Opposition would be happy.

I am thankful to the Minister for Local Government and others who have pointed out the considerable ramifications of high interest rates on housing costs and other areas of the economy. High interest rates affect a number of things, not merely home ownership. On the question of these ramifications, I believe if interest rates are not to be brought down significantly people will be paying $3\frac{1}{2}$ times the value of the original loan they take out. So for a house that is perhaps worth \$20 000 someone will end up paying \$70 000, which is \$50 000 wasted as far as they are concerned. It is \$50 000 that could be used more productively.

We have the Government talking about production, but it is prepared to go along with the system whereby all that money virtually is left unproductive or, more charitably, where it takes \$50 000 or \$70 000 to produce \$20 000 in advance. That is not productivity.

Dr Dadour: Rubbish!

Mr PEARCE: What is rubbish?

Dr Dadour: Look who is talking about productivity.

Mr PEARCE: Productivity is often spoken of from the Government's side of the Chamber and the honourable member is one who is continually speaking of the need to be productive. Can the honourable member tell me that using \$70 000 over a period to produce \$20 000 worth of goods is being sufficiently productive? Of course he could not. We would be in agreement on this: If interest rates were much lower we would have more efficient productivity.

Mr O'Connor: When did you take out your loan?

Mr PEARCE: At the end of 1973 and that is why in one sense the absolute figure of \$63 360 is not completely accurate because over that time I would have paid off some of the loan at a lower rate. However, in rough terms, it can be considered that the final figure is $3\frac{1}{2}$ times the amount of the original loan.

Mr Rushton: You are paying it off with cheaper money. The money you received is cheaper because of inflation. That is part of the total package.

Mr PEARCE: High inflation in that sense is useful because it bumps up the value of a person's property. It is not part of the total package, but it is part of the total pattern. This is what the Premier complained about in an earlier interjection. Perhaps the Premier would have been more honest if he had told people four years ago that he did not know how to correct the present situation. It is a difficult problem and this is what State and Federal Governments are finding at the moment. It is hard to bring interest rates down just by dropping interest rates on Government bonds. This has been a mechanism to raise or lower interest rates in the past. Everyone else tries to compete with this move, but it is not one that works well when attempting to lower interest rates, because if the Government drops its bond rate people invest in private building societies and elsewhere because of the higher interest rates.

What the Federal and State Governments have discovered I feel sure is that they cannot bring down interest rates simply by using an economic mechanism like that. What is required is heavy lobbying with the building societies, which the Government does not appear to bring off in any significant way—I do not consider an 0.5 per cent reduction to be particularly significant—or legislative action to limit the amount of interest which building societies and other lending institutions can charge. If we have a system where multifarious institutions are competing for the same amount of available funds, obviously they try to go higher than each other. What must be done is a level must be set beyond which none of them may go. This would be a ceiling up to which they could attempt to out-bid each other. Of course, we would have to be realistic and the system would have to be flexible to a certain extent. However, the amount would have to be well below 10 per cent or even 8 per cent. It would certainly have to be a lot lower than it is at present.

To digress for a moment, if we are considering fixed charges, we must realise that they get them not by the overall total interest rate but the differential between the interest rate they charge the borrowers and the interest rate they pay to the lenders. Provided they are able to adjust that differential to cover their own fixed and operating costs there is no reason a ceiling could not be put legislatively on interest rates charged by building societies and other lending institutions. That is an option available to the Government, but which it has not attempted in any way to use or exploit.

The net result of it all is that the building industry at the moment is in the doldrums. Housing costs are high and, as they increase, the amount of deposit an ordinary person has to raise before he is in a position even to negotiate for a loan also increases. What is happening is that more and more people are finding themselves unable to negotiate for a loan because they cannot raise even the 10 per cent deposit. This is certainly true in regard to all those who for many years have been on the waiting list to buy a SHC purchase home.

Because of the monetary policies of the Federal Fraser Government we are in a situation where real wages are effectively declining. This makes it even more difficult for anyone to save a deposit. With the deposits escalating people are often illegally borrowing money separately for a deposit thus putting a crippling burden on themselves. I could deal with this aspect at great length because I have heard so many complaints from those in financial trouble as a result of this action, but I understand that one of my colleagues will deal with that point in detail so I will not do so.

As people cannot afford to buy houses, others cannot afford to build. No-one can afford to build if there is no purchaser for the home. If a builder does construct a house it will remain empty waiting for a purchaser and the person who built it will have his money tied up at 12 per cent or more during that time. So the building of spec homes has decreased. Members will be aware of the fact that in the past by building spec homes some builders have cushioned themselves during the downturn periods in the building industry.

A recent survey I conducted demonstrated that some 21 per cent of my electorate—a developing outer area—is in some way or another involved in the building industry, either by being directly involved or by being married to someone involved.

That is a big percentage of the residents of one group of suburbs to be involved in one particular industry.

When we have a downturn in the building industry, as we have now, the incomes involved are constricted. All the small businesses and shops consequently suffer because there is not as much money around in the community. I suppose that is true of any area which is particularly dependent on one industry and that industry suffers a downturn. Everyone suffers even if only indirectly involved. Country members will understand this because the effect is magnified and clearly noticeable in small country towns. However, the same situation applies in the metropolitan area when the building industry plays a significant part in the community, as it does in my electorate.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.06 p.m.

Mr PEARCE: In conclusion, this area of housing is an area in which the Government does not have a good record, an area in which it is extremely vulnerable, I would suggest both economically and in terms of public opinion. Four years ago, when running for the election, the Liberal Party told us that interest rates could be brought down in this State. I think that statement was at least half true. I believe interest rates can be brought down, but it was untrue to suggest that the people who could do it would be Liberal Party members. In the four years of labouring to bring down interest rates—and they have laboured mightily, so they tell us—the total decrease is the 0.5 per cent we have been told is to come about. If we do see this reduction in the interest rate, is has come about not by the efforts of this Government, but through costly consultation with the Federal Government as well.

Something is needed; some definite action is needed to break the whole package or the whole spiral of increases in this area. Something must be done because the burden on the ordinary person is too great to bear. This burden is borne not only in the week-by-week and month-by-month rental and mortgage payments, but also because the payments are grossly inflated by the massive interest component. Over the lifetime of an average person, he will pay something like \$50 000 or \$60 000 in interest on his mortgage. Surely members of the House cannot stand by idly while they watch the ramifications and implications of this on the whole economy of our State, the implications on unemployment and on industry and business, as well as the implications on the whole spectrum of our economy.

In the four years this State Government has been in office, the mortgage rate has been brought down 0.5 per cent. Does that mean that in eight years it may be down 1.5 per cent, and in 10 years, it may be down to a mere 10 per cent?

Mr Spriggs: I am glad you accept it.

Mr PEARCE: I certainly do not accept that, except, if I could make a prediction, I would suggest it is likely to happen only if the Government benches continue to be occupied by the people who sit in front of the member for Darling Range. I believe a constructive and positive approach needs to be taken to these problems. After four years of operation we must see that the people who can take this approach are not the people presently occupying the Government benches.

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Minister for Housing) [4.08 p.m.]: In rising to reply to this amendment, I find I have very little to reply to. I will comment initially on the early points raised by the member for Balcatta. He spoke firstly about drugs, and I am sure the Government totally agrees with him. We are as concerned as are members of the Opposition with this problem, and we have been concerned about it for a considerable period of time.

The member for Balcatta mentioned briefly certain aspects of the pay-as-you-use water system. I can assure him that the aspects he mentioned have been considered, and it is not as easy as some people think it is to implement such a system in a way that will assist the average householder. I am quite sure the member for Balcatta has done his homework and that he realises this fact. The board has put a considerable amount of time and effort into this matter and we intend to come back fairly quickly with the answers.

Mr Jamieson: Nearly every State has had a Royal Commission into this.

Several members interjected.

Mr O'CONNOR: We can use the reports of the other States. The member for Rockingham said that I was not speaking to the amendment, but I thought other issues raised by the member for Balcatta were probably more important than the actual amendment. This is not because the issues raised by the member in regard to housing do not concern me, but rather that the amendment really criticises the Federal Government and private enterprise in regard to housing.

Mr B. T. Burke: That is not what the amendment said.

Mr O'CONNOR: I have the amendment here, and what I say is correct.

Mr B. T. Burke: The amendment refers to "relieving the effects of".

Mr O'CONNOR: But those effects have been brought about, not by actions of this Government, but through the actions of others.

The rising interest rate was brought about by action taken by the Whitlam Government as an anti-inflationary measure, and it did not work. Unfortunately that Government stuck by its action and the situation continued. We must bear in mind that some building societies have borrowed money for a period of 12 months at a set rate, and if the societies are forced to drop their interest rates immediately, it can cause many problems. We could take the case of an elderly widow who relies on the interest from her building society deposits as her sole income. A person such as this would be affected immediately the interest rates were dropped. While we are anxious to have a decrease in the interest rate, and there have been comments about a drop of 2 per cent, this Government supported the request to drop the interest rate initially by 0.5 per cent. The Premier and I held discussions with the building societies some weeks ago—

Mr Bertram: Was there any correspondence?

Mr O'CONNOR: The honourable member can talk to representatives of the building societies. We requested that they bring their rates down and they have complied with our request. This was not a secret meeting. The Premier and I invited representatives of all building societies to attend, and we requested a reduction in the interest rate. Agreement was reached, but the societies indicated that they would have some other problems.

This is an urgent matter, and one of great gravity as far as the Government is concerned. Today we have heard two Opposition speakers on the amendment—the member for Balcatta and the member for Gosnells. In many ways the comments of these two members conflicted, and I will explain my statement to the House in a minute.

Looking through this amendment, I believe that the Opposition has altered its priorities. The member for Balcatta complained about a 17 per cent interest rate, and I would complain about such an interest rate also. When I heard about the rates applying to second mortgage loans—and this was about six weeks ago—I contacted Mr Brotherson, who is the State Housing Commission officer in charge of building society finance. I requested that he contact the building societies

to find out which societies were charging that rate. As far as we can determine, no building society is charging 17 per cent.

Mr B. T. Burke: Can I just interrupt for one moment? Do you know this has been going on now for 18 months, not just six weeks, and these are private finance companies having to advance the money?

Mr O'CONNOR: I know that the private finance companies are doing this. If I may be allowed to continue, the money that goes from the Housing Commission through the building societies or the home builders' account is lent at 5½ per cent. We lend on a house up to the value of \$29 000, and I wish to quote some specific instances so members can understand what is involved.

On a house valued at \$29 000, we lend up to \$24 500 at 5½ per cent, leaving a balance of \$4 500.

Mr B. T. Burke: Some of them cost more than \$29 000.

Mr O'CONNOR: I am referring to what happens in the State Housing Commission. Unless a borrower has a much higher deposit, we will lend money only on a house up to the value of \$29 000, and we require a 5 per cent deposit; that is, \$1 500. We will lend a maximum of \$24 500, so that leaves a balance of \$3 000; in other words, an individual would be required to borrow another \$3 000. If he borrowed that amount at 17 per cent interest, and the balance from us at the 5½ per cent which we allow through the building societies, his total interest rate over the whole period would be 6.98 per cent. Many people here would be very happy with that interest rate. The member for Gosnells mentioned that in his area where he borrowed \$17 000, that amounted to \$63 000 over a 30-year period. If he had obtained the money from the State Housing Commission, plus the loan at 17 per cent, it would have saved him \$15 000 to \$20 000. I might add that at the time he borrowed his money, his Government was in power.

Mr Pearce: And the interest rate was 7.7 per cent.

Mr B. T. Burke: But the second mortgage money does not run for the whole period of the commission loan; it runs for only four years.

Mr O'CONNOR: Correct; I am talking about the total period, but in the case referred to by the member for Balcatta the interest rate would be even less than 6.98 per cent.

Mr B. T. Burke: Yes, but for the first five years, many people are paying in excess of \$200 a month.

Mr O'CONNOR: I think it is reasonable that individuals purchasing homes should have an adequate deposit. Frankly, the State Housing Commission is concerned not only with people wishing to purchase homes but also with those who rent homes because they do not have the money for a deposit. I am sure that most members would like to get a loan at a total rate of 6.98 per cent.

Mr B. T. Burke: Where does the normal deposit of \$1 500 come from?

Mr O'CONNOR: They must be expected to save something, surely.

Mr B. T. Burke: I agree, but in effect the deposit is \$4 500. You are talking about a normal deposit of \$1 500.

Mr O'CONNOR: Is the member for Balcatta suggesting that people borrow their total deposit?

Mr B. T. Burke: I am suggesting some people have only \$800 or \$900.

Mr O'CONNOR: In such cases, their applications generally are not accepted because of insufficient deposit. If a person has no deposit and wishes to borrow the entire amount, he will get into trouble. I am talking about a normal case. I guarantee the member for Balcatta that if I put out money at 6.98 per cent tomorrow, I would be flooded with applications.

As I say, the member for Gosnells borrowed his money at a much worse rate than that which applies today, and he borrowed it during the term of a Labor Government.

I also point out that this Government, in conjunction with the Federal Government, has increased the money which goes into the home builders' account. In other words, by the end of next year, the funds we receive from the Commonwealth and place in the home builders' account will increase to 40 per cent which, once again, will assist the individuals.

Mr B. T. Burke: But that will simply be a reallocation, where you take money away from the commission to give it to the terminating building societies.

Mr O'CONNOR: Let me complete the point I was making regarding purchase homes.

Mr O'Neil: The honourable member has forgotten that the Federal Minister for Housing at the time (Mr Les Johnson) said that the commission should not build any purchase homes at all.

Mr B. T. Burke: The Minister in this place was not very far from that proposition, either.

Mr O'CONNOR: In recent weeks, the Government, through the Treasury and the Education Department, has been able to put \$5 million into the SHC for additional houses. This indicates the Government is concerned and is trying to do everything it can to assist individuals. We are concerned about unemployment and we are trying to do all we can to cope with the situation.

On top of that, we are putting a further \$15 million of short-term money into the permanent building societies in order to stimulate the building industry and create employment. I believe these are real contributions by the Government, which members cannot deny must improve the

The member for Balcatta mentioned the reposition generally.

jection rate of people seeking loans as something like one in three. But what does that mean? A bald statement as such does not have any bearing on the matter at all. What are the reasons for the rejections? It could be that the applicants have decided to buy another house, or that they have moved away, or they have insufficient funds, or any one of a number of reasons.

To give an indication of what occurs in the rental sphere, it is interesting to note that in January this year, 347 homes were offered to individuals in the metropolitan area and 191 were rejected, or more than one in two.

Mr B. T. Burke: I was not talking about rejections; I said "deferrals" according to your answer last night.

Mr O'CONNOR: In February, which is only last month, of 363 people offered accommodation, 180 knocked it back. This indicates that in both spheres there may be varying reasons for people not wishing to proceed.

Mr B. T. Burke: Your answer to question 120 was, "Offers have been deferred in 205 cases at the request of applicants". Not rejected but deferred; they still want the houses but they cannot take them up at this stage.

Mr O'CONNOR: But what is the reason? It may not be only finance.

Mr B. T. Burke: That is one of the main reasons. It could be that people have moved to the country, but there are not many reasons apart from finance.

Mr O'CONNOR: There could be many reasons; in fact, I am amazed at the number of reasons given for the rejection of rental accommodation. Some people do not like the accommodation, some say it is too small or too old

or too far from the city; some people want single detached accommodation. In other words, the reasons put forward are many and varied.

Certainly, there are other ways in which perhaps we can push more money into the home building industry. However, this would be at the expense of some other sector. Members opposite did not mention the real benefits of policies adopted by the State Housing Commission; they did not mention rebates or maintenance, both of which require a considerable amount of money because of the backlog which has grown over a period of time. For the information of members, I note that in 1973, rebates were \$1 147 000 while today they are \$6.5 million, an increase of something like 600 per cent. These rebates go to people who are in difficulties and need the high priority we are giving them. Perhaps members opposite suggest we should give this area a lower priority.

Mr B. T. Burke: I certainly think you should lower the priority given to maintenance, where people telephone the State Housing Commission and ask for a maintenance man to come out and bang back a skirting board when they themselves could easily do the job.

Mr O'CONNOR: I agree; in fact, I have been discussing this matter recently with the State Housing Commission. It is my view that if people cannot maintain houses in a reasonable condition, they should not be permitted to remain.

Mr B. T. Burke: There are some items which the commission must be responsible for, but even I can bang in a nail or two.

Mr O'CONNOR: The maintenance figure has increased from \$1.5 million to \$11.6 million this year. Capital expenditure increased from \$24 million in 1973 to \$72 million today.

Sir Charles Court: Be careful with that maintenance one, because the moment you relax on that, members opposite will be niggling at you because somebody has not gone out to repair a dripping tap.

Mr O'CONNOR: I feel very strongly about this matter. It costs a prohibitive amount to send a maintenance man out to these areas for small repairs which the householder could have carried out himself. Some people do take the initiative and do the job themselves, and this is how it should be.

The member for Gosnells commented that the cost of building a home had increased by 25 per cent in recent years.

Mr Pearce: No, per year.

Mr O'CONNOR: But he did not refer to the present year, when, although the cost of building materials increased by 10.69 per cent, the cost of houses went up by only 1 per cent, which is probably the best effort we have had for a long period.

Mr B. T. Burke: That does not make it the best.

Mr O'CONNOR: Can the member for Balcatta tell me when we had a better result?

Mr B. T. Burke: That does not mean it is the best; it is simply because they are fabulously expensive now and are beyond the reach of people; that is causing the slump in the building industry.

Mr O'CONNOR: The point I make is that it appears the rate of increase is coming back to a more acceptable level. The Government has put fairly substantial sums of money into this area, and we have not finished with it yet. We intend to go further and try to obtain more funds to go into the industry. We believe the building industry is the hub of the work force of our State, and keeps other industries going.

Members opposite also referred to interest rates. I mentioned that I have spoken to Mr Brotherson of the State Housing Commission about this matter. It is very difficult for us to control funds totally in this way, because if we establish a limit over and above the present limits, it might result in a flow of money from Western Australia to other States.

Money, generally, is short at the moment. I believe the \$15 million this Government has put into the State Housing Commission will have a tremendous benefit. The money we have put in on short term to the building societies already is having an effect because of the number of applicants coming forward for that money.

As far as I am concerned, the Government has acted properly all the way through, and I fail to see where the Opposition can say it has done otherwise. We have given money out at very good interest rates. In fact, home purchasers are paying only 5.75 per cent interest, which is a great incentive for those who want to purchase their own homes. If that person has insufficient deposit and must look elsewhere at varying rates of interest, it is difficult for the Government to control, and we do not condone it.

Mr B. T. Burke: Why have a limit of \$24 500?

Mr O'CONNOR: This limit has been varied from time to time, but the amount is limited to give the maximum benefit to as many people as possible. If we raised it to \$30 000 we would reduce the number of people we could assist.

What I am thinking of at the moment is to try to mix the 5.75 per cent money with dearer money so that we can lend money to more people at around 8 per cent or 9 per cent.

Mr B. T. Burke: The real reason is that this is a stipulation of the Commonwealth Government. It applies also on the cost of the houses.

Mr O'CONNOR: They have been reviewed in recent years, and this condition has varied.

Mr B. T. Burke: They change it each year, but the trouble is you have changed the system and now you are going by their restrictions, whereas before you did not need a limit.

Mr O'CONNOR: We can alter it ourselves. In fact, recently I altered the amount which applies in the north-west; we now allow some \$32 000. But we can alter it ourselves and have done so. If the time is right and we have sufficient money to increase the limit, I am quite happy to follow that course. However, we must also consider assisting the majority of people.

I do not think it is right to give very few people a Christmas present of a 5.75 per cent loan while everyone else pays 12 per cent. We are endeavouring to close that gap so that more people benefit. Recently, I had a small amount—some \$800 000—which I could release, and I got the building societies to mix it, two for one. They provided \$2 for every \$1 I provided at an interest rate of 9 per cent. Three times as many people received the benefit of that money and although no-one paid 5.75 per cent, no-one paid 12 per cent. In my opinion, that is a much fairer method of handling the situation. These are the sorts of things we are attempting in an effort to try to help the greatest number of people.

Mr Speaker, I believe the Government has no case to answer. Nothing the Opposition has said has revealed that the Government has been at fault. Where people have insufficient deposits for State Housing Commission homes and borrow the balance at 17 per cent, it is unfortunate and unfair. However, as I have pointed out already, members must consider that even with a second mortgage of that amount at 17 per cent interest, the total amount of interest over the full period of the loan is only 6.98 per cent. If we had \$100 million, we could lend it all now at that rate of interest. I oppose the amendment.

Debate adjourned until a later stage of the sitting, on motion by Sir Charles Court (Premier).

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT GRANTS BILL

Message: Appropriations

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriations for the purposes of the Bill.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: FIFTH DAY

Amendment to Motion

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

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

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

To which Mr B. T. Burke had moved an amendment—

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

But we beg to inform your Excellency that your Government is deserving of censure for failing to relieve the burden imposed on the people of Western Australia—particularly home owners and prospective home owners—by harsh monetary policy and high interest rates.

MR HODGE (Melville) [5.22 p.m.]: I rise to support the amendment to the Address-in-Reply moved by the member for Balcatta. I was staggered by the calm admission by the Minister for Housing at question time yesterday that since the 1st July, 1976, 54 people had been forced to obtain second mortgages to purchase State Housing Commission homes. According to the Minister, the people are given only friendly, helpful advice by State Housing Commission officers about where they may obtain second mortgages, but in reality they are being directed to finance companies and being forced to take out second mortgages at at least 17 per cent interest.

It amazes and horrifies me that a Minister of the Government can come in here and admit that fact. Where is his conscience? We are talking about people who are the lowest income earners in our society—they must be in order to qualify for a loan to buy a State Housing Commission house.

Mr O'Connor: We are providing funds at 5½ per cent.

Mr HODGE: But not enough—only \$24 500.

Mr O'Connor: What do you say we should provide?

Mr HODGE: If a person qualifies for welfare housing, the Government should be prepared to lend him sufficient money to buy that house without being forced to go to a finance company and borrow money at 17 per cent interest. If the house costs \$30 000, that is what the Government should lend. I do not believe the Government should force the poorest section of the community to borrow money on second mortgages.

Mr O'Connor: That is ridiculous. A person must be expected to provide some money himself if he wants to purchase a home. He must make some effort. What you suggest would reduce the number of people we can help.

Mr HODGE: But the person who gets that house must live and should not be struck by poverty through having to pay off excessive mortgages.

Mr O'Connor: The loans we give are 5½ per cent. If \$3 000 additional is taken out at 17 per cent it computes at 6.98 per cent.

Mr HODGE: I do not believe that is correct as a total, but while struggling to repay that mortgage at 17 per cent they will not have enough funds, on the income they are earning, to survive.

Mr O'Connor: Many people would like to buy a lot of things but they must produce something themselves.

Mr HODGE: The answer is not a second mortgage at 17 per cent.

Mr O'Connor: They should save that additional amount.

Mr HODGE: The recent ½ per cent decrease in interest rates, which was loudly heralded, I believe has been largely illusory and to some extent a confidence trick. Several of my constituents have come to my office and complained that their housing repayments have not gone down.

Mr O'Connor: Where is the confidence trick?

Mr HODGE: The newspaper reports of the Government's announcement gave people the impression there would be an immediate ½ per cent reduction in the interest on housing repayments.

Mr O'Connor: For new home purchases. It was an accurate report.

Mr HODGE: It has certainly misled some people. Many people have come to my office or phoned me saying, "The whole thing is a confidence trick. My mortgage has not gone down." On investigation I have found many of the building societies are not in a position to reduce

their interest rate. They have huge amounts of money invested on reasonably long terms at a high interest rate and they are not able to reduce the interest they charge by $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. I understand people getting new loans are paying $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent less but people with existing loans are not. People thought they would get an immediate $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent reduction but of course they have not.

I also wish to talk about the situation of young couples who are trying to obtain finance through building societies because they do not qualify for welfare housing through the State Housing Commission. I had a case brought to me today about a man who is a welder. He takes home \$160 net a week. He went to the Perth Building Society and asked about borrowing \$30 000 to buy a home. He was told he would need \$4 000 deposit. He had \$2 000 himself, and he went away and took out a personal loan with the IAC Finance Company for another \$2 000. The personal loan was at a rate of 19.97 per cent interest over a four-year period. His repayments are \$70 a month over a four-year period.

Mr O'Connor: That is before he starts paying for the house.

Mr HODGE: He has now qualified for a loan of \$26 000 from the Perth Building Society. The society apparently does not know or is turning a blind eye to the fact that he has borrowed half the deposit to obtain the \$26 000. He has to pay the Perth Building Society \$252 a month for a period of 30 years. With the previous mortgage from IAC, he has to pay a total of \$322 a month out of his net income of \$640 a month. He is paying about 50 per cent of his wages in repayments on the house.

Mr O'Connor: Do you not think he is rather foolish?

Mr HODGE: He may well be but he has been forced into that position.

Mr Williams: Who forced him?

Mr B. T. Burke: People are becoming desperate.

Mr HODGE: People are desperate and those are the lengths they are going to. Whether or not it is foolish, that is what this man has done and he is prepared to take that risk.

Mr O'Connor: If I want to borrow \$100 000 at 25 per cent—

Mr HODGE: This man is wanting a roof over his head. He is not engaged in a harebrained scheme. He is providing a roof for his family.

Mr O'Connor: He is harebrained if he is paying more than he can afford.

Mr Blaikie: That is not an average situation, and you know it.

Mr HODGE: I know a real estate agent who is working for one of the biggest companies in this city. He tells me that this type of situation is very common. He sells houses to young couples. They are so deep in mortgages they have not enough money left each week to buy food and the basic necessities. They certainly cannot afford to buy floor coverings, basic furniture, or even curtains.

Mr Blaikie: And he sells houses to them, does he?

Mr HODGE: He is earning a living.

Mr Blaikie: He must be a most reputable sort of a fellow.

Mr Bryce: Typical of those who back the Liberal Party.

Mr B. T. Burke: People are being locked into this situation. He has to feed his family.

Mr Blaikie: Name the agent.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HODGE: The options outlined by the member for Balcatta in his speech would make a huge difference. It is stupid for the member for Vasse to blame the salesman for the high interest structure.

Mr Blaikie: If the salesman had any scruples he would not do it.

Mr HODGE: The salesman is trying to earn a living, and I remind the member that there is a little unemployment around the State.

I believe the precarious situation in which thousands of young couples in this State find themselves today is very serious indeed. Yet the Minister was prepared to stand up here last night and, without a blush, talk about people paying 17 per cent interest. That is certainly a reflection on the competence of the Government.

Mr O'Connor: I said I didn't agree with it. You couldn't have been here.

Mr HODGE: The Minister does not seem particularly worried about this matter.

Mr O'Connor: What can you do about it? If a person wants to borrow at that rate of interest, he can.

Mr HODGE: I believe the list of options outlined by the member for Balcatta in moving this amendment are very sound.

Mr O'Connor: What are they? You don't even know what they are.

Mr HODGE: I believe the Government must be prepared to act to try to remedy the situation. We cannot allow it to go on any longer. The

Government is always talking about protecting the family and saying the family is the fabric of our society. Let me say there is no more serious threat to the fabric of our society than the hardships being caused to young family people by the high interest rate structure that this Government is prepared to allow to continue.

MR BERTRAM (Mt. Hawthorn) [5.32 p.m.]: I was staggered to learn that people are being obliged to borrow money for housing at 17 per cent and more, although I should not have been staggered because it is only a relatively short time ago that the Government amended the Money Lenders Act to allow loans to be made lawfully at 20 per cent. I refer to a Bill brought into this Parliament in 1974. I listened to the member for Gosnells, who said—and I have no reason to think he was inaccurate—that the State Government indicated during the election in 1974 that it would set about bringing down interest rates. I do not think we should take too much notice in this Parliament of what the Government has to say on the question of interest rates—or anything else for that matter—because I recall a debate here in 1974 during which I indicated to the Parliament that what the Government was doing was increasing interest rates to 20 per cent per annum.

Mr Laurance: You were wrong then, and you are wrong now.

Mr BERTRAM: Was I? Let me read the following extract from that debate—

Mr Laurance: Who is increasing rates?

Mr BERTRAM: This Government is.

Mr Laurance: The Bill does not do that.

Sir Charles Court: Tell us where the Bill does that.

Of course, the Government to which I was referring then is the current Government—the Liberal-Hancock-Country Party Government. As a result of that debate I thought it was timely that I should ask question 152 yesterday on this matter. I asked the Premier what is the maximum rate of interest now charged by money lenders, and he changed direction and said that the Money Lenders Act prescribes that no money lender shall lend money at a rate of interest exceeding 20 per cent.

We all know that if it were not for the amendment to that legislation—which I understand was said to have been initiated in order that this State may have money lending interest rates approaching those of the other States—the people of this State today would not be paying 17 and 20 per cent interest on housing loans, or on any other form of loan.

The fact of the matter plainly and simply is that the Government does not have any *bona fide* will to reduce interest rates; that is the real position.

Mr O'Connor: The fact that we are lending money at 5½ per cent does not count?

Mr BERTRAM: The magnificent total of three-pence halfpenny!

Mr O'Connor: If you think \$12 million is threepence halfpenny, that is all right.

Mr BERTRAM: I do, in this context. We have already seen evidence which makes it clear that amount is a pittance against what is factually required. The Premier has done what he so often does: he says he has made representations to the Prime Minister that something should be done about interest rates. That looks very good in our media; here is our Premier fighting for us and making representations to the Federal Government. However, he is always doing that. One could almost believe there is an underhanded arrangement whereby he makes these representations and appears to be battling for Western Australia and appears to be attacking the Prime Minister when in fact on the great bulk of occasions we hear no more of the matter and the Prime Minister merely fobs him off.

What we do know is that if the Prime Minister wants to do something about interest rates he has the power to do so—thanks, I believe, to the Whitlam Government. There exists the Finance Corporations Act which has been left there gathering dust, and which would enable the Prime Minister, if he for a moment wished to do anything about interest rates, to do something. He has opted so far to do nothing about the matter.

So we come back to this State, and we find the window dressing exercise referred to by an earlier speaker. The Premier, supported by the Minister for Housing, has gone along to the Building Societies Association and has asked the societies to reduce their interest. Somewhat miraculously, a few days later the societies gave some sort of undertaking to do so.

What I wonder is just how close is that to a breach of chapter 6 of the restrictive trade practices legislation.

Sir Charles Court: I can tell you the building societies were worried about this, and I said if the Commonwealth Government or anyone else was stupid enough to prosecute them on that section, I would go to gaol on their behalf; and the Prime Minister said the same.

Mr B. T. Burke: The dynamic duo! There is no gaol that could hold you.

Mr BERTRAM: The fact of the matter is that the Premier is not a lawyer, and most obviously he does not even appear to be one. The Prime Minister is in the same category; I understand he is a farmer who breeds bulls.

Sir Charles Court: And a good farmer.

Mr BERTRAM: With the greatest respect to members of the Country Party, in my dealings with them I have found none of them has ever shown any outstanding legal capacity or qualification.

Mr Laurance: You are a great judge.

Mr BERTRAM: Therefore, I am not concerned about what they say.

What I am saying is that instead of the Premier telling us what the law is, he should be giving us an assurance that his activities have not in any way inculpated himself or the building societies in respect of that provision of the Restrictive Trade Practices Act. That is a matter for determination by a lawyer, not an accountant.

Sir Charles Court: If you do not want the State Premier to talk to people in an industry so as to achieve something for the public, come out and say so.

Mr BERTRAM: I did not say that at all.

Sir Charles Court: You look at the Act.

Mr BERTRAM: The Premier has become very concerned of late about the need for this State to comply with the traditions of the Westminster system. One of those traditions is that we shall always comply and appear to comply with the law, and not only us, but everyone from the top to the bottom of the State; and a few people are of the view that what has occurred here is perilously close to a breach of the law.

The particular chapter to which I refer was put there to meet this precise situation, because all building societies are not in the same position. All building societies are not able to increase or decrease their rates at the Premier's direction. They cannot do it; that is the whole object of the law. The point is that the weaker ones—if we can describe them as that—should have the opportunity to do their own thing. Therefore, I am not at all impressed by the Premier's legal opinions.

Sir Charles Court: I did not express a legal opinion; I expressed a common-sense point of view.

Mr BERTRAM: I have said the Premier is not a lawyer, and what we should have in this Parliament is a statement that what the Premier has done and what the building societies have done

in no way breaches that Commonwealth law which was put there to ensure all citizens, and not just a hand-picked few, have equal rights.

Sir Charles Court: What you are saying is that we should not have asked them to try to get the interest rate down. That is how stupid your argument is.

Mr BERTRAM: The Premier obviously was not listening before, because I said lawful procedures are available. I am led to believe that in at least one other State the building societies gave to the Government the right to fix the interest rates chargeable by them. There is the clear solution if the Government were really serious about finding one. By legislation the Government—that is, the public—has the power through courts to fix wages. Why then should not the Government be consistent and be prepared, if it is dinkum about interest rates, to treat this matter in the same way? If the Government were clearly honest in its desire to reduce interest rates there is a straightforward way to do it.

All the Premier has done is to make submissions, the details of which we do not know, to the Commonwealth Government; nor do we know the response from the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister clearly possesses the power to do something about interest rates.

Interest is a national problem; the Premier has already made this clear on a previous Bill when he pointed out that we had to amend the Money Lenders Act to keep pace with the people in the Eastern States, and so he increased money lenders' interest rates effectively up to 25 per cent. When the Bill to amend that Act was before the House I invited members to check interest rates in six months' time, and I said probably they would be up to 20 per cent. I have little doubt that lending was going on at 20 per cent at that time.

It is no good having laws if we are not going to use them. It is no good the Premier leaning on the building societies and treating them alike when as a matter of fact they are not alike. What an extreme coincidence it was that only a few short days after the Premier approached the building societies, they all agreed to reduce the rate. Some people in the community would believe that they did so after consultation, and in agreement. Did that happen? I think Government members should tell us whether that happened. The people in the community are entitled to know if it did happen. What is the secret?

Generally the Government's performance on the question of interest rates is poor in the extreme. When I hear as I did that people are

having to borrow money at 17 per cent in order to buy a home I felt it to be criminal. This amendment presented by the member for Balcatta is thoroughly justified and I support it. I draw the attention of those who are interested in this debate to the fact that the question of interest in this motion is not directed solely to the question of housing interest as it has far-flung ramifications and it is therefore a most important issue.

It is timely that we debate the matter here and whilst one cannot get any satisfaction out of debating something of this sort, particularly when one knows the Government has the numbers and will shortly use them with force and a lack of conscience necessary to defeat the amendment, it is nonetheless necessary.

It is most important we draw to the attention of this Parliament, the media, and the people we represent, this very parlous state of affairs. There are people being injured very sorely by this legislation and this Government has not so far today or on any other day provided a case for the justification of the fact that the interest today on housing and other transactions is so dreadfully high.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 20

| | |
|----------------|----------------|
| Mr Barnett | Mr Hodge |
| Mr Bertram | Mr Jamieson |
| Mr Bryce | Mr T. H. Jones |
| Mr B. T. Burke | Mr McIver |
| Mr T. J. Burke | Mr Pearce |
| Mr Carr | Mr Skidmore |
| Mr Davies | Mr Taylor |
| Mr H. D. Evans | Dr Troy |
| Mr T. D. Evans | Mr Wilson |
| Mr Grill | Mr Bateman |

(Teller)

Noes 30

| | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| Mr Blaikie | Mr Nanovich |
| Sir Charles Court | Mr O'Connor |
| Mr Cowan | Mr Old |
| Mr Coyne | Mr O'Neil |
| Mrs Craig | Mr Ridge |
| Mr Crane | Mr Rushton |
| Mr Grayden | Mr Sibson |
| Mr Grewar | Mr Sodeman |
| Mr Hassell | Mr Spriggs |
| Mr Herzfeld | Mr Stephens |
| Mr P. V. Jones | Mr Tubby |
| Mr Laurance | Mr Watt |
| Mr MacKinnon | Mr Williams |
| Mr McPharlin | Mr Young |
| Mr Mensaros | Mr Shalders |

(Teller)

Pairs

| | |
|-----------|-----------|
| Ayes | Noes |
| Mr Tonkin | Mr Clarko |
| Mr Harman | Dr Dadour |

Amendment thus negatived.

Debate (on motion) Resumed

MR WATT (Albany) [5.51 p.m.]: I rise to support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply and in so doing I would like to make a passing reference to parts of the Speech presented to Parliament by the Governor. During the first part of the Governor's Speech the performance of the Government in the previous year was reviewed. I thought it was an excellent summary of the Government's efforts; it reflected a remarkable achievement and showed that it had been a year of good government.

I take this opportunity not to cast pearls of wisdom on matters of philosophy as other members have attempted to do, but to discuss some issues that are specifically related to my electorate. I will also inform members of what is happening in my electorate and hopefully make an impression on the Government of things that need to be attended to.

During last year Albany has been riding on the crest of a wave and I am very confident that that situation will continue for quite some time to come.

Mr Blaikie: Good representation too!

MR WATT: I believe that has something to do with it. In a speech to this House last year I referred to a number of economic barometers, all of which reflected a tremendous economic stability in the Albany electorate. I referred to building activity, unemployment, the availability of commercial premises for rent, and a number of other matters. For example, building activity has been maintained at a constantly high level and while other parts of the State are experiencing something of a slump in the building industry, Albany is extremely buoyant. Frequently builders tell me that they have work lined up for anything 'up to six or 12 months, or even more, in advance and it is very difficult to find a builder, of any competence at least, who is able to take on a job.

New office complexes are under construction at the moment and a very large shopping complex is in its initial stages right now. I understand that apart from having a very large supermarket it will also contain about 70 small shops. This is a trend that is developing in the metropolitan area but it is the first time that a complex of this type has been built in Albany.

The biggest single activity in the Albany area is the fishing industry and a number of things are happening in that regard. I have been very pleased to see the development of Southern Ocean Fish Processors which has established an industry in Albany. It is fair to say that that same company attempted to establish an industry there three or four years ago and it is probably also fair to say that it turned out to be something of a disaster. The company had a number of problems with the trawlers it was using and it was undercapitalised; and had it not been for the injection of new capital and new overseas interests from the United Kingdom the company would have gone broke. But it has been revitalised.

At the moment the company has received two of a proposed three very large stern trawlers which have been brought out from England. The first, the *Othello*, arrived a little before Christmas—I think in November—has completed two trips, and is now in port. The second, the *Orsino*, arrived last month and the third is due to arrive in a little while.

It is encouraging to see the catch rates the trawlers have been able to attain. The company budgeted for what it felt it would need to catch and the catch rates have met the targets. Although the first trip was rewarded with only about 160 tonnes, the second trip more than doubled that figure when the catch was about 350 tonnes. So, we are extremely confident about the success of the activities of Southern Ocean Fish Processors in Albany.

The company has had some industrial difficulties. The Waterside Workers' Federation decided that its members ought to be entitled to unload the fish catches when the ships returned to shore. The company has employed a permanent work force and its workers are affiliated with the Australian Workers' Union, and part of the permanent employment for these workers was always intended to be the unloading of the fish. So there was a bit of a confrontation for a while. When the second of the ships arrived it was carrying a cargo of processing equipment for the new factory and the company engaged a stevedore to engage waterside workers to unload the ship. They turned up for work and said, "We will unload the cargo on the condition that you will give us the right in future to unload the fish." Of course that was not acceptable to the company and would have destroyed the whole concept of the venture as it was intended and as it had been planned and structured.

Mr Skidmore: A little rationale down there will sort that one out.

Mr WATT: It has been sorted out. The conflict went on for about four or five days and on the Tuesday morning after the long weekend in March the waterside workers had a meeting at 7.30 in the morning. It so happened that over that weekend Southern Ocean Fish Processors had purchased a rather large crane which was standing in the yard for all the waterside workers to see as they drove to their meeting. They realised fairly sharply that if they did not unload the machinery from the ship the AWU workers would and it was in their interests to get on and do it; and that they did. So the matter has been happily resolved.

Mr Skidmore: I should like to think it was that easy.

Mr WATT: It was a very good example of common sense prevailing. All is well that ends well, and that is the important part. I had the pleasure of meeting the representative of the Bader Company from Germany, which is supplying all the equipment in this factory, and inspected the factory with him; and he told me that in his view—and he has seen most of them—the factory is the most modern of any in the world. That is quite a worth-while achievement to note because in this day and age such a factory has to be made as efficient as possible; and we believe this will be the case.

The construction of the factory is almost complete. Obviously the freezing chamber has been completed for some time because it has had fish in it since January; and it is only a matter now of the remainder of the filleting and processing machinery being set into gear and the company will be under way.

Mr Skidmore: What sort of catches are they getting?

Mr WATT: As I said a while ago, on the first trip out the *Othello* brought in about 160 tonnes and in the second trip over the same period the catch was 350 tonnes. This is regarded as being something of a research period so that during the first few months the fishing grounds can be surveyed in order to ascertain the location of the fish. The company is finding new fishing grounds every day, and it believes that when three trawlers are fishing in the area together, as a result of its experience in the North Sea, the catch per ship will increase.

Mr H. D. Evans: What is the minimum tonnage per day required for it to be an efficient operation?

Mr O'Connor: It would need to be 4½ tonnes per day; but they are getting up to 18 tonnes.

Mr WATT: I thought it was five tonnes.

Mr O'Connor: Yes, but they are getting up to 18 tonnes on some days.

Mr WATT: But that is not on a sustained basis.

Mr O'Connor: No.

Mr Skidmore: Is there any indication of the type of fish they are catching?

Mr WATT: They have in fact caught 22 different varieties of fish. I do not profess to be a great fisherman and if I start to quote names I may get myself into trouble, so I shall do a little research and pass on the information to the honourable member.

The early indications of the success of the company are most encouraging and they are very pleasing to us all. However, I am worried about the proposed introduction by the Commonwealth Government of a 200 nautical mile or 370 kilometre fishing zone later this year. Early last year guidelines were laid down and agreed to by the States for some joint fishing ventures to be carried out. I say I am concerned about it because I feel that perhaps these arrangements have been made rather hastily. I do not know what the Commonwealth Government expects to gain from these arrangements in terms of financial reward; but it seems to me that the fishing industry is an Australian resource and we should be developing it rather than allowing overseas companies to fish in what I will call "our" waters. I believe the Government would do better to encourage local industry to fish those waters and, if necessary, to assist it financially. We should not only encourage local industry, but we should also give it practical assistance if at all possible.

I hope this Government will exercise caution and that it will not be too anxious about rushing into agreements when we should be developing another local industry. If the early successes of the Southern Ocean Fish Processors are a guide, I would say that the potential is there for a considerable-sized fishing industry.

It was interesting to read an article in *The Western Australian* on the 11th March in which the Australian Federal Minister for Primary Industry (Mr Sinclair) announced that foreign boats would be allowed to fish in Australian waters under guidelines which he had just introduced. That particular aspect of the activities is called "feasibility studies"; but those sorts of things are just the thin edge of the wedge and once we start allowing people to do feasibility studies and the like, the operation starts to turn into a permanent one. It is like the old salesman getting a foot in the door and once he has done that he feels he is entitled to stay.

Members should realise that approximately 70 per cent of the local consumption of fish in Australia is imported. We should realise that there is a great potential for Australia to satisfy its own domestic consumption of fish. For example, it is disturbing to read the following comments contained in an article by Max Hollingsworth in *The Australian* in January last year. The article reads in part—

FOREIGN fishing vessels carried off more than \$300 million worth of fish outside Australian territorial waters last year, compared with our official exports of \$83.47 million.

About 3 000 foreign trawlers were sighted—a 600 per cent increase in nine years.

I believe that shows a very alarming trend and one which we ought to be seeking to control. There was an article in *The Financial Review* in January last year written by Michael Byrnes on the same question of foreign interests in our fishing industry. The article commences as follows—

JAPANESE vessels each year take more than 50 000 tonnes of tuna, worth \$150 million, from the Australian region, according to the latest issue of Australian Fisheries.

Further on the following comments were made—

"A fleet of Taiwanese single and pair trawlers operates off north-western and northern Australia and in the Gulf of Carpentaria. The total number has been estimated at 180 (the greatest number fishing one time is believed to be 93).

That refers to a large number of ships and obviously those ships will be taking a great deal of fish. I believe we should be encouraging the local industry in Australia.

Another problem in regard to the 370 kilometre limit is the ability of the Australian authorities adequately to police the area and to maintain reasonable surveillance over foreign craft entering the zone. We have a very small number of patrol craft in the Australian Navy and, quite frankly, the fleet of ships available for that purpose is hopelessly inadequate.

Recently an interesting proposition was put to me by one of my constituents.

Mr Pearce: You have constituents like that, too, have you?

Mr WATT: Yes; I have some odd propositions too.

Mr Pearce: Lucky man.

Mr WATT: This particular constituent knows what he is talking about. He is a former senior pilot of BOAC. He recently wrote and obtained

the details about hovercraft from the manufacturers in the United Kingdom. When he first mentioned this to me my tendency was to smile and say, "Oh, yes". But when he presented the technical information about these craft—I was going to call them "ships" but I will call them "craft"—it can be seen that they present a very interesting picture. I think they could well be ideally suited for the policing and surveillance of the 200 nautical mile limit.

Commercial hovercraft are refined, efficient, reliable, and extremely technologically advanced. The craft used for the regular crossing of the English Channel carry quite a large number of motor vehicles in addition to many passengers and they are now an accepted form of marine transport. They have a number of advantages over the conventional type of craft. For example, they could be used purely and simply as patrol craft and perhaps for that purpose they would not need to be too big.

Mr Pearce: Don't they have to be big to overcome the large swells in open seas?

Mr WATT: They would have to be fairly big, but they would be small in comparison with those used—

Mr Pearce: The ones used to cross the English Channel are like liners.

Mr WATT: That is right. I suggest they would need to be appreciably smaller than that.

Mr Pearce: If they are appreciably smaller they are not big enough to cope with the large swells.

Mr WATT: I am envisaging something which would cover a couple of swells at least. The technical information I have received I have sent to the Minister for Defence in Canberra, suggesting he ought to consider seriously the use of these craft, if he has not already done so. When we read reports of the hovercraft and the technical details associated with them together with the uses for which they can be adapted, we realise they have a lot going for them.

For example, they could be used as patrol boats by the Navy. One of the pamphlets showed a version which is protected with a heavier grade of steel and has gun turrets mounted on it. In every sense of the word it was an attack craft, whereas other versions are simply used as passenger craft and for any other number of uses.

They have another advantage in that they could be used in the north-west of the State which experiences great variations in tides. They would have virtually no draught because they ride above the water. Consequently although a ship can go in only so far on the low tide, a hovercraft would

be able to go right in. Another use to which these craft could be put would be in connection with drug running, a matter referred to today by the member for Balcatta. Anything at all which Governments—either State or Federal—can do in an attempt to control that situation is well worthy of consideration.

They also have a considerable advantage because they can get up to quite remarkable speeds which a patrol boat could not reach. This would be of considerable value in an emergency situation, a sea rescue or search operation, or the pursuit of vessels bringing drugs into the country.

Another advantage is that the hovercraft requires a much smaller crew—I think three is the number. Perhaps if it were staying at sea for any period, more might be required, but that would not present any problem because there is plenty of accommodation available on it. If the engine failed, the hovercraft would sit on the water and float like any other craft. The hovercraft does have many advantages and I hope the Government will make recommendations to the Federal Government on its use. The suggestion has been made that we should build our own.

Moving on to another aspect of fishing in Albany, I wish to refer to a situation which has developed over the past few weeks causing a great deal of concern. I have been in some conflict myself to decide the correct solution.

The situation is that a local cannery—Hunts Canning Co.—has been forced into a position where it has found it necessary to retrench a number of staff. I understand that at this point approximately 40 have been retrenched, which represents something like 25 per cent of its work force, and it is planning further retrenchments in the days that lie ahead. The situation could be reached where the company might be forced to close down altogether.

Some of those retrenched were casual employees, but others were staff members of several years' standing. Even the casuals, though, had a job, which now they do not have. Albany has always relied on the casual employment supplied by Hunts.

The situation has been brought about because of two associated reasons. Firstly, with the salmon season more than half gone, the catch has been very poor indeed and I understand there are some beaches which have not caught any salmon at all. The second reason is that another company—West Ocean Canning—established a depot in Albany to receive fish which are sent to Perth to be processed in its Perth factory. When West Ocean Canning established its depot in Albany it was licensed to deal in other types of fish, but

not salmon. This information was provided to the member for Vasse today in answer to a question he asked the Minister representing the Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife.

The situation then arose where it would have been difficult for West Ocean Canning to involve itself in salmon, but I received reports, which I understand to be correct, that West Ocean started buying salmon from the fishermen and transported them by road to Busselton from where they went on to Perth for canning.

It was believed that transport regulations prevented the cartage of salmon from the area and that licences would not be issued for that purpose. However, apparently a close examination of those regulations revealed some loopholes and some fairly astute people put the Transport Commission under pressure to the point where it is now issuing licences for this purpose. The result has been that with half the season gone—and a poor season at that—about 50 per cent of the fish which have been caught have left the town and 40-odd people have lost their jobs.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr WATT: Prior to the tea suspension I was discussing some of the problems facing the salmon industry, in particular, in Albany. I was commenting about the 40-odd people who have lost their jobs.

I notice that some Government members have returned to the Chamber to listen to me but I do not seem to have a captive audience in the Opposition!

Mr Skidmore: But it is very selective.

Mr Jamieson: I will pass on your remarks.

Mr WATT: I would very much appreciate that.

Mr McIver: They have had too much salmon!

Mr WATT: I think my attitude can be summed up by saying that if West Ocean Canning, or any other company, decides to set up a processing factory in Albany—or at least attempts to do so or shows some interest in doing so—in order to share the available resources, as a consequence jobs will be provided for those people from Hunts Canning Co. who have become unemployed. My first concern is to see that as much as possible of the natural resources stay in the area in order to provide jobs for the people living there.

The town of Albany has been at a considerable disadvantage in not having an industry to provide jobs for the people in the town because it does not have a natural tangible resource available in the region in any volume—apart from agriculture. By contrast, other areas or regional

centres, such as Bunbury, have had their growth stimulated as a result of the timber industry and the introduction of wood chipping and the chip board factory at Dardanup. Also, mineral sands have made a significant contribution to the growth of Bunbury.

Geraldton has had a long-established rock lobster industry—or crayfishing industry, as we previously knew it—and that town has also received a boost from mineral activity in the region. The towns in the north-west have grown up around iron ore mining which provides the bulk of the employment for the people living in those towns. The Kalgoorlie-Boulder region has traditionally had gold, and in more recent years nickel production has taken place in that region. The production of those minerals has provided jobs for at least most of the people in the area.

In the case of Albany, I consider it reasonable to claim that the fish caught in and around Albany are indigenous to the region and should be retained in that town for processing. I have made representations to the Minister to that effect and I am hopeful a decision will be reached in the very near future.

My dilemma is that such a move could be seen by some as creating a monopoly for one firm. My answer to that accusation is that the metropolitan area already has such a monopoly on most industrial activity, population, community facilities, tertiary institutions, and many other things. I consider my proposal is well justified.

I repeat what I said earlier: I am not trying to do any special favours for Hunts Canning Co.; if a competitor to that company set up operations in Albany I would welcome it, and my attitude would be quite different. My desire is to see that the fish stay in Albany in order to provide the residents of Albany with jobs.

By the same token, let us not underestimate the value of the contribution to the economy made by Hunts Canning Co., and more especially its contribution to the salmon fishermen. In the 30 years the firm has been operating it has been a major employer of labour, and has provided stable and secure employment to many people. It has also provided casual work for many more people during peak periods.

The company has also been very good to the fishermen, I am told. One fisherman told me recently that apart from the fact that the fishermen have always received cash on delivery for their fish, it has also been possible for the fishermen to deliver their fish during the 24 hours of each day of the week. The fishermen have also had assistance in other ways, such as being financed into nets and, in some cases, the fishermen

buy their fuel through the company and pay for it at the end of the season. There are many other side benefits available to the fishermen.

If the Minister does agree to my submission then obviously some consideration will need to be given to the question of the price for salmon, so that the fishermen can be assured of receiving a fair price for their catch. Just how that will be achieved, I cannot say. Frankly, that is a bridge we will have to cross after the Minister has reached his decision.

I now turn to make a few comments on the question of a larger species—the whaling industry. After a very successful season last year, the new season opened at the beginning of March this year. So far the catch rate is a little better than is normal at the start of a season.

The industry has gone through a very trying time. I reported to Parliament last year on the problems which beset the whaling industry, caused mainly by the actions of protesters and environmental pressure groups who are seeking the intervention of the Federal Government to cancel the licence of the Cheynes Beach Whaling Company.

Last year a number of people attempted to disrupt the lawful activities of the catchers. On many occasions I publicly expressed my concern about the actions of those people.

Mr Jamieson: I think they nearly harpooned a few, didn't they?

Mr WATT: I do not know that they were near enough, actually! Perhaps they will improve this year—and, of course, I say that in jest, as members will be aware.

I think a far more concerted attempt will be made this year by the environmentalists and the protesters. We were told last year and it has been rumoured—I cannot describe it as much more than a rumour—that the protesters plan to visit us this time with a minesweeper. Of course, that will be a much bigger ship and it could cause quite a serious situation if the protesters decide to become difficult, as they did with their rubber dinghies last year.

Mr Jamieson: So long as they do not put rubber whales in the water!

Mr McIver: Is the Federal Liberal Party Government in favour of whaling at Albany?

Mr WATT: I am about to discuss the attitude of the Federal Government.

Mr Old: What about the coalition Government here? It is in favour.

Mr WATT: I want to say, firstly, I have approached the Government and pointed out the need for urgent legislation to provide laws which were not available last year so that there is, firstly, adequate protection against injury for the people involved in the industry—and that is always possible—and, secondly, to prevent these sorts of people deliberately preventing others from going about their lawful business, which I cannot accept.

Referring to the Federal Government, we welcome its initiative in giving a policy undertaking to institute a judicial inquiry at Federal level into all aspects of the whaling industry.

Mr McIver: They did that with fuel, too, and it did not do much good.

Mr WATT: As far as I am concerned, nothing but good can come of it. I believe all interested parties have been contacted and have approved the terms of reference drawn up, which are widely embracing in the scientific, economic, tourism, and conservation aspects. We should welcome the inquiry so that the whole issue can be stripped of the emotion and the fairy-tale nonsense people have been telling us about whales, and we can get down to the real issues surrounding this industry. Perhaps we can then have a decision made and the public can be properly informed and made aware of how well controlled the industry is now.

I would like to record in this forum my appreciation and commendation of the crew members and employees of the Cheynes Beach Whaling Company who took part in the recent rescue of a visitor from the Eastern States who was washed into the sea off the Natural Bridge. One really needs to know the area to have an idea of what the coastline is like. It is a terrible piece of coastline and it sends a chill down the spine to think about going into the water at that point. No-one can recall anyone ever having gone into the sea at that point and come out alive; so this fellow can count himself very lucky indeed.

He was only about half a kilometre off shore when he was picked up and it is not realised what a delicate job was required of the skipper of the chaser to get his ship in there to rescue the man, or the mate who dived into the sea to bring him out, the police who were involved with radio, and the pilot of the plane. Some people think the pilot's part in the rescue was not very significant, but to fly in the dark below the level of the surrounding cliffs and just above the level of the water, with only his landing lights to give him any idea where he was going, was a very courageous deed, and we are told it gave the

man in the water some hope to cling to to know people were still looking for him. It was the plane flying back and forth that gave him courage. It was a tremendous effort by all concerned and I think they should be awarded the highest possible commendation for their actions.

I want to mention a matter about which I spoke last year; that is, the need for a second high school in Albany. Numbers are growing steadily but not dramatically at the moment. A couple of years ago there were about 1 350 students at the school. I think there are about 1 250 at the moment but projections indicate that in the not-too-distant future it will peak out at 1 500-odd students and thereafter will taper off again. But 1 500 students at a high school are far too many, and for that reason I have been making strong requests for consideration of the question.

Speaking on another matter relating to education, I want to mention the need for community participation in decision-making in matters affecting some of the regions. I am pleased to say when the Minister and the Director-General of Education were in Albany in December last year we had a discussion about this problem. I took them to the high school and they realised the problem was far more acute than they had previously thought.

Arising out of our discussions, we are now planning to have a two-day seminar in Albany on the 15th and 16th April, to which the department will bring various speakers from the planning branches who can discuss the aspects and criteria which need to be taken into account when making a decision as to the type of school to be provided, whether there should be two five-year high schools or an upper and lower school, just what form it should take, where it should be located, and all the other aspects. The public have been invited to participate by nominating, and I think this is a wonderful example of community participation in decision-making.

I commend the Minister, the Director-General of Education, and the Government for helping us to reach a decision in such a practical and democratic way.

With those comments, I indicate my support for the Address-in-Reply.

MR SKIDMORE (Swan) [7.46 p.m.]: Although I have addressed this House on many issues on many occasions, I have never before had such difficulty in deciding how to approach my task. It can best be summed up by saying I am perplexed, worried, and concerned at a situation that has developed in the Swan Valley arising

from the attitude of the Federal Government and the State Government and its servants towards the Aboriginal problem.

I would like to preface my remarks by reading from the national platform of our party. The introduction to our platform on Aborigines and islanders states—

For many thousands of years prior to the coming of white people to Australia, Aborigines were the sole inhabitants of this continent. Discipline was embodied in the tribal structure. Each member had expectations and limitations and accepted tribal discipline. There was total awareness of being in harmony with the Land and 'Dreaming.'

With the coming of white people, Aboriginal land was stolen, spiritual links shattered, the tribal economy broken, ritual life ceased and in many cases Aborigines murdered and tribes separated. Leadership structure and Aboriginal culture was devastated and Aborigines became dependent on white people. Aboriginality no longer meant pride, substance and belonging, it no longer meant a life-long exploration of the joys of the spirit. It came to mean constant denigration and contempt, grinding poverty, fear, helplessness and apathy. All the concepts of the Aboriginal personality were slowly undermined so that Aborigines could only relate to white commercial society with shame and embarrassment.

I do not think we have made much progress in the last few years.

I have repeatedly sought some assistance for these poor, hopeless people. Scorn has been heaped on my head about some of the things Aborigines do when they endeavour to settle in the white man's community and adopt the social standards required of them. The problem still exists and it will not disappear with the do-nothing attitude of the State and Federal Governments.

Some three years ago I wrote to the then Minister for Housing—the present Deputy Premier—who sent out a screed on the standards he expected of Aborigines living in the community. I was probably one of the few members who wrote back to the Minister and commended him on the criteria he had established for these people.

The criteria was, in simple terms, just this: the people are expected to abide by the social standards of the community within which they live. And that is the criteria I have applied to Aborigines over my years as a member of Parliament.

Just recently unfortunately it was through me that an Aboriginal family was put out of its residence in Midvale. I am not very proud of the

fact that I had this family moved, but I found that this step was necessary after three years of talking, promises, and hopes. These people failed to meet the criteria, and they had to go for the peace of mind of the people around them.

Some seven or eight months later, again I am faced with the trials and tribulations of these people, and I will have to take similar action with another Aboriginal family in another suburb of my electorate. It grieves me deeply because the fault is not theirs; the fault is ours; the fault lies with the Government, and I shall show members why I believe this to be so.

If we consider some of the actions taken by these people, we may be able to understand their frustrations and their inability to come to grips with our society in the way most of us manage so easily. The complaints lodged about these Aborigines are ones with which we have become very familiar. We heard of Aborigines urinating in the street, sexual intercourse on the front lawn in view of the neighbours, drunkenness to the extent that the people involved urinate and spit on their neighbours, and the destruction of property on either side of the house involved. In this case I am talking about a State Housing Commission home, and the houses on either side of this house have virtually been destroyed. Other Aborigines have moved into the wrecks and they are living on the premises as trespassers, and of course they should not be there.

When the complaint was made to me I visited the people concerned. This was around midday, and even then the parents were besotted with drink and were in a frame of mind that did not really endear them to me. However, I did talk to them as I have talked with all the families in my area, but I found them in such a hopeless state of mind that I came away most despondent because I could think of nothing that would assist them.

The story is well known to all of us. People are allotted a State Housing Commission home after proving that they are worthy of something better than they have had, living under bridges and out in the open. Such a family unit then moves into a home and all the other friends and relatives come around and crowd in on them. Unfortunately these people are not able to say "No". They share their goods, their home, their meals, and their booze with their friends and relatives. Of course the alcohol increases the problem. When the householder is sober he will say to these other people, "Look, you have to go, otherwise I will get the police to come in and move you." I know that some responsible Aborigines have said things like this on many occasions and these are

very good people trying to make the grade. However, when they are under the influence of liquor they find they are unable to say, "No". So I will again be faced with a very sad task. In fact, I have already reported the incident to the Minister for Housing requesting that another Aboriginal family should be put out of its residence because of the family's antisocial behaviour.

This family will join the other families under the bridges, in Saunders Street, on the rubbish tip, out at the back of the abattoirs, underneath a grapevine, or indeed, anywhere they can lay their heads. What future do they have? Nothing else except becoming filthy rotten drunk so they can forget the hurt forced upon them by us, because we have failed to do anything for them.

I am becoming sick and tired of the number of inquiries that have been conducted into Aboriginal affairs. These have been carried on *ad nauseam* since time immemorial. In fact, our treatment of the Aborigines commenced when we first landed here; we raped their women and shot the men for no other reason than that some of them interfered with our farming pursuits. Because of our sad history in regard to our dealings with Aborigines, we find ourselves in the present situation.

We are asking the Aborigines to conform to the standard around them, and hundreds of Aborigines are conforming to that standard. However, we will have problems until such time as we allocate places for these people to live where they do not have to cope with the necessity of other families crowding in on ones who are already housed. We will achieve nothing until we achieve that, and I am getting sick and tired of reports.

My speech is directed to the Minister for Community Welfare and he will understand why. It is time we stopped talking; it is time we had a little action. Fortunately, we had a very dry winter last year, but we are now faced with the fact that all the Department for Community Welfare can do is to give these people some new tents.

Mr Grewar: What are you suggesting?

Mr Ridge: I do not want to intrude on your time, but I recognise the problem. It is a very difficult one to try to solve and I appreciate many people in the community and within the Department for Community Welfare are doing nothing more than talk about what they are going to try to achieve. I wish I could offer you an instant answer to this problem, but could I just indicate to you that the Minister for Housing and I have recently had quite a long talk with the Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs to get the same message across as to what we have to do to help

these people. I am not at liberty to tell you what initiatives we have taken, but I believe firmly that our talks with him were very fruitful and in the comparatively near future we will be able to see something positive being done to help these people. I agree with you in many cases they are their own worst enemy. Perhaps we are responsible for what has happened, but we are trying to help them now. Unfortunately it is a long slow process.

Mr SKIDMORE: It is so long and so slow that I wait in vain for the moment of realisation of the aspirations of these people.

Mr Ridge: I wish you were in my position.

Sir Charles Court: We don't.

Mr Ridge: I assure you it is a very difficult problem to try to resolve.

Mr SKIDMORE: I think the Minister and I are on the same wave length, and if he can see that my remarks go where they rightfully belong, I will be very happy.

I want to say that it becomes very difficult for me, as the member for the area, to accept that their placement in Lockridge was a temporary thing. The Aborigines received some assistance and help, but we now find that their tents have deteriorated and the department says they are to get new tents.

Mr Ridge: If I could just interrupt again, bearing in mind it is your time, I think it will interest you a little to know that when they were camped in Lockridge, I gave an undertaking that the area would be cleared in a specified time. I had a sincere desire to shift these people out of that particular area into more adequate housing in a specified time. Quite obviously I was not able to achieve that, but negotiations are going on with the local authority and the Aboriginal people, and with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs whereby we anticipate we will be able to provide these people, once again in the initial stages only, with tents on the existing site for a comparatively short while, but we will ask the Federal Government, which accepts the responsibility, to provide us urgently with funds so we can provide the Aborigines with more permanent facilities on a permanent site, something in the line of hostel accommodation, night shelter accommodation, or whatever might be appropriate. I appreciate that will not solve the problem. There is a great deal to be done, but like you, I want to see them housed in something much more acceptable than they have now.

Mr SKIDMORE: I hope we will see something happen because I have waited for so long, and I have seen nothing happening.

Mr Ridge: So have I.

Mr SKIDMORE: Nothing has happened. I have heard the great Messiah come out of the wilderness of the City of Canberra in the Eastern States. I thought he would come here and do something for these people, and he did practically nothing.

Mr Ridge: Not through lack of trying.

Mr SKIDMORE: I thought at long last we had someone who had sufficient courage to get up before his fellow Cabinet Ministers and say that these people are due for consideration over and above others. What a dismal failure. I hope in two months' time I can come here and apologise to the Federal and the State Ministers. I would be the happiest man in the world to be able to do that. This is the problem—

Mr Ridge: Let me point out—

Mr SKIDMORE: —and I think in all fairness my speech should be my own. I appreciate the Minister's point of view, but I want to make my speech.

In all seriousness a situation has developed in this area, and I am glad the Minister for Housing has returned because he is aware of the complaints I recently lodged regarding a family who will remain nameless because I see no purpose in naming these poor, unfortunate people. However, what he and the Minister for Police are not aware of—and this is something that grieves me greatly—is that today I had a constituent come into my office who was a very angry man. He lives alongside an Aboriginal family.

The Aboriginal woman who owns the home bought it under circumstances which would be known to the Minister. She is incapacitated and is confined to a wheelchair. She is of sober habit and lives with her own immediate family. She is a fine woman—in fact, she is hardly a woman; she is only 18 years of age. She has tremendous understanding and a very deep admiration for her neighbour.

However, when these other people move in she, like others, just cannot say "No" to them, and the situation has reached the stage where I contacted Superintendent Sherry of the Midland Police and told him I wanted some action taken to protect this woman. I told him I wanted him to get his patrols out there and to get these people out of her house because she wanted them out and did not want anything to do with them. I found that Superintendent Sherry not only has to worry about that situation, but about every other incident around the place, and he just has not got the men to do the job.

It is time the Minister for Police listened to the overtures of people like me who are saying a very dangerous situation exists in Midland and the Swan Valley. I am afraid we will see blood shed there soon unless some effort is made to control those people who are destroying any chance others have of making the grade in the community.

Mr Speaker, I am not exaggerating when I say this gentleman told me he would write to the Commissioner of Police and give the police eight weeks, and if after that period no action had been taken he would send his wife out of his house. He said every evening from then on—and especially on the evenings following the arrival of social service cheques—he would have 15 good, young, husky men with him and would do something about the matter. This man is not a bad specimen himself; he has already belted them up five or six times.

When the police have attended the house they have driven up and found everything is hunky-dory, with love and admiration for all concerned. But, Sir, what else would you expect when the police drive up in a patrol van with lights blazing and can be seen for miles before they arrive?

Mr O'Connor: Many people are in similar circumstances, and I am concerned.

Mr SKIDMORE: The other night a patrol wagon drove up, and the officers found everything in order; so they decided to back up and park out of the way and to let things really get moving again. Then they proposed to move in and get rid of the troublemakers. They parked their vehicle out of the way. You would not believe it, Mr Speaker, but another patrol wagon came along with lights flashing and shone its searchlights on the first patrol car. Of course, the cat was amongst the pigeons then.

I told the gentleman who visited my office that he should be very careful, but he replied, "I have had it." His wife was being subjected to language which is quite unmentionable in this place. She was being subjected to the foulest language that could be used to a woman. The man has to earn his living at night and leave his wife at home to suffer this foul abuse.

That poor woman is abused left, right, and centre by these people, and is even spat upon. Why is this? It is simply because we do not do anything about it; because we do not have the avenues for these people. The Minister for Community Welfare shakes his head. However, there was an opportunity to purchase a building in Guildford which would allow the homeless and alcoholic to be housed, but what did the Government do? It let the chance go by.

Mr Ridge: I can assure you it was not my fault, because I made representations to the Commonwealth.

Mr SKIDMORE: Why did we not get the money? This building would have provided an immediate solution to the problem of providing accommodation for these people. It would have given them the opportunity to stand on their own feet with some dignity, and a chance to make the grade.

Mr Ridge: I suggest you are being less than fair when you suggest that nobody cares and that nobody is trying to do something, because the Government is trying.

Mr SKIDMORE: If it is I have not heard anything about it yet, and nor have the Aborigines. There are no social workers amongst the abattoir group, nor are there social workers calling on the people out at Lockridge.

Mr Ridge: I suggest they would be calling on them frequently.

Mr SKIDMORE: It may not be as frequently as the Minister thinks. All these Aboriginal people have a problem, and we are not doing anything about them.

Mr Ridge: We are. We are desperately trying to solve their problem.

Mr SKIDMORE: Then why cannot I see houses? Why could the Government not allow the Widgee development to go ahead when it had the opportunity to purchase land from the Housing Commission? That idea was put forward by Alan Kickett, but it was rejected by the Government.

Mr Ridge: By whom?

Mr SKIDMORE: I do not know by whom.

Mr Ridge: The particular area which I am speaking about being developed is the Widgee Road area.

Mr SKIDMORE: I am not satisfied.

Mr Ridge: I do not know what will satisfy you.

Mr SKIDMORE: When the Ministers of this Government and we in this place sit back—

Mr Ridge: The Ministers of this Government are not sitting back. They are very active and are trying to solve this problem.

Mr SKIDMORE: The Minister had a glorious opportunity when the land was being developed by the shire; but, as Robert Bropho said, his heritage and his land were being sold. I believe these people have a right to houses and land, and their land should never have been taken away. These people were denied the opportunity to have a housing settlement there. I even brought the

plans to this Chamber one night and held them up, but not a damn thing was done about the matter.

Mr Ridge: Are you blaming the Government for that?

Mr SKIDMORE: Of course I am.

Mr Ridge: What about the local authority out there? Do you think it may have been responsible for it?

Mr SKIDMORE: The local authority was one of those authorities which denied the Aborigines any opportunity to get anywhere until members of the local authority had their arms twisted behind their backs.

Mr Ridge: I do not believe that is a fair statement.

Mr SKIDMORE: It is a fair statement.

Mr Ridge: The Swan Shire Council has one of the most involved persons I have dealt with in conjunction with Aboriginal communities in that area.

Mr SKIDMORE: I was referring to the council as a whole, and not to the men. I have the utmost respect for Len Marshall. I was speaking of the shire collectively, because I was told at the time that the State Housing Commission could not get through to the shire, and that the shire would not see it.

It was told by the Aborigines that the shire was at fault. I went out and got all the Aborigines together and arranged a deputation with the shire. We met and we talked. At that stage people were blaming one another because this matter was shifted from department to department, and we had 1 001 public servants trying to deal with these people, and we were getting nowhere at all.

I would like to take up some individual problems associated with the cases which were denied, and I might point out to the Minister for Community Welfare that he is not going to get the worst blast.

Let us consider the criteria in respect of what I believe should be the social standards of these people. I am sure the Minister cares about the matter, and I am aware that some remarks were made about problems that might arise, and so on.

Mr O'Connor: There are problems there now.

Mr SKIDMORE: Yes. If you will bear with me, Mr Speaker, I would like to quote these cases, because it is very important that I do not mislead the House. I quote as follows—

This family have five children with ages ranging from 10 to 2 year. Their sixth child died in August, 1976. The family were originally from Calingiri, where Mr A. had his own shearing team.

Mr O'Connor: I take it this is an Aboriginal family.

Mr SKIDMORE: Yes. The document continues—

The family had a SHC home at Calingiri and were excellent tenants for over 5 years and were well integrated into the local community. However, in January, 1976, when Mrs A. was expecting her sixth child, she became seriously ill with a kidney complaint and was transferred to KEMH for hospitalisation, where she remained for 6 months. During this period Mr A. found it increasingly difficult to manage his job (which required being away from home for long periods), visit his wife and care for his children. Finally, his seven year old son became seriously ill and had to be hospitalised in PMH for over 4 months. Mr A. decided to move to Perth, so he could be near his wife and son and he made the necessary arrangements to place his children in "Wanslea Home". He applied for unemployment benefit and paid for his children to be in Wanslea out of his unemployment benefit.

That is not a bad effort at all, but what was the sum total of all his efforts? Unfortunately, the Aboriginal tenant did not understand the system—because nobody bothered to tell him—and neglected to return his house key and now he is being held responsible for the accumulation of rent.

The document continues—

After the birth of her sixth child Mrs A. was discharged from KEMH into one of the bush camps at Lockridge, as was her 7 year old child. Having lost both their home and job in Calingiri and being unable to afford the cost of "Wanslea" any longer the whole family were forced to move into one of the camps. After four weeks in these conditions (including poor water supply), the baby died. The family were devastated by this death and could not bear to stay in the camp, so they moved into a one roomed tin shack on the property of a local wine-grower, in West Swan.

They are now living in a small tent at Bishops Road camp at Lockridge. The camp has not even minimal facilities and the family share the tent with another Aboriginal woman, who has been evicted, and her five children. The conditions are so bad they defy description and represent a serious threat to the health of the remaining children, especially the seven year old. Constant representations have been made to SHC regarding this family and SHC have undertaken numerous

inspections of their conditions, but they are still not housed. The greatest factor driving this family to despair is that even if they were to be donated the money to pay off their debt to SHC, they may have to wait several years before they were actually housed.

It may be that, legally, the family has a debt to the SHC but, by God, members cannot tell me they have any moral debt! They are now considered to be bad tenants and even if they were to pay off their debt they would still have to wait years before they were allocated a house.

Mr O'Connor: On many occasions, when we have had bad tenants and when difficult circumstances have arisen we have immediately provided them with emergency accommodation.

Mr SKIDMORE: That does not get away from this one case where a person has been so put upon by the whole system that it has reacted against him. This was a person who was making it, somebody who had his own shearing business; he was really getting on top of the lousy system we have forced him to adopt, then all of a sudden he gets kicked in the guts. The document continues—

Although SHC state that the principal factor delaying rehousing is the debt in fact there are many examples and cases where all debts have been met, but the Commissioner still refuses, even to people on the emergency list. This was once a stable well knit family, now they have almost disintegrated.

Mr Speaker, I have several other well documented cases of a similar nature, relating the abuses to which these people have been subjected. They may be only small things in the eyes of many people, but to these Aboriginal families they are insurmountable difficulties. I believe it is a terrible indictment on this Government that it treats Aborigines in such a manner.

Mrs Craig: What did you say the debt was?

Mr SKIDMORE: I do not know; I think it was a small amount, perhaps \$200.

Mrs Craig: They pay \$5 or \$7 a week, do they not?

Mr SKIDMORE: That is right; that is brilliant!

Mrs Craig: I am just asking you what the debt was.

Mr SKIDMORE: I am not talking about the amount of the debt; I am saying that the debt should not be enforced because the person involved did not understand the system. Nobody bothered to tell him at any stage that he had to

return the key if he vacated the premises, otherwise he would be judged to be still responsible for the rental.

Mr O'Connor: Have you made representations on their behalf?

Mr SKIDMORE: Not at the moment; that will come later.

Mrs Craig: Well, why talk about it before you have?

Mr SKIDMORE: Because I am running this show, not the Minister.

Mr O'Neil: You are using their problems for your advantage, having not made representations in this case.

Mr SKIDMORE: The reason I have not made representations as yet is my business but if the Minister would like to come over here I will show these papers to him and he will understand why I have not made representations.

Mr O'Neil: You have only just received the papers, I presume.

Mr SKIDMORE: Yes, that could be one of the reasons.

Mr O'Neil: You are making a great noise about nothing happening, but you have done nothing other than to make a noise.

Mr SKIDMORE: If the Minister for Police and Traffic had worked as bloody hard as I have in helping these people he might be better informed on the subject.

Mr O'Neil: I was Minister for Housing for seven years.

Mr Pearce: And what did you do for the Aborigines? That is nothing to be proud of. I would not put that up if I were you.

Mr SKIDMORE: I would prefer it if members on my side did not add to the interjections, because this is a very vexatious problem. Apparently my message is getting through to the Government; at least I am getting interjections and at least people are listening. Perhaps at long last, as the Minister said, we are going to get some action.

Mr O'Neil: I hope you are going to represent these cases in the appropriate quarters.

Mr SKIDMORE: I will, and I will be proud to do so.

Mr O'Neil: At your convenience.

Mr SKIDMORE: Look, Mr Minister, do not try to pull the can on me because it is not going to work.

Mr O'Neil: You just pulled the can on yourself.

Mr SKIDMORE: I can take it; I can have a shower when I get home and come out clean.

I wish to quote now from a resolution of the Aboriginal housing meeting held by my party. Referring specifically to Aboriginal housing, the following statement was made—

Not only is this problem serious in itself but it also presents the greatest obstacle to raising the health, education, and employment status of these families. The many useful programmes designed to improve Aboriginal health, education and employment are rendered largely ineffective (and even wasteful) as a result of inadequate housing.

This is the whole crux of my argument; it is inadequate housing which is causing all the distress to these people. It is time this Government started looking at other schemes whereby the housing of Aborigines can be better understood and maintained, instead of the hotch-potch system which presently exists, where Aboriginal people must deal with about five welfare agencies before they can obtain a "Yes" or a "No". I do not know how other members go, but even I, with all my eloquence, have difficulty in obtaining a "Yes" answer from some of these Government agencies, so how would Aborigines go dealing with five of them?

Mr Ridge: Do you think it would be of advantage if we set up a special unit to assist Aborigines to acquire accommodation?

Mr SKIDMORE: I suggest the Minister should establish an Aboriginal housing board similar to the one which operates in South Australia.

Mr Ridge: It was announced only two or three days ago that this Government intended to establish an Aboriginal housing board.

Mr B. T. Burke: But not along the lines of the South Australian body; it will have less power.

Mr Ridge: It is to be modelled on the South Australian system. We have learnt from their experience, and ours will be a better body.

Mr SKIDMORE: In all sincerity, I am very disturbed at the plight of Aborigines today, and I believe Government action is desperately required to overcome the situation.

I should also like to ask the Minister for Police and Traffic to check with Superintendent Sherry about the situation at the Midland Police Station. I believe it is absolutely imperative to increase by a large number the staff based at that station. It is essential that the department reassesses the attitude of its officers towards Aborigines in the area to overcome the very difficult position which exists at present. The situation is at boiling point and has reached a dangerous level.

The Minister for Housing knows the problems associated with the family I mentioned but I would like to feel that somewhere along the line something better will be done for all Aborigines.

I wish to mention a couple of other small matters before I conclude. One matter concerns the Minister for Local Government. I refer to the system of the allocation and subdivision of land in and just out of my electorate.

In Bullsbrook there is an area which was subdivided 20 or 30 years ago and where blocks were available, but now a nice flashy-looking sign has been put up and people are buying the blocks. Of course, once a young couple buys a block they feel that it is their own, they are all starry-eyed about it and they sign on the dotted line; and then all of a sudden they realise that the splurge in the brochure is not to be believed. We find where the brochure says that water and electricity is readily available it really means that the electricity is about six miles down the road and mains water will never reach the place. These people are faced with having to put down expensive bores which have on some occasions proved to be fruitless, and eventually they are in great difficulty.

Coming nearer home, a development is taking place in Bellevue. A case which is particularly known to me concerns a young couple who bought a block and are building a very modest cottage of about 9½ squares; it is by no means a mansion. Fair dinkum, all one could fit into the bedroom is a wardrobe and a bed. They strained their budget to afford to build the house. The house was built for them and then the crunch came. They suddenly found that although they thought they were going to get the electricity connected simply by paying a meter deposit and all the necessary connection fees, they were faced with a bill of \$900 to get a mains extension. But there was no mention of that in the glossy brochure. There was no mention of what the kids were going to suffer. This means that this young couple are in their home without electricity.

I have appealed to the SEC to connect the electricity but the young couple can be connected only if the company which is selling them the land lends them the money, because I told the company that it was time it faced up to its responsibilities and that these services be connected.

My comments are directed to the Minister for Local Government. If such a law does not exist, surely it is about time we had a law whereby these avaricious landowners and wheelers and dealers in the real estate industry can be prosecuted so that they do not cheat children and young kids who are buying their first home—I think I am old enough to use those terms—and who are

faced with a colossal debt of \$900 to have the electricity connected because they have been conned by the real estate agent who sold the land to them.

Mr Nanovich: In fairness, it is the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning, and have you seen the actual brochure yourself?

Mr SKIDMORE: I have seen one.

Mr Nanovich: If it is definitely misrepresentation—

Mr SKIDMORE: The cunningness of it is that they skate so closely around the misrepresentation that one has to be a fairly cunning sort of fellow to understand. I appreciate the member for Whitford's interjection, but I am not arguing the pros and cons. What I am saying is that the confidence trick has worked on people in this regard and I want the confidence trick to be stopped, if possible.

I want people going into their first home—and goodness knows it is hard enough to get one—to be able to do so unfettered by the fact that at the end of the road they have to pay \$900 to have the electricity connected by a five-pole extension. I shall explain what happened. Running through the estate and around the perimeter of the estate there is a line of high tension poles. Of course, like anybody else, they looked and saw that there was no problem and when they asked they were told, "It is right past the door." Mr Speaker understands those words. But the low tension connection is about five poles up the road where it first enters the estate.

This is the only couple I know of in this situation who are worrying about it and I have not received any other complaints, but I am worried that the situation exists and I like to feel that the Government will legislate to ensure that if the service is not provided the real estate agent must ascertain the cost of connecting the service to every lot so that the people will know exactly what the situation is.

I might say that some of the shires are also culpable in this regard. If I wanted to I could quite easily put the finger on the shire involved in this case and I would be prepared to show the documentation to other people to point out how it was a little culpable in regard to the subdivision in question. We cannot absolve anybody of blame. Surely to goodness it is not asking too much that some consideration be given to protecting these people.

When I moved into my weatherboard and asbestos house in Mt. Yokine 30 years ago I was so starry-eyed that I forgot to pay the deposit for

the electricity and I spent the Christmas with candles and hurricane lamps. So members can see just how easy it is to get into this situation.

My time has almost elapsed and I feel I have covered those subjects concerning my electorate that I wanted to cover. I wish to conclude on one other issue which is that I find little solace in the Governor's Speech regarding expenditure for my electorate. A classic example is the Koon-gamia School oval. The school has been there for 15 or 16 years and all we ask for is a reticulation system, although I know it probably would not have been used during the dry months. The kids and the teachers have hand-watered. The oval has been nurtured and looked after and even today it is the only piece of green in Koongamia. But do members think we can get a reticulation system? It is not much to ask.

I have even asked the Minister questions regarding the extension of the sewerage main to the La Salle College which involved the expenditure of \$35 000 which is not much in a Budget the size of this State's. It would have saved the parents of the students of that private school about \$5 000 if only we could have got the sewerage connection made. The main is within spitting distance of the school. The parents had to put in a very expensive septic system at their own cost because we could not get the money.

There are many other places where we look in vain for any joy in the Governor's Speech as far as my area is concerned. I have mentioned previously to the House the sick room at the Cyril Jackson High School. I was told by the Education Department that the school has a sick room. It has a glorious sick room! I am not kidding when I say that it is the old broom cupboard. In sheer desperation the principal moved out the brooms and the cleaning equipment and manouvered a stretcher into the room and called it a sick room. As soon as it was designated as a sick room I was told by the Education Department, "What are you quarrelling about, they have a sick room?" The sick room is a nine foot by six foot box!

I notice the Minister for Agriculture is yawning. I suppose that he, like others, may be tired although I do not think that is the reason for his yawn. I extend him some credit for allowing me to get off the vexatious subject of the smell from the abattoir at Midland. But I suggest that because the report of the Meat Commission reveals that considerable alarm has been evidenced because of the overworking of the by-products plant for some two years, we may get some rather drastic failures in that regard. I am hoping they do not occur because if they do we will have

our smell back in the Midland area, and I hope finance will be provided to ensure the maintenance of that part of the plant.

Mr Old: I think you will find it will be all right.

Mr SKIDMORE: I hope so, because I obtained some hope from reading the report of the commission. Members may feel that because of all the whinging and bitching I have done tonight I am unable to support the motion, so I simply leave it at that and conclude my remarks.

MR CRANE (Moore) [8.30 p.m.]: Whilst I do not believe I could match the oratory of the member for Swan, I would like to take this opportunity to say a few words in support of the Address-in-Reply to His Excellency the Governor. I was pleased to note the Governor's remarks on the economy and how it is showing signs of improvement. Unfortunately, economies are a little like barometers; they go up and down and change from day to day. I hope in the long term we will see the long-awaited improvement in the economy and the lowering of interest rates would help this.

Mr Bertram: Hear, hear!

Mr CRANE: There are several points I would like to mention concerning my electorate and I will take this opportunity to do so. Like the member for Swan, I did not see a great deal in the Governor's Speech which was of any specific benefit to my electorate. However, I did see an overall sign of good government, which is what we should be working for.

Over the last couple of years we have had two severe droughts which have had a drastic impact on the economy. They have brought home to us the important fact that we try to instil in other people, that we do rely on the earning capacity of our rural areas to provide the life which we in the city can enjoy. There has been a great deal of hardship as a result of this drought but I have a feeling, a sixth sense, that this will be a good year and I am sure it will not take the rural industry very long to gear itself up and get itself into production, so ensuring the people to whom I referred a moment ago may continue to live in luxury.

The establishment of two particular hospitals is of concern to me. One is at Wanneroo, which I understand is coming along reasonably well and is much needed, the other is the one needed at Moora. That is not going too well and is needed just as much. In Moora for many years we have been asking for an improvement in our hospital situation. I have had to sit patiently as members of

other areas have enjoyed a good deal of financial assistance for the construction of hospitals, and the people of Moora have had to be patient, too.

At Moora we were hoping renovations currently in progress would be followed up by extensions to the hospital. Moora serves a very large area and people visit it from 100 miles away. I do not wish to be too critical because I realise the Treasurer is reasonably short of funds but whilst we have heard so much over the last couple of years of a new deal in federalism we have not yet had a great deal of assistance in regard to hospitals.

Transport is a matter that has caused me much concern, particularly in the area I have inherited north of Wanneroo. I have made many unsuccessful approaches to the Metropolitan Transport Trust to establish a bus service for the people in the area and there are many of them. If members read yesterday's paper they might have seen an article by Alan Bond.

Mr B. T. Burke: You probably got \$50 for the mention.

Mr CRANE: The article mentioned there were 2 000 people at Yanchep and Two Rocks alone and they have a bus service to Perth only two days a week. Surely we should get some sense into our government and realise they are people just the same as those who enjoy free "Clipper" services around the city and that they too are entitled to better services.

After much arm twisting I have had a small success. I decided to leave the Metropolitan Transport Trust alone because I was convinced that for some reason or other officers of the trust, or perhaps the officer in charge, is determined not to do anything for the people north of Wanneroo. I went to the Director-General of Transport and was successful in getting a survey completed last weekend and I am hopeful that from this something will transpire.

Mr McIver: Wouldn't the people know there were no buses before they went to the area?

Mr CRANE: Yes, but there were no buses in Perth in 1828. A little earlier on, the member for Avon asked whether I would put in a plug for the chaff growers in his district. The only mention of this I will make is that he should buy a ton of the chaff and feed it to his own nightmares.

Water is something that has caused a lot of problems to our community and I have been outspoken on the subject. I was shattered to read that the long-term plan of our Government was to supply \$92 million over the next five years

to improve the water situation in Western Australia. Conspicuous by its absence in the allocations was the area I represent. Several years ago it was pointed out that Bindi Bindi, my home town, which is almost as big as its name, was short of water. The town is in the centre of an area which has been described by the Department of Agriculture as one of the critical water deficient areas in the State. It was ranked fifth in priority by the department several years ago, yet no mention was made of the area getting any relief. Something must have gone wrong with the strategists' plans.

I was a little critical last year when our Water Resources Council, or whatever it is called, was formed because in my opinion it was made up of too many bureaucrats. I tried unsuccessfully to have a representative from the Rural Water Council—a body which has operated mainly in the electorate of Mt. Marshall but also in Moore and Merredin—to be elected to the council. The Rural Water Council, with representatives of all shires, has done a great deal of work in helping to alleviate the serious water problem in the northern wheatbelt.

My reasons for wanting a rural representative on the council was that it had so many bureaucrats I felt it would be most definitely bureaucratically constipated, which it evidently is. I say this because we have had no good results in the area I represent over the past 12 months.

I believe the only solution to the problem is the extension of the comprehensive water supply scheme, which the economists say is not on. I am not being critical of the Minister, as he did come to Bindi Bindi and enjoy a pleasant afternoon. He listened to us most patiently and then, unfortunately, had to tell us there was nothing he could do to help.

After mentioning economists, I will give some figures of the Bindi Bindi area, an area which had asked that the water supply scheme be extended 14 kilometres. We were told it would cost \$450 000 to have this work done and therefore it was not considered to be economically viable. To give an idea of the district, the wheat production for 1976 was 19 297 tonnes. In 1977 the figure was 19 224 tonnes. For 19 200 tonnes at \$90 a tonne, we have a figure of \$1.7 million which that area produces. I would consider myself to be an average farmer in the area and I know at least a half of my income is from other sources. Therefore I could easily say that the income of the district would be \$3.4 million. A third of that would mean we pay income tax on \$1 million and at 50c in the dollar—and I pay more than that—we would pay \$500 000 a year. In other

words, in one year we would more than pay the cost of the water supply and yet we are considered not to be economically viable. We are not asking the Government to provide it every year, we want it for one year only. We simply want the Government to give us a go, and the same can be said for many other areas.

The water level is falling throughout the old part of my electorate, including Bindoon, and all the towns are suffering from a serious water shortage. Twelve months ago I said we may need to tow an iceberg to Western Australia and all I received from the Government was a big iceberg myself when it came to being granted any assistance. I do not believe we, as a Government, are following the examples which were set by men like C. Y. O'Connor and Sir John Forrest.

I should like to touch also on another industry which affects my electorate greatly and that is the crayfishing industry. I have received a number of complaints from people within the industry and a greater number of complaints than the Minister will admit. People involved in the industry are very concerned about the early closure of the season. If members care to read yesterday's issue of the *Daily News* they will see that the rock lobster industry opened in the Abrolhos Islands. Members will see from the article that almost everyone agrees that most of the fish will be taken by the end of May, therefore closing the season six weeks early will have very little effect on the whole situation, but it will drastically affect those people who operate small boats. These people must operate in-shore. They do not own big boats and equipment which would enable them to go out into the rough water. They are the ones who are suffering.

I should like to make the point that, had the decision to close the industry early been made last year, the people concerned would have understood the position and they would not have committed themselves to the purchase of new boats or equipment. However, they were not aware that the axe would fall this year. The excuse that a letter was sent out four or five years ago saying that this may occur simply is not good enough. These people have made financial commitments and many of them are in serious financial difficulties as a result of this decision. I believe the rock lobster industry is in need of a good overhaul.

I have mentioned previously the effect that the larger pots are having on the industry; but the Fisheries Department cannot provide figures or statistics as to the actual effects the larger pots are having. I doubt that some of the people in the Fisheries Department know these larger pots are in existence.

However, fishermen are tooling up and spending a great deal of money on these pots. In a couple of years we will find something will need to be done. In other words, we will put up the slip rail after the horse has gone.

I should like to make another point in relation to the national park at Yanchep. I was approached last year by the Yanchep Golf Club which was concerned at the increase in fees at the course. Members of that club gave me a list of figures and I wrote to the Minister about the problem. We should remember that the Government controls the national parks. The Government has a Minister for Recreation. I was hoping he would be here tonight to listen to some of the remarks I wish to make about recreation and sports, but unfortunately, like policemen, Ministers are not always available when they are wanted and the Minister for Recreation is not present tonight. However, I shall put these figures under his nose when he returns.

The cost of playing nine holes at the Yanchep golf course has increased from \$1 to \$2. The cost of playing 18 holes has increased from \$2 to \$4. We find comparable prices at comparable golf courses are not really comparable, because the other golf courses are better. The cost of playing nine holes at Hamersley golf course is \$1.40; for 18 holes it is \$2.40. At the Bayswater golf course the price for nine holes is 75c. The cost of playing 18 holes at the Wembley golf course is \$1.70, and at the Rosehill course nine holes cost \$1.40 and 18 holes cost \$2. Therefore, we find that the cost at the Yanchep golf course is approximately double the price charged at any of the other golf courses I have mentioned.

The Government claims it wants to support the "Life Be In It" campaign. Let us be more accurate. The Minister for Recreation should be concerned also about the cost of recreation. One should not forget that before one can enter the national park at Yanchep in order to play golf one has to pay \$1. I am sure the member for Whitford would agree with me that, as the member who represents the area, I have to pay \$1 in order to get through the gate to visit my constituents at Yanchep. I do not know whether it is built into the electorate allowance, but I will bring up that matter before the tribunal at the next meeting.

A Government member: What about the gold pass?

Mr CRANE: I have not tried using the gold pass; but if one wants to have a drink at Yanchep one should remember that one must pay \$1 to

enter the park. These are the points which are causing concern to the people who live in that area.

I wrote a letter to the Minister for Tourism and advised him that the people in the area were concerned at the suggestion that the golf course would be closed. Evidently trees were to be planted on the golf course in order to feed the koalas. The Minister replied and said that the Government had changed its mind about the trees, but the prices would remain unchanged. Our Government is trying to force people away from playing golf in the Yanchep National Park.

Mr McIver: You are a dreadful Government.

Mr CRANE: The only way the Government can force this is by increasing the price.

Mr McIver: Hear, hear! A dreadful Government.

Mr CRANE: I hope that before long we may be able to see some common sense being used in the administration of the park. From letters received from the Minister for Tourism we find that the Government is concerned about over-usage of the park. What are national parks for if they are not for the people to use and how can they be over-used? I should like to make the point that it is high time the area of the park in which the golf course, the lake, and the hotel are situated came under the control of the Wanneroo Shire. The Wanneroo Shire should control it and should enable that area to be used for the good of the people.

The Shire of Wanneroo at the moment does not have a public golf course. The nine-hole course situated at Yanchep could be extended and made into a very enjoyable course. In keeping with its reputation, I am sure the shire would be able to administer a very satisfactory community golf course and park for recreational purposes.

I should like to give members an indication of the comments which golfers who have played on the Yanchep Park golf course have made. If members care to look at the visitors' book at the golf course they will find the following comments in the period from the 1st September to the 10th October last year. In deference to you, Mr Speaker, I will not use the second word, but it is in the plural and it means "illegitimate". The first word is "miserable". The next comment is "too costly for a public golf course"; "ridiculous price—for professionals only"; "\$4 for 18 holes is bloody ridiculous".

Mr Bertram: Very true.

Mr CRANE: The prices charged at the golf course at Yanchep are too high for a public course of such a poor standard. This is what the

people think of the Government which is responsible for increasing the fees and, as a member of that Government and the one who represents these people, I suppose they have the same opinion of me, but I can assure members that I am the youngest son of seven and my mother and father were married long before I came along.

Mr Nanovich: I should like to correct the figures you gave for Hamersley. The figures you gave for nine holes and 18 holes are incorrect. It costs \$1.40 for nine holes and \$2.40 for 18 holes.

Mr Pearce: Excessive profiteering.

Mr CRANE: I thank the honourable member and I stand corrected, but they were the figures given to me.

I should like to mention a matter which is causing trouble in the coastal towns. The Minister for Lands will know what I am talking about because I recently approached her with a deputation. I was very happy about the way she received me and with her sympathetic approach to the problem, even though she was not able to help. I appreciated her charming manner.

Mr Pearce: You mean she smiled nicely while she turned you down?

Mr CRANE: People are asking for more blocks to be opened up. The Shire of Dandaragan is insisting—and I do not really blame it—on bringing the standard of the roads and services up to the standard which will be required in the future and the standard which in fact is being asked for in Jurien. In other words, the shire wants to put in road verges and kerbing so that these costs are already accounted for in the price of the land.

What happens otherwise is that after people are there for a while there is strong agitation for the shire to supply these improvements, such as the widening of the bitumen and the provision of kerbing. The result then is that the shire goes to the ratepayers, and most of its revenue comes from the rural areas. So we find the poor old farmer again is asked to pay more rates to provide the services. Therefore, the shire is adamant that it should be able to provide these improvements and charge for them in the initial allocation of blocks.

The Dandaragan Shire is also quite adamant that it could develop those coastal town blocks at half the cost the Government must provide and that it would also enable sufficient blocks to be available so there would not be the highly inflated prices because of the demand. This is the problem. Usually only 50 or so blocks are released at a time and the demand is so great that the price is forced up.

As the Government we should look at the possibility of shires with coastal towns being able to develop the land and put the money they receive from the sale of the blocks towards other amenities for the towns. It would help in decentralisation and it would not cost the Government anything. The people who use the amenities would be the people who pay.

I was in Moora today at a swimming carnival; I asked the people if they had anything in particular which was causing them concern, and I was surprised at the number of people who came to me and said they would like me to do something about our lovely new number plates.

Mr Bryce: Hear, hear!

Mr CRANE: They said that the term "State of excitement" does not turn them on.

Mr Bertram: You can say that again!

Mr CRANE: Those who made the comments were sensible and deep-thinking people. All my constituents come into that category. They were concerned and they wondered how the new number plates came about. I do not know; I certainly did not have anything to do with them. Many people claimed that the wording on the number plates subjects Western Australia to ridicule in the whole of Australia. We had a very good number plate—the wildflower State—and there is no doubt about it that this is the wildflower State.

In this instance I agree with my constituents. I was asked to suggest that the Minister or others responsible for the new number plates go to sleep again, have another dream, and come up with a better idea because the present number plates have brought ridicule to Western Australia.

Opposition members: Hear, hear!

Mr CRANE: It is all right. I will have a go at members opposite in a moment.

Another item with which I wish to deal concerns the kilometre signs on the sides of roads. There is one just out of Midland or Pearce referring to "NN" which stands for New Norcia. The sign is on the Great Northern Highway and the next sign refers to Moora, but Moora is not on the Great Northern Highway because that highway turns off at Walebing.

There are many places in between to which no reference is made. For instance, Badgingarra does not get a mention and I understand that Three Springs does not either. Apparently the member for Greenough knows this is so. Many towns are important, but they are not mentioned either deliberately or because those responsible for the signs do not know their geography. I suggest we have another look at the situation and

revert to the signs which indicate a place is so many kilometres from the GPO. The only people who understand the new signs are those who live in the areas—the people with local knowledge—and they do not need the signs.

I do not want to keep members for more than 45 minutes tonight.

Mr Bertram: You are not allowed to.

Mr CRANE: I will conclude by referring to something which has caused me a great deal of concern for some time. I know I am a Crane, but in Parliament I sometimes feel like a frustrated emu. I refer to the ineffectiveness of the back-bencher. He is there to put his hand up and be a number, if numbers are required. Apart from that he does very little else except serve his electorate and be sure to obtain sufficient votes so the Government will be returned to office and the Executive form of Government continue.

Many years ago in England, France, and so on the king reigned supreme. If anyone did not agree with the king, the king quickly had the offender's head lopped off. That was a wonderful system, particularly if one were a king. However, many people objected to the system and as a result of that objection democracy was born. The people had a say and the present form of government was evolved. I believe France was the father or mother of democracy. It does not matter whether it is feminine or masculine. I think someone wrote a song about it, as follows—

Arise you children of patriotism;

The day of glory has arrived.

Or something to that effect.

Mr Bertram: Will you not give us its tune?

Mr CRANE: No; but if the honourable member wants it in French, it is as follows—

Allons enfants de la patrie;

Le jour de gloire est arrivé.

As a result democracy was born, but gradually we have seen an erosion of the usefulness of the back-bencher. We have reverted not to the kings and their acts, but to an Executive form of government where the back-bencher does not have sufficient say or sufficient opportunity to use his knowledge or present his ideas. I am firmly of the opinion that the best brains are in the back benches.

Back-bench members: Hear, hear!

Mr CRANE: The trouble is I will never be able to prove it.

Mr Old: The greatest bulk perhaps!

Mr CRANE: I believe the time is fast approaching when we must have another look at the system and give the back-bencher an opportunity to play his part. After all, he does get the abuse

in the country. He goes out there and makes excuses—unless he happens to be the member for Moore—for the decisions the Government sometimes makes. A while ago I flatly refused to say that a 100 per cent increase in the fee for electricity connection should be paid by those people who are at a disadvantage, anyway.

I believe we should consider very seriously the committee system of government, particularly on very controversial issues. I remember that a few years ago we had a most dramatic experience here when we were discussing whether it would be a good idea to place a bridge over or a tunnel under the Swan River. Because the Government of the day proposed a bridge, the Opposition wanted a tunnel. I venture to suggest that had the Opposition been in power at the time and the bureaucratic boffins had decided a bridge would be best, we on the other side would have argued like hell that a tunnel would have been best.

That is the point I make here. It is the Government and the Opposition and it is a numbers game. When we are making decisions which affect the livelihood and well-being of people for 50 or 100 years to come those decisions should not be made on political grounds, but with common sense.

This would be the position if we had a committee system. I remember serving on a committee of the House last year or the year before last with two ALP members and two Liberal Party members. Party politics never raised its head. We were interested only in facts and we got them. Therefore, on these issues the committee system must be brought back.

We have seen what happens in the Senate with 10 senators supposedly representing this State. They do not represent the State; they represent the political party which helps to get them elected. Whilst they make their decisions on party lines they are not necessarily looking after the best interests of Western Australia; and this is what it is all about. Therefore, we should return to the Senate system laid down in our Constitution. We should have a committee system in Parliament. The committees could be made up of members of both sides and the back-benchers would then have an opportunity to exercise that flair to which I referred and by using the brains and intelligence some of them have, we would get the best from the people elected to this Parliament by the people they serve.

I know that the member for Morley had brought up this subject once or twice previously, and there is a lot of wisdom in what he had to say. With an executive form of Government we have a dictatorship by the Executive rather than by the

individual or the King. The sooner we give this matter some serious consideration—and it has occurred in the Federal Parliament—the better we will be able to handle the problems which should be decided on a plain common-sense basis, and not on party political lines.

I think I have said enough for tonight, and if the member opposite who has been attempting to interject would like to jump to his feet, I promise not to interject on him as he has attempted to do on me.

Before I resume my seat—and I point out to members opposite that I still have 14 minutes during which I can speak—I would like to take this opportunity to remind all members that we are about to adjourn for the Easter break. I hope all members have a very happy and safe Easter. I hope they will rest and return to this place refreshed and really determined to do something worth while for Western Australia.

Mr B. T. Burke: And the same to you.

DR TROY (Fremantle) [9.02 p.m.]: I would like to contribute to the Address-in-Reply debate and, in particular, make special reference to that part of the Governor's Speech which relates to the economy. I will quote the first two sentences, from page 1 of the document, relating to the economy. They read as follows—

The national economy shows signs of recovery.

Difficulties persist, but lessening inflation and lower interest rates clearly indicate improvement.

Before I proceed with my remarks about the economy I would like to take issue with a vicious attack carried out on me in this place last Thursday. Of course, I refer to the attack carried out in part of the contribution to the Address-in-Reply by the member for Scarborough. When he spoke he was, of course, speaking for the Government and, of course, there has been no disclaimer by anybody on the Government benches of his remarks since.

Mr Young: I was not speaking on behalf of the Government.

Mr Bateman: Of course you were.

Dr TROY: During his speech the member for Scarborough continually referred to a letter which was signed by me and printed in full in the *Daily News* on the 1st March. The contribution of the member for Scarborough in relating to that letter took up nothing of substance in that letter. I hereby challenge him to repeat outside this House the remarks he made under the protection of the privilege of this House.

Mr Bateman: Hear, hear!

Dr TROY: I can assure the member that if he does so he will find himself the subject of a whole lot of litigation because what he said was clearly libellous.

Mr Pearce: Is the member for Scarborough prepared to do it now?

Dr TROY: If the Government wishes to discuss the issue of the Middle East I am happy to enter such a debate but the Government has not brought a proposal to this House. It never has done in the past, and it seems to me unlikely to introduce such a proposal in this present period.

The situations that arise in the Middle East are both contradictory and complex. To raise the question in the manner which the member for Scarborough did on Thursday last, in the form of a 10 or 12-minute diatribe of personal abuse, is a poor substitute for discussion on such a complex question. The member for Scarborough might be happy with that kind of discussion, but as far as I am concerned it does nothing to enhance the standing of this place in our community, or improve its decorum.

I would point out that I organised and invited here a number of people to discuss a particular view at a public forum in Fremantle.

That public forum discussed a question over a period of five hours. At that forum there was present, apart from myself, two Labor members of Parliament, the Secretary of the United Palestinian Workers Association, and a whole host of other people.

Mr Young: There were also some other people. I hope you will tell us who they were.

Dr TROY: They spoke about this issue, which is very complex. It is not a simple issue, although the final conclusion one might draw—or seem to draw arising out of such debate—may have had some semblance of simplicity about it.

Apart from the personal attack directed at me, the member for Scarborough made several other references in his speech to a number of matters. One was that he referred to the Arab States that organised the PLO. I quote, "Hitler had the gestapo and the Arab States have the PLO." I will refer to a copy of his speech in order to mention the countries he particularly named. They were Syria, Egypt, South Lebanon, Libya, and Iraq. In making that statement he perpetrated a gross slander against those countries.

Mr Young: You realise that is inaccurate.

Dr TROY: I point out that the PLO has been recognised by no less a body than the United Nations. I might add that more than 80 other Governments throughout the world have also recognised that organisation.

The logic of the member for Scarborough's position is that this State Government, and the Government that he is part of federally—in that sense the party that controls that Government—should demand the severance of all ties with those Arab States to which he referred. I believe that what he said was a gross slander against those States. Again, I say that if he follows the logic of his position he should demand the severance of all trade and diplomatic relations with those countries.

In the letter which appeared in the *Daily News* I expressed a particular view. I believe I have the right to express a particular view. In fact, if one looks at the history of the Labor movement of this country, and in particular at the history of the Labor Party, one finds that in that organisation there is in existence, and always has been, differences of view. In my opinion this is both necessary and desirable from the point of view of the Australian community.

I will refer to only one example of foreign policy to make my point; that is, the policy operated by this Government—or by this country—towards Vietnam a few short years ago. I would remind you, Mr Speaker, that the Government policy on this question was initiated by Sir Robert Gordon Menzies in 1963 with a statement to the House of Parliament. There was no prior discussion; there was no debate as to the wisdom or otherwise of that position then. It was based on a series of premises, one being that we would go all the way, more or less, with LBJ. The expression was coined by somebody else subsequently, but that was the essence of our position. No matter what the USA did, we were with it right or wrong.

In taking that action in 1963, and as a result of subsequent events, we endorsed some of the grossest acts ever committed against a country in modern times; certainly in the history of my lifetime.

One has only to refer to the bombing policy operated against Vietnam from February, 1965, to December, 1972. Just to give some idea of how intense and how horrendous that policy was, it was the equivalent of dropping every five days over a period of seven years the TNT content of the tons of explosives dropped on Europe during the whole course of World War II. The declared intention of the director of the US Air Force, at that time, was to bomb Vietnam back to the stone age.

Debate, agonising discussions, and reappraisals took place in the Labor movement. I might say I am proud of the fact that in February, 1965, I organised the first demonstration on that question outside the US Consulate in St. George's Terrace, Perth. Four other people were with me at that time. I make no apology for my attitude and actions on a whole lot of issues pertaining to matters concerning this State and this country.

The fact is that appraisals, reappraisals, debate, discussions, and so on are not tolerated at all in the Liberal Party, and the member for Scarborough might well remember the attitude the party bosses took towards him when he had a change of heart over the Tresillian issue. Just imagine what would happen in regard to something of far graver significance. Of course, members opposite are quiet. When we go back and look at the whole history of the Liberal Party, nothing of importance has been discussed and debated inside the Liberal Party which would compare with the discussion and debate that takes place, often in an agonising kind of way, both inside and outside the Labor Party and the whole of the Labor movement.

I would like to refer to another quote from the member for Scarborough's contribution.

Mr Young: Do not say "another quote", because you misrepresented the first one.

Dr TROY: It is this—

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The interjections will cease. I might just say that the member for Scarborough was heard in relative silence and I believe the member for Fremantle ought to be given the same opportunity.

Dr TROY: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The member for Scarborough was referring to a number of observations I made in my letter. He went on to say—

If he had mentioned them, he would have confused his Maoism with his Marxist-Leninism, and probably would have been shot by somebody;

Mr Young: "Shot at".

Dr TROY: The uncorrected copy, which he had not corrected by 12 o'clock on the day after, reads exactly as I read it. He may want to change his remarks subsequently.

Mr Young: You cannot quote from an uncorrected copy, and I said "shot at".

Dr TROY: The member for Scarborough had not corrected the copy by 12 o'clock on the Friday. I am led to believe it is standard practice in this

House to correct copy by 12 o'clock on the following day. I could not get hold of an uncorrected copy until after 12 o'clock on the Friday. If he likes, he can challenge the honesty and integrity of *Hansard*. I do not and I will stick to what I quoted.

Mr Young: Have you never added a two-letter word to a speech?

Dr TROY: That remark of the member for Scarborough, even as he wants it corrected, is one of the most outrageous that has been made in this place.

Mr Grayden: What you are saying at the moment is pretty outrageous.

Dr TROY: It offends every aspect of parliamentary propriety which he said he was defending. I challenge him to resign on that issue. Further, if he wants to make an issue of it I challenge him to go outside this House and make the same statements.

Mr Pearce: He has no integrity; that is the trouble.

Dr TROY: As a matter of principle, I happen to oppose—

Mr Sodeman: Talk to your deputy leader.

Mr Bryce: You are one of the most spineless members.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will cease interjecting. I have asked that there be no interjections, or at least that interjections be restrained. Members will please have regard to my wishes.

Mr Skidmore: The member on his feet is certainly ignoring the interjections. He should be given the courtesy of being heard.

Mr Grayden: Tell him to stick to the truth.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Fremantle.

Dr TROY: I happen to oppose on principle the use of terrorism. When I say that, all my life—and I was born in 1941—the politics of terror one way or another have dominated this world, and the primary terror that has dominated this world has been the terror of an impending, likely, or possible atomic war.

When I was four, two atomic bombs were dropped on Japan. They served no military purpose at that time, as the archives of Japan, the US, and every other country are now revealing, even to the most cynical. But it seems that has not penetrated to many of the people on the opposite side. I would say the purpose of that exercise was to intimidate the rest of the world into support of the grand plans of the United States of America.

Since Vietnam and Watergate, the realities of that role I believe have been thoroughly revealed for what they are.

In the case of Vietnam, I had no hesitation in siding on that occasion with the oppressed as I saw that battle. I defend the right of the oppressed to take up arms if such action will advance their cause.

Mr Blaikie: What about Hungary? With whom did you side on that occasion? He is strangely silent.

Mr Bryce: How old were you, you buffoon, in 1956?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Bryce: You certainly did not have a political platform, you goose.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Fremantle.

Dr TROY: By way of responding to the interjection on Hungary, I was 15 at that time, but that is of no great consequence. My position is this on the invasion of Hungary by the Soviet Union: I stand here in total opposition to that invasion, and I make no qualification whatever about that.

Getting back to what I was going to say, my personal preference is that we should be able to resolve problems both locally and internationally around a conference table, but unfortunately we live in a less than perfect world.

I might point out that in 1917, when Lord Balfour made a declaration to the Zionist movement in Europe, no vote was taken of the Palestinian people who lived in the area that is now part of Israel. When the United Nations resolution of 1948 was passed—and I might add it was supported by the Soviet Union—no vote of the Palestinian people was taken.

One might ask how it came about that this state of affairs developed. The fact of it is that world opinion was responding to the agony of the Jews. That was a very real agony which was suffered by many of them in Europe in a vicious way during the Second World War and before that. One of the other propositions in relation to this question was that Palestine, as it was then called, was regarded as being an empty land; the realities were something different.

There were many Arab villages in the area now constituting Israel. There were 400 Arab villages at that time; today there are less than 50. The area has been subjected to a very long period of oppression by Britain in order to maintain control. Despite that, my position is now and

always has been that I unequivocally defend the right of the Jews to live anywhere in this world free of persecution, whether they are living in Israel or anywhere else in the world. I am opposed, again as a matter of principle, to racism of any kind, and in particular I am opposed to anti-Semitism.

The attack by the member for Scarborough had nothing in fact to do with the Middle East. It was an attempt at a diversion. It was a crude attempt to interfere with the internal affairs of the Australian Labor Party. He waited almost three weeks before he responded to that letter in the *Daily News*.

Mr Young: It was the second sitting day of Parliament.

Dr TROY: I might say I tried late in that sitting to respond, but time ran against me. However, I challenge him again to step outside parliamentary privilege and make the same statement. I believe the reason for the attack he levelled at me became evident the following day.

Now I would like to return to the point at which I began, because the following day it was revealed that in the course of the last 12 months of this 29th Parliament, there are now more than 10 000 additional people on the unemployment lists, and the Liberal Party had no mandate for that. It was elected on the promise that it would solve the problem; it even said that it could solve the problem. Some outrageous statements were made but instead of a solution the Government is terrorising 10 000 additional Western Australians. Unemployment in this State now stands at over 35 000. In fact, in the month of February ours was the only mainland State where the unemployment figures went up.

We do not have a State of excitement. I do not know what the member for Moore would suggest as he did not tell us what this slogan should have been. However, it seems to me that we should be calling it a State of depression. The member for Nedlands and the member for Scarborough had no mandate for a policy of 35 000 unemployed.

Amongst those 35 000 unemployed people, there are 15 000 unemployed youths. The Government has had several interesting initiatives on that score. It established this job creation centre in Perth, and in the period of time it has been open 17 000 youths have passed through its doors. Of that, 2 000 people were sent for interviews, which resulted in jobs for 320 youths. So of the 17 000 unemployed, 320 obtained jobs, and the other 16 680 got nothing. The Government has developed also a policy of job creation for

unemployed youth. In other words, it finds jobs for some of the youths, but many of the jobs last only until the employee turns 18. The moment they reach 18 years and their wages go up, they are sacked.

Mr Sibson: I wonder who caused that problem?

Dr TROY: I would like to refer to some particular problems in the area of Fremantle and I will refer to a report of a series of discussions which has been going on for over 18 months, and more likely for two years. The report is from the Australian Chamber of Shipping Study, the Port Authority Study, and in addition, in the latter stages of that discussion, the Stevedores got into the act. The report refers to changes imminent in the area of Fremantle, and there are plenty.

The main area where changes are occurring is in regard to containerisation. Up till this time the trade had been handled by conventional methods of cargo handling to Singapore, West Malaysia, Hong Kong, Manila, Taiwan, Japan, and more recently the Persian Gulf. These have been handled traditionally by conventional cargo-methods, but there are very advanced plans for complete containerisation of this trade. In addition, it is planned that the trade from this port to the west coast of the United States will go through Melbourne via a containerised service. I would like to quote a little of this report which reads—

With the future decrease in conventional vessels employed in the traditional liner services, there will be a corresponding decline in the demand for labour.

The cutback will mean literally hundreds of jobs will disappear. Unfortunately in the area of Fremantle there is already a long dole queue and the only initiative that seems to be coming from the Government is through its port authority, which is a semi-governmental instrumentality, to cut the number of jobs in the area.

The other industry that has suffered serious damage in Fremantle is the meat processing industry, and of course one of the aspects that is causing concern here is the export of live animals. In effect what we are seeing here is the transport out of the State of animals that might otherwise have been processed here. Our meat processing industry is in strong competition with the meat processing industries of, in particular, Japan and the Middle East.

Unfortunately our Government does not see any way around this problem. We could look, for example, at the decision taken by the New Zealand Government on this question. It provided refrigeration facilities in the Middle East to allow the export of processed meat, and so New

Zealand is salvaging its own meat processing industry. However, our Government stands aside and does little.

The member for Moore referred also to the crayfishing industry. A very large section of that industry is located in Fremantle. The people in this industry have run into very serious difficulties for two reasons. As with many other things we export, the price is determined in US dollars, and the real value of the US dollar has declined, as everyone who has been following financial newspapers knows. In addition to that, people in the industry are faced with the proposition of a declining price. The proposals of the Government one way or another either over a long-term period or a short-term period—and that long-term period is not all that long—is to cut down the actual number of fishermen from 2 000 to 1 400. Unfortunately, in the general area no other initiatives are being taken by the Government.

It is a truism to say, as has been said repeatedly, that the mining industry has played an important role in the fortunes of this State. It has been pointed out by none other than the Premier from time to time that Western Australia, with 8 per cent of the population, produces 22 per cent of Australia's export earnings. Of course, a large part of that comes from the mining industry.

What has become clear, in relationship to Government policy on this question, is that there is no real understanding why the boom in our minerals occurred, and there is no real understanding of why the depression is now taking place. There has been some belated realisation by the Premier that there is a desperate state of depression in the world steel industry, and next week, of course, we will see him rush off to Japan.

Several references were made tonight to the hoary old chestnut about economic questions that Whitlam, when he was in power in Canberra during the period 1972 to 1975, caused all these problems. There are two views one can take of events. At the time these problems occurred in Australia to a greater or lesser degree the problems occurred in every other country in the world. So we could say we have a rather central economy with respect to the rest of the world's economy, or alternatively we could say that what happens in the rest of the world to a large degree determines what happens here.

In response to the Governor's Speech we heard again members of the Government traditionally eulogising the Premier; that he was responsible one way or another for the boom. However, the truth of the matter is that the Government has no idea as to why it occurred, and even less idea as to why the depression occurred.

Let us look at the whole history of the iron ore industry, and in particular the last 12 months. In order to do this I will go back to a speech I made here last year. What I proposed then was that the "prospect in the Pilbara for iron ore is fewer jobs or decreased wages or both". Of course, that is exactly what has happened. Wages in the area have gone down very substantially as anyone who works in the iron ore industry will tell us. Overtime has all but cut out, and people in the north do not have the rosy future now that was proposed and suggested to them when the Government went to the electors just over 12 months ago.

The fact is that Japan is on the eve of announcing further cutbacks in iron ore contracts. However, one should not just look at iron ore.

If we consider the nickel industry over the last 12 months we find there have been sackings in Kambalda, Scotia, and Carr Boyd of 600 men; in Windarra of 400 workers; at Redross of 120 workers; and in the North Kalgoorlie processing plant 100 people have been given notice effective on the 31st May. At the Selcast operation 200 employees have serious doubts about their future employment.

There is no prospect for any great employment being offered by the Government in the mining areas in the eastern goldfields. I refer, of course, in particular to the goldmining industry. Already over 800 people are unemployed, and many more have lost jobs and left the area.

I would like now to turn to an additional area of mining that has played a large part in the accumulation of several private fortunes in this State. I refer to the people who played a part in accumulating that huge wealth—approximately 20 000 of them—over a period of years. I am referring, of course, to Wittenoom. A very real tragedy is being exposed as time goes by in this area.

By way of information, there are 28 documented cases of mesothelioma from that area, and when we bear in mind that the disease has a 20 to 30-year lag period from exposure to the onset of illness, it can be realised we have not yet seen all of it. There is as yet an undetermined level of carcinoma of the lung from the same area.

The difficulty in relation to this disease arises from the fact that smoking, in combination with exposure to asbestos, has a synergistic effect as far as carcinoma is concerned. We do not really understand the depth of this. There is an additional problem, which is the crippling consequences of asbestosis itself.

Just today I was talking to one of my constituents who was in Wittenoom at the age of 21, and remained there for two years. He is now aged 43, and he will never work again because his lungs have been almost completely destroyed, and the damaging process caused by asbestos bodies is still continuing.

I believe the Government and the mining companies which accumulated the wealth from this area should guarantee to anyone who suffers from these problems, full compensation in respect of any difficulties that arise, and there should not be any litigation in respect of these people who, unfortunately, when they become aware of the disease are quite sick and often do not have very long to live. They should not be required to suffer the process of litigation to establish their case.

There are, as members may know, women who have contracted this disease. Their only crime was that they lived in the area when they were children.

The damaging effect of asbestos in relation to asbestosis has been known since 1918, but the deleterious effects of asbestosis were not understood until 1964. Dr Wagner in South Africa revealed the significance of the disease mesothelioma in 1964. In 1974, as a result of the work of Dr Selikov at the Mt. Sinai Hospital in New York the connection between carcinoma of the lung and the synergistic effects of both smoking and exposure to asbestosis have been established.

So despite there being a relatively new body of knowledge, there is also to some extent an old body of knowledge; and I believe this community has a responsibility to the people who were unknowingly exposed to these problems.

In the speech to which I referred initially reference was made several times to the fall in the interest rate and the decline in inflation, and it was said these are a reflection of the fact that our economy is on the up. Quite a number of economic indicators were conveniently overlooked in that speech. One such group are the parameters that relate to what is happening to the economies of Japan, Germany, West Germany, and the United States. They were not even mentioned, but they very clearly had a very big impact on us.

However, internally there were a number of other factors that were conveniently overlooked in the last quarter of last year. What became evident was that new car sales decreased, new home building approvals also decreased, and as

the weeks go by we find our overseas reserves are falling. Hardly a week goes by these days without our overseas reserves taking another dip.

Just to remind members, our overseas reserves as at Wednesday of last week decreased by \$60 million; in the week before that they decreased by \$68 million; and in the week before that they decreased by \$78 million. That does not paint the picture that things are very rosy. However, central to our problem—and I referred to it at least in part in respect of the crayfishing industry—is the role of the US dollar as a world currency.

What happens to the US dollar in relation to what happens to us is very important. As a country we have been unable to defend ourselves against a devaluing US dollar; and when one compares our position now to our position previously, one finds the decline took place from the time that we devalued. We have gained very little out of the act of devaluation; and, of course, the US dollar continues to decline. This means our total earnings also continue to decline.

Nixon made the decision in 1971 to take the US off the gold standard. What flowed from that decision was a series of speculations into and out of the other currencies of the world.

Of course, during that period the Australian dollar was fixed in direct relationship to the US dollar, as most other currencies in the world were. From the period August, 1971 to December, 1972, that meant that because our dollar was undervalued in terms of real goods and services, there was great speculation in the Australian currency. In that period approximately \$4 000 million came into Australia; and, of course, members may remember the debate which took place between Mr Snedden who was then the Treasurer of the country, and Mr Anthony, who was then the Minister for Primary Industry, as to whether or not Australia should revalue.

Of course, the "or not" side won the day, and the refusal to make the decision when it should have been made cost our overseas reserves in effect \$4 000 million.

Then in the period from 1972 to 1974, again as a result of unstable currencies, there was speculation on a world scale in raw materials and we saw the prices of wool and wheat jump. Of course, that added in no uncertain way to our money income.

But what did not happen, and to some extent could not happen, was that no equivalent increase in goods and services provided in the country accompanied that rise in money income.

There was a very marked increase in the money in circulation in our economy and the two causes were those I have just outlined.

A vast amount of this money was used in the public sector, and I believe Whitlam, who was then the Prime Minister, is to be commended for seeing that a whole lot of that reserve did go into the public sector.

What has happened since on a world scale—and we have to get back to this to understand what is happening now—is that we have seen a series of competitive devaluations, and the net effect has been that we have gained nothing.

I would like to conclude my remarks with this statement: This State, like its Federal counterpart, is being led by a Government which has no idea of where it is going or where it has come from. I believe the Government is in fact sabotaging our economy, and that it should resign.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Tubby.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Closing Time

THE SPEAKER (Mr Thompson): I advise members that questions for Tuesday, the 4th April, will be accepted until noon on Friday, the 31st March.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: SPECIAL

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier) [9.39 p.m.]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until 4.30 p.m. on Tuesday, the 4th April.

In doing so, Mr Speaker, I should like to wish you and the rest of the House a very happy Easter.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 9.40 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

WATER SUPPLIES

Consumption, Source, and Restrictions

176. Mr NANOVIK, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) What drop in water consumption was there in—
 - (a) metropolitan area; and
 - (b) country,
 for the period May 1976/March 1977, and May 1977/March 1978?
- (2) How much in each of the above periods came from underground sources?

- (3) Is he in a position to advise what percentage of householders in the metropolitan area have their own water supply?
- (3) Is it likely the Metropolitan Water Board will lift water restrictions during the coming winter to permit the use of sprinklers?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) (a) Metropolitan—65 367 000 cubic metres, or a drop of 41 per cent.
- (b) The drop in water consumption on the goldfields and agricultural country water areas supplied by Mundaring Weir was 7 272 367 cubic metres, which was a reduction of approximately 31 per cent.
- (2) May, 1976, to March, 1977—Metropolitan 31 550 000 cubic metres; country* nil.
- May, 1977, to March, 1978—Metropolitan 41 612 000 cubic metres; country* nil.

* Answer has been confined to water supplied to country from Mundaring Weir.

- (3) The most recent reliable estimate was on 1st December, 1976, when the proportion was 7.8 per cent.
- (4) Consideration of any easing of the current restrictions will depend upon winter inflow to dams.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Geraldton Committee

177. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

With reference to the Geraldton regional development committee, announced by him last week:

- (1) Why was not a representative of the trade union movement included?
- (2) Does he agree that future development of the region would benefit from a continuation of the good industrial relations record experienced in this area?
- (3) Is he aware that the secretary of the Geraldton Trades and Labor Council, Mr Jack Newman, has been a constructive member of the mid-west regional liaison group which was the forerunner of the development committee?

- (4) As working people will have a major part to play in any future development, will he consider adding at least one representative of the Trades and Labor Council to the development committee?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) and (4) The structure of the regional committees provides for six members nominated by local government authorities and six members nominated by widely diversified community industry and commerce groups within the region.

The people selected are not representatives of any specific organisation within the region.

I believe the committee will energetically and effectively reflect the views of the region and provide well informed advice to the Government.

- (2) and (3) Yes.

I should like to add that the constitution, if we can so call it, or the rules of these regional development committees, which were previously called zone development committees, have existed since the early 1940s; and even during the terms of Labor Governments not a single *par excellence* union representative was nominated to any of these committees because the present manner of representation was seen to be right.

178. *This question was postponed.*

INFLATION AND COST OF LIVING

Rate

179. Mr DAVIES, to the Premier:

- (1) Was he correctly reported in the *Daily News* of 26th January, 1978 as having said with reference to Western Australia's inflation rate, that "Western Australia's higher rate was disappointing but it reflected the relative prosperity of the State, where average earnings also had risen faster than the national average"?
- (2) If so, will he explain how Western Australia's inflation rate, being the highest of any capital city, reflects the relative prosperity of this State, particularly as it is 15% higher than the six capitals' average?
- (3) Is it correct that Perth's increase of 3.2% for the December quarter was mainly due to increased prices for petrol,

milk, bread, electricity and motor vehicle registrations, all of which are subject to Government control?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) Yes.

- (2) It should be apparent that a higher rate of increase in average earnings would be reflected in higher costs. There are, of course, other factors as I have pointed out previously. The higher index figure for food, particularly meat, in Western Australia is a reflection of better returns to producers in this State by comparison with some other States where prices for livestock fell to wholly uneconomic levels during the rural recession. Drought conditions and the severe summer have had and will continue to have a marked effect on seasonal prices for fruit and vegetables.

- (3) The relative contributions of the individual sub-groups comprising the Consumer Price Index for Perth to the change in the index points of the index between the September quarter, 1977, and the December quarter, 1977, in descending order of importance, were "other motor vehicle operating costs" (1.2), "petrol" (0.9), "fuel and light" (0.7), "clothing—women's and girls" (0.5), "local government rates and charges" (0.5) and "rent—government owned dwellings" (0.5). A number of other sub-groups also recorded increases and for further detail I refer the member to the Australian Bureau of Statistics publication, "Consumer Price Index—December Quarter, 1977". The Bureau of Statistics does not break the Consumer Price Index down further than the sub-groups shown in that publication so it is not possible to isolate exactly the contributions of increased prices for petrol, milk, bread, electricity or motor vehicle registrations to the increase in the Consumer Price Index.

FOOD PRICES

Increase

180. Mr DAVIES, to the Treasurer:

- (1) Will he explain why the increase in food prices for Perth over the year ending in January was 13.6% compared with a national average increase for the six State capitals of only 9.7%?

- (2) What action does the Government propose to reduce increases in food prices in Perth to national levels?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) The higher increase in the food group of the Consumer Price Index for Perth in the 12 months ended January, 1978, was primarily attributable to higher increases in the meat and seafoods and fruit and vegetables sub-group indexes. In the 12 months ended January, 1978, the increase in the index for the sub-group "meat and seafoods" for Perth was 16.0 per cent, compared with 9.3 per cent for the six capitals.

For the sub-group "fruit and vegetables" the corresponding increase for Perth was 15.9 per cent and for the six capitals a decrease of 1.9 per cent.

I commented on the factors underlying the higher index figure in this State in my reply to the previous question.

- (2) I would expect that as returns to rural producers in other States improve, prices for rural produce in those States will come more into line with those being realised in Western Australia. Also, a return to more normal weather conditions can be expected to result in lower prices for some seasonal food lines.

NOTE: The February figures released today indicate a closing of the gap between Western Australia and the six capital cities figure.

HOUSING

Aborigines

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

- (1) How many units of accommodation were constructed for Aboriginal applicants by the State Housing Commission in 1976-77?
- (2) How many have been constructed since 30th June, 1977?
- (3) In each case, where were the units constructed?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) 106 units completed in 1976-77.
- (2) To 22nd March, 1978, 16 units of accommodation were completed, and contracts for a further 47 units will be arranged during the financial year. It is proposed to commence development of housing villages at Gogo and Christmas Creek.

- (3) Single detached dwellings:

| | | 1/7/77 to 22/3/78 |
|-------------------------|---------|----------------------|
| | 1976-77 | |
| Geraldton | 2 | nil |
| Meekatharra | 2 | nil |
| Moora | 3 | nil |
| Broome | 2 | nil |
| Collie | nil | 8 |
| Derby | 4 | nil |
| Wyndham | 1 | nil |
| South Hedland | 1 | nil |
| Metropolitan Area | 23 | 8 |
| Total | 38 | 16 |
| Village type dwellings: | | |
| One Arm Point | 26 | nil |
| Looma | 22 | 5 |
| Fitzroy Crossing | 20 | 7 |
| Total | 68 | 12 |

In addition to the preceding information, it should be noted that funds totalling \$900 000 were approved in November, 1976, for the construction of houses for Aborigines under a special housing project in the following towns—

Borden—3 houses including one with granny flat attached.

Tambellup—6 houses including one with granny flat attached.

Albany—1 house.

Gnowangerup—1 house.

Pingelly—3 houses.

Williams—4 houses.

There are five houses on order for Brunswick Junction.

Eleven houses will be available for Moora, which will close the Aboriginal reserve. Six of these houses are being provided by the State Housing Commission and five by the Department for Community Welfare.

Arrangements are in hand for three pensioner units and a caretaker's cottage to be constructed for pensioners at Moora. All servicing has been finalised. The local Aboriginal community was awarded the contract to carry out the levelling and filling associated with this project.

HOUSING

Commonwealth-State Agreement

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

- (1) Will the coming Commonwealth/State housing agreement make major changes in the State Housing Commission's present policy?

- (2) In view of his publicly expressed concern at rumours about State Housing Commission policy in respect to rents and other things, would he please provide the House with a progress report of negotiations about the new Commonwealth/State housing agreement?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) No.
(2) State Ministers have agreed with the proposals and are awaiting a formal agreement.

HOUSING

Stamp Duty

183. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Premier:

Will he give consideration to the abolition of stamp duty on first home purchases?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

This item has been examined on several occasions. The last in May, 1977.

The proposal has not been adopted because—

- (a) the cost to revenue—estimated to be \$10 million for 1977-78.
(b) increased administrative problems and costs involved in investigating and checking of claims to "first home purchase".

HEALTH

Medical Practitioners

184. Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Has Western Australia an under or over supply of medical practitioners at present?
(2) What is the anticipated position given the existing recruitment through migration and medical school graduation in 1979, 1980 and 1981?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) The most recent survey indicates that Western Australia has an adequate supply of medical practitioners and there is no under or over-supply.
(2) The position in 1979, 1980, and 1981 cannot be anticipated as the attitude of the Commonwealth Government to the immigration of medical graduates in the future is not known. The optimum number of medical practitioners in a community is a controversial subject and is being studied currently.

INTEREST RATES

Fluctuation and Building Societies

185. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Treasurer:

- (1) What has been the fluctuation in interest rates for long term and short term bond rates since July 1977?
(2) Does he have any information indicating whether or not all building societies have acted to implement the recent 0.5% decrease in interest rates?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) Interest rates on loans issued since July 1977 were—

| | July 1977 | October 1977 | February 1978 |
|-------------------|------------|--------------|---------------|
| | % | % | % |
| Short term | 9.7 | 9.6 | 8.9 |
| Short-medium term | 10.2 | 10.0 | 9.1 |
| Medium term | 10.4 | 10.2 | 9.2 |
| Long term | not issued | 10.2 | 9.2 |

- (2) The Building Societies Association has advised me that all of the major permanent societies and most of the small societies have agreed to accede to the Government's request for a $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent reduction from previous levels. I am advised that all societies have implemented the reduction on new loans and adjustment of interest on existing loans to owner occupiers is in progress.

HOUSING

Building Approvals

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

- (1) What has been the fluctuation in home building approvals during each of the 12 months to February?
(2) How have approvals varied during January of each year for the past five years?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) and (2) This information is available by reference to the monthly bulletin issued by The Australian Bureau of Statistics.

HOUSING

Funding: State

187. Mr BRIAN BURKE, to the Treasurer:

What amount of State funds has been provided to the State Housing Commission during each of the past three years?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

For the years 1974-75 to 1976-77 there were no allocations from the General Loan Fund to the State Housing Commission. However, the following borrowing allocations were approved to supplement the commission's internal funds.

| | |
|---------|-------------|
| 1974/75 | \$2 000 000 |
| 1975/76 | \$2 000 000 |
| 1976/77 | \$800 000 |

The amounts authorised in each of these years formed part of the Loan Council borrowing allocations for the State in those years.

At the June, 1973, Premiers' Conference and Loan Council meeting the arrangements for housing finance were changed. The Commonwealth entered into an agreement with each State under which the States would receive separate advances for welfare housing in the years 1973-74 to 1977-78 instead of a proportion of its annual Loan Council allocation being earmarked for this purpose. The State's Loan Council allocation was reduced accordingly and, as a result, advances ceased to be made to the commission from the General Loan Fund.

PRE-SCHOOL CENTRES

Levy

188. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Can he confirm that whereas a levy will not apply to four-year-olds attending pre-primary centres, it will continue to be applied to four-year-olds attending community based kindergartens?
- (2) If "Yes", does this measure not run counter to the spirit of his earlier assurances that pressure would not be brought to bear on community based kindergartens to hand over to the department?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) It is not considered that meeting the wishes of the committee of a transferring centre puts pressure on other pre-school centres to transfer.

PRE-PRIMARY CENTRES

Four-year-olds

189. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is he aware that after he had left the meeting for pre-school parents last Monday evening, having stated that four-year-olds would be permitted to attend pre-primary centres where there were insufficient numbers of five-year-olds, the Education Department representative, Mr Quinn, stated that four-year-olds would not be permitted to attend pre-primary centres in the metropolitan area under any circumstances?
- (2) Can he explain the apparent inconsistency between these two statements?
- (3) Will he clearly define departmental policy on four-year-olds attending pre-primary centres throughout the State?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) and (2) There is no inconsistency between any statements made at the seminar referred to, and the policy relating to the admission of 4-year-olds into pre-primary centres is perfectly clear. I advised parents, in answer to a question, that 4-year-olds would continue to be accepted at transferred pre-primary centres where this had been a previous practice, and where 5-year-olds were not excluded as a consequence of 4-year-olds being admitted.

Newly constructed pre-primary centres cater only for 5-year-olds, and this will continue to be so until it is considered that the demand for a year's pre-school experience on a voluntary basis has been satisfied.

In certain isolated instances such as small communities in rural areas, 4-year-olds have been admitted where there are insufficient 5-year-olds, and where the admittance of 4-year-olds provides economic viability which assists in justifying the employment of the teacher. I have repeated these policies publicly on many occasions and I feel the Education Department representative acted correctly in clarifying the point with me.

WATER SUPPLIES

Serpentine and South Dandalup Dams

190. Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife:

Further to my question 71 on Thursday, 16th March, 1978 in which the Minister advised departmental employees collected stock for the commercialisation of marron, will he advise—

- (1) Why are departmental employees being used to collect stock for the commercialisation of marron?
- (2) Exactly how are these marron caught?
- (3) Does any departmental employee receive payment for the sale of the marron so caught?
- (4) If "No", who receives the revenue from this venture?
- (5) As the Minister has stated the water catchment area is being used at the Serpentine Dam for person or persons to take marron, what toilet arrangements have been made for use by such persons in the catchment area?
- (6) What commercial firm or firms are buying the marron?
- (7) Are the marron being purchased sold locally or on the overseas market?

Mr P. V. JONES:

- (1) To provide broodstock for the development of this promising industry.
- (2) By standard dropnets.
- (3) Not apart from their wages.
- (4) Consolidated Revenue Fund.
- (5) The toilets provided at Serpentine Dam for the use of visitors have been made available for the marron operation. The board's ranger supervises the hygiene aspects involved in the operation.
- (6) Marron are being sold to holders of fish farm licences requiring broodstock.
- (7) The marron are to be held by the purchasers as broodstock.

ROAD TRANSPORT

Frozen Goods

191. Mr McIVER, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) As private road hauliers now delivering freezer consignments to country areas previously carted by Westrail are charging \$1.50 per individual consignment plus freight charge—
 - (a) under which section of the Act is the charge made; and
 - (b) would the Minister take the necessary action to have the charge stopped?
- (2) Do officers of the Transport Commission check vehicles carting freezer consignments to country areas to make sure refrigeration equipment meets with Public Health regulations?
- (3) If "Yes", when, and what was the result of such examination?
- (4) Will the inspections continue?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) (a) Regulation No. 12 of the regulations of the Transport Commission Act, amongst other things, provides—

12. (1) It is a condition of every licence that—

... (b) charges as approved by the Commissioner from time to time be made for the carriage of passengers or goods on or in the vehicle in respect of which the licence is issued and, in the absence of such approval, the charges set out in the application for the licence apply;

- (b) No.
- (2) Not as a general rule. Whilst it is not the function of the Transport Commission to supervise public health regulations, as a matter of general interest checks are made if and when complaints are received.
- (3) Whilst this information is not readily available, every opportunity is taken by Transport Commission officers to inspect vehicles carrying temperature-controlled goods and if any deficiencies are observed, they are referred to the contractor for rectification.
- (4) Yes—if and when required.

RAILWAY CROSSINGS

Flashing Lights

192. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

Would he advise to whom are submissions made regarding installation of traffic light signals at rail level crossings?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

The Chairman,
Railway Crossing Protection Committee,
Main Roads Department,
East Perth.

ROAD TRANSPORT

Meekatharra-Mullewa

193. Mr McIVER, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

Will the Minister table all tenders submitted to the Transport Commission regarding transport of freight to the Murchison region, which will be introduced when the Mullewa-Meekatharra line closes?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

No. Traditionally, rates offered by unsuccessful tenderers are treated as confidential between the Commissioner of Transport and the tenderer

ROAD

York By-pass

194. Mr McIVER, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) Have plans for the by-pass road at York been finalised?
- (2) If "No", would he advise the reasons?
- (3) If (1) is "Yes", when can it be anticipated work will commence?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) and (3) The alignment of a York by-pass has been selected but before the proposal is finalised discussions with the local authority, detailed survey and design will be required. Preliminary estimates indicate that major expenditure of approximately \$480 000 would be involved so a decision has to be made as to whether the construction of the by-pass is warranted in the near future.

PRE-PRIMARY CENTRE

Thornlie School

195. Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is he aware of the large increase in the pre-primary school children in the Thornlie area north of Spencer Road?
- (2) Is he further aware there are no pre-primary facilities available to these children?
- (3) If answer to (1) and (2) is "Yes", will he take immediate steps to establish a pre-primary centre at the existing Thornlie Primary School?
- (4) If not, why not?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Within two kilometres of the Thornlie Primary School there are two pre-primary centres, Brookman and South Thornlie, which between them have vacancies for 41 five-year-olds as at today.
- (3) and (4) A State-wide analysis of pre-primary needs is being undertaken at present. The needs for additional facilities in the Thornlie area will be considered when the results of the survey are available.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES

Street Lighting: Berberis Way and The Retreat

196. Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

- (1) Has the State Energy Commission plans to install street lighting in Berberis Way and The Retreat, Forrestfield?
- (2) If "Yes", when will this installation be finalised?
- (3) If (1) is "No", will he give full reasons for this decision?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) District work priorities schedule work to be carried out during April, 1978.
- (3) Not applicable.

HOUSING

Forrestfield Development

197. Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister for Housing:

Further to my question (10) on Wednesday, 15th March, 1978, as he has agreed to pay compensation to those people affected by dust from the housing development in Forrestfield—

- (1) Will his department make an immediate assessment of the damage done to their homes and not wait until the development is completed?
- (2) If "No", will the assessment be carried out when the development is finalised?
- (3) Will he give his exact reasons for wanting to wait until the development is completed?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Yes, when the land development is finalised.
- (3) While every effort is being made to prevent any repetition of the dust problem, it is felt that a proper and final assessment can only be made when there is no longer any prospect of reoccurrence.

HEALTH

Vietnamese Refugees

198. Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) In view of some of the reported diseases being brought into the country by Vietnamese refugees, is he assured that all refugees coming into Western Australia have had the necessary faecal and urine blood samples taken from them to ensure that such diseases as cholera, typhoid and other intestinal diseases are not present on entry to the State?
- (2) If "Yes", exactly what tests are taken from these people?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Some refugees are examined by the Commonwealth Health Department overseas before immigration, but there has been no opportunity to examine the refugees arriving by boat off the north-west coast before entry into Western Australia. Public Health Department officers examine and test all refugees

whether examined by the Commonwealth Health Department or not and I am satisfied that they present no significant public health problem.

CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Star Swamp Area

199. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister for Housing:

Would he table any departmental documents, studies and findings that may have been made regarding Star swamp and its surrounding bushland?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

No.

SCHOOLS

Swan Electorate

200. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister for Education:

Would he please advise regarding the following:

- (a) a listing of all schools in the Swan Electorate;
- (b) names of the principals and deputy principals of the schools concerned;
- (c) the total number of students enrolled in each school for the years 1976-77 and 1977-78; and
- (d) the total number of teachers in each school for the same period?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

This information will be supplied to the member in writing.

POLICE STATION

High Wycombe-Forrestfield Area

201. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

- (1) Is he aware that under a proposed development scheme in the High Wycombe/Forrestfield area, an increase in population from 5 000 to 11 000 will take place?
- (2) Is it the Government's intention to provide a police station in this fast growing area?
- (3) In view of the increased vandalism taking place in the High Wycombe area, as reported to him by the High Wycombe/Maida Vale Progress Association, what action, if any, has been taken to alleviate the situation?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) I understand that the scheme proposes to provide 1 600 blocks, the first becoming available in 1979.
- (2) No. The practice of establishing police stations in all suburbs is uneconomical and brings about excessive duplication of static duties, which in turn restricts manpower resources.
- (3) Recent inquiry into this report reveals that there has been no increase in the incidence of vandalism.
Regular patrols will continue, and will be increased according to the needs of the area.

RAILWAYS

Housing

202. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

In regard to the disposal of Houses owned by Westrail to the present occupants or other interested railway workers, would the Minister advise the methods at present adopted for the disposal of same?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

First right of refusal is given to employee tenants on the basis of current evaluation as supplied by the Under Secretary for Works.

If the offer is refused and the tenant vacates, the property is allotted to next suitable applicant for employee housing, with a desire to purchase.

RAILWAYS

Collie-Brunswick Junction

203. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Will the existing rail link between Collie and Brunswick Junction have to be upgraded if the Alwest project proceeds?
- (2) If "Yes", what upgrading would be envisaged?
- (3) If the existing route is to be used, but upgraded, would the Minister outline the action the Government intends to take to protect the environment adjacent to the railway reserve and thus preserve what is recognised as a scenically beautiful and unspoiled area?
- (4) What is the name of the seasonal river that forms part of the river valley traversed by the aforementioned rail link?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) to (3) No.
- (4) Lunenburg.

FISHERIES

Whaling

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

- (1) Did the Federal Government consult with the Western Australian Government prior to its announcement that an inquiry will be held into whaling in Australia?
- (2) If so, how and when?
- (3) Will the Minister ask the Federal Minister for Primary Industry to give members of this Parliament a copy of the preliminary assessment of the effects of a closure of the whaling company on the economy of the Albany district when it becomes available from the Federal departments involved in making the assessment?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) Yes—with the Premier.
- (2) By telex and telephone in the week previous to the announcement.
- (3) Yes, if a public document of such a nature is produced.

"R" FILMS

Drive-ins

205. Mr PEARCE, to the Chief Secretary:

Does the Government have any power over the showing of "R"-rated movies at suburban drive-ins where they can be readily seen from neighbouring streets and houses?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

No. The Censorship of Films Act provides for the classification of films and for certain restraints upon the screening of restricted exhibition films. However, the Act's ambit is confined to the grounds of picture theatres.

There is an Australia-wide problem in this area and at present a sub-committee of State Ministers headed by the New South Wales Minister for Services is engaged in discussions with film industry representatives in an endeavour to find a satisfactory solution.

ROAD*Gosnells-Beechboro Freeway*

206. Mr PEARCE, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

- (1) Is it intended to re-align the Gosnells/Beechboro Freeway along a path different from the originally gazetted route at or near the point at which the proposed Freeway crosses the Canning River?
- (2) If so, will he table a map of the proposed realignment?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) An extension of the Beechboro/Gosnells Highway between Gosnells and Kelmscott is under investigation as part of the South-East Corridor Study currently being undertaken for the MRPA.

Any proposals for realignment would be included in a report to be released for public comment. If it is decided to proceed with a realignment, this would require an amendment to the Metropolitan Region Scheme which would be processed in the normal way. The amendment procedure gives the public an opportunity to make submissions.

- (2) A map will be included in the report for public release referred to in (1).

FRAIL AGED PERSONS*Institutions*

207. Mr PEARCE, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) (a) What provision currently exists for the care of frail aged in the City of Gosnells area;
- (b) would he list the institutions and indicate for each—
 - (i) the number of persons accommodated;
 - (ii) the length of the waiting list; and
 - (iii) the source of capital and recurrent funding?
- (2) (a) What provision currently exists for care of the frail aged in the Shire of Armadale area;
- (b) would he list the institutions and indicate for each—
 - (i) the number of persons accommodated;
 - (ii) the length of the waiting list; and
 - (iii) the source of capital and recurrent funding?

- (3) (a) What provision currently exists for care of the frail aged in the Town of Canning area;
- (b) would he list the institutions and indicate for each—
 - (i) the number of persons accommodated;
 - (ii) the length of the waiting list; and
 - (iii) the source of capital and recurrent funding?
- (4) What plans does the Government have to provide facilities for the frail aged in—
 - (a) the City of Gosnells; and
 - (b) the Shire of Armadale-Kelmscott?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) (a) Medical care through general practitioners.
Home help service.
Meals on Wheels.
Silver Chain Nursing Service.
Chiropody Clinic.
Community Health Nursing Service.
Home library service.
- (b) There are no residential institutions specifically for frail aged persons.
- (2) (a) Medical care through general practitioners.
Home help service.
Meals on Wheels.
Silver Chain Nursing Service.
Chiropody Service.
Community Health Nursing Service.
Home library service.
Free municipal transport service.
Grocery delivery service.
- (b) There are no residential institutions specifically for frail aged persons.
- (3) (a) Medical care through general practitioners.
Home help service.
Meals on Wheels.
Silver Chain Nursing Service.
Community Health Nursing Service.
- (b) J. Murray Homes for Frail Aged.
 - (i) Persons accommodated—38.
 - (ii) Waiting list—15.
 - (iii) Capital costs were met as follows:—
Department of Social Security —\$200 000.
State Government—\$50 000.

Lotteries Commission—
\$50 000.

Local donations—\$100 000.

Total—\$400 000.

Recurrent costs are met from charges for accommodation and allowances paid by the Department of Social Security.

- (4) The State Government has no plans to establish residential institutions in the Armadale-Kelmscott and Gosnells areas but encourages and supports local government, religious and voluntary bodies prepared to undertake this work. The State pays a furniture subsidy of two-thirds of the original cost to all non-profit organisations which establish aged or handicapped persons accommodation.

The Extended Care Department of the Royal Perth Hospital which looks after the needs of the southern corridor, is active in promoting home help schemes for aged and handicapped persons who need support services to enable people to maintain themselves at home and avoid the necessity for institutional care.

SCHOOL

Australind

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

- (1) Is a school to be built at Australind?
- (2) What stage has the planning reached?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) and (2) No final decision on the construction of a school at Australind has been made, but forward planning in relation to sites and date of establishment are proceeding.

STATE ENERGY COMMISSION

Coal Contracts

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

- (1) Do contracts exist for the supply of coal to the State Energy Commission?
- (2) If "No", under what basis is coal being purchased by the State Energy Commission?
- (3) When will the new coal contracts be finalised?
- (4) At what date did the last coal contracts end?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1), (2) and (4) Yes. Coal contracts do not expire until the end of June, 1978.
- (3) Negotiations are proceeding regarding new coal contracts.

MINING

Coal at Eneabba

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

- (1) Did he read the article in the *Sunday Times* of 27th November, 1977, headed "Big coal find at Eneabba"?
- (2) Will he advise Parliament of the actual position regarding proven reserves in the area?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The position with regard to coal reserves in the Eneabba area is unchanged since my answer to your previous question of 15th August, 1977. The indicated (but not "proven") reserves of the Eneabba area amount to about 37 million tonnes.

ENERGY

Task Force

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

- (1) Has he agreed to convert a portion of Government car fleets from petrol to liquid petroleum gas as part of a national energy conservation programme?
- (2) Have the Federal and State Governments agreed to a special all-Governments task force to be set up to examine ways of implementing a new energy policy?
- (3) If a special task force is to be set up, who will be its Western Australian representatives?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

- (1) No, but a programme is under consideration by the SEC and MTT.
- (2) Yes, through the Australian Minerals and Energy Council.
- (3) Yes. Senior officers of the State Energy Commission and Mines Department under my direction.

ELECTRICITY CHARGES

Churches

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

Will the Government give consideration to altering the rate of electricity charges levied on churches from the general and

industrial rate to the domestic rate where the use of electricity is for church purposes?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

Charges for electricity are progressively being aligned with the costs determined by the demand and load pattern of each type of customer.

The demand and load pattern of the typical church cannot be aligned with that of the typical domestic customer hence the tariffs will necessarily be different.

MEAT INDUSTRY

Employees

213. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) What was the total average number of workers employed in the meat industry in each of the past five years?
- (2) What is the present number of meat industry employees in Western Australia?
- (3) How many meat industry employees have been retrenched in 1978?
- (4) How many meat industry employees is it anticipated will be retrenched in the next three months?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) to (4) This general information is not known to my Department.

Concerning the Commission's abattoirs, the average number of meat industry employees are:

Midland Division—600.

Robb's Division—498.

The number of such employees retrenched in 1978 is:

Midland Division—185.

Robb's Division—32.

The need for further retrenchments will depend upon the future availability of stock throughput.

WATER SUPPLIES

Turbidity, and Effect of Logging and Mining

214. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) From which dams is the metropolitan water supply obtained?
- (2) How frequently are the streams supplying these dams measured for turbidity?

- (3) What is the maximum level of turbidity on the Jackson scale which is acceptable for the metropolitan water supply?
- (4) On how many occasions in the past two years has the turbidity level exceeded the accepted maximum?
- (5) Are any of the catchments of dams supplying the metropolitan water supply considered to be affected by logging or mining operations to the extent that the quality of water running off is affected, and if so, which catchments and to what extent are they affected?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) Victoria, Canning, Churchmans, Serpentine (main and pipehead), South Dandalup, Mundaring, Wungong and North Dandalup pipeheads.
- (2) The number of streams feeding into these storages is so great that regular monitoring of each stream is not possible. However, where catchment activity of any nature is likely to cause turbidity then monitoring is carried out on a weekly basis. In addition, some turbidity sampling is carried out as part of a catchment investigation.
- (3) The Australian Water Resources Council recommendations are:—

25 Jackson Turbidity Units (JTU) for untreated water and five for treated water.

- (4) Turbidity at the level of 25 JTUs is not measured, therefore this information is not available. Action to shut off water sources is initiated at the level of 15 JTUs and on this basis Wungong pipehead has been shut off twenty times and North Dandalup pipehead once in the last two years.
- (5) No.

MIDLAND AND ROBB JETTY ABATTOIRS

Facilities

215. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) On what basis is the charge for use of boning room and other such facilities at Midland and Robb Jetty abattoirs determined?
- (2) At what level are present charges set?
- (3) Over the past five years, on how many occasions were increases in boning room and other such charges made, and by how much on each occasion?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) The commission engaged the services of an independent valuer in 1976 to review the level of charges of the commission's boning room and other such facilities.
- (2) The rentals per week range from \$89 for the smallest room to \$350 for the largest room.
- (3) This information is not readily available but will be provided to the member as soon as possible.

MIDLAND AND ROBB JETTY ABATTOIRS

Facilities

216. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) How many firms or individual operators use the service/works abattoir facilities at—
 - (a) Midland Junction; and
 - (b) Robb Jetty, at the present time?
- (2) Which are the seven largest operators using each of these service works, and what is the annual capacity which each has access to?
- (3) How many private operators have boning and packing facilities at—
 - (a) Midland Junction; and
 - (b) Robb Jetty?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) (a) 42;
(b) 7.
- (2) This information is confidential to the operators concerned.
- (3) (a) 5;
(b) 1.

CATTLE

Slaughtering: Number

217. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) What is the total number of cattle in the southern region of Western Australia, slaughtered in each of the past five years?
- (2) How many cattle is it projected will be slaughtered in the southern region of Western Australia in each of the next five years?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) and (2) Number of cattle slaughtered in southern region in each of last five years—

| | '000 |
|---------|-------------|
| 1973-74 | 427. |
| 1974-75 | 482. |
| 1975-76 | 714. |
| 1976-77 | 840. |
| 1977-78 | 760 (est.). |
| 1978-79 | 536 " |
| 1979-80 | 450 " |
| 1980-81 | 460 " |
| 1981-82 | 470 " |
| 1982-83 | 480 " |

Includes cattle from pastoral areas other than the Kimberley region.

CATTLE

Slaughtering: Number

218. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) How many cattle for slaughter for beef have been produced in the south-west of Western Australia in each of the past five years?
- (2) How many cattle for slaughter for beef is it anticipated will be produced in the south-west of Western Australia in each of the next five years?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) and (2) The figures below are estimates of number of calves born less deaths—

| | '000 |
|---------|------|
| 1973-74 | 490. |
| 1974-75 | 535. |
| 1975-76 | 610. |
| 1976-77 | 620. |
| 1977-78 | 530. |
| 1978-79 | 446. |
| 1979-80 | 435. |
| 1980-81 | 450. |
| 1981-82 | 465. |
| 1982-83 | 480. |

W.A. less all pastoral regions.

STATE FORESTS

Bauxite Mining: Area Involved

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

- (1) Adverting to part (3) of question 89, of 1978, what is the total area of State forest which is expected to be mined for bauxite or used in any way in connection with bauxite mining operations if the propositions for expansion put forward by Alcoa Limited are achieved?

(2) In what year is this expected to be?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

- (1) It is not appropriate to speculate on what area will be involved until Government has decided on the level of mining following negotiations with the companies concerned. When these decisions have been announced it will be possible to provide the member with a figure.
- (2) No date can be nominated for the reasons given in (1).

ABATTOIRS

Cattle, Sheep and Lambs: Slaughtering Capacity

220. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) What is the existing slaughter capacity currently available in Western Australian abattoirs for—
 - (a) cattle; and
 - (b) sheep and lambs?
- (2) On present projections, when is it anticipated that a further export abattoir will need to be built in Western Australia?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) (a) and (b) In the agricultural areas, capacity is in the order of 860 000 per annum for cattle and 9 million per annum for sheep.
- (2) The Government has undertaken to provide a guarantee to establish an export abattoir at Esperance because of the special regional considerations in this area.

On present projections the slaughtering capacity of export abattoirs for cattle, sheep and lambs is expected to be adequate in the immediate future.

MEDICAL FACILITIES

Amending Legislation

221. Mr TAYLOR, to the Minister for Health:

With respect to the content of the Health Act Amendment Bill of 1977, and particularly that part which sought to give local authorities the power to guarantee loans for the construction of medical facilities—

- (a) is it intended to reintroduce like legislation this session;
- (b) if "Yes", in the present session or the budget session; and

(c) also is the legislation likely to be reintroduced in the same form or in an amended form?

Mr RIDGE replied:

The answer to the question is "Yes" but I would like to qualify that to some extent by indicating that the proposed legislation is still under consideration by the Government at this stage. I simply indicate that we expect the legislation to be proceeded with. If that is the case, hopefully it will be proceeded with during the present session and in an amended form.

COCKBURN SOUND

Unauthorised Discharge

222. Mr TAYLOR, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

With respect to those waters adjacent to industry in the South Fremantle-Coogee Beach area and under the control of the Fremantle Port Authority:

- (1) How many complaints have been received by the Fremantle Port Authority of unauthorised discharge by industry into Cockburn Sound in the period since 1st January, 1978?
- (2) On what dates is it suggested such discharges occurred?
- (3) Which such reportings were investigated?
- (4) How many prosecutions were initiated from such reportings?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) The one complaint received related to fatty substances in the water of Owen Anchorage and the adjacent beach near Coogee Beach Reserve.
- (2) Saturday, 4th March, 1978.
- (3) The reporting was investigated by a Fremantle Port Authority Inspector.
- (4) None. Investigations revealed insufficient grounds for prosecution.

WATER SUPPLIES

Salinity: Effect of Bauxite Mining

223. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister representing the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

- (1) Have any studies been carried out by or for the Government suggesting that bauxite mining and the associated spread of dieback disease will cause increases in the salinity of—

- (a) water supply catchment areas currently being used for Perth supply; and
 - (b) water supply catchment areas under scrutiny for possible future metropolitan supply?
- (2) What studies are they and will the Minister table any relevant reports?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) and (2) Studies carried out under the Hunt Steering Committee have indicated that clearing of forest for any purpose in the western high rainfall areas will not cause an increase in the salinity of runoff water.

Theoretical studies based on the South Dandalup Dam suggest slight increases in salinity dependent upon the form of rehabilitation undertaken and field studies are underway to test this.

I refer the member to the Report of the Hunt Steering Committee tabled by the Premier on 6th October, 1976 and table the following reports for his further information:

Chloride Balance of Some Farmed and Forested Catchments in Southwestern Australia, by A. J. Peck and D. H. Hurle.

Simulation of the Effects of Bauxite Mining and Dieback Disease on River Salinity, by A. J. Peck, R. A. Hewer and G. C. Slessar.

I seek leave to table the documents referred to.

The papers were tabled (see paper No. 106).

LAPORTE TITANIUM

Effluent and Sulphur Emissions

224. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Health: Further to my questions last week relating to Laporte Titanium would he please advise what actions have subsequently been taken by his department and what are the results of that action(s)?

Mr RIDGE replied:

An officer of the Public Health Department visited the area on 15th March and made an inspection of some nearby

properties. As a result, further inspection will be made this week with an officer of the Department of Agriculture. A full report on the results of the inspections is not yet available.

WATER SUPPLIES

Wellington Dam

225. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) What is the capacity of Wellington dam?
- (2) What is the amount of water presently contained in the dam?
- (3) For what purpose(s) is water from this dam currently being used?
- (4) What is the current daily draw on the dam?
- (5) At what rate per month for each of the last 24 months did the dam receive water?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) 185 million cubic metres.
- (2) 70 307 000 cubic metres.
- (3) Water is supplied to the Collie irrigation district and the great southern towns water supply.
- (4) 450 000 cubic metres.
- (5) This information is not readily available.

COCKBURN SOUND

Fish Deaths

226. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister representing the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

Further to my question (28) of 1978, why is it that a large number of fish deaths occur and present a situation where identification of cause is described as impossible?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

Because reports are usually received long after the waters which caused the mortalities have changed and there is no indication of what to look for in the often grossly decayed bodies to isolate the possible causes.

COCKBURN SOUND

Release of Fatty Globules

227. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Further to question (29) of 1978 has any charge been laid against Anchorage Butchers and, if so, what is the nature of the charge?

- (2) In view of what has now become an all too common occurrence in terms of releasing pollutants into Cockburn Sound, will he outline the avenues of action open to the Government to preclude this type of release in the future?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Action may be taken under the Port Authority Act, 1902-1969 or the Health Act 1911-1976. As the member is aware, the Government is concerned about the situation and has commissioned a general study of Cockburn Sound by the Department of Conservation and Environment and a special study to find an alternative method of disposing of the industrial discharges from the food processing plants.

LAPORTE TITANIUM

Effluent

228. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister representing the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

- (1) Further to his answer to question (30) of 1978 is it a fact that radium is a component of the waste?
- (2) If "Yes", in what proportion is it found?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) Radium is present in trace quantities as a result of traces of slightly radioactive material present in the ilmenite feed stock.
- (2) The precise radium content is unknown however tests undertaken by the company indicate that contamination is well below that accepted for potable water by the World Health Organisation.

LAPORTE TITANIUM

Effluent

229. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister representing the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

- (1) Further to my question (31) of 1978 what is the precise extent of the seepage?
- (2) What methods of containment are being considered?
- (3) Has the seepage contaminated the water table?
- (4) If so, what length of time is necessary to resolve the situation before the contaminated material is expected to reach the Leschenault estuary?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) The precise extent of seepage is not known but as previously advised, the test boring indicates that the contaminated material is confined to a seepage path 30 metres wide.
- (2) Laporte Aust. Pty. Ltd., is planning to construct a trench to intercept the seepage inside the factory site. The seepage will then be pumped back into the effluent disposal system.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) Contaminated material is already reaching Leschenault Estuary as pointed out by the member in his previous question that the stain was in the estuary.

TRAFFIC COUNTS

Old Coast Road

230. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

Further to question (41) of 1978 are figures available to indicate the number of vehicles on a Friday before a long weekend for the same road?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

Average number of vehicles on Fridays preceding five long weekends—4 198.

HEALTH

Tailings Dam at Baldvis

231. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Further to my question (110) of 16th March, 1978, why has only one reading been provided?
- (2) If the readings provided are the only ones available, why has the Government not taken further readings at regular intervals in view of the high readings compared to levels acceptable by the World Health Organisation?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) Only one reading of each sample was taken.
- (2) The figures given in answer to question 110 are the upper limits of radium 226 calculated from the gross gamma count. It is certain that more accurate measurement of radium will show much lower levels and be within the World Health Organisation standards. It should be pointed out that the levels found are similar to those likely to be found in natural waters elsewhere in Australia.

More accurate measurement of radium are expensive, however, I have arranged for this to be done.

There is little point in taking water samples for radioactive analysis at too frequent intervals, as radioactive levels in water are very unlikely to change significantly over a period of several years.

HIGH SCHOOL

Safety Bay

232. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Education:

In view of the Government's advocated policy of "buy Western Australian made" could he advise—

- (1) Is it a fact that four or five aluminium roller doors for the Safety Bay High School were made in and purchased from Queensland?
- (2) That these doors arrived dented and had to be sent back?
- (3) That when returned were found to be too big and had to be sent back again?
- (4) If "Yes", why does this Government apparently not adhere to its advocated policy?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) to (4) Four anodised aluminium roller security shutter doors were bought from South Australia for the Safety Bay High School. Such doors, with the span necessary, are not made in Western Australia, and aluminium security doors are required in this instance because of the corrosion of steel which occurs near the coast.

One door panel was slightly damaged and this was rectified locally. The doors were all of a satisfactory size, in fact, they were fractionally small, but the contractor adjusted the external framework to accommodate them.

The Government strongly advocates and supports the use of Western Australian made products but, in this case, there is no local supplier.

However, the Education Department, in conjunction with the Public Works Department, is seeking alternatives to maximise the use of WA made products.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT LAND

Hillman

233. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Does the department or the Government own land in Hillman currently designated for school use?
- (2) What is the size of the block concerned?
- (3) Precisely where is the block located?
- (4) Is the department planning to dispose of the land by sale or other means?
- (5) If "Yes" has consideration been given to giving the land to the Rockingham Shire Council for the purpose of erecting a community based facility?
- (6) If "No" to (5), will he consider approaching the shire with a view to giving or selling the land concerned?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) The only land held for school use in Hillman is occupied by the Hillman Primary School.
- (2) 4.099 2 hectares.
- (3) Unnaro Street.
- (4) No.
- (5) and (6) Not relevant.

ADOPTIONS

Birth Certificates

234. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Community Welfare:

- (1) Which Government departments have access to the certified birth certificate of an adopted person?
- (2) Under what circumstances can an adopted person obtain access to his/her certified birth certificate or secondary birth certificate?
- (3) Can an adopted person obtain his/her original birth certificate?
- (4) (a) Has an approach been made to him by the Australian President of Jig Saw International to discuss adoption laws; and
(b) what was the result of that approach?
- (5) Is he considering any changes to the adoption laws along the lines requested by Jig Saw International?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) to (3) Questions (1), (2) and (3) are the responsibility of my colleague the Chief Secretary as the matter of access to birth certificates are controlled by the Registrar General's office.

- (4) The Australian president and two local members of Jigsaw International met with officers of my department on 8th March. There was an exchange of views on adoption practices and procedures. Opinion and views were expressed by Jigsaw on the desirability of releasing adoption information of a confidential nature to certain individuals and organisations in certain circumstances.
- (5) There are no proposals at this stage to change our adoption laws and practices to meet the opinions and view of Jigsaw International.

BLACKWOOD RIVER

Channel Markers

235. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) Is his department aware that some markers indicating the channel entrance to the Blackwood River are non-existent and is causing boat owners some anxiety?
- (2) Can he advise when it is intended to have this navigation aid suitably marked?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) This work was programmed for January and all materials have been assembled. The divers who were to have carried out the work were diverted to more important priorities and it will now be done in the latter half of April.

BEEKEEPING

Drought Relief

236. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Has his department carried out any survey to ascertain the effect of drought on the apiculture industry?
- (2) Can he advise to what extent beekeepers have been affected through loss of honey production and the need for supplementary feeding of bees because of drought conditions?
- (3) How many apiarists have been disadvantaged?
- (4) Is he able to advise whether the Government can assist disadvantaged persons in this industry and, if so, by what means?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) to (4) This matter is currently being investigated by my department with a view to providing assistance where the need is identified.

With your indulgence, Mr Speaker, if I may elaborate on that answer I have had information to hand since the answer was prepared and I would confidently expect we should be able to make some announcement in this regard in the next day or two.

FARMERS

Drought Relief

237. Mr DAVIES, to the Treasurer:

- (1) How much has the State Government outlayed in the provision of concessional loans to farmers in drought declared areas in Western Australia for this financial year?
- (2) From which division of Consolidated Revenue have the funds for concessional loans been taken?
- (3) How much did the State Government budget for this financial year to provide concessional loans to farmers in drought declared areas of Western Australia?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) At the end of last week 427 loans with a total value of \$9 604 000 had been approved. A further 379 applications were still being examined by the Rural and Industries Bank.
- (2) and (3) Funds for concessional loans are provided from within the standing arrangements between the Commonwealth and the State for natural disaster assistance. Under these arrangements, the State is required to contribute \$1.5 million in a year and the Commonwealth provides the balance of money required. The State contribution will come from Consolidated Revenue Fund under Division 20, Item 106 where \$2 million has been provided. The extra amount of \$500 000 is to meet other natural disaster payments that do not qualify for Commonwealth assistance.

LAND TAX AND PROBATE DUTY

Estimate

238. Mr DAVIES, to the Treasurer:

- (1) In view of cash receipts for land tax for the eight months of this financial year totalling \$12 322 179 and because the

total financial year estimate is only \$12 500 000, will he now produce the revised figure of this year's estimate for land tax?

- (2) Will he also provide the revised figure for this financial year's estimate probate duty receipts, as they have already exceeded his previous budget estimate by \$410 176?
- (3) Will he also provide a revised figure for the total taxation receipts which the State expects to receive at the end of this financial year?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) \$14 million.
- (2) \$13 million.
- (3) \$270.7 million against a budget estimate of \$265.6 million.

These figures are, of course, subject to the usual and necessary reservations associated with all estimates which can vary quickly with changing circumstances.

HOUSING

Funding: State

239. Mr DAVIES, to the Treasurer:

Was an allocation of \$3 million to the State Housing Commission forthcoming from the Consolidated Revenue Fund or the General Loan Fund?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

The additional allocation of \$3 million to the State Housing Commission is to be provided from the General Loan Fund. As a result of an improvement in transactions on the Consolidated Revenue Fund in the first six months of the year, the Government has decided to pay to the General Loan Fund, interest earnings on short-term investments which it had previously proposed to take to revenue.

This action is in line with the Government's overall financial policy which I explained when the Budget was presented to Parliament; namely, to monitor our Consolidated Revenue Fund Budget closely, and to be prepared to provide the maximum amount possible for the capital works programme and other employment generating activity.

ELECTORAL

Kimberley By-election

240. Mr JAMIESON, to the Chief Secretary:

- (1) How many section 122 votes were applied for at the Kimberley by-election held on 17th December, 1977?
- (2) How many of these votes were admitted to the scrutiny?
- (3) Was this an unusually high number of applications?
- (4) If (3) is "Yes" what was considered the cause?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) 534 at 20 polling places.
 - (2) 17.
 - (3) and (4) No. In the general election held on 19/2/77 the number of votes applied for under section 122A was 532 at 21 polling places. The number admitted was 11.
- In the general election held on 30/3/74 the number applied for was 308 at 13 polling places. The number admitted was 1.

RECREATION

Kununurra Sports and Recreation Club

241. Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for the North West:

- (1) Is it a fact that the Kununurra Sports and Recreation Club is experiencing dire financial problems?
- (2) Why did the Minister for Local Government refuse to help this club by allowing property on which the club's amenities are constructed to be used for financial security?
- (3) What has been the general financial position of this club during its existence?
- (4) What has been the reason for the deteriorating financial situation?
- (5) Will he investigate methods of keeping this most essential facility of the district in a reasonably viable condition?

Mr Speaker's ruling:

I advise that question 241 is out of order. Parts (1), (3) (4) and (5) are inadmissible because the Minister has no responsibility for the affairs of a private social group.

Part (2) of the question possibly could be rephrased and directed to the Minister for Local Government.

HOUSING

Naval Base

242. Mr TAYLOR, to the Minister for Lands:

With respect to those houses on leasehold land at Naval Base, which leases expire on 31st March, 1978, will she allow those lessees who are making genuine efforts to have their homes removed to alternate locations but because of problems beyond their control may not be able to do so before 31st March, additional time to complete their arrangements?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

The department has received applications to defer removal of structures but none has been in the category suggested. Having regard to advices individually sent to lessees on 14th September, 1977, and again on 29th December, 1977, there should not be any such cases. Should any be brought to notice, a short extension may be considered.

HEALTH

Canned Food

243. Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister for Health:

In view of the apparently enormous number of cans containing food which is damaged daily in chain stores, will he advise—

- (1) What action does his department take to ensure none is sold which has split?
- (2) Will he further advise what happens to those cans which are split and the food contaminated or spoilt?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) Departmental officers, and local health authority officers, regularly monitor retail outlets and warehouses for damaged cans. Public Health Department officers also examine all imported foods arriving by ship, rail and road transport.
- (2) Damaged or split cans are condemned, seized and destroyed by incineration or disposal at land fill sites under supervision of a health officer.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Star Swamp Area

1. Mr SKIDMORE, to the Minister for Housing:

My question without notice relates to question 199 on today's notice paper. It appears from the answer supplied by the Minister that studies have been made, but the findings have not been tabled.

Would the Minister make arrangements for me to peruse those documents at the State Housing Commission?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

I am not aware of the documents to which the honourable member is referring. If he will confer with me later I will see what can be done.

LICENSED FISHERMEN

Number, and Tonnages Caught and Processed

2. Mr BLAICKIE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife:

- (1) Would he advise the number of licensed fishermen on the south coast—that is, Esperance to Windy Harbour—holding each category of licence; that is, abalone, salmon, rock lobster etc.?
- (2) What processors are permitted to operate, on what species, and what is the locality of each base of operation?
- (3) What tonnages of—
 - (a) salmon;
 - (b) tuna;
 have been caught on the south coast in each year since 1974?
- (4) What percentage of the total catch in each year since 1974 was processed by works on—
 - (a) south coast;
 - (b) west coast?
- (5) What price per tonne was paid by—
 - (a) south coast;
 - (b) west coast processors
 for salmon in each year since 1974?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

The Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife has provided the following information—

- (1) Number of licensed fishermen in area from Esperance to Windy Harbour—

Abalone, 14; Salmon, 25 (Limited entry licences).

Rock lobster, 14 (These fishermen also have a wet fish licence).

Wet fish, 112 (This figure excludes the 14 rock lobster fishermen).

- (2) Albany Bait Producers—All species except western rock lobster, salmon and tuna but they can process the offal of salmon and tuna.

Australian Seafood Producers and West Ocean Canning (Esperance)—All species except western rock lobster and salmon.

Hunts Canning Pty. Ltd. (Esperance)—All species except rock lobster, abalone and salmon.

Hunts Canning Pty. Ltd., (Albany)—All species of fish.

SAFCOL (Esperance)—All species except rock lobster, abalone and salmon.

Southern Ocean Fish Processors (Albany)—All species except rock lobster, Australian salmon and all species of tuna.

Tidelands Research and Development (Denmark)—All species except western rock lobster.

West Ocean Canning (Albany)—Those species required for further processing at their Perth processing establishment except rock lobster, marron and salmon.

- (3) (a) Salmon tonnages

| Year | South Coast | West Coast | Total |
|------|-------------|------------|-------|
| 1974 | 984 | 501 | 1 485 |
| 1975 | 968 | 341 | 1 309 |
| 1976 | 939 | 177 | 1 116 |
| 1977 | 1 321 | 119 | 1 440 |

- (b) Tuna tonnages

| Year | Albany | Esperance | Total |
|------|--------|-----------|-------|
| 1974 | 294 | 27 | 321 |
| 1975 | 773 | 464 | 1 237 |
| 1976 | 228 | 62 | 290 |
| 1977 | 535 | 408 | 943 |
| 1978 | N/A | 700 | 700 |

(approx. to March 20)

- (4) If total catch refers to salmon and tuna only then the answer is as follows—

- (a) Salmon

| Year | % South Coast | % West Coast |
|------|---------------|--------------|
| 1974 | 66 | 34 |
| 1975 | 74 | 26 |
| 1976 | 84 | 16 |
| 1977 | 92 | 8 |

- (b) Tuna

| Year | % South Coast | % West Coast |
|------|---------------|--------------|
| 1974 | 100 | 0 |
| 1975 | 100 | 0 |
| 1976 | 100 | 0 |
| 1977 | 93 | 7 |
| 1978 | 50 | 50 |

- (5) Not known with any accuracy.

LAND

Mt. Hawthorn

3. Mr BERTRAM, to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Is the land in the Swan Location 8831, formerly lot 313, The Boulevard, Mt. Hawthorn, scheduled to be sold by public auction on the 1st April, 1978?
- (2) If "Yes", is she personally aware of all of the adverse consequences which will flow to the next door neighbours of the said land, should it be sold?
- (3) More particularly, is she aware that—
 - (a) one of the said neighbours—namely one Campbell—did in fact make proper inquiries before purchasing his land there, and
 - (b) the said auction will place both of the said neighbours in a position far worse than that of other residents in The Boulevard?
- (4) Was the said lot 313 once a road reserve?
- (5) If "Yes", when did said lot 313 cease to be a road reserve?
- (6) Will she postpone the said auction so as to allow further representations to be made in this matter? If not, why not?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question, the reply to which is as follows—

- (1) Yes.
- (2) I believe so.
- (3) (a) I am not aware of the extent of Mr Campbell's inquiries but he purchased only this year (23.1.78) and accepting that he made proper inquiries he must

have known that the adjoining Swan Location 8831 was not a road.

- (b) No. All nearby frontages in The Boulevard are the same—about 12.16 metres.
- (4) It was once under-width private road held in fee simple by the Crown.
- (5) The road was closed in 1972 by the operation of section 12 of the Reserves and Road Closure Act (No. 95 of 1972).
- (6) No. Mr Campbell has presented his case personally to the department and other representations have been made to me and all aspects have been fully considered.

ROAD

Tom Price-Nanutarra

4. Mr McIVER, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

Would the Minister advise what is causing delay to the sealing of the Tom Price-Nanutarra Road as promised to the residents of Tom Price by the Premier in 1974 and again in 1977 in respective policy speeches?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

If the honourable member is referring to the section of the Nanutarra-Wittenoom Road between Tom Price and Nanutarra, the department has on its current programme \$826 000 to improve some of the harsher sections and \$110 000 for maintenance on the whole road.

TRAFFIC

Excessive Noise on Melville Roads

5. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

- (1) Is the RTA the authority that has responsibility for apprehending trucks that create excessive noise on suburban roads?
- (2) If "Yes", would the Minister take immediate action to have the RTA patrol Stock Road, Marmion Street, and Leach Highway in the Melville area?
- (3) If the RTA is not responsible, who is the responsible Government authority?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) An investigation will be made.
- (3) Not applicable.

WATER SUPPLIES

Goodwin Report

6. Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) Has he seen the report on the front page of tonight's issue of the *Daily News* which purports to quote the Goodwin report, produced by the catchments section of the Metropolitan Water Board?
- (2) Do the sentiments expressed in the newspaper article coincide with those outlined in the Goodwin report, particularly that logging and bauxite are adversely affecting metropolitan water catchment areas?
- (3) Will he, on the next sitting day, table a copy of the Goodwin report; if not, why not?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Answered by (1).
- (3) I will advise the honourable member in due course.

STOCK

Live Sheep Committee

7. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Has he been successful in calling a meeting of the Live Sheep Committee for tomorrow (Thursday), as he indicated yesterday?
- (2) If not, why was it not possible; and if so, who will be attending it?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) and (2) The meeting which was scheduled for eight o'clock tomorrow morning has been cancelled because the arrangement I made with the Secretary of the Meat Industry Employees' Union was that provided the two ships were loaded we would be prepared to meet with the union and representatives of the industry and discuss the situation. This was clearly understood by Mr Watson-Bates and he has been advised today that the meeting will not proceed tomorrow.

PRE-PRIMARY CENTRE

Balga

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

- (1) Is it true that during November of last year the Minister promised to undertake the construction of a fence outside the Balga pre-primary centre, and that the construction would be given the highest priority?
- (2) Is it true that today, five months later, nothing has been done?
- (3) Would the Minister please advise when it can be done?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) to (3) The honourable member made an overture to me and gave me some letters relating to the matter. I pursued the matter with departmental officers who assured me that although the work has not been commenced—there have been some hold-ups in approval for the work—it is to commence almost immediately. In any event, the honourable member will be advised by me in writing of the exact situation.

TRAFFIC

Excessive Noise on Melville Roads

9. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

Can the Minister inform me what progress has been made by the Noise and Vibration Control Council on the complaint that I lodged with the Commissioner of Public Health on the 1st April, 1977, concerning road traffic noise on certain roads in Melville?

Mr RIDGE replied:

I understand the honourable member was informed by the Commissioner of Public Health that his representations had been referred to the Noise and Vibration Control Council. However, motor vehicle noise is a major problem in every de-

veloped nation and there has been little progress anywhere in finding an acceptable solution.

The Noise and Vibration Control Council has set up a special committee to study abatement of nuisance from motor vehicles and there are interstate groups also seeking a solution. Sadly, an early answer is unlikely.

PUBLIC SERVANTS

Annual and long service leave

10. Mr BERTRAM, to the Premier:

- (1) Is it a fact that a number of public servants have been allowed to accumulate annual leave and long service leave over a span of 10 or 20 years, and perhaps longer?
- (2) If so, does he believe this situation operates unfairly, particularly in that it does not tend to reduce the huge number of unemployed?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) My understanding is that provision exists for the accumulation of long service leave in certain cases, and this only with special permission because of special circumstances. If my understanding of the position is correct—and I am basing it on my own experience when I have received requests for this kind of deferment—the cases are few in number and they are always considered very carefully because it has been Government policy to get rid of leave accumulations as much as possible. Some people would dearly like to accumulate their leave because they do not feel that, for physical or other reasons, they need it. On the other hand, the policy has been to try to get the leave cleared as quickly as possible. I could not be precise as to the incidence of deferments but I will gladly make some inquiries.
- (2) I do not think it will resolve the unemployment problem in any way to speed up leave-taking, especially as far as some senior people are concerned.